

## **Notes for Annual Report – 2008/9**

This report will be placed in full on the Town Council's website.

[www.hythetowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.hythetowncouncil.gov.uk)

### **Council Meetings**

There have been 10 Council meetings during the course of this last year. Its principal Committees of Finance and General Purposes and Plans and Works have met 13 and 18 times respectively. My particular thanks go to the Chairman of both these Committees of Councillor John Schoner and Councillor Reg Belcourt respectively for all their hard work and support. All Committee Chairmen will be making short reports on the highlights of the year from their own perspectives.

### **Charity Trustees**

The Town Council is the Corporate Trustee for a number of Charities. There have been 4 meetings of the full Charity Trustees together with 1 of the Charities Committee. The Town Council is responsible for the operation of four charities of Horn Street, Palmars, Eaton Lands and Davis Oaklands. It also provides the administrative support to the Wakefield Bequest, of which two serving Councillors are currently Trustees.

Annual returns are undertaken for all the above Charities to the Charity Commission.

One of the key issues which the Trust for the Davis Oaklands has had to deal is the issue of the Permanent Endowment. After lengthy negotiations the Charity Commission has agreed to the loan of some of the endowment to the Town Council if necessary, so as to ensure that the replacement Sport Pavilion on South Road can be achieved.

### **Town Council's Websites**

The Town Council operates two websites:

The Portal website is [www.hythe-kent.com](http://www.hythe-kent.com) which gives general information about the Town and the community as a whole. The Town Council also has its own business website. [www.hythetowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.hythetowncouncil.gov.uk) The website is updated weekly and provides public access to Agendas, Minutes and other Council documents as well as facilities and hire arrangements. It has also a public notice board page. This website currently is receiving in excess of 2,000 visits per month.

Thanks go to the webmaster of Mr Adrian Wilson for his work on both sites.

### **Oaklands – Local History Room / Museum**

Mrs Janet Adamson continues in her role as the Hon Curator of the Museum and she usually frequents Oaklands on a fortnightly basis, fielding many and varied enquiries of an historical nature.

### **Oaklands – Bandstand Concerts**

The Town Council continues to run its ever popular band programme with 19 performances during the course of the last summer providing an array of music. A similar programme is planned for the forthcoming season.

### **Town Hall**

The Town Hall has held 45 events and 8 guided walks during the course of the year and has been used by 13 organisations.

The Undercroft has been utilised on 27 occasions by charities and it is a focal point within the Town. Its use is free to local organisations.

The Civic Society hosts weekly tours of the Town Hall as part of their organised walks which take in the many facets of the Town's history including Oaklands and its Museum.

Grateful thanks to the Civic Society for its many endeavours.

### **Town Council Surgeries**

9 Surgeries have been held over the course of the last year. They are usually held on the first Saturday of each month and are regularly attended by local residents and they are usually attended by two Town Councillors. Details are available on the Town Council's website.

### **Eaton Lands**

This vast tract of land forms a Charity which is administered by the Town Council acting as Charity Trustee. The Town Council was awarded a grant from the BIG Lottery Fund for assistance towards the further development of Eaton Lands by way of bulb and tree planting, nesting boxes, information panels and improved access. Councillor Reg Belcourt will say more regarding this project? (if not see below)

**Early this year the Town Council was successful in its bid to the Breathing Places Big Lottery Fund receiving £9,300 and a further £1,500 from the Phillips Trust. These two funds, together with finance from the Town Council, the Civic Society and Shepway District Council has meant that trees and bulbs have been planted, pathways laid, steps installed, trails laid and information panels to be erected.**

The northern meadow area continues to be maintained, with the grass amenity area to the south regularly cut 12 times per year and the wildflower element to the north managed so as to try and ensure its sustainability. Paths are cut through the meadow so that people can enjoy the area. Public Footpath HB 25 which runs through the meadow has been cut back and the woodland area's paths and steps have been refurbished.

### **Eaton Lands Allotment Sites**

There is a significant area of Eaton Lands which is given over to two large allotment areas which are fully occupied with 72 plots and there is a waiting list of 55 would-be tenants. The Town Council rents these areas from the Charity. The allotments have been steadily improving over the years and thanks go to the Plans and Works Clerk and the Town Sergeant for their regular inspections. Now with the long waiting lists there is an even greater need to ensure that all the plots are properly cultivated.

### **Longbridge Allotment Site**

I am pleased to report that this statutory allotment site of 10 plots is fully let with a waiting list of 31.

### **Twiss Road Allotments**

The Twiss Road site is fully occupied with 27 plots and a waiting list of 61.

The allotment sites have all been recently re-measured so as to ensure that tenants are paying the accurate rent and also to release, wherever possible, more land for waiting tenants. There is currently an overall waiting list of 91.

### **Hythe Green**

This informal open space area is the host to many activities including x 14 Boot Fairs inclusive of the Mayor's Boot Fair. Local Charities and organisations benefit from these events and it provides them the opportunity to boost their funds.

It is also used by the large biennial events of the Festival and the Fete as well as circuses, fun fairs. It provides free car parking provision in the form of the Portland Road Car Park, as well as a play area and informal open space.

### **Property Matters**

The Town Council is embarking on a four year scheme to undertake property improvements to all of its building. The external decoration of both Sanford House and the Hythe Library has taken place and a new tennis and bowls hut has been put in place on South Road Recreation Ground.

### **Civic Activities – Speaker's Events**

I have attended 110 events so far during the course of the year. The highlights have been í .

### **Other Local Organisations**

Many thanks to the organisations that work effectively within the Town especially through the SEEDA Steering Group and Partnership.

### **Appointments to Outside Bodies**

The Town Council also has appointees to other bodies and I am very grateful to those Members who have served this year on the following bodies :

Age Concern  
Hythe Chamber of Commerce / Tourism Forum  
Hythe Twinning Association  
Kent Association of Parish Councils  
Shepway Tourist Action Group  
Hospital of St Bartholomew and St John  
Hythe Institute Fund  
Hythe Sick Fund  
Anne Peirson Trust  
Newington Unknown Donor's Charity  
Wakefield Bequest

**Conclusion**

Finally I would like to thank all the staff and Councillors for their support during the past Civic Year.