

Annual Report from Town Mayor, Councillor James Page

Firstly I'd like to thank the residents and my fellow Councillors for the continued privilege of being Mayor and also the opportunity to serve our community. It should probably go without saying but I am still learning and trying to discover ways that our community can best benefit from my efforts, those of my fellow Councillors, community volunteers and the very capable team of staff now here at the Civic Centre. We obviously try and provide an ear to many, or indeed any of the issues that residents want to raise with us, unfortunately only a few are in our direct control. For those that are not, with the close working partnerships that have been talked about we do our best to influence and aid.

The service that we provide is key, but everybody also cares about costs. Clearly the costs we have some influence over is the Council Tax. You have heard about the services we provide and some of the successes and savings we have achieved. But before I go on to report on some of the other benefits and services delivered during the last year or so I would like to stay with the Council Tax theme for short while longer and go over the history of the last few years in a bit more detail. As you can see from the chart in the years prior to the current administration the Council Tax influenced by Telscombe Town Council increased hugely, in fact by over 52%, since the new team has had some budgetary influence the increase has only been just under 7.5%, 1.4% this year and 5.2% for the coming year. You will have seen from the Clerks report that at the beginning of this year we took steps to actually allocate to budget centres £75,000 of the slush fund that had been taken from residents over the previous years totalling over £155,000. We then set a budget increase of 1.4% as a target, however given the previous mechanisms of management, accounts and record keeping we felt it necessary to allocate a small amount from the remainder of the un-earmarked earmarked reserves of just over £21k as a contingency. In actual fact only £11k was required to cover unforeseeable costs so 10k has been put back into unallocated reserves. The net result is we managed cost increases to just 7.46% or just over £18k. This was achieved through proper budget controls, various cost cutting initiatives some of which you have heard about from the Chairpersons and also some that I will mention shortly. This was done despite over £19k of unforeseeable costs sustained as mentioned by Ron.

Savings Already mentioned include Verges £15,951, Accounts £2,200, Town Crier £2,000, Insurance £1,999. Other savings include Telecoms £1,097, SDJC £8,300, Cattle Grids > £2,000. Giving a total saving in excess of £33,500. We also have booked additional revenues of Rent £4,800 and Mast £5,700. Total minimum benefit of 44k or circa 16%.

TELSCOMBE & EAST SALTDEAN ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

28th of April 2009



Summary of major achievements

- Those already mentioned
 1. Quality Council
 2. Qualified Clerk
 3. Qualified Assistant Clerk FT
 4. Residents Association
 5. Town Crier
 6. All IT refreshed
 7. Extended Civic Centre hours
 8. Councillors Surgeries
 9. New website
 10. Information Portal
 11. Tye Audit complete
 12. Bingo evenings
 13. Risk management
 14. Accounts
 15. Savings
 16. Revenue Increases
 17. Security System
 18. Community bus
 19. New benches
 20. New goal posts
 21. Various Events
 22. Out-sourced payroll services
 23. Member training
 24. Grants
- Other achievements
 25. Bunding resolution to ESOC
 26. £20,000 fine avoided
 27. Bunding exposure capped
 28. Tye Commons Committee
 29. Co-ordinated Council Meetings
 30. Contracts of Employment in place for the first time in the councils history
 31. Objectives & training plans in place also for the first time
 32. 2 ¾ FTEs to 4 ½ FTEs budgeted
 33. Additional revenue £5,700
 34. Year let £4,800

NB at the time of production year end processing had not been completed figures may be subject to minor change

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Head line objective for 2009 2010

- Re-tendering of Parks contract target 25% or £15,000
- IT DR to be offered to local business community
- Environmental and Community Officer
- Increased revenue generation from assets
- Installation of “foldable back wall” on Chamber
- Limited Licensing applications to increase utilisation
- Increase revenue and new Management Plan for Tye
- Further consolidation of activities with Peacehaven to optimise cost base for both Councils
- Tendering for service delivery to other authorities
- Production of Town Report
- Five Year Management Plan and Product & Services Portfolio

Transparency and Accountability

I hope that the presentations today, the web site and the increased availability of both staff and councillors demonstrate the teams desire to provide the services to the community in open and accountable way. We are all here to help and are always grateful of input, suggestions and questions even if they are sometime difficult or we don't immediately have the answers. Besides it keeps us on our toes.

Team Work

In our first year we got our feet under the desk so to speak, had some good successes and laid down foundations on which to build. This year, building on those foundations the team, albeit with some different members has achieved a massive amount. We have also established a game plan for going forward in many areas and i believe with the continued excellent team work both within our civic centre and with other groups obviously with occasional exception of advertising, John, we will continue to deliver better and better results.

Thanks

I'd would like to reiterate my thanks to my fellow councillors, my thanks to Martin and his team ESPECIALLY Stella for her help and support during the transition and for knocking Martin into shape, and finally to our esteemed visitors and indeed to those residents who found the time to come along and support.

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