

Policy & Resources Committee by Councillor Ron Maskell

2008 –2009 has brought its challenges; we have had to cover unplanned parallel running of two Clerks to facilitate a hand over of duties at a cost of nearly £7,000 & £1,358 unplanned recruitment costs.

This did however achieve the recruitment of a CILCA qualified Clerk allowing the Council to work towards an application for Quality Status, which as you have seen we were successful in achieving in a very short period of time thanks to Martin.

Additionally the increase in Stella's hours and the promotion to Assistant Clerk which is part of our succession planning and appropriate staff coverage has cost £10,900, this increase has been well justified with many additional savings, increased accountability and accessibility to the residents of our town.

One of the many benefits of this is that we now open the Civic Centre all day to service resident's enquiries, and it has been proven to be very popular.

The Town Council's policy and resources Committee continues to play a significant role in the promotion and ongoing improvement to the Council's profile and services.

The Committee has overseen the procurement and installation of new server based IT equipment.

The new equipment has allowed networking of packages for resilience and improved productivity. Additionally it has greatly enhanced the processing and storage capacity of the Councils IT.

The new IT equipment has also enabled the flexible in house production of The Town Crier magazine to printer's proof stage together with information leaflets and posters.

On top of this we now do our accounts internally the staff having been trained to manage and enter data rather than paying external resources to come and do it this for us have saved over £2,200 per year.

Our newly CILCA qualified Assistant Town Clerk has been Instrumental in producing high quality publications on the new system. The Town Crier has been produced quarterly and has become a publication valued by local residents. In addition local businesses are enthusiastic about purchasing advertising space in the newspaper resulting in a neutral cost of production for the Council, and thereby saving a further £2,000. In addition, only this week we have managed to negotiate an improved delivery service with a further saving to the Town.

The committee has continued to seek best value for Council services and achieved savings by tendering for insurance services for the Council saving nearly £2,000 and outsourcing the payroll function to a specialist contractor. Following the saving of nearly £16,000 on the verge cutting contract we will be re-tendering the park contract with a view to saving £15 to £20,000.

Telscombe Town Council had the second highest Council Tax in the District prior to the election.

The previous three annual increases of 10%, 25.1% and 11.3% were obviously a contributing factor.

TELSCOMBE & EAST SALTDEAN ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

28th of April 2009



As you have heard from the Clerk, during the first year of the new administration and indeed going forward we are operating a more disciplined approach to fiscal matters. We have closed the gap to the average cost across the District by more than 5%. When we started we were 49% above the average and we have reduced the gap to only 43.5% and we are continuing to work on reducing the gap further.

Monthly Councillor Surgeries are now held on the first Saturday morning of every month to make the Council more accessible to residents seeking advice and information. The Residents Association also now joins us and holds a coffee morning so resident can also be aware of other activities and issues in the town. As well as regular attendances by our own Town Councillors the surgeries are now regularly attended by District and County Councillors to further aid our residents.

In accordance with recommendations from the external auditors the Councils risk management has been enhanced. The committee has agreed a comprehensive risk assessment for the council's property, services, functions and equipment. The risk assessment is produced using a Local Council standard package and now allows risks to be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

The Committee has been instrumental in improving partnership working in general and has established a liaison meeting with Peacehaven Town Council.

Closer working with other Councils has already achieved savings due to joint tendering for contracts.

Members of the Committee have also worked with Newhaven and Peacehaven Town Councils to establish an enhanced pre booked community bus service. Key local issues such as the new waste water treatment works have been considered by the Committee in partnership with other organisations.

We have also worked with the residents association and with our joint efforts membership has increased and the last meeting was well attended with guest County and District Council speakers, they are also working to quarterly guest and visitor meetings with Peacehaven residents association and a guest speaker at all meetings.

The Committee has instigated member-training events in effective public speaking and Local government finance.

The Grant Sub Committee continued to ensure local community organisations received financial support from the Council with some seventeen organisations benefiting from grants totalling £5,000.

I'd like to thank our Town Clerk, Assistant Town Clerk, and all the members of the Policy & Resources Committee along with all the active members of the Town Council for all there assistance and hard work.

There are of course the unsung heroes being the caretakers and not forgetting the members of the public who have assisted in the continued improvement of the councils services.