

Wymondham Town Council

Annual Report 2014-15

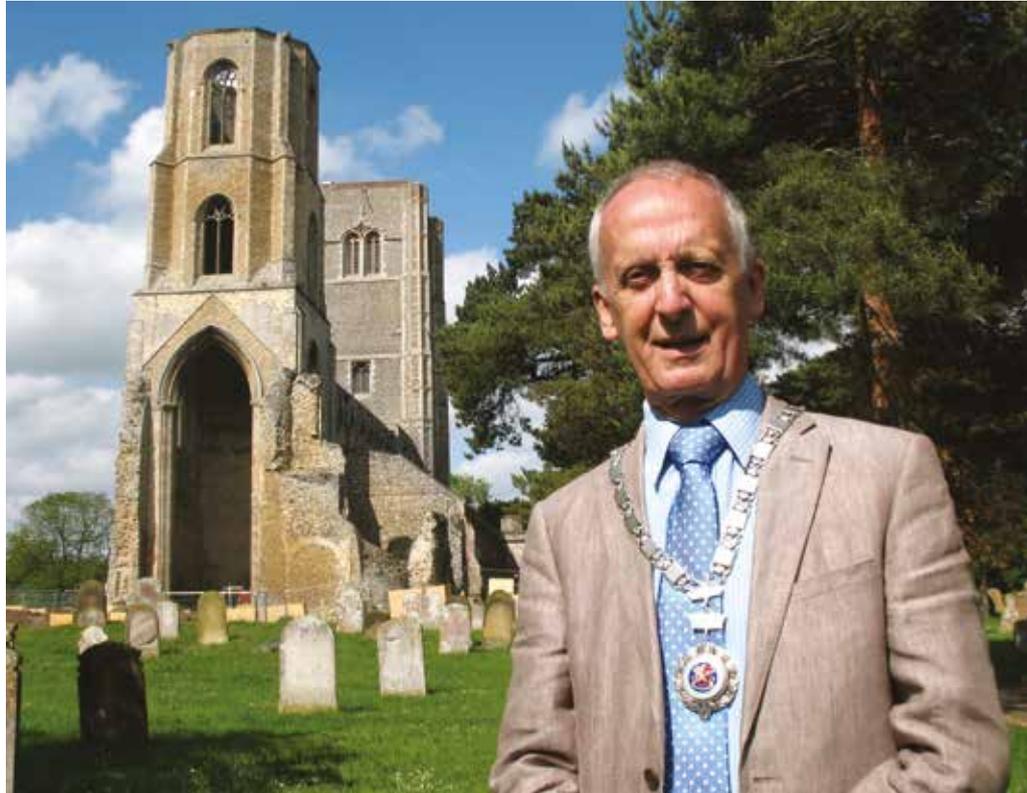


What the Town Council has been doing for Wymondham in the past year

June 2015

Memorable year as mayor

Being Mayor of Wymondham for 2014-15 was an interesting year for me and having held this same office four years previously in 2010-11, I had a general idea of the duties involved. These consist of chairing the monthly full council meeting, as well as representing the town at civic functions both within the town and around Norfolk, where you are expected to meet with other mayors and civic dignitaries.



Cllr Colin Foulger, Town Mayor 2014-15

Town Councillors who served this year

After four years, the current Town Council ended its 2011-15 term with the local government elections in May. The following councillors finished their period of office, and we thank them for their work for the community.

Abbey Ward

C Buckton
R Savage
S Elliott/L Hornby

Cromwells Ward

J Halls
JH Turner
N Ward

Northfields Ward

MJ Gibbins
C Longhurst
A Taylor

Rustens Ward

D Disney
C Foulger
A Gardiner/
P Broome

Town Ward

J Andrews
D Fernee
M Heard

I was pleased to be invited to several Christmas carol services, including our own at Wymondham Abbey. The Remembrance Day Parade this year took on an extra significance as it was the 100th anniversary of the start of the First World War. It was also very pleasing for me that the town council's links with local schools continue, and I was invited to attend Founder's Day at Wymondham College as well as Speech Day at Wymondham Academy. The school council from Robert Kett paid their annual visit to meet with the Mayor in the Council Chamber and asked some interesting questions on their very good understanding of democracy as it is today.

Without doubt for me the highlight of my year was the ceremony at the town's war memorial on Thursday 12 March to commemorate the award of the Victoria Cross to Harry Daniels, a 'Son of Wymondham', for his actions carried out 100 years ago on the battlefield in France. The government had decreed that all

towns and villages who had a VC holder born there would be presented with an engraved York stone plaque to be laid on the 100th anniversary of the day when the action took place.

Wymondham had the honour of being the first town/village in Norfolk to hold this commemoration, and therefore there were no patterns for us to follow. So starting in early November meetings were held at the town hall with many interested town groups, including the Ex-Services club, to discuss and plan the ceremony. Invitations were sent to all Norfolk's civic dignitaries including the Lord Lieutenant, as well as those surviving descendants of Harry Daniels who had been traced. For once the weather was kind and a fantastic array of uniforms of past and present services were 'on parade' at the town's war memorial on Town Green, in full view of the press and TV.

Truly the high point of a memorable year for me as Mayor.

Wymondham Town Council

How it works, what it does, where your money is spent

How does your Town Council work for you?

The 15 members of Wymondham Town Council are all unpaid volunteers, elected by Wymondham people every four years. Elections took place in May 2015 so that 2014-15 was the last year of office for the council. Each year the councillors elect a Mayor and Deputy Mayor from among their members.

The full Town Council meets on the first Tuesday of every month. It takes questions from the public, notes minutes from its committees and receives reports from representatives on outside bodies. It also approves all payments to suppliers from the preceding month and discusses issues relevant to the town.

Some of the Town Council's functions are delegated to three main committees and these meet on Tuesdays in accordance with the schedule published in 'About Wymondham' and on the council website. Each committee consists of five members who elect their own chair and vice chair. These committees are:

Leisure and Environment, which supervises the maintenance, upkeep and improvement of the Council's recreation areas such as Ketts Park, Browick Road recreation ground and the Spooner Row playing field. It is responsible for ensuring that play equipment meets health and safety requirements and that residents have access to leisure facilities. It is also responsible

for other open spaces such as the Tolls Meadow nature reserve, the Becketswell amenity area and the allotments.

Planning, Lighting and Highways liaises closely with Norfolk County Council and South Norfolk Council on all road, pavement and lighting issues affecting the Wymondham parish. It takes a strategic planning overview for the town and works in conjunction with the county and district councils. While it does not grant planning approvals (normally the responsibility of South Norfolk Council) the Town Council is consulted on all applications affecting Wymondham.

Finance and General Purposes manages property owned or leased by the Council including the cemetery, allotments and the chartered Friday market. It is also allocates funds under the Council's small grants scheme and is responsible for machinery purchases and the Council's administration team. Its remit also includes the Grade 1 listed Market Cross and the provision of Tourist Information Centre facilities provided by the council staff.

Agendas are posted on the Town Council notice board and agenda and minutes for council meetings are published on the council website, and these indicate the starting time. Public participation is allowed at all meetings at the allocated time.

A closer look at planning

Planning can be a complex and often contentious matter. The Town Council's Planning Lighting and Highways Committee works within a planning policy framework which explains how planning applications are dealt with, and how decisions are made.

South Norfolk Council has the final say in planning matters. Sometimes its Planning Committee will delegate decisions on appropriate cases to planning officers in consultation with local members. All applications are forwarded first to the Town Council for comment, and details of applications are posted on the council noticeboard. Plans are available for consultation in the office, or through the South Norfolk Council website, and considered at a council or committee meeting where they are on display for discussion.

Letters from the public commenting on applications are welcome, and time is always allowed at the start of meetings for public comments to be made in person. The Town Council will then comment to the district council in the light of the local plan and other policy guidance, taking into account any public comments and the considered views of its members.



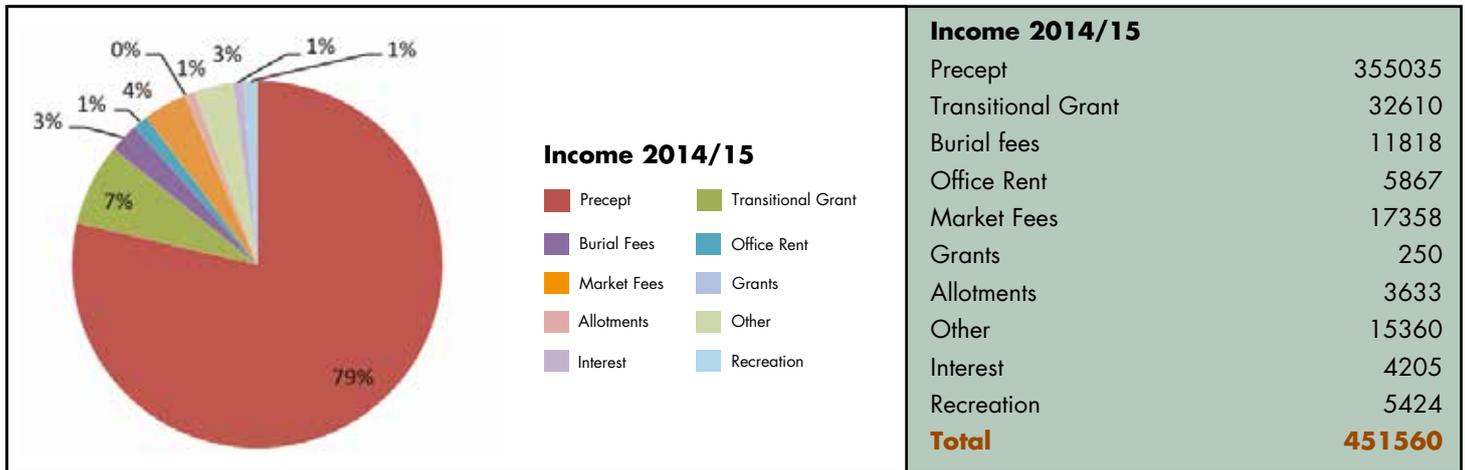
Civic Award 2014

The Town Council makes an award each year to a member of the community who has done outstanding work for Wymondham.

The 2014 recipient was Trevor Brown for his tireless work with Wymondham Dementia Group and the Pabulum café. Formerly a social worker, Trevor is an Elder of the United Reformed Church and a founding member of the Ashcroft project which supports vulnerable females in the community. He is also a trustee of the Wymondham Dementia group and a founding member of the Pabulum Café.

Precepts, grants, income and expenditure-council finances explained

Where the money comes from, and where it goes, are set out in these two diagrams:



The Town Council is required by law to set a budget each year, which then determines how it is financed for that year.

Income is obtained from a number of sources such as market fees, leisure activity fees, burials, rents, grants and income on investments. It is also prudent for the Council to maintain a general reserve to cover emergencies together with earmarked reserves for specific projects. The largest source of income is the precept, which in the 2014-15 financial year was £402,445, equating to £73.40 per annum for a band 'D' property. This year the precept is composed of £370,083 council tax and a transitional grant from the government of £32,372.

Expenditure included the costs of maintaining the council offices at 14 Middleton Street and the salaries of the Town Clerk, administration support staff and groundsmen as well as the Tourist Information staff. The Town Council also maintains various amenity and play areas such as Ketts Park, Tolls Meadow and the Cemetery. Play equipment is replaced as part of a rolling programme of refurbishment.

Another important part of the council's work is in supporting local groups through our grants scheme. Each year the Town Council makes grants to local organisations to help with projects. Grants awarded in 2014-15 are shown in the box to the right.

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|------------------------------|-------------|
| Citizens Advice | 3500 |
| British Legion | 276 |
| Wymondham Symphony Orchestra | 250 |
| Wymondham Music Festival | 2500 |
| Wymondham Lions | 500 |
| Total | 7026 |

| | |
|---------------------------|------------|
| Wym Rugby Club Youth Fund | 500 |
| Total | 500 |

Good news for families

A big investment in play equipment is being made by the Town Council over several years. It will benefit children up to twelve years old.

At the King's Head Meadow, public comment identified the need for an enhanced children's play area. A working group of councillors selected Wicksteed Play Equipment Ltd as the preferred partner, and work costing nearly £75,000 was completed by late summer.

The cost was met from the Town Council's play sites fund. Additional funding of up to £100,000 has been ring-fenced for new play equipment at Ketts Park during 2015.

Wymondham's Victoria Cross

On 12 March 2015 a commemorative stone was laid near the war memorial to mark the award of the Victoria Cross to Company Sergeant Major Harry Daniels VC, MC, for 'conspicuous bravery'.

It was 100 years to the day that his action in the battle of Neuve Chapelle resulted in this award. He was the first Norfolk man to be so honoured. An information board about Harry's career with photographs has been sited near the stone.

An extract from the citation for Harry's VC in the London Gazette for 27 April 1915 reads:

'For most conspicuous bravery on 12th March 1915, at Neuve Chapelle. When their battalion was impeded in the advance to the attack by wire entanglements and subjected to a very severe machine-gun fire, CSM Daniels and Corporal Noble voluntarily rushed in front and succeeded in cutting the wires. They were both wounded at once and Corporal Noble has since died of his wounds.'



Sergeant Major Harry Daniels VC MC



Young visitors in Council Chamber

In December the Mayor welcomed School Council members from Robert Kett School to visit the Town Council Chamber, where they questioned him about the way the council works for the town. This annual visit follows the laying of flowers at Becket's Chapel in memory of Robert and William Kett, executed on 7 December 1549.

New home for CAB

Wymondham Citizens Advice Bureau moved into new premises, behind the Council Offices in Middleton Street, reached through the blue gates to the left of the Council offices. Thanks to the work of staff and volunteers the move from the former offices in Griffin Court was accomplished with the minimum of interruption to services for the public.

The bureau is still dealing with clients for the same number of hours, but 'drop-in' clients are only seen on Monday, Wednesday or Friday mornings. Clients with appointments will be seen on Monday or Friday afternoons.



Wymondham CAB is one of the seven bureaux operated by Norfolk Citizens Advice Bureau. Each is able to provide advice on a wide range of matters including benefits, housing, debt and welfare rights.

And lots more!

Many other Town Council activities during the year included refurbishing the War Memorial, supporting town centre public events such as Wymondham carnival, revived after many years, and helping the Wymondham British Legion to raise funds to replace its worn-out standard.

Back copies of 'About Wymondham' may be found on the Town Council website at wymondhamtc.norfolkparishes.gov.uk