

Report from the Mayor of Sandwich for the year 2009/2010

This year has been a good one for Sandwich Town Council - despite the economic down turn - and a great deal has been achieved.

For more than twelve months the council worked in partnership with Dover District Council to totally refurbish the Quay public conveniences. The work has now been completed and Sandwich Town Council has taken over the administration, maintenance and cleaning of the facilities and employed attendants to be present during opening hours. Ours is the first town within the District to take over such facilities and it is hoped that other towns and parishes will follow the lead.

The installation of lighting at the Butts recreation ground has been an ongoing project but it has now been confirmed that the works will take place this month. I want to thank Dover District Council, Sandwich Town Cricket Club and the youth of the town for all their efforts in achieving this result.

The council has created an additional 24 allotment plots at the Black Lane site in St. Barts Road. There are now 63 plots and all but two are taken. With the help of the White Cliffs Countryside Partnership, allotment holders and local children, a hedge has been planted along the south side of the area.

Last April the Mayor of Honfleur received a party from Sandwich, which he had invited to visit his town in Normandy, in order to rejuvenate the twinning between the two towns. A large party, including representatives from many local organisations, visited Honfleur. A good time was had by all and the twinning was indeed reinvigorated. Subsequently, back home, a new Sandwich Honfleur Twinning Association committee was formed, which has been energetically fund-raising so that hospitality may be similarly offered when the Mayor and a party from Honfleur visit here in May.

The council is still working with the Police and Kent County Council to reduce speeding in the town and some improvement has been achieved. However, we want to see further reductions and hope that, when implemented, the 'PACE' scheme will help.

We have also cooperated in setting up a new Tourism Committee, with members of the community and local businesses, to promote this lovely town of ours. Here we can excel, because of our history, our nature reserves and walking and sports facilities.

I am also pleased to report the success of the 'Sandwich in Bloom 2009' project, which earned a judges' commendation for this its first year. Congratulations to everyone who took part. It is hoped that 2010 will be even better!

Due to lack of funds, Dover District Council has asked Sandwich to accept a number of extra responsibilities in the forthcoming year. We have arranged to take over the administration and maintenance of the Tourist Information Centre, the Quay public conveniences and the Bulwark play area, whilst raising the precept by only 10%. However, there is much to resolve in the coming year, such as the Poulders Gardens play area, and we will do our utmost to assist the residents of our town. The regeneration of the Quay is also of major importance to the council.

The Mayoress and I have travelled in Kent, Essex, West Sussex and London representing Sandwich, telling people what a wonderful town we have. When mayors from elsewhere come here, they totally agree and often say how envious they are.

It is a privilege and an honour to serve as mayor and I thank the council for electing me. I feel fortunate to live in a fascinating medieval town and strive to protect its assets in an ever changing world. The office sometimes requires difficult (and unpopular to some) decisions, but I know that this council has the determination and the courage to do what is right for the future of Sandwich.

Councillor J Trussler