

## **Report from the Mayor of Sandwich 2014/2015**

2014/15 has been a busy and exciting year for Sandwich. Back in spring 2014, flood defence construction was still underway at the Quay but we didn't have long to wait before the renovated Quay was unveiled – and what a pleasing addition it has made to the town, not to mention indispensable for the protection it affords. Work on the Sandwich Town Tidal Defence Scheme, which is being delivered by the Environment Agency, KCC and Pfizer, continues along other local reaches of the Stour and is scheduled for completion in summer 2015. Sandwich Toll Bridge Fund (of which the Town Council is the sole Trustee) worked jointly with Pfizer, the Rotary Club and DDC to get the Bulwarks Play Area cleaned, repaired and repainted this year so children could enjoy the riverside to the full once more.

A lot of great work has been done by the Town Team this year, not least to address traffic issues affecting our town. This summer Lorry Watch volunteers monitored HGVs coming through our town and their findings, which were sent to KCC, confirmed what local people and the Town Council had been saying for some time – that the volume and size of traffic passing through Sandwich is too great for our historic streets and buildings. Observations showed that every day an average of 250 heavy vehicles over 7.5 tonnes passed through Sandwich, and that an average of 463 vehicles per hour used New Street, Strand Street and High Street. The Team is now taking a crucial role in bringing together a working group of local stakeholders to find solutions to our traffic problems.

The Town Council continued to play its role in local organisations and also continued to act as an advocate for Sandwich with other public bodies such as KCC, the Police etc. and where necessary with businesses, for example about water metering. The Council also maintained its good working relationship with Discovery Park and we have had continuing positive news from that quarter as more firms and education providers have taken premises and started up activities on site. Our staff have continued to provide not only administrative support for the Council – to which they have provided quality, thorough information throughout the year - and caretaking for the Guildhall but also signposting to other public services, tourist information and public conveniences for locals and visitors to our beautiful town. The Quay Conveniences once again attained Platinum standard (the highest standard) in the Loo of the Year Awards 2014.

Many Sandwich people and businesses have been very generous in supporting the Mayor's Fund charity appeal this year and thank to their generosity, local charities and community organisations received £4,900 this year in grants from the Fund.

We have had many wonderful public events this year and the Sandwich Community Events Association as well as other community groups should be given great credit for organising them. Volunteers continue to be crucial to quality of life in our town for all ages.

Not least, volunteers played a key role on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2014, when the town came together to mark the centenary of the outbreak of World War One. A flower-laying ceremony at the War Memorial was followed by the laying of flowers at memorials in churches across the town and a service of remembrance at St Clement's. Later that evening lights went out as 11pm approached, marking the expiry of Britain's ultimatum to Germany one hundred years ago. Many were struck by the number of people that took part in this commemoration, as well as our Battle of Britain and Remembrance Sunday wreath-laying ceremonies and the Armistice Day silence, including many children and young people. It was comforting to know that in Sandwich, across the generations, those who had fallen in war were not forgotten and the Council was immensely grateful to everyone who helped organise and lead these events.

Lastly, no report for this year could be complete without mentioning the wonderful re-discovery of Sandwich's very own copy of the Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest. To own one of these important documents would be wonderful but to own two is an immense privilege and a great indicator of the historical importance of this town. At its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> February the Council expressed its intention not to sell the Magna Carta and to bring both the Magna Carta and the Charter of the Forest back to Sandwich. The Council has established a working group to look into the details of what happens next.