



**HARWICH TOWN  
COUNCIL**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2018/2019**

Harwich Town Council consists of 16 members elected to serve the interests of residents and address the communal needs of the town. The following members have been elected by you: -

<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Ward</b>	<b>Party</b>
Simon Ashley	East Central	UKIP
Barry Brown	East Central	Con
John Brown	West	Independent
Garry Calver	East Central	Lab
Sean Fay	West	Con
Maria Fowler	West Central	Lab
Ivan Henderson	East	Lab
Jo Henderson	West Central	Lab
Dave McLeod	East Central	Lab
Pam Morrison	West	Lab
Charlie Powell (Mayor)	East	Lab
Fiona Powell	West	Lab
Geoff Smith	East	Lab
Vacancy	West Central	
Alan Todd (Deputy Mayor)	East	Lab
Vacancy	West Central	

#### Representation on outside bodies (subject to change in 2018/19)

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Councillor</b>
Age UK	Cllr D McLeod
Ark Family Resource Centre	Cllr P Morrison
Henry Smith's Charity (Ancient Parish of Dovercourt)	Cllr S Fay
Harwich & District Community Association	Cllr M Fowler
Harwich & District Community Crime Prevention Panel	The Mayor
Harwich & Dovercourt Tourism Group	Cllr I Henderson and Cllr C Powell
Harwich Community Consortium	Cllr I Henderson
Harwich Conservation Panel	Cllr M Fowler
Harwich Festival Committee	Cllr D McLeod
Harwich Mayflower Project	The Mayor
Merchant Navy Welfare Board	Cllr A Todd
Neighbourhood Networking Meetings	The Mayor and the Clerk
Petrochem/Carless Environmental Liaison Committee	Cllr S Ashley and Cllr C Powell
Royal British Legion Services Committee	Cllr P Morrison
Tendring District Council Parish and Town Council Community Resilience Meetings	Cllr C Powell
Teen Talk (Harwich)	Cllr J Henderson
Tendring District Association of Local Councils	Cllr D McLeod
Tendring District Council Transport Liaison Group	Cllr S Fay
Tendring Older People's Forum	Cllr D McLeod
Parish Transport Meeting	Cllr S Fay
Port Liaison Committee	Cllr M Fowler Cllr C Powell Cllr A Todd Cllr P Morrison

## Mayor's Report

It has been an honour, privilege and a great pleasure to have been given the opportunity to serve Harwich Town Council as Mayor for the 2018/19 civic year and my sincerest thanks go to all the councillors of Harwich Town for giving me that opportunity.

Sincere thanks also go to my daughter Kate Powell for making history, as at just 18 years old she became the youngest Mayoress the town has ever had.

Both Kate and I decided at the start of our year, we would like to do things differently as Mayor and Mayoress. Kate was hoping to work with the younger community, and I was going to try and see if I could bring together some of the other areas of the community.

We started with a visit to 10 primary schools; the Harwich and Dovercourt High School and I also had a meeting with the Harwich Haven Authority. With help from all of these, Kate held a beach litter pick with 150 children and over 50 adults in attendance. It was fantastic to see all age groups in our community working together.

Kate and I have, as Mayor and Mayoress, had the opportunity to meet some wonderful people who work and fundraise with organisations, both locally and further afield. We have made many memories that we will cherish long after our term of office is over. Everywhere we went we heard about the community spirit of Harwich and Dovercourt.

I have visited many care homes and engaged with residents and staff which has been great, and Kate and I visited dear old lady (Dorothy) to celebrate her 107th birthday at Lime Court.

As my predecessor said last year, we are the envy of many towns and villages within the district of Tendring and further afield, it's what makes Harwich the place it is – our community.

Kate and I are pleased that we have had the opportunity to try and get the youth involved more with the community spirit of Harwich such as through the fire cadets, the litter pick and the bunny hunt at Easter. We also took part in several events out of our town, in Chelmsford, Felixstowe, Ipswich, Clacton, Walton, Brightlingsea and Woolverstone helping to raise the profile of Harwich throughout Tendring and beyond. We also took part in as many of the local community events that we could: Sea Shanty Festival, Air/Sea Festival, Festival of Arts to name just a few.

We would like to thank all organisers and staff that gave us such a great welcome. I would like to thank Neil, Fiona and Hannah at Harwich Haven for a superb tour of Harwich Harbour. They explained how they and their colleagues keep our harbour of Harwich safe for all its users.

I would like to thank Commodore Rob Dorey and his staff at Trinity house who were incredibly informative, when I had a tour of their workshops and office complex. It was interesting to see how the light vessels around our coast are deployed and maintained.

As Mayor, one of my main roles is to Chair the Town Council Meetings and to sit on all the different council committees. It has been a busy year and I'm extremely grateful for the help and advice from all our former mayors and current councillors. My thanks also go to

my chaplain Rev Rosie Tallwin along with Rev Canon Margaret Shaw and her team for all their help and advice.

I would like to give a special thanks to our brilliant administrative team Clerk Lucy, Assistant Clerk Michelle, Administrative Assistant Shannon and Estates Supervisor Peter as without all their hard work this would not happen.

Last of all, the biggest thanks goes to my daughter Kate Powell, Mayoress of Harwich, I think you have done a great job, well done.

As Mayor, I have done my best to promote our town for its history and tourism. It has been an honour and humbling experience to serve this great town of Harwich.

**Councillor Charlie Powell**  
**Mayor of Harwich**

## Allotments Committee Report

Harwich Town Council manages six allotment sites. Plots are rented out to residents who wish to grow their own fruit and vegetables. Harwich Town Council ensures the rent is affordable and offers a discount to state pensioners.

The meetings of the committee are open to the public where questions and queries can be voiced. The committee is always open to suggestions and ideas to help with the smooth running of the sites. This has resulted in numerous repairs and general upkeep such as fence repairs, boundary hedge reductions and tree management. This year, the focus for this has been our Abdy Avenue site where we have carried out repairs to the wall, removed overgrowth and hedging and asked for boundary footpaths to be reinstated. Any important repairs have been carried out on all sites throughout the year and each site will become the focus of individual attention in turn.

One major administrative function that has occurred this year is the periodic review of the tenancy agreement which has now been fully updated and issued to all plot holders. I would like to thank all plot holders for their co-operation in speedily returning their signed copies.

Another important administrative aspect of this year's work has been the improvements made to the database by Michelle, Shannon and Peter. Areas were identified where alterations to the database could bring about administrative and management improvements and the team has worked together to incorporate these changes in to the council's allotment database.

In accordance with the council's existing policy, rent continues to be reviewed annually and it was resolved to bring in a modest increase of 40p per rod from September 2019. As chairman of the Allotments Committee I am both pleased and grateful that Harwich Town Council has recognised the need to retain the allotments as one of the council's key priorities. Significant progress has been made in rationalising the council's allotment stock. The underused Willow Way site has been decommissioned and returned to Tendring District Council, and a decision was taken to register the Boatswains Call site with Land Registry in order to prove Harwich Town Council's continued ownership of the site.

At present the council has more than 215 plots and this year, in particular, the council has seen an increase in the number of new tenants. Many plot holders are long-standing tenants and help newcomers when they arrive, as managing a plot is hard work and needs commitment. Should you be interested in obtaining an allotment plot, please contact the office on 01255 507211 where we will be happy to give you details of available plots or record your details on the waiting list. To view the sites please go to [www.harwichtowncouncil.co.uk](http://www.harwichtowncouncil.co.uk) and click on 'Allotments'.

Every day there is something that needs attention which is administered from the office in the Guildhall by our Assistant Clerk, Michelle Townsend, supported by Shannon Lenyk and our Estates Supervisor, Peter Barrenger, who deals with the 'hands on' side of things.

On behalf of the committee and myself, may I thank the staff for overseeing the wide-ranging issues and administrative matters that are necessary to ensure the smooth running of Harwich Town Council's allotments? I also wish to place on record our gratitude to our volunteer Site Representatives for all that they do on a day-to-day basis. They are invaluable and provide a direct liaison between plot holders and the committee. We would be very pleased to hear from any plot holder who might consider taking on this

valuable and interesting role. As Chairman of the Allotments Committee, I would like to thank all the committee members for their commitment to the decision-making process. This enables Harwich Town Council's allotment stock to be successfully managed and for our tenants to continue to have the quiet enjoyment of their allotment.

**Councillor Alan Todd**  
**Chairman of Allotments Committee**

## Environment & Community Committee Report

The members of Harwich Town Council's Environment and Community Committee have worked to ensure positive results were achieved for the town.

The committee formulated a working party to investigate possible enhancements and funding opportunities that would be available to produce a low maintenance area which commemorates the 1953 flood. Suggestions for consideration include a circular mosaic, a listening bench and information boards. Although this project is deferred until later in the year, there have been some minor improvements made to the Flood Memorial Garden.

Harwich Town Council has been liaising with Essex Highways with regard to the increasing number of potholes in the town. The committee were given the opportunity to give photographic examples of some of the town's worst pot holes which were then reported as part of the Local Pothole Repair Scheme. This programme runs in addition to Essex Highways existing asset-led repair approach. The council are pleased with the prompt action which has also led to Church Street and Highfield Avenue being highlighted and placed on the Capital Programme (resurfacing), for consideration.

The committee have highlighted to Tendring District Council the ever-growing number of untidy sites in the parish. The committee will continue to urge the district council to take action with the hope that many sites will be cleared by 2020 in time for the Mayflower celebrations.

The committee agreed to purchase two, 6ft aluminium Tommy silhouettes from the charity Remembered (There but Not There), to commemorate the centenary of World War One. The Tommies were installed in two locations within the parish of Harwich and Dovercourt, one beside the Maritime Museum and one at the Minesweepers Memorial. Unfortunately, adverse weather conditions caused damage to both of the Tommies and at present, alternative locations for the siting of the Tommy silhouettes are still being explored.

The committee have agreed to participate in Essex County Council's Winter Salt Bag Scheme again to support the local community during periods of heavy snow. Essex County Council delivered a one tonne pallet of individual 25kg bags, to be used by members of the community on the local highways/footpaths. However, as this amount would only be able to assist a relatively small area of Harwich and Dovercourt, the committee made the decision for this salt to be utilised by the High-Street traders to ensure that local residents can safely visit the local amenities.

The following projects have been identified by the committee and submitted to the Local Highways Panel:

- Blue Roundabout
- – Work has started to install a sculpture of the Mayflower on the blue roundabout on the approach to Harwich as part of the town's celebrations of the 400th anniversary of the ship's sailing.
- Parkeston Road Zebra Crossing – The validation process is now complete, and a feasibility study has been requested due to a number of potential issues that will need fully investigating.

- Installation of Safety Bollards, East Street – Due to maintenance costs and highway legislation, the Local Highways Panel have turned down the committee's request to install safety bollards between 1 and 1A.
- Low Road Speed Survey – A further speed survey request is being reconsidered by the Local Highway Panel.
- Safety Signs for Allfields Estate – Due for submission to the Local Highways Panel.

The committee wish to express thanks to the Estates Supervisor and volunteers from the Harwich Residents Association and Harwich Secret Gardens who have been regularly monitoring and watering the newly planted trees on Harwich Green.

As well as providing valuable updates to the committee, the Horticultural Advisor has been involved with several council partnership projects with Tendring District Council which have included planting of the flower beds along the seafront and the Green Flag Award for Cliff Park.

The committee is very appreciative of the ongoing efforts of its voluntary Horticultural Advisors, Cheryl Thompson and Chris Greenfield and active members whose positive contribution has greatly benefitted the committee's work.

**Councillor Maria Fowler**  
**Chairman of Environment & Community Committee**

## Finance & General Purposes Committee Report

Harwich Town Council's Finance and General Purposes committee oversees the council's finances and internal processes including the running of the Hill School site and the upkeep of the Guildhall.

For the year 2018-19 its members have been Cllrs B Brown, J Brown, Calver (vice chair), Fowler, J Henderson, Morrison (chair), C Powell (ex officio), F Powell, Todd (ex officio), and Urwin.

One of the prime functions of the committee is to ensure that funding is available for projects undertaken by the council. As a result of this, the council, again, provided Christmas lights both in the town centre and on Harwich Quay. The council funded shuttle busses bring the cruise ship crews into Harwich and Dovercourt to visit the local amenities. The council has also provided the funding to allow the town's public CCTV to be fully monitored in order to support the police. The council maintain its financial input into the partnership which oversees the foot ferry service.

Maintenance of the Guildhall and the Hill School site is an on-going responsibility and the work is presently under way to replace windows in the Guildhall and one of the roofs at the Hill School site.

A high quality digital copy of the 1604 Royal Charter has also been obtained and framed and is now on permanent display in the Guildhall's ground floor stairwell.

The committee is responsible for working in conjunction with the Clerk to the Council to prepare the annual budget for consideration by the council and we were extremely pleased to be able to maintain a £40,000 grant budget to assist and support local clubs, societies and charities. This resulted in grants being awarded to:

- The Harwich Festival of the Arts
- The Grand Theatre of Lemmings
- The Harwich and District Stroke Association
- The Arrival of St Nicholas at Christmas
- The Harwich International Shanty Festival
- The Harwich Quay New Year's Eve Fireworks
- The Dovercourt Bowling Club
- The Pharos Trust (LV18)
- The Dovercourt Theatre Group
- Harwich and Dovercourt Cricket Club
- The Harwich Conservation Panel

In January, the council set its budget for 2019-20. This incorporated the funding required to part fund a PCSO within the newly announced community policing team which is to be based at Harwich police station. It was this decision that required the increase in the precept of 3.6 pence per week for a Band D household as all of the council's other commitments will be funded in the coming year from within a cost neutral budget.

In closing, may I thank the members of the committee for their hard work and support, in particular Councillor Garry Calver who has worked alongside me as vice chair of the committee. It is also a fact that the committee's efforts would have come to nothing without Lucy, Michelle, Shannon and Peter. A tremendous amount of work has gone in behind the scenes to update policies, working practises, introduce GDPR and to ensure that the

council remains compliant in an age when compliancy requirements are ever growing. Garry and I have worked very closely with Lucy and her team on this area of the council's responsibility and we have been incredibly impressed by their expertise, commitment and forward thinking. They take great pride in the service that Harwich Town Council gives to the local community and they have again risen to every challenge.

Last but not least, a big 'thank you' to all of the individuals and organisations who have worked alongside the committee in a variety of ways throughout the year. It has been a very successful year and that success has only been possible because of the support and partnerships that have made such a positive difference.

**Councillor Pam Morrison**  
**Chair of Harwich Town Council's Finance and General Purposes Committee**

## Planning Committee

Harwich Town Council is a statutory consultee on planning applications for the parish of Harwich and Dovercourt.

The committee consists of all 16 elected and co-opted members of the council and it is a convention of Harwich Town Council that the Planning Committee is chaired by the Deputy Mayor.

The committee has considered numerous applications during the year since May 2018, ranging from home improvements such as side, front and rear extensions; tree preservation orders; new dwellings; commercial gains and repairs and redecoration to listed buildings in old Harwich.

The committee has raised no objection to most of the applications it has considered. However, there have been few applications where dwellings located in unsuitable and inappropriate areas with parking concerns have led to debate amongst councillors.

There have been several improvements to the town over the last year;

**McDonalds** – Construction completed in December 2018 and has been a popular eatery and social location for many.

**Card Factory** – A unit in the Gateway Retail Park was developed into Card Factory.

**Mayflower County Primary School** - The provision of a double class base for a temporary period of five years. The erection of a canopy to provide an outdoor play area.

**Custom House Development** – An additional 5 dwellings have been given approval to further develop this site.

The committee strives to keep updated of all developments with the emerging Local Plan and will continue to respond to the consultation to help shape the future planning needs of the parish, in the best interests of the community.

I wish to place on record my sincere thanks to all committee members for their attentive considerations of all applications. I also wish to thank Lucy who has endeavored, as always, to ensure that all relevant information has been available to the committee members, allowing them to deliberate on each application and to reach an informed decision in the best interest of the town.

**Chairman of the Planning Committee**  
**Councillor Alan Todd**

## Clerk's Report

2018-19 has been yet another busy year for the council. I previously reported the sterling work of the council in bringing to fruition, the refurbishment of the much-utilised skatepark in Wick Lane, adjacent to Dovercourt Lifestyles. Over a year on from the build this project has proved most successful in terms of renewed appeal amongst existing users as well as encouraging newer disciplines. Taking feedback from attendees at the official launch event in April 2018, council has committed to earmark funds to enable an annual skatepark festival for the life of the next council, and in conjunction with Tendring District Council, planning is underway for the first annual skatepark festival later this year.

Having essentially completed this project, the council's key priorities for 2018-19 were the Hill School Refurbishment project and Allotments. I'm pleased to report that works are in progress for the Hill School buildings, with appropriate funding earmarked and a great deal of work has been carried out by Michelle, Peter and Shannon in terms of a complete overview of the council-managed allotments. The Hill School Restoration and Allotments will remain as key priorities for 2019-20, along with Mayflower 2020.

In addition to the identified key priorities, council has worked hard to meet the demands of the new General Data Protection Regulations, which were imposed from May 2018. With an ever-growing emphasis on transparency and accountability in local councils, it became necessary to conduct a complete overhaul of our data protection protocols which commenced with an audit, followed by risk assessment, the creation or amendment of policies and procedures and finally implementation. We continue to regularly monitor our processes in all aspects of council administration, from Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, to the requirements of the Transparency Code and the Public Sector Bodies Regulations. I'm really pleased with the work council officers continue to put into ensuring the council remains compliant with all necessary legislation.

In May, Local Elections will be held, and Harwich Town Council will commence a new period of office. There's a lot to organise with a new council and we are working hard to prepare for the potential changes that lie ahead. Following an Electoral Review of Tendring, by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England during 2017, a number of changes are being made at local level, not least the changes to the wards (areas within the parish) which will see Harwich & Dovercourt increase from 4 wards to 5, which have also been renamed to reflect the new areas they each cover. More details on the new warding arrangements can be found on the Harwich Town Council website – just search for 'Elections'.

I'm delighted to report that following the appointment of Shannon Lenyk in October 2017, and her subsequent success in gaining her NVQ Level II in Administration, Shannon has agreed to renew her contract with the council and work towards a Level III Business Administrator Standard. Shannon works 25 hours per week in the council offices at the Guildhall and has become a real asset to an already strong team. Shannon's main duties are providing administrative support to me and Assistant Clerk and has been invaluable when working on the requirements of GDPR.

The Council's ongoing commitment to the personal and professional development of its staff has led to further training opportunities over the past year which has covered several topics such as Minute taking, Social Media, Elections, Health & Safety and Risk Assessments. The Council has also undergone its 3-year Emergency First Aid at work refresher training, which also now includes basic defibrillator training; and because there

are several defibrillators sited within the parish, Council agreed to commit £400 towards the provision of free training sessions for members of the public, which were held in November. The 3 sessions were fully attended with around 50 people in total successfully trained in the use of a defibrillator. Additionally, staff benefitted from a free Stress Management workshop.

In closing, I would once again, like to offer my personal thanks and gratitude to Michelle Townsend, Peter Barrenger and Shannon Lenyk who have worked incredibly hard over this past year to support me in the delivery of the Council's work and without them, none of what we achieve would be possible. I very much look forward to working with them all again over the next year.

**Lucy Ballard**

**Clerk to the Council and Responsible Financial Officer**