

CHAIRMAN'S VIEW

By the time you read this article Spring should be well and truly here and the dark Winter evenings a fading memory. Spring is always a busy time for the Town Council and this year is no exception.

We are still determined in our efforts to purchase Molins Sports Ground in Mill Lane and are working hard to that end. Amongst the other projects that the Town Council are currently pursuing is the restoration of the war memorial under the Market House and the implementation of a trial one-way system in the Town Centre. Indeed, the Town Centre is very much the focus of our attention at present. For some time now the Town Council have been planning a regeneration project for the High Street, Market Square and Duke Street. Therefore, earlier this year we were very pleased to agree joint funding with Wycombe District Council for just such a project under the guidance of the Civic Trust. The key element is the involvement of residents and Town Centre traders to drive the project forward, with help and advice from the Civic Trust who will also facilitate approaches to various funding opportunities. Given the current economic climate this project has taken on a new and important urgency if we are to retain a vibrant and economically viable heart to our community.

Back in January the representatives of the developers who wish to build 700 housing units on land at Park Mill Farm staged an exhibition displaying their plans for the site. Previously, the Town Council (along with many other local groups and individual residents) objected to the original planning application for the development and, so far, have seen nothing new to change our stance. However, we would like feedback as to your current views, so please write to us and let us know what your thoughts are on the matter.

For an up-to-date briefing on these points and all other local issues please make the effort and come to the Annual Town Meeting at 7.00pm on Wednesday 29th April at the Community Centre in Wades Park, (and yes, after last years mix up, the meeting really will start at 7.00pm!)



Alan Turner, Mayor & Chairman
Princes Risborough
Town Council

Annual Town Meeting
29th April
7.00pm

EDITORIAL



First it was snow then ice that made our roads around the Risboroughs impassable. We now face a new menace – potholes! The awful weather saw water repeatedly freezing and thawing in existing cracks in our roads, expanding them and making them worse. Heavy traffic soon broke them up into real hazards. Please report any dangerous potholes to the Highways on Call (t: 0845 230 2882).

On a lighter note, it was great to see children enjoying the snow, with some mums and dads making snowmen and even sledging!

RACA (Risborough Area Community Action) have given the young people of Princes Risborough the use of the back of their notice board in Horns Lane car park to be able to inform them of activities in the town that maybe of interest.

Great News! We have six new single-decker buses for the High Wycombe, Princes Risborough and Aylesbury route. They are very comfortable and much needed!

Let us all look forward, now Spring is here and hopefully the bad weather is behind us. The Spring flowers brighten up the gardens, so smile, it takes less muscles to smile than frown!



Cllrs Pam Summerbell and Pamela Williams

MONEY MATTERS 2009-2010

Last November the full Town Council met to discuss and decide upon the precept for the coming year (2009-2010). For those of you who may not know what the precept is, it is the amount of money the Town Council ask Wycombe District Council (WDC) to add to the annual council tax in order for the Town Council to discharge its responsibilities in maintaining the town for the benefit of the townspeople. Full accounts have to be passed to WDC for scrutiny before it allows the requested amount.

The meeting was a difficult one because councillors were fully aware of the needs to be economical, but also conscious of the high standards expected by the residents in keeping the town clean and tidy. The Council was also aware of the poor quality of children's playground facilities when compared with neighbouring parishes. Last year the total expenditure in running the town was £348148, which we were able to reduce to £283500 by using our income, our underspend from the previous year and a significant proportion of our reserves. For 2009-2010 our total spend is expected to be £355558 – an increase of just 2.1% on last year – but, unfortunately, we no longer have large reserves that we can use to reduce this. The inevitable consequence of this is that we have to ask for a precept of £345000 for 2009-2010, a substantial increase. Let me go through our proposals to explain this situation.

Administration and Human Resources Committee. Total expected expenditure has risen from £62486 in 2008-2009 to £72723 for 2009-2010. Apart from a few cost-of-living or inflation rises, this increase is wholly due to staff costs. There are two components to this. First we have had to employ more staff to cover the upkeep and running of the new burial ground, which is, in effect, a ring-fenced business. Secondly the committee initiated a review of the salaries of our staff, not only related to the population and budget size of equivalent towns, but also related to the increased administrative burden of the burial ground, and found that we were grossly underpaying our clerk and her assistant. The Town Council felt that it would be unacceptable to continue to employ well-qualified staff at sub-normal rates and had no option but to propose significant pay increases.

Memorial Garden Committee. Last year's estimated expenditure for the Burials Committee (as it was then called) was created before the development loan for the memorial garden and burial ground was confirmed. Thus the Town Council had to include items in the budget that would be covered by the loan if and when it was approved. Now that the loan is a reality and much of the work on the site has been completed, a

reduced expenditure can be anticipated with the principal outgoings being associated with general maintenance and the annual repayments (£19220) of the loan.

Consequently the annual budget is reduced from £43200 in 2008-2009 to £32170 in 2009-2010.

Parks Committee. The Parks Committee has had to absorb some cost-of-living rises, such as those related to general maintenance of playground equipment and collection of dog waste, but the main increases arise from the poor standard of children's playground equipment in the town. We have four sets of playground equipment in our parks and all look very jaded and passed their best. Any of you that have taken your children to nearby parishes to play 'on the swings' can only be amazed at the superior quality of equipment available compared with that in our town's open spaces. For the coming year the Town Council propose that a major improvement to the King George V recreation ground (KGV) should take place. As a consequence they have agreed that for KGV £12500 be assigned to improve the skateboard area and that £30000 go towards a new set of children's equipment in the park – this in addition to the £30000 agreed last year making a total of £60000. It's amazing how much you have to spend these days in order to get even a modest improvement to children's play equipment!

Public Relations Committee. The Public Relations budget has been reduced by £350 to £11150. I must emphasise that this is not because the council have decreased the importance of this committee. Rather we continue to believe that regular contact with you, the townspeople, is essential in order to keep you well informed of our actions and their underlying reasoning. We have had to increase our expenditure on the upkeep of our website as it is pointless having a website that is not up-to-date: maintaining currency clearly costs money. However, much of this has been offset by reducing our production and distribution costs of 'Crosstalk'.

Town and Lighting Committee. The Town and Lighting budget has increased from £96700 to £108520, an increase of just over 12%. As has been said many times before, we are one of the few councils within Bucks that have to pay for their own lighting stock. Within the lighting budget, we have stabilised the maintenance and repairs expenditure, but the continuing increase in electricity costs cannot be avoided and we have built in a 15% increase in these costs. Expenditure on the fabric of the town (litterpicking, grass cutting, flower bed maintenance) has been increased in line with inflation. Capital expenditure (£5100) includes restoration of the market house war memorial and the establishment of additional planters. We hope that funding from BCC will allow the establishment of a road crossing on the Longwick Road between Brook Road and Wellington Avenue (we have allotted a £1000 grant to this to demonstrate our support and hope).

Grants and Subscriptions. Grants to worthy causes have decreased by 5.7% to £15185. The principal recipients remain the same - £2155 for those churches with graveyards, the money given is specifically to maintain these areas; £8000 to the Risborough Festival and £3230 for the Community Centre. Subscriptions to various organizations of benefit to the running of the Council increase marginally to £1280. Principal subscription expenditure is to the Bucks Association of Local Councils, which accounts for £1000.

Income and Reserves. Our main income for the coming year is expected to be that earned from the new burial ground and we would hope that this will more than cover the annual repayment of the loan we took out in order to develop the facility. Since the estimates meeting of last November interest rates have tumbled dramatically and this will inevitably mean that our forecast of £5000 from bank interest could be very optimistic even though a fall in interest rates was anticipated in setting this figure. Hiring our sports pitches for formal league fixtures and rents for the market stalls under the market house each bring in over £1000. All these with various small rents and leases, bring our anticipated income for next year to £35379. The National Association of Local Councils recommend that council reserves should constitute an average of 2 months spending. This would mean our reserves should be £57500. However, the Town Council agreed that a lesser sum (£50000) be set aside as reserves for 2009-2010.

Precepts are essentially predictions, based on past experience together with any firm indications of future trends. We cannot, therefore take too many risks in our predictions and then find we have insufficient funds to meet our legal obligations. In the coming year several important invitations to tender are due to go out. These cover major expenditure on grass cutting, litterpicking and the maintenance of our lighting stock. The council have looked very critically at these items and anticipate a significant reduction in costs. However, we cannot reduce our expected expenditure based on hope, but if our anticipation is well-founded, this could well benefit next year's precept.

A more detailed presentation of these figures will be a part of the annual town meeting later in the year (April 29th).

Reg Orsler
Chairman Finance Committee



PLANNING NEWS

The Jack Scruton Award for excellence in architectural planning and building was originated to celebrate the best in new, or renovated, structures in the Wycombe District. It is quite some time since Princes Risborough has featured in the nominations and, apart from the new build of older persons' accommodation at the former Berryfield Road School, it looks as if some time will pass before the next opportunity to nominate will occur.

Perhaps, if there were a category of 'Sites with Planning Permission but No Work in Progress' then we could be in with a chance. Wellington Avenue, Clifford Road and the Aston & Full site in Mill Lane spring to mind, but at least the developers of the last named have indicated that work will start and continue to completion without interruption.

Planning Applications have been fewer in the last quarter, and the decisions from Wycombe have included a larger than usual number of refusals, some for the second or third time of asking.

The properties at Longfield and Elmdon, on Aylesbury Road, together with those at the other end of the A4010, The Old British School and 26/28 Wycombe Road, have all been refused.

Local pubs seem to have provided a great deal of planning interest, each trying to promote alfresco and smoking areas to attract more trade, but finding difficulties with nearby residents who feel disadvantaged by the increase in levels of noise, light and parking to which they have not previously been accustomed.

The Town Council is sympathetic to those residents who register complaints, but it must be stressed that its powers are quite limited and it is only a consultee in matters of planning and licensing.

Ben Benifer

Chairman of Planning



wonderful site. However, they have had to grapple with a



number of major problems in order to make it possible for the bereaved to bury their loved ones close to home. We remain extremely grateful to the donor who has made all this possible.

My initial interest in this project arose from a very personal experience and I owe my involvement, since 1997, to a challenge from the late David Allworth, who was Chairman of the Council at that time, and I would like to record my thanks to his family for the privilege it has been for me to be part of this project.

However over the last 15 months I have been developing new interests in my life, to add to those I already have, and intend now to step back. I look forward to consigning a vast amount of paperwork from various areas of my home to the loft once I have completed a record of the tortuous efforts of so many people who participated in the achievement of this lovely facility. I

sincerely hope that others who follow will share the vision
Maggie Wooster



MEMORIAL COMMITTEE UPDATE

I am pleased to advise you that the Memorial Garden is finally up and running. The long-awaited turf was laid late last year, and immediately transformed the visual aspects of the site. Much of the development is completed and the resolution of the remaining issues are being dealt with by the Council.

We are delighted that Sure Care will be maintaining the lawns and that we also have a gardener to look after the gardens. The office staff who will deal with all enquiries are responsible for the day to day running of the facility.

The Town Council spent many years from the late 80s searching for a new burial site before being offered this

HUMAN RESOURCES & ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

The office continues to be busy and with the ever increasing demands of new legislation, as well as those of the external auditors, the staff really do earn their keep. The administration of the new memorial garden has also now been added to staff duties. Another one of the jobs the office team are tasked with is to locate and apply for potential grant funding towards the costs of Town Council

projects. Recently we were successful with one such application and have obtained funding for 50% of the cost of restoring the war memorial under the Market House. As always, we are very conscious of the fact that we are spending residents' money and wherever possible we do try to identify alternative funding opportunities in order to lessen the burden on your pocket whilst providing a quality service to the Town.

Alan Turner

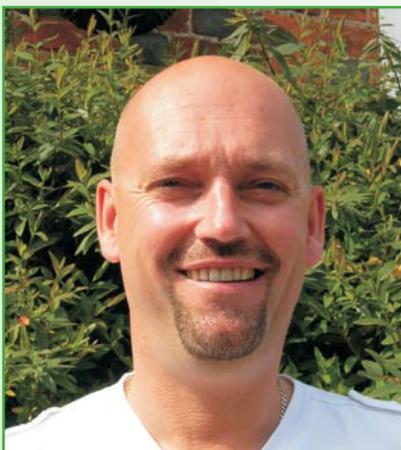
Chairman HR & Admin Committee

TOWN AND LIGHTING UPDATE

All the lighting columns in the town are now numbered. It is important that you continue to report all faulty lights to us. If you can give us the location and/or the number printed on the pole it will help our contractor to identify exactly which lamp is faulty and speed up repairs.

We have ordered six smart, new, square, free-standing

planters to decorate the town centre with colour all year round. If you have visited Aylesbury recently, they are the same style as those in its town centre. These will replace the broken brick-built planters in Duke Street as well as brighten up other locations. Please keep a careful eye on these and make sure any vandals caught damaging the plants are brought to swift justice, I



think we have all had enough of these mindless people ruining the environment for the rest of us. CCTV continues to perform well. Monitoring officers in High Wycombe recently spotted some youngsters painting make-up over the Market House. PCSOs and Police were promptly alerted and the minors involved were forced to clean it off with their clothes. If they hadn't been caught, you, the taxpayer would have footed the bill for a contractor to turn out and clean it up. More of this kind of restorative action please, Thames Valley Police.

Gary Hall

Chairman of Town & Lighting

PARKS UPDATE

My entry for this months edition of 'Crosstalk' is along slightly different lines from the usual banter, as I have a short story to share with you all.

On a lovely, cold, but crisp, dry day, several weeks ago, I was walking with my dog, Lil, through Wades Park, as we do once or twice a week on our 'park patrol' duties. The main purpose of this is to inspect our parks for any vandalism or other aspect of maintenance/landscape matters that need to be dealt with. There, in the park, sat two young mothers, whose toddler children were playing happily on the grass. I thought how lovely it was to see young families such as this, enjoying our lovely local parks. As I approached the seat where the young ladies were sitting, I heard one of the mothers say 'Oh no!!' as her little girl (probably aged about two and a half) picked up handfuls of dogs excrement, which covered both of her hands, and her coat as she approached her mother. Her mother was almost in tears as all she had on her to clean her child up were tissues and, therefore, all she could do under the circumstances was push her home in her pushchair, hoping to goodness that the little girl did not spread the mess or touch her mouth or eyes on the journey home.

This, sadly, is the sorry state our parks have reached thanks to the irresponsible and filthy habits of a minority of our dog owners within Princes Risborough.

Every Saturday, the young football players practice in the same park and it has become routine before play for the managers to go around the pitch picking up dog excrement before play can commence. It is an irresponsible and filthy habit not to pick up your dog's excrement. If the current level of dog excrement continues in our parks, the very sad day may arrive when we, as a responsible council will have to ban dogs from our parks in order to protect the people and, particularly, the children that use them for play.

On a lighter note, our Chairman of Finance has already informed you that we intend to install some new play equipment in the King George playing fields in the very near future, and ready for the summer.



Eunice Clifford, Chairman of Parks

A NEW MAYORS CHAIN



The car boot sale that is run by the Town Council raised enough capital to purchase a new chain of office for our town "Fit for a Prince".

As this is money raised outside of the precept, there is no cost involved to you, the tax payer!

The Town Council felt that the Mayor of our town should suitably represent us in a fitting way that other mayors from surrounding towns do.

YOUTH TOWN COUNCIL (YTC)

One of the results from a recent survey carried out by the YTC was that the younger members of the community requested the use of a notice board within the town to let them know what events were being arranged for their benefit. As a result, RACA have kindly given permission for the YTC to use the notice board located in the Horns Lane public car park (next to M&S). All future events for young people will be posted on this notice board, listing what's on in and around the area.

Whilst on the subject of the YTC, if any of you young people are interested in becoming a member of the YTC, please get in touch with our Clerk, Mrs Sue Griffiths, at the Council Offices, Horns Lane (opposite M&S).

Cllr E Clifford & Cllr P Summerbell

NEW RACA EVENTS FOR 2009

Building on the success of their Visitor Project and last year's sell-out of the inaugural Walking Festival Weekend, Risborough Area Community Action (RACA) have been listening to what else people would like to see take place and even more events are being planned for 2009.

Local volunteers are taking the lead in preparing the second

accompanied Walking Festival on Saturday and Sunday, 13 and 14 June and for a Commemorative Kop Hill Climb on Saturday and Sunday 26 and 27 September. More than 500 walkers took part in last year's highly popular Walking Festival Weekend in a series of walks centred on Princes Risborough that were suitable for young and old, novices and striders! Up to 250 entrants are expected for the Kop Hill Climb, which will provide spectacular views for on-lookers and revive the magic of the 1920s original event.

RACA is also planning to hold a Cycling Celebration in the autumn along similar lines to the walking weekend, but need local cycling volunteers to help plan and organise the event.

If you would like further information, please contact John Hughes at jgh@jghughes1.f9.co.uk or leave your name and contact details at the Information Centre in Horns Lane when the leaders of the events will be in touch with you.

2009 Princes Risborough Walking Festival - Experience the Chilterns

Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th June 2009

Two full days of guided walks, starting and finishing in the town centre.

Walks for families, wildlife enthusiasts, local historians or serious ramblers.

Short walks, easy stile-free walks, morning or afternoon walks, all day walks.

For more information contact Princes Risborough Information Centre **01844 274795** or email risborough_office@wycombe.gov.uk

THANK YOU AND GOOD LUCK!



On October 10th 1966 twins Sylvia and Jean, then aged 19, took the decision to start off in business together in hairdressing. Little did they realise then, the impact that they would have on so many people's lives!

Their dedication to so many led not only to having many customers, but also many friends.

Now they have decided to retire after 42 years. Their shop closed on 31st January 2009. In their own words those 42 years have been a happy and eventful time!

Princes Risborough Town Council and the many people in and around the area, thank you both for the excellent way that you have conducted your business over the years and wish you both the happiest of retirement.

RISBOROUGH RUGBY CLUB UPDATE



Risborough Rugby Club have taken some significant steps forward in the last few months, none of them bigger than recently, with 200 people watching the clubs first home game at Princes Risborough Secondary School. Please keep up to date with fixtures news in the Whiteleaf Cross Public House or the Red Lion at Whiteleaf

We still require a floodlit area for training. If anyone has any information could they please contact Andy Emmet on **07977455414**, likewise if you are interested in playing or coaching with the club. Training is at 7.30pm on a Wednesday in Longwick village Scout Hall. All prospective rugby players aged 17+ welcome.

OBITUARY- DAVID ALLWORTH

After a long and difficult illness, David Allworth passed away last December. David was a former member and past

chairman of the Town Council, but was probably best known as 'Bookie', Princes Risborough's local bobby. Dave was a man of great character, strong convictions and huge stature. He was a Policeman through and through, and even when retired he always retained the aura of a traditional copper.



As our local copper he lived and worked in the town and was always on duty. His police van was a familiar site patrolling the town at all hours. As a strict authoritarian type he kept good order, he knew who to keep an eye on, and everyone, even the local villains, respected him.

Dave had a great love for Risborough and wanted to give something back, so after his retirement he joined this council and spent many years in public service as a councillor. He did not suffer fools gladly, and was very intolerant towards individuals and organisations that were perceived to be working against what was best for Risborough. In such cases he did not refrain from telling these people exactly what he thought of their ideas and schemes if they weren't up to scratch.

He was devoted to Risborough and championed many things during his time including the restoration of Whiteleaf Cross, helping to raise the funds to carry out this work.

A generous and fair man, he was also well known for his charitable work, for which he never sought any glory.

In recognition of his hard work and long-standing devotion to the town he was awarded our highest honour last year- the annual Citizenship Award. He accepted this humbly and with great pride. He was highly regarded and loved by all of us who knew him, and sadly last year Princes Risborough lost one of its greatest.

Our thoughts and sympathy go out to David's family.

DOUBLE SUCCESS FOR ST MARY'S PRE-SCHOOL

The staff and parents of pupils at St Mary's Pre-school are celebrating after receiving official recognition for the second time of the school's exceptional childcare facilities and outstanding commitment by staff.



Fiona Brooks, the supervisor of St Mary's Pre-school based in St Mary's Church Hall, attended a special presentation evening run by Buckinghamshire County Council to receive a certificate of achievement for excellent, high quality, childcare services and inclusive practices. The event was run to honour the hard work and dedication of child carers from a wide range of services across the County, including child minders, pre-school workers, school nurseries and day nurseries. The pre-school has now added to its success with an

'outstanding' assessment from OFSTED. The judgement categories were for the overall effectiveness in meeting the needs of children, leadership & management and the quality & standards of the provision.

PRINCES RISBOROUGH SCHOOL

In June 2009 we will be introducing "Vertical Tutoring" during tutor time (20 minutes, first thing each morning). This is an initiative whereby all students work together in mentoring sessions and not just in year groups.

As another way of continuing to improve our excellent links with the community, we would like to issue a call for local volunteers to join us and take part in this Vertical Tutoring scheme. Each mentoring group will be led by a teacher and one "Link Tutor". Would you like to become a Link Tutor and use your life experience for the benefit of your local school? Have you ever wondered what goes on in education today and what it's like to inspire young people? Staff are very friendly and it's a warm and welcoming school. This is a very rewarding project to participate in. It will take up only a small part of your day, but will bring you a great deal of satisfaction. Appropriate training will be given and you will never be expected to work alone with students.

If you are interested please contact Mrs Wendie Johnson at PRS by telephoning 01844 345496 or email wjohnson@princesrisborough.bucks.sch.uk. All successful applicants will be subject to a CRB check as is routine for any adult working with children. We look forward to hearing from you.

How and Who to Contact

Princes Risborough Town Council, 1, Tower Court, Horns Lane, Princes Risborough, Bucks, HP27 0AJ,
(01844) 275912 or e-mail prtowncouncil@btinternet.com

Mayor & Chairman of the Council:	Cllr. Alan Turner
Deputy Chairman & Chairman of Finance Cttee:	Cllr. Reg Orsler
Chairman of Admin & HR:	Cllr. A Turner
Chairman of Memorial Garden Management Cttee:	Vacant
Chairman of Parks Cttee:	Cllr. Eunice Clifford
Chairman of Planning Cttee:	Cllr. Ben Benifer
Chairman of Public Relations Cttee:	Cllr. John Coombs
Chairman of Town and Lighting Cttee:	Cllr. Gary Hall

Councillors

Cllr. Bill Bendyshe-Brown	Cllr. Carl Etholen	Cllr. Will Streule
Cllr. Pam Summerbell	Cllr. Pamela Williams	Cllr. Wally Woolf

Clerk to the Council:	Mrs. Sue Griffiths
Assistant to the Clerk:	Mrs. Kirsty Pope
Clerical Assistants:	Mrs Janice Meade and Miss Nikki Bedwin

Office Opening hours: Tuesday. 10.00am – 3.00pm Thursday. 10.00am – 3.00pm Saturday. 10.00am – 12.00pm

Please visit our website; www.princesrisborough.com

The full Town Council meets at 7.15pm on the last Tuesday of each month at The Chapter House, St Mary's Church. There is a 10-minute slot at the beginning of each meeting when the public can express a view or concern relating to town matters. Please check the website to confirm time and venue. The next meetings are:

Tuesday March 31st

Tuesday April 28th

Tuesday May 26th

The Town Council aims to be as accessible as possible, and welcomes the views, comments and concerns of the Princes Risborough electorate. Although the views of the whole Council are given wherever possible, for constitutional and legal reasons we must state that the views expressed here in Crosstalk, and in any personal correspondence received from individual Councillors, are those of the author concerned and do not necessarily express the opinions or policy of PRTC unless explicitly stated.