



# **FOWEY TOWN COUNCIL**

## **ANNUAL REPORT 2014/2015**

Welcome again to the Annual Report, which has been produced by your Town Council to try to keep you informed about the work of the Council and of any significant issues affecting Fowey. This Report has been distributed to all households in the parish via the Fowey News and is also available on the Fowey Town Council website [www.foweytowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.foweytowncouncil.gov.uk) or via email by request to me, the Town Clerk, at [sallyvincent957@btinternet.com](mailto:sallyvincent957@btinternet.com). Any appropriate feedback is welcomed, particularly suggestions for additional items for inclusion in the next Report.

**Sally Vincent, Town Clerk**

### **YOUR COUNCILLORS 2014/2015**

**Cllr Mrs Katherine Alexander**

**Lankelly House, Lankelly Lane, PL23 1HN**

**01726 833839**

Katherine has been a member of the Environment Committee and the Planning Committee and she is also one of our Neighbourhood Plan representatives. Katherine will continue as a Councillor during 2015/2016.

Katherine can be contacted at [alexander.katherine@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:alexander.katherine@yahoo.co.uk)

**Cllr John Berryman**

**4, Lanwithian Road, Lostwithiel, PL22 0ES**

**01208 872253**

John is the Mayor of Fowey and has just completed his fifth term of office. He moved to Lostwithiel in early 2014 but still maintains an active role at Penhale Farm. John is a member of the Finance Committee and the Environment Committee but, as Mayor, he is also an *ex officio* member of all the Town Council committees. He will continue as a Councillor and as Deputy Mayor of Fowey during 2015/2016

John can be contacted at [john@penhale-fowey.co.uk](mailto:john@penhale-fowey.co.uk)

**Cllr Mrs Anne Boosey** **01726 833793**  
**26, Polvillion Road, PL23 1HF**

Anne is the Chairman of the Planning Committee and as a member of the Finance Committee. She will continue as a Councillor during 2015/2016.

Anne can be contacted at [anneboosey@btinternet.com](mailto:anneboosey@btinternet.com) .

**Cllr Tony Delves** **01726 833715**  
**74, Hillhay Close, PL23 1EN**

Tony is a member of the Planning Committee and the Finance Committee. He will continue as a Councillor during 2015/2016.

Tony can be contacted at [ac.delves@btinternet.com](mailto:ac.delves@btinternet.com)

**Cllr Mrs Carol Eardley** **01726 833164**  
**21, Pentreath Close, PL23 1EP**

Carol is a member of the Environment Committee and the Chairman of the Town Hall Committee. She will continue as a Councillor during 2015/2016.

Carol can be contacted at [carol.eardley@btinternet.com](mailto:carol.eardley@btinternet.com)

**Cllr Mrs Ruth Finlay** **01726 832762**  
**47, Vicarage Meadow, PL23 1EA**

Ruth has served as the Deputy Mayor during 2014/2015 and is the Chairman of the Environment Committee and a member of the Planning Committee. She will continue as a Councillor during 2015/2016 in her new role as Mayor of Fowey.

Ruth can be contacted at [ruthfinlay@live.co.uk](mailto:ruthfinlay@live.co.uk)

**Cllr Mrs Sherlee Gudmunsen** **01726 834847**  
**Place Lodge, Passage Lane, PL23 1JS**

Sherlee will continue as a Councillor during 2015/2016.

Sherlee can be contacted at [sherleegud@gmail.com](mailto:sherleegud@gmail.com)

**Cllr David Hughes** **01726 812982**  
**Fiddlers Green, Castledore Road Tywardreath, PL24 2TR**

David is the Cornwall Councillor for Fowey and Tywardreath and will continue as a Fowey Town Councillor during 2015/2016.

David can be contacted at [d.hughes@cornwall.gov.uk](mailto:d.hughes@cornwall.gov.uk)

**Cllr David Willmore** **01726 834811**  
**4, South Street, PL23 1AR**

David is a member of the Planning Committee, the Town Hall Committee and is the Chairman of the Finance Committee. He will continue as a Councillor during 2015/2016.

David can be contacted at [d@willmore.eclipse.co.uk](mailto:d@willmore.eclipse.co.uk)

**Cllr Mrs Lesley McCartney**  
**51, Tavern Barn, PL23 1EG**

**01726 834473**

Lesley joined the council during the year and is a member of the Town Hall Committee. Lesley will continue as a Councillor during 2015/2016 when she will also take up a new role as a member of the Planning Committee.

Lesley can be contacted at [lesleymccartney@btinternet.com](mailto:lesleymccartney@btinternet.com)

### **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COUNCIL 2014/2015**

I would like to open this report by stating that it has been a pleasure and privilege to lead this Council for the last 12 months, I admit however at times it has been hard work but still rewarding when you see the Council's plans coming to a satisfactory conclusion and at times very frustrating as it seems to take so long to get completion.

My thanks go to all the committee chairs for their hard work during the year and to all the Cllrs. Special thanks to the few members of the public who have attended some of our full council meetings and sat through to the bitter end. We welcomed Lesley McCartney as a new a co-opted Cllr in July, and we hope you are enjoying your 1<sup>st</sup> year, Lesley.

Our special thanks to Cllr Hughes for his representation of Fowey at Unitary level.

Special thanks also to our Clerk, Sally for the many hours she devotes to the work and to the smooth running of the Council.

Two transfers from CC to FTC have dominated this year, and previous years, they are Squires Field and the public Toilets both have yet to be completed, hence my comment on the frustration as to the time taken to transfer. Anyone would anticipate with all the property transfers undertaken by CC that the process would by now be second nature and very straight forward, but I guess every application must be considered individually.

As I stated last year Squires Field poses a major problem as a considerable annual cost will be incurred, maintenance of the field, pavilion and the newly equipped play area, also the surface of the parking area, insurance and rates, total annual cost in the region of £8-10,000 would not seem excessive. The asset at the moment has no earning capability.

Finally I come to the problem of the continued provision of the public conveniences in Fowey. I believe it was over 2 years ago we were offered and in principle accepted the freehold of 3 toilet blocks, Readymoney, Main and Caffa car parks. Caffa Mill has been completely refurbished but still closed, Readymoney has had last years' storm damage repaired and is open, Main Car Park is open and awaiting refurbishment, when that will happen is anyone's guess as we have no capital budget to cover the cost. As you are all fully aware the toilets on Town Quay are at the moment undergoing refitting and hopefully be re-opened in early May. On completion of the transfer we will be opening Caffa Mill toilets. Our soon to be adopted ship HMS Montrose is undergoing a complete refit at Devonport at present. I will obtain the latest news on Thursday as the Mayoress and I are guests of the ships officers and will be given a short tour of the dockyard and HMS Argyll.

**John Berryman, Mayor of Fowey**

### **REPORT OF THE TOWN HALL COMMITTEE 2014/2015**

I would like to thank my fellow Councillors, Sherlee Gudmunsen, Lesley McCartney and David Willmore, for their help and support and also our excellent Caretaker, Caroline Lewis,

who achieves small miracles at times! Improvements and repairs continue one of which, the repair to the area around the window on the external, eastern elevation was recently completed to a high standard leaving it looking considerably better than before. The kitchen has a new microwave, cups & saucers, cutlery and glasses and we have further plans to renew other furnishings but this needs to be done gradually taking into account time and costs. We have had another successful year of bookings which help to balance the books nicely, to the relief of the Finance Committee. These have come from Craft Fairs, rehearsals and performances by the Troy Players, Fowey Festival of Words and Music and private parties including a recent wedding. Believe it or not, the Hall can be made to look very attractive with some strategically placed flowers, ribbons and pretty lights. Bookings of the Town Hall can now be viewed and made through the recently re-launched Fowey Town Council website. The Town Hall Committee is very aware of its responsibility of the upkeep of this very special, historic building and will endeavour to continue with this over the next twelve months.

**Carol Eardley, Chairman Town Hall Committee**

#### **REPORT OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE 2014/2015**

Fowey Town council finances are in a strong position; the precept was raised to allow us to cover the cost of taking over Squires Field, the refurbishment of the Toilets and associated legal fees that go with all of that, we have had to take legal advice on a few occasions which has had to be paid for.

We hope that the Town Quay toilets will be completed by 8<sup>th</sup> May and the Caffa Mill toilets will have had all legal work done for them to be handed over to the Town Council, a lot of time has been spent going over costing and quotes to make sure we get value for your money and the job comes in on budget.

£10,000 has been put in to the 'sinking fund' to be used in any unforeseen circumstances to maintain the Town Quay and the Town Hall. Each year we look at all the leases, permits and licenses etc. and make adjustments where needed.

The Town Council now runs an accounting programme, called Scribe which is available to all of the committees to see at their meetings via our laptop, and I thank our Town Clerk and Cllr Tony Delves for all their hard work in inputting all the figures and making it work.

All of the committees have worked very hard to keep to their budgets, which they have done; As usual the annual accounts are available for the public to see.

I would like to thank all the members for their hard work over the last year.

**David Willmore, Chairman Finance Committee**

#### **REPORT OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE 2014/2015**

We have had a fewer number of planning applications this year, but some very interesting ones which have caused us to ponder deeply and think about reasons for approval or refusal, and having made our decision, with reasons, I think in most cases Cornwall Planning department have largely agreed with us; although at times we are still baffled, confused and, let's face it, cross with them!

I consider myself fortunate in having such a dedicated committee, most of them can understand the plans on line, which totally baffle me, in that they are small and impersonal, and I thank them for explaining some of the finer points that I miss. The comments are

always pertinent and helpful and there are some lively discussions. I am sure that you are aware that the public are more than welcome at our meetings, and then you could stay seated and listen to the full Council meetings.

The new phases of Hill Hay are going up very fast now, I hope that time will prove me wrong about sewage schemes etc., but I am still not happy about it all.

There is really not much more to say, planning is planning, but the helpfulness of my committee has certainly made my role easier and I thank them.

**Anne Boosey, Chairman Planning Committee**

### **REPORT OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE 2014/2015**

It has been another successful year with the work of the Environment Committee and I would like to thank my fellow members for their commitment and hard work over the year.

There are four different aspects to this committee

**1. The Local Maintenance Partnership** which is a partnership between the Fowey Town Council and funding from Cornwall Council, specifically for public footpaths.

**Fourteen Gold Public Rights of Way** in the Parish have a total grant of £626 to be cut once in the year. We have to wait until nesting birds have fledged before we can allow our contractor to cut. This usually generates a number of cross phone calls and emails and this is the reason why there is a wait.

**Grass cutting around the Town** is part paid through an Agency Agreement, CC pay for four cuts per year and Fowey Town Council pay for five cuts. So the Town grassed areas, designated to be cut, are cut nine times per year at a total cost of £2,600.17.

**Weed killing**, CC do not pay for any weed killing around the Town, again Fowey Town Council weed spray twice a year at a cost of £1,410.00

The committee would like to thank our contractor Lanhydrock Garden Services who has worked hard for the Town over the past year.

**2. Old Grammar School Garden** this popular and well-loved garden had been left for a number of years with no change to the planting or any improvement to the layout. Last year Fowey Town Council made the decision to improve this garden.

May 2014 saw phase 1 of the redesign of the lower garden using local garden designer Ali Siddall. This first phase saw change to the pathways, to create a more meandering walk through the new beds planted with decorative grasses and seaside planting. Indeed the new garden was the focus of an article in the magazine Cornwall Today.

Phase 2 of the redesign will begin in May, which will see some of the new seating and beds created.

**3. Fowey In Bloom** One of the aims of the Environment Committee is to keep regular contact with the Fowey in Bloom group to support their activities and to monitor Fowey TC's grant of £500 to them.

This group took part in Cornwall in Bloom 2014 with 72 entries of which the Town Centre displays were judged "excellent". This very small group of volunteers help create a colourful and cared for town from spring through to the autumn which our visitors and locals appreciate. This small group need more volunteers and help from businesses with things like watering during the summer and on behalf of the Environment Committee we thank them for the work they do.

**4. Allotments** the One Acre field was handed over in December 2013 and work did not begin, due to the poor weather, not until March 2014. Between March and April last year there were a number of working parties to clear the field of brambles, gorse, trees and eventually to create the plots. The first season was very good considering how late everyone was in starting to dig their plots.

Sadly we lost our chairman of the Readymoney Association, George Cussons earlier this year. He was a very “hands on “chair, encouraging the new allotmentees and turned up to all the working parties. He will be sadly missed.

**Orchard** we decided to plant a small orchard of 15 Cornish Apples on the scrub ground to the side of the new allotments and with a grant from Councillor Hughes’s local contingency fund, work began in early January this year. Once again a group of a hardy allotmentees braved the January weather to dig and then plant the apple saplings; I am pleased to say they have all taken.

**Ruth Finlay, Chairman Environment Committee**

#### **REPORT OF THE CORNWALL COUNCILLOR 2014/2015**

Most people are aware that, over the six years since the formation of Cornwall Council, Central Government finance to the Council, initially over half the £ 1 billion per annum required to provide services, such as education, children, adult social care and roads, has been reduced by 50%.

The conversion from District and County Councils to a Unitary Authority has achieved over £190 million of savings by cutting out duplication and stream-lining the system. Further savings have been achieved by moving staff out of expensive leased properties and Council properties with very high maintenance costs into fewer, Council-owned properties. This was the rationale for building the new offices in Bodmin, which are expected to recover their cost, in savings, within 5 years, with further on-going savings.

Over the past two years, further large savings have been made both by reducing the number of costly “interim” and “agency” staff employed and by a major, top-down restructuring exercise. The new Chief Executive is on a significantly lower salary than his predecessor: the number of Directors has been halved, from 6 to 3: comparable changes have been made down through the organisation.

Whilst the savings achieved have been significant, unfortunately this has resulted in hundreds of redundancies. Since the workload has not diminished, it has also meant that council officers have to shoulder even bigger workloads. It is to the enormous credit of these officers that, under such pressures, they have continued to provide a high level of service in a professional manner.

However, whatever Westminster politicians may say, there is a limit to the savings which can be achieved without loss of front-line services. We have now reached a situation in which Cornwall Council has to consider which non-statutory services to cut, reduce or devolve to Town and Parish Councils in order to produce a “balanced budget”, which it is obliged by law to do. Cornwall has opted to prepare a 4-year budget, based on reasonable expectations of revenue and expenditure, in order to provide the best possible continuity of services, at the lowest cost, over this time-scale. Whilst, this is unpalatable both to the public and Councillors, we consider it to be the most responsible approach, as we see no realistic prospect of an improvement in the situation in this period.

An inevitable consequence of this policy has been the “devolution” of responsibility for such things as public toilets, allotments and weeding to towns and parishes, which has resulted in increased costs to them, which they have had to cover through increased parish council tax. Personally, I consider this to be a “stealth tax” by local government as they take the credit for reducing their Departmental expenditure by passing the cost, and blame, down the line. Towns and parishes have little opportunity to resist as the public; quite reasonably, have come to consider such services “essential” even if the law does not define them as such. I am confident that the present Cornwall Council, its Cabinet and officers are doing their utmost to salvage the best from the wreckage of our Local Government, in spite of all the efforts of doctrinaire elements in Central Government. Fowey Town Council, its Clerk and officers and I accepted the realities of the situation early on and have worked hard to obtain the best possible outcomes for Fowey, especially the transfer of allotments, Squire’s Field and the toilets to FTC in order to preserve them for the community. I would add particular praise for the Clerk, whose efforts to resolve the many and complex problems which have arisen have been well beyond the call of duty. The allotments are now ours and the transfer of the other assets is “nearly there”. However, as a result of the cuts and restructuring in County Hall, the bureaucratic system is moving unbearably slowly, to the frustration of all. On a local note, I would like to propose a special vote of thanks to Martin Eddy, until last month our Area Network Manager, who has taken early retirement. In all his duties he always gave much more than was required, but in the case of Fowey, his contribution to ensuring the smooth transfer of the Du Maurier Festival from being highly dependent on local authority subsidies to its successful independent existence was immense. Apart from putting in many more hours than he was paid for, his “behind the scenes” work in easing the project through the “system” probably went un-noticed by all but a dedicated few. I am sorry if this report seems a little negative, but I think that it is important that the people of Fowey realise the harsh realities of the situation within which we operate. I am proud to represent Fowey on Cornwall Council and promise that I will always seek the best outcomes for our community in these testing times.

**David Hughes, Cornwall Councillor for Fowey & Tywardreath**

**AND FINALLY**

Remember that meetings of the town council are held in the Town Hall and are advertised on our notice board and on our website [www.foweytowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.foweytowncouncil.gov.uk). Minutes are also published on the website as soon as is practicable after meetings. At every meeting there is an agenda item for public participation and this is actively encouraged. Please support your councillors by letting them know what you think about any aspect of life in Fowey – your input is crucial if they are to make the right decisions for the town. Alternatively, I can be contacted by telephone on 01208 871159, by post at Colcerrow Farm, Par, PL24 2RZ or by email at [sallyvincent957@btinternet.com](mailto:sallyvincent957@btinternet.com).

**Sally Vincent, Town Clerk**

