



ANNUAL REPORT 2008 / 2009

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FOREWORD BY THE MAYOR FOR 2008/09 CLLR. H. MORGAN



During my year as your Mayor, Virginia and I have attended about 55 functions, our invitations have been very diverse,

Whilst attending this many functions we have met many interesting and dedicated people, members of organisations whose work much of the time is only appreciated by the people they help and is generally unnoticed by the general public. Some of the events like the presentations of degrees at the Abbey of St Albans and the Chairman's Garden Party at County Hall have been grand affairs whilst the presentation of flowers to three of our centenarians and visits to St Christopher's Nursing Home and the Breathe Easy Club have been moving, yet happy occasions.

The Charities that I have chosen for my year are the Isabel Hospice, MacMillan Cancer Support and The Willow Foundation.

ABOUT THIS REPORT....

This Annual Report aims to explain the background to the legislation and the history, duties and powers of the Town Council and what it has done in the last year.

This report covers the period 01 April 2008 – 31 March 2009

CONSULTATION & FEEDBACK

We want to know your views on the contents of this Report, and receive your comments, queries and complaints regarding the services provided by the Town Council.

Up to date information on all Town Council activities can be found on the website www.hatfield-herts.gov.uk

Members of the public are also invited to attend every Council meeting to ask questions, make comments and raise matters of local interest.

Please send any comments to:

Ms. Carrie Lloyd
Town Clerk
Hatfield Town Council
Birchwood Leisure Centre
Longmead, Hatfield, Herts. AL10 0AN

Telephone: 01707 262023

e-mail: enquiries@hatfield-herts.gov.uk

DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNCIL, ITS MEMBERSHIP AND ESTABLISHMENT

Hatfield Town Council comprises 15 elected Councillors who each serve for a term of 4 years. The next Town Council elections are due in May 2011. The Councillors annually elect one of their number to be the Town Mayor who chairs Council Meetings. Town Councillors do not receive any payments or allowances with the exception of the Town Mayor who receives a small allowance. Members of the Council as at 5 June 2009 are listed on page 8.

Most of the business of the Council has been delegated to 3 main Committees. The Resources and Policy and Leisure Committees meet 6 times a year and the Planning Committee meets 13 times a year.

Copies of the Agendas for all meetings are available for inspection 3 days beforehand at the Council Offices and of Full Council at the Council Offices and Hatfield Library. Members of the public are welcome to ask questions about matters being considered at all meetings. Advance notice is required and details of how to do this are available from the Council Offices.

The Council employs a team of 26 contracted staff, headed by the Town Clerk, who is Ms. Carrie Lloyd, to implement its policies. A further 67 casual staff have also been employed over the last year mainly as holiday playscheme staff.

The Town Council serves the parish of Hatfield, which has a population of 34,000 (Hertfordshire County Council estimate for 2007). Hatfield is also served by two principal Councils - Hertfordshire County Council, which is responsible for education, social services, highways, strategic planning and libraries and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council which also covers Welwyn Garden City, Welwyn, Welham Green, Brookmans Park, Essendon, Northaw, Cuffley, Woolmer Green and other surrounding villages and which is responsible for housing, local plans and development control, environmental health, refuse collection and major recreational facilities.

OUR MAIN PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

Our unique purpose is to offer a range of very local services that meet the need of our communities, many of which would not otherwise be provided.

More specifically we will offer our residents:

- A main sports and leisure centre offering a wide range of indoor and outdoor sporting options, as well as a holiday playscheme, all at competitive prices meeting local needs.
- Other venues, situated within the heart of our communities, two of which are highly valued village based centres, providing local people and local groups with a choice of easily accessible activities, including outdoor and indoor sports, playgroups, play areas, and hosting a variety of local clubs requiring meeting and other social event space.
- Well maintained and well occupied allotment spaces.
- Well maintained community parks and open spaces.

In addition to these specific services, we seek to promote the broader interests of the community. The Council will achieve these objectives by

- Consulting the community generally and service users specifically on services provided, and by demonstrably responding to findings.
- Engaging the Community on the big issues facing Hatfield and playing a key advocacy role on their behalf.
- Working in partnership with a wide range of local organisations to ensure an improving standard of services to meet the needs of residents and others. Our relationship with the University of Hertfordshire, and other public bodies are critical to that success.

BUSINESS PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The Council's business planning process and performance management has until now been centred around its budget process and financial performance. In the budget cycle the Leisure and Resources and Policy Committees consider their strategies for the following financial year, review performance for the current year to date and set appropriate budgets.

Once the policies and budgets are approved, the Officers are instructed to ensure that income, expenditure and financial performance are closely monitored.

TOWN COUNCIL SERVICES

The Town Council's Final Accounts for 2008/09 will be considered by Council on 8 July 2009. A comparison to 2007/08 is set out below.

2007/08		2008/09
£		£
90,011	DEMOCRATIC REPRESENTATION & MANAGEMENT	91,811
143,755	CORPORATE MANAGEMENT	142,201
27,010	COMMUNITY EVENTS & ACTIVITIES	28,965
31,695	SECTION 137 EXPENDITURE	35,215
7,077	ALLOTMENTS	9,821
227,632	BIRCHWOOD CENTRE & PLAYING FIELD	145,868
16,334	LEMSFORD HALL & PLAYING FIELD	25,273
17,530	NEWGATE STREET VILLAGE HALL & PLAYING FIELD	19,433
235	OXLEASE HOUSE & GROUNDS	-678
87,644	COMMUNITY PARKS & OPEN SPACES	85,394
33,854	ROE HILL HALL & PLAYING FIELD	54,936
-	IMPROVEMENTS TO FACILITIES	267,698
2,363	VEHICLES / PLANT	-
1,682	HOWE DELL COMMUNITY CENTRE	4,600
-	LOAN CHARGES	-
-30,643	INVESTMENT INTEREST	-32,360
-	INTEREST PAYABLE	5,426
-6,000	MOVEMENT ON PENSION RESERVE/RETURN	20,000
96,264	CONTRIBUTION TO/FROM (-) RESERVES	-125,355
746,443	PRECEPT ON DISTRICT COUNCIL	778,248

Electorate figures for Hatfield

Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Actual	Estimated
2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
20,187	19,743	20,592	21,000	22,838	23,316	23,794

Figures obtained from electoral department, Welwyn Hatfield Council as of 15 October annually.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

During the last year the Planning Committee have met on 12 occasions. 192 Planning Applications were discussed, 78 less than last year which was high due to the amount of building going on around the De Havilland site. We raised 40 objections. These were for a number of reasons i.e. over development, inadequate parking, not in keeping with the area. Various site visits were made during this year.

Other matters discussed by the Planning Committee during this year were:

1. Review of the East of England plan
2. Hertfordshire Charrette Consultation
3. Old Hatfield Charrette Consultation
4. Future of Hertfordshire Waste
5. Hertfordshire Waste Development Plan.
6. Licensing Applications.
7. Hertfordshire Minerals Site Selection Methodology.
8. Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council Core Strategy.

Two items that are on-going are the Barnfield Incinerator proposal and the closure of the Hatfield Tunnel for Refurbishment. All Political Parties on the Town Council are against the Barnfield Project.

Consultation and Projections have taken place for the Tunnel Closure. One Tunnel at a time will be closed and contra flow will operate through the remaining tunnel. Although 'two years' has been quoted as the time scale for the work, the motorway agency has indicated that it will be shorter time than this as no resurfacing will take place.

Councillor Howard Morgan – Chairman Planning Committee

LEISURE COMMITTEE

The past twelve months have seen further development and expansion of the Town Council's leisure responsibilities.

Birchwood Leisure Centre

With the building and relocation of the Council Offices to Birchwood in 2008 and the continued successful management of the Funzone play area, the Council has demonstrated a commitment to the development of Birchwood.

The Funzone have extended their opening hours and although the café remains a challenge in profitability, we continue to see this as an important part of the facility.

The coming months will see re-carpeting and maintenance works undertaken, as well as use of the grounds for circus bookings.

The play schemes remain popular and affordable.

We are still in ongoing discussion with Hatfield Town Football Club regarding their proposed move to Birchwood.

Community Halls

Roe Hill Hall - Continues to be a well used and popular facility with a well utilised bar.

Lemsford Hall - The floor was resealed and the bar continues to be profitable.

Newgate Street Village Hall - Budgeting for the new kitchen installation is underway.

Oxlease Hall - Remains a very popular venue.

Howe Dell Community Hall - As a new facility at the beginning of 2008, Howe Dell has become quickly established and a popular addition to our leisure facilities.

Open Spaces

The Council has made a commitment to purchase further grounds equipment to manage the expanding number of open areas and play areas maintained by the Council's labour force. In the past year we have taken on de Havilland Grange meadow and sports pitch as a result of the development of the de Havilland and west of Hatfield Garden Village areas.

In the past twelve months we have installed new play equipment, goal posts and seating in the following areas:-

Centenary Park
Roe Hill
St Albans Rd East
Campion Road

We will be completing new soft surfacing and some new play equipment at Ellenbrook and Millwards in the next couple of months.

Councillor Sarah Atkinson – Chairman Leisure Committee

RESOURCES AND POLICY COMMITTEE

The Resources and Policy Committee, which has several varied responsibilities, has met six times during the year.

New Town Clerk

One of this Committee's responsibilities is selecting and hiring council officers. This year we, as a Council, were very pleased to have appointed our new Town Clerk, Carrie Lloyd, who joined us in June 2008.

New Council Offices

Due to the dedicated work of our Deputy Town Clerk, Paul Widdicombe, in conjunction with the architect Millbridge and builders Leary Brothers, the building work for the new Council Offices at Birchwood was completed, within budget, and on time. The finished project, which was financed entirely from the Council's own capital resources, will create financial savings from better synergy and rental reductions.

Capital Expenditure

Our policy is to keep all the Town Council properties in good condition by implementing a rolling programme of repair and decoration.

This year, thanks to funding from Re;Play Partnership's Big Lottery Grant and the Town Council's own joint funding, £120,000 will be spent over the next three years on our play areas.

Also this year, the Sportsman Meeting Room at Birchwood, has been refurbished and a new staff rest room has been created in the corner.

Grants

Last year 12 local organisations benefited from grants offered by the Hatfield Town Council, these grants are to help facilitate community activities within our area.

The recipients include: Jim McDonald Centre, Friends of Oak View School, Hatfield Crusaders Cricket Club, Hatfield Town Youth Football Club, Allotments Association, Hatfield Town Football Club, Howe Dell Staff Parents Association, Memorial Hall Hatfield, Local History Society, Air Training Corp, Friends of Birchwood Avenue School.

Annual Youth Exchange

The Council has been organising an annual youth exchange with Zierikzee in Holland. The twinning with Zierikzee started over 50 years ago and developed from the 1953 disaster, when so many lives were lost during the floods which devastated the lowlands.

The people of Hatfield contributed to the flood relief fund, part of which was sent to Zierikzee, from this action a bond was formed

Regretfully, due to changes within the Dutch authorities, and despite the best efforts of this Council, it would appear that these exchanges are going to come to an end shortly.

Budget

This committee also sets an annual budget and is acutely aware of its responsibilities to use public money with economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

We have been able to keep council tax increases below the rate of inflation for the sixth consecutive year.

Councillor Geoff Wiltshire – Chairman Resources and Policy Committee

COUNCILLORS 2008 - 2011

Cllr M Alder	69 Northfields Hatfield, Herts. AL10 0AH	01707 271827
Cllr S M Atkinson	365 St Albans Road West Hatfield, Herts AL10 9RU	01707 265877
Cllr D Berry	9 Daffodil Close Hatfield, Herts AL10 9FF	01707 259843
Cllr H Berry	9 Daffodil Close Hatfield, Herts AL10 9FF	01707 259843
Cllr M Clark	39 Chantry Lane Hatfield, Herts AL10 9HW	01707 262082
Cllr L Clark	39 Chantry Lane Hatfield, Herts AL10 9HW	01707 262082
Cllr S Laver-Walton (Elected June 2009)	1 Almond Walk Hatfield, Herts. AL10 8SY	01707 265485
Cllr C Juggins	44 Park Meadow Hatfield, Herts. AL9 5HP	01707 276480
Cllr D Kay	49 Northfields Hatfield, Herts AL10 0AH	01707 894612
Cllr H Morgan	Flat 2, Maynard House The Common Hatfield. Herts. AL10 0NF	01707 264391
Cllr K Morris	37 Stanley Drive Hatfield, Herts AL10 8XX	01707 690775
Cllr R W Smith	44 Willow Way Hatfield, Herts AL10 9QE	01707 264742
Cllr R Wheeler (Co-opted May 2009)	53 Westland Drive Brookmans Park, Herts. AL9 7UG	01707 647878
Cllr M White (Elected June 2008)	30 The Downs Hatfield, Herts AL10 8JX	01707 880324
Cllr G S Wiltshire	Tolmers Park Farm Newgate Street Village Hertford SG13 8RG	01707 872561