



Marks Tey Parish Council



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Chairman's Review Marks Tey Parish Council May 2021

It has been a difficult year with the Covid restrictions impacting on many of the parish's activities. This has meant a considerable amount of extra work for the Councillors and Staff and my thanks goes out to all. With the halls being closed we have taken the opportunity to have them all redecorated along with the toilets and foyers. We have replaced some of the vinyl flooring in the small hall and in the main entrance. Some of these projects have been brought forward whilst others have needed attention for some time but the lock downs have enabled us to complete these jobs without impacting on the hall hires. Along with this we have had the playground refurbished and some of the items replaced, this has all come at considerable cost and we are hoping that the coming years will allow us to recover some of these funds.

The Main Hall heating system has been replaced, the old night storage heaters removed and new air source heat pumps installed, this should produce energy savings. We have been fortunate in receiving some grant funding from our Borough Councillors, toward the cost of the improvements to the halls and the playground; again my thanks goes to them for their continued support. We trust these changes will encourage greater use of the facilities as any improvements we make have to be funded either by grant funding or by the hall hire cost.

What do the people of Marks Tey get for their money?; a very good question, but looking at our Budgets you will see that the Precept amounts to £59,550 and our Budget for council expenses is £57,975, this leaves us the grand total of £1,575 to cover any other cost that we may incur. In order to fund anything else within the parish we must try to ensure that the halls and the grounds not only cover their costs but provide an income.

This year we have entered into a new contract for the field maintenance and hope to continue to provide a user friendly open space for all to enjoy. Our agreement with Coggeshall Youth Football has provided support for the grounds maintenance, something that does not happen without football being played on our field. It provides the opportunity for the youngsters of Marks Tey to get involved with local football. We will continue to manage the premises and grounds for the benefit of the residents of Marks Tey.

The lock downs have meant that the community library, Young at Heart and the community picnics have been curtailed but the community group has continued to be busy. A considerable amount of volunteer hours have gone into tidying up the grounds, litter picking, clearing paths and weed control. Tree and hedge planting have taken place and the community woodland walk has been transformed from a piece of waste ground to an area of interest.

As we have been unable to have our community litter picks it is encouraging to see that we have volunteers stepping in to continue this task and at last count we now have 20+ volunteer litter warriors, coordinated by Trish Wynne-Willson. This is a never ending task and my thanks go out to all involved.

The Neighbourhood Plan has been completed and submitted to Colchester Borough Council. This has taken five years to produce and many hours of volunteers' time. I would like to thank the members of the Steering Group and commend them for their sheer determination to complete this task. They have produced a comprehensive set of documents covering a wide range of topics, a special mention to Patsy Beech and her efforts in producing the Character Assessment a document well worth a read for any resident that hasn't already done so.

Away from the premises we have with our Borough Councillors been involved with various highways and parking issues. The parking at the London Road shops took far longer to resolve than hoped despite the parish council escalating this issue to Colchester Borough Council. This was due to a developer who was in breach of their planning obligations.

We have this year in conjunction with local business, Penny Meadows Life Skills Limited and a number of other supporters have raised the funding to provide two Defibrillators installed in the recently purchased telephone boxes. One outside the shops in London Road and the other by the bus stop at Poplar Nurseries. My thanks go to the volunteers who carry out the weekly checks. Another valuable addition for the community but again comes with the cost of annual maintenance.

We have been in discussions with Jacobs and Highways England regarding the proposals for Junction 25 of the A12, we did make some suggestions but these

have not been adopted by them, the public consultation should be taking place in June and I would like as many residents as possible to make their opinions known.

As with all voluntary roles it is not easy to recruit and at present, we have three vacancies on the parish council so if there is anybody who would like to become involved with the community, please contact the Parish Clerk, Gemma Humphries at the Parish Hall for full details.

Gerald Wells

Chair Marks Tey Parish Council