

Bury St Edmunds Town Council

Annual Report 2013/14



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Chairman's introduction

This last Council year (May 2013 – April 2014) Bury St Edmunds Town Council:

- again gave significant financial support to Bury in Bloom for floral displays in parts of the Town and additional money towards the sculpture of the Wolf on Southgate Green roundabout alongside the crown which represents St Edmund's head which was guarded by the wolf.

- jointly funded with St Edmundsbury Borough Council the Family Fete which was held in the Abbey Gardens in early August.

- arranged the Armistice Day memorial service around the Angel Hill war memorial.

- held its St Edmund's Day Awards in November 2013; the awards for Citizen of the Year and Young Citizen of the Year being an important way for the Town to acknowledge those who do so much for our community and deserve civic recognition, the publicity for which helps to encourage others to do likewise. The Awards evening was very well supported and was again successfully combined with the various best plot Allotment Awards.

- awarded community grants.



**Councillor Stefan Oliver
Chairman 2013/14**

Through the Year

May (2013)

The Annual Meeting of the Town Council was held at the Guildhall to highlight and support the Guildhall's application for a Heritage Lottery Bid. Cllr Stefan Oliver was elected Chairman.

Councillors were also appointed as representatives to outside bodies such as Bury in Bloom, Safer Neighbourhood Team, Guildhall Feoffment Trust, Suffolk Association of Local Councils, and the Christmas Fayre Working group.

June

Response made to Norfolk and Suffolk Transport body's consultation to the effect that Council regards the A14 Rookery improvements to be the priority on their list.

July

Judging of the Council's Allotments Competition took place.
Allotment holders meeting

August

Council's St Edmunds Community Fete was held in the Abbey Gardens, free entry: entertainment for all, childrens games, races and competitions, free craft workshops, modestly priced refreshments.

September

Substantial objections made to the Rougham Hill Waste Transfer Station planning application.

October

A presentation was received in respect of the Masterplan being submitted to St Edmundsbury Borough Council for the proposed Station Hill development.

November

The Chairman and other Councillors represented the Council at the wreath-laying Armistice Day service. The veterans and helpers were afterwards invited in to the Council's offices for tea and biscuits.

The St Edmund's Day Awards evening was held - giving recognition to those who have made an outstanding contribution within the community. Presentations were made to joint Citizens of the Year winners and to the joint Young Citizen of the Year winner. Allotment awards were also presented.

January

More grit bins put out, now totalling 104.
Allotment holders meeting.

February

Council set its precept level at nil increase, £13.50 per Band D. Government welfare reform changes reducing the number of households paying the precept.

March

An information flyer was sent to all households in the parish of Bury St Edmunds informing of Council's role in the Town and inviting residents to let us know what they would prefer Council to prioritise and any comments were invited. 90 responses were received.

April

Response to St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Licensing Cumulative Impact Consultation relating to the Town centre - requesting that it be reinstated along with other areas added in, St Andrews Street South and the Station Road area.

Explaining the financial position

The chart illustrates key areas of Council's income and expenditure, indicating the position at 31 March for 2013 and 2014:

	Year ended 31 March	
	2013	2014
	£	£
Annual Precept	189,500	170,177
Total other receipts (INCOME)	14,255	36,695
Staff costs	76,503	81,108
Loan interest/Capital repayments	0	0
Total other payments	128,940	107,863
Balances carried forward	147,594	165,495
Total Cash & Investments	145,968	164,660
Total Fixed Assets	66,851	67,979
Total Borrowings	0	0

Where does the money come from?

Council Tax

The Council's primary source of income (known as its precept) comes from the payment of council tax by people who are resident in the parish of Bury St Edmunds. This money is collected on the Town Council's behalf by St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

For the financial year which ran from 01 April 2013 to 31 March 2014 the amount of council tax paid to Bury St Edmunds Town Council by the occupier of a property which falls in the 'D' band was just £13.50 (the same amount as for the previous three years).

Allotment Rents

A total of £15,201 was collected from allotment tenants as the annual rent for their plot(s).

Balances Carried Forward

The balances held at the end of the financial year of £165,495 (known as general reserves) although significantly higher than the minimum level set by Council, is still within the parameters laid down in the relevant guidance. It is essential that an amount of money is available to cover any unexpected expenditure and Council has decided that it will keep £60,000 as its minimum reserve. The remaining reserves are available to spend the next year.

Assets

Council's fixed assets are recorded in a register. Examples of these assets include street furniture such as litter/grit/dog bins and office equipment, furniture etc. The value at the

end of the financial year has increased slightly to £67,979.

How has the money been spent?

Staffing

The Council's staffing bill overall is slightly higher this year which is in part due to the 1% national pay award (the first since 2009) which came into effect from 01 April 2013. The staff costs include £2,452 on training and £129 on travel.

Office Premises

The costs of the office premises included £30,314 rent and service charge, £7,788 business rates, £3,024 insurance, £704 cleaning, £4,244 computer maintenance and phone services.

Elections

There were no casual vacancies this year - all Councillors

remained in office for the whole year.

The normal term of office for a councillor is four years and the next planned elections will be in May 2015.

War Memorials

Every year before the Armistice Day and Remembrance Day services the Council ensures that both the memorial on Angel Hill and the Boer War memorial in Cornhill are cleaned. This is done by a specialist contractor so that damage is not caused by the cleaning materials or process and cost £1,000.

Bury in Bloom

A donation of £5,912 was given to 'Bury in Bloom' in respect of floral displays in Abbeygate Street (including erection, watering throughout the season and removal).

Allotments

In total £9,035 was spent at the allotments including:

Dip tank works	£2,007
Fence repairs	£337
Grass and hedge cutting	£600
Lease costs	£851
Miscellaneous expend. including repairs	£153
Skip hire	£1,075
Tree works	£1,185
Water used	£2,635

Grant Funding

Grants awarded are shown below:

Magna Carte 800 Celebrations (educational purposes)	£5,000
Bury St Edmunds Cricket Club	£2,000
Bury In Bloom Wolf Sculpture (additional)	£2,000
Horringer Court Residents Association (traffic calming)	£1,000
Memorial Garden Fund	£250
British Red Cross	£250
Royal British Legion	£120

Council and Committee Meetings

The Town Council has three committees, two of which make recommendations to the full Council. These are Finance, Policy and Resources which meets monthly, Staffing and Employment which meets every three months. The Planning and Licensing committee which meets twice a month has authority to make decisions on behalf of the Council.

Planning and Licensing is a very busy committee, with on average 20 planning applications to look at each meeting, plus licensing and other issues such as proposed street closures, vending permits and tree preservation orders. Members of the public are

always welcomed to meetings so that the council can reflect the views of those people most affected by planning decisions.

The Full Council meets monthly, except for August. All meetings are held on Wednesday evenings, and are open to the public. At each meeting there is an opportunity for the public to ask questions.

Meeting agendas are displayed on the Council notice board in the Cornhill, in the Town Council offices, as well as on the website at www.burystedmunds.suffolk.gov.uk

The website provides much more information on current matters which the Town Council is to consider or has considered, for example, objections that its

Planning & Licensing Committee has made, presentations to be made to that Committee by developers prior to their submission of master plans to St Edmundsbury Borough Council, (the planning authority), prior to submission of a planning application; current consultations received by the Town Council for consideration and response; information on the Council's allotments for those residents wanting to go on the waiting list, information for existing allotment holders and the downloadable Official Guide to Bury St Edmunds.

How to contact us

All Town Councillors can be contacted via the telephone numbers shown below their photograph (see page 5). Remember to dial 01284 before the number shown if you are calling from outside this dialling code area or from a mobile. They can also be reached by email and some have additional mobile or business telephone numbers as shown on the website which is at: www.burystedmunds.suffolk.gov.uk.

Staff members are:

Town Clerk: Julia Dyball Tel: 01284 757139
Email: julia.dyball@burystedmunds.suffolk.gov.uk

Assistant Town Clerk and Responsible Finance Officer:
Sue Hindry Tel: 01284 757157
Email: susan.hindry@burystedmunds.suffolk.gov.uk

Allotment officer/Admin Assistant:
Gill Cook Tel: 01284 757158
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Your Councillors



Cllr Patrick Chung
Southgate Ward
761120



Cllr Bob Cockle
St Olaves Ward
756249



Cllr Quentin Cornish
Minden Ward
750264



Cllr Paul Farmer
Abbeygate Ward
768777



Cllr Jonathan Hartley
Minden Ward
762467



Cllr Cliff Hind
Moreton Hall
706542



Cllr Kevin Hind
St Olaves
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Cllr O'Driscoll
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Eastgate Ward
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Cllr Clive Springett
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