



Ware Town Council Annual Report 2017/18



A Message from the Mayor, Cllr Alexander Curtis

It has been a real honour to serve as Ware's Mayor for the past year. Our town is characterised by the fantastic array of local community groups which do so much to make Ware such a fantastic place to call home. I have greatly enjoyed working with many of these groups over the past 11 months. Giving speeches to groups like Ware Rotary, assisting with the deliver of Ware Festival and paying visits to local schools has provided me with a unique set of opportunities to promote our town and encourage civic pride within it.

Our young people are a great asset to the town, which is why I am proud to have revived the "Mayor for a Day" competition for local 11 year olds, which was last carried out almost two decades ago. Welcoming the winners to Ware Priory for a programme of activities was a highlight of this year for me. Hearing about their aspirations and ideas for this town firmly convinced me that the future of Ware is very much in safe hands. Aside from promoting the role of young people, raising funds for long-established local community group "Sad Cats" has also been a very worthwhile endeavour. As local councillors, we need to use the platform which we are provided with by electors to raise the profile of voluntary groups that tirelessly support all of the wonderful events throughout this year which make Ware so special. Helping volunteers to achieve their objectives is always a highly rewarding experience.

One of the most important aspects of being Mayor is championing Ware causes. This year, the Council and I have been absolute in our efforts to save Fanshawe Pool from closure, engaging in both public campaigning and behind-the-scenes lobbying on the issue. Similarly, I am proud to have championed local business, Ventura Wildlife, in their fight to keep open their much-valued zoological gardens at Van Hage Garden Centre. Ware Town Council continues to fight for Ware's interests as East Herts District Council seeks to adopt a District Plan. Although Ware provides one voice in the choir with regard to the formulation of this very important piece of planning policy, it is the duty of local councillors to ensure that this voice is as loud, reasoned and strong as possible. The long overdue creation of a Neighbourhood Plan for Ware CP will surely be welcomed by residents over the coming year. I hope to see as many local people contributing to the design of this document as possible.

I look forward to working with groups, including Guideposts Trust, over the coming months to help combat the social epidemic of loneliness in our town. Ware Town Council will be providing support to new schemes which I have been working on to help bring our town closer together, including consideration of regular free coffee mornings at Ware Priory. A more prominent council, present in our town and listening to local people, is something which I and other councillors are very keen to create. A council providing leadership for our town, yes; but leadership that is always informed by the needs, values and desires of local residents.

Councillor Alexander Curtis, Mayor of Ware

Support to Local Organisations in 2017/18

Ware Royal British Legion	£200	Celebrating centenary of end of WW1
East Herts Diversionary Activities Group	£250	Summer activities in Ware
Ware's the Fun Palace	£200	Weekend of free workshops
Ware & District Photographic Society	£262	Annual exhibition
Hertford Rugby Club	£250	Women's changing facilities
Rotary Club of Hertford Shires	£250	Refurbishing Lido play area
Leaside Community Centre	£6500	Disabled toilet facilities
Southern Maltings Community Group	£15,000	Open ground floor & develop plan for the whole building
Ware in Bloom	£3,800	Water bowser
Age Concern Ware	£5,000	New Cooker
Total Awarded 2017/18	£31,712	

[The Town Council supports the following organisations with annual grants:-](#)

Ware Museum General Grant £5,000
Ware Museum Tourist Information Point £2,100
Ware Town Partnership Dickensian Evening £1,600
Ware Town Partnership Ware in Bloom £1,300

Report on the Accounts for 2017/18 and the Budget for 2018/19

The environment in which the Council operates has continued to be difficult and we have worked hard to manage the Council's finances responsibly and keep any increases in our precept below inflation. Following a 1.0% increase in the precept last year, we have increased it by 3.0% this year (based on a Band D property). Unfortunately, due to continued challenging market conditions in the hospitality sector and a lack of demand for office space in the town, we again have a small excess of expenditure over income. This amount of c.£7,500 (compared to £5,000 last year) will be covered from the Council's reserves which currently stand at c. £412,000.

The Council derives much of its income from the functions held in the Priory building and Fletcher's Lea. As last year, the hospitality industry continues to experience difficulties I am disappointed to report that, as a result, income from weddings and functions was down against budget. The wedding market in particular continues to be challenging but we are beginning to see increasing bookings thanks to our hard-working marketing team.

Due to our office vacancies, the Council is having to be more innovative in finding uses for its office space. East Herts Council have set up a hot-desking facility for new small businesses in Bishops Stortford and are interested in seeing similar facilities in both Ware and Hertford. We are discussing with East Herts, the possibility of providing a similar facility at the Priory. While discussions are at an early stage we hope they will lead to a positive result.

The Town Council continues to provide all of the services that residents of the town expect such as the Lido, Ware Festival, the Food Festival, Rock in the Priory and the Community Cinema. In addition, the Council as Trustee of the Priory Charity is responsible for the upkeep and the maintenance of the Priory building and its grounds; following the last quinquennial inspection of the building a programme of works has been established to ensure that it is maintained in the best possible condition. We are now preparing for the next such inspection. The Town Council will also continue to provide financial support to local group (see above) and will also continue towards the running costs of the CCTV system.

I would like to thank the Friends of Ware Lido for their continued assistance with the Lido. The Town Council's commitment to this unique and well-loved facility is well known. Running and maintenance costs are high and income is heavily dependent on the weather. Last year, due to poor weather, net expenditure for the Lido rose to c.£49,000 (which was the primary reason for the small excess of expenditure over income during the year).

The New Home Bonus is a grant paid by Central Government to District Councils based on the number of new homes built. Unlike many authorities, East Herts District Council passes on part of this grant to Town and Parish councils. This Council has so far received £420,000 which has been allocated to such projects as Tudor Square, refurbishment of our Lido and the development of a new Town Council website. Grants have also been awarded to Southern Maltings Community Group, Ware Drill Hall Association, Wodson Park, Leaside Community Centre, Ware in Bloom and Age Concern Ware.

Ware Town Council Income and Expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2018

	Forecast Income and Expenditure			Budget Income and Expenditure			Budget Income and Expenditure		
	2017/18 Income £	2017/18 Expend £	2017/18 Balance £	2017/18 Income £	2017/18 Expend £	2017/18 Balance £	2018/19 Income £	2018/19 Expend £	2018/19 Balance £
As Trustee of the Priory Building									
Priory Building	150375	264580	-114205	209,447	255,627	-46,180	210,558	255,151	-44,593
Priory Grounds, incl Public Conveniences	3630	114559	-110929	900	103,213	-102,313	900	106,198	-105,298
Priory Lido	61946	111882	-49936	74,280	104,446	-30,166	73,400	112,802	-39,402
Fletcher's Lea	62719	99,033	-36314	68,500	109,145	-40,645	55,500	103,068	-47,568
Audit Fee		16500	-16500		10,000	-10,000		10,000	-10,000
Miscellaneous income and costs		0	0		767	-767		-263	263
Loan payment Fletcher's Lea		93,280	-93,280		93,280	-93,280		93,280	-93,280
Total for Priory Charity	278,670	699,834	-421,164	353,127	676,478	-323,351	340,358	680,236	-339,878
Ware Town Council Services									
Allotments	5279	8622	-3343	5,200	8,092	-2,892	5200	8302	-3102
Closed Churchyard, War Memorial & Clock		4890	-4890		4,664	-4,664		3461	-3461
Cemetery	56009	67173	-11164	75,000	91,146	-16,146	75000	89790	-14790
Tourism, Leisure & Amenities	9067	48602	-39535	5,100	40,060	-34,960	5100	41060	-35960
Town Twinning		0	0		2,000	-2,000		2000	-2000
Town Centre CCTV		10600	-10600		10,600	-10,600		10600	-10600
Ware Festival	12336	21311	-8975	6,100	14,728	-8,628	5300	14881	-9581
Administration	90741	240813	-150072	90,521	271,463	-180,942	53023	237791	-184768
Subsidy to Priory Charity as above	278,670	699,834	-421164	353,127	676,478	-323,351	340,358	680,236	-339878
Precept Income	584183		584183	584,183		584,183	604140		604140
Use of Reserves	41945		41945	0		0			
Brought forward from 2016/17	15930		15930	15,930		15,930	1,088,121		0
Total for Ware Town Council	1,094,160	1,101,845	-7,685	1,135,161	1,119,231	15,930	1,088,121	1,088,121	0

Council Services

Ware Town Council provides:

- Ware Cemetery
- Allotments at Widbury Hill and King George Road
- Maintenance of the war memorial, church clock and the churchyard at St Mary the Virgin
- Ware Festival, Rock in the Priory, free band concerts, town tours, town talks, food festival
- Support and encouragement of Town Twinning with Wülfrath, Germany and Cormeilles-en-Parisis, France
- Ware Youth Town Council
- Grants to local organisations
- Monthly afternoon film shows for senior residents & films in the school holidays for children
- The Town Council is the first tier of local government and represents the views and opinions of Ware residents.

As Trustee of the Priory Charity the Town Council provides:-

- Ware Priory and Fletcher's Lea
- Priory Grounds and public toilets
- Children's play area and skate park
- Ware Priory Lido (heated outdoor pool)

How to Contact Your Councillors

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