



Ware Town Council Annual Report 2015/16



A Message from the Mayor, Cllr Phyllis Ballam

Ware Town Council and myself as Mayor have had a busy year. Some issues and events recur regularly from year to year while others are completely new. Amongst our recurring problems are the mess made by pigeons and complaints of dog fouling in Bourne Park. With regard to the pigeons we have as yet been unable to identify a proven and affordable method of reducing the population and, consequently, the nuisance they create. Part of the problem is that pigeons and rats are attracted by the availability of food because of people feeding the water fowl, although some people actually deliberately feed the pigeons. The Council had hoped by now to have an information board installed near the bridge at Amwell End giving details of the various water fowl and explaining when and what it is good to feed and specifically asking the public not to feed the pigeons. This is ongoing. We have now arranged a public meeting on 23rd May, to discuss dog fouling.



Some years ago there used to be a garden party to show that the Council appreciates the work of volunteers in Ware and to thank them. It was hoped to reinstate this. However given the uncertainty of suitable garden party weather, it was decided that I should hold a reception for volunteers in the run-up to Christmas and this I did. I think everyone present enjoyed the occasion – I certainly did! Many important aspects of Ware's life would not proceed without volunteers.

Whilst on the subject of volunteers, I must mention all those involved with Ware in Bloom. Residents and visitors to the town are often saying how beautiful the town looks and how the colourful planting throughout the town centre brightens both the town and people's lives. Ware was pleased and honoured that Wodson Park Sports Centre was chosen by the Anglia in Bloom Regional Committee to host the Anglia Region awards Ceremony last summer. This brought us visitors from all over East Anglia. Ware achieved a silver gilt award and was invited to enter Britain in Bloom... I was pleased to accompany our leading Ware in Bloom personnel to Sunderland for the National Awards when Ware received a Silver.

I am pleased to say that our town appears to be thriving. There are some empty shops, but we have been pleased to see the opening of several new businesses, The Snug, Casita Bonita, Dream Doors and a new Gallery in Baldock Street to name but a few. We also welcome the opening of the Premier Inn and the adjacent Beefeater. The Premier Inn should bring visitors to Ware and make life simpler for those arranging business or social events. I was sorry to hear recently that our craft shop is to close and customers of one of our High Street Banks have received letters stating that the Ware Branch will be closing in July. This we deplore! Unfortunately this is presumably a commercial decision which cannot be affected by central or local government.

The Town Council continues to run or support the events which liven up the year. The principal one, of course, is Ware Festival in which we are assisted by the Ware Festival Committee made up of representatives from various organisations within the town and organised by our Events Organiser, Rosalyn Montgomery, to whom our thanks are due. We are grateful also to the Ware Town Partnership who organise Dickensian Evening and Music and Motors. We are again holding a Food Festival at the end of May.

We were pleased during the year to support the Southern Maltings Group in their efforts to keep this malting as a facility for Ware. We were delighted when East Herts Council agreed to enter into a lease with the Group to enable them to pursue their plans for an arts facility for all. We wish them good luck in this venture.

We believe that the long awaited enhancement of Tudor Square will commence shortly and hope that everybody will be happy with the result. The final plan had to be acceptable to East Herts Council and Hertfordshire Highways.

All our committees have continued to meet regularly, particularly the Planning Committee which has to meet more frequently to meet East Herts time scales.

I should like to thank our Town Clerk, all our staff and my fellow Councillors for their hard work during the year.

Support to Local Organisations in 2015/16

Each year the Town Council allocates a budget for grants to support local organisations. In 2015/16 the grants awarded were:-

Southern Maltings Community Group	£500.00	Towards professional fees
St Mary's Church	£250.00	Towards restoration of the church organ
East Herts Council DAG	£250.00	Towards Summer activities in Ware
Groundwork	£250.00	Towards Really Wild adventure play scheme
Ware & District Photographic Society	£365.71	Towards cost of Annual Exhibition
Wodson Park Netball Club	£175.00	Towards volunteer training
9th Ware Brownies	£500.00	Towards a wildlife park visit
Ware Cricket Club	£250.00	Towards a cricket sight screens
Leaside Community Centre	£459.29	Towards a new servery
Ware Drill Hall	£10,000	Towards an alarm system
Southern Maltings Group	£10,000	Towards developing as an Arts Centre
Total awarded 2014/15	£23,000.00	

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	£1,300
Ware Town Partnership Ware in Bloom	£1,100

Report on the Accounts for 2015/16 and the Budget for 2016/17

Last year we took steps to address declining levels of function income by engaging a new caterer, Seasoned Events, on a temporary contract. Following a tender process, this appointment was made permanent. Despite a recovery in the economy, the hospitality industry has continued to experience difficulties and Ware Priory has not been immune to this. In addition, there were one-off costs associated with the change of caterer. The result is an excess of expenditure over income for the year of c.£24,000. This will be covered from the Council's reserves which currently stand at c.£300,000. However, bookings, particularly meetings and conferences, have now grown and we expect to see the benefit of this from 2016/17.

In challenging times we have worked hard to manage the Council's finances responsibly. Following no increase last year, we have increased the precept by just 1.5% this year (based on a Band D property). Within this budget the Town Council will continue to provide all the services that residents expect, such as the Lido, Ware Festival, the Food Festival, Rock in the Priory, Community Cinema and the maintenance of the Priory and its grounds. The outside of the Priory building was re-painted during the year and, following the 5 yearly building survey, a programme of works has been established to ensure the building is maintained in the best possible condition.

The Town Council continues to support local groups such as Ware in Bloom, Dickensian Evening and Ware Museum and to pay towards the town CCTV system. During the year the Council awarded £3,000 in grants to local organisations including the Southern Maltings Community Group, St Mary's Church, Ware & District Photographic Society, Wodson Park Netball Club, 9th Ware Brownies, Ware Cricket Club and Leaside Community Centre.

Thanks to the Friends of Ware Lido for their continued assistance with the Lido. The Town Council's commitment to this well-loved facility has been recognized by GSK making it a community project for their 300th birthday celebrations. This involves extensive improvements to the Lido building, the changing rooms and the exterior to improve the experience for swimmers and ensure that the Lido will be enjoyed by the people of Ware for many years to come.

The New Homes Bonus is a grant paid by Central Government to the District Council based on the number of new homes built. The District Council passes on part of this grant to Town and Parish councils. This Council has so far received a total of £209,000 which has been allocated to such projects as Tudor Square, the Neighborhood Plan, the Lido, and grants to Southern Maltings Community Group and The Ware Drill Hall Association. The Council continues to look for other local projects that this grant funding could support.

WARE TOWN COUNCIL FORECAST INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2016 (2015/16)
 BUDGET FOR 2015/16 AND BUDGET FOR 2016/17

	Forecast Income and Expenditure			Budget Income and Expenditure			Budget Income and Expenditure		
	2015/16 Income £	2015/16 Expend £	2015/16 Balance £	2015/16 Income £	2015/16 Expend £	2015/16 Balance £	2016/17 Income £	2016/17 Expend £	2016/17 Balance £
As Trustee of the Priory Building									
Priory Building	199,391	279,517	-80,126	185,250	241,361	-56,111	253,150	285,432	-32,282
Priory Grounds, Incl Public Conveniences	14,117	95,207	-81,090	900	86,674	-85,774	900	98,236	-97,338
Priory Lido	171,368	227,167	-55,799	45,150	90,430	-45,280	45,450	88,465	-43,015
Fletcher's Lea	54,353	116,095	-61,742	63,400	100,224	-36,824	74,055	107,954	-33,899
Audit Fee		10,000	-10,000		10,000	-10,000		10,000	-10,000
Miscellaneous income and costs	264	3,093	-2,829		1,900	-1,900		2,330	-2,330
Loan payment Fletcher's Lea		93,280	-93,280		93,280	-93,280		93,280	-93,280
Total for Priory Charity	439,493	824,359	-384,866	294,700	623,869	-329,169	373,555	685,697	-312,142
	Forecast Income and Expenditure			Budget Income and Expenditure			Budget Income and Expenditure		
	2014/15 Income £	2014/15 Expend £	2014/15 Balance £	2014/15 Income £	2014/15 Expend £	2014/15 Balance £	2016/17 Income £	2016/17 Expend £	2016/17 Balance £
Ware Town Council Services									
Alloiments	5,173	7,891	-2,718	5,200	7,744	-2,544	5,200	8,008	-2,808
Closed Churchyard, War Memorial & Clock	0	2,614	-2,614		2,848	-2,848		3,564	-3,564
Cemetery	85,004	70,010	14,994	71,500	69,078	2,422	71,500	73,702	-2,202
Tourism, Leisure & Amenities	34,650	60,768	-26,118	7,200	41,600	-34,400	5,000	39,450	-34,450
Town Twinning		202	-202		2,000	-2,000		2,000	-2,000
Town Centre CCTV		10,600	-10,600		17,467	-17,467		10,600	-10,600
Ware Festival	11,661	18,739	-7,078	7,950	17,441	-9,491	7,800	17,533	-9,733
Administration	88,752	264,556	-177,804	81,236	258,510	-177,274	80,206	273,322	-193,116
Neighbourhood Plan		0	0			0			0
Subsidy to Priory Charity as above	439,493	824,359	-384,866	294,700	623,869	-329,169	373,555	685,697	-312,142
Precept Income	551,748		551,748	551,748		551,748	568,115		568,115
Grant from East Hert Council	21,023		21,023	21,023		21,023			0
Use of Reserves			0				2,500		2,500
Total for Ware Town Council	1,235,504	1,259,739	-24,235	1,040,557	1,040,557	0	1,113,876	1,113,876	0

Council Services

Ware Town Council provides:

- Management of Ware Cemetery
- Management of two Allotment Sites
- Maintenance of the War Memorial, Church Clock and Churchyards at St. Mary's Church.
- Litter bins and public seats.
- Ware Festival, Rock in the Priory, free band concerts, Town Tours, Winter Talks, Food Festival
- Support and encouragement of Town Twinning with Wülfrath, Germany and Cormeilles-en-Parisis, France
- Support for Ware Youth Town Council
- as the Trustee of the Priory Charity, management of the Priory, Fletcher's Lea, Children's Play Area, Skatepark, Lido (heated open air swimming pool), Public Conveniences and Priory Grounds
- Grants to local organisations
- The Town Council is the first tier of Local Government and represents views and opinions of the people of Ware

How To Contact Your Councillors

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