



HENRY EDWARDS HONOURED WITH FREEDOM AWARD

A record-breaking 40 years of service as a Tenterden town councillor was marked in November when Henry Edwards received the Honorary Freedom of the Town and Hundred of Tenterden.

A well-known figure in the town, Mr Edwards was first elected to the council in 1979, was a frequent contributor to council debates, and closely involved with the Twinning Association and the May Fayre. He took the position as Mayor in 1989 and 1990.

"I have some fantastic memories from my time on the council", he says. "It's been a great honour to have served, and I have never taken that for granted."

A lifelong resident of Tenterden at his Eastwell Farm, Henry's family links with the town go back to 1872 when his great grandfather, Obadiah, bought the old Tenterden brewery and nine local pubs.

Presenting Henry with his framed Scroll and an inscribed shepherd's crook, the Mayor, Cllr Jean Curteis, commended him for 40 years of service to the "welfare and preservation" of Tenterden, as well as being a mentor to many town councillors.

Picture shows Felicity and Henry Edwards with Town Clerk Phil Burgess and the Mayor, Cllr Jean Curteis

TOWN PROJECTS TO FEATURE IN FEBRUARY EXHIBITION

Progress continues on the three major town projects, funded by £3.5 million of land sales to developers, and an exhibition is scheduled to be held in the Town Hall on Friday and Saturday, February 21 and 22. Meanwhile, here's an update on recent developments.....

CINEMA

Following positive initial responses from Historic England and Ashford Borough Council to plans to convert the Pebbles building in the High Street, the project has taken another big step forward with the Town Council's decision to commission a full building feasibility study.

A competitive tender has resulted in evaluation of the five bids by an expert panel, and the selected consultants, Burrell, Foley & Fischer, expect to start work in January.

This will produce a digital survey, engineering studies and business plans based on consultations with potential operators.

RECREATION GROUND

The favoured project of the public consultation, the re-ordering of the Recreation Ground, will take place in two phases.

Phase 1, scheduled for delivery this year, will include a new eco-friendly youth hub on the site of the existing pavilion, and overlooking a fantastic new skatepark - the sunken, low-noise design and special features have been finalised after extensive consultation with the youngsters who will use the skatepark and youth hub.

A multi-use games arena, and year-round tennis and netball facilities, will also be provided.

Phase 2 of the project will see an extensive mixed-play adventure area appealing to a wide age group. The Bowls Club will remain in position, and plans have been submitted for an extension to the clubhouse.

TOWN HALL

The public consultation revealed that residents felt the Town Hall was underused and unwelcoming, and only served a small proportion of the public. Greater community facilities were required, and this important historic building was seen as a potential central hub for the town.

The current foyer is dark, and much of the ground floor is taken up by corridors. There is no disabled access in some areas, and others are poorly served. Maintenance is expensive, insulation is non-existent, the roof leaks regularly, and the heating system is antiquated with no thermostatic control.

Initial plans, which exceeded £2 million, were dismissed as too expensive. The architects were asked to present options of a phased approach, or an alternative pared-back full plan. These will be outlined, with costings, at the February exhibition.

Meanwhile, the latest designs for the Town Hall and Recreation Ground can be viewed on the Town Council website www.tenterdentowncouncil.gov.uk

Contact Tenterden Town Council

If you would like more information about Tenterden Town Council, visit the website www.tenterdentowncouncil.gov.uk; tel: 01580 762271; email townhall@tenterdentowncouncil.gov.uk; or visit the Town Hall, 9am-1pm Mondays and Thursdays and 9am-3.30pm Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays.



TENTERDEN TOWN COUNCIL



Picture courtesy of Pat Vernon

INVESTMENT AND SAVINGS IN TOWN BUDGET

Tenterden Town Council has announced the precept – its annual budget – for the coming year, which includes further investment in the town and a programme of significant savings. Total expenditure for 2020/21 of £603,839 equates to just £3.07 a week for the average Tenterden household.

New items for the year include.....

- £10,000 in provision for legal costs to challenge contentious elements in planning applications.
- £10,000 for a professional gardener to improve our gardens and flowerbeds.
- £5,000 in support for town events, including the return of Tentertainment this year.
- £5,000 for one-off grants, such as the Ivy Court Surgery social prescribing initiative (see story on page 3), and
- £1,500 to fund winter-hanging baskets in the High Street.

While a growing population inevitably means greater budgetary pressure for the council, significant savings have been made in the past year, such as.....

- £18,000 overall savings in more effective operation of

the Caretaker Scheme, the team which looks after the town's maintenance and green spaces.

- £15,000 in IT costs plus huge savings in printing, stationery and photocopying, following the introduction of iPads for all councillors.
- £13,000 reduction in the cost of Christmas lights without reducing the number of trees which are lit.

Says Town Clerk Phil Burgess: "Tenterden is growing quickly, so every year we have the task of providing services to more people while at the same time keeping costs under tight control."



"This year's budget underlines the council's determination to keep investing in the town and sustaining our reputation as The Jewel in the Weald."

"We believe that the precept represents excellent value for money, and as more housing becomes available from the Dandara and Taylor Wimpey developments, future town budgets will result in an even lower precept per household."



£5k

TOWN EVENTS



£10k

LEGAL ADVICE



£10k

NEW GARDENER



£5k

GRANTS



£15k

IT SAVINGS

EXHIBITION REPEAT

The exhibition of Tenterden's civic regalia, archives, historical artefacts and photographs held at the Town Hall in September was such a success that it is to be repeated in May.

More than 700 people visited the exhibition in September, and many residents either missed it or expressed the wish it could have been held for longer.

The exhibition will now be held again from Friday to Sunday, May 1-3, 2020, with the Friday being dedicated to organised visits from local schools.



MAYOR'S BALL RAISES CHARITY CASH

The annual Tenterden Mayor's Ball, held at the London Beach Hotel in November, raised £2,221 for local charities.

The Mayor, Cllr Jean Curteis, will donate the money to her nominated charities.

Sixty people attended the event, including Mayoral representatives from other towns.

Picture shows Cllr Curteis receiving the cheque from Chris Prigmore, on behalf of the Savannah Trust which supports charitable events in and around Tenterden.



GIVING THE TOWN A REAL VOICE ON PLANNING

The campaign to give Tenterden a real voice over new development is growing and the partnership between Tenterden Town Council and two resident-led initiatives – the Community Land Trust and the Selective Neighbourhood Plan – is gathering momentum.

The council is questioning not just the number of new planning applications, but also their demographic balance – for instance, they are currently considering at least three major planning applications for luxury retirement flats, which will inevitably increase the pressure on Ivy Court Surgery and other local health providers.

The council is supporting the Neighbourhood Plan group (NP), which is focussing on the need to protect Tenterden’s precious natural environment, and the Community Land Trust (CLT), committed to bringing affordable homes to the town for young people and key workers.

Says the Town Council’s planning committee vice chair Cllr Kate Walder, “We are coming together as a community to ensure that new development does not destroy what is so unique about our town and to tackle seriously the crucial issue of affordability”.

A significant development this year



will be a Housing Needs Survey to identify what is required for residents and local workers – the type of homes required, and issues such as affordability, rentals, share ownership and facilities.

COMMUNITY LAND TRUST

The CLT is one of six in Kent, which are all at an early stage, driving the urgent need for genuinely affordable homes.

However there are many other CLTs, for instance in Cornwall, Hampshire and Cambridgeshire, which have successfully built developments of affordable new homes.

Says CLT chairman Mark Ellender: “To crack the problem of affordability, there has to be an element of subsidy.

“Typically funding is drawn from a range of sources. It can be available from central and local government and charities, while commercial institutions can offer long term funding at competitive interest rates. And the generosity of individuals can never be underestimated.”

For further information, visit www.tenterdenclt.org

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

More than 300 people braved stormy winds and lashing rain to visit the Selective Neighbourhood Plan (NP) exhibition and public

consultation at St Mildred’s Church, Tenterden in November.

It was a remarkable turnout, reflecting residents’ concerns about the need to protect the local environment – the implementation of an NP is the only viable and statutory way to protect green spaces for future generations.

Said NP chairman Richard Masefield: “A recent study by the Campaign to Protect Rural England has suggested that the amount of farmland, woodland, gardens and greenfield land lost to housing development is now increasing annually at the rate of 58 percent.

“In Tenterden and its surrounding parish the Neighbourhood Plan provides us with an opportunity to do something about that, and we are determined to take it.”

Cllr John Crawford, chairman of the Town Council’s planning committee and one of the 30-strong NP campaigning group, said: “I’m extremely proud of how the whole community has created positive ideas to preserve and improve our historic town, the Weald countryside and the environment well into the future.”

For further information, visit www.tenterdenneighbourhoodplan.org/



RESIDENTS ENCOURAGED TO REVIEW DEVELOPERS’ HOME PLANS

A flood of planning applications from developers has resulted in the council’s planning committee currently reviewing plans to build almost 450 new homes.

This is in addition to the 250 homes on Tent1A which is nearing completion, and 225 on Tent1B which has been approved as part of the Local Plan

If all the pending applications were granted, this would increase the town’s population from 7,180 to around 10,000, with a consequent impact on the town’s GP and social services, schools, parking and infrastructure.

Cllr John Crawford, chairman of the planning committee, says that none of the new applications are in the agreed Local Plan. Developers can still legally apply for permission to build up to 1,000 new homes as ‘windfall’ developments throughout the entire borough of Ashford, but points out that Tenterden would face a disproportionate burden.

The council is encouraging local residents to visit the Ashford Borough Council website planning.ashford.gov.uk and click on Planning Applications

For the Limes Land application (250 new homes), key in 19 as the Case Year, and 01788/AS as the Application Number.

For Tilden Gill (100 new homes), key in 14 as the Case Year, and 01420/AS as the Application Number.

For the Westwell Court application (56-bed care home and 23 assisted living units), key in 17 as the Case Year, and 00708/AS as the Application Number.

For the Smallhythe Road development (54 apartments for older residents), key in 19 as the Case Year, and 01669/AS as the Application Number.

For London Beach Hotel development (60 flats for active retirees), key in 19 as the Case Year, and 01206/AS as the Application Number

SURGERY WELLBEING SCHEME BACKED BY COUNCIL

An imaginative initiative to improve the wellbeing of local people is being backed with a £5,000 grant from the Town Council.

The scheme, called ‘social prescribing’, will be piloted by Ivy Court Surgery in Tenterden and associated doctors’ surgeries in Woodchurch, Charing and Hamstreet.

Dr Neil Pillai from Ivy Court told the council that while the area has excellent local health resources “there are many challenges that lie ahead – advances in healthcare have led to an ageing population, societal changes have led to a fragmentation of the family unit, and financial pressures have led to significant cutbacks in NHS and social care provision”.

He said increasing cases of loneliness and social isolation and the pressures of modern life are leading to an epidemic of mental health problems “that spare no age or class”.

In many cases, patients can be helped with simple initiatives that connect people and keep their minds and bodies active, including gardening clubs, knitting groups, yoga classes and Men in Sheds groups.

Cllr Kate Walder, who presented a report to the council on social prescribing, said that half of all people over 65 take at least five types of medication a day, while research has shown that following referral to a social prescribing programme, demand for GP services falls by 28 percent and there is a 24 percent reduction in A&E attendances.

The council grant will pay for training of surgery staff by specialist social prescribing organisation Wellbeing Enterprises, which will include spotlighting local needs and resources – Ivy Court has already identified 102 voluntary, charitable and other organisations which could help patients under a social prescribing scheme.

COUNCIL GIVES GO-AHEAD TO WILDFLOWER VERGES

Plans to create wildflower verges in the town and a wildlife habitat at Kiln Field have been approved by the council.

Verges in Appledore Road, Chalk Avenue and St Michaels are to be designated as areas encouraging the natural growth of wildflowers and grasses, part of Tenterden’s continuing drive to make the town as ecologically and environmentally friendly as possible.

