



Royston Town Council

Annual Report for the Financial Year 2007-2008



Published June 2008

Introduction

This report is the Annual Report of Royston Town Council, it summaries the activities of the council since the last Annual Meeting of the council held 14th May 2007. Information about the council and minutes of meetings are available on the web-site, www.roystontowncouncil.gov.uk. The town council's newsletter is published quarterly.

Quality Council Status

In December 2007 Royston Town Council was awarded the nationally recognised status of Quality Town Council. This award confirms that Royston Town Council is run in accordance with the high standards required by the National Association of Local Councils and other government bodies. In achieving Quality Status, we have demonstrated that we are an active, professional, and a competent body to work with and performing above national minimum standards. Royston is the first council in North Hertfordshire to gain this award and only the fifth in the county.



Presentation from Mr Farguarson of Quality Status Award to Royston Town Council

Civic Responsibility - Councillor Peter Lill – Town Mayor 2007-2008

It is with deep sadness that I report the sudden death of Councillor Peter Lill. His death came on the day which was to see the end of his mayoral year and the handing over of the chain. Condolences go to his family; he will be greatly missed by fellow councillors and staff. Leader of the town council Councillor Lynn Berry said: "Peter served the public through most of his life in his job as a fire-fighter and then as a councillor. He was proud to have been mayor twice and was enthusiastic about carrying out his duties in the community."

The Mayor carries out civic engagements on behalf of the people of Royston. During the year the Mayor attended over 50 engagements. The major civic events for the year were the Mayor's Reception, the Civic Service, Christmas Day visits and the Remembrance Day Parade during which the Mayor laid a wreath on behalf of the Council at the Royston War Memorial and at the 91st Bomb Group Memorial in Priory Memorial Gardens.



One of the highlights of the year was receiving a Silver Award for Royston at the Anglia in Bloom Awards Ceremony in Ipswich and then presenting awards to the winners of the Royston in Bloom competition. Other events included the La Loupe Twinning Reception, the Pink Ribbon Race, the Parish Church Fete (which included the Mayor doing a sponsored bounce on the bouncy castle), Royston Kite Festival, 75th anniversary of St. John Ambulance in Royston and the 25th Anniversary of the Falklands War Memorial Service at the Royston Memorial.

His chosen charities for the year were the Lewin Stroke & Rehab Unit at Addenbrookes and the Royston Stroke Club. During the year he held two quiz evenings and a charity golf day to help with raising funds for them. Together with other donations from various organisations and the Royston Crow, he managed to raise over £4300 to be equally divided between the two charities. Report by Town Clerk.

Royston Town Council Office Details

Town Hall, Melbourn St, Royston, Herts, SG8 7DA

Enquiries 01763 245484. Fax 01763 248016

Email: enquiries@roystontowncouncil.gov.uk

Web-site: www.roystontowncouncil.gov.uk

Office opening hours:

Monday-Thursday 9am—1pm & 2pm—5pm

Friday 2pm—4.30pm.

Staff:

Town Clerk, Susan Thornton-Björk:

town.clerk@roystontowncouncil.gov.uk

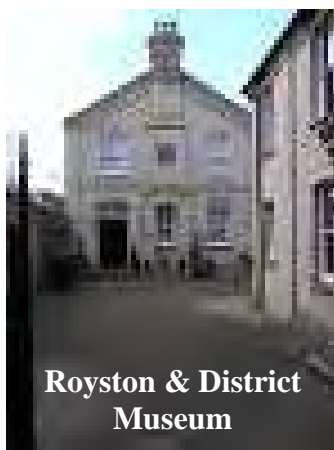


Assistant to Clerk, Jean Waldock: jean.waldock@roystontowncouncil.gov.uk

Administrative Officer, Pam Robinson: pam.robinson@roystontowncouncil.gov.uk

Administrative Assistant, Yolanda Hayes.

The council also employs four part-time caretakers and cleaners.



Royston & District Museum

5 Lower King St, Royston, Herts, SG8 5AL

Tel: 01763 242597. www.roystonmuseum.org.uk

Museum Opening Hours:

Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday 10am—4.45pm

and at other times by arrangement with the curator.

Staff:

Museum Curator, Carole Kaszak: curator@roystonmuseum.org.uk

Museum Assistant, Anstey Garrick Green.

Town Councillors

15 councillors represent 3 wards in the town. In 2006 all seats were up for election; in May 2007, due to the resignation of Councillor Barton, one seat was up for election. The next full elections are due in 2010.

The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chairmen of Committees are elected annually in May. The following councillors held office during 2007-2008:

Town Mayor: Councillor P. Lill

Deputy Town Mayor: Councillor P. Grimes **Chairman Finance:** Councillor L. Berry (Leader)

Chairman Planning: Councillor B. Prime **Chairman G P & Highways:** Councillor M. Harrison

Royston Heath

Burt, P Mr (Con) Tel. 248042

Davidson, L Mrs (Con) Tel. 221431

Doel, C Mr (Con) Tel. 07771914258

Gaillard, E Ms (Con) Tel. 242924

Kennedy, R Mr (Con) Tel. 245681

Royston Meridian

Grimes, P Mr (Con) Tel. 244139

Harrison, M Mr (Con) Tel. 220055

Lill, P J Mr (Con) Tel. 242310

Phillips, M Mrs (Con) Tel. 250844

Smith, R Mr (Con) Tel. 222890

Royston Palace

Beardwell, E Mrs (Lib Dem) Tel. 242242

Berry, L Mrs (Con) Tel. 243272

Inwood, R Mr (Lib Dem) Tel. 221793

Mayne, P Mr (Con) Tel. 246550

Prime, W Mr (Con) Tel. 242152

There are also Sub-Committees and Working Parties which are set up at the beginning of the year, these were the Town Premises & Human Resources Sub-Committee, Museum Sub-Advisory Committee, Royston in Bloom Working Party and the May Fayre Working Party. In total, there were over 76 meetings with councillors' average attendance being 78%. Extra working party groups were formed as required to deal with current issues and consultations. The council responded to a number of consultation documents during the year which included the North Hertfordshire District Council's Royston Town Centre Strategy, Core Strategy and Development Policy and Land Allocations Issues consultation. The council also responded to the Stevenage and North Herts Action Plan (SNAP) and the East of England consultation on Gypsy and Travellers Site Accommodation.

Councillors also represent the council on various organisations such as Royston Community Transport, Chamber of Commerce, Friends of Royston Museum, Royston & District Sports Council and the Twinning Association and report back to committee meetings regularly.

The council met seven times during the year, with the main area of the council's work being delegated to the principle committees of Finance, Planning and General Purpose & Highways. Finance and Planning met monthly, with General Purpose & Highways meeting bi-monthly. All these committee meetings were open to members of the public and press, with a time allowed at the beginning of each meeting for members of the public to speak. Agendas are published on the town council's notice-board and the web-site.

The Annual Town Meeting March 27th 2008

At the Annual Town meeting the following awards were presented by the Mayor Councillor Peter Lill:

Community Chest Awards

This year grants totalled £1,500 and were made to the following groups and organisations .

Organisation	Purpose	Award
Archaeology Family Fun Day	Family Fun Archaeology Day (part of National Archaeology Week) at Royston & District Museum in July 2008	£100
Friends of Guiding (Royston)	To improve, tidy and plant area in front of Guide Hut	£150
Rotary Club of Royston	Towards hire charge of concert hall for Youth Makes Music Concert	£250
Royston Arts Society	Towards the rental of hall for the Annual Art Exhibition 2008	£150
Royston Band	To assist with the costs involved in the Royston Town Band's trip to the Whit Friday Band Competition	£150
Royston & District Twinning Association	Financial assistance to take visitors out from our Twinning Town Grosselmerode	£150
Royston Greenfingers Club	To purchase shrubs for planting in gardens between Health Centre & Town Hall to improve appearance of area	£100
Royston Junior Netball Club	To purchase equipment including kit and balls	£150
St Johns Parenting Team	To help with running costs of a crèche for parents attending a morning, monthly, parenting café	£100
The Open House Project	To the costs of purchasing a camcorder to be used by young people for film making projects	£100
Westgate Dance Fund	To help towards transport cost of coaches to take girls to Earls Court to take part in 'Guinness World Record' event	£100

COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS 2007/2008

The Mayor awarded five awards this year. Three of the awards were given to people who have helped with the running of the museum over many years:

Peter Ketteringham - as Trustee of the Museum and for his involvement with the Royston & District History Society and many other Royston organisations.

Shirley Keith-Williams - for her many years voluntary service to Royston and District Museum (since 1989) and other Royston organisations.

Christine Whitbourn - for her voluntary services to Royston and District Museum and her fundraising support for the Friends of the Museum since 1999.



The other two awards went to:

Colin Mingay - for his thirty years' dedicated service with Hertfordshire Constabulary, of which a third of this time was spent as a Royston Community Policeman.

Christine Baker - for her thirty-six years' dedicated service as a teacher at St. Mary's Catholic Primary School.

Reports from the Chairman of the Principle Committees

Finance Committee: Leader & Chairman of Finance, Councillor Berry.

As reported at last year's Annual Meeting, there has been a lot of work done to reach Quality Council status. As you may have seen in the press Royston Town Council was awarded Quality Status in December 2007. We are very proud to have achieved this recognition and being only the fifth council in Hertfordshire to do so.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank Cllr Peter Lill, for his hard work on behalf of Royston and his charities over the past year, not only has he been busy representing the town of Royston but he took the time out in December to marry his Mayoress, congratulations to Wendy and Peter.

Royston has some wonderful attributes of which the council remains committed to supporting, the War Memorial, the Cave, Royston & District Museum and the May Fayre. We continue to support Royston in Bloom and were really pleased Royston achieved a Silver Award in the Anglia in Bloom competition last year.

The Community Chest Awards are always gratefully received, Royston Town Council has allocated money to top up the Community Awards Fund to ensure that projects can be supported for quite a few years to come

I also reported at last year's meeting there was a sum included in the budget for external re-decoration of the Town Hall. This as some of you may be aware has now been done.

It is the responsibility of this Council and all its members to keep costs to a minimum whilst continuing to ensure a level of service for the town. After many lengthy discussions with fellow councillors, and quite a few re-workings of the figures, the precept for 2008/09 was set at £179,560.

My thanks for their hard work over the past year go to the town clerk and the assistant town clerk and also to my fellow councillors for their continued support over the past year.

General Purpose & Highways Committee: Chairman Councillor M Harrison.

2007-2008 has been a very busy year and the following issues were discussed by the committee:

Cold Calling Zones: Last year we mentioned discussions were taking place with the police to set up a no Cold Calling Zone, this has now been done in one area of the town.

Parking: Parking is a major problem in Royston and Royston Town Council informed the district of areas of concern particularly Newmarket Road. I'm pleased to see that restrictions will soon be in place. A parking strategy for the whole of the town centre in general is still under discussion by the district council. We are still trying to bring in a weight limit of 7.5 tonnes for Melbourn St to help protect the cave. We have had support from the NHDC Royston Area Committee and are still waiting the out-come of this.

Bus Services: The local bus service has been a major concern to us and we have discussed in length the withdrawal of the 17 service and expressed our opposition to this. It is now possible that some form of compromise could be found but details of this are not available as yet.

Royston Youth Council:

We are pleased to have worked with North Herts District Council in setting up a Royston Youth Council. We hope this will help engage the young people of our town in some if not many of the issues that face us in connection with the youth. In addition both town, district and the county councillor have visited schools in the town to explain the workings of the various councils and to listen to the students points of view.

In closing, I would like to thank my deputy, Councillor Philip Mayne and the other councillors for their support and also the town clerk, her assistant and the other members of staff for their help and assistance. I would also like to thank our County Councillor, Doug Drake and various District Councillors who have attended our meetings, their input and advice is always greatly appreciated.

Planning Committee: Chairman Councillor Prime.

As a statutory consultee for planning applications within Royston, the planning committee have had a busy year since last May, a total of 114 planning applications were responded to by the committee. One of the key responsibilities of the committee is to examine applications not just for technical aspects, but also to try and make sure that they blend in with surrounding buildings, many of which are very ancient and historical to the town.

There were a number of contentious applications that concerned residents of the town greatly and a number of members of the public came and addressed the committee to voice their views. With the ever increasing number of applications decided by delegated authority at the Planning Authority, it provides the only opportunity for public debate of some planning applications.

There was also a number of consultations that the council were asked to comment on as part of the North Hertfordshire Local Development Plan, working parties were set up to form a response to them on behalf of the council. A working party of the committee has been working closely with officers of North Herts on the Town Centre Strategy.

I would like to thank the Town Clerk and the town hall staff for all their help over the past months together with my colleagues on the committee who have worked tirelessly on an unprecedented number of strategies. The planning committee is committed to playing its part in helping revitalising the beautiful and ancient market town of Royston.

Properties:

Royston Town Council owns the Town Hall, Royston Cave, Green St Allotments, 30 Kneesworth St (leased out to a dental surgery), Market Hill Rooms, Royston War Memorial, Stile Plantation and Green Walk Plantation. The Town Hall and Market Hill Rooms are hired out on a regular basis to local organisations and commercial hirers. Market Hill Rooms now has disabled access and toilets. For hiring details please refer to the web-site or telephone the council office.

**Royston & District Museum:**

The town council runs the local Royston & District Museum as an agent for North Herts District Council. During the town council's budget discussions for 2008-2009, it was decided to close the museum on Sundays to help reduce operating costs.

In total, 3664 people visited the museum last year. Donations received from visitors, during the year, amounted to over £700. This money is used for purchasing items for the collection.

There has been renewed interest in the museum from local schools, with visits focusing on the different themes, The Victorians, The Changing Face of Royston and Costumes from the Past. In December, the museum received a visit from the High Sheriff of Hertfordshire.

The Friends of the Museum have funded the conservation of a number of etchings by E.H. Whydale in the sum of £1,690. These will be exhibited at the Elizabeth Marsh exhibition during 2009.

Exhibitions displayed in the museum during the year were:

- Melbourn Photographic Club - in 2007
- The Natural History of Hertfordshire - Brian Sawford
- Images of New Zealand – Rachel Haynes
- Colouring In – Art work by Anstey Garrick Green & Falcon Green
- Jack's War Diary
- Footsteps - Paintings by Christina Pattison
- Melbourn Photographic Club - in 2008

Events during the year included:

- Bassingbourn Iron Age Dig – Royston Museum had a display stand and the Royston Time Trackers also attended. They went for their first field walk, the finds of which are now on display in the museum, and they also met Carezza Lewis of Time Team
- Family Archaeology Day - Attracted 150 visitors and £113 was raised in aid of the museum
- Two art workshops 'Colour, Cut, Create' – run by Anstey Garrick Green as part of the Royston Arts Festival – 30 children attended and the event brought in a total of 86 visitors to the museum during the morning
- Demonstration of the Royston Crow Printing Press – demonstration by Councillor Liz Beardwell as part of the Royston Arts Festival
- Mulled Wine Morning hosted by the Friends of Royston Museum in celebration of Christmas
- Book Sale as part of the North Herts Book Festival, which raised approx. £100

Royston Time Trackers – Formed in April 2007. A new group for young people between the age of 8 and 16 of age who want to explore the objects, buildings and history of the local area. Membership is free but numbers are restricted, they meet on the last Saturday every month. Ring the museum to find out further information and apply for an entry form. Membership is currently full and there is now a waiting list.

Royston May Fayre, 7th May 2007:

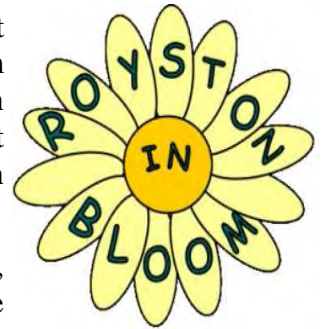


The town council, in partnership with Royston Round Table and Royston Rotary Club, and with support from other organisations, continue to run this yearly event. This event gives local charities and voluntary organisations a chance to apply for a free pitch at the event and raise money for their own organisation or for a charity.

The day started with the Classic Car Show in the Civic Car Park, with the main event in the park being opened by the Mayor at 12 noon. Despite the rain many people came and enjoyed the free entertainment provided. The main attraction, the TWAT Mountain Bike Display Team proved to be very popular, as did the Royston Town Band and Opus 17 playing in the beer tent.

Royston in Bloom:

Every year the committee continue to work hard to ensure Royston looks its best and in 2008 won a Silver Award in the Anglia in Bloom competition. The team continues to work on projects around the town and over the year there have been improvements made at the area around the Guide-Hut, planting of trees at Coombes Community Centre and planting up of a flower bed at Royston Health Centre.



The 'Sponsor a Bulb' stall at Royston's Sunday Farmers Market in October 2007, proved to be very popular with many visitors paying for a bulb to be planted in the town. Thanks go to all the volunteers and sponsors who show their support.

Allotments

Royston Town Council owns the Green St Allotments; the size of the site is approximately 4.5 acres and is divided into 127 plots. All plots have been let over the last year and there are now forty six people on the waiting list. The Royston Allotments and Gardens Association works closely with the town council to make sure the site is maintained to a good standard.



The Royston & District Local History Society continue to manage the cave and provide guides for visitors to the cave. The cave is open on Saturdays and Sundays 2.30pm to 5pm from Easter Sunday to the end of September, Wednesdays 2.30pm to 5pm during August and at other times by arrangement.

An application for Scheduled Monument Consent has been applied for, this will enable the replaced of the deteriorating railings at the bottom of the cave. There is ongoing investigations into ways of preserving the carvings.



The Leete Charity Trust:

This charity is administered by the town council and members serve as Trustees. The charity provides grants towards further education for students who live, or attend school, in Royston. In 2007-2008 a total of £1,930 was made available to 9 applicants. Application forms are available from the council offices and on the web-site. Information about this charity is given to schools in Royston and surrounding area.

Financial Statements for the year-ending 31st March 2008

An independent internal auditor is commissioned to inspect the council's accounts, he attends the offices twice a year. Checks are made to ensure the council is complying to relevant procedures and controls which are expected to be operational during the financial year. After the completion of the year-end the accounts are sent to an independent external auditor for verification.

Inc and Exp Year End Accounts 31 March 2008					
31-Mar-07	INCOME	31-Mar-08	06-07	General Fund	07-08
158,368.00	Precept	170,000.00	74,364.24	Balance 1 Apr 07	128,661.62
39,464.59	Agency	43,051.29	314,472.72	Total Income	329,041.09
16,573.42	Interest	16,150.15	355,344.74	Total Expenditure	382,507.11
31,976.92	Town Hall, MHR, Priory Rooms	33,545.38	33,492.22		75,195.60
5,008.15	Museum	6,366.99	95,169.40	Transfer to other a/c	773.65
1,118.00	Allotments rents	1,202.75	128,661.62	Balance at 31 Mar 07	74,421.95
15,496.39	30 Kneesworth Street Rent	15,352.49			
2,431.00	Royston Cave	2,000.00			
4,459.34	May Fayre/In Bloom/Christmas Lights	11,064.97	Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2008		
32,576.91	Town Centre Forum/Other A/C	30,307.07		Current Assets	
7,000.00	War Memorial Grant	0.00	1,592.26	Museum Stock	1,523.63
314,472.72	Total Income	329,041.09	15,198.50	Debtors+ Vat	10,719.66
	EXPENDITURE		413,718.38	Cash/Bank A/c	355,370.22
104,883.91	General Administration	93,005.58			
39,464.59	Agency	43,051.29	430,509.14		367,613.51
81,453.71	Town Hall, MHR, Priory Rooms	93,325.36	Less Current Liabilities		
65,686.14	Museum	69,466.09	34,574.38	Creditors	25,144.77
1,204.44	Allotments	950.93			
4,680.55	Royston Cave	4,096.95	Net Assets		
796.39	30 Kneesworth Street	792.49	26,633.97	Other accounts	*27,407.62
2,086.46	War Memorial	14,919.16	206,000.00	Stamford Yard Bal	206,000.00
12,654.60	Civic/May Fayre/Christmas lights/In Bloom	12,024.22	81,131.62	General fund Bal	**73,323.6
5,443.93	Plantations	4,931.59	47,530.00	MHR Fund	1,098.35
36,990.02	Town Centre forum/ Other	45,943.45	34,639.17	Capital Fund Bal	34,639.17
355,344.74	Total Expenditure	382,507.11	395,934.76	Total Balance	342,468.74
The above statement represents fairly the financial position of the authority as at 31 Mar 08 and reflects the income and expenditure during the year.					

* Balances of Other accounts held by the Town Council at 31 March 2008

Museum Tapestry	£5,934	Museum Donations	£3,415
British Gas Fund	£4,451	War Memorial	£2,194
May Fayre Fund	£4,816	Town Centre Forum	£6,599

Trust Fund Accounts held:

Leete Charity Fund	£20,894	Cave Trust Fund	£15,920
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** The General Fund balance includes the following amounts, which are earmarked funds:

Museum Stock, Jacks War Book Sales - £3,318.50—Town Centre Forum Balance - £5,774.71

Town Council Budget

Shown below is the budget allocated for the year 2007-2008 together with the out-turn of the income and expenditure for the year. A saving of £1,069 was made on expenditure for the year, and income was £6,759 higher than expected this was due to higher interest rates. Details of the budget workings for 2008-2009 are also show.

<u>Summary</u>	<u>2008-2009</u>	<u>2007-2008</u>	<u>2007-2008</u>
	Budget	Year End	Budget
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>			
Offices	102,682	91,111	93,580
Museum	67,305	65,741	65,870
Town Hall	29,089	35,126	29,924
Priory Rooms	6,480	4,647	6,712
Market Hill Rooms	7,894	7,119	7,321
Plantation	5,445	4,932	5,225
Other Expenses (Civic, May Fayre, Christmas lights)	11,195	11,002	11,005
Royston Cave	3,000	3,097	3,000
Allotments	978	951	960
War Memorial	2,073	1,760	2,415
30 Kneesworth St	800	792	1,335
Town Centre Manager(LGA 72 s144)	10,000	10,000	10,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	246,941	236,278	237,347
<u>INCOME</u>	-		
Donations received for Mayors Chain		110	
Interest	12,000	16,150	11,000
Museum	700	2,618	900
Town Hall	20,457	19,739	19,600
Priory Centre	6,773	6,307	7,395
Market Hill Rooms	9,250	7,889	7,650
Allotments	1,120	1,203	1,120
30 Kneesworth St (Rent)	14,830	15,352	15,085
Other Income - Land sale - Misc		141	
TOTAL INCOME	65,130	69,509	62,750
NET EXPENDITURE	181,811	166,769	174,597
Precept	179,560	170,000	170,000
Net difference	-2,251	3,231	-4,597

The Local Government Act 1972 Section 137 gives councils the ‘power to incur expenditure for certain purposes not otherwise authorised’. The limit for spending under this section for Royston Town Council in the year of account was £69,823.20 being 12,380 electors multiplied by £5.64.

The following payments were made this year:

- British Gas Account - Contribution to the Community Chest Awards £ 750
- Royston Day Centre - Donation to lunches £1,000
- Town Twinning Association - Donation £ 100
- British Legion Poppy Appeal - Donation £50

For further information please contact the Town Clerk,
Tel. 01763 245484, or email: town.clerk@roystontowncouncil.gov.uk