

# Royston Town Council

## 2006-2007 Annual Report

June 2007



*Mayor's Foreword : My year as Mayor has been a very busy one; out of 103 invitations I managed to attend all but 21 of them. These included a lot of AGM's and open days, plus the cutting of at least 7 ribbons. As well as being invited to many dinners and lunches with various groups within Royston, I also attended many fund raising events in other areas of North Hertfordshire. I would like to thank all of you who invited me during my wonderful year as Mayor, I have thoroughly enjoyed it. I would also like to thank everyone who gave a donation and supported my fund raising events throughout the year, with everyone's help I have raised over £5,000 for Meldreth Manor School and Royston Day Centre.*

**Councillor Lynn Berry, Town Mayor 2006-2007**

### TOWN COUNCILLORS

15 councillors represent 3 wards in the town. In 2006 all seats were up for election and 9 previous councillors were re-elected and 6 new councillors voted in. The councillors for 2006-2007 were:

#### **Royston Heath**

Barton, C Mr (Con), resigned Mar 07  
Burt, P Mr (Con) Tel. 248042  
Davidson, L Mrs (Con) Tel. 221431  
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

### ORGANISATION

The Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Chairmen of Committees are elected annually in May. The following councillors held office during 2006-2007:

**Town Mayor:** Councillor L Berry

**Deputy Town Mayor:** Councillor C Barton

**Chairman Finance:** Councillor P Mayne (Leader)

**Chairman Planning:** Councillor B Prime

**Chairman G P & Highways:** Councillor C Barton

Full Council met six times during the year with the main area of the council's work delegated to the principle committees which are Finance, Planning and General Purpose & Highways. Finance and Planning met monthly and General Purpose & Highways bi-monthly. All of these committee meetings were open to members of the public and press.

There are also a number of Sub-Committees and Working Parties which are Town Premises & Human Resources Sub-Committee, Museum Sub-Advisory Committee, Royston in Bloom Working Party and the May Fayre Working Party. In total, this amounted to 84 meetings with the councillor's average attendance being 76%. In addition to these meetings, extra working party groups were set up during the year to deal with current issues, such as the review of the Conservation Area Policy for Royston, applying for Quality Town Status and car-parking issues within the town. Councillors also served as representatives for the council with various organisations within the town.

The council employs 4 full-time staff: Town Clerk/Responsible Finance Officer Susan Thornton-Björk, Assistant to Clerk Jean Waldock, Administrative Assistant Pam Robinson, Museum Curator Carole Kaszak. There are also 6 part-time staff: Museum Assistant Anstey Garrick Green, Admin Assistant Yolanda Hayes and 4 caretaker/cleaners.

The council offices are open Monday-Friday 9am-1pm, Monday-Thursday 2pm-5pm and Friday 2pm-4.30pm. Tel:01763 245484, Fax 01763 248016 Email: [enquiries@roystontowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@roystontowncouncil.gov.uk) Web-site: [www.roystontowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.roystontowncouncil.gov.uk). Address: Town Hall, Melbourn St, Royston, Herts, SG8 7DA.

# Royston Town Council Activities

**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, and Stile and Green Walk Plantations. The Town Hall and Market Hill Rooms are hired out on a regular basis to local organisations and commercial hirers. All the allotment plots were let during the year and there were approximately 40 people on the waiting list for an allotment.



**Royston & District Museum:** The town council is responsible for the running of the local Royston & District Museum. During 2006-2007 a total of 4035 people visited the museum; these included groups from Potton History Society, an American Spiritual Group, U3a Sawston College and 4 local school groups. The museum displayed 6 exhibitions during the year which included 'Whydale Etchings' from the museum's collection, 'Photographs by Terry Hartga' and 'Ornamental Creations by Cheryl Moore'.

Donations received from visitors during the year amounted to over £350. This money is used for purchasing items for the collection. One of the items donated to the museum collection during the year was a Long Case Clock, manufactured by a Royston clock maker.

The Royston Tapestry continues to be embroidered by volunteers. The Tapestry Fund has now reached over £5,000 from donations this is used towards the threads needed and will be used towards framing when finished. The tapestry can be seen at the museum.

**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. This year grants totalling £2,565 were made to 12 applicants.

**Community Chest Awards:** Every year the council awards grants to community organisations within the town and these were presented at the Annual Town Meeting. A total of £2,484 was distributed between 14 applications.

**May Fayre, 1st May 2006:** The town council, in partnership with The Round Table and The Rotary Club, and with the support from other organisations, continue to run this yearly event. The event was well supported with thousands turning out on a lovely summers day to enjoy the many side stalls and, in particular, the 'PAWS' dog display team. It is a chance for local charities and voluntary organisation to have a free stall and raise funds, as well as informing the public of what they do.

**Royston Cave:** The Local History Society continues to manage and provide guides for the opening of the cave. The cave was opened on 59 occasions from April 06 to the end of September 06. Due to a heavy rainstorm at the end of July, the cave had to be closed for the weekend because of flooding. The number of visitors for 2006 were 1642 adults, 425 children and three TV film makers, this was an increase of 744 visitors compared to the previous year, possibly due to the publicity surrounding the Da Vinci Code book and associated TV programmes. The new Royston Cave web-site was launched in April 06 and attracts many visitors to the site; it is designed and maintained by a volunteer. Visit [www.roystoncave.co.uk](http://www.roystoncave.co.uk).



**Royston in Bloom:** The committee continued to work hard throughout the year. They had to withdraw Royston's entry into the 2006 Anglia in Bloom competition due to lack of admin support, but with an increase in members during the year they have entered into the 2007 competition. Many projects have been completed and their thanks go to all the volunteers and sponsors who show their support. The committee have worked particularly hard securing sponsorship to ensure that all of Royston's hanging baskets will be filled and displayed around the town centre. Sponsorship was received from Solutions for Business, Walkers Partnership, Stationery Cupboard, Trinity Life Church, Curwens Solicitors, WJK Accountants, Local History Society, Pelmark Flint Cross, Royston Country-Homes and Gardens, Mark Weatherhead, Stuart G Findlay, Brian Racher Trust, Mr Tutton, NHDC Area Committee, and Royston Crow.

## **The Annual Town Meeting March 22<sup>nd</sup> 2007**

### **Reports from Chairmen of the principle committees**

**Finance Committee:** During my year as Leader, there was a significant change in the running of the town council in that our former Town Clerk retired after guiding the council very well for thirteen years. We are fortunate that her experienced and well qualified deputy, Susan Thornton-Björk was appointed as our new Town Clerk, and as her assistant we secured the services of Jean Waldock.

One of the principal duties of the Finance Committee was to prepare a budget for 2007-2008 and to set Royston's precept. (See page 4) Many of the 06-07 budget figures remained unchanged but otherwise a 2% increase was made, for insurance, rates and fuel a 5% increase was felt prudent, reflecting higher than expected rises in 06-07. The overall increase equates to 4p per Band D household per week. There were only three new items in the budget, a small sum for Quality Town Council Status, funds for a refurbished copier for the museum and a larger sum of £5,000, for the external decorations of the town hall.

During the year, a small working party was set up to examine the possibility of the town council applying for Quality Town Council Status accreditation. The working party demonstrated, that for very little additional expenditure, accreditation was within our grasp since the council already fulfils the majority of the accreditation criteria. A newsletter called the Royston Town Crier has been produced, it is delivered around the town with the local Police Incident Report; further copies are available at the library and the town hall.

The current restoration on the War Memorial is being funded by contributions of £7,000 from English Heritage and £7,000 from North Herts District Council.

Royston Town Council continues to support the Town Centre Manager, who is doing much to try to restore the fortunes of the town centre. We have seen both Farmers and European markets selling their wares in the centre of Royston.

Finally, Market Hill Rooms has undergone refurbishment with a new disabled access and a disabled toilet. The cost of this work has not come out of the precept as it has been funded by part of the money raised from the sale of Stamford Yard. **Councillor Mayne, Past Leader & Chairman of Finance**

**Planning Committee:** The Planning Committee consulted on a total of 122 applications during the year, of these, approximately one third of them have proved to be controversial. When these appeared on the agenda, the council increasingly saw concerned residents forming themselves into properly constituted organisations and coming to meetings to voice their concerns through an elected spokesperson.

This is a very welcome trend, not only does it help the town council's Planning Committee, it also helps the planning officers at NHDC as it gives them an elected spokesperson to consult and meet with. It proved very helpful to hear the views from residents in different parts of the town during the Royston Conservation Policy consultation. **Councillor Prime, Chairman of Planning**

**General Purpose & Highways Committee:** 2006-2007 has been a very busy year and the following issues were discussed by the committee:

*Cold Calling Zones:* The town council has been and is still in discussions with the police authorities on setting up of such zones, and a survey is still being carried out.

*Gypsy Sites:* We await further information following a draft from the East of England Assembly to give our response. We are advised a further document is to be issued.

*Train Timetables:* First Capital Connect is considering a change to its timetables. The committee is aware that both our MP Oliver Heald and the North Herts District Council have expressed their opposition to these changes and the town council is supporting the efforts already being made. All proposed changes will not only affect Royston, but the whole district in general, a reduced service must be resisted.

*Parking:* Parking is a major problem in Royston and the district's increase in parking charges has not helped the situation. To avoid paying parking charges, more people are parking on the streets, this is causing major problems in Newmarket Road and the surrounding side streets, and King James Way. Parking in the whole of the town centre in general is a concern to members and we have asked for a meeting with North Herts District Council officers to discuss the matter further. **Councillor Harrison, Vice-Chairman General Purpose & Highways**

## Financial Statements

Twice a year an independent internal auditor comes in and inspects the accounts. After the year-end the accounts are sent to an independent external auditor for verification. The statement below shows the council's accounts at the 31 March 2007.

Inc and Exp Year End Accounts 31 March 2007					
31-Mar-06	INCOME	31-Mar-07	05-06	General Fund	06-07
153,013.00	Precept	158,368.00	89,972.62	Bal at 1 Apr 06	74,364.24
36,967.04	Agency	39,464.59	337,954.75	Total Income	314,472.72
17,005.89	Interest	16,573.42	343,347.96	Total Expenditure	355,344.74
33,085.41	Town Hall, MHR, Priory Rooms	31,976.92	84,579.41		33,492.22
12,772.44	Museum	5,008.15	10,215.17	Transfer to other a/c	95,169.40
1,223.00	Allotments rents	1,118.00	<b>74,364.24</b>	<b>Balance at 31 Mar 07</b>	<b>128,661.62</b>
12,000.00	30 Kneesworth Street Rent	15,496.39			
0.00	Royston Cave	2,431.00	<b>Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2007</b>		
2,425.98	May Fayre/In Bloom/Christmas Lights	4,459.34			
69,461.99	Town Centre Forum/Other A/C	32,576.91		<b>Current Assets</b>	
0.00	War Memorial Grant	7,000.00	2,032.11	Museum Stock	1,592.26
<b>337,954.75</b>	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>314,472.72</b>	18,928.35	Debtors+ Vat	15,198.50
	<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		470,040.96	Cash/Bank A/c	413,718.38
84,173.10	General Administration	104,883.91			
36,967.04	Agency	39,464.59	<b>491,001.42</b>		<b>430,509.14</b>
46,610.54	Town Hall, MHR, Priory Rooms	81,453.71	<b>Less Current Liabilities</b>		
81,037.19	Museum	65,686.14	54,194.64	Creditors	34,574.38
1,504.36	Allotments	1,204.44			
1,186.06	Royston Cave	4,680.55	<b>Net Assets</b>		
-	30 Kneesworth Street	796.39	31,803.37	Other accounts	26,633.97
2,853.67	War Memorial	2,086.46	296,000.00	Stamford Yard Bal	206,000.00
14,052.68	Civic/May Fayre/Christmas lights/In Bloom	12,654.60	74,364.24	General Fund Bal	81,131.62
5,418.80	Plantations	5,443.93	0.00	MHR Fund	47,530.00
69,544.52	Town Centre forum/ Other	36,990.02	34,639.17	Capital Fund Bal	34,639.17
<b>343,347.96</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>355,344.74</b>	<b>436,806.78</b>	<b>Total Balance</b>	<b>395,934.76</b>
<b>The above statement represents fairly the financial position of the authority as at 31 Mar 07 and reflects the councils income and expenditure during the year.</b>					

The chart below shows the budget and year-end figures for 2006-2007, together with the budget allocated for the 2007-2008. During 06-07, a savings of over £8,000 were made on expenditure; this, together with an increase in income of more than £11,000 (partly due to higher interest rates), meant the council made savings of over £19,500 against the budget allocated for the year.

	Budget	Year-end	Budget		Budget	Year-end	Budget
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	<u>2007-08</u>	<u>2006-07</u>	<u>2006-07</u>	<u>INCOME</u>	<u>2007-08</u>	<u>2006-07</u>	<u>2006-07</u>
Offices	93,580	101,097	<b>108,090</b>	Donations/Grants		<b>150</b>	
Museum	65,870	63,104	<b>64,058</b>	Interest	11,000	16,573	<b>10,000</b>
Town Hall	29,924	25,574	<b>24,725</b>	Museum	900	905	<b>700</b>
Priory Rooms	6,712	4,230	<b>5,960</b>	Town Hall	19,600	17,747	<b>19,400</b>
Market Hill Room	7,321	8,930	<b>5,980</b>	Priory Centre	7,395	8,001	<b>5,600</b>
Plantation	5,225	5,444	<b>5,250</b>	Market Hill Room	7,650	5,836	<b>5,000</b>
Other Expenses	11,005	11,768	<b>11,550</b>	Allotments	1,120	1,118	<b>1,120</b>
Royston Cave	3,000	2,250	<b>3,000</b>	30 Kneesworth St	15,085	15,496	<b>12,780</b>
Allotments	960	1,204	<b>950</b>	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>62,750</b>	<b>65,826</b>	<b>54,600</b>
War Memorial	2,415	2,086	<b>4,050</b>	<b>Net Expenditure</b>	174,597	170,687	<b>190,543</b>
30 Kneesworth St	1,335	796	<b>1,530</b>	<b>Precept</b>	<b>170,000</b>	<b>158,368</b>	<b>158,368</b>
TCM (LGA 72 s144)	10,000	10,000	<b>10,000</b>	<b>Net difference</b>	<b>-4,597</b>	<b>-12,289</b>	<b>-32,175</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>237,347</b>	<b>236,483</b>	<b>245,143</b>				

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