



Royston Town Council Annual Report 2018/2019

14th May 2018 – 12th May 2019



Town Hall, Melbourn Road, Royston, Herts. SG8 7DA

Tel: 01763 245484 Email: town.clerk@roystontowncouncil.gov.uk

www.roystontowncouncil.gov.uk

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Royston Town Council's Annual Report gives a review of the activities of the Town Council during the Civic year and the financial report for the year ended 31st March 2019.

Statement from the Town Mayor 2019-2020

I am honoured and humbled to be asked once again to represent our great town as Mayor. I promise to work for the benefit of Royston and its people in this time of change.

I will work hard to give youngsters a say in their future, as sometimes I know they don't feel they are being listened to. I hope to work with other organisations, looking into forming a Royston Youth Council as this, I believe, would give them a voice in how the town develops in the future.

I want to help local businesses achieve their full potential by promoting both them and our town as a leader for enterprise. In doing this I hope that they will also engage with young people to create local jobs for the future.

I would also like to help the Royston and District Twinning Association grow and be more recognised.

I feel that we need to look at our local environment by changing the way some of us think. It shouldn't just be about making a profit but also about having a healthy vibrant town and keeping open areas accessible to everyone, no matter what their personal circumstances are.

In my year as Mayor I would like to be remembered for supporting the belief that no matter what your background is you can get involved and have a voice in this great community that we have.

My charities for the year will be the Mayor's Community Trust Fund and the Garden House Hospice in Letchworth.



Town Councillor and Royston Mayor 2019-2020

Robert Inwood

Royston Town Council

There are three tiers of local government in Royston; Town, District and County. Details of what each council is responsible for can be found on the Town Council's website at [Who does What-Council Services - Royston Town Council](#).

Also on our website, further details can be found about the Town Councillors, council meetings, minutes and other general information and useful links - www.roystontowncouncil.gov.uk

All Town Councillors serve in a voluntary capacity and are elected for a four year term of office. Councillors are not paid and do not receive any allowances for attending meetings. The Mayor is elected annually in May at the Annual Meeting of the Council. Ten Members serve on each of the principal committees: Finance, Planning and General Purpose and Highways.

The Councillors that held office during the year 2018/2019 were:

Mayor: Councillor Iain Leggett

Deputy Town Mayor: Councillor F J Smith

Chairman Finance: Councillor John Davison

Chairman Planning: Councillor Marguerite Phillips

Chairman General Purpose & Highways: Councillor Mike Harrison

Royston Town West

Cllr Ruth Brown (Liberal Democrats)

Cllr John Davison (Conservative)

Cllr Emma Squire-Smith (Liberal Democrats)

Royston Town South

Cllr Tom Perry (Liberal Democrats)

Cllr Carol Stanier (Liberal Democrats)

Royston Palace

Cllr Amy Bourke-Waite (Labour)

Cllr Ian Coll (Conservative)

Cllr Mark Hughes (Conservative)

Cllr Robert Inwood (Labour)

Cllr Iain Leggett (Conservative)

Royston Meridian

Cllr Mike Harrison (Conservative)

Cllr Marguerite Phillips (Conservative)

Cllr F John Smith (Conservative)

Cllr Philip Smith (Conservative)

Cllr Vera Swallow (Conservative)

Full Council meetings and principal committee meetings are open to all members of the public and the press. At the beginning of each meeting time is set aside to allow members of the public to make representation to the various committees about items on the agenda.

Copies of the agendas are posted on the Town Hall notice-board and Council web-site. A calendar detailing the meetings for the coming year is also available on the web site.

The Town Council's Planning Committee makes recommendations on all of the planning applications for Royston. The Committee commented on over 100 applications throughout the year. Final decisions on all applications are made by North Herts District Council (NHDC).

School Visits

Royston Town Council organised another successful round of visits to local schools during the spring term 2019. The schools visited this year were Icknield Walk First School, Roman Way First School, St Mary's Primary School and Studlands Rise First School. Town, District and County Councillors all took part and children were well engaged and put forward several ideas which have been taken on board.

Naturally Royston Working Party



This year the Naturally Royston Working Party mainly focussed on the natural environment and how to make our gardens a friendly habitat for pollinating insects. They hosted a very popular stand at the May Fayre and handed out seeds for nectar rich flowers and materials to make a bug hotel at home. The seeds were donated by John O'Conner Grounds Maintenance to honour their 50 year anniversary.

Naturally Royston is also currently arranging for the siting and unveiling of a commemorative plaque for the tree sculpture in Priory Gardens which is dedicated to the late Cllr Peter Burt who inspired the work.

The group is looking for volunteers to join their committee and also for suggestions for initiatives to improve our town. To get involved, please contact us at admin@roystontowncouncil.gov.uk or follow them on the Twitter page @naturallyroys.

Silver Sunday, a National Celebration of the over 65's

Once again, Royston Town Council organised a FREE showing of a classic film at the Royston Picture Palace Cinema in the Town Hall. Older residents attended and had free tea and cakes before watching "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes". Free transport was also provided for those that needed it with the generous help of Royston Community Transport.

Green Street Allotments

The allotment site in Royston is owned and managed by the Town Council. There are no vacant plots at the moment, if you are interested in obtaining a plot contact the Town Council by email enquiries@roystontowncouncil.gov.uk or call 01763 245484 to be added to the waiting list, it is approximately 2 to 3 years wait for a plot. You must be a Royston resident to rent an allotment.

Royston War Memorial

Royston War Memorial in Melbourn Street was erected in 1922 in memory of the Servicemen of the town killed in the First World War. Later it was extended to include those who were killed during the Second World War. It is now a listed monument and becomes the centre of attention each year for the annual Remembrance Day Parade.

Royston Town Council have recently carried out reparation and renovation to the War Memorial. The works included the installation of two ramps at the Memorial to ensure improved access for all. The work was complete for the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War and huge

crowds attended the parade to mark this significant event. The Council gives thanks to the Brian Racher Trust, Johnson Matthey and NPK Holdings for their donations towards the cost of the works. The picture on the cover of this annual report shows the refurbished War Memorial.



Royston is proud to have its own Museum and Art Gallery, which celebrates the wonderful stories of the District and its people. The Museum aims to be the centre of the community in Royston, and hosts regular events for a variety of interests. Activities cater to all ages, abilities, and access needs.

The museum is open every Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday throughout the year, with private bookings available all other days. Museum staff can also facilitate external events for community groups, including outreach and reminiscence sessions.

In 2017, the Museum achieved full accreditation renewal from the Arts Council. The Museum cares for the archive of the Royston Crow, an extensive collection of works by E.H. Whydale, and the renowned Royston Tapestry.

The Town Council's thanks go to the Friends of the Museum, the Royston & District Local History Society, and the Royston & District Local History Society Trustees of the Collection. We are grateful for the goodwill of its loyal band of volunteers and supporters, not to mention our curator and her assistant, and all who help to keep the museum open for all to enjoy.

www.roystonmuseum.org.uk

Royston Annual May Fayre

One of the Town Council's annual events is the May Fayre. In partnership with other organisations and volunteers, the Town Council continues to run this yearly event in the Priory Memorial Gardens taking place on the first Bank Holiday in May. It gives local charities and voluntary organisations a chance to fund raise for themselves. Admission to the event is free.

Again the event was very busy, despite the chilly weather, with hundreds of people enjoying the day. There was fun for all the family with the Town Band keeping the crowds entertained with their music and regulars such as the miniature railway, the Punch and Judy show and the Novelty Dog Show. Free attractions, 'Circus Whiz' and 'Last Man Standing' were provided thanks to funding from Royston Town Council.



Running alongside the May Fayre was the Historical Car Show which was organised by the Rotary Club.

Community Halls & Royston Picture Palace

The Town Council provides public halls which can be hired, namely the Town Hall and Market Hill Rooms. Our two community halls are hired out to various local organisations, community groups and privately to members of the public for children's parties, fitness classes and social events such as quizzes.

The Town Hall is used as a state of the art, digital cinema every Friday and Saturday evening throughout the year. Our thanks go to the many volunteers who give up their time to help put on the performances; without them the show could not go on.

The Leete Charity Trust

The Town Council is the sole Trustee of this charity. The charity provides grants towards further education for students who live, or attend a school, in Royston. The grants are made from the interest earned on the Trust's investments. During the last year, a total of £1,450 was awarded to 8 young people going on to further education.

Details and an application form can be downloaded from the Town Council's web-site.

Green Walk Plantation & Stile Plantation

Two small plantations link the town centre to open countryside and footpaths. These plantations are a hidden secret of the town and are used for walking and wildlife spotting. The Town Council have added information boards and benches to the sites and have undertaken some additional tree planting this year, using hazel trees donated by a local resident, to compensate for the natural loss of some of the woodland.

Royston Cave

As a world famous, Grade I listed heritage site, the uniqueness and mystery of Royston Cave continues to attract visitors from across the globe. Open every Saturday, Sunday and Bank Holiday, from Easter weekend until the end of September, Royston Cave opened for general admission across 65 dates in 2018, with the addition of 25 private tours and the annual return of its successful Cave by Candlelight event, held in December. During 2018, Royston Cave welcomed a total of 3401 visitors, with general admission costing £5 for adults, £4 for seniors and £2 for children. Private tours were made by arrangement and charged at £80 per session.

In September, Nicky Paton was appointed as the new manager of Royston Cave and has since worked with the Cave Advisory sub-committee to introduce a host of new features and procedures. This includes the redesign of Royston Cave's visual identity, across digital and printed material, which aims to elevate the cave's physical and digital presence to a level befitting a renowned heritage attraction. From the revision of tourist leaflets, guide brochures and tickets, to the design of new visitor information signage, event posters and online content, Royston Cave is aiming to offer a more professional and pointed visitor experience.

Royston Cave is also working in close collaboration with Royston Museum to introduce new educational programmes, resources and events which will benefit the wider Royston community. This includes a three-dimensional, 360 degree, interactive virtual tour of Royston Cave, which is currently in the development stage but expected to be in use by the end of the year.

In November, due to ongoing issues with water ingress and deterioration, Royston Cave was added to Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register. The register highlights the most vulnerable historical sites in England. With help from specialists, conservation is ongoing, but the uniqueness

of Royston Cave means progress is slow. A report is currently being compiled which will outline the most effective strategies to conserve the cave moving forward.

The new 2019 season has now officially started and the efforts of the new management team are already being realised, with visitor footfall forecasted to increase from 2018. Prices and opening times have remained the same with the addition of a new student ticket option which has proved popular.

For more information, visit roystoncave.co.uk.

Annual Town Meeting 2019

At the Annual Town meeting in March 2019, the Mayor, Councillor Iain Leggett presented the Community Trust Fund Awards to:

ORGANISATION	PURPOSE OF GRANT	AMOUNT AWARDED
Home Start	To assist with the cost of an outing to Paradise Wildlife Park	£250
Priory Quilters	To assist with hiring Market Hill Rooms for an exhibition of quilts and textile art as part of Royston Arts Festival	£229.50
Royston Speak Out Club	To assist with the cost of a summer outing	£300
Royston Arts Society	To assist with the cost of hiring the Heritage Hall for the annual autumn art exhibition which forms part of the Royston Arts Festival	£240
Royston Historical Pageant	To assist with the staging of Royston Historical Pageant	£1,000
Royston Bowling club	To assist with the purchase of a dethatching machine	£250
Rotary Club of Royston	To assist with the cost of providing tables for the schools Technology Tournament	£250
Royston Photographic Society	To assist with the cost of hiring the Town Hall for the Royston Arts Festival Exhibition	£187

The Community Service Awards were presented to:

Lindsay Davidson – In recognition of her services to the Royston community over many years as a Town Councillor, volunteer and active member of many committees.

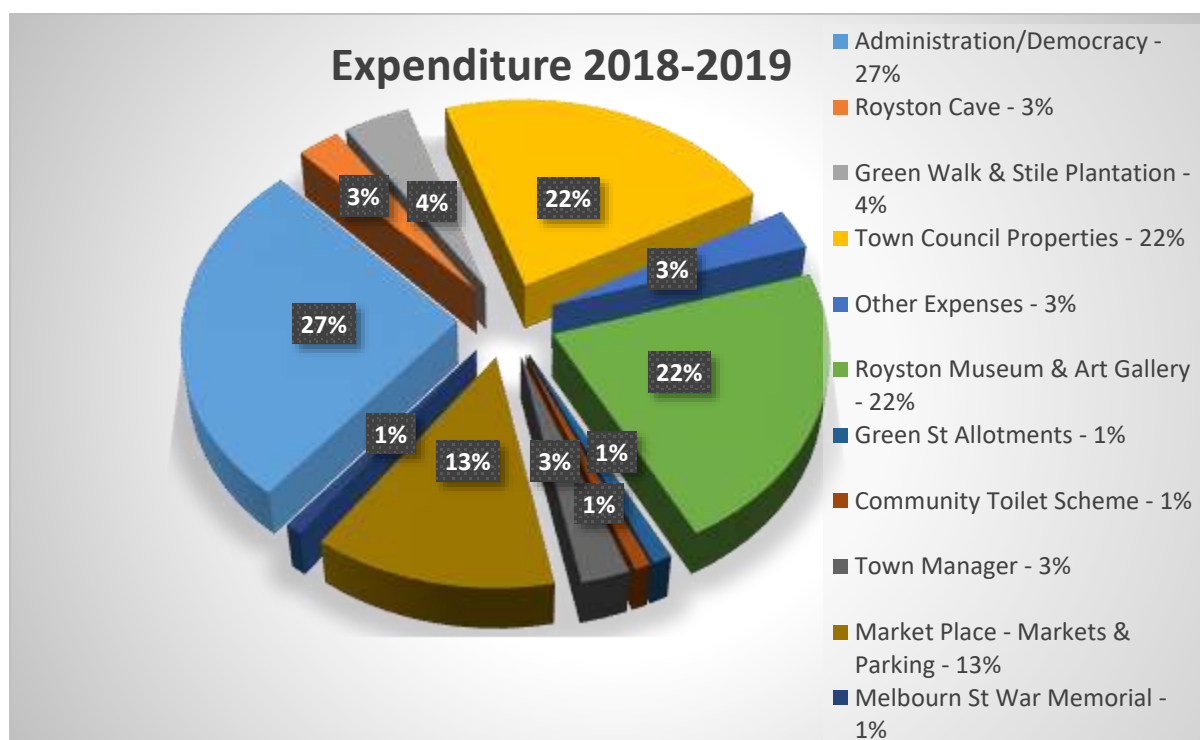
Susan Thornton-Bjork – In recognition of her work as Town Clerk to Royston Town Council from 2006 to 2017.

Ben and Beth Chapman – for their work in fund raising for many local charities.

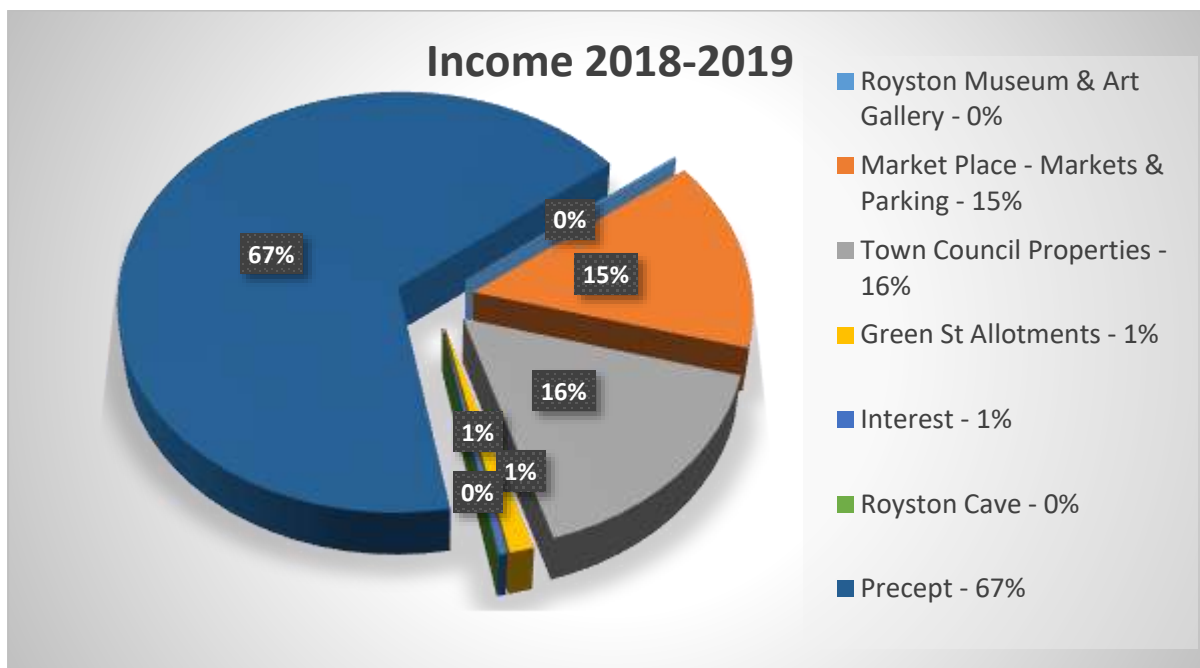
Royston and District Community Transport – In recognition of 25 years serving the Royston community.

Royston Town Council Finances

Royston Town Council Finances 2018-2019	Budget	Out-turn
EXPENDITURE		
Administration/Democracy	116,523	102,486
Royston Museum & Art Gallery	88,254	83,379
Town Council Properties	95,250	83,963
Green Walk & Stile Plantation	12,317	16,314
Other Expenses (Civic Functions, May Fayre, Christmas Lights etc.)	13,610	11,992
Royston Cave	5,781	10,498
Green St Allotments	3,797	4,037
Melbourn St War Memorial	3,467	3,530
Town Manager	10,000	10,000
Community Toilet scheme	4,000	3,365
Market Place - Markets and Parking	59,948	49,433
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	412,947	378,997



INCOME	Budget	Out-turn
Interest	300	1823
Market Place - markets/parking	55,000	61,351
Royston Museum & Art Gallery	1000	796
Town Council Properties	65,170	67,715
Green St Allotments	5,150	5,579
Royston Cave	0	120
Precept	283,609	283,610
TOTAL INCOME	410,229	420,994



Royston Town Council Finances 2019-2020

The Royston Town Council part of the Council Tax for 2019-2020 is £47.29 per Band D household.

Royston Town Council Budget & Precept 2019-2020

Expenditure

Admin/Democracy	110,957
Royston & District Museum & Art Gallery	88,254
Royston Town Hall	53,639
Priory Centre Rooms	13,840
Market Hill Rooms	17,669
Green Walk and Stile Plantations	17,776
Legacy project	20,000
Other Expenses	19,796
Royston Cave	19,290
Green St Allotments	4,146
Royston War Memorial	2,953
30 Kneesworth St	932
Town Manager	10,000
Cross Public Conveniences	5,263
Markets and Parking (Market Hill/Angel Pavement)	63,673
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	448,188

Income

Interest	1,500
Royston & District Museum & Art Gallery	1,000
Royston Town Hall	20,400
Priory Centre Rooms	6,200
Market Hill Rooms	12,100
Green St Allotments	5,100
30 Kneesworth St	15,550
Royston Cave	12,000
Markets and Parking (Market Hill/Angel Pavement)	57,000
TOTAL INCOME	130,850

Net Expenditure **317,338**

Precept including CTRS grant **317,338**

Budgeting for 2019-2020 has included increased maintenance at the Plantations due to the ageing trees, funding for a legacy project to introduce new facilities, on which the residents of Royston will be consulted, and removal of zero hours contracts for staff.