



Easingwold Town Council

2019 - 2020



Annual Newsletter



Please contact EDCCA if you wish to volunteer to help local people; or, if you are having to self-isolate and need any help with shopping, collecting medication etc. If you are looking for local resources, please consult the EDDCA COVID-19 Support List on their website.

EDCCA, Police House, Church Hill, Easingwold YO61 3JX Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9.30am to 12.30pm
Tel: 01347822875 email: info@edcca.org.uk

The Easingwold Area Foodbank is there if you may need confidential food packages. The Foodbank helps local people in need and delivers throughout Easingwold and its surrounding villages. Please call their 24-hour message service on 0772 44 44 750 and they will discretely call you back.

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EASINGWOLD TOWN COUNCIL
Contact: Town Clerk
Easingwold Library, Market Place
Easingwold YO61 3AN Tel: 01347 822422

A Message from Council Chairman Peter Nottage

The last year has turned out unimaginably from how it began; and quite far from our hopes and aspirations. The Covid-19 epidemic has turned our lives upside down.

Firstly, on behalf of our whole Council and Town, may we express our heartfelt condolences to all those amongst us who have suffered a loss of a loved one or friend. Next, may we extend our best wishes to all of us who have been infected and trust you will soon return to full health. May we also extend our gratitude and profound thanks to all the NHS Staff, Care Workers, Key Workers and Volunteers who have helped and are helping to steer us all through this most severe of challenges. Thank you to all our businesses, many of whom have been so badly affected by the recent lockdown. We hope that when this event has passed, you will be able to bounce back and return Easingwold to the vibrant market town it has always been. Finally, to everyone in Easingwold and all our visitors and workers please obey the Government guidelines as they evolve over the coming days, weeks and months and stay safe.

When this epidemic began the Council deliberated hard over what might be the best steps to take, within Government guidelines, to help Easingwold move through the restrictions and lockdown as successfully as possible. Naturally, there is no simple answer to this problem; so, we balanced the risks of various arrangements with the community benefits they might offer. In this spirit we decided the following:

- To keep the Council Office open and operated by a single clerk but closed to the public, so that we can respond to the Town's needs
- To move all the Council meetings to the on-line video meeting system of WebEx
- To keep the town maintenance programme going as much as possible, whilst respecting social distancing for our workers
- To stop capital projects until conditions change
- To keep the public spaces open for exercise; but to close the children's play areas and skatepark (because of the difficulties to socially distance there)
- To keep all the public benches open to allow rest for those who need it
- To keep the weekly Town Market open for food stalls only, using strong social distancing arrangements to support our town's food needs
- To keep the public toilets open longer, but to have them more regularly cleaned, to give somewhere for key workers to wash their hands when needed.

We will continue to review and adapt these arrangements as needed and as the crisis evolves. Besides Covid-19, our Council (newly elected in May) has been working on many other things. Please take a moment to read the rest of this newsletter. It will tell you more of what has been going on and what is being planned. In the meantime, please follow all guidelines and stay safe.

The Millfields Story



Easingwold Town Council has been following through on its promise to invest in Millfields Park and enhance its value to the town.

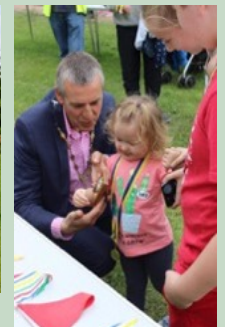
The Jacko's Way path has been completed and is now a key park feature. Besides enabling access to the woods for those with limited mobility; it has facilitated the Park Run and enabled a sponsored toddle to raise funds for charity. Alongside it, the Permissive Route enables horses to cross from Millfield Lane to Oulston Road without the need to go through the town.



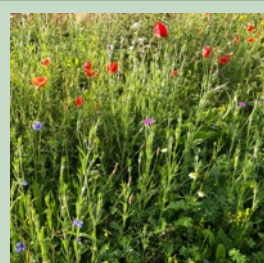
The dipping station and board walk have made visits to the wetland and pond popular. It's proving equally popular with our wildlife. We have reports of nesting geese, swarms of tadpoles, and several newts amidst the re-emerging plants.



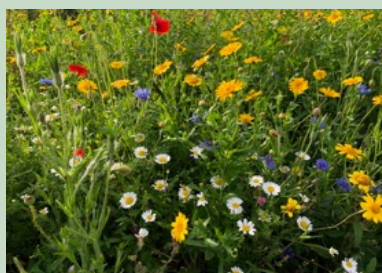
A massive volunteer effort created the Jacko's Way path stretching across the south meadow, through the woods and north meadow back to the main path. We have refurbished the horseshoe path; and delivered the permissive horse route at the top of the north meadow between Millfield Lane and Penny Lane.



As well as the annual Galtres Fun Run, Millfields is now the home for a weekly Park Run. The Park Run has become a huge success and gained a regular following on Saturday mornings.



Once again, the wildflower border brought a burst of colour to the edge of the main footpath. The annual cutting programme planned for the meadows will build their vibrancy and diversity.



New access gates from Millfield Lane lead to the North Meadow and the wetland allowing in machinery for maintenance work. Parts of the wetland were dredged in March to keep the ponds and dykes open.

Our 2019-2020 Diary



In May we held the first Easingwold and District Community Day, this was extremely well received and supported by the whole town and its surrounding villages. It had four major themes: a health and wellbeing section coordinated by Millfields Surgery and EDCCA; a safety section provided by the Lions; a Galtres Centre open day; and finally, a celebration of the activities of our District's organisations, clubs and voluntary groups.

The previous Town Council completed its 4-year term when the new Council was elected in May. Several of our Councillors have continued in their role, with four retiring. We should like to thank Georgina Bingham, Julian Fowell, Chris Jackson and Geoff Ellis for all the excellent support they voluntarily gave to the town. Geoff Ellis deserves a special mention having been a Town Councillor for over 40 years and a long-time Chairman. At the same time, Geoff retired as a District Councillor at Hambleton; we sadly also lost Chris Rooke in that role, who died after a long illness.

The new Council, which will continue until April 2023, is pleased to welcome Kathleen Butcher, Caroline Fletcher, Kelly Osborne and Richard Varney as Councillors. They have quickly got into action and are helping assure that Easingwold continues as a vibrant and welcoming market town. Our Clerks, Jane Bentley and Jean Fairbrother, continue in their roles and we should like to thank them for their hard work and enthusiastic support to the Council and the town. Equally, we should like to thank the multiple contractors and service providers whose work enables the town to operate, look good, and be maintained every day. Finally, we should like to thank the many volunteers who work across all sectors of our community and make Easingwold such a good place to live, work and visit.

One of the first jobs undertaken by the Council was to review the vision for the town it inherited from the previous Council and update it to fit in with the evolution of Easingwold and its Community. This refreshed vision and a summary are available on the Council website. They form the basis of the Council's plans and aspirations for its 4-year term. One of the major changes resulting from this work was the creation of our Climate Change Action working group. They will be working to identify ways in which we, as a Council, can address environmental issues at a local and practical level.

The vision's view of Easingwold's needs also proved valuable in the preparation of our comments to the Hambleton District Council's draft Local Plan and our detailed appraisal of its impact on the town (available on the website). We are concerned that a greater recognition of the longer-term housing and commercial needs of the town be provided. We are also concerned that an adequate investment be made in the town's infrastructure to assure that the effects of our considerable recent growth are ameliorated to the greatest possible extent. We have decided that, as a Council, we already have sufficient funds from CIL and our reserves to fulfil our first priority project: to complete a network of footpaths around the town centre that will enable better accessibility for all. The plans for this project sadly have been delayed by the Covid-19 problem; but are being drawn up by specialist consultants to be ready for consultation as soon as this becomes possible.

Once again, the town centre and Galtres Centre have been at the epicentre of much of the town's activity throughout the year. The Community Day was followed by the Lions Annual Fayre and Band Contest; Rockin' all over the Wold; and the annual Fun Fair. A new event for November was the motorcyclists' Toy Run in a massive charitable effort. It had been planned to follow this up with an Egg Run at Easter, but sadly this had to be postponed until next year. Once again Christmas was a highlight of the Town's year. As a Town Council we reinvested in our town lights due to regulation changes. There were Christmas lights competitions for the best residential and commercial displays; best commercial window display; and the 'Light-up-a-Life' Christmas tree and Ceremony for the St. Leonard's Hospice. Each brought joy and well-being to all. ETC organized the Christmas Market at the Galtres Centre. The Lions took their Christmas Sleigh to visit most homes in the town as well as to many of our Christmas events.

Our Markets have had a very successful year until the recent disruptions. The Friday market has been getting huge support from its customers and traders alike. We have introduced a monthly Saturday artisan market, which is also attracting strong support. Unfortunately, the Country Market held in the Galtres Centre has closed. We have recently agreed a contract to refurbish the Ladies toilets, which is now delayed; but the current toilets have extended hours and enhanced cleaning to cope with the crisis.

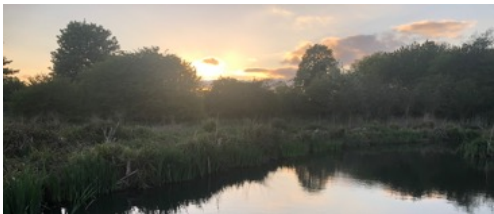
Moving further afield, we have been refurbishing and replacing our public benches and, should you wish to sponsor a whole or part bench, then please contact the Clerks for information. We have created a programme with a view to refurbishing the Memorial Park and in line with this a contract to refresh the bandstand has been allocated. We are making recreational improvements to Chase Garth park. There has been further planting of crocuses on the entrance verges to the town. The tree pollarding programme has been completed in Uppleby; we have carried out a trees survey in Claypenny and awarded a contract to help maintain the Mallison Hill woods. All these outdoor works are now supported by an equipment storage container located alongside the Millfields car park.

We are concerned about traffic in the town and speeding within our streets. This has led to the installation of VAS (Vehicle Activated Sign) units at several sites to remind drivers when they exceed the speed limits. We are still planning to have consultants study parking in the town in conjunction with Hambleton District Council and North Yorkshire County Council with a view to identifying the optimum parking and traffic management solution for the town.

Whilst our programmes have been curtailed somewhat whilst the current Covid-19 crisis is resolved; the Council continues to work actively and positively for the town and plans a resurgence as soon as practicable thereafter.

Town Council

Our Thank-You Flag flies over Easingwold in honour not just of the NHS, but also all the Care Workers, Key Workers and Volunteers that are helping us through the current crisis.



- Currently the Council has had to change the way it operates to accommodate the requirements of the lockdown and Covid-19 crisis. This means that all council meetings are now held via the on-line video meeting system of WebEx
- However, as the monthly planning, committee and full council meetings are public meetings, should members of the public or press wish to attend them, please apply to the Clerks; they will provide you with an electronic invitation to allow you to observe on-line. As usual there will still be 15 minutes at the beginning of each meeting where members of the public can ask questions of the Council via the Clerk and Chairman about issues on the agenda. If you choose to speak, thereafter please mute your microphone so that the meeting can proceed as planned
- The agendas for these meetings will be published as usual, on our website and in local Facebook groups so that you can see if something that will interest you or about which you would like to comment is going to be discussed
- The Council has asked its contractors to continue with the routine maintenance programmes it operates around the town, but to operate strictly to social distancing criteria. Please respect their important role for the Community.
- We are concerned that dog owners are being less vigilant than normal in clearing up and taking their pet's waste home. Please stop soiling our town!

Recreation & Open Spaces Committee

- This committee oversees a strong programme of maintenance and support for our open and recreational spaces and our children's play areas. In particular, the play areas have a working group who interact with quarterly professional inspections to assure that all the equipment is in good order and safe to use. Please contact the Clerks if you identify issues that may need attention
- This year has focused heavily on our Millfields Park as the Millfields vision has moved into action. Progress has been shown in page 2. There is still more to do. We have received a grant to slightly extend and upgrade the horseshoe path. This will enable the highly successful Park Run to be held weekly without the need to go on to the grass areas. We are working on plans for bicycle-skills tracks to be placed in the south meadow; and to get ready for a public consultation with regard to a lit jogging track. We have dredged the wetland area to keep it clear and in good order for the next few seasons
- We have created a new programme to look at keeping the Memorial Park in good condition, this will evolve as conditions return to normal; but will begin with the refurbishment of the bandstand
- We spend a great deal of time and effort in maintaining the trees in our council-controlled areas. During this year we've also been planting trees, especially around the car park, north meadow and parkland areas of Millfields Park.

Operations Committee

- We have had to change the operation of the Council Offices and management approach to the town in response to the Covid-19 challenge. This has included closing the Offices to the public and operating them with one Clerk at a time. However, should anyone need the Council's support for any reason please call the Clerks or send an email and they will endeavour to fulfil your needs
- Could we please remind you that, whilst our Town Clerks will help your needs as much as they can, the Town Council has limited responsibilities. If you wish to report issues relating to highways, drainage, lighting etc. please do this to NYCC or HDC via their helplines or websites
- As a Council we use a combination of reserves, CIL & Section 106 funds plus grants and sponsorships to pay for our capital investment programme for the town. This work too has been somewhat delayed due to the present situation but will resume as soon as possible
- We are looking forward to our markets getting back to normal. We have extended our exterior seating licences for our hostellers and cafés for another year and very much hope that they too will soon return to action and bring life back to our town centre.

Social & Events Committee

- The Council website, email, WiFi and IT systems have been adapted as needed during the year.
- The Council has created a budget for promoting Easingwold that we will use in conjunction with the HDC Vibrant Market Towns initiative to help increase the attraction of the town and help us bounce back commercially as we emerge from the current restrictions
- Inclusion and accessibility are important aspects of the ETC programme. We support a broad range of local groups and organisations, and the Dementia Friendliness initiative
- Our programme of grants and donations is extensive; but is exclusively in support of local organisations. Should an organisation with which you are involved be looking for support; either financial or in any other way, please contact the Clerks for the necessary forms
- In conjunction with the North Yorkshire Youth organisation we have established a Youth Council for the town that has been meeting monthly in the COZIE building; and will continue by WebEx for now. Any young people who would like to join in please contact the Clerks and they will put you in touch with the Organising Team.