



Easingwold Town Council

2024 - 2025



Annual Newsletter

A Message from Council Chairman Peter Nottage

As we welcome you to our Annual Newsletter, a blooming of spring flowers and blossom around the town shows that we can all celebrate living in a town that, according to the Sunday Times, is one of the best places to live in England. Equally, Easingwold won the North Yorkshire Region in the 2024 'Yorkshire in Bloom' competition. We'll be trying again in 2025, so please help keep Easingwold looking its best with your own efforts. I feel sure that we'd all agree with their selections, sentiments and compliments. I'm certainly proud that we've received recognition that reflects the excellence of our town and its surrounding area. We can also delight in serving as a gateway to the beauty of the Howardian Hills and a hub for our nearby villages.

Over the last year I'm sorry to say that two former Councillors, John Tanner-Smith (a former Council Chairman) and Chris Jackson, have died and will be sadly missed. We remember and thank them both for their considerable services to the town. From the current team, Councillor Ben Sparrow has resigned due to work pressures, and once again we're looking to co-opt someone to join in and help us serve the community. We've been building our relationships and coordination with North Yorkshire Council (NYC) over the past 12 months and are leading the Easingwold and Villages Partnership Group, which is piloting NYC's emerging approach for local community engagement. During the year our programme of events and activities in the town centre has acted as a draw to visitors from far and wide: from our Summer of Music and Rockin' All over the Wold; to the Christmas lights and events; to the Park Run in Millfields; the classic car rally; or the Galtres Centre events. Our town offers something for everyone to enjoy.

We have worked hard on our parks over the year. In Millfields Park, winter evening and early morning lighting will soon be added to the jogging path to enable its use as a safe place to exercise, avoiding the need to run on darkened streets. The Claypenny play area has been fully refurbished. Our improvement of the Memorial Park is now largely complete and it offers a lovely place to visit close to the town square. We are examining improving Chase Garth Park and have begun by enhancing the quality of the informal entry point which had become quite boggy.

Once again, we should like to thank our Clerks, Jane Bentley and Jean Fairbrother, for their continued excellent service to the town. We should also like to thank all our tradesmen and contractors who have completed their tasks so well and helped keep the town in good order and well presented for our visitors and residents alike. It is clearly a winning combination!

2024 has delivered natural disasters, economic headwinds, and conflicts round the world. We're enhancing our own resilience by preparing a Community Emergency Response Plan. Along with NYC & EDDCA, we've placed a trauma bag in the George Hotel for emergencies and maintain our multiple defibrillators in the town. For those in need, we're grateful for EDDCA's meals-on-wheels and Foodbank; plus all the town's other volunteers and organisations who've helped our community. On a more rueful note, we continue to have incidents of anti-social behaviour and vandalism. The Police have emphasised that they want the public to report any incidents to them and be assured that the Town Council will actively pursue prosecutions if we can.



Our local Foodbank is a part of EDDCA.

We know that times maybe difficult for some amongst us; and, if you need their help, please do call them on 01347 822875 and we know that they will provide you with a discrete support.

Please do contact EDDCA if you wish to volunteer to help local people; or, if you are having problems that may be helped by their support. If you are looking for local resources, please go to their website or call them.

EDCCA, Police House, Church Hill, Easingwold YO61 3JX Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday 9.30am to 12.30pm Tel: 01347 822875 email: info@edcca.org.uk

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EASINGWOLD TOWN COUNCIL

Contact: Town Clerk

Easingwold Library, Market Place

Easingwold YO61 3AN Tel: 01347 822422

Millfields Park in the Sunshine



Millfields Park continues to thrive, and we continue to invest in its maintenance and improvement.

The Claypenny children's play area has been fully refurbished. We have upgraded the management regimes for the north and south meadows so that they form wildflower meadows over the coming few years.

Several of the footpaths and the Friendship Garden have been resurfaced with more durable stone to improve their winter resilience. The jogging track has been resurfaced and will soon have lighting added to enable its use on darker nights and mornings. The Park Run centred there gets stronger all the time.

A new culvert under Millfield Lane is planned to help control winter flooding.



Bonfire Night



For the very first time in 2024, Easingwold Scouts brought bonfire night to Millfields Park. They used the whole recreation area to mount a superb firework display; one that lit up the sky with colour and sound.

The event provided an easy location for even our least able to attend and raised significant funds for the Scouts to use throughout the year. We look forward to welcoming them back in 2025, so make it a date for your diaries.



Easingwold's Summer of Music



We will welcome back the Easingwold Summer of Music from May 24th until Sept 6th, 2025. Some new acts, but many old favourites will join us at the Buttercross. Don't miss 'Rockin' all over the Wold', our festival of sound on Saturday July 12th.



2024-25 Reflections



Easingwold – a town for all seasons

Last year your Town Council presented its vision for the town and defined what it was working to help achieve in the town: *“We want Easingwold to be a prosperous community, with a clear and distinctive character, that delivers a high quality of life for all its people. We want to see the positive development of Easingwold as a thriving modern town, a great place in which to grow up, live, grow old, access services, and visit.”*

2024 – 2025 has been a first year of the Council working towards that refreshed target, and we like to think that significant progress has been made. In his remarks the Chairman mentioned his pride at Easingwold being identified by the Sunday Times as one of the best towns to live in North Yorkshire as well as being the winner of Yorkshire in Bloom for North Yorkshire. We believe that neither result is by accident, but rather a cumulative effort by all the community, working together to make Easingwold a great place to be and to visit. In this coming year we will be continuing our best efforts to help Easingwold evolve and improve once again.

One unseen aspect of our work this last year has been to re-evaluate our Council operating structures and approach in the light of our vision to ensure that they help facilitate its achievement. We decided that the overall structure was valid, but that we needed to rebalance the work of our committees, to ensure that their workloads were similar and their duties coherent. This has been done, and the underlying changes are now reflected in the Committee Notes on page 4. Alongside this, we have looked at our working groups and stopped those that have completed their tasks or whose role is no longer needed. We have committed to keeping our offices in the town library for the next 2 years and to maintain the Council chamber in the Galtres Centre. We have also changed the way in which we operate our budgets so that we can ensure we keep momentum behind our projects programme. The Committees now oversee the operating parts of our budget, those that involve the management and maintenance of our lands, parks, office, and services. Alongside this we have a projects budget aimed at ensuring we can keep progressing the big refurbishment and new tasks we wish to undertake. This projects budget is added to by any CIL monies or grants we receive during the year. We always seem to have more things we would like to do, than we have funds to achieve; so, there will always be something to do the next year! We always do our best to offer our community value for money and try to minimise any increases of precept we ask for. This year, despite significant inflation, we restricted the increase to 3.5%; albeit this was helped by having more households in the town to contribute, as the building of new houses in our new developments continues.

Our larger projects this year have included: the completion of the refreshment of the Memorial Park; a full refurbishment of the Claypenny children's play area (including fences and gates); resurfacing paths and tracks in Millfields Park; bike racks in the town square; many new seats and waste bins around the town; and refreshing the daffodil bank on the Long Street. Equally we have invested in our town planting (so expertly done for us by Andrew Nelson) with a new supplier of the plants grown especially for us and redone for both summer and winter colour.

Whilst our projects budget gets largely spent on physical things, the social side of Easingwold is equally important to us. Our markets are thriving and bring a vibrant buzz to the town. Our Friendliness Initiative continues after 10 years. We hope more and more people, especially our newcomers to the town, will join us for will join us for coffee & cake at the George Hotel. Our Summer of Music was a great success once again in 2024 and the 2025 edition promises to be just as wonderful as ever. Our Christmas programme of lights and trees, the charity ‘Light up a Life’ ceremony, Artisan and Christmas Markets is always a highlight. We support events across the town throughout the year - from rallies, to runs, to fairs and more; please come and join in. Easingwold’s outdoor welcome and Café culture are always there to for you to enjoy come rain or shine.



Our Town Square Evolves

The Council has set up a working party to concentrate on enhancing the town square and its benefits to the community. Recently installed bike racks in front of the Toll Booth buildings have proved very popular with cyclist visitors. The flower displays have been extended and number of planters increased. The location of waste bins has been improved. The markets programme has been strengthened. Contracts have been agreed to refurbish the toilets. A large range of events have been agreed to improve the use of the space.



Town Council



We remain proud to fly the Ukrainian flag above our town square in support of Ukraine and its struggle against unwarranted aggression and war.



The refreshed Claypenny Children's Play Area in Millfields Park.



A bench installed in Millfields by ETC to thank Chris & Jane Jackson for all their volunteering throughout the town for so long.

- Our meetings are held in the Council Chamber of the Galtres Centre and are paperless,
- The agendas for all our meetings are published in advance on our website and local Facebook groups. You are welcome to attend if it interests you. If something you'd like to comment about is being discussed, then you can tell us about it during the public agenda section,
- Our policies, minutes, reports etc. are also stored on our website – so you can consult them to identify what actions we may have taken, what responsibilities we have, and what work we undertake,
- The Council has routine maintenance programmes in and around the town; please help our contractors by allowing them to complete their tasks without hindrance,
- The Town Clerks are the executive support for the Council. The Clerk also provides administrative and management support to the full council and its committees, and acts as its Responsible Financial Officer,
- Easingwold Town Council has limited responsibilities and so it is always pleased to try and help; however, it is often better to contact the other authorities direct if they operate in the arena of your question. To help in this the ETC website has a guide and link to different local service providers.

Recreation & Open Spaces Committee

- This committee oversees a strong programme of maintenance and support for our wonderful open and recreational spaces and our children's play areas,
- In particular, the play areas have 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,
- We have renovated the Memorial Park, much of Millfields Park, and the Claypenny Children's Play Park. We trust that they will serve the town well for many years to come.
- As expressed elsewhere, our programme of work in Millfields Park has continued along the lines of our vision. Our next investment, alongside Easingwold Running Club, will be winter lights for the jogging track.
- We have continued our programme of tree works in the areas we own throughout the year. We complete professional tree reports for different areas of the town according to a multi-year programme, and then resolve any issues identified to keep our trees in good condition.
- We have continued our programme of grass cutting and planting/tree management for the main town greens and parks,
- We provide Council Allotments in Dawnay, and should anyone wish to have an allotment, then they should contact the Town Clerks to join the waiting list.

Operations Committee

- Our offices are situated in the Town Library and open on each Tuesday from 2 - 5pm and Friday from 9:30 - 11:30am. You are welcome to visit then. Otherwise, you can call the Clerks anytime on 01347 822422 and leave a message; or email them on clerk@easingwold.gov.uk,
- The Operations Committee oversees the management of our Council, its offices, services, equipment, finances, markets, archives etc. Comments regarding the support we provide, or opportunities we have for improvement should be forwarded to the Town Clerks,
- The Council works hard to provide value for money to the local taxpayers. Our budget includes elements for all our operational activities, but also a provision for projects that will keep the town not only in good order, but also offering better facilities for generations to come.
- We are working with the NYC Community Partnership Forum, and the Wold-class Business Forum to keep Easingwold an exciting destination to visit and stay in,
- We do hope that you will all visit our town centre and its traders and businesses for all your day-to-day needs. It is the epicentre of Easingwold and its life.

Social & Events Committee

- The Council website, email, and IT systems are constantly updated and improved during the year. Please go on-line to www.easingwold.gov.uk and look for yourselves.
- Inclusion and accessibility are important aspects of the ETC programme. We support a broad range of local groups and organisations, as well as our 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,
- We invest in Christmas Lights and twice-yearly planting to keep us looking great,
- We offer opportunities to sponsor benches, seats and trees, details can be obtained from the Clerks.
- Our Markets are thriving. We try to keep a high level of diversity in the traders present; and keep a list of potential new traders. We also have a series of part-time traders, who fill gaps for illness or holidays,
- We provide street trading licences on our land to cafés and hostellers to add to the town's vibrancy.