

Report of Cllr David Haigh, Town Mayor 2018/2019

Apart from a few years of university I have lived all of my life in Meltham, why? The Meltham Township is a great place live and had genuine community spirit, and your Council's aim is to best support Meltham, Helme and Wilshaw to continue to be a lovely township to live in.

Meltham has many community and self-help groups, it is a caring community supported by statutory provision in terms of our schools and health and welfare services. The Council has done its best to help nurture both voluntary and statutory provision, through grant aid and mutual support. We mark outstanding achievement in our community via our Pride of Meltham wards given out annually at our Civic Reception. This year it was a real pleasure to mark the achievements of Mandy Taylor, Jean Burhouse, Michael Hall and Jill Horsman and they all received commemorative plaques.

This year your Council has financially supported a number of organisations and events from our grants funding budget and you will find more information about those organisations and what the grants were for in the next Meltham Mercury.

- Meltham and Meltham Mills Band - £10,000 for the purchase of new uniforms and musical instruments.
- Meltham Greenway Skate Park- £2,578.80 for the purchase and installation of durable seating.
- Meltham Memories - £1300.00 for the purchase of flag holders and flag poles and with an additional £2150.00 agreed for 2019/20 towards the rental of two marquees for the 2019 Meltham Memories event, insurance for additional areas, sandbags and increased signage.
- Meltham Business Association £677.23 for the purchase of Christmas Lights for the Town.
- Meltham Parish Church Hall - £200.00 towards the cost of hosting a Christmas dinner for the homeless and lonely on Christmas day 2018.
- Walkers are Welcome - £294.00 for the production of posters and leaflets.
- Friends of Meltham Library - £500.00 to support children's activities over a 12-month period.
- Meltham Churches Together £350.00 towards the Carols in the Park event.

In addition, the Town Enhancement Fund has provided improvements to defibrillator provision in Meltham. I will leave other financial matters to my report as Chair of the Councils Properties Administration and Finance Committee.

Our Planning, Environmental and General Purposes Committee as Chair Councillor Whites' report will outline have been active in environmental and planning matters on or behalf. They have responded to public comments on planning and environmental 'grot spots' and provided commentary to Kirklees planners to best regulate development and extensions to property under the governments existing planning regulations, when development is often the default option.

The Council this year has had a heavy programme of work much assisted by the guidance of our proactive Clerk who has worked tirelessly to benefit our community with her support and knowledge.

In my role as Town Mayor, often with my wife Mary, I have been able to visit many Town events and meetings and represent our Township at Kirklees and other municipal meetings. I have also tried to help promote our varied village businesses where possible, especially in these times of austerity and uncertainty due to 'Brexit' matters.

In terms of our major asset, the Robert Ashton Memorial Park, there have been a number of developments including management of the parks trees and other ongoing maintenance mentioned in the report from the Properties Administration and Finance Committee.

This year there has been a real focus on the Councils governance to ensure compliance and transparency seeing much work, still ongoing in some areas, on standing orders, financial compliance, insurance cover, and preparation for and compliance with the dreaded General Data Protection Regulation.

We are also trying to seek out Melthamers view on their community by using the Place Standard tool - 'Ask Meltham' will involve talking to residents about their perception and views in key areas. We need this evidence to ensure we are best servicing what you want and to ensure our 4- year Council plan is relevant and reflects the priorities of residents, so we can allocate scarce resources and time effectively. The results which will be publicly available for all to use will also help the Council and other community groups bid for external funding where evidence is usually a key criteria of a successful bid. You can see more about 'Ask Meltham' in the next Meltham Mercury.

Throughout my Mayors year an important and ongoing matter has been the possible purchase of Meltham Town Hall from Kirklees. At the last full Council meeting of the municipal year we finally signed the paperwork after exhaustive negotiations with Kirklees, a tenant and subtenant. We will use money from our reserves (mainly funded from the sale of Meltham Hall and parts of the estate) to purchase the property, which will be rented and let by Max Bradley a local property developer and sublet to the Crossroads charity once it is brought up to standard and equipped to their needs.

The Council will have ongoing rent revenue and Crossroads will have purpose designed room and facilities which it does not presently have on Holmfirth Road, and the Community retains a major asset and building.

The Council has continued to lobby Kirklees, seeing it drop the car park charges proposal and look again at charges for secondary school transport costs for Meltham pupils, all pupils starting Year 7 in September will do so under the existing arrangements.

After responses to our Meltham Mercury about speeding and dog fouling issues, the Council has held public consultations and are hoping to work with:

1. The police to help provide evidence of need linked to community group initiatives which may lead to visiting camera vans or other warning devices and
2. The trial of 'Keep Britain Tidy' dog fouling materials after identification of target areas and the assessment of the amount of signage required had been undertaken by the Planning and Environmental Committee.

We are continuing to provide CPR / defibrillator training and to fund defibrillators or cabinets for existing defibrillators to make Meltham a safer place.

On the theme of safety, the knocking down of the Town Centre lamp standard in November caused a backwards step in terms of our CCTV safety and monitoring as the collision took out all the major control equipment. As I write we are still waiting for an insurance settlement on the CCTV equipment, but we are taking the opportunity to review the provision of CCTV in the Town Centre and to possibly expand the same. We have continued to help fund our village library this year by providing £4000 to pay for the premises in the Carlile Institute and this is likely to rise in the future due to increased rental costs.

Your Council tries its best to be financially prudent, but the loss of over £7000 Kirklees Council Tax Revenue (CTR) grant monies and despite cuts to some budgets has led to a small rise in the precept (detailed in the Finance Committee's report) to compensate for the loss of funds and rising costs generally. For a Band D property the rise is equivalent to £7.32 per annum.

Can I thank our retiring Councillors Nigel Brook, Edgar Holroyd-Doveton, Pat Maxfield and John Butterfield for their service to Meltham and my deputy Councillor Kate Buchanan for her help during the year. It has been a great pleasure to have been your Town Mayor during the 2018/9 Council year and my wife and I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting Melthamers and attending many celebrations and events in our Town and outside. I believe Meltham is a great place to live in and still do after 67 years living here!

David Haigh J.P

Town Mayor 2018-19

ANNUAL REPORT – Chair of the Planning and Environment and General Purposes Committee 2018/19, Cllr Paul White

We meet every three weeks throughout the year in order that we can scrutinise and comment on all Planning Applications in the township and ensure that Kirklees Council has our concerns and objections in time. This also means that any resident is able to attend and share their views, which we can pass on to Kirklees Council. Sometimes this can be very frustrating as it often appears that our words fall on deaf ears.

In February Kirklees Council approved their latest Local Plan, which decides what land and sites are to be used for over the next 15 years. It replaces a previous plan from the late 1990's. There have been a number of years of so called 'consultation' which many residents and the Town Council has taken part in. The very grave concern has been about the possible allocation of land from 'Green Belt' to housing sites. However, the new plan does not include any new sites from the green belt which means that there will be no new housing sites at Mill Moor Road or Helme Lane during the life of this plan. Your Town Council argued vociferously for this outcome in

order to protect our rural distinctiveness and also on grounds of our full schools and health services as well as over congested roads. We are also blessed by the fact that nearly half of the land in the township is within the Peak District National Park and their voice is also a loud one in terms of protecting our green field and landscape. Our neighbouring towns have been less fortunate with sites in both Honley and Netherton being taken from the green belt.

Of course Planning is not all we do and we've continued with our campaign to eradicate 'grotspots' and have received numerous requests from residents to tackle litter and grot in various locations. People may attend our meetings or simply contact the Town Clerk with details and the grotspot will be tackled, either by us insisting that either Kirklees deal with, if it is their responsibility, or by sending out our own contractor, who has dealt with many issues including collecting literally hundreds of bags of litter over the year. A regular concern is the area around Morrisons, where we have a direct line with the Manager. Regrettably we are having to return to the same spots over again as it's the same place where litter accumulates. What is hugely gratifying is the increasing number of residents that now volunteer, either to keep clean their locality or are part of organised groups improving places such as The Pleasure Grounds and the Meltham Green Way. If you'd love to join them please contact the Town Clerk.

Of course there are many other issues we look at as well but I'd like to finish by thanking my fellow Councillors for their energy and fortitude during the year and especially our Town Clerk, Michelle Chard for her continued diligence, humour and hard work.

Paul White

Properties, Administration and Finance Committee - Report from the Chair - Councillor David Haigh

We have endeavoured as a Committee to ensure our Council funds are properly used, by having an efficient Council with clear budgetary control and planning and exercising proper stewardship in relation to our properties and estate, especially the Robert Ashton Memorial Park. It has not been an easy year for the Council in terms of both forecast and other costs incurred especially in the park.

The ongoing maintenance of the park had to go over budget in some areas due to the funding of a professional tree survey, meaning expensive tree work had to be performed by tree surgeons to ensure the health and safety of the public and comply with other statutory requirements. The Council's grounds maintenance contractor held costs to that of 2017-18 and we met with the contractor to review priorities and needs and have an excellent relationship.

Our general contractor has been busy on such matters as refurbishing the car park steps, installing a duck food box by the pond and safety notices, re-positioning of the seating, repairing the bandstand and keeping our aging children's play equipment tidy and serviceable. We have consulted (with input from Councillor Noon), with parents about the children's play area and hope once works related to drainage problems in the younger children's area are completed to attend to the surface in the dry season! -

and then look at a full plan for renovation or replacement of the play equipment. Then it is hoped to move on to form a Friends of the Robert Ashton Park groups along the lines of the Pleasure Grounds group to help us manage, perhaps fund and watch over the Park.

Our general contractor has also been busy renewing and servicing our village seats and marker stones and dealing with 'grot spots' identified by councillors and the public, you will no doubts have seen his trailer emblazed with the Meltham Town Council crest at his current worksite.

A councillor working group of Councillors Haigh and White, supplemented at times by Councillors Holroyd-Doveton and Maxfield and latterly by councillor Keighley have worked on a 4-year Council plan, running from 2018-2022, recently signed off by full council, identifying priorities and funding needed. This will be helped by the planned Place Standard evidence gathering to take place in the next Council year which will inform evolving priorities in the ongoing document to steer or needs for the future.

We have continued to ring fence for future provision annual amounts in relation to key future areas such as election costs, CCTV renewal / funding and Meltham hall improvement – so we are building up resources without the need to dig into reserves.

The Council has made £20,000 available for grant aid in our community and £2,000 for town enhancement works and are also developing a further scheme with a budget of £5,000 for shop frontage replacement or repair, to try and preserve the character of the Town Centre conservation area. Fuller details are in the Mayors report.

We hope that the small rise in precept, and careful planning for the future costs and commitments added to the 4-year plan will allow us to fund the Council's identified priorities to keep our small town the great place it is.

The precept rise was the equivalent of £7.32 for a Band D property – an increase of just 14 pence per week and was mainly due to Kirklees Council significantly reducing the Council Tax Revenue grant it provided to the Town Council from over £7,000 per year to mere hundreds of pounds and generally increasing costs. The Council tried to mitigate matters by cutting some budgets but did not want to eat into reserves to alleviate the loss of funds. With the purchase of the Town Hall we will have significantly less in reserves but will have rental revenue and an appreciating asset tied to the use for community good.

Can I thank all the committee for their hard work and support and in particular my Vice Chair Cllr Jean Wrathall and our Town Clerk, Michelle Chard.

Councillor David Haigh J.P

Chair of Properties, Administration and Finance Committee 18/19