

Meltham Mercury

Meltham Town Council's Newsletter - Summer 2020

The Council offices are temporarily closed.
Please email the Clerk:
townclerk@melthamtowncouncil.gov.uk



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The Clerk to the Council is Michelle Chard.

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The Council offices are on the first floor of The Carlile Institute (access via lift or stairs).

WELCOME TO OUR SUMMER 2020 NEWSLETTER

KATE BUCHANAN, TOWN MAYOR PROVIDES AN UPDATE ON THE CORONAVIRUS SITUATION: We have continued with 'business as usual' in these strange and difficult circumstances following lockdown at the end of march. The council has been meeting remotely.

Given the circumstances, your Council in line with many town and parish councils, has agreed to delay the election of a new Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor until May 2021. Committee membership remains the same. This means that I will continue as Town Mayor, Roberta Bampton as Deputy Mayor and the chairs of all committees remain the same. In an emergency meeting soon after the lockdown, we agreed delegation to the Clerk to ensure that business could continue albeit in a limited form.

SUPPORTING OUR NHS AND KEY WORKERS

Thank you to everyone who's supported www.meltham.org: Meltham's response to Covid 19. Clr Richard Noon worked with James from Swooshed to light up St Bartholomew's Church as a Thank You to our NHS and key worker staff. The production of the artwork around the old phone box, NHS and VE Day flags was supported financially by Meltham Town Council. So, even during lockdown, we were still able to bring some colour, hope and vibrancy to the town.



Change of email address and an Update on the Town Council in Lockdown

The Council offices in the Carlile Institute are closed due to the virus but behind the scenes it's business as usual as far as possible. You can contact the Council (ideally via email) TownClerk@melthamtowncouncil.gov.uk and please note that our e-mail address has recently changed.

OUR LOCAL RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK

MELTHAM'S LOCAL COVID-19 RESPONSE FRAMEWORK IS BASED AROUND A SPECIALLY-CREATED WEBSITE: WWW.MELTHAM.ORG. IT HAS HAD ALMOST 10,000 VISITORS SINCE THE BEGINNING OF MARCH AND HAS ASSISTED MORE THAN 1,000 RESIDENTS WITH SHOPPING REQUESTS, PRESCRIPTION PICK-UPS, FOOD BANK REQUESTS AND CALLS TO PEOPLE WHO ARE LONELY OR IN NEED OF SOMEONE TO TALK TO.

The wider meltham.org operation was designed to help residents, businesses and community groups alike, to try and ensure that no one was left out and that everyone received the help and advice they needed. It has been a whole community effort. Thanks to all the volunteers who stepped forward to assist with shopping, prescription deliveries, foodbank requests and isolation calls.

There have been a host of events to bring the community together online including a business forum, cook a-longs from Alasdair Nunn of RachAls catering.

We have worked with Qubra and Prit from Meltham & Meltham Mills Convenience store and Richard & team at Meltham Co-op who have been amazing over the last few weeks – I know many have already thanked them for their efforts – but thank you once again. We also worked with Claire Curran and Chris Woodhead from Zest for Print to produce flags, posters and rainbows. A personal highlight was seeing the Carlile Institute and St Bartholomew's Church lit up blue as a thanks to our NHS and key worker staff. James from Swooshed provided this as well as picking up and delivering school dinners every day for key worker children across the Valley.



Meltham In Lockdown – Your Stories

We are in an ever-changing environment and there are many stories just within this brief update on the efforts of all involved in our community response. This is why we'd like **you** to share your stories of Lockdown in Meltham with us, through the website www.meltham.org. Upload photographs, songs, written word, video – anything you want – to document your time during lockdown. This will then be archived for future generations to come – and thanks to Arts Council for England funding, will be turned into a play by Dragonfly Productions

and the Carlile Institute.

It has been a whirlwind 10 weeks for many – my own thanks go out to each and everyone who has donated their time, effort and resolve to supporting Meltham residents during this time – thank you. We're not out of the woods yet though, so we'll keep going for some time to come. If you need help, visit the website www.meltham.org

ClrNoon

Robert Ashton Memorial Park – Coronavirus (COVID -19)

We are pleased to say that our park has remained open for people to exercise in throughout the pandemic. To comply with government guidance and to protect park users some facilities were closed. These included the two play areas, the tennis courts and the toilets. Recent changes to government guidance have happily allowed the tennis courts to reopen and you are free to use the tennis courts provided you comply with the rules on social distancing.

We continue to monitor government guidance and will reopen more facilities as and when we are safely able to do so. Our dedicated staff and contractors continue to maintain the park, cutting the grass, picking up litter and generally keeping the park a pleasant place to visit – but if you see a contractor working please keep a safe distance away.

If you have visited recently you will have seen the striking signs throughout the park, reminding users of the government guidance and the rules to be followed. Gates in the park have been secured in an open position to reduce the need to touch surfaces. So please do visit the park but follow the guidance:



MELTHAM LITTER PICK

Meltham Walkers are Welcome in conjunction with Meltham Town Council had planned to hold a Litter-pick on March 28. Our plan was to tidy up footpaths in areas central to Meltham by removing litter and clearing vegetation that impedes use of the footpaths. We chose the paths leading from Towngate, Station Street, Sunny Heys and Hey Doorstep Green leading to Morrisons supermarket.

As the Covid-19 situation became clearer we sadly had to cancel. We remain very keen to hold this event in the future so please watch this space (and social media).



The Big Lunch in the Robert Ashton Memorial Park 2020

We were looking forward to the Big Lunch in the Park so it was with a great sadness that it has had to be postponed. We'd like to thank the group of volunteers and fellow councillors who put in so much effort to make this a success. We had located all manner of straw bales, marquees and tables, games for all, stalls, ice cream van, state of the art fire engine (from Rosenbauer) and much more to make this an enjoyable event. We look forward to re-scheduling the Big Lunch in the future.

EACH YEAR THE COUNCIL PUBLISHES AN ANNUAL REPORT WHICH INCLUDES REPORTS BY THE TOWN MAYOR AND FROM THE CHAIRS OF THE MAIN COMMITTEES. SUMMARIES OF THESE REPORTS ARE INCLUDED IN THIS NEWSLETTER BUT YOU CAN FIND THE FULL VERSIONS ON THE COUNCIL'S WEBSITE

www.melthamtowncouncil.gov.uk/about/publications-and-reports/ & continues at www.melthamtowncouncil.gov.uk

Financial update

Back in January 2020 the Town Council authorised a formal precept demand to Kirklees Council for £137,982 for 2020/21 – meaning that a Band D property in Meltham would pay just 8 pence per week more. The Town Council's precept is significantly less than the national average and is a tiny proportion of residents' total council tax bill, with the majority of council tax going to Kirklees Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the fire and rescue authorities. At a total cost of less than a pound a week for an average property, we believe that the Town Council's services continue to represent value for money.

● Cuts to grant funding

Unfortunately, Kirklees Council has significantly reduced the grant it provides to the Town Council from over £7,000 per year to mere hundreds of pounds in 19/20, and then to nothing at all for 20/21. The Town Council needs to replace this funding in order to protect the services it provides.

● Protecting Meltham Services

As Kirklees Council cuts services, the Town Council is stepping in to protect and provide for the residents of Meltham, e.g. making a considerable contribution towards keeping the library service in Meltham and arranging for footpaths and public spaces to be cut back of vegetation and cleared of litter.

● Ensuring the Town Council's future finances are on a firm footing

We have taken steps to reduce expenditure where we can, but for many years the Town Council did not raise the precept, or the increases were below inflation. This is not sustainable indefinitely and ultimately reduces the money available for local projects.

● Improving our area

We listened to what residents wanted to happen in Meltham when they took part in the Ask Meltham project last year and the bulk of the increase in the precept will go on putting in place actions to address the priorities that residents highlighted. Some of this work has come to a halt due to the restrictions imposed by the Coronavirus but in due course this will resume. The Council continues to set aside monies for improvements to the Town Centre to ensure Meltham is an attractive and safe place to live, work and visit. We continue to make significant grants to community groups and are planning a number of improvements to further enhance Robert Ashton Memorial Park over the coming years.

Meltham Fringe: Holmfirth Art Week, July 2020

The planning for this was at an advanced stage when sadly, the Holmfirth Art Week was cancelled. Fifteen artists (including a ceramicist, photographer and jeweller) were planning to exhibit in two venues: Crossroads (the Old Town Hall) and the Carlile Institute. A big thank you to the artists and committed team of volunteers who were supporting this. We aim to be part of Art Week as Meltham Fringe in July 2021.

Meltham in Focus

In 1994, nearly 30 years' ago, Meltham Photographic Club began a compilation of photos and articles which aimed to capture many aspects of Meltham, past and present. Photographs show Meltham town centre going back to the late 1800s and more recent photos of the same shot for comparison. Photographs include many mills and other buildings in and around Meltham, many of which have been demolished. Articles span events and concerts put on by Meltham & Meltham Mills Band, the Scouts and Guides and many other community organisations over many decades. We can find photographs of annual events such as Meltham Gala, photos of television programmes 'in the making', the Royal visit by King George V and Queen Mary in 1912 and articles about David Brown Tractors and 'The Beer Houses of Meltham 100 years ago'. The 'black folders' were initially stored in the Library but later moved to the Edward Brook Room in the Carlile Institute.

Your Council recently approved the financial outlay to digitize the collection and we are delighted to report that it is well on the way to completion. Dave Pattern who works at Huddersfield University and is a member of Huddersfield Local History Society is undertaking the work. Dave is responsible for creating the website: Huddersfield Exposed which, if you're interested in local history is well worth exploring. The digitization of the Meltham archive involves scanning each folder, enhancing the images and enabling everything to be viewed online. All the pages will be readable and searchable online for everyone to access via Huddersfield Exposed and www.melthamtowncouncil.gov.uk. The site will be live by the time you receive this issue of the Mercury. Printed copies of the original folders will be available in the Library (in the Carlile Institute, Meltham).



*TOWN HALL & CO-OP EARLY 1900
Town Hall & Tower Clock given by Edward Brook in 1897
Co-op opened in 1869*



*CO-OP & TOWN HALL
1990*

TREES UPDATE

Earlier in the year Meltham Town Council applied for and received over 300 saplings from the Woodland Trust to plant around Meltham. A number were offered to local community groups with the remainder intended for a community planting event in the Robert Ashton Memorial Park. Unfortunately due to the lockdown, that event was cancelled, but the trees still made it into the ground.

Christine Senior of the Friends of Meltham Pleasure Grounds worked with volunteers to plant over a hundred trees in the Pleasure Grounds, some went to the local schools and some were given out to anyone who wanted one at the community group day in the Carlile Institute on the 7th March alongside a 'plant a seed' activity from Edible Meltham (see picture below). The trees that were left went with the park keepers to be put around the Robert Ashton Memorial Park. It was great being able to facilitate this and hopefully next year we can do it again and this time manage to hold a community planting event.



Tour de Yorkshire

Meltham Town Council funded the production of street decorations for the Tour de Yorkshire which was planned to travel through the town in May - this event was unfortunately cancelled due to the virus but it is hoped it will be rescheduled in the future and the decorations can be used then.



MELTHAM VE DAY CANCELLATION



Received from Pam Murgatroyd, one of the organisers of the Meltham VE Day 75 celebrations:

'We are all extremely sad that the event had to be cancelled after all the hard work that the committee had done to arrange it. However, the flags and banners, financed by Meltham Town Council, went up and Mick Hall from Meltham Band arranged for several musicians to play the Last Post at 3pm on 8th May 2019. Several street parties were held in the town whilst maintaining safe distancing so this special anniversary did not go unrecognised.'

MELTHAM TOWN COUNCIL: GRANTS AWARDED 2019-20

MELTHAM WALKERS ARE WELCOME

for £229.54 to support a visit from a Japanese delegation to Meltham.

ENABLING YOUTH

for £600 to undertake a consultation with Meltham Youth to find out their issues and needs.

HOME VALLEY LIONS

for £750 for their message in a bottle scheme. This simple idea is designed to encourage people to keep their personal and medical details on a standard form and in a common location – the fridge. A message from the Lions: 'As soon as we take delivery and the current pressure is off



the local surgeries and pharmacies we will be distributing the bottles for issue to Meltham residents.'

MELTHAM SUBSCRIPTION BOWLING CLUB

for £4,549.00 towards improvements to the greens. Michael Pogson comments that 'We are very grateful to the Town Council for the support in replacing the Bowling Green 'kerbs' and improvements around the greens. This is a very popular club with a large number of residents playing in the many teams.'



MELTHAM MEMORIES

for £2,150.00 for installing flag pole holders and flags for events throughout the year.

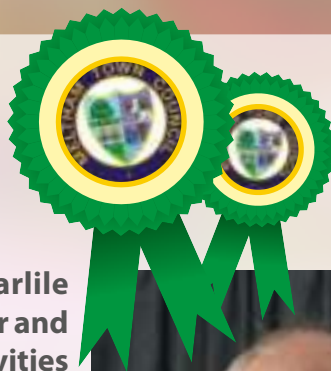
Pride of Meltham Awards

Robert Pepper

Robert has been an invaluable member of the Meltham Carlile Institute Support Group since 2014. He is the Chair, the Treasurer and responsible for room rentals and bookings of all the various activities and events in the Carlile, including theatre, films, concerts, classes and community groups. He is also a trustee of the Carlile Institute. Robert established a music and theatre programme and the Carlile successfully bid for Arts Council funding which provides subsidised tickets for children and free school workshops. Robert is also involved in charitable work with the Communities United Project which has benefited many hundreds of young people including those living in Meltham.

Robert will soon be retiring from his volunteering activities and all the volunteers at the Carlile wanted to acknowledge his immense contribution to a project which is such a valuable community asset.

The Town Council felt that Robert's huge contribution and dedication to the Carlile institute was more than worthy of recognition. So, on behalf of all those who have benefited from the Carlile Institute and the activities it provides, a big thank you and congratulations on your award.



Patricia Redfearn



Patricia is being awarded the Pride of Meltham award for her voluntary work running the luncheon club for older people in Meltham for sixteen years. The luncheon club started up again when Alan, Patricia's late husband was elected to the Town Council back in 2003. He wanted somewhere where older people could come once a week, have a hot meal and a chat.

Alan and Pat Radford (who was the Clerk to the Council at that time) approached Kirklees Council and were provided with ovens and a freezer. And so it was that the luncheon club started up in the Carlile in 2004 with Patricia, her daughter Sally and the late Shirley Watson covering one Wednesday and Pat Radford and her team covering the alternate Wednesday. When Pat and her team stopped, Vanda, Margaret and Gillian took over. The children from Meltham C of E school also come and help by laying the tables and serving the food.

The luncheon club provides an excellent meal once a week and you can hear the laughter from those having their lunch throughout the Carlile. The residents who attend the luncheon club are very grateful for the efforts of all of those who volunteer to provide this valuable service, none less so than Patricia. When Patricia's husband Alan was very poorly he said to Patricia 'you will carry on with the luncheon club' and three years on she still is.

Patricia was reluctant to accept this award claiming that others were equally deserving but the Town Council feels it's right and proper to celebrate the outstanding contribution Patricia has made to the lives of so many residents of Meltham. On behalf of all those who have benefited from the luncheon club over that time a big thank you and congratulations on your award.

Town Mayor's Report 2019-20 Cllr Kate Buchanan

My year as Town Mayor has been fascinating and stimulating. I have very much enjoyed developing new initiatives with fellow councillors, talking to people and chairing Council meetings. I have attended many events in Meltham and been invited to a number further afield. This report provides highlights of my past year since May 2019:

Ask Meltham

This was launched at the end of May 2019 with the full support of all councillors. Thanks to the Clerk's efficiency and support from Julie McDowell and her team from the Democracy Service at Kirklees Council, we were able to train over 30 volunteers to enable conversations with and submit evidence from over 700 people, including children and young people. The process has been beneficial on many levels: it has encouraged me and my fellow councillors to get out and about in different settings e.g. community groups, cafes, outdoor spaces, businesses and ask people their views on living and working in Meltham; it has enabled the Council to become more responsive to what's important to Meltham's residents; it has created a better working relationship with Kirklees Council. My thanks to Cllr Brian Keighley for analysing and making sense of the data. If you're interested in the details, please go to: www.howgoodisourplace.org.uk/ask-meltham/... *continues at www.melthamtowncouncil.gov.uk*

We had already started implementing many of the recommendations of Ask Meltham when the pandemic struck and are looking forward to picking up where we left off as soon as we can do so safely.

Properties, Administration and Finance Committee: Annual Report 2019/2020

Chair - Councillor Roberta Bampton

The maintenance and improvement of the Robert Ashton Memorial Park continues to be the highest expenditure for the Town Council. This year repairs have been made to pathways, fencing and the children's play areas. It had also been intended that this year we would hold an event in the Park at which we would consult our residents and other stakeholders to find out what they want from the Park. However, this and other plans for the Park were put on hold, firstly because of the decision to undertake the Ask Meltham project and secondly by the impact of the Coronavirus. One of the outputs from the Ask Meltham project was that the Town Council decided to commission a park master plan and accompanying consultancy services from Kirklees Council for a wholesale change to the park, adopting a holistic and proactive approach to change rather than a largely reactive one... *continues at www.melthamtowncouncil.gov.uk*

Planning, Environment and General Purposes Committee Annual Report 2019-20

Chair: Cllr Paul White

For most of this year our committee was 'ticking' along quite nicely getting on with business on behalf of our residents. The sudden change in March as we started coming to terms with the coronavirus pandemic was an anxious time for all of us and has remained one which has created fear and isolation for many of us.

Our work has continued as the Government decided not to stop the planning process in the UK, and as a consequence, planning applications are still being submitted. We decided early on that it was important that we continued to meet (remotely) in order that both your views/objections alongside the Town Council's views were expressed to Kirklees Council. Since then Kirklees Council decided to use executive powers to make decisions without open committees (following Government advice) and this feels like residents are being excluded from the process as only written objections may be made... *continues at www.melthamtowncouncil.gov.uk*