



Newhaven Town Council Annual Report 2008-09



INTRODUCTION BY THE TOWN MAYOR

COUNCILLOR GRAHAM AMY

It was a great honour to be chosen as the 24th Mayor of Newhaven and it has been a year that I will never forget. Indeed, I will find it hard not to be opening businesses, visiting groups or meeting my fellow Mayors at various events throughout the area.

I have met hundreds of my fellow townspeople and made many new friends along the way. I have been ably supported by the Mayoress, my wife Marlene, the Deputy Mayor Cllr. Carla Butler, and the staff at Newhaven Town Council.

My first official duty was to join the Chairman of SEEDA (South East England Development Agency), Basepoint Director Brian Andrews and Carla Butler in her other role as Chairman of Lewes District Council, for the official opening of the Newhaven Enterprise Centre on Denton Island. I am delighted that despite the recession the Enterprise Centre has gone from strength to strength.

On a light-hearted note I was volunteered to be Neptune and lead the Children's Parade at the Maritime Festival, which was organised by the NCDA and supported by Newhaven Town Council. It was great fun and once again ably supported by our local schools and our marvellous sea cadets.

I had the great pleasure to join with Cllr. John Adams and Cllr. Robert Robertson, the Chairman of the Newhaven branch of the British Legion to unveil an information lectern on the War Memorial Green. The lectern tells the history of the town's three memorials, when they were constructed and who they commemorate.

I chose the Searchlight Residential Home as my charity during my Mayoral year and they asked if I could help them raise funds for a new mini-bus. Thanks to the generosity of groups like the Lions and the Rotary Club, HMS Ranger, Sainsburys, my fellow councillors, the staff at Searchlight and the amazing kindness of the people in the town we raised an incredible £30,000 for the bus. I cannot thank you all enough for making Searchlight's and my dream come true.

During the year we had a royal visit with her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra visiting the Children and Family Centre on Denton Island, the Hillcrest Centre and the Fort. I wore several hats that day –as the Mayor of Newhaven, as Chairman of NCDA and as Chairman of the Castle Hill Group where I received on behalf of the group, the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service (the equivalent of the MBE for groups). It was a marvellous day and the Princess was absolutely charming.

The Mayoress and I were privileged to represent Newhaven at the Dieppe Raid commemorations held in Newhaven and France. Many people attended the services both in Newhaven and Dieppe. It is important that we never forget the people that lost their lives on the ill-fated raid.

Despite the many protests, work on the incinerator is now well under way and I hope that Veolia, who stand to make substantial sums from the waste contract, help fund some of the much needed projects in the town's regeneration programme.

The demise of Woolworth's has put added pressure on the town centre and we will need the new library and further improvements to improve the footfall in the town. I urge residents to shop in the town where possible, to help our beleaguered shopkeepers at this difficult time.

Newhaven has a great culture and I know that we will recover from these difficulties as we always do. Hopefully we will get "Village Green" status for the sandy beach which will be an enormous boost for the town.

Newhaven still has a lot to offer and I am proud and very grateful to my fellow councillors for electing me as Mayor.

Councillor Graham Amy
Town Mayor

REPORT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

COUNCILLOR JUDITH OST

The last year has been a busy one for the Town Council. Following the announcement early in 2008 by the French owners of the port that the West Beach will be permanently closed on health and safety grounds and the erection of a formidable fence to prevent people from accessing the sands, the Town Council set up a Working Party to look at what could be done. One of the things they looked at was the legal position – whether local residents might have accrued a legal right of access over the decades that they have been using the beach. Following discussions with advisers, it was suggested that it might be possible to obtain Village Green status for the beach.

If this is successful it would mean that the public use of the beach is confirmed and that the owners would not be allowed to close it except in an emergency. In order for the Village Green application to be valid in law, it needs to be shown that the inhabitants of Newhaven have used the West Beach for lawful sports and pastimes (e.g. walking, flying kites, playing with children, picnicking, playing beach games, building sandcastles etc) as of a perceived right, for a period of at least 20 years.

Accordingly, last summer the Town Council set about asking local people whether they supported the idea and whether they would be able to help provide evidence to support the application. The response was overwhelming – more than 1,000 people filled in initial forms of support and not one person objected to the idea. Hundreds of family photographs were brought into the Town Council offices and sixty people provided fuller written evidence in detailed questionnaires.

Having gathered all this evidence together, a detailed statement of facts was written in support of the application and this, together with all the evidence, was finally submitted to East Sussex County Council in December. We were told that the County Council had never before received so much evidence relating to a village green application. Once the application had been registered there was a six week period for the receipt of objections and one objection was submitted to the County Council – from Newhaven Port and Properties, the owners of the beach.

The objection is a very technical one, couched in legal language, and at the time of writing this report it is being considered carefully by the Town Council's solicitors. A meeting is due to take place at the end of March to decide how the Town Council should respond.

It will be up to the County Council to decide how they will consider the application. It has been clear from the beginning that the case is unusual and that it would be contested by the port authority. For these reasons it is likely that the County Council may decide to call a Public Inquiry to consider the application, which could involve the Town Council in substantial legal costs, especially if there was then an appeal against the decision of the Inquiry.

Clearly local people would feel very let down if the Town Council was unable to fight for the West Beach all the way through the whole process due to a lack of funds. For this reason, the Town Council took the decision to add a special one-off charge of £50,000 to the Precept (the money raised through local Council tax) for Newhaven for 2009/10 to provide a fighting fund for the beach. Careful economies were undertaken to make sure that apart from this charge, there was no other increase in the Precept. This was a difficult decision to make at this time of economic recession, when many local families will be feeling the pinch – but feeling has been running so high about the closure of the beach, which the people of Newhaven feel so strongly “belongs” to them, that it was felt to be the right decision. The effect of the charge is to add about £1 per month to the council tax bill for a Band D home.

Gathering evidence about the West Beach has taken lots of time, however the Town Council has been busy doing other things as well. A brand new, state of the art play area has just been completed at the Denton recreation ground and will be open for the school Easter holidays. This includes a new ball games area and a wide range of play equipment chosen by local children in Denton. The Town Council provided £30,000 for the project and the remaining £50,000 came from Government pathfinder funding which had been obtained by East Sussex County Council. The District Council have provided invaluable help in designing the play area and arranging for the installation of the equipment. Now that this project has been completed, the Town Council hope to turn their attention to the play area at Valley Road, once again in partnership with the District Council which owns the adjacent grass bank.

A new community bus service for Newhaven will be starting on 1st April which has been funded by the Town Council. This will be a door to door “dial-a-ride” service operated by Community Transport for the Lewes Area (CTLA) and will run on Tuesdays and Thursdays. It will cover the whole of Newhaven, Denton and South Highton and can be used by anyone who finds it difficult to use public transport. Once people have registered with CTLA (which they can do free of charge) then they will be able to book a ride within the town for any purpose – for example doctor’s appointments, to go shopping or to visit a friend. Each trip will cost £1.50 per person. For more information or to register, telephone CTLA on 01273 517332.

A new information lectern was installed at the War Memorial green last spring giving historical information about the people and events that the memorials there commemorate as well as information about the construction and design of the memorials.

Two new notice boards have just been installed by the Town Council in the town centre on the wall of the old Friday-ad building. One of these is for the Town Council and the other is for community use, so that local organisations can publicise events they are holding.

The Council has also made improvements this year to the facilities at Meeching Hall. The upstairs rooms have been completely redecorated, including a new kitchen area and new carpeting and disabled access to the side of the hall has been improved. To complete the improvements it has now been agreed that new stage and window curtains will be provided downstairs. Meeching Amateur Dramatics, who use the hall on a regular basis and stage two or three productions a year at the hall, have offered £1,000 towards the cost of the stage curtains.

When the current Town Council was elected in May 2007 it was decided that the Council’s priority would be youth and a number of projects have taken place this year to provide facilities for the town’s young people. The new play area at Denton has already been mentioned. Additionally, the Town Council has financed free holiday activities for children and young people which have been provided by two local organisations. NIPPERS at Shakespeare Hall has provided free play opportunities to children nominated by local schools or by social services. The Newhaven Community Development Association (NCDA) provided free activities for young people at the Lewes Road hut. Both of these activities took place throughout the school holidays in 2008. Funding to enable NIPPERS to continue with these activities during 2009 has already been agreed.

The Town Council makes grant aid funding available for local organisations each year. This year we had an additional sum available as a result of the sale of the Cemetery Lodge last year. It was agreed that the interest earned on this sum of money should be added to the grant aid budget. This has enabled us to offer match funding to both Newhaven Cricket Club and Newhaven Football Club for projects they wish to undertake at the Fort Road Recreation Ground. The Cricket Club want to refurbish the Cricket Pavilion there and have applied for additional funding from other bodies to enable this to take place. We have already heard that the Football Club has been successful in their bid for funding from Viridor Credits to replace their flood lights and this bid was assisted by matched funding of £2,200 from the Town Council.

The Town Council funded the Christmas community event at the Fort which took place on 6th December and was attended by more than 1300 local residents. A Christmas Grotto was provided by volunteers from the Churches of Newhaven, there were various community stalls, fairground activities, a Christmas Punch and Judy Show, Victorian Museum displays provided by a Historical Re-enactment group and Christmas Music. Entry to the Fort and all its exhibits was free. In 2009 it has been decided to sponsor a summer time event instead, and this will take place on 20th June.

Newhaven in Bloom are a small group of volunteers who work very hard to provide floral displays around the town each year and the Town Council has agreed to give them £1,500 this summer so that they can buy new planters and fill them with flowers.

For 2009/10 the Town Council is embarking on a new exciting youth project, which is to work with Tideway School to have a "Young Mayor" elected from amongst the 11-17 year olds in the town. The election will take place on 1st July and the "Young Mayor" and his or her deputy will then hold office from September to September to fit in with the school year. It is hoped that these two young people will provide a focal point for representing the views of young people to the Town Council. The "Young Mayor" will have a small budget of £500 to spend on whatever young people wish provided that it is in accordance with the services and resources normally provided by the Town Council.

In these times of economic down turn, Newhaven continues to face a number of challenges. A major survey of the infrastructure of the town is being carried out by a company called BPP under the auspices of the Newhaven Strategic Network, which is a partnership organisation between local authorities and the business and voluntary sectors. The results of the survey are expected to be made public in July and will start off some interesting and exciting discussions about the future development of the town. The Town Council looks forward to taking part in these and to continuing to work to make Newhaven a great place to live.

Councillor Judith Ost

THE ROLE OF NEWHAVEN TOWN COUNCIL

There are three tiers of local government with areas of responsibility in Newhaven - East Sussex County Council, Lewes District Council and Newhaven Town Council.

East Sussex County Council's responsibilities include:

Adult Social Care, working in partnership with East Sussex Downs & Weald PCT and others, to assess the needs of and commission services for older people and those with disabilities, either in their own homes or in residential placements;

Waste Disposal, such as by landfill or incineration

Children's Services, leading the Children's Trust arrangements, supporting school improvement, commissioning services for children and families through Children's Centres and otherwise, and managing fostering and adoption;

Transport and Environment, including road safety; the maintenance of footways, roads and bridges, and street lighting; support for public transport; rights of way and access to the countryside; and protection of the Downs and Heritage Coast;

A range of other services, including Libraries, Archives and Records Management, Trading Standards, Adult Community Learning, and the Registration Service.

Lewes District Council's responsibilities include:

Housing

Deciding planning applications

Rubbish collection from premises in the town; provision of recycling facilities

Street cleansing

Environmental health

Provision of leisure and sports facilities, such as the Seahaven Pool, recreation grounds

Collection of Council Tax on behalf of all three tiers of local government

Licensing of taxis

Newhaven Town Council is the equivalent of a village parish council. It receives annually a small percentage of the money raised by Council Tax, known as "the Precept". This money can be spent on the provision of various things that are of particular benefit to the local community and which the Town Council feel are not adequately provided by the other two tiers.

Eighteen local people serve as Councillors on the Town Council. They are all volunteers and receive no pay for the work they do on behalf of the town. Elections are held every four years.

There are full meetings of the Town Council about every six weeks throughout the year, which take place at Meeching Hall, in Fort Road. All meetings of the Council are open to the public and there is a short period at the beginning of each meeting put aside for questions from the public and for the receipt of petitions.

An important part of the role of the Town Council is to represent the views of the town in response to various public consultations.

On a regular basis our Planning Applications Committee meet to look at planning applications received by the Planning Authority and to pass on to them our comments. The Town Council always try to represent the views put forward by local people in this regard, although sometimes this can prove difficult when an application is controversial and has both vocal support and opposition amongst local residents. Nevertheless, members of the Planning Applications Committee take a vigilant approach in representing the local viewpoint, and encourage objectors/supporters of planning applications to attend meetings and put forward their views. When an application is of particular public interest a special public meeting may be held.

At the present time, Newhaven Town Council provides the following for the local community:

- ◆ The Town Council offices in Fort Road act as an information point for local residents. The offices were the subject of a major refurbishment in 2003-4 and are now much more people friendly, with easy public access from street level. Internally there is a lift for the less agile or parents with buggies and the interior is light, modern and convenient. The building also has a private interview room and a small meeting room. Current planning applications may be viewed there during normal office opening hours. Leaflets and posters are displayed concerning local events, places of interest and other items of general interest. The Registrar visits the offices by arrangement to allow local residents to register births and deaths. The meeting room is in regular use in hosting meetings connected with the Meridian Mature Citizens Forum, Anti-Social Behaviour, Tourism Group and the Local Area Transport Strategy. The offices are owned by the Town Council.
- ◆ Four social centres are owned, maintained and run by the Town Council. They are available for hire by local organisations and individuals. They are Denton Social Centre, East Side Social Centre, Lewes Road Hut and Meeching Hall.
- ◆ Some of the town's recreation grounds are maintained by the Town Council. These are the Denton Recreation Ground and Children's Play Area, the Valley Road Play Area, and the Lewes Road Recreation Ground and Children's Play Area. Other local recreation grounds and play areas are the responsibility of Lewes District Council.
- ◆ Three amenity areas in the town are maintained by the Town Council. The Bay Vue Amenity Area in Bay Vue Road is owned by the Town Council and maintained as a grassed area with public seating. The Valley Ponds area is leased from Lewes District Council and looked after by the Town Council as a wildlife conservation area and amenity area for local residents. The strip of land known as the Rose Walk Amenity area (behind Southdown School, linking Church Hill and Rose Walk) is leased from East Sussex County Council and maintained as a grassed area by the Town Council.
- ◆ The town's war memorials are looked after by the Town Council. All three memorials – the Canadian Memorial, the Mercantile Marine Memorial (also known as the Transport Memorial) and the town's War Memorial – now stand together in the Memorial Gardens in South Way. Each year in August, the Town Council host a commemoration service at the Canadian Memorial on the anniversary of the Dieppe Raid in 1942. The Town Council also work in partnership with the Royal British legion to organise the annual service of remembrance during November
- ◆ Newhaven Cemetery is owned by the Town Council, which acts as the local burial authority. The Cemetery includes burial plots, a garden of remembrance for ashes interments, and a chapel which is used for some funerals.
- ◆ There are a small number of allotments at Newhaven Cemetery, which are let to local residents for a nominal annual fee. The allotments at East Side are owned and controlled by Lewes District Council.
- ◆ The Town Council own and fund the CCTV cameras in the town centre, which are operated and maintained by Sussex Police.
- ◆ The Christmas Lights in the town centre are owned and put up each year by the Town Council. A number of local businesses allow the Town Council use of their electricity supply for this purpose. The bulbs are LED energy saving bulbs.

- ◆ The floral boat at the junction of Bridge Street and South Way is owned and maintained by the Town Council. The Town Council have also planted bulbs in grass verges in various locations in recent years. Additionally, support is given by the Town Council to Newhaven in Bloom, who provide many of the floral displays in the Town in the summer.
- ◆ A new community bus service operating on two days a week on a door to door dial-a-ride basis is starting on 1st April 2009, funded by the Town Council and operated by Community Transport for the Lewes Area (CTLA).
- ◆ The Town Council funds the provision of vouchers for local senior citizens giving a reduction in the purchase price of senior citizen railcards.
- ◆ Some of the public seats in the town are owned and maintained by the Town Council.
- ◆ There are 7 Town Council noticeboards around the town which are used for the display of Town Council minutes and agendas and a list of Town Councillors. These include a new noticeboard in the town centre which has been installed this year. Additionally, a new community noticeboard has been provided in the town centre which can be used by local organisations.

The Town Council are also consulted on wider matters, such as the Lewes District Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Development Framework plan.

The Town Council are represented on the following outside bodies:

Access in Seaford and Newhaven Committee

Age Concern Day Club

Citizens Advice Bureau

Community Transport for the Lewes Area (CTLA)

INPACT

Lewes District Association of Local Councils

Lewes District Foyer

Meridian Mature Citizens Forum

Newhaven Children & Young People's Initiative

Newhaven in Bloom

Newhaven Local Action Team (LAT)

Newhaven Local Area Transport Strategy Steering Group

Newhaven, Peacehaven & Lewes Volunteer Bureau

Newhaven Strategic Network

Open Spaces Group

Parishes of the Lower Ouse (POLO)

Shakespeare Hall

NEWHAVEN TOWN COUNCIL STRUCTURE 2008-2009

Town Council Members

Denton Ward

Charlie Carr	73 Iveagh Crescent, South Heighton
Ann Giles	41 Arundel Road, Denton
Roderick Main	5 Avis Parade Flats, Avis Road, Denton
Angela Simmons	Cedars House, 1 Heighton Road, Denton (<i>Lead Member for</i>
<i>Community Services</i>)	
Vacancy	

Meeching Ward

John Adams	110 Newhaven Heights, Court Farm Road, Newhaven
Graham Amy	71 Court Farm Road, Newhaven (<i>Mayor</i>)
Carla Butler	6 Southdown Close, Newhaven
Darren Grover	2 Firle Terrace, South Heighton
Maurice Langham	34 Mariners Wharf, Fort Road
Robert Robertson	28 Western Road, Newhaven
David Rogers	74 Fort Road, Newhaven

Valley Ward

Julie Carr	73 Iveagh Crescent, South Heighton (<i>Lead Member for Partnership & Promotion</i>)
Emma Clothier	c/o Town Council offices
Cynthia Kennedy	70 Elphick Road, Newhaven (<i>Lead Member for Children and Young People</i>)
Judith Ost	Mary Ann's Cottage, Lewes Road, Newhaven (<i>Leader of the Council</i>)
Pat Ost	Mary Ann's Cottage, Lewes Road, Newhaven
Steve Saunders	25 Southdown Road, Newhaven (<i>Lead Member for Planning</i>)

Staff

Town Clerk Ian Everest

Assistant Town Clerk Jacky Cole
(Part-time)

Administration/Financial Assistant Ruth Durrant

Grounds Staff Robin Deakin, Peter Shew, Tony Skinner

Caretaker John Seymour
(Part-time)

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The Town Council's full accounts for the year 2008/09 will be available later in the year for public inspection.

Income

The Town Council's budget is comprised of the amount paid by residents of the town (via the Council Tax) and the amount raised by income from rentals, lettings, bank interest and other fees and charges.

2008/09

Precept (Council Tax)	£ 304,550.00
Income (budgeted)	£ 72,112.00
	£ 376,662.00

Expenditure

The Town Council's expenditure is controlled by a budgeting and monitoring process which categorises expenditure into separate headings.

For the year 2008/09 the budgeted figures were

Administration/Office	£ 49,300.00
Staff and Training	£ 198,350.00
Building and Grounds Maintenance	£ 35,601.00
Community Services	£ 85,700.00
(CCTV Cameras, Christmas lights, grants, play areas, Citizens Advice Bureau, School Holiday Activities)	£ 368,951.00

The Town Council also has an Earmarked Reserves Budget. This is used for projects for which it may be necessary to accumulate funding over a number of years or for special one-off funding demands.

During the year 2008/09, the following expenditure has been made from the Earmarked Reserves:

Election	£ 4,435.00
Hall Refurbishment	£ 9,123.00
Notice Boards/Street Scene	£ 1,887.00
Youth Initiatives	£ 413.00
Incinerator Fighting Fund	£ 24,450.00
Play Areas	£ 32,000.00

During the year 2008/09, the following grants were awarded by the Town Council:

2nd Denton & South Highton Beaver Scouts	£	60.00
3rd Newhaven Scout Group	£	150.00
Access in Seaford & Newhven Committee	£	200.00
Ann Bickmore Children's Fund	£	200.00
Bluebirds - Newhaven Branch	£	80.00
Busy Bees	£	400.00
Denton Women's Fellowship	£	150.00
East Sussex Wildlife Rescue & Ambulance Service	£	50.00
Elim Church Lunch Club	£	100.00
Friends of West Quay	£	250.00
Hanson Road Residents Association	£	180.00
Happy Valley Pre-School	£	500.00
Hillcrest Community Partnership	£	2,000.00
N.I.P.P.E.R.S.	£	250.00
National Coastwatch Institution	£	500.00
Newhaven & Peacehaven U3A	£	100.00
Newhaven Bowls Club	£	150.00
Newhaven Football Club	£	2,209.00
Newhaven in Bloom	£	300.00
Newhaven Vista for the Blind & Visually Impaired	£	250.00
Newhaven Youth Marching Band	£	300.00
Our Newhaven	£	250.00
Rock Solid Youth Group	£	200.00
Rotary Club of Newhaven	£	200.00
Seahaven FM	£	500.00
Seahaven Harriers	£	100.00
Shakespeare Hall	£	150.00
Sussex Air Ambulance	£	100.00
Vitalise	£	230.00

Note:

The accounts of Newhaven Town Council are audited each year in compliance with the Audit Commission Act 1993 - Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/553).

The accounts for the year 2007/08 have been duly audited and certified by the external auditor.