

Manningtree Town Council Annual Report

This is a brief review of some of the District Councillors' activity connected to Manningtree Town matters in the year 2017/18.

I must first apologise for my extended absence from your meetings. As you are aware I've been suffering with a couple of bouts of throat cancer. I'm pleased to report that after chemotherapy, radiotherapy and my fifth surgical operation at the Royal Marsden Hospital in March, I'm tumour free..... still having regular tests and check-ups but OK at present. Therefore I hope to be a more visible presence at your meetings in future.

ADC

The White Hart Public House. This prominent building, at the heart of Manningtree, has been left to deteriorate and has for many months, been boarded up. It is an eyesore.

An application was made by the owner for a change of use, in order to change the status of the building to a dwelling. This application was opposed and several people including Carlo and myself spoke against the application at Planning Committee.

The application was refused, but that decision is now subject to appeal. Over the years the owner has built small residential units at the rear of the premises and the accommodation above the ground floor is occupied. Therefore the viability for a public house accommodating the needs of the 21st century customer is extremely limited. However our view is that there remains potential in that building for some kind of retail enterprise.

I have spoken to the TDC Enforcement Team. They have considered the condition of the building, but will not sanction any enforcement at this time, in terms of the boarding etc.

The Nat-West Building. The planning application to change the use of this building into a collection of dwelling units was resisted. Again several people including Carlo and myself spoke against the application at Planning Committee. The application was refused.

The applicants have revised their application and the ground floor has been preserved for business use. The principal for residential use above the first floor was already established.

Consideration to amalgamate Lawford, Manningtree and Mistley councils into a warded authority

I called a meeting of representatives of the three parishes to discuss the issue. This was after a letter inviting the review was sent to parishes by the leader of TDC. My motive was to create a more dynamic mutually supporting community going forward. I was concerned that the future development of Lawford and Mistley would provide considerable additional income for those parishes, but would leave Manningtree behind.

Manningtree is already showing signs of decay and I believed a mutually supportive joint authority would be good for Manningtree in the future. For example, collectively a bid to take over the old

Post office could have potentially been made, with the collective access to finance, grants and loans. It would make an ideal Food Hall / Craft Centre / Cinema etc.

However the only parish in favour was Lawford.

Contracting with Essex Police – Special Constables

Essex Police has invited Parish Councils to contribute towards dedicated Special Constables. Discussions were had between the three parishes and no agreement on collaboration was reached.

I understand that the matter is still under active consideration by Lawford Parish Council. I was made aware yesterday that they are discussing with Essex Police allowance and uniform costs, post training.

Use of Manningtree Fire Station by Police

It has been confirmed with the Tendring District Commander that no police officers will be stationed at the fire station. The facility will be available for officers to use if they are called to the area or are in the area for other enquires. There will be no facility for the public to consult the police in the fire station.

Extension of the AONB

Discussions and consultations continue until tomorrow, regarding the potential extension of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Commercial Burglaries – Manningtree

You will recall that there has been a real spate of mainly commercial burglaries in Manningtree over the last year. Our vulnerability is exacerbated by our distance from police resources and our location on the border of Suffolk. These matters of concern have been taken up with the District Commander by Carlo and me. Some investigative success was achieved relating to some of these crimes and persons were arrested.

It has been accepted that travelling criminals use the rural routes between counties to commit burglary and theft offences and to transport drugs further afield. This is supported by intelligence.

At a meeting on the 18th April we received notification that Automatic Number plate Recognition Cameras (ANPR) will soon be installed at undisclosed locations on the route between Lawford and Suffolk, at the gateway to our community.

These cameras will be linked to the national scheme and will certainly assist with tracking criminals' movements entering or leaving our community and provide vital improvements in intelligence gathering. These cameras also provide valuable crime prevention.