

TDC Update – Manningtree – October 2018

LEADER OF COUNCIL TO WRITE TO MINISTER OVER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED AT MANNINGTREE RAILWAY CROSSING

Neil Stock, leader of Tendring District Council (TDC), is to write to the Secretary of State for Transport to raise concerns over a vital railway crossing at Manningtree (Lawford Parish).

Lobbying for improvements to the crossing, where the A137 meets the Norwich-London mainline, was adopted as a corporate priority by TDC earlier this year.

Currently motorists can face long delays when the level crossing is closed, as it is frequently due to the busy railway line, with an alternative height and width-restricted underpass not able to cope with demand.

The road is busy not only with local traffic, but also provides a key link between Essex and Suffolk and is a resilience route if there are closures on the A12 between Colchester and Ipswich.

Despite organising meetings with representatives from Network Rail, Greater Anglia, Essex County Council, local MPs and other stakeholders, Cllr Stock told a meeting of TDC's Cabinet on Friday (October 12) progress had been too slow.

As a result Cllr Stock said he would be writing to the transport minister to request that he looks at the issue.

“Before I send off the letter I will be speaking to our officers to see what specific asks I can make of the Secretary of State, as we need action and not just bland support from Government on this,” Cllr Stock said.

“We have made strenuous efforts in an effort to get some short-term improvements made now whilst working towards a longer-term solution that will solve the problem once and for all. But even getting a simple traffic light system installed to control the traffic flow under the rail line has so far failed to materialise and I find that failure of action to be totally unacceptable.

“Trying to make meaningful progress on this issue has not been helped by the failure of the rail industry to take their responsibilities seriously and to engage with us.

“I propose therefore to write to the Transport Secretary and ask him personally to look at this issue as a matter of urgency. I shall also set up a meeting to which I shall invite the chief executives of Network Rail and Greater Anglia, the leaders of Essex and Suffolk county councils, the MPs for that area as well as other key stakeholders and partners to attempt to thrash out a solution to this problem.”

NEW LEISURE AND TOURISM APP TO BE DEVELOPED BY COUNCIL

A mobile smartphone app is to be developed by Tendring District Council (TDC) to promote leisure and tourism within the district.

The idea has been in development for some time, before being proposed to Cabinet in February, and Cabinet agreed to delegate to officers a decision on whether or not to proceed with the project after further talks with app developers.

Now after positive talks with the project team about the scope of the app – including negotiating down the price for development – a decision has been made to go ahead with the initiative.

Development will now begin on the app, which will focus on tourism events and leisure facilities, such as the Clacton Airshow, Princes Theatre and TDC's leisure centres.

TDC has appointed Amido to lead the project, while We Are Mobile First and Plan Alpha Systems will provide further technical expertise.

Cabinet had set aside £120,000 for the project, but development of the app will now cost just over £89,500, with £6,000 per year running and support costs.

Events are a crucial part in underpinning the local tourism economy, and visitors today almost expect digital technology to support such events – developing an app now means TDC will not fall behind the curve.

It is believed the app will help increase income to the council, for example through increased theatre ticket sales, leisure centre membership and enabling e-donations to the Clacton Airshow in our increasingly cashless society, though at this stage it is difficult to accurately predict the return on investment.

The app has been made possible through the council's digital investment, which began in 2013, and this project is part of the second phase of that work. Mick Skeels, TDC Cabinet Member for Leisure and Tourism, said this was an exciting project.

“Smartphone usage continues to grow rapidly, with the Office of National Statistics reporting that 78% of adults use a mobile or smartphone to access the internet, and developing an app helps to keep Tendring District Council relevant in this mobile, digital age,” said Cllr Skeels.

The app will feature event schedules, timetables and guides for events which it is hoped will help all users to take full advantage of the entertainment on offer within Tendring District.

PREPARATIONS FOR COUNCIL OFFICES REFRESH TAKE ANOTHER STEP FORWARD

Plans to carry out internal alterations to Clacton's Grade-II listed Town Hall will be decided upon later this month.

Tendring District Council's Planning Committee at its meeting on October 16 will consider proposals for alterations to the 1930s building in Station Road.

The application has been put forward by Tendring District Council (TDC) as part of its Transformation Project, to modernise working methods and its buildings.

Building work began on Clacton Town Hall in 1929 and the building was opened by Prince Arthur of Connaught in 1931 – and one of the civic rooms bears his name to this day. The building is formed of two wings with the popular Princes Theatre in the middle.

Over the years the building has been altered in a number of ways and part of the planned works will be to reverse some of those changes. A number of areas of internal partitioning will be removed to make larger, more open offices.

In addition the former council chamber, which is currently the housing reception, will be restored to make a new meeting room. No changes to the outside of the building are planned.

Carlo Guglielmi, TDC Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Resources, said it would be good to see the Town Hall return to its more original internal design.

"The council has invested in technology in order to become more efficient," Cllr Guglielmi said.

The Transformation project aims to use more technological solutions to improve services and to be more efficient. The programme will also see the redundant offices at Westleigh House in Carnarvon Road make way for more town centre parking in late 2018, and a move out of the Weeley site in late 2019.

An initial phase of works at the council's Pier Avenue offices is nearing completion, and work on the Town Hall phase is scheduled to begin in early 2019.

Any application put forward by the council must go before the committee, and these works also required listed building consent. The proposals are recommended for approval by planning officers.

INVITE TO INFORMATION EVENT ON PREPARING FOR WINTER

A Be Safe: Winter Ready event is being held in Tendring to encourage people to get ready for winter.

Organised by Tendring District Council's Emergency Planning team, in partnership with the Environment Agency and the Jaywick Sands Community Forum, the drop-in afternoon will see a number of organisations on hand to give advice on staying safe this winter.

Although the Be Safe: Winter Ready event is focused on preparing for winter risks, including flooding, some of the advice given will be relevant to people year-round.

Advice will include preparation of an emergency grab bag, containing everything you may need should you have to evacuate, where to keep up-to-date with information, and other top safety tips.

The Be Safe: Winter Ready event takes place at **Golf Green Hall, Golf Green Road, Jaywick Sands, from 12.15-4.15pm on Wednesday, October 24, 2018.**

Lynda McWilliams, Tendring District Council (TDC) Cabinet Member for Health and Education, including Community Safety and Emergency Planning, urged people to go along.

"With the blazing hot summer we've had it can be easy to forget what a harsh winter came before it, but we are fast approaching that time of year again," Cllr McWilliams said.

"While this event takes place in Jaywick Sands, which has been evacuated twice in the past decade due to flooding concerns, **the information available on the day is relevant to everyone.**

BUSINESSES WHO WORK WITH ANIMALS BEING MADE AWARE OF NEW REGULATIONS COMING INTO FORCE

Companies whose business involves animals are being written to advising them of new national rules.

The Animal Licensing Regulations came into force from October 1, replacing a number of existing laws and replacing them with a single licensing regime – setting nationally applicable conditions.

A ratings system is also being introduced dependent on how well businesses meet certain criteria.

Those affected include pet boarding homes and day care facilities, firms which sell animals as pets, horse hiring, dog breeding, and keeping or training animals for exhibition.

Firms with a zoo licence or a dangerous wild animal licence are unaffected until their permits expire, at which point they will move over to the new Animal Activity Licence. Similarly, those with a Performing Animals (Regulation) Act licence will move across on March 31, 2019.

The new regulations could also affect the public who may sell animals from their private home or online, such as rabbits, guinea pigs or dogs, who will need a licence if they make more than £1,000 a year from sales.

Pet shops which sell only food and items, not animals, are unaffected.

Tendring District Council's Animal Licensing Team – which this year won a Gold RSPCA PawPrints Awards for the sixth consecutive year for its work – has written to existing licence holders informing them of the change.

The team will be responsible for processing applications and inspecting premises, as well as giving advice.

A schedule of fees for the new licence will be available on the Tendring District Council (TDC) website.

People who are unsure if they need a licence are urged to contact the Animal Licensing Team for advice.

Michael Talbot, TDC Cabinet Member for Environment, urged people and businesses that might be affected to read up on the changes.

“This new licensing regime will in many respects simplify the process by creating a single licence covering multiple areas,” Cllr Talbot said.

“However, as with any change, there can be quite some work to do in the transition period. That is why we are encouraging people to read up on the new regulations so they can be informed about them, and whether or not they need a licence.

“If in doubt, our Animal Licensing Team will be happy to help.”

Full details on the legislation can be found at www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2018/486/contents/made while advice and guidance notes can also be found through the Pet Industry Federation website at www.petcare.org.uk

YOUR CHANCE TO REVIEW PROPOSED POLLING ARRANGEMENTS

Proposals on where polling districts – and polling stations – are located during elections in Tendring have been published for people to review.

Following changes by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England, Tendring District Council (TDC) is reducing next May from 60 councillors in 35 wards to 48 members representing 32 wards.

As a result, TDC's Electoral Services team has looked at the most appropriate places for people to cast their votes during elections, and how the new wards should be split up into polling districts.

Whilst many polling places have remained the same, it has been necessary to introduce some new premises and discontinue using some existing ones.

People had their say on initial proposals during a consultation over the summer, and now they are being given the chance to review the proposed recommendations which were backed during the first stage of feedback.

From Monday, September 17, **until October 15**, people can give their feedback on where they vote.

To see the recommendations visit www.tendringdc.gov.uk/pollingreview from September 17 or view a hard copy at Clacton Town Hall or TDC's offices in Weeley between 9am-3pm on weekdays. Responses can be submitted by post to Polling Review, Leadership Support, Town Hall, Station Road, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex CO15 1SE, by e-mail to pollingreview@tendringdc.gov.uk or by completing the online form. Ian Davidson, Returning Officer and TDC Chief Executive, said people should review the proposals.

"It is important that voting is accessible to all," he said.

"I urge everyone to have a look at these proposals and see where they will be voting – subject to any changes following this review – from December."

The council will publish its final recommendations on November 5.

General Information:

If anyone witnesses any fly tipping occurring please contact TDC's Waste Management Team on 01255 686768.

Alan Coley