

Town Assembly Meeting 18 May 2023

Welcome everyone to our first Town Assembly meeting as a newly elected council. It's great to welcome new faces and welcome back some familiar and established faces to the council. I look forward to working with you all over the next 12 months.

This past year has continued to be a challenge for many of our residents, with the cost of living crisis impacting us all, but despite the challenges it has been great to see that community spirit remains robust and that new ventures in the form of shops and other businesses have opened and seem to be thriving in the town.

In 2022, we celebrated the Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June with a very successful beach party before we mourned her passing on the 8th September and the proclamation of a new King. With the ascension of Charles III the new Carolean era has begun.

As Mayor, I think I experienced my most nerve wracking, but at the same time my proudest 5 minutes of public speaking as I read out the ancient proclamation by the war memorial at 3pm on Sunday 11th September 2022. Surely a once in a lifetime experience.

Also in June last year, we were finally able to welcome our visitors from Germany for a belated 50th anniversary celebration of the Manningtree Frankenberg Society partnership and our towns' enduring friendships.

Thank you for including us in your celebrations and I hope the deckchairs are being put to good use.

I have continued to enjoy the support of my fellow councillors over another very interesting period in our small town's history. Ruth's support as Deputy Mayor has once again been invaluable.

We welcomed our new clerk Ruth Frost in February this year, following the resignation of our old clerk Jennifer Spear, who has moved onto a bigger council where she has told us she is relishing the new challenges. She is missed but has left us in willing and capable hands!

As the country celebrated the King's Coronation at the beginning of this month, Manningtree held its first street party in decades as the High Street was closed for the festivities.

Particular thanks must go to our sponsors, TDC, Rose builders and City and Country for their generous donations. All the shops for their window displays and opening on Sunday, the Business Chamber, The Rotary Club, Fire Brigade and volunteers who put up all the bunting and made our town shine. The Red Lion for the tables and chairs and throne our musical and children's entertainment and all the residents who supported us celebrating this historic event.

Thank you as well to all the residents, young and old who joined our litter pick on BH Monday for our Big Help out for the Coronation, we'll be organising an Autumn one soon.

Our thanks must also once again go out to the street keeper volunteers who continue to work tirelessly keeping Manningtree glyphosate free. Cllr Dunnett please be sure to pass these thanks on in person.

Newly erected wooden posts around South St green are helping prevent further damage to the grass. Thanks to Cllr Charlesworth for his hard work in completing this project.

The Council achieved dementia friendly organisation status in December 2022 and are continuing to work with other organisations within the local community in a bid to make the community of Manningtree, Mistley and Lawford dementia friendly.

In January this year the recipients of our community engagement awards were Steve Russell as the individual award winner for his litter picking in the town and Steve Tattam, Bonny Williams, John and Caroline Hall the organisers of the Manningtree Earth festival. We look forward to 2023's festival along with some other exciting projects that will take place in our town over the summer. Including the first Manningtree Pride event.

The Council has made payments to various local organisations including Age Concern, Dedham Vale AONB, Essex and Herts Air Ambulance, Singing for pleasure, and many more.

In 2023, so far we have said goodbye to Cllr Ben Brown, we would like to thank him for his contributions to the council and wish him well in his future ventures. Today we welcome new Cllr Anna Helm Baxter and look forward to working with her.

The beach toy library is very well used and this past year we have installed a sun lotion dispenser next to it, also very well used, both remain very popular additions to our beach area, we are just awaiting a fresh delivery of sand for 2023.

In March this year, I was honoured to unveil the plaque under the Ox that was erected to honour the women accused of witchcraft. A lot of hard work was undertaken by the historic society and the museum to ensure that their names will no longer be erased from history.

Looking forward to the rest of the year,

We will continue to support the Manningtree Mermaids with their campaign to obtain bathing water status, I have promised to go in for a dip if, no WHEN they achieve it! I don't want to be going in alone...hint, hint.

Councillors will once again be supporting the Earth Festival on the 11th of June, and as mentioned before looking forward to supporting and celebrating the first Pride event which is happening at multiple locations in the town on 22nd July. And much later this year, the Christmas Market organised by Rotary. There is a full list of upcoming activities and events in and around the town on our website.

Manningtree Town Council remains committed to improving and supporting our residents, so if anyone has any ideas of ways we can in 2023 and beyond, please don't hesitate to let us know.