

# RAYLEIGH TOWN COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

## JUNE 2021



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### ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

# KING GEORGE V PLAYING FIELD

The Environment Committee deals with a variety of subjects and most of its responsibilities are within the town centre, such as Christmas Lights, Trinity Fair, Markets, Floral Displays, Crown Hill Public Toilets and Street Furniture. The Committee also manages four allotment sites in the town and Lower Wyburns Woodland on Daws Heath Road. Our Sub-Committees hold regular meetings and are served by members of the public as well as Town Councillors. The Town Council is consulted throughout the year on many issues by other local organisations and our members are appointed as representatives of the Town Council to attend meetings of the Chamber of Trade, Dutch Cottage Management Group, Finchfield Trustees, Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils, Rayleigh Town Museum, Rayleigh Mount, Rochford District Council and Essex County Council.

The King George V Playing Field is owned by the King George's Trust and all twenty three members of Rayleigh Town Council are Trustees. The playing field is one of Rayleigh's most valuable resources and the Town Council endeavours to preserve and improve this asset. This has been another very good year for the Trust. Our prestigious Green Flag status was renewed for the eighth year running, and awarded winner in the Playing field and Children's Play area categories by the Essex Playing Fields Association at their awards in October.

We have continued our contract with Elm Horticultural Ltd, our grounds maintenance contractor, due to the good work that has been conducted to award winning standard for our playing field and we will be listening to their ideas for improvements to make this an even more enjoyable place to visit.

The central location of the playing field makes it a very popular venue for events. Income is generated for the Trust from these bookings and from various other sources including the hire of the Pavilion by organisations for meetings, Rayleigh Town Council's rental of office accommodation on the first floor, the Snack Bar, Rayleigh Bowls Club's lease for use of the pavilion and bowling green plus local youth and adult football teams. All income received is used to help towards the costs of maintenance and improvement of the playing

field and facilities. Events have been greatly affected by the Covid-19 virus and hopefully we can have some return when it is safe to do so.

The Skate Park and Teen Shelter continue to be very popular for young people and the majority treat all of the facilities in the playing field with respect. However, following reports of anti-social behaviour, an increase in vandalism and reports of drug taking in the teen shelter, the Town Council has liaised closely with Essex Police. It is the Town Council's policy to pursue all offenders through the civil and criminal courts as necessary to help offset the cost of vandalism, which has to be paid for by Rayleigh taxpayers.

The Town Council also continues to employ the services of Essex County Council's Youth Workers to attend the Skate Park every Wednesday evening to discuss these and

other issues with the young people. Their work has been very effective, helping and educated some very vulnerable individuals. Bar 'n'Bus also attend the field throughout the year to interact with youth activities such as cage football.

The Town Council worked in co-operation with clubs following guidance from the Government and Football Association regarding the introduction of football at a grassroots level for 2020/2021 season. The season was affected by lockdowns but despite this all clubs have just completed their season. In order to help these teams during the hard conditions imposed by the pandemic the Town Council agreed to cancel all charges for training and pitches for the second half of the season. Rayleigh Bowls Club is situated within the playing field and rents part of the ground floor of the Pavilion

as its base. The club had to close due to the Covid-19 virus and is taking gradual steps to re-open on a limited capacity. Please contact the club directly regarding joining or further information

Mark Bryant's Snack Bar on the ground floor of the Pavilion continues to be very popular for his variety of ice creams and snacks. Mark is open at weekends in the winter and every day throughout the summer. The Snack Bar houses a defibrillator that was donated by Rayleigh Football Club for easy access in emergencies.

Going forward, the Town Council have that the King George V Playing Field Committee will be re-named the Open Spaces Committee. This committee will then be responsible for Lower Wyburns Woodland, Allotments and King George V Playing Field.

### Anglia in Bloom

The Anglia in Bloom 2020 competition was cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Therefore Anglia in Bloom has changed the format of the competition this year. There will be no judging visit and competitions will be entered by submitting photographs of floral displays in a variety of categories.

### Crown Hill Public Toilets

We have now taken on a 10 year management lease with Rochford District Council, who own the Crown Hill Public Toilets, in order to continue to provide toilet facilities for the public in the town centre. We understand from Rochford District Council that the existing public toilets building will be refurbished and available for rent by a commercial business. The Town Council fitted a defibrillator to the outside of the new toilets and this is available for all to use in an emergency.

### Charity Workers in Town Centre

We continue to have a Street Management Plan with the Public Fundraising Regulatory Association to control the activities of Charity Fund Raisers in the town centre and we continue to liaise closely with the 'Big Issue' to ensure compliance with our regulations.

### Homelessness

The Town Council is concerned about the increase in the number of 'beggars' who sit in shop doorways and are aware that not all are genuinely homeless. We work in partnership with Church groups, the police and Rochford District Council to ensure that those who really do need help are put in touch with the appropriate charities and organisations, and the 'professional beggars' are moved on by the police.

If you would like further information on any of these subjects or if you would like to become one of our sponsors please contact the Town Council office.

### Public Footpaths

Mr Mike Davies continues to do an excellent job as our Public Footpaths representative and is constantly working to improve the pathways and to solve the numerous and varied problems that come his way.

### Rayleigh Markets

Rayleigh's Wednesday market continues to take place in the High Street every week although during 2020/2021 the market had to either close or only trade with essential stall holders only. Usually, the stalls sell a huge variety of goods and one pitch is put aside for a charity each week.

Following the announcements by the Government, the Town Council has been liaising with Rochford District Council's Environment Health officer regarding the re-introduction of more stalls, taking into consideration high street queuing for banks, building societies and other businesses.

# PLANNING & HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE

The Town Council is a statutory consultee for all planning applications submitted to the District Council by householders, businesses and organisations such as Councils and schools. Members of the public may view planning applications on line on Rochford District Council's website at [www.rochford.gov.uk](http://www.rochford.gov.uk).

The work of our Planning & Highways Committee was reviewed in 2018 and we decided that, due to the high number of applications for minor changes to properties, we would concentrate only on the planning applications that meet a set criteria and these include the Conservation Area in the town centre, Listed Buildings, Large Housing Developments, Green Belt Land and Changes of Use of Premises. Town Council members may continue to ask for any applications to be considered by our Planning & Highways

Committee, however, we have found that this is not often necessary and the new criteria has resulted in far fewer applications being considered, but with more time being able to be given to the more significant applications.

The Committee Chairman and other members of the Planning & Highways Committee attend Development Control meetings at the Civic Suite to give the Town Council's views on applications, in order to assist District Councillors in reaching their decisions.

Rochford District Council is currently

working on its new Local Plan and the Town Council will continue to ensure that it is involved in all forthcoming consultations.

It is very important for local people's views to be represented in a fair and consistent manner. An in-depth knowledge of the local area is extremely helpful when examining planning applications and formulating a response to the District Council.

The Town Council's Planning & Highways Committee meet every three weeks in order to respond to

the District Council within the consultation period for planning applications.

The Planning & Highways Committee continue to assess Rayleigh planning applications during the Covid-19 Virus. The weekly parish list provided by Rochford District Council are added to the Town Council website every Friday. If residents wish to raise comments or objection to an application they should contact Rochford District Council directly.

# EASTER EGG HUNT/PRIMARY SCHOOL QUIZ/TRINITY FAIR/REMEMBRANCE PARADE/CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

It was a difficult decision for the Town Council to cancel the above events in 2020, however the health and safety of our residents, members and organisations is priority. Following Government Guidelines, the Trinity Fair had to be cancelled for the second year in 2021 however we are very hopeful this will return in 2022. Discussion will take place regarding the Remembrance Parade and Service and Christmas Lights Event for 2021 and information will be circulated in due course.