

MISTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Annual Report of the Council for 2011/12

1. Membership

Elections for a new Council were held in May and resulted in five new Councillors and seven existing Councillors being elected. During this year two Councillors, Aggie Forrester and Karen Young, resigned for personal and work commitment reasons and were replaced by Iris Peacock and Andrew Norman after the vacancies were advertised. A full list of Councillors is given at the end of this report.

At the Annual General Meeting in May Martin Rayner was elected Chairman and Frances Fairhall Vice Chairman.

C/C Sarah Candy continued to represent the parish on the County Council and she and D/C Carlo Guglielmi were elected to represent the parish on the District Council.

2. Finance

The Council's precept for the year was £52000 which represents a Council tax of about £55 per Band D property and an increase of about 2% on the tax for the previous year. The precept for the coming year has been set at £57000 to enable the Council to meet its commitments and to restore its balances following some unexpected expenditure during the year.

At the beginning of the year the Council's reserves stood at £25573 and, subject to audit, at the end of the year stood at £23062. This reserve is made up of £3834 working balance, a General Reserve of £10017, a Cemetery Reserve of £2735 and the Clerk's Superannuation fund of £6476. These last two items are "ring fenced" and cannot be used for any other purpose.

Total income during the year, excluding balances brought forward, was £83442 and total expenditure £85954.

The accounts are subject to a quarterly audit by an Internal Auditor and a yearly audit by External Auditors.

3. Major Items of Expenditure

a. Police Community Support Officers

The Council, in co-operation with Manningtree and Lawford Councils, contribute 50% of the cost of two PCSOs. These Officers are dedicated to work only within the three parishes and, the Council consider, have made a very good contribution to neighborhood policing in the area.

The cost during the year was £23552 of which £20290 was recovered from Manningtree and Lawford Councils which included contributions from the previous year.

b. Street Lighting

The Council owns and maintains 111 street lights within the parish. The cost of energy during the year was £3445, and the cost of repair and maintenance £2825.

c. Recreation Grounds and Open Spaces

The Council owns Furze Hill Recreation Ground which contains the Village

MISTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Hall, car park, children's play area, three sports pitches and a large wood containing many ancient trees. The total area of the Recreation Ground is about 50 acres. The total cost of maintaining the Ground, excluding the Village Hall which is maintained by a Management Committee, was £8046.46. Major items of expenditure were £2880.00.00 for maintaining the car park, and £2157.00 for grass cutting.

In addition to the Recreation Ground, the Council maintains three areas of common land and cuts highway verge grass on behalf of the County Council. The total cost of grass cutting on these areas was £1733.13.

The Council employs a Warden to carry out maintenance and cleaning work on Furze Hill and part of his duties are regularly to check the safety of the children's play equipment. In addition to these safety checks monthly checks are undertaken by Bruce Landscapes and a yearly one by ROSPA.

d. Employment of the Clerk

The Clerk to the Council is employed, on a part time basis of 13 hours per week, under the terms and conditions of the National Agreement drawn up by the Society of Local Government Clerks and National Association of Local Councils. His salary and expenses during the year amounted to £9768.42.

e. Administration

The cost of administration, including insurance, audit fees, stationery, training fees, hiring of premises etc was £6902.25. Included in this is a sum of £3844.31 for insurance covering third party liability and the cost of repairing damage to the Councils equipment and facilities. Also included in this sum is £224.00 claimed by Councillors for traveling expenses. With the exception of a Chairman's allowance of £400.00 to cover his expenses, the Council elected to accept no other allowances.

f. Grants and Subscriptions

The following grants (grant) and subscription (sub) were paid during the year:-

Evangelical Church	£25.00	grant
Brantham Fireworks Display	£30.00	grant
Friends of Historic Essex	£10.00	sub
Theatre of Lemmings	£100.00	grant
Homestart	£300.00	grant
First Aid Responders (Manningtree & District)	£450.00	grant
Council for the Protection of Rural Essex	£28.00	sub
Essex Association of Local Councils	£448.51	sub
Manningtree Festival	£70.00	grant
Open Space Society	£40.00	sub
Manningtree Museum	£30.00	grant
Tendring Association of Local Councils	£15.00	sub
Rural Community Council of Essex	£90.00	sub
Royal British Legion (memorial wreath)	£50.00	grant
Citizens Advice Bureau	£200.00	grant
Community Bus	£200.00	grant
Essex Wildlife Trust	£40.00	sub
English Heritage	£10.00	sub
Society of Local Government Clerks	<u>£118.00</u>	sub
Total	£2254.51	

In addition grants amounting to £2691.17 were given to the Village Hall

MISTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Management Committee to assist it to maintain the building and grass cutting of the Welcome Home Field, costing about £550, was carried out in lieu of a grant to the Trustees of the Field.

4. Other Facilities and Services Provided by the Council

a. Planning

Every planning application is forwarded to the Council and considered by the Planning Sub Committee who forward comments to Tendring District Council.

In addition, three Consultation Documents were considered, and commented upon, by the Sub Committee. They were the Mistley Waterfront and Village Strategy, the Manningtree and Mistley Conservation Area Management Plan and the Manningtree Town Centre Improvement Plan.

b Cemetery

In conjunction with Manningtree Town Council the Council owns and maintains a public cemetery situated next to St Mary's Church yard. It is coming into increasing use and the fees received during the year amounted to £1419.00 and expenses amounted to £691.17. Most of the excess of income over expenditure is being put into a reserve account to be used for a future extension.

A grant of £860.00 was given to the Mistley and Manningtree Parochial Church Council towards the cost of maintaining the Church graveyard. This is an index linked annual grant made in recognition of the granting of an easement for access between the Church and the Cemetery.

c. Roads and Footpaths

Various extensions to no waiting restrictions have been agreed with the County Council over the year and most are now in place.

Of continuing concern is the inadequate footway in New Road from the Church Hall to the Church and we will continue to press for this to be upgraded.

The Council continues to report to the County Council any road defects, especially pot holes, overhanging hedges, defects in footways etc.

A voluntary Footpath Representative inspects all the public footpath within the parish on a regular basis and any defects are reported to the County Council. The Council also carries out a limited amount of maintenance on some public footpaths on behalf of the County Council under the Public Footpath Partnership Scheme.

d. Village Hall

The Village Hall is owned by the Council but we have no say in the management or maintenance of it. It is leased to the Charity Commissioners and managed by a Management Committee consisting of representatives of regular users of the Hall together with up to 5 appointed members. During the year the Mistley United Football Club gave up its lease of part of the Hall which is now entirely the responsibility of the Management Committee

e. Trees

The Council owns many trees on our land particularly at Furze Hill. They are regularly inspected by the Council's Tree Warden, Cllr Ian Rose, and work has been carried out on them for safety and aesthetic purposes. Of particular

MISTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

concern this year has been the encroachment of younger trees into the space occupied by Old Knobbly, the ancient oak tree planted in Tudor times, which are posing a threat to the old tree. Consultations are taking place to find the best way to combat this threat.

5. **Swans and Geese**

The Council continues to be concerned about what we consider is the excessive feeding of swans along The Walls which is turning parts of the greensward in a boggy grassless mess. We welcome the swans, which are part of Mistley's heritage, but the overfeeding, against the advice of the R.S.P.B. and English Nature, also attracts hundreds of Canada Geese which are not natives of the area. The Council is actively seeking ways of reducing the damage caused to the greensward by the birds.

6. **Affordable Housing**

In conjunction with the English Rural Housing Association and the Rural Community Council of Essex, the Council undertook a housing needs survey, in 2008/09, throughout the parish to ascertain whether there was a case to build affordable housing for rent or part ownership by local people. The results of the survey was that a case can be made for up to 15 houses and talks are now taking place with Tendring District Council's Housing and Planning Departments, and the County Council's Highway Department. A suitable site has now been identified and it is anticipated that firm proposals will be the subject of a public consultation exercise during the coming year.

7. **Mistley Quay**

The Council has supported, and will continue to do so, the initiatives to see the removal of the unsightly fence which has been erected along the quay side and have it replaced by a more suitable barrier.

8. **Health and Safety**

A Health and Safety Policy was commissioned last year and is being adhered to by the Council during the year.

8. **Access to Information**

All agendas and minutes are available from the Clerk or via the Council's web site. Copies of all non confidential correspondence and accounts are also available from the Clerk.

Martin Rayner - Chairman of the Council. Richard Ling - Clerk to the Council

Appendix

List of Councillors

Martin Rayner (Chairman) 25 New Road Mistley	Member of all Committees
--	--------------------------

Frances Fairhall (Vice Chairman) Elm House, Trinity Road Mistley	Member of all Committees
--	--------------------------

MISTLEY PARISH COUNCIL

Geraldine Carter
Rutherglen Villa, Shrublands Road
Mistley

Council's representative on the Tendring
District Association of Local Councils

Agnes Forrester
45 Rigby Avenue
Mistley

Joy Frascinella
9 Portlight Close
Mistley

Member of Finance Committee

Richard Horlock
Calm Water, Green Lane
Mistley

Member of Finance, Planning and
Cemetery Committee
Transport representative

Angela Kilmartin
3 Barley Store, High Street
Mistley

Iris Peacock
5, Stourview Close
Mistley

Member of Planning Committee and
Council's representative on Village Hall
Committee

Ian Rose
Yaffles, School Lane
Mistley

Member of all Committees and
the Council's Tree Warden

Sally Toller
Parkside, School Lane
Mistley

Kate Worsley
3, Millers Reach
Mistley

Council's web site co-ordinator

Footpath Representative

Mrs Vanessa Trent

Furze Hill Warden

Mr Brian Forrester

Richard Ling – Clerk to the Council

White Gables, Hungerdown Lane, Lawford, Manningtree, CO11 2JN
Tel: 01206 390195 e.mail: richard@ling44.fsnet.co.uk