

## **Annual Report of the Council for 2010/11 version 2**

### 1. **Membership**

During the year Cllr Frascinella resigned from the Council due to business commitments and, after advertising, Cllr Andrew Norman was co-opted onto the Council bringing it up to its full complement of 11 Members.

At the May 2010 Annual General Meeting Martin Rayner was elected Chairman and Frances Fairhall elected Vice Chairman.

Elections will take place in May 2011 to elect all Members of the Council. Cllrs Michael Dew and Carlo Guglielmi represent the Parish on the District Council and Cllr Sarah Candy on the County Council

### 2. **Finance**

The Council's precept for the year was £51000 which was a £1000 increase on the previous year and represents a Council tax of about £52 per Band D property. The precept for the coming year has been set at £52000 which represents an increase of under 2% ie less than inflation. This small increase was agreed to provide reserves to cover services and grants to local organisations given the reduction of funding from ECC and TDC due to government budget cuts

At the beginning of the year the Council's reserves stood at £24996.56 and, subject to the submission of final audited accounts, at the end of the year stood at £26834.24.

This reserve is made up of a General Reserve of £18727.15, a Cemetery Reserve of £2233.88 and the Clerk's Superannuation fund of £5873.21. These last two items are 'ring fenced' and cannot be used for any other purpose.

Total income during the year, including balances brought forward, was £111314.95 and total expenditure £84480.71

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. During the year the Contract between the Police and the three Councils was renegotiated resulting in better value for money than in the previous Contract. The cost during the year was £30516.00 of which £15906.51 was recovered from Manningtree and Lawford Councils with £5971.04 still to be received

#### b. **Street Lighting**

The Council owns and maintains 110 street lights within the parish three of which has been added during the year and one removed. The cost of energy during the year was £3440.37 and the cost of repair and maintenance was £4407.73. This was about £1000 more than in the previous year but included the cost of a three yearly service of all lamps.

#### c. **Recreation Grounds and Open Spaces**

The Council owns Furze Hill Recreation Ground which contains the Village Hall, car park, children's play area, three sports pitches and a large wood containing many ancient trees including 'Old Knobbly' an ancient oak. 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 £1985 plus £2563 for grass cutting. Income received for the use of the sports pitches was £1250. The Council employs a Warden to oversee the use of the Recreation Ground part of whose duties is to check the condition of the children's play equipment. Safety checks are also carried out at monthly intervals by an independent Contract and a major yearly check carried out by Tendring District Council  
 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 was £2330.

d. Employment of the Clerk

The Clerk to the Council is employed 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 £10349.06. The hours were increased to 15 hours per week to cover the current work load

e. Administration

The cost of administration, including insurance, audit fees, stationery, training fees, hiring of premises etc was £66083.31. Included in this is a sum of £861.53 claimed by Councillors in training costs, allowances and expenses.

f. Grants and Subscriptions

In order to assist local organisations some major and minor grants were paid out during the year. Subscriptions to relevant Essex and National Organisations were also made. The following are details of the grants and subscription paid during the year:-

First Aid Responders	£300.00 grant
Council for the Protection of Rural Essex	£29.00 subscription
Essex Association of Local Councils	£454.00 subscription
Friends of Foundry Court	£50.00 grant
Young Musician of the Year	£70.00 grant
Open Space Society	£40.00 subscription
Manningtree Museum	£100.00 grant
Tendring Association of Local Councils	£15.00 subscription
Rural Community Council of Essex	£55.00 subscription
Royal British Legion	£50.00 grant
Mistley Church graveyard	£870.00 grant
Citizens Advice Bureau	£200.00 grant
Community Bus	£200.00 grant
Essex Wildlife Trust	£10.00 subscription
English Heritage	£15.00 subscription
Society of Local Government Clerks	£150.00 subscription
Essex Playing Fields Association	£25.00 subscription
Mistley Cricket Club	£1100.00 grant
Railusers Association	£100.00 grant
Historic Essex	£40.00 subscription
Friends of Mistley Church	£1000.00 grant
Stour Choral Society	£100.00 grant
Church Hall	£150.00 grant
Tendring District Council	£2500.00 conservation plan cost
Welcome Home Field	£500.00 grass cutting
<b>Total</b>	<b>£6983.00</b>

4. **Other Facilities and Services Provided by the Council**

a. **Planning**

Every planning application is forwarded to the Council for our comments. Of particular concern this year is the planning application from Tesco on the Manningtree/Lawford border of which the Council considers the disadvantages far outweigh the advantages and have informed Tendring Council accordingly.

In addition there have been a number of major consultations initiated by TDC on the Local Development Framework and Supplementary Planning Documents on the Manningtree and Mistley Conservation Area and the Mistley Waterfront Plan.. the Council submitted detailed views on all these documents.

b. **Cemetery**

In conjunction with Manningtree Town Council the Council owns and maintains a public cemetery situated next to St Mary's Churchyard. It is coming into increasing use and the fees received during the year amounted to £4675.00 and expenses amounted to £1099.00. Most of the excess of income over expenditure is being put into a reserve account to be used for a future extension.

c. **Roads and Footpaths**

Three new footpaths have been created this year in the Furze Hill and Clacton Road area following a review with major contributions from Mr R Horlock.

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

The Council was successful in persuading Essex County Council to erect 30 mph. signs and roundels in New Road in an effort to reduce the speed of traffic in that road. 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 in considers need repairing.

d. **Village Hall**

The Village Hall is owned by the Council but we have no say in the management or maintenance of it as it is leased to the Charity Commissioners and is managed by a Management Committee whose work is appreciated by the Council. As an expression of this appreciation improvements works costing £1580.00 were funded by the Council.

e. **Trees**

The Council owns many trees on our land particularly at Furze Hill. Much work, costing £930.00, has been carried out for safety and aesthetic purposes during the year. Including work to provide 'breathing space' for Old Knobbly.

5. **Swan Basin**

The Swan Basin, situated in the High Street, was built in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century and is now listed as a structure of historic interest. The water flowing from the swan's beak was supplied by a brick culvert originating in the Furze Hill area and flowing under properties in School Lane and the High Street. Over the year this culvert has become blocked and broken at various times and in various places. During the year it was decided to bring it up to date and fill the basin from the mains in order to supply water to the swan by an electric pump. Much of this work has been completed by the generosity of Tendring District Council and Veolia Water Company. All that now remains to be done is for the basin to be cleaned and painted and this will be carried out early in the new financial year. Tendring Council has also contributed £1500 to

cover the cost of the water supply for the next 10 years.

6. **Swans and Geese**

The Council continues to be concerned about what we consider is the over 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 RSPB, the RSPCA and English Nature, attracts hundreds of Canada Geese which are not natives of the area and add to the mess in the area. The Council will continue to work with these bodies and with Tendring District Council in an effort to resolve this problem.

7. **Affordable Housing**

Three years ago, in conjunction with the English Rural Housing Association and the Rural Community Council of Essex, the Council undertook a housing needs survey 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 showed that such a case could be made and a site in Harwich Road near its junction with Rigby Avenue was chosen in conjunction with TDC and ECC Highways from a shortlist. A planning application for up to 15 houses has now been submitted to Tendring District Council which, if approved, will result in work commencing next year.

8. **Health and Safety**

A Health and Safety Policy is in place and is being adhered to by the Council during the year.

9. **Access to Information**

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

Martin Rayner - Chair of the Council  
Frances Fairhall – Vice Chair of the Council  
Richard Ling - Clerk to the Council

1<sup>st</sup> April 2011