



CAISTOR TOWN COUNCIL - THE ANNUAL REPORT

PRESENTED AT THE ANNUAL TOWN MEETING, HELD IN THE

ARTS CENTRE, CAISTOR ON 30th APRIL 2009

Report from Cllr. S. Webster, Chairman of the Town Council

It has been my privilege to Chair Caistor Town Council and to represent the Town as Mayor over the last year. I have attended a number of events and functions, not only in Caistor, but also around the county. Being able to network with many district and county councillors and other chairmen has given me a greater understanding of civic life but has also, hopefully, helped these councillors to learn about Caistor.

I wish to thank my Deputy, Cllr Robinson, for his support and guidance this year. It has been an interesting year within Council, with many heated discussions about topics that Councillors felt very strongly about. I know that the councillors have only the Town of Caistor at heart but sometimes I felt that personalities were becoming more important. I would like to thank all councillors for their continued commitment to the Town of Caistor and hope that the personal conflicts have now finished.

I would like to thank our overworked Clerk, Mrs Ruth Dawson, for her extremely efficient and industrious service to the Council, as well as keeping myself and others focused on how to work and behave. I would also like to thank Mrs Julie Smith, the Accounts Clerk, who has managed to keep the Council financially in line and help keep us to our budgets, and I would also like to offer thanks to the Council's internal auditor, Mr Mike Grant, who double checks our financial situation.

County Cllr. Tony Turner is a very positive person for Caistor, who fights for us very effectively at Lincolnshire County Council. I wish him a speedy recovery and a return to the fray. Cllrs. Caine and Lawrence have tried to improve our position with West Lindsey District Council, but it appears to be an uphill struggle when competing against Gainsborough.

This year has seen a great change in the Market Place, new paving and resurfaced roads. The Townscape Heritage Initiative has certainly upgraded the appearance of the centre of Caistor and, although the Council still has some reservations, the scheme has certainly enhanced our Town. The scheme is not yet completed and we are still waiting for the railings around the War Memorial to be replaced, as well as seats, litter bins and the new bus stop. I hope that when it is all completed, we will see an upturn in our commercial businesses, beating the national trend.

CCTV has been very much on the tips of tongues for the last couple of years. Unfortunately, I cannot see a glimmer of light in the future for this project. The changes in the government's attitude to CCTV and the lack of support from West Lindsey District Council may see its death

knell, although we are thinking positively on how we can adapt the equipment that they have for improved security in Caistor. A big change in the Market Place is the imminent closing of the present Co-op supermarket and its relocation to the Talbot site. We, as a Council, have had initial talks with the developers and, mutually with the Co-op, are trying to ensure that the transfer is as painless to Caistor as possible.

The 'old' hospital site has again come into focus with statements from the developers of construction in the near future. We wait with baited breath to hear of the next stage.

Christmas in Caistor - We have had the tallest tree ever gracing the Market Place, putting Grimsby and Gainsborough to shame. Thanks go to Sealord for their organisational skills in getting such a large tree to Caistor, at no cost to the Council or the residents. I must also thank Michael Galligan and his tireless crew for all their efforts in making Christmas so special with the hundreds of trees adorning the houses. Overall, it is a marvellous achievement which lifts the whole community.

I am very appreciative of all the hard work put into our social calendar by the many societies and organisations. It is one of the most important aspects of Caistor that, although not easily seen, affects and improves the lives of many. Earlier this week I had the honour to be present at the badging up of the new Army Cadets at the Caistor Yarborough School. I was proud of the young people as they demonstrated their perfected drill techniques. This, to me, was one of the most moving events that I have been to. I wish the new Army Cadet Force all my best wishes for the future.

In conclusion, this has been another successful year for Caistor and a busy and productive one for the Town Council. The Council was pleased to have been awarded Quality Council status in October. I am looking forward to the next year, the revamped Market Place, the new Co-op and the overall enhancement in Caistor.

Report from Cllr. I. Robinson, Planning Committee Chairman

The past twelve months have seen less work for the Planning Committee, with only 44 planning applications to consider. The majority of these have been of a minor and un-contentious nature. This is probably a sign of the economic times. Perhaps the application which resulted in the biggest public correspondence was a proposal to build extra dwellings on the parking/play areas of Kelsway/Varlow Road. However, the developer has withdrawn that application for the time being.

The Town Council met with the developer of the proposed housing development on the site of the former Caistor Hospital on North Kelsey Road to highlight their anxieties and concerns.

The THI project has almost drawn to a close, with just one or two properties in the area remaining in need of restoration.

The public realm aspect of the THI is almost complete. The general consensus from members of the public is that there has been a vast improvement to the Market Place. Members of the public have praised the contractors for the way that they have carried out their work and, at the same time, enabling the daily life of Caistor and the Town Centre businesses to carry on with as little disturbance as possible. There are still some final works to complete; the bus shelter has to be installed, street furniture to be fitted and the railings and lighting for the war memorial to be replaced. There have been a variety of views expressed as to whether those railings should be replaced. On Tuesday of this week, a meeting was called by the Caistor Civic Society and the Royal British Legion who met with the Project Manager to explore the various options. The consensus from that meeting is that the old railings are not suitable for re-use and that a new set of railings should be designed and installed. The Project Manager has taken this view on board and he is progressing the work and will consult interested parties.

Money was made available to try and implement some traffic management system on the Grimsby Road /High Street section of the highway, with the acknowledgement by all that the junction with South Street is potentially a danger. Although there have been no deaths on that section of the

highway in living memory, the railings and buildings have been hit by heavy goods vehicles on numerous occasions. There might be a general consensus that this bend/junction is a problem, the solution is less clear. The County Highways staff will be conducting research and ascertaining the views of the local residents.

Report from Cllr. S. Webster, Chairman of the Churchyard, Cemeteries and Field Paths

The cemetery and churchyards have again been kept in very good condition by Mr Colin Cearnas and Mr Malcolm Wright and their sterling work has paid dividends. Colin has also organised the Community Service workers, who completed some important maintenance jobs. The entrance to the North Kelsey Road Cemetery has been improved, with the aid of plastic mesh laid on the surface to make it more durable for the cars to park on.

It has been decided that the grass at the rear of the church will have less cuts in future so that wildlife may be attracted to the area. The main attention will be given to the front, which is more in the public eye.

On a more sour note, I was informed this week that an uncaring individual had allowed their dog to wander in the cemetery and foul on one of the well-cared for graves. This is a problem that the Council will be discussing in the near future.

Again, I would like to thank our Clerk for answering so many queries from members of the public about the location of relative's graves, in her own time.

The field paths, stiles and signposts are generally in a good condition. I would like to thank Lincolnshire County Council for their speedy response to any problems with the field paths.

Finally, I would like to encourage as many people as possible to use our network of field paths as I am sure they will appreciate them as much as I do.

Report from Cllr. M. Plume, Chairman of Parks

South Street Park

The Park has been well used again this year and, despite difficult weather for mowing, it looked tidy for the most part. The border along the Burnett's Yard boundary has been left uncut again to provide a natural habitat for wildlife. The grass is showing signs of a good recovery after the very successful Bonfire and Fireworks display last November, once again organised by the Caistor and District Lions.

It looks like being another busy year for the Park. The Family Fun Fair is already confirmed and we are anticipating the Proms in the Park event and Bonfire taking place again this year. We are also hoping to replace the goal posts and I hope that we can gain some funding to replace the wooden hut, after it became beyond repair, and also do something with the climbing frame/safety surface. A decision should be made soon on the future of the Burma Bridge as to whether we can repair it or not.

Although there are Dog Control Orders in place, some people are ignoring these and I would like to remind members of the public that, if caught, offenders will be prosecuted.

Millfields

The Millfields play area is being used and enjoyed by many, although a small number of individuals seem to be causing trouble by littering, blocking the stream and vandalising Council property. Again, anybody caught will be dealt with appropriately. The dome climber is coming to the end of its useful life and I hope that we will be able to replace it when the time comes.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Lincolnshire County Council for carrying out path improvement works between the North Kelsey Road entrance and the park as this is a well used path which used to get quite muddy. They have put crushed stone down to prevent this, at no cost to the Town Council.

Report from Cllr. J. Cole, Chairman of the Sports Ground

Thanks to the foresight of Alan Frankish and other councillors some forty years ago, when the Council bought and developed the area to the size it is at present, Caistor Sports Ground and Caistor Sports and Social Club now provide facilities that are amongst the best in the area and are used and enjoyed by a large majority of Caistor residents of all ages, whether it be young children on the play equipment, or older residents - like me - who play bowls. However, without the continued input of the various sports clubs and their maintenance of the grounds, the residents of Caistor would not have the excellent facilities they have today. The facilities are used by:-

- 2 Senior football teams:- Caistor Rovers, Caistor Tennyson
- 1 Junior Football team
- 4 senior cricket teams.
- 5 junior cricket teams
- Caistor Hillside Bowls Club:- 5 teams.
- Caistor Tennis Club:- 2 teams

Five items of play equipment are provided, plus a basket ball area and football goal. 3.5 acres are left as a "free play area", with goals for kick about football. It is hoped that another set of goals - donated by Caistor F.C, will be erected in the summer.

Vandalism is on the increase, with damage to the buildings and by the mindless idiots who think that smashing bottles in the children's play area gives them credence in the community. Also there has been an increase in the amount of under-age drinking, both on the sports field, but more recently in the 3.5 acre free play area. The police have been informed and are making regular patrols.

The Dog Control Orders are proving to be effective, with a number of dog owners being reported to WLDC. I still feel that it is a pity to have these in place but, once again, it is the minority who have spoilt it for the majority.

There has been general maintenance of the play area this year, in line with the ROSPA reports. My thanks go to Colin Cearnes and Malcolm Wright for their input and work around the Sports Ground.

Projected works for 2009-10

The following work is planned:-

- Tree surgery
- General maintenance
- Spraying for weeds/insects on both the cricket and football pitches - and it must be noted that the Football and Cricket Clubs pay for over 50% of those costs.
- Replacement of the Lincolnshire Fencing on North Kelsey Road.
 - It is hoped to replace the swings in 2010/11 and money has been accrued for this on a yearly basis over the last two years. Also, discussions are in the early stages to develop a wide life area in part of the bottom 3.5 acre

Annual Report from the Accounts Clerk

Financial Summary – Budget Report

The Financial Summary shows:-	28545.00	under budget
Assets to prove this figure:-	15633.00	Capital Reserve balance
	10676.00	Current Account balance
	<u>2236.00</u>	VAT to claim
	28545.00	

Calculation to prove actual expenditure – March 2009 Financial Summary

Expenditure	51976.00
Plus VAT correction	10442.00
Less other income (not to include Precept)	6173.00
Plus interest received	<u>451.00</u>
	56696.00

Income and Expenditure

Looking at the income and expenditure for the last financial year shows a surplus of £9703. However:-

Earmarked funds for special projects 08/09	19381.00
Earmarked special projects 07/08	<u>9160.00</u>
Increase in earmarked reserves	10221.00

The surplus is held as earmarked funds for special projects not yet utilised.

Income and Expenditure Account for Year Ending 31st March 2009

<u>Income</u>	
Precept	£55506.00
Interest on investments	451.00
Economic development	0.0
Market tolls	2150.00
Burial fees	2529.00
Allotment rents	120.00
Recreational ground letting	20.00
Donations	<u>903.00</u>
Total Income	<u>61679.00</u>
<u>Expenditure</u>	
General administration	8829.00
Section 137 payments	647.00
Capital spending	0.00
Running costs – burial ground	602.00
Running costs – recreation ground	4128.00
Donations	458.00
Mayor's allowance	928.00
Special projects	10562.00
Staff costs	24091.00
Miscellaneous	<u>1731.00</u>
	<u>51976.00</u>
Surplus for year	<u>9703.00</u>

Report from Cllr. Mrs J. Hughes, Town Hall Management Committee Representative

It is my happy duty to thank the Town Hall Committee and its co-opted members, on behalf of the Town Council, for all the hard work and dedication in this financial year. The meetings take place in the Arts Centre on the third Wednesday of alternate months, with representatives from user groups and co-opted members.

Since the last report, the Town Hall Committee has dealt with the funding, scope and application to Caistor's THI Scheme, with a view to re-structuring and updating the venue for flexible use in the modern climate. The focus has been on restoration, heritage repairs and other elements of maximum benefit to the Town Hall. The aim was to improve the fabric of the building, obtain energy savings and other targeted enhancements to the facilities, to make it even more attractive to potential users. The new kitchen and the main roof have been completed.

It was found that the Arts Centre roof, although only 18 years old, needed replacing. Comparable tiles only offered a life span of 20 years so slate was chosen, to match the main roof. This repair took place over the rainy period and caused its own problems, which are on-going to-date.

The new windows are installed and new black back stage curtains are in use.

Now the focus is on modernisation, to interior repair and improvements, a central heating system review and to replace storage heaters in the Arts Centre. The electrics throughout need reviewing, with new lights for the reception area and a re-fit of toilet facilities - in line with modern amenities, as we now miss some bookings to more up-to-date halls.

My thanks go to the dedicated committee, also to Eric and Dot for their work in difficult circumstances and to Mrs Charlotte Linsell, whose tireless work provides visits from touring theatre companies, putting Caistor on the map as an Arts Centre. Special thanks go to Cath Hand and Pam Cluff and the Bar Stewardship people.

I draw your attention to the AGM which will take place on 20th May 2009. This will include ideas for colour schemes and possible match fundings, and a 'Tidy up Day' which is scheduled to take place on 6th June which will include work in the car park. Any volunteers are welcome.

Our objective is to bring more people and organisations into the Town Hall, to ensure its future sustainability.