

Workington Town Council

Annual Report 2014-15

**Councillor Mary Bainbridge**

**Mayor of Workington**

Workington Town Council

Membership 2014-15

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| **Name** | **Ward** |
| Cllr Mary Bainbridge (Town Mayor) | St. Michael’s |
| Cllr Carole Armstrong (Deputy Town Mayor) | Moss Bay |
|  |  |
| Cllr Bill Bacon | Moss Bay |
| Cllr Lillian Baldry | Moss Bay |
| Cllr Ann Bales | Moorclose |
| Cllr Peter Bales | Moorclose |
| Cllr John Bechelli | St. Michael’s |
| Cllr John Bracken | Moss Bay |
| Cllr Barbara Cannon | Moss Bay |
| Cllr Mark Fryer | St. John’s |
| Cllr Konrad Hansen  | St. John’s |
| Cllr Nik Hardy | Moorclose |
| Cllr Hilary Harrington | Harrington |
| Cllr Michael Heaslip | St. John’s |
| Cllr Carl Holding | St. Michael’s |
| Cllr Gerald Humes | St. Michael’s |
| Cllr Elsie Johnsen | St. Michael’s |
| Cllr Frank Johnston | Moorclose |
| Cllr Margaret Jones | Stainburn |
| Cllr Richard Jones | Stainburn |
| Cllr Andrew Lawson | St. Michael’s |
| Cllr Billy Miskelly | St. Michael’s |
| Cllr Jim Osborn | Harrington |
| Cllr Marjorie Rae | Harrington |
| Cllr Bill Reville | Moss Bay |
| Cllr Denise Rollo | Moss Bay |
| Cllr Mike Rollo | St John’s |
| Cllr Neil Schofield | St. John’s |
| Cllr Stephen Stoddart | Moorclose |
| Cllr Joan Wright | Moorclose |

Annual Report

The Town Council took several steps forward this year, taking on an Events Officer in the Autumn, and adding another Estate Worker in the spring. Employing staff to deliver the council’s services has so far been a successful innovation. The Christmas lighting switch on and festival was another roaring success and the allotment estate is quietly improving.

This year also saw the transfer of the freehold of the majority of the allotment estate from the Borough Council to the Town Council. The transfer included sites in Siddick and Harrington that had never been managed by the Town Council. This allows the Town Council to invest confidently in improving the sites with better fencing, better pathways and better maintenance. The Council has few statutory duties, but one is to provide allotments to people who live in the town. Slowly but surely, this is happening. The Workington Nature Partnership has also thrived, with the Nature Partnership Officer developing a hardworking volunteer base, and some dramatic improvements beginning at Harrington Reservoir particularly.

This report is written under the publicity ‘purdah’ rules that govern the run up to an election – in 2015 at all levels from Town to Borough to Parliament. But it would be wrong not to give a public thank you to those councillors who are not standing for re-election on 7 May. Cllrs Richard and Margaret Jones are both past Mayors, and Richard is the town’s longest serving member at 31 years. Cllrs Nik Hardy and John Bechelli are also long-serving past Mayors, stepping down now to enjoy their family lives. Cllr Elsie Johnsen leaves St Michael’s Ward after eight years, but no doubt she will still be a familiar sight to allotment holders on the Soapery. Cllr Marjorie Rae is stepping down from Harrington ward after a distinguished stint, and Cllr Carl Holding will be no doubt pursuing his parish career in neighbouring Seaton. Cllr Gerald Humes is also standing down, after a period in which his chairmanship of the Council’s Policy and Resources Committee heralded many of the changes the council has put in place in recent years.

We wish all our retiring councillors the very best and look forward to working with the newly elected ones for the next four years.

**Chris Bagshaw, Town Clerk**

An overview of the Town Council’s Accounts for the year ending 31 March 2015

The council collected £332,848 from council tax payers in 2014-15. Additionally it received £47,720 as a Council Tax Support Grant, a payment from central government ‘passported’ through Allerdale Borough Council to compensate for changes to the way the council tax is calculated.

It increased its outlay on staff, taking on an Events Officer (30 hours per week) in the Autumn and fulfilling its statutory duty to enrol staff in a pension scheme.

The Christmas festival and In Bloom displays accounted for nearly £60,000 of expenditure, but the general consensus was that both had been exceptionally good this year.

The council has continued to support a number of the town’s third sector and voluntary organisations over the year, including West Cumbria Trades Hall, Citizen’s Advice Bureau, Harrington Youth Club, Christmas in Company, South Workington Youth Partnership, Mind In West Cumbria and the local Foodbank.

The council also continued to fund the Workington Nature Partnership in conjunction with Allerdale Borough Council.

The council’s brief year end receipts and payments (estimated, unaudited).

**Income**

Precept £332,848

Council Tax Support Grant £47,720

Rents £21,581\*

**Total**  £402,149

**Expenditure Total** £385,767

Full audit accounts will be available for inspection by the general public on 1 June.

\* this is higher due to a change in the allotment rental year

A View on the Budget for 2015-16

The council has set a budget for 2015-16 based on a 2% increase for Band D council taxpayers. It is anticipated that this will bring an income of £349,490. The Borough Council has taken the decision to pass on the reduction in their central funding to the Town Council by reducing the council tax support grant to £33,404. However a rise in the town’s council tax base means that the total income from council tax and grants will increase slightly.

There will be a small increase in revenue from allotments, following the transfer of two additional sites to the Town Council, and this will support the continued investment of £30,000 earmarked per year to deliver safer, more productive and accessible allotments to everyone in the town who requires one. The waiting list is currently around 80 people, with a vacancy rate of around 8 plots at any time.

The council has continued to invest in the capacity of the town’s community resources, with funding ongoing for the Citizen’s Advice Bureau, the Trades Hall, South Workington Youth Partnership and the Helena Thompson Museum. The council is also providing long term funding to Workington Town Band, as it re-establishes itself and the town’s vibrant musical tradition.

The council’s partnership with Allerdale Borough Council to support the work of a Nature Officer continues successfully, and money continues to be set aside to fund the aspiration to improve the few remaining ‘back lanes’.

The cultural life of the town is being supported not just by the work of the Events Officer, but also by teaming up with South Workington Youth Partnership to deliver sporting taster and fun days across the town over the school holidays. Teaming up with Allerdale Borough Council is also a productive way of supporting Workington in Bloom and the town’s Christmas Festival and lights switch on. This year will see more music under the Hub during the summer, and other musical events throughout the year.

Play areas for the town’s youngest residents continue to be a priority, with an action fund of over £75,000 now earmarked for improved facilities in Moorclose, Westfield and Salterbeck. Further projects around town should see investment in Vulcan Park and elsewhere, for ‘Panna’ football and other activities.

The council was pleased to receive a clean bill of health from auditors in 2014 and anticipates careful and targeted investments to support the whole community of Workington in the current year.

**Chris Bagshaw, Town Clerk**

**WORKINGTON TOWN COUNCIL**

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