

October 2023 Mayors Column

September has gone in a flash and as we move into October the Town Council starts its annual process of setting budgets for various committees, in order to pay for the services the Town Council delivers for you all. As ever, it is a careful balance of affordability and what our staff can manage.

All our budgets, meeting agendas and minutes are available for public scrutiny, and meetings are open to the public, you can, given enough notice ask questions at most meetings too. If you have an interest, please have a look. You can also contact your ward councillor, you'll find contact details on our website, or feel free to give the Guildhall staff a call on 01752 844846 and they will be able to put you in touch with your elected representative.

I am keeping my section short this month, but would really appreciate it if you would read the meet your councillor section below. Councillor Matt Griffiths is leading on some important business planning work which will give better direction to the Town Council and should help us deliver on some of the strategic priorities we have agreed.

Much of this is not new, and in part brings forward ideas from our agreed Neighbourhood Plan, but in a Town Council Business Plan designed to enable delivery of some of those ideas that we can control. As with the budget setting process outlined above, you can feedback on our Strategic Priorities and plans through your ward councillor.

You will hear more of our Business Planning in future months, and I am grateful to Matt, Sinead, our town clerk, and the team for bringing this long overdue piece of work together.

I would like to finish with a big congratulations to the Friends of Summerfield Playpark, who have fought for and raised significant amounts of money to breathe new life into the Summerfields Playpark. The first phase of new equipment is being installed as I write. Well done to Councillor Lisa Mortimore and all those who have played a part in this. The Town Council are pleased to have utilised a new Playparks Match Funding scheme. We would love to hear from other community groups who are interested in their local playparks and the Town Council will match fund pound for pound anything raised up to £10,000.

Councillor Richard Bickford
Mayor of Saltash 2023-24

Meet Your Councillor

Councillor Matt Griffiths – Essa Ward



In August I was really pleased to be elected as Chair of the Town Vision Sub-Committee. The primary purpose of this group is to support Sinead, our Town Clerk, to lead the business planning process for Saltash Town Council and oversee its effective implementation.

We're currently working on putting together the business plan for the three-year period from April 2024 to March 2027. This is important work to establish an overarching and unified business plan for Saltash Town Council, increase engagement with residents and provide a solid foundation to secure investment to achieve our strategic priorities.

Our strategic priorities for the next three years are:

1. Boosting Jobs and Economic Prosperity

To ensure Saltash benefits from higher income, reduced poverty, improved facilities and quality of life. Promote Saltash as a vibrant and welcoming visitor destination.

2. Health and Wellbeing

To support the Saltash Healthcare Action Group in improving our local NHS provision. Support improvement to mental health, fitness facilities, educational wellbeing of children and young people together with opportunities to access a high level of quality learning.

3. Housing

To ensure Saltash has a balanced range of high quality and affordable housing by working in partnership with Cornwall Council.

4. Travel and Transport

To work with key stakeholders to support access to affordable, accessible and sustainable transport in Saltash and the rural and urban areas and promote walking and cycling.

5. Climate Emergency

To continue to acknowledge a climate emergency and to bring forward a local climate change strategy.

6. Recreation and Leisure

To continue to provide, improve, and support play parks, open green spaces, the library service, cultural activity, leisure and sport facilities, and to acknowledge our unique position on the Tamar and Lynher rivers.

This process is going well and our aim is to have the business plan completed by Christmas.

It's great to see the commitment in the Town to support young people, the future generation, who are an energetic and creative asset. They are increasingly, and rightly, raising important issues

regarding the barriers and inequalities they face and it is important that we respond both positively and strategically to these concerns.

To that end, I'm really impressed with the work of both Livewire and The Core who provide creative, warm and safe spaces day in day out, giving young people opportunities to express themselves and get validation when its often missing from other parts of their lives. As a Town Council, we have increased the budget for the delivery of professional youth work over the last few years to ensure that support is targeted in areas of greatest need to achieve maximum impact.

We're also focused on developing the play parks in Saltash to make sure they're fit for purpose. Sadly, many of the existing parks are in a poor condition and we want to remedy this. The population of Saltash is growing, with increasing numbers of families living in the Town. We want to make sure that there are fun and attractive facilities available for children to play where they live rather than have to go elsewhere.

Summerfields is a great example of this and the Friends of Summerfields Park have made significant strides in raising money to refurbish the park there working with Cornwall Council. This group of committed volunteers has clearly demonstrated what can be achieved since it formed two years ago and is a model that can be replicated in other areas of the Town.

Saltash is a great place to live and there are so many active community groups making a difference, particularly important in these challenging times. We can do so much more by collectively working together and we believe that having a focused business plan in place for Saltash Town Council will really help with this.