



Mayors Annual Report

Annual Parish Council Meeting via Zoom Tuesday 20th April 2021.

The last 15 months have been very difficult for everyone, and the effects of the pandemic have been felt strongly in our town. Although not all Covid related Marazion has suffered far too many losses during this period, made even more difficult by the fact that we have not been able to pay our respects to those people we have lost, as we would have wished.

There have been times where it has felt like the heart has been ripped out of our community with the loss of people who were at the centre of life here.

However, the Town Council has had to continue, like everyone else, under these difficult circumstances.

As well as this being our first Zoom Annual Town Meeting, there have been a lot of other firsts for our council during this period.

On the 28th of April last year we held our historic first on-line meeting and have continued to do so enabling us to carry out our business whilst still being open, accessible and accountable to members of the public.

The Mayors Annual report is usually an opportunity to update you about what the council has done over the past 12 months as well as our plans & hopes for the future of our town. However last year we were not able to hold our Meeting, so I am going to try outline some of what we have done in the last two years.

Rather than putting our work in chronological order I will talk about the assets that the council are responsible for, what work we carried out in that period and our plans for them in the future.

Sometimes people have misconceived ideas about what we are responsible for and what we can do about it, but this is the current situation on what we look after, bearing in mind quite a lot of our work and plans have been interrupted during the current pandemic.

We have divided some of our larger **Allotments** in half making them more manageable for the tenants. We felt it important that they were kept open during the lockdowns for people's wellbeing and that they could be managed within the strict Covid restrictions. The Allotment working group continues to look at ways to improve their management and use.

The Beacon and Brazier. The Council has repaired the handrail and steps leading to the viewing seating area and continues to liaise with St.Aubyn Estates to ensure the trees are kept reduced in height in order that the views from those seats can be enjoyed.

The Fairfield and Long Barn where the councils lease with St.Aubyns Estate comes to an end of September 2023. The council are engaging with the estate to try to ensure that this building and green area can continue to be of benefit to the community in some form.

The Bus Shelter at Turnpike Road has had a new roof fitted and been decorated. We try to ensure that all the shelters remain in a good condition despite the sporadic acts of graffiti which have occurred in some of them. We are also looking at the possibility of replacing the shelter at West End sometime in the future.

At the **Cemetery** work was carried out to remove the lean-to on the small granite shed and repairs made to the remaining building. A large amount of waste soil that had built up over the years below the hut has been removed and the appearance of the lower part of the cemetery has been improved. We felt it important that the cemetery also remained open during the lockdown periods, and it is an area where social distancing can easily be maintained.

Work has been undertaken at the **Folly Field** to improve the appearance of the long flowerbed adjacent to the main road. Further work will be undertaken in the coming months. In addition, a new cycle rack is to be fitted next to the toilets. This was possible due to a grant from Cornwall Council and donations from The Chamber of Commerce and St.Aubyns Estate.

At **East End Garages** the parking spaces were marked out, and security bollards fitted to ensure they were not abused and available to the persons renting them. In addition, the council went through a difficult legal process to ensure that this area remained a strong asset for the town.

With **The Maypole Gardens** we are looking at ways to make this area low maintenance but still a beautiful place to sit and enjoy the views.

Work has been carried out to get rid of the moss on the paths in **The Memorial Garden** in an ecological friendly way and have plans to experiment in 'wild seeding' parts of it.

The Play Area sub-committee continues to work hard to maintain both **The Play Areas**. At The Folly Field we had to remove the zip wire as it was becoming unsafe and was the piece of the equipment most misused by adults. As other pieces of equipment come to the end of their life, we will look to replace them with more appropriate lower maintenance items.

In partnership with the Playing Fields Association the play area in Gwallon Lane has been completely replaced. This has been undertaken despite the restraints of the pandemic and my fellow Councillors should be congratulated for being able to deliver this project under very difficult circumstances.

We completed a programme of refurbishment at the **Folly Field toilets** which has not only improved their looks but also reduced their running costs. Both the male and female toilets have been fitted with new hand driers which use a lot less water and are more energy efficient. They also have new toilet pans which also use less water and are more robust,

saving repair costs. The male toilets have also been fitted with a much-needed new floor. Our next aim is to look to refurbish the accessible toilet.

The Toilets at The Square have also been fitted with new more efficient hand driers. It is part of the council's long term plan to either completely refurbish the toilets or rebuild them so as to include an accessible toilet.

The last 12 months has been particularly challenging in trying to keep the toilets open with enhance Covid compliant measures. We are grateful to St.Aubyns Estate for bearing the vast majority of the increased costs in order that they can be opened safely.

The Council are also responsible for and undertake ongoing work maintaining the **benches, planters, water trough, water pumps, Celtic cross, wishing well, etc all throughout the town.**

All of this work has to be carried out within budget to which money from the precept goes. All the money raised from this precept is spent within the town for the benefit of its residents. Despite all the work we have done or are in the process of undertaking as a council, we are pleased that over the last two years it has only been increased by 0% & 0.5%. This has been made possible by a combination of the council increasing its efficiency, improving its income source, and carefully planning for the future.

In April 2020 we published our first **5-year Business Plan** which sets out our strategy, ambitions and the rationale of our decision making.

It is always our aim to obtain the best value for the residents of Marazion whilst keeping the towns services and infrastructure in the best condition possible.

The Town Council are always keen to work in partnership with others who have a common interest in making Marazion a better place to live and work.

We have a close relationship with the The Churches, The School, The Surgery, The Chamber of Commerce, The Town Trust, St.Aubyns Estate and many other organisations within the town.

The strength of being able to work in partnership with others has proved vital during the period of the pandemic.

Marazion Town Council helped establish the **Marazion Covid Co-ordination Forum** made up of members of Marazion Council, Chamber of Commerce, Church, Chapel, Covid Support Group, School and Surgery. During the height of the pandemic, we meet weekly via Zoom.

The purpose of the Forum is to provide co-ordination, avoid duplication of effort and support to the various groups, bodies and organisations involved in the current health crises. Their objective is to help facilitate self-isolation and social distancing for the people of Marazion and St. Michaels Mount.

Marazion Covid Support Group is community led and was set up well in advance of the lock down which enabled them to be in a strong position to offer immediate help.

The Group was and still is involved in a range of tasks for people in isolation including the shopping and the delivery of food, the collection of prescriptions and delivery of medicines, exercising of dogs and together with The Church and The Chapel, supporting people through phone calls.

Through their contact with callers the group were able to identify vulnerable persons within the community. The Town Council was able to collate this information and pass it to the relevant organisation. The Council also co-ordinated information between Cornwall Council and the various groups linked to the Forum.

The driving force behind the Covid Support group was Mike Kearnon and I was delighted to be able to award him with the **2020 Marazion Community Champion of the Year Award** just before Christmas. I only wish I was able to have done it in front of the audience that it deserved.

There were essential business that continued to remain open during the worst of the pandemic and on behalf of the council I was please to award certificates of appreciation to Baden Pharmacy, Cobble Corner, The Copper Spoon, Trevenner Stores, Marazion School and Marazion Surgery.

I am proud of the work of The Forum and it has brought all of the organisations involved even closer together and it is something I believe that can be kept going in some form in the future to build on those links that have been formed.

I am also proud of the council and the hard work that the Councillors carry out, especially these last 15 months. Despite the restrictions they have still been able to deliver a good service to the community.

All the Councillors carry out their role because they love this town and want to do what is best for it. There are not many Councillors who are so hands on, making repairs, painting the towns property, unblocking toilets and many more unseen tasks. I think the amount of work they carry out for no financial reward sometimes goes unrecognised and unappreciated.

As well as looking after and improving the towns assets, the council is managing to continually move forward. We have gone to on-line banking, government emails, implementing more policies, including a Sustainability policy and have even managed to recruit a new Town Clerk, in what I believe to be another first for us, a female clerk.

I have in the last 12 months been joining other Mayors in Cornwall for regular meetings and members of the council are now undertaking joint meetings with our neighbouring parishes of Perranuthnoe and Ludgvan.

We are very shortly going to launch our own **website** on which we will be able to outline the work we do and perhaps be able to dispel some of the inaccurate information which circulates on other online mediums.

I don't have time to cover all the other work that the council undertakes throughout the year and all our day-to-day business

The council have a strong, sustainable and responsible plan to manage and enhance its assets whilst continuing to work in partnership with others. Always providing best value for the community it serves

I would like to finish with some personal thanks.

To all the members of the Marazion Covid Support Group. Not only for their work on the group but the work they carry out in the community on a daily basis.

To all the community organisations and volunteer groups for the work they have done in the town and will hopefully start doing again soon.

There are going to be a few changes over the next month or so.

Two of our Councillors Syd Trudgen and Martin Britten have not stood for re-election and are going to enjoy some well-earned time off from being Councillors.

Both have been excellent Councillors and former Mayors and have given a lot to the town and will be greatly missed. However, I am certain they will both still be involved in the town community in some way

Our County Councillor Sue Nicholas is also standing down. She has always worked and fought hard for our Council & Town.

And we are losing Paul Benney who has been my chaplain for the last twelve months. I think we are really going to miss Paul and his thoughtful words & prayers.

I want to thank The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Billy Collins for his help and hard work. There have been a lot of changes at great speed and Billy has been very supportive of me as we continually adapt to the circumstances.

Thanks to the Mayoress Carrie for supporting through some difficult times, even though she has not managed to get to go to many engagements or had an excuse to buy a new dress.

And a special thanks to Tracey our new Town Clerk.

I think all of the council will agree that she has been a breath of fresh air to the council and has been an excellent addition to the team. We have achieved a lot of changes in the six months that she has been here which would not have been possible without her hard work and enthusiasm.

During most of my tenure my role as Mayor has been somewhat different to usual and at times has been very challenging.

I would not have been able to do it without the help and support of my fellow Councillors. We are fortunate on our Council to have Councillors with a good mix of experiences and ideas many of whom are involved in the other activities throughout the town.

It has been a difficult time, but they have dealt with the challenges facing the council with great professionalism & dedication.

I know they will continue to work hard to deal with local problems and maintain the town, making Marazion the best place to live.

Despite the difficulties during me of term in office, I have still enjoyed it immensely and it is an utter privilege to carry out the role.

The town has an excellent council and is in safe hands for whatever the future holds.

Thank You.

Councillor Derek Laity (Mayor of Marazion, April 2021)