



ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13

7th June 2013

Foreword by the outgoing Mayor, Councillor Mrs Val Raw

It was a great honour for me to represent the Town Council of Great Aycliffe in my role as Mayor during The Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the Olympic Games. I attended many community events to celebrate these remarkable occasions. I also had the wonderful opportunity to unveil the stone commemorating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee in the commemorative woodland the Town Council planted along a section of The Burn. As well as the formal civic duties I attended a further 166 engagements.



I would like to thank everyone who helped me raise £6511.00 for my nominated charities this included the generous donation from Barclays Bank. This amount was shared as follows the Butterwick Hospice received £4,761, Combat Stress for Veterans returning from war received £1,550 and the two food banks on the Town received £100 each.

The Town Council endeavours to rise to all challenges whilst focussing on the community's needs and continuing to improve our services this is becoming increasingly difficult during these current economic times.

This annual report provides a brief summary of some key achievements from the past year, an overview of financial information and a snapshot of the year to come.

SOME KEY THINGS WE DID LAST YEAR

- ✓ A major achievement last year in this current economic climate was once again not raising the Town Council portion of the Council Tax.
- ✓ Achieved £264,000 savings across all service areas which have been added to council balances, this will enable us to continue to deliver all of our services to you without the need to make cuts.
- ✓ Achieved a clean bill of health with our finances and received an unqualified audit.
- ✓ Installed an upgraded BMX track at Woodham Park.
- ✓ Expanded the skateboard area within the Town Park.
- ✓ Installed outside gym at West Park.
- ✓ Worked with a range of partners to deliver a variety of events and services.
- ✓ Finalised the licence agreement with Durham County Council which will enable the Town Council to manage and improve a number of areas of land.
- ✓ Entered into an agreement to undertake a limited snow clearing and gritting service on behalf of Durham County Council.
- ✓ Held 38 public environmental events even with the bad weather we had.
- ✓ Held another successful Town Pride Environment Week working with the Youth Council, local schools and volunteers.

A message from the new Mayor, Councillor Mrs Barbara Clare

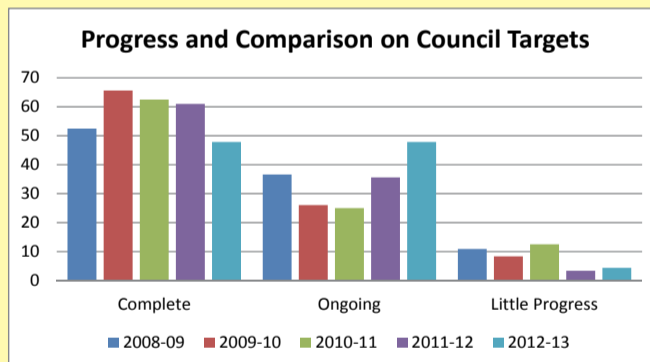
It was an honour to be appointed as Mayor for the Town Council of Great Aycliffe at the Annual General Meeting held in May. I am looking forward to a full year of civic events and public engagements. If you would like me to attend an event or special occasion please contact Christine Ryder on 01325 300700.

The Town Council has been working very hard to find cost savings, yet still deliver the high level of services the residents of Great Aycliffe have become accustomed to. However, changes in legislation to the way that Council Tax is calculated resulted in an unexpected shortfall in the Town Council finances of over £352,800. Whilst this was partly offset by a Government Grant of £296,150, it still left the Council facing a net shortfall of £56,650 in the 2013/14 Revenue Budget. Due to careful management of the Town Council finances we achieved this saving without the need to make cuts to front line services or staffing levels, although, vacant staffing posts did need to be deleted.

We encourage the residents of Great Aycliffe to engage with the Town Council and make their views known. We have a customer panel where residents can be actively involved in Town Council business and we are always looking for new members. Please contact the Town Council Offices 01325 300700 for further details. Or, why not attend one of our Council or committee meetings to see for yourself what goes on. Everyone is welcome.



The table below shows progress, as a percentage, on the Council targets over the previous 5 years. Regular reports are provided to both Councillors and the Customer Panel who have the opportunity to discuss progress on individual items.



SOME KEY TARGETS FOR THE COMING YEAR

The Town Council constantly strives to provide excellent services for its residents. Some of our key targets for 2013/2014 are:

- The Town Council will be starting work on the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan. This is a very important piece of work which will help the residents of Great Aycliffe plan for the future. **We will need your help to ensure the best plan possible is produced.**
- Finalise the licence agreement with Durham County Council which will enable the Town Council to manage and improve a number of areas of land.
- Improve our partnership working.
- Improve our community engagement and encourage more residents to become involved in local government.
- Continue to provide all existing services without the need to make cuts.
- Commence a review of all service areas to ensure value for money.
- We are aiming to once again freeze the Town Council portion of the Council Tax.
- Undertake 40 public environmental events.
- Undertake 60 school environmental engagements.

AIMS AND TARGETS 2013/2014

AIM 1 "TO PROVIDE GOOD QUALITY GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF THE COUNCIL"

- 1 Publish a Parish Performance Plan by 30th June
- 2 Achieve an unqualified audit opinion on the Annual Governance Statement
- 3 Pursue the development of a Neighbourhood Plan, improving community engagement and encouraging the residents of Great Aycliffe to become involved in the process
- 4 Quarterly performance reports are presented to Policy & Resources Committee
- 5 Deliver the Internal Audit Plan Schedule of Work and report to Council
- 6 Provide a Member and Town Clerk training programme to comply with guidance for Quality Status
- 7 Undertake a review of all records and filing systems annually to comply with Freedom of Information Act
- 8 Improve advertising of Council facilities and services by targeting a service area in each publication
- 9 Undertake a town wide questionnaire consultation, as part of the Neighbourhood Planning process
- 10 Complete the new Health & Safety Manual, ensuring requirements for feedback from Managers is incorporated
- 11 Quarterly reporting to Performance Management Group regarding Health & Safety requirements, accidents and other information
- 12 Develop and deliver a training plan for new Members

AIM 2 "TO MANAGE THE COUNCIL'S FINANCES AND ASSETS IN A RESPONSIBLE MANNER"

- 13 Produce annual statement of accounts by 30.6.13
- 14 Achieve an unqualified audit opinion of the accounts by 30.9.13
- 15 Ensure the Medium Term Financial Plan is approved by 30th June each year
- 16 Quarterly budget control reports are presented to Policy and Resources Committee
- 17 Undertake a review of all Council risks every March and report to Council
- 18 Budgets/Precepts approved by 31st January 2014
- 19 Manage the future financial impact of the localisation of support for council tax (LCTSS) and any future cuts to LCTSS
- 20 Commence a programme of financial reviews of all service areas
- 21 Undertake an annual update of the Asset Register including the schedule of expected life and replacement costs for plant and machinery. Ensuring that any works are prioritised by the Equality Act and replacement plant and machinery is built into the capital works programme as necessary

AIM 3 "TO PROVIDE ACCESSIBLE, AFFORDABLE LEISURE FACILITIES AND OPPORTUNITIES"

- 22 Deliver 40 public countryside events
- 23 Deliver the Council's programme of special events
- 24 Expand the activities offered at the Oak Leaf Sports Complex
- 25 Complete the programme of asset management planned work at the Oakleaf Sports Complex
- 26 Provide at least 10 bar/catering promotions to develop the social side of the OakLeaf Complex business
- 27 Investigate ways to extend the cycle paths on the Great Aycliffe Way and around Great Aycliffe
- 28 Assist Aycliffe Youth Council to hold a Free Family Fun Day in the Town Park on 30th July 2013 to coincide with the first Fun in the Park event

AIM 4 "TO PROVIDE PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION AS APPROPRIATE IN GREAT AYCLIFFE"

- 29 Achieve successful Ofsted Inspection Results (if undertaken)
- 30 Aim to maximise child numbers at both pre-schools

AIM 5 "TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT OF AYCLIFFE BY MANAGING AND DEVELOPING PARKS, PLAY AREAS AND GREEN SPACES"

- 31 Environment Officer to work with local schools and community groups to develop volunteer opportunities
- 32 Work with the Youth Council, schools, community and voluntary groups hold a Town Pride Environment Day
- 33 Undertake maintenance and management of specific DCC environmental areas as per the management agreement
- 34 Undertake a limited snow clearing and gritting service on behalf of Durham County Council as per the management agreement

AIM 6 "TO HELP AND ENCOURAGE PARTNERSHIP WORKING TO IMPROVE THE SERVICES AND FACILITIES FOR THE RESIDENTS OF GREAT AYCLIFFE"

- 35 Support and encourage Aycliffe Youth Council (AYC) by

Organising the election process
 Holding at least 8 meetings a year
 Helping to organise at least 1 project a year

- 36 Working with other groups to develop community activities to encourage pride in Great Aycliffe
- 37 Work with partners and assist with initiatives to reduce litter

AIM 7 "ENCOURAGE THE RESIDENTS OF GREAT AYCLIFFE TO BECOME INVOLVED IN LOCAL DEMOCRACY"

- 38 Hold at least 5 Customer Panel meetings with the residents of Great Aycliffe
- 39 Hold a budget setting consultation meeting with the Customer Panel
- 40 Hold a Parish Meeting
- 41 Hold an Allotment AGM
- 42 Hold 6 allotment representative meetings
- 43 Hold or take part in at least 2 events to inform residents about Town Council services

AIM 8 "TO RESEARCH INFORMATION AND MAKE THE CASE FOR GREAT AYCLIFFE"

- 44 Produce timely responses to all major consultations carried out
- 45 Undertake benchmarking and research where appropriate for new policies and procedures
- 46 Keep up to date with any changes in legislation and report to council as and when required

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

The Town Council, as a relevant body, applied under the Neighbourhood Planning (General Regulations (2012) to Durham County Council to designate the parish boundary of Great Aycliffe as a Neighbourhood Area. After the appropriate consultation period the application from the Town Council was approved in February 2013.

Work on the Great Aycliffe Neighbourhood Plan will commence in the next few months please keep an eye open for public events which will be advertised in the Newton News as well as our own website and publications. The findings from the public events and questionnaires will help shape the future of Great Aycliffe and will become supplementary planning guidance for our area. Please take the time to attend one of these public events and share your views for the future of Great Aycliffe.



BYERLEY PARK, HORNDALE & COBBLERS HALL WARD



John D. Clare Lab - Tel. 318333
Ian Gray Lab - Tel. 313770
Brian Hall Lab - Tel. 314105



Irene Hewitson Ind - Tel. 318763
Paul Kjenstad Lab - Tel. 07530 314019
Alison Palmer Lab - Tel. 314559

WOODHAM WARD



Barbara A. Clare Lab - Tel. 318333
Neil Collinson Lab - Tel. 300072
Mary Dalton Lab - Tel. 320499



Michael Dalton Lab - Tel. 320499
Sandra Haigh Ind - Tel. 318303
Keith Henderson Lab - Tel. 319542

KNOW YOUR COUNCILLOR

AYCLIFFE CENTRAL WARD



Jim Atkinson Lab - Tel. 310791

AYCLIFFE VILLAGE



Bill Blenkinsopp Ind - Tel. 788893

SIMPASTURE WARD



Derek G. Atkinson Lab - Tel. 301395



John Clark Lab-Tel. 07972 170190

WEST WARD



Eddy Adam Lab - Tel. 315136
Raymond Bowman Lab - Tel. 308094
Arun M. Chandran Lab - Tel. 313224



George C. Gray Ind - Tel. 314934
Daniel Summers Lab-Tel. 07846 937918
Tom Twissell Lab-Tel. 07455 666550

SHAFTO / ST. MARY'S WARD



Robert S. Fleming Lab - Tel. 310025
Wendy Hillary Lab - Tel. 313273



Malcolm Iveson Lab - Tel. 319759
Chris Wheeler Lab - Tel. 318805

NEVILLE WARD



Jed P. Hillary Lab - Tel. 313273



Sarah Iveson Lab - Tel. 319759

THE SENIOR OFFICERS WITHIN THE COUNCIL ARE

Town Clerk
 Corporate & Policy Officer
 Finance Manager
 Works Manager

Andrew Bailey
 Christine Walton
 Dan Austin
 Don Thompson

info@great-aycliffe.gov.uk
christine.walton@great-aycliffe.gov.uk
dan.austin@great-aycliffe.gov.uk
info@great-aycliffe.gov.uk

Complex Manager
 Environment Officer
 Early Years Officer
 Senior Admin Officer

Judith Thexton
 Steven Cooper
 Jackie Swainston
 Christine Ryder

judith.thexton@great-aycliffe.gov.uk
steven.cooper@great-aycliffe.gov.uk
jackie.swainston@great-aycliffe.gov.uk
christine.ryder@great-aycliffe.gov.uk

MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES MUNICIPAL YEAR 2013 / 2014

CHAIRMAN / VICE-CHAIRMAN

Number of Members

COUNCIL (All Members) Councillor Mrs. Barbara A. Clare (Mayor), Councillor Mrs. Wendy P. Hillary (Deputy Mayor)

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE (26 Members + Mayor and Deputy Mayor as ex-officio)
Councillors E. Adam, J. Atkinson, B. Blenkinsopp, R. Bowman, A.M. Chandran, Mrs. B.A. Clare, J.D. Clare, J. Clark, N. Collinson, Mrs. M. Dalton, M.A. Dalton, R.S. Fleming, I. Gray, G.C. Gray, Mrs. S. Haigh, B. Hall, K. Henderson, Mrs. I. Hewitson, J.P. Hillary, Mrs. W.P. Hillary, M. Iveson, Mrs. S.J. Iveson, W. Iveson, P. Kjenstad, Mrs. V.M. Raw, D. Summers, T. Twissell and C. Wheeler.

RECREATION COMMITTEE (26 Members + Mayor and Deputy Mayor as ex-officio)
Councillors E. Adam, J. Atkinson, B. Blenkinsopp, R. Bowman, A.M. Chandran, Mrs. B.A. Clare, J.D. Clare, J. Clark, N. Collinson, Mrs. M. Dalton, M.A. Dalton, R.S. Fleming, I. Gray, G.C. Gray, Mrs. S. Haigh, B. Hall, K. Henderson, Mrs. I. Hewitson, J.P. Hillary, Mrs. W.P. Hillary, M. Iveson, Mrs. S.J. Iveson, W. Iveson, P. Kjenstad, Mrs. V.M. Raw, D. Summers, T. Twissell and C. Wheeler.

POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE (26 Members + Mayor and Deputy Mayor as ex-officio)
Councillors E. Adam, D.G. Atkinson, J. Atkinson, B. Blenkinsopp, R. Bowman, A.M. Chandran, Mrs. B.A. Clare, J.D. Clare, J. Clark, N. Collinson, Mrs. M. Dalton, M.A. Dalton, R.S. Fleming, I. Gray, G.C. Gray, Mrs. S. Haigh, B. Hall, K. Henderson, Mrs. I. Hewitson, J.P. Hillary, Mrs. W.P. Hillary, M. Iveson, Mrs. S.J. Iveson, W. Iveson, Mrs. A. Palmer, Mrs. V.M. Raw, D. Summers and C. Wheeler.

SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS from the Policy and Resources Committee

SERVICE REVIEW WORKING GROUP (7 Members)
Councillors J.D. Clare, R.S. Fleming, I. Gray, B. Hall, J.P. Hillary, M. Iveson and C. Wheeler.

GENERAL APPEALS SUB-COMMITTEE (Members chosen as necessary)

PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE (10 Members + Mayor as ex-officio)
Councillors D.G. Atkinson, J. Atkinson, Mrs. B.A. Clare, M. Dalton, Mrs. M. Dalton, R.S. Fleming, Mrs. S. Haigh, B. Hall, J.P. Hillary, M. Iveson and Mrs. V.M. Raw.

APPEALS SUB-COMMITTEE (9 Members + Deputy Mayor as ex-officio)
Councillors E. Adam, A.M. Chandran, J.D. Clare, K. Henderson, Mrs. I. Hewitson, Mrs. W.P. Hillary, Mrs. S.J. Iveson, W. Iveson, P. Kjenstad and C. Wheeler.

AUDIT SUB-COMMITTEE (7 Members + Mayor and Deputy Mayor as ex-officio)
Councillors A.M. Chandran, Mrs. B.A. Clare, M. Dalton, G.C. Gray, B. Hall, Mrs. W.P. Hillary, M. Iveson, Mrs. S.J. Iveson and W. Iveson.

ASSET MANAGEMENT MEMBER WORKING GROUP (9 Members)
Councillors J. Atkinson, R.S. Fleming, G.C. Gray, B. Hall, K. Henderson, J.P. Hillary, M. Iveson, Mrs. V.M. Raw and C. Wheeler.

CHARGES WORKING GROUP (Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Environment, Recreation and Policy and Resources Committees plus the Mayor and Deputy Mayor)
Councillors J.D. Clare, Mrs. B.A. Clare, R.S. Fleming, I. Gray, B. Hall, J.P. Hillary, Mrs. W.P. Hillary and M. Iveson.

WORKING GROUPS from the Recreation Committee

GOLF COURSE WORKING GROUP (3 Members)
Councillors J. Atkinson, R.S. Fleming and M. Iveson.

SPORTS COMPLEX WORKING GROUP (Members chosen as necessary)

SHOW WORKING GROUP (7 Members + Chairman & Vice-Chair of Recreation)
Councillors J. Clark, M. Dalton, Mrs. M. Dalton, G.C. Gray, B. Hall, J.P. Hillary, P. Kjenstad, D. Summers and T. Twissell.

MAYOR'S ANNUAL EVENTS

The following Civic Dates have now been finalised for the newly appointed Mayor of Great Aycliffe, Councillor Mrs. Barbara A. Clare.

CIVIC SERVICE - Sunday, 14th July, 2013
at St. Clare's Church, Newton Aycliffe – 10.00 a.m.

CHARITY GOLF TOURNAMENT
Friday, 30th August 2013 at Oakleaf Golf Complex

TOWN COMMUNITY CAROL SERVICE
Sunday, 15th December 2013 (Provisional) – Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre – 2.30 p.m. to 4p.m.

CIVIC CAROL SERVICE
Sunday, 22nd December 2013 at St. Clare's Church, Newton Aycliffe – 6 p.m.

CIVIC DINNER AND DANCE - Date and venue to be arranged



REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES 2013/14

- (a) **Youth Council - Three + 1 Officer**
Councillor J.D. Clare, Councillor D. Summers, Councillor T. Twissell, Corporate & Policy Officer
- (b) **County Durham Association of Local Councils - Two Members only at AGM + Town Clerk**
Councillor R.S. Fleming, Councillor J.D. Clare, Town Clerk
- (c) **Citizens' Advice Bureau - One plus One reserve (Vacancy)**
- (d) **Woodham Village Community Association - Two**
Councillor N. Collinson, Councillor K. Henderson
- (e) **Great Aycliffe and Middridge A.A.P. Local Council's Committee - Two + Town Clerk**
Councillor R.S. Fleming, Councillor B. Hall, Town Clerk
- (f) **Larger Local Councils' Forum - Two + Town Clerk**
Councillor R.S. Fleming, Councillor J.D. Clare, Town Clerk
- (g) **Lifelong Learning Committee - Three**
Councillor J. Clark, Councillor Mrs. S. Haigh, Councillor W. Blenkinsopp
- (h) **Newton Aycliffe Youth Centre - One**
Councillor D. Summers
- (i) **Aycliffe and District Bus Preservation Society - Two**
Councillor I. Gray, Councillor D. Summers
- (j) **Sedgefield Health Network - One**
Councillor N. Collinson
- (k) **Friends of Byerley Park Local Nature Reserve - One**
Councillor I. Gray

MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL

29th May 2013	Environment	27th Nov. 2013	Environment
29th May 2013	Recreation *	27th Nov. 2013	Recreation *
5th June 2013	Policy & Resources	4th Dec. 2013	Policy & Resources
12th June 2013	Full Council	11th Dec. 2013	Full Council
3rd July 2013	Environment	15th Jan. 2014	Environment
3rd July 2013	Recreation *	15th Jan. 2014	Recreation *
10th July 2013	Policy & Resources	22nd Jan. 2014	Policy & Resources
17th July 2013	Full Council	29th Jan. 2014	Full Council
4th Sept. 2013	Environment	26th Feb. 2014	Environment
4th Sept. 2013	Recreation *	26th Feb. 2014	Recreation *
11th Sept. 2013	Policy & Resources	5th Mar. 2014	Policy & Resources
18th Sept. 2013	Full Council	12th Mar. 2014	Full Council
16th Oct. 2013	Environment	9th Apr. 2014	Environment
16th Oct. 2013	Recreation *	9th Apr. 2014	Recreation *
23rd Oct. 2013	Policy & Resources	16th Apr. 2014	Policy & Resources
30th Oct. 2013	Full Council	23rd Apr. 2014	Full Council

All meetings commence at 7.15 p.m.

* The Recreation Committee will commence immediately after the Environment Committee Meeting.

14th MAY, 2014 - COUNCIL ANNUAL MEETING - 7.15 p.m.

21st MAY, 2014 - PARISH MEETING - 7.15 p.m. (*)**

(***) (N.B. - this is not a meeting of the Town Council but a meeting of local government electors in the Council's area. Any queries about the Parish Meeting can be made to the Town Clerk on 01325 300700). The Public and Press are cordially invited to attend. "The Public Entrance to the Council Chamber will be open 30 minutes prior to the commencement of meetings".

COUNCIL SUB-COMMITTEES

Personnel Sub-Committee - This Sub-Committee will be held as and when required. **Audit Sub-Committee** - This Sub-Committee will meet, as a minimum, on a quarterly basis (dates as appropriate). **Appeals Sub-Committee** - This Sub-Committee will be held as and when required. **General Appeals Sub-Committee** - Will be held as and when required.

The following Working Groups will meet as and when required.

Charges Working Group - Asset Management Member Working Group - Golf Working Group Sports Complex Working Group - Show Working Group - Service Review Working Group - Personnel Member Appeal Panel

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

Listed below for public disclosure is the allowances and other expenses claimed by the Council's Elected Members during the financial year 2012/13 in line with statutory requirements as set out in the Local Authority (Members Allowances) Regulations 2004.

Surname	Forenames	Title	Total Payment	Allowance	Subsistence	Mileage Claim
Bambridge	Stephen	Mr	£1,059.60	£1,059.60		
Blenkinsopp	William Maurice	Mr	£1,059.60	£1,059.60		
Bowman	Thomas Raymond	Mr	£1,059.60	£1,059.60		
Bowman	Dorothy	Mrs	£1,059.60	£1,059.60		
Clare	John Duncan	Mr	£1,059.60	£1,059.60		
Clare	Barbara Anne	Mrs	£1,059.60	£1,059.60		
Crosby	Vincent	Mr	£1,059.60	£1,059.60		
Curtis	William James	Mr	£1,059.60	£1,059.60		
Dalton	Maria WH	Mrs	£1,059.60	£1,059.60		
Ducker	John Paul	Mr	£ 452.27	£ 452.27		
Fleming	Robert Stuart	Mr	£1,059.60	£1,059.60		
Gittins	Paul Steven	Mr	£1,059.60	£1,059.60		
Gray	George Coulson	Mr	£1,059.60	£1,059.60		
Gray	George Robert	Mr	£1,059.60	£1,059.60		
Gray	Joan	Mrs	£1,059.60	£1,059.60		
Gray	Ian	Mr	£1,059.60	£1,059.60		
Haigh	Brian	Mr	£1,059.60	£1,059.60		
Haigh	Sandra	Mrs	£1,059.60	£1,059.60		
Hall	Brian	Mr	£1,059.60	£1,059.60		
Henderson	Keith	Mr	£1,059.60	£1,059.60		
Hewitson	Irene	Mrs	£1,059.60	£1,059.60		
Hillary	Jeremy Paul	Mr	£ 353.20	£ 353.20		
Hillary	Wendy Patricia	Mrs	£1,030.17	£1,030.17		
Hopper	Catherine Mary	Mrs	£1,059.60	£1,059.60		
Iveson	William	Mr	£1,059.60	£1,059.60		
Iveson	Sarah Jane	Mrs	£1,059.60	£1,059.60		
Iveson	Malcolm	Mr	£1,059.60	£1,059.60		
Palmer	Alison	Ms	£1,059.60	£1,059.60		
Paylor	Enid Marion	Mrs	£ 794.70	£ 794.70		
Raw	Valerie Margaret	Mrs	£1,059.60	£1,059.60		
Warburton	Alan Derek	Mr	£1,059.60	£1,059.60		

Subsistence figures are for Conferences - As per approved Members Allowance Scheme

Annual Report on the Council's Finances 2012/13

1. Introduction

Welcome to the annual report on the Council's finances which we hope you will find informative and of interest.

This report sets out a summary of the Council's spending plans for 2013/14 and explains how this will be funded by you, the council tax payers of the Parish. The report also provides a summary of the Council's financial performance in 2012/13 and details of the outcome of the annual audit inspection by the Audit Commission.

2. The Council Budget

The Council Budget is an estimate of the resources that the Council will require to be raised from council tax to fund all of the services it provides for a period of one year.

The Budget covers the financial year which runs from 1st April to 31st March.

The Council needs to set a Revenue Budget and a Capital Budget each year.

The Revenue Budget funds the day to day running costs of the Council's services such as salaries, supplies and services and the net cost after deducting any income receivable from fees and charges and grants is met from the Town Council proportion of the Council Tax bill.

The Capital Budget funds major one off investment in the Council's fixed assets such as its buildings, vehicles and play areas and is funded from the Council's Balances and Reserves and any external grants that may be available.

3. Localisation of Support for Council Tax

The Council has been subject to a fundamental change to the way in which it is funded following the localisation of support for council tax by the government.

These statutory changes to the way in which council tax benefits are funded and accounted for in the council tax system, left the Council facing a reduction in its tax raising capacity of over £350,000 with effect from 2013/14.

While the government has put in place Localising Council Tax Support Scheme (LCTSS) funding totalling £300,000 per year to offset the impact of these changes, the Council was still left facing a £50,000 shortfall which needed to be met from savings in the setting of Council's 2013/14 Revenue Budget.

In addition, the Council has found itself in a position moving forward whereby it is now reliant on an external funding stream which accounts for nearly 20% of its Budget. This has created much uncertainty and concern for subsequent years as the future receipt of the LCTSS funding is by no means guaranteed

4. 2013/14 Revenue Budget

The 2013/14 Revenue Budget was developed on the principle of protecting front line services and avoiding

Service Area	2013/14 Budget £
Members and Civic Expenses	70,800
Corporate Management, Finance and Administration	453,850
Capital Financing Charges	30,150
Pre Schools	235,150
Community Events	150,950
Sports Complex	624,700
Golf Course and Driving Range	228,550
Environment and Open Spaces	120,000
Parks, Sports Pitches and Play Areas	239,850
Works and Depot	133,600
Street Equipment	8,000
Cemeteries	70,600
Allotments	14,750
Contingency Sum	25,000
Total Cost of Running Town Council Services	2,405,950
Contribution to Capital Reserves	50,000
Total Planned Spending	2,455,950
Less Income	
LCTSS Grant	(296,150)
Pre-Schools Funding and Fees	(208,000)
Sports Complex Fees and Charges	(419,150)
Golf Course and Driving Range Fees and Charges	(166,900)
Cemeteries and Allotments Fees and Charges	(26,400)
Feed In Tariff Income from Solar Panels	(12,000)
Other Income	(26,750)
Investment Income	(4,000)
Use of Council Balances to fund 2013 Election	(25,000)
Total Income	(1,184,350)
Net Budget Requirement / Council Precept	1,271,600

the need for any job losses, whilst striving to freeze the Town Council Tax for what would be a fourth year in a row.

The setting of the Revenue Budget needed to take into account the likely changes in costs and income between the two years. This included making additional budget provision for pay awards, inflation, falls in leisure income and the withdrawal of double taxation grant by Durham County Council, and offsetting these through efficiency savings and budget reductions including the 2012/13 officer pay freeze, the new insurance and brewery contracts, a restructure of sports complex staffing.

The Council also needed to fund the £56,650 shortfall created by the localisation of support for council tax. This was met through the deletion of vacant staffing posts.

In overall terms, the Council's 2013/14 Precept reduced by £352,800 from £1,624,400 to £1,271,600, reflecting the loss in tax raising capacity following the localisation of support for council tax, the inclusion of the new LCTSS Grant which partly offsets this loss, and the budget reductions made to balance the budget.

5. 2013/14 Council Tax

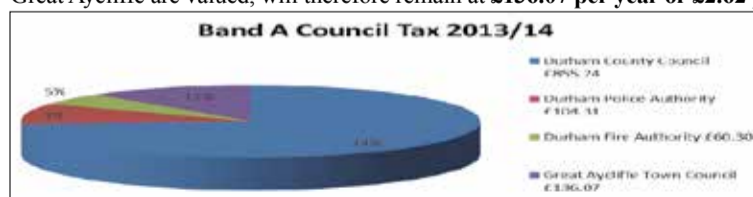
The Town Council Tax is calculated using the Tax Base for the Parish which is a calculation of the total number of chargeable properties in the area.

The Council Tax Base reduced by over 20% from 7,959 properties to 6,230 properties following the localisation of support for council tax, reflecting the inclusion of council tax benefits payments in the calculation.

However, by reducing the Council Precept to £1,271,600, the impact of this reduction has been offset and the Council is pleased to report that a freeze in the level of Town Council Tax has been achieved for 2013/14.

This is the fourth year now that the council tax has not been increased and the Council hopes that this will make a small contribution at least towards easing the burden on local tax payers during these difficult economic times.

The 2013/14 Council Tax at Valuation Band A, which is the band at which the majority of properties in Great Aycliffe are valued, will therefore remain at **£136.07 per year or £2.62 per week**.



A breakdown of the 2013/14 Council Tax is shown above demonstrating that only **12p in every £1** of the total Council Tax comes to the Town Council:-

6. 2013/14 Capital Programme Budget

Following the change in the Council's financial situation following the localisation of support for council tax, a decision was taken to undertake only essential capital investment this year.

The 2013/14 Capital Programme Budget was therefore set at a lower level than in recent years at **£187,250** and includes provision for various building works, replacement machinery and equipment, footpath and play area safety surface repairs, and refurbishment of bus shelters.

The Capital Programme Budget will be funded in full from the Council's Earmarked Capital Reserves,

as there is not currently expected to be any external capital grants and contributions available to support the Council's spending plans, and the Council does not need to undertake further borrowing at the present time.

7. Council Balances and Earmarked Reserves

The Council's Balances and Earmarked Reserves stood at just under **£950,000 at the end of March 2013**. After accounting for the funding of the 2013/14 Capital Programme Budget and a number of on-going revenue and capital budget commitments from 2012/13, as well as the cost of the 2013 Elections, it is likely that the Council will have just over **£750,000 in Balances and Reserves at the end of the 2013/14 financial year**.

This is considered to be an adequate level of reserves to support future capital spending commitments and to provide some protection against future spending commitments and possible cuts to LCTSS funding.

8. 2011/12 and 2012/13 Actual Revenue Spending

A summary of the Council's actual expenditure in 2011/12 and 2012/13 in running its various services, and how this expenditure was funded, is detailed below:-

2011/12 £	Service Area	2012/13 £
70,119	Members and Civic Expenses	68,670
401,443	Corporate Management, Finance and Administration	413,560
29,768	Capital Financing Charges	30,184
228,521	Pre Schools	232,968
141,617	Community Events	140,409
730,367	Sports Complex	702,778
275,625	Golf Course and Driving Range	274,390
341,265	Parks, Sports Pitches and Play Areas	321,138
311,134	Environment, Works and Street Equipment	318,284
71,945	Cemeteries	79,666
22,656	Allotments	18,057
-	Contingency Sum	3,933
2,624,460	Total Cost of Running Council Services	2,604,037
	Less Income	
(39,075)	Grants	(38,475)
(222,412)	Pre Schools Funding and Fees	(251,345)
(437,827)	Sports Complex Fees and Charges	(424,563)
(196,294)	Golf Course and Driving Range Fees and Charges	(152,110)
(18,267)	Cemeteries Fees	(18,575)
(5,419)	Allotments Rents	(6,425)
(43,163)	Other Fees and Charges	(37,725)
(3,727)	Investment Income	(4,592)
(966,184)	Total Income	(933,810)
(364,050)	Exclusion of Depreciation Charges	(359,843)
1,294,226	Actual Net Cost of Council Services	1,310,384
322,624	Contribution to Council Balances / Savings	314,016
1,616,850	Council Precept / Council Tax	1,624,400

The financial position and spending of the Council is continuously monitored and controlled in order to help achieve the most efficient use of public resources and, as can be seen above, this has resulted in significant savings being achieved in both 2011/12 and 2012/13. Spending in 2012/13 was £315,000 or nearly 20% under the level of Precept. This is made up of the inclusion in the Revenue Budget of a £50,000 contribution to Earmarked Capital Reserves as well as substantial efficiency savings and under spending on the Revenue Budget of over £250,000. All savings achieved on the Revenue Budget have been set aside in the Council's Earmarked Reserves to support future spending commitments

and to provide for further investment in Council and community assets for the benefit of the tax payers of Great Aycliffe over the coming years.

9. 2011/12 and 2012/13 Actual Capital Investment

A summary of the Council's capital investment in Council and community assets in 2011/12 and 2012/13, and how this expenditure was funded is detailed below:-

2011/12 £	Investment Area	2012/13 £
47,009	Council Buildings Works	71,105
61,475	Council Offices Solar Panels	10,183
40,000	Sports and Golf Complex Access Road	-
-	Aycliffe Show Field Improvements	46,585
10,000	Replacement Vehicles and Machinery	25,500
33,225	Computers, Servers and Website	-
85,788	Parks and Play Areas Investment	61,008
46,760	Allotments and Environmental Initiatives	2,520
14,245	Other Capital Investment	19,681
338,502	Total Capital Investment	236,582
	Funded by:-	
35,785	Capital Contributions	61,076
302,717	Use of Council Balances	175,506
338,502	Funding of Capital Investment	236,582

Capital investment in Council and community assets has totalled nearly £2 million over the six year term of the Council since 2007. This investment has included the installation of numerous new play areas and multi-use games areas across the town, the opening of the Environment Centre at Moore Lane, disabled access works, planned maintenance works to public buildings and

replacement vehicles, machinery and equipment.

This is all investment that would not otherwise have been possible if the Council did not include a contribution to capital reserves in the Revenue Budget each year and achieve efficiency savings against the Revenue Budget year on year. The Council has also actively sought external grant funding, securing over £500,000 from various sources to support capital investment in the town in recent years.

10. Annual Audit Report

The Council is subject to an external inspection by the Audit Commission each year and the overall opinion on the financial standing of the Council is set out in an Annual Audit Letter. The Audit Commission looked at three main areas in 2012/13:-

1. Statement of Accounts
2. Annual Governance Statement
3. Value for Money (Use of Resources Assessment)

The Council is pleased to report that it has again received a clean bill of health on all aspects of the audit inspection.

This means that the Audit Commission considers that:-

- the Council's Accounts present fairly its financial position;
- it is well managed and governed with sound strategies, policies, procedures, systems and internal controls;
- its finances are in good order;
- it delivers value for money to the local community.

This was a very positive Audit Report for the Council and the Audit Commission commended the Council for the progress it has made over the last few years. This is an excellent achievement and has been achieved as a result of the hard work and commitment of all councillors, management and staff.

It has also been agreed by the Council that it will continue to seek a greater level of external audit in 2013/14 despite a change in legislation which would allow the Council to move to a limited assurance audit regime.

As one of the largest Town Councils in the country and which spends nearly £3 million of local tax payers' money each year, it felt it needed to continue to manage its finances to a higher standard and to seek a greater level of assurance from external auditors in order to demonstrate efficient use of public money.

The 2012/13 Audit Letter is due to be received later in the year, following the completion of the 2012/13 Audit.