



CROSStalk

Annual Report - Year Ending March 31 2019

A message from the Town Mayor & Chairman of the Council Cllr Matthew Walsh

Welcome to this evening's Annual Town Meeting. On behalf of everyone at the Town Council, thank you for taking time to join us here for an update on the past twelve months and to hear about our plans for the future.

Tonight you will see we have made significant changes to the format of the Annual Town Meeting. We have placed a greater emphasis on the key events that have occurred this past year, whilst continuing to celebrate the wonderful people that live and work in our community. This special edition of CrossTalk contains reports from the Chairman of each committee which covers the main work of the Town Council.

Last year I mentioned that the Town Council continues to "step in", indeed this year we have "stepped up". We are undertaking the greatest period of investment in our history. The purchase of the former NatWest building will enable the council to have a strategic stake in the future of the High Street whilst providing a long-term income stream. This coupled with the Community Centre refurbishment, which will include a brand new café and function room, will continue to protect and enhance our community assets.

Movies in the Park kicks off a week-long of Festival celebrations, (June 29th - July 6th) which I am confident will deliver our best festival to date. Our brand new quarterly Farmers Market begins on the 18th May with a host of excellent local producers and the first outing of our mobile demonstration kitchen. Located around the Market House, this will be one event not to miss.

The highest honour from the Town Council, the Citizens Award, has been joined by new awards this year. Community groups give so much to the vitality and diversity of this town and we want to recognise their crucial work with our Community Group Award. As part of the Town Council agenda of promoting the role of business and supporting our High Street, we have created a Business of the Year Award. Finally, we wanted to recognise the role of our Young Citizens; the future of our community and with the calibre we received in nominations, I strongly believe our best days are ahead of us.

I would like to thank everyone for their commitment this year. We have faced many challenges and dealt with them as a team together. I often mention that the Town Council 'punches above its weight' and I think our successes this year continue to reflect that. I would also like to thank Annabelle Denbury for her efforts in organising tonight's meeting.

We welcome your feedback on tonight and indeed any town matters.

Cllr Matthew Walsh - Town Mayor & Chairman



Finance Committee Report

Our Committees Annual budget for 2018/2019 was £414,094

Principle Source of Income – Precept £354,151

Supplemented by:

- Market Rents
- Devolved Services
- Services to other Councils
- Festival Sponsorship/Grants
- CIL (spend within 5 years)

Precept for 2019/2020 - £378,211

BAND D TAX RATE £101.85 increase of 1.98% on 2018/2019 (£99.87)

Breakdown of the precept for 2019 - 2020

Estimated Expenditure 19/20

Admin & HR	£123,585
Civic & Democratic	£5,375
Town	£218,842
Market	£7,300
Public Relations	£14,325
Events	£29,799
Commercial Services	£55,391
Grants & Subs	£11,530
Legal Costs	£2,500
Local Plan	£1,000
Town Regeneration	£15,000
New Mower/Equipment	£40,000

TOTAL £524,647

Estimated Income 19/20

General £220,266

TOTAL £220,266



Finance Committee Report

The financial year 2018–2019 saw continuing pressures on the Town Council service provision, with rising inflation and a further cut in the Government's Council Tax Support Grant amongst the challenges faced. However, the Town Council's long term policy of financial prudence and efficiency savings, linked with investing income to generate future prosperity for the community still enabled us to:

- Invest in our staff through training, equipment and remuneration.
- Complete the restoration of the Market House.
- Continue management of our weekly Charter Market.
- Build on the success of the summer Festival and Xmas Lights event.
- Put plans in place for our forthcoming Food Markets.
- Work closely with our Local Government partners on the Local Plan.
- Prepare for the switch to a Unitary Authority.
- Invest in the Town Centre to keep it the vibrant heart of our community.
- Issue numerous small grants to local groups and organisations.
- Contain the increase to the precept to 1.98%.

All this and of course keeping on track with maintaining our glorious parks, Stratton Memorial Garden and much more.

Whilst in comparison to some of the larger Town/Parish Councils (Sutton Coldfield, the largest in the Country, has an electorate of 75,000 and a precept of £1.8 M) our relatively small precept, wisely budgeted, still enables us to not only offer good value for money, but also to "punch well above our weight".

The Town Council will continue to manage its finances efficiently and in accordance with Government regulation and probity whilst seeking to provide an excellent service to you, the community. The Annual Accounts are available to view and I can also confirm that the Charities accounts have been received.

Cllr. Alan Turner

Admin & HR Committee 2018/19

Work of the Administration and Human Resources continues apace with our expanding staffing team. As we move into summer season our new maintenance team have been recruited and begun their roles. We also be interviewing candidates for our new Bookings and Property Officer role for which we have received many applications.

The Admin & HR Committee has supported the introduction of new software systems as we look for efficiencies and improved reporting across the Council. We have introduced new Health and Safety systems We have also appointed a Data Protection Officer and reviewed our policies following the introduction of GDPR.

The Local Council Award Scheme was designed to recognise the good practice of local authorities in England. The Town Council currently recognised as Quality Council, has submitted its application for Quality Gold Award which is deemed to be the highest ranking for our sector. We should hear about this later in the year.

Lastly, our thanks to Susanne Griffiths for her sterling work in supporting our Committee this year.

Cllr. Iain McLauchlan

Public Relations Committee Report 2018/2019

Following the successful transition last year to a new website for the Town Council, the PR committee have worked to enhance the social media channels that are in use as well as develop a new Media Policy. Facebook pages for the Festival and the Thursday market have been refreshed and new accounts established on Instagram and Twitter, in order to promote the Council's many and various activities.

Much of the work of the PR Committee is promoting the Events Committee programme of events and last year we supported the promotion of Kop Hill Cars in the High Street, Festival week activities, the Christmas Lights switch-on event and the Thursday market.

The Committee has published three issues of the successful resident's magazine, CrossTalk, and has made some changes to the format, style and content to improve readability. Further work will be carried out this year to more closely align the look and feel to our new website. If you have suggestions to improve CrossTalk, please do get in touch.

Unfortunately, work on the Heritage Trail has not progressed as fast as we had hoped, but the project is still very much alive and plans are being drawn up to make it a reality.

I would like to thank the members of the PR Committee for their hard work over the last year and give huge credit to the office staff supporting our work, namely Kirsty Pope and Annabelle Denbury.

Cllr. David Knights

Events Committee Report 2018/2019

Easter 2018 saw the town's annual Easter egg tree display in our town by children from local primary schools, these eggs certainly brightened the trees by Horns Lane car-park and along the Aylesbury road near Burton Lane. A big thank you must go out to the local children, schools, teachers that helped with this.

July saw yet another fantastic Annual Town Festival event that thankfully had glorious weather to go with all the events of the week. Festival week commenced with a picnic on Whiteleaf Cross which incorporated a chocolate hunt, entertainment, a visit from Peter Rabbit. During the week there were numerous events laid on by our local retailers and businesses including an open day at the Fire Station, to History walks and tours of local factories. One of my personal favorite events in the build up to the Saturday festival is the lunch time school choir performances that take place throughout the week at St Mary's Church, which either our Mayor or I attend.

The final day of festival week saw our High Street filled with families and visitors enjoying themselves, we were yet again blessed with brilliant sunshine and along with all of our stalls, activities and our now famous beach the whole town had a wonderful atmosphere. The addition of the giant LED screen in Church Street to watch the England quarter final of the World Cup was another first for our Town Council, and the bonus of us winning was even more special.

September saw our first attempt at an Open Air cinema in the King George V park and although the weather certainly wasn't on our side, we had lots of children enjoy watching Moana and an evening showing of The Greatest Showman.

Our final event of the year was the Christmas lights switch-on, it was lovely to see so many local families and residents gathered to enjoy the Ice-Rink, visit Santa in his Grotto and enjoy all the festivities.

Finally I would like to add that none of these events we plan each year would be possible if we didn't have the assistance of our office staff; Annabelle, Kirsty, Sue and Jayne, our Maintenance team, Kevin and Rob and finally my fellow Councillors and our Volunteers that give up their time for free to make sure all our residents and town enjoy these events.

Cllr. Andy Ball

Town Committee Report 2018/2019

This has been a very busy year for the committee, which meets every month, with various major and minor projects coming on line.

The committee oversees the actions of the in-house Maintenance Team, who perform many and varied tasks for the Council, such as grass cutting, building maintenance and general grounds maintenance.

Over the past year this team has worked extremely hard to maintain the quality of the flower beds around the town and due to the very warm summer had a hard time to ensure that the beds were sufficiently watered, and dead headed to ensure that they always looked at their best.

It will soon be time to put in the summer bedding and we will endeavour to ensure that the beds are kept looking their best regardless of what weather we get.

The team are also heavily involved in our Devolved Services programme, whereby we provide grass cutting and grounds maintenance to other councils and authorities which brings in a very valuable finance stream which helps to keep our in-house maintenance costs down.

To continue to provide an efficient and effective service we will also invest in some new equipment that will enable the team to complete their grass cuts in a shorter time, which will free them up for other essential work.

The committee is very appreciative of all the work that this team does over the course of the year and the high standards that they maintain in all they do.

A major project that is now well underway and due for completion by the end of April is the rolling programme of replacing most of our old sodium type street lighting stock with new energy efficient LED heads which are both brighter and use much less energy.

We took some time to identify a supplier and the correct equipment and following successful trials in various parts of the town the roll out is now in progress, due for completion at the end of April.

The committee is grateful for the hard work done by the LED Lighting sub-committee who have taken the brunt of the work leading up to this point.

When we were informed, by a councillor, about the Silent Soldier concept to recognise the 100th anniversary of the end of World War 1 we embraced the project and together with the RBL local branch, purchased and installed a number of silhouettes in and around the town. In addition to the Silent Soldier project the Town Council held a Beacon Lighting Service at Stratton Memorial Garden. It was a wonderful, well attended event to commemorate the end of The Great War.

It is also worth noting that we have 're-turfed' the Poppy Cross on Duke Street Gardens with AstroTurf as it was becoming difficult to maintain real grass in this area and now the Cross will look good all year round, even if we suffer a long hot summer as per last year.

During the autumn we installed a Youth Shelter in the King George V park which had been a request from a group of young people who use the skate park there. Unfortunately, this was vandalised by fire shortly after, but the culprits were known and dealt with by the police.

For those of you who regularly cycle, you will be pleased, no doubt, to see that a free to use electrical bicycle tyre pump has been installed in the Market Square. This was fully funded from external sources and is an example of co-operation between local authorities and outside organisations.

We have both monthly and quarterly inspections of all of our play equipment and as such we can deal with any maintenance/damage issues as they arise.

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Town Committee Report 2018/2019

In our close co-operation with Risborough Rangers Junior Football Club (RRJFC) we were able to allow access to St. Dunstan's Park on a regular basis for training and are in the process of installing a shed on the Earle Mitchell Ground (also known as Tenants) to store RRJFC's essential grounds equipment. The 'pavilion' on that field is in a state of disrepair and as such we have decided to take it out of use until we have the time and finance available to refurbish.

We have introduced a 'Severe Weather Policy' in relation to the operation of the Thursday Market. The market continues to flourish, and we are constantly getting enquiries asking for either a temporary or permanent pitch.

The committee has close liaison with the Risborough Environmental Group (REG), and we receive regular updates on the work that this fine organisation does.

The committee has decided on the planning and installation of a Communal Garden in the Stratton Memorial Ground, as somewhere where the beauty of the SMG can be seen along with our views across to the Whiteleaf Cross and this garden should enhance the tranquillity of the site and provide another focal point for flowers in the town that can be access by all.

As in all years the committee strives to provide a cost effective and efficient service to the community and to come in on budget regardless of what surprises come up.

Cllr. John Coombs



Planning Committee Report 2018/2019

The Planning Committee meets monthly to consider planning applications sent to us by Wycombe District Council who are the planning and decision making authority. We discuss each application and submit our comments. Occasionally we may feel there are proper grounds for a refusal, in which case we will set these out for Wycombe District Council to consider.

We are keen to where ever possible retain the character of both the Urban area and the Town Centre, both in terms of architecture and materials. Also to retain as much retail/ hospitality occupancy as possible in both the High Street and Duke Street

Frequently applications refer to work proposed to be undertaken to trees. We usually refer these to the Arboriculturalist with any comments we think relevant.

Cllr. Ian Pearce

Who is responsible for what

Princes Risborough Town Council
Tel: 01844 275912

Bus Shelters
Christmas Lights Switch on
Crosstalk Newsletter
Dovecote Building
Open Spaces & Play Areas
Stratton Memorial Garden
Street Lighting (excluding A4010)
Office of the Mayor & Engagements
Thursday Market
Town Flowerbeds & Baskets
Town Summer Festival
Verge Cutting
War Memorials

Wycombe District Council
Tel: 01494 461000

Benefits
Building Control
Business Rates
Community Safety
Council Tax
Dogs & Fouling
Electoral Services
Environmental Health
Housing
Licensing
Noise
Pest Control
Planning
Parking (Car Parks)
Street Cleaning
Waste Management & Recycling

Bucks County Council
Tel: 01296 395000

Roads & Pavements
Education
Main Libraries
Social Care Services
Trading Standards
Registrar
Waste Disposal
Grass Cutting (rural)

Princes Risborough Town Council

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Please visit our website: www.princesrisboroughtowncouncil.gov.uk @Princesris

Mayor & Chairman:	Cllr. Matthew Walsh	Deputy Chairman:	Cllr. Andy Ball
Chairman of Finance Cttee:	Cllr. Alan Turner	Chairman of Admin & HR:	Cllr. Iain McLauchlan
Chairman of Events Cttee:	Cllr. Andy Ball	Chairman of Town Cttee:	Cllr. John Coombs
Chairman of Planning Cttee:	Cllr. Ian Pearce	Chairman of Commercial Services:	Cllr. Andy Ball
Chairman of Public Relations Cttee:	Cllr. David Knights		

Councillors

Cllr. Gary Hall	Cllr. Tapashya Murali	Cllr. Pam Summerbell
Cllr. Nathan Davis	Cllr. Janet Roberts	Cllr. Lee Byrne

Clerk to the Council:	Mrs. Susanne Griffiths
Deputy Clerk:	Mrs. Kirsty Pope
Admin Officer:	Jayne Mylchreest
Projects & Communications Officer:	Mrs. Annabelle Denbury
Maintenance Team Leader:	Kevin Locke
Maintenance Team Operatives:	Robert Powell, John Prince, Barney Heffernan, Christopher Dominey

Office Hours

Monday - Friday 9.30am – 3.30pm

The full Town Council meets at 7.00pm, bi-monthly on the last Tuesday of the month at The Princes Centre, Clifford Road. There is a 10-minute slot at the beginning of each meeting when the public can express a view or concern relating to Town matters. Please check the website to confirm time and venue.

The Town Council aims to be as accessible as possible, and welcomes the views, comments and concerns of the Princes Risborough electorate. Although the views of the whole Council are given wherever possible, for constitutional and legal reasons we must state that the views expressed here in Crosstalk, and in any personal correspondence received from individual Councillors, are those of the author concerned and do not necessarily express the opinions or policy of PRTC unless explicitly stated.