

TDRA AGM 2023

Committee Report

In the absence of an elected Chairman, this is a collective report from the TDRA Committee of Trustees. It is our intention to appoint a Chairman as and when a suitable individual is willing to take up the role, but we are not in a position to do so at present.

As we emerged from the pandemic into a more “normal” environment, the Committee recently took the opportunity to step back and reconsider the core purpose of TDRA. The key elements are that

- We are residents of Tenterden and District who care about the town and its future. We combine to present a united voice on matters that we feel are important to the town and the wellbeing of its residents.
- We are a registered charity No. 1121579.
- We are strictly non-political. Our members come from all walks of life and include homeowners and tenants of all ages, with a wide variety of interests.
- We are **not** a campaign group but strive to provide a focus for matters of interest and concern to the whole of the population of Tenterden as determined by the Committee.

The full text, including sections on How We Operate and What Do We Do, is included as an Appendix at the end of this report, and is posted on the front page of our website tdra.org.uk

The Committee also agreed the priorities in the coming year are to

- Increase engagement with our members
- Improve connections with other community organisations
- Increase membership from the town and surrounding villages

Issues addressed by the Committee in the year included

- Tenterden Leisure Centre. We took an active role in chasing Ashford Borough Council to resolve the deficiencies in the roof works that substantially delayed the pool opening. The surrender of the lease by the Tenterden Leisure Centre Trust and appointment by Ashford Borough Council of Freedom Leisure to run the Leisure Centre should hopefully provide a permanent solution.
- Homewood School proposed sale of land. The school are seeking the approval of the Secretary of State for Education to dispose of the land in Appledore Road. We objected to the sale on the basis that, amongst other criteria, any loss of sporting capacity should be mitigated by improved sporting facilities elsewhere, which is not proposed by the school. No decision has yet been announced by the Secretary of State.
- Potholes, particularly in Beacon Oak Road. We have complained to Kent County Council about the totally inadequate temporary pothole fixes in Beacon Oak Road, which disintegrated in a matter of days. We have been assured that Beacon Oak Road is scheduled to be completely re-laid, but await KCC advice as to the timing.

We are pleased to report that a new oak tree was planted in the Recreation Ground with the agreement of the Town Council in memory of Peter Davies who died in 2017. Peter was a member of the Association for twenty seven years, Chairman for two separate terms, and holder of a Civic Award from Tenterden Town Council for his contribution to volunteering in the town.

Comment re planning issues are covered in the Planning Secretary's report.

In terms of the various projects associated with Tenterden Town Council and the proceeds of the Tent 1A development,

- Cinema. Earlier this year a decision was taken to wind up Tenterden Cinema Limited. Unfortunately there proved to be no building which was viable and available, so the concept of a cinema in Tenterden is on hold.
- Town Hall Project. The Town Council have completed a plan for major improvements to the Town Hall at an estimated cost of £2 million; a planning application was submitted to Ashford Borough Council in 2022 and a decision is awaited.
- Recreation Ground. Whilst an application for planning consent was submitted in 2021, this is at an impasse due to Sports England lodging an objection to removal of the current grass pitch on the Recreation Ground. As we understand the issue, if the Homewood School land sale is allowed, that may provide a football "solution". Otherwise it is difficult to see a practical way forward.

In March, for the first time in three years, we managed to host a members' coffee morning. Unfortunately the weather conspired against us and the continuous rain resulted in a low turnout. As mentioned above, we hope to find more ways of engaging with our membership in the current year.

Our Committee sees three trustees who are not standing for re-election this year, being Alan Bates, Mike Winiberg, and Sally White. Alan in particular deserves our thanks; a member for over twenty years, and Chairman from 2017 to 2021, his contribution to the Association and the town has been immeasurable.

We would very much welcome some new trustees of the charity coming from the residents of the town and surrounding villages. The time commitment is not onerous, and it gives the opportunity to be involved in, and express a view on the issues affecting all of us. To get a more detailed view of what it entails, please contact Ian Marsden at gill.marsden2@btinternet.com. Ian is one of our long serving trustees and will happily give more detail if you have an interest.

Finally, a sincere thank you to all our members for your continuing support: it is much appreciated.

Appendix

CORE PURPOSE OF TDRA

Who are we?

- We are residents of Tenterden and District who care about the town and its future. We combine to present a united voice on matters that we feel are important to the town and the wellbeing of its residents.
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How do We Operate?

- The committee, elected by members at the AGM, meets ten times a year to consider matters raised by members, and our Planning Committee's responses to current planning applications.
- We seek to engage with residents of Tenterden and the villages around the town- that make up the district.
- On major issues affecting the whole community we will arrange meetings to canvass opinions and guide the TDRA response.
- We strive to focus on what is of overall benefit to the Town and District
- We follow Charity Commission guidance (1) as the committee members are also Trustees of the Charity.
- We are open and transparent. Minutes of meetings will be posted to the TDRA website on a monthly basis.
- Any money raised through donations is used only to further the aims of the TDRA.

What Do We Do?

- Listen to the views of our members.
- Take up their concerns on planning, local services and environmental issues where the committee agrees it would be in the interests of the majority of the community.
- Collaborate with other local organisations, e.g. through working parties, on matters of common interest so our members interests are represented.
- Monitor relevant planning applications that are submitted to Ashford Borough Council and comment where community interests are involved. We do not arbitrate on neighbour's disputes, but we do offer guidance on sources of official advice and procedure.
- Propose measures that we believe will improve the quality of our environment and meet Tenterden and District's community needs.
- Comment on the overall County and Borough-wide plans and other general planning issues especially where there may be implications for Tenterden.
- Hold an annual coffee morning each to enable members and non-members to meet committee members informally to raise matters of individual concern.
- Communicate with members by email and other forms of social media where possible including contributing articles and commentary to relevant neighbourhood websites, blogs, magazines, newspapers and social media outlets.
- Hold an Annual General Meeting each Spring to report to members, elect officers and committee members and hear an invited speaker on subjects of local interest.