

SALTASH AND DISTRICT OBSERVER

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March 2017 - Issue 300

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St. Barnabas Staff's Sad Farewell as Wards Close

Staff at St. Barnabas Hospital gathered for a farewell photograph as the wards officially closed on 17th February, highly doubtful as to when or if they would be returning. They have been offered alternative employment at Liskeard Hospital during what health authorities describe as a temporary closure of St. Barnabas' wards due to the problem of recruiting staff at both Saltash and Liskeard.

Staff members who do not wish to be named told the Observer that on last 15th December they were told that there was a staffing problem at Liskeard and a possible answer might be a 'temporary' move of St. Barnabas staff to that town for twelve or eighteen months, potentially between Christmas and the New Year. The Minor Injuries Unit was closed on Friday 16th December at 3 p.m. and the manager of St. Barnabas was moved to Liskeard the following Monday. Staff were left in a state of flux just before the Christmas period.

On February 1st staff attended a meeting to be told St. Barnabas was closed to new admissions with immediate effect, staff would be relocated within two weeks, and the closure would be for three months followed by a review of staffing levels.

They are now querying the likelihood of resolving a long standing staffing problem within three months. The St.



Barnabas staff, who last October were congratulated by the area manager on their 'impressive' work ethic regarding bed occupancy and discharges, fear that this will become a 'rolling' three months. Already several have found jobs elsewhere and they anticipate more will follow until St. Barnabas has its own staffing crisis leading to 'closure by the back door'.

Many of the thirty or so staff have dedicated many years of service to the sick of Saltash and district. The longest serving nurse Sharon Burfoot was clearly emotional after 27

years of service to St. Barnabas. Sister Karen Busher who herself has worked the wards at St. Barnabas for 19 years confirmed that there was a very special feeling to the hospital shared by the staff. 'Once we are here we love it,' she confirmed. She also confirmed that the staff fully support the petition circulating in Saltash urging the retention and re-opening, to include an enhanced minor injuries unit open for extended hours.

The petition remains open and all residents concerned for the future of our well loved local hospital are urged to sign it at the Guildhall or other venues in the town. Alternatively they can add their names by e-mail at guildhall@saltash.gov.uk

A note of optimism was however struck at a meeting between health officials and various stakeholders held in the

Guildhall and attended by the Mayor. She reported that it was tentatively agreed that Saltash put forward its own proposals for a local health service and it was agreed that St. Barnabas was not to be sold but would have a role, if not as its previous one. The Hospital League of Friends has been vocal in working with the council to ensure the hospital's future. Discussions were held as to the possibilities of relocating the minor injuries unit to a site near the Health Centre in Plougastel Drive, the surgery currently being in the process of purchasing a Cornwall Council property adjacent to it. Some services currently carried out at the health centre might then be moved to St. Barnabas to help ensure the hospital's future.

However no assurance was given as to the future of the wards as inpatient facility.

New Rail Bridge Crosses the Tamar

Sharp eyed residents and visitors will have noticed a new feature as they come up the slip road off the Tamar Bridge. Immediately opposite traffic as it reaches the lights by the foot of Fore Street is a fine model reproduction of Brunel's world famous Royal Albert Bridge. This is to be a permanent feature of the town and it is hoped to have a 'Welcome to Saltash' sign in England and Cornish installed below it with other appropriate wording.

The reproduction was previously installed across the river on the green space by the bridge offices on the St. Budeaux side. It was made for Taziker Industrial, the company that carried out the major renovation work on the actual Royal Albert Bridge.

Saltash Town Councillor Richard Bickford explains, 'A number of bodies including local schools wanted the model once the railway bridge work was completed. I thought it would be ideal to have it on public display in Saltash. I persuaded Taziker's project manager of this and fortunately he agreed and donated it to the town. I would like to publicly thank Taziker Industrial for this generous gesture.'



Town Budget Set for Year

The local element of council tax, that which goes to Saltash Town Council, is to increase by 1.6% over the next year. This means an average Band D dwelling will have its charge for local expenditure increased from £114.45 to £115.99. The increase will help to cover costs of the increasing number of services which the town council is being encouraged to take over from Cornwall Council, including management of the Waterside area and public toilets.

The town council's 'precept' for the coming year is set at £608,673. This is the sum which it needs to raise from local council taxpayers to cover its anticipated expenditure of £684,139, the balance being raised by central government tax support funding and the town council's own income from such sources as Guildhall rental and cemetery fees.

This is in addition to the Cornwall County council tax set to increase by 3.97%, the same amount as last year and in excess of inflation. Cornwall Council blames the increase on the cutbacks in government support and the ever increasing cost of adult social care to deal with an aging population and which will absorb 2% of the increased rate.

IMPORTANT MESSAGE TO USERS OF THE HOPPER SCHEDULED BUS SERVICE TO DERRIFORD

Demand has picked up, but buses are still running on the schedule without sufficient passengers to make the service viable.

Unless there is an increase in passenger numbers, we will have to cease to run the current schedule on Friday 17th March.

We remain committed to establishing a service to Derriford for our members, and we will try to find an alternative way of doing it - whether this be a more restricted schedule or a different approach altogether.

Your ideas welcome!

Please do encourage colleagues and friends to use the service if you can

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It's no secret that this will be my last report as a Cornwall Councillor, indeed as a Saltash Town Councillor too. Bob Austin and I will not be standing for re-election on May 4th, and will hang up our laptops to spend more time with our families (in the classic euphemism used by politicians the world over). Whether our families will welcome our undivided attention is another matter altogether.....

ELECTORAL MATTERS

In four years time, voters may be pleased to know that there will be fewer Cornwall Councillors anyway. The Government considers that there are too many of us. The final number is supposed to be evidence-based, though I think it's more a case of a finger in the air - Tory proposals for 85 have been rejected in favour of a compromise figure of 99 Councillors. Saltash for instance may well end up with just three instead of four. My own view is that this is a retrograde move, based on all our workloads, and the fact that Cornwall is actually under-represented on a national basis.

Also this week it has been confirmed that the Boundary Commission will press ahead with a reorganisation of regional local authority boundaries - the headline story is that there will be a cross border Devon/Cornwall electoral constituency, and only five (instead of six) Cornwall MPs. This is the much-maligned "Devonwall" issue that will ignore the natural boundary of the Tamar, the new constituency covering Launceston, Barnstaple and Bideford. This vast area will be covered by fewer councillors



CORNWALL COUNCIL



and our PL12 community
For Observer readers
From Councillor Joe Ellison

too, and was opposed some years ago by a very effective campaign led by former Saltash Mayor, Adam Killeya.

CORNWALL AND THE BUDGET

At the last Cornwall Council meeting, a balanced budget was agreed with an increase of 3.9% in Council Tax, in common with similar budget increases from most other South Western local authorities. Like them, 2% of the increase is earmarked for improvements in Adult Social Care, and like them, 1.97% is the maximum allowed by the government without triggering a referendum, which would be prohibitively expensive. Readers will also be aware that the increase in Council Tax also encompasses the Town Precept and the Police Precept (which today may be seen as inadequate owing to a £20 million shortfall in income resulting from a legal dispute with Morrisons over the Exeter Middlemoor site).

All main authorities have seen the Rate Support Grant further reduced from central government, and have found it necessary to make further cuts in frontline services - in the case of Cornwall, £32 million. As a consequence, town and parish councils are being asked to shoulder the costs of a higher proportion of services that were formerly provided by Cornwall Council, such as public toilets and libraries. Also Leisure

Services are now fully privatised.

To its enormous credit, Saltash Town Council has kept its own Precept down to an increase of just 1.6%. This is despite an accelerating programme of devolution of responsibilities from Cornwall. In the case of Saltash, most of the management of the Waterside will be down to Saltash Town Council - the beaches, the pontoon when refurbished, the dinghy park and car park, the slipways and quays. Saltash will appoint an on-site Warden, funded by income from fees and charges passed on from Cornwall. Saltash will also take on all toilets (re-opening Alexandra Square), the old Caradon buildings by the Bowling Club, the Maurice Huggins Room and maybe Victoria Park itself.

SALTASH - CITY OF CULTURE ?

A more controversial issue is Cornwall's decision to invest £340,000 in supporting a bid to become the European City of Culture. This has split your Cornwall Councillors. Bob and Hilary support the expenditure, believing it could trigger investment worth about three quarters of a million pounds. Derek and I believe that it is a waste of public money, and that any benefits would only accrue to Truro, Falmouth and St Ives, with little or nothing to South East Cornwall, in a pattern all too common in Cornwall.

Peter Ryland Chamber Chairman keeping us Updated...

According to the Met Office Spring is now here but it does not always feel like it. However, the flowers are starting to come out, and generally, the days are becoming warmer and, of course, daily becoming longer. So, now is the time to think about supporting the town centre. The hanging baskets will go up shortly and people are starting to sit outside the coffee shops again so it must be Spring.

There is a lot taking place being proposed for the town centre some of which the Chamber members are involved with. At No. 4 Fore Street there is now, in addition to the 1st Friday of the month a produce market on the 3rd Saturday of the month with additional traders. From Saltash there is now a regular bus service to Derriford for those working/visiting the hospital and environs and who are members of the CIC. At Truly Scrumptious you can now have a Jelly Beans party and build a Jelly Bear. If you have a gluten free diet then the shop for you has opened next to the entrance to Keast Mews. There is talk of a shop opening with a retail area selling toys, sensory aids, children's clothing and baby wear, but with workshop for parties and baby sessions and a social area for Mums/Dads with young children. It is believed that this would be an advantage to the town and the Chamber is looking to feedback from members of the public as to whether it would be of interest. Please visit the Saltash Community Facebook page and let me have your comments.

Believe it or not the planning of the May Fair is now well advanced and already the first meeting of FROST has taken place re. the planning for the Christmas Festival there are also many other ideas for additional festivals in and around Fore Street. So keep your eyes on the press to read about the forthcoming events but in the meantime why not visit Fore Street where you can get everything you want from sweets to jewellery, picture framing to gifts, shoes to clothing, hairdressing to coffee and don't forget you can have 2 hours free parking. Many shopkeepers will always try and help even if it is presently not in stock. With plenty of parking and ample buses into the centre there is no excuse not to shop in the town and with a Saltash Card get a discount with many of the retailers and should you buy too much to carry home then there are taxis available.

Come on Saltash people spring into action and shop local to show the shopkeepers that all the hours they put into keeping their shops open is worthwhile.

Volunteers Thanked with Fish Supper

The volunteers who keep open an idyllically sited community facility offering a warm welcome with a warm or cold drink and superb river views were warmly thanked at a fish supper in Ash Torre Rock.

'Without you we could not keep open to welcome residents and visitors from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. almost 365 days a year', said Lynn Marsh, daughter of renowned local ferryman Gerald Truscott whose dream it was to create a community facility in the heart of the old Waterside, on the rock where Saltash was founded.

After enjoyed their fish supper and socialising there was an evening of music. Volunteers first listened to the song, 'The Rock', especially written, sung and

now recorded by Martin Crawford to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of Ash Torre last March. They then listened and sang along to songs played by Maureen on the accordion.

More volunteers to join the happy team and serve hot drinks to those who come to enjoy the views of the Tamar from the picture windows or the open balcony are always welcome. Anyone interested should contact Lynn on 01752 844255

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Fruit Trees Uprooted in Public Orchard

Residents and visitors to Elwell Woods in the heart of Saltash below the Cornish Cross were saddened to see that the apple trees carefully planted three years ago for public pleasure have suffered serious vandalism during late February or early March. Not only have trees been damaged but two have been carefully uprooted and stolen. Anyone who has suspicion as to their whereabouts or those responsible is asked to contact Councillor Joe Ellison through Saltash Guildhall, or local police.

Sadly similar damage is reported to the apple trees planted out at Tincombe several years ago, while trees in Manor Park are also reported as having suffered recent vandalism. Again public help is sought in identifying those responsible in the hope that the remaining trees can flourish and continue to bring pleasure to the town.

Waterfront Warden Welcomed

Saltash now has its own Town and Waterfront Warden.

'He proved a very good applicant and fulfils all that was asked of him,' the Town Council was told.

Mr. Jeff Diamond has already started in his new post and is keen to meet and get to know the waterside residents.

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Mayoral Matters & Money Matters

"Nobody spends somebody else's money as wisely as they spend their own."

These words belong to Milton Friedman, the economist's economist. But as we approach the beginning of the new financial year, officers and councillors at Saltash Town Council have been doing their sums to work out how much the Council will need to ask residents to pay in Council Tax for the financial year beginning in April, and it turns out that wise spending of public money means that Saltash Town Council will be asking its residents to pay just 1.6% more than last year – so residents who live in a Band D dwelling will be paying roughly £1.50 more than last year. Impressively, this is the same as the current CPI inflation rate of 1.6%. What's more: this is against a backdrop of new assets that Saltash is taking on from Cornwall Council, like management of the Waterfront and management of toilets in

Longstone Park and toilets in the car parks at Alexandra Square and Belle Vue. Mr Friedman: this demonstrates that there has been plenty of wise spending of other people's money here in Saltash! I reckon that's because of the close connection councillors feel with the community. Councillors are passionate about supporting Saltash residents, and we treat public money as carefully and as wisely as if it were our own. Don't forget that there are elections coming up, and you, too, could join the town council and play a role in ensuring that money continues to be spent wisely. The deadline for registering your intention to stand for election is 4pm on 4th April so there is still time to throw your hat in to the ring! Contact the Guildhall for more details.

These words, meanwhile, belong to Winston Churchill: "There is no finer investment for any community than putting milk into babies." With two young daughters, I was keen to choose Mayoral charities that support young people. So one of my charities has been Storybook Dads. It was Saltash resident Sharon Berry who had the vision to set up this charity back in 2003. It now operates in over 100 prisons around the country, helping prisoners record themselves reading stories to their children. It is



such a beautifully simple concept, but gives comfort to thousands of children who are separated from their fathers.

My other Mayoral charity has been Girlguiding Saltash. My goodness me! The support that the leaders of the Guides, Brownies and Rainbows give to girls in Saltash is stunning. Girls are being empowered to discover the best in themselves, to become fearless adventurers. It was a pleasure to be able to present cheques to my two Mayoral charities at the recent meeting of the Town Council, each charity receiving £1,000. I offer my grateful thanks to all the people who have given generously at fundraising events like my Valentine's Ball. Thanks, too, to Saltash groups including Tamar Trotters, Café Church at the Wesley and U3A who have also donated generously to the fund for my Mayoral Charities.

We spent a happy day in the beginning of March with Guide leaders, Brownies and young people from The Core creating outdoor murals for

Saltash. These photos give you a sneak preview of the fantastic artwork that was created. Eavesdropping on their conversations as the girls painted away, it was lovely to hear them talk about their special memories of Saltash and about their special places in Saltash. They were also very excited at the thought of seeing their murals on display over the coming years. It was heartwarming, and reinforced for me the message that all investments - of money, time or heart - must be made wisely.

Cllr. Hilary Frank, MCIL (Japanese)
Town Mayor



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Sunday 19th March

Cotehele Daffodil Day

2pm - 5pm £4.00

Thursday 23rd March

**Dutson Garden Centre followed by
Roadford Reservoir café**

11am - 4pm £7.00

Sunday 26th March

**Mothering Sunday Lunch at
Portbyhan Hotel Looe**

11.30am - 4.30pm £5.00

Tuesday 28th March

**Tavistock and the Engine House Café
at Callington**

11am - 4.30pm £4.50

Saturday 1st April

**Cornwall Spring Flower Show
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10am - 4.30pm £7.00

Sunday 16th April

**Easter Sunday Lunch at
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11.30am to 5pm £5.00

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Mayor Gives Cheques to Chosen Charities

Two charities, one strictly local and one founded in Saltash but now national, each received a cheque for £1000 from the Mayor's Charity Fund.

Councillor Hilary Frank had decided on becoming Mayor that Saltash Guides were to be one of her chosen charities as the organisation; she said 'gives girls hope and curiosity as they move on in their journey through life.' She praised the guides for their help during her Mayoral year, which began with their preparing the buffet supper with a largely Japanese theme, for the mayor-choosing evening. Since then they had been involved in helping at the queen's ninetieth birthday celebrations and a teddy bears' picnic among other events.

Girl guiding district commissioner Wendy Child was pleased to accept a cheque for £1000 from the Mayor at the March council meeting.

Sharon Berry OBE also accepted a cheque for the same sum on behalf of the charity, which she founded in Saltash, Storybook Dads. This began in 2003 in Dartmoor Prison as an attempt to keep together families in which a parent was serving a prison sentence. By recording a bedtime story to be enjoyed by a child at home, children who are innocently suffering through the parents' imprisonment have their lives enriched, the parental bond is maintained and it has been

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proven that reoffending rates are reduced.

The Storybook Dads scheme has now spread to over a hundred prisons in Britain.

The Mayor's charity benefited in particular from

the recent Mayor's Valentine Ball but also from donations from many local individuals and organisations.

The Mayor in particular thanked U3A and the Tamar Trotters running club for their generosity.

Red is the Colour at Mayor's Festive Fundraiser



Ladies in red, and gentlemen too, bought colour to the Mayor's Charity Fundraiser Ball held in the China Fleet Club. The Mayor had asked that each guest wear an item of red that had been purchased in a charity shop and these varied from vivid dresses and suits to ties, handkerchiefs and cummerbunds.

The event was fixed for February, 'as close to Valentine's Day as possible', said Mayor Hilary Frank. She had chosen this deliberately as 'Saltash is a community with a beating heart' and during her Mayoral year she had been astounded to discover just how many organisations there were in the town looking out for their neighbours, 'A living community such as ours is a sign that love is possible in a

material world' was the Mayor's Valentine message.

The event was in aid of the Mayor's two charities. The first was Girl Guiding Saltash and slides shown during the evening showed the joy on girls' faces as they were, as the Mayor said, 'Given the chance to believe in themselves – the chance to explore.' The other chosen charity was Storybook Dads, founded in Saltash to give children suffering as a result of a parent being imprisoned,

the opportunity to connect with that parent through listening to recorded bedtime stories read by the parent. This not only helps the child but has been shown to reduce the reoffending rate.

After a sumptuous buffet dinner independent judges selected the best dressed lady and gentleman in red – these were Mrs. Jo Basket and Matthew Oakes. After which the Mayor and Consort with their guests settled to dancing the night away.



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Artistic Talents Abound in Flourishing Festival of Music and Drama

For each of the last twenty-seven years the magic of music and the spoken word have been shared during two weeks of Winter by those performing in and attending at the Saltash Music, Speech and Drama Festival.

Each year hundreds of performers from infant school age to senior citizens have been encouraged to extend their vocal or musical talents, be they in speaking acting, singing or playing an instrument. Many proudly carry away a trophy, all carry away constructive criticism from one of three professional adjudicators, each an expert in their field. Above all, each entrant takes away pride in having performed in public,

often for adults, as well as children, for the first time.

For the audience, as soon as they enter the Wesley church, they can sense the frisson of nervous excitement as young and older competitors gather at the back of the building. Parents, teachers and other audience members are scattered throughout the seating area while in the centre the adjudicator sits, seemingly sternly, with a pad of paper on which to complete copious notes on each performer.

When brought together after performing children are sometimes asked how they felt about speaking, singing, or playing in a large venue to an unknown audience, often for the first time. Almost all



The children pictured with the Mayor and Consort, are from the Saltash based Bethany School of Drama and the Essa School of Drama. All were competitors in the drama section of the Festival

admit to having been nervous but most agree to having been happy and increasingly relaxed as their performance began and proud as it concluded.

While offered constructive criticism each performer is encouraged and in particular is praised if a few hesitant moments or off notes were followed by a full recovery and confident conclusion. Adjudicators especially encouraged the young beginners in their appropriate posture and performance, in clearly announcing the piece they were to perform and it bowing to the inevitable applause.

The two weeks saw a wide range of young and adult talent, opening with the bubbling enthusiasm of the

youngest children reciting humorous verse and sharing their evident enjoyment with their audience. Verse speaking contrasted with reading from such diverse works as The Bible and Roald Dahl's "BFG". The adjudicator was especially praising of the Bible reading, for ourselves we especially enjoyed the recital of 'Just Friends', celebrating a friendship between a young boy and girl.

School Choirs packed half of the church as they gathered from Plymouth, the South Hams and various village schools to sing a wide range of classical, folk and jazz numbers. Especially memorable were the Compton Primary School Singing Group, who practice in their

spare time and came together to give a stirring rendering including the meaningful lyrics 'Together we belong, together we are stronger, we can overcome'. The choirs were followed by soloists of all ages again ranging from strictly classical to strident songs from the shows.

An equally wide range of instrumentalists performed, from the youngest showing off their skills on electric keyboard through the sonorous sounds of brass to the woodwind, strings and piano. We were delighted to see the Saltash Observer's cup for electronic keyboard solo awarded to Poppy, one of the three excellent entrants in this class.

But as was frequently emphasised it was not about the winning but the competing. While the entrants were sometimes criticised, they were always encouraged.

And over the two weeks we lost count of the number of young performers whom we saw walking nervously to the front and later marching proudly back again with a smile of obvious and justifiable pride. For many it was the first public performance, for few, we hope, will it have been the last.

For some the festival has become a family tradition. During the piano performances we met with old acquaintance Martin Wannell whose 9-year-old daughter Bryony won the cup previously awarded to her older sister Jocelyn in 2010, while her brother Harry had won Instrumental in the brass section last year.

Over five hundred performers came from all across the South West to take part in what has become, over the last quarter century, one of the most prestigious such festivals in the region. We hope that it will long continue to be so and that more of our Saltash young people will come to join in and share the enjoyment and pride that clearly boosts their own self confidence, encourages them in their performance and brings so much pleasure to so many. As instrumental adjudicator Elizabeth Childs emphasised to a section of promising young piano players, 'It's all about learning and sharing and celebrating'.

St Patrick's Day at Ashtorre Rock

Friday 17th March from 2.30-3.30pm

Bill Ryan will be leading a St Patrick's Day sing-song - Free

Les Miserables

Saturday 18th March from 10.00am - 5.00pm,

We have a professional director and vocal coach who will guide you through some acting skills and vocational technique before you have the chance to participate in an informal presentation of Les Miserables. Cost - £25; £20 for students & OAP.

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Locals Prioritised for Housing

New houses at Fairway will be allocated in accordance with an agreement setting out a local connection criteria. This gives priority in the first instance to households with a local connection to Saltash, then the wider county of Cornwall. This is the standard town approach.

This is a response from the affordable housing team at Cornwall Council given to County Councillor Bob Austin.

He has sought such confirmation as he had heard rumours that the properties were to be allocated to people from Manchester or Birmingham and was anxious to correct this.

'Please accept our assurances that neither the Council nor Westward Housing will be mass-allocating these properties to households relocating from Birmingham', the affordable housing team has confirmed.

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More Great Events coming in May
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Being "on the Council" – A Personal View by Joe Ellison

Clare and I moved to Saltash in 2001, and for fifteen of those years, I have been a councillor – Town Councillor since the beginning, a Caradon Councillor for two years and a Cornwall Councillor since 2013. So what's it like, and is it worth it? It is a particularly appropriate time to ask these questions since it's no secret that I won't be seeking re-election in May for either the Town or Cornwall, but many other (and younger) people will be considering their options and chances.

To my amazement, many people are still unclear about the difference – it's common to hear "The Council should do something about it" – but which Council? Basically the unitary Cornwall Council is responsible for the big ticket items such as Adult Social Care (the biggest item on the budget), Schools and Childrens Services, Leisure and Economic Services, Housing, Roads (through Cormac) and Parking plus other obligations like Newquay Airport and the Fire Service. Cornwall has a massive budget of over £500 million, and elects 123 councillors, including four for Saltash.

As a generalisation, most other services are provided by your Town Council, with 16 councillors. Our four wards, now conveniently and logically called North South East and West each have four elected councillors, and the Town Precept (about 11% of your Council Tax) amounts to about £600,000. This has nearly tripled since I was first

elected, as more and more services are devolved from a cash-strapped Cornwall Council.

I first got involved in local politics through our residents association SWRA, formed to fight a proposal for a nightclub on stilts on the Waterside! A group of like-minded Independents got together to fight what we saw as complacent neglect by a previous council.

Independents for Change

As Saltash Independents for Change we put up 11 candidates, fought a vigorous campaign, and to our surprise, 10 of us got elected, so that we took over control of Saltash Council. Sadly, owing to deaths and resignations over the years, only myself and the redoubtable and legendary Sue Hooper MBE still remain. Our early years, fighting opposition from the rump of the old Council were not at all easy.....

So what's it like to be a councillor, and do I have regrets?

First let's distinguish between the roles of Cornwall and Town councillors. For Cornwall, you are a small cog in a large machine, and there is little opportunity to pursue issues that are important to you. Our recent Council monthly agenda was over 260 pages. I always felt the injustice of the disparity of resources put into South East Cornwall as apposed to the "Golden Triangle" of Camborne, Pool and Redruth and I've totally failed to influence that. Even the disgraceful state of the A38 trunk road takes a poor second place to the A30 and there are no plans for any improvement before 2020. Yes, only our MPs can influence the Tory government's policies, but the problem of lack of economic development is also down to the little-known and unelected Local Enterprise Partnership, which is the primary dispenser of EU funds (badly done according to an independent report on the last eight years of EU funding).

Great officers

A second drawback of being a Cornwall Councillor is that the Council is distinctly officer led. Every major and minor decision is the subject of comprehensive reports. There are some great officers, but equally officers are not always as responsive to councillors as they should be and are capable of kicking issues into the long grass indefinitely – when first elected I took up issues of the Wain Homes and Persimmon footbridges across from Pillmere and the Pillmere central play area. Four years on, those issues are still not, and may never be resolved.

However I'm proud of my roles and input on subsidiary committees like Tamar Bridge, Mount Edgcumbe, Miscellaneous Licencing (taxi drivers to you), and above all, Planning East, where we members have a good record of overturning unjust officer recommendations. But why oh why, in an age of proven video-conferencing, do members from North and South East Cornwall always have to flog down to Truro and St Austell?

Another plus point is the good friends I've made throughout Cornwall. Whilst most votes and committee memberships go according to party proportion and lines, most of us are not "whipped" and I've made good friends regardless of politics. Those friends include Steph McWilliam of UKIP, Andrew Long of Mebyon Kernow and Jim Flashman of Kit Hill, a Tory farmer and the very approachable Leader, John Pollard.

So much for Cornwall

Council. So what is it like being a Town Councillor? I thoroughly recommend it if you are interested in your community. It's definitely not for the money, as you are only eligible for an allowance of £200 per year, and that is taxable!

However, you have a far greater say on expenditure in Saltash, issues are (usually) resolved in a far shorter time frame, and if you have a vision and determination, you can often get decisive support and see "your" project through to fruition. My abiding interest was always the improvement of the Waterside environment and getting Saltash a fair share of any public grants available – I am proud of Silver Street and Huntley Gardens, the Fisherfolk Mural, the Brunel statues, and above all, the Cornish Cross and Elwell Woods.

Unforgettable experience

I've also had the unforgettable experience of being elected Mayor in 2005/06. As all Mayors have found, Clare and I met so many nice people in Saltash that even now it's impossible to take a short walk up Fore Street without stopping to chat to innumerable acquaintances. If you want to make new friends and get to know your town really well, stand for Council!

The downside is time management. You can be a town councillor and just attend Council meetings once a month (some do), but in effect there are numerous committees or working groups that you really need to know about. As a Cornwall Councillor with an allowance of £12k, there is a relatively older profile, with relatively few councillors who are not retired, but it is perfectly feasible to be a town councillor and hold down a full-time job, as most meetings are in the evenings.

Is it worth it?

So, to return to the question I started with at the beginning. Is it worth it? Financially no, but I wouldn't have missed the experience for the world. I may not be Cornish but I consider myself as a man of Cornwall. I think Saltash is a wonderful place and community – in fact I get quite twitchy if I drive very far beyond Plymouth, and the other side of Exeter is more or less out of bounds. I have even forsaken support of Accrington Stanley to support Plymouth Argyle!

So Saltash, like some kind of benevolent vampire, needs new blood, in the May elections, a new generation of councillors with fresh ideas and ideals, to take up the baton of influencing the development of your town from some of us more jaded veterans!

Joe Ellison

Support Students for Careers In NHS

Saltash students in years eight to twelve are to be encouraged to attend a National Health Service careers day for South East Cornwall.

The town council has been asked to lend support to such an event to be held in Liskeard, probably in early April. The Mayor of Looe originated the idea of encouraging local children to consider careers in the health service which is currently blaming lack of staff for its closure of Saltash's St. Barnabas Hospital. However he agreed with the Mayor of Liskeard that Liskeard would be the more central venue for such an event.

The Saltash town council has agreed to support such an event and finance the transporting of Saltash students to it up to a cost of £100.

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SHERYLL MURRAY MP WRITES...



I visited the Saltash Food Bank in its new location at the Lower Ground Floor of 18 Belle Vue Road, Saltash to meet the volunteers and view the fantastic facilities. The Food Bank are always looking for donations of items and anyone can call by to drop in a contribution. They deal with recipients in a confidential manner and have asked me ensure people know that they are there to help anyone who is struggling.

I was also pleased to have the opportunity to have a tour of the rest of the building and am really pleased that this project, which is run by the Saltash Gateway CIC, provides many opportunities for both local organisations and businesses.

During the recent recess I was pleased to join my colleagues Oliver Colvile MP and Neil Parish MP to visit Devon and Cornwall Food Action based in Richmond Walk in Plymouth. It was good to catch up with some of the volunteers who are constituents of mine. Devon and Cornwall Food Action is not a Foodbank. Foodbanks issue food to individuals whereas DCFA issues only to charitable organisations that feed the disadvantaged in our communities either by providing cooked meals or by issuing food parcels.

DCFA endeavours to obtain surplus, short-date or end-of-line stocks from producers, manufacturers and retailers. Food that might otherwise go to waste. This alleviates Food Poverty and Food Waste and saves suppliers Landfill Tax too! I am pleased that businesses who donate include Trewithen Dairy based

near Liskeard and I would like to thank the Clarke family for their support for this fantastic charity.

I was also able to pop along to Ginsters to discuss many matters including the PGI (Protected Geographical Indication) status for the Cornish Pasty. The pasty industry is very important to the Cornish economy. Pasty-makers generate approximately £300 million of trade per annum and employ over 2,000 people. Many of these jobs are year-round, full time, permanent positions. There are strong links between pasty production and local suppliers of the ingredients too - as much as £15m is paid to Cornish farmers for ingredients for pasties, equivalent to over 5% of the total farmgate value of Cornwall's farm produce.

Pasties are sold in virtually every village and high street in the county and therefore support and uphold the local shops that are often the hub of communities and a lifeline for those without transport. Many bakers shops say their existence depends on the pasty. Pasty producers also sustain other local service industries such as engineering and transport. The PGI therefore protects consumers in enabling them to distinguish a genuine Cornish pasty, whilst helping to ensure the sustainability of a vital Cornish industry.

As Parliament returned from the Recess it was a pleasure to welcome Pupils and Staff from St Stephens School to Parliament. They were also going to visit other places in London and I am pleased that the Parliamentary Education Fund assists with travel costs.

Students use Youth Speaks to Shine Light on Mental Health



Saltash.net was delighted to host the first round of the 2017 Rotary Youth Speaks competition on Wednesday 25 January. Held in the school's lecture theatre, the event saw two saltash.net teams enter.

The teams were Ellie Kevern (8LS), Ellie Wanless (9JY) and Jemima Budd (9JY), and Molly Willis (9JY), Jasmine Leslie (9JY) and Tegan Lynch (9JY).

The winners were Ellie, Ellie and Jemima with their speech: do we really talk about mental health enough? The judges felt that it was a very current topic for today's climate. They proceed to Mount Kelly College on 22nd February.

Jemima led the team well with a powerful opening statistic about it taking a decade between the first symptom of mental health and treatment.

Ellie Wanless delivered her six minute presentation well, opening the audiences' eyes to a variety of mental health illnesses and concluding that we could all make a change by supporting local charities like the Samaritans.

Ellie Kevern concluded with a powerful vote of thanks where she reiterated that, on average, one in ten young people are currently suffering in silence.

Thank you to Ms Baxter and Miss Beacroft who helped coach the teams in the run up to the event.

Conundrum Corner

Taking the initial letter to the one-word answers to the following eight questions can you re-arrange them to make a Cornish place name?
 1 What name is given to smallholders in the Highlands and Western Isles of Scotland? (8)
 2 Who was the Composer of the musical work The Four Seasons? (7)
 3 At which Battle in 1801 did Nelson claim that he had not seen the signal ordering him to withdraw? (10)
 4 What name is given to the Ovary of a female fish filled with mature eggs? (3)
 5 In May, 1954 in which City did Roger Bannister become the first man to run a mile in under four minutes? (6)
 6 In which US State did Bluegrass Music originate? (8)
 7 Which type of Rice is traditionally used in making Risotto? (7)
 8 Which Andrew Lloyd Webber musical featured the songs Oh, what a Circus and Rainbow High? (5)
 Answers on page 7

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Salt.net Recognised as NCS "Champion School"



Saltash.net was delighted to invite representatives of the National Citizen Services programme from Cornwall College in to school recently to present an assembly to Year 11 students.

The National Citizen Service programme is a unique, government subsidised opportunity that is for our students in Years 11 and 13.

Every summer students have the opportunity to take part in a 4 week scheme based at Cornwall College, taking part in life skill building activities and being presented with the opportunity to build their employability skills. Tasks include both personal challenges and work based activities.

The school was thrilled to see so many interested students recognising that this was a unique opportunity that they could not miss out on.

The school was also

delighted to receive an award recognising our school as a NCS Champion school for 2015/2016 due to the volume of students that took part in the programme.

Mrs Gue, Head of Personal Development, said that "schemes like this are vital for personal development and we are thrilled that so many students have shown an interest, and for those who have already benefited greatly from the programme."

Conundrum Answers:

Answers: 1 Crofters 2 Vivaldi 3 Copenhagen 4 Roe 5 Oxford 6 Kentucky 7 Arbuta 8 Eviata. Re-arranged the letters spell Coverack

Cashpoint Users Feel Intimidated

Those using the cashpoint outside Barclays Bank in Fore Street during the evening have complained of feeling intimidated by groups of young people gathering there. One user in particular was concerned that they could read the pin number as it was inserted.

The groups gather, Saltash Town Council was told, due to Barclays leaving their wi-fi on during the evening. It was understood that the bank was to turn it off but this does not appear to have happened.

While it is not an offence simply to gather at a given point the Town Council has



An Opportunity to Try, Say Saltash Bowling Club

Why not give bowls a try... suggests our friendly local bowling club.

Saturday 15th April is an important day for Saltash Bowls Club. Because it is our Opening Day for the 2017 Outdoor season. It is also the day we invite people of all ages, young or older, to come along and have a try at playing outdoor bowls. There is no charge at all, and the club will provide bowls to suit the individual.

One of the myths about bowls is that it is an old person's game. True, there are a lot of older people playing bowls, but it is one of the few games you can physically play outdoors as you get older.

The level of bowls being played at the club is such that once you have mastered the mechanics of the game, including holding the bowl correctly and delivering the bowl up the green the distance you would like, you can play either a competition, or else mixed friendlies.

Our mixed friendly programme this season will include visits to Yelverton, Bere Alston, Kingsbridge, Newquay West

End, Teignmouth and Oreston.

We will also play Brixham St Mary's and Holsworthy, at home.

The games are generally on a Sunday afternoon with refreshments provided.

Our men's league programme is in the evening at 6.15 during which we will visit Torpoint, Liskeard, Lostwithiel, and Callington. The ladies leagues are in the afternoon.

Saturday 15th April at 10.a.m. is open for all to have a go at playing bowls. The club coaches will be on hand to guide anyone new to the game.

We are also planning to

open the Green and Pavilion for refreshments

and trials on the Saturday of the May Fair 29th April.

Should you wish to go further we will welcome you at our Club night every Friday night for 6 weeks at no extra cost? You will be given coaching and at the end of the 6 weeks you will be asked if you would like to join the club as a member.

Why not give it a try!

Should you not be able to attend on either of these Saturdays, but would still like to give it a try please contact the Club Secretary, Mrs Chris Johnstone, on 01752 219051 or Mr. John Payne on 01752 845197.

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Essa Files...

Over half-term I went to Norway, for three main reasons. Firstly, it was a new country for me, secondly I had never been to the Arctic Circle, and thirdly I was hoping to see Aurora Borealis: the Northern Lights. The first two of those were sorted, at least technically, the moment I stepped off the plane, but the third was trickier.

You see, it turns out that the main challenge when it comes to seeing the Northern Lights is not, as I'd assumed, them actually being there. Although the amount of solar activity is going to drop after this year, at the moment it's still the case that there's something up there about 90% of the time. It transpired that the trickier bit is having a clear sky to actually see them: it doesn't matter how good they are if they are behind a load of cloud. This is what happened to us for pretty much the whole of the two nights we went light hunting.

The reason I'm telling you this is not to underscore my reputation as the Observer's travel correspondent, but rather because it struck me that this is a pretty good metaphor for lots of things, not least the work of a local council. Surely no one can doubt that there are lots of good ideas out there about what can be done for Saltash, and good people to implement them. My ten years on the Town Council, and particular my year as Mayor, proved to me beyond a doubt how much of both those things Saltash possesses.

However sometimes those people and those ideas can get stuck behind clouds. Clashes of personalities can cover up solutions, so can people being unwilling to listen to the ideas of others, and when you get those things in combination it can be very hard to see the bright ideas, no matter how good they actually are.

agreed to write to Barclays and to notify the police with a view to the young people moving elsewhere.

Good people can also get stuck behind clouds: the most common being that they rule themselves out of standing for the council because they feel that they don't have the time, or that 'people like them don't stand', or they don't appreciate the extent to which the council can be a positive force for change. I realise that in a sense I'm on weak ground here, because I'm just about to stand down from the council, but then I have done ten years: if you're someone with the ideas and enthusiasm to do good for Saltash then it's time to step out from behind a cloud, stand for election, and shine. If you do it for ten years I'll even let you have a rest!

Incidentally I am happy to report that right at the last moment, just as we thought we wouldn't see the Northern Lights at all, they popped out from behind the clouds!

Adam Killeya

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A Complete Transformation and a New Eating Experience

A new eating experience is being offered in Fore Street for those, including especially busy people, who want to enjoy a speedily prepared meal or snack while still ensuring a quality dish freshly prepared to order using the freshest of ingredients, often local produce, either to takeaway or eat in. As many have already realised the Saltash Takeaway, on the sunny side of Fore Street, has recently undergone a complete makeover. It's fresh decor welcomes those who wish to peruse the extensive menu and the open plan redesign offers the opportunity to watch each dish being professionally prepared and speedily cooked to perfection. In the front of house there are now tables set out for those who wish to enjoy their meals overlooking the lively street scene and as the weather warms there will be the opportunity to eat and drink outside.



The new face behind Saltash Takeaway is a familiar one in Saltash. Dave Roberts will be recognised by many from the Saltash Social Club, where he has been part of the team who have transformed and popularised it. While still actively involved in promoting the club Dave decided last year to seize an opportunity to introduce a new standard of quality catering at sensible prices to the evening economy in Saltash and then to extend it to daytime customers.

After closing for a complete transformation of the premises Dave gradually re-opened late last year while still seeking to improve the overall customer experience

and picking the perfect team to prepare and serve the new range of dishes.

Wealth of expertise

Dave considers himself fortunate to have acquired as Manager Michelle Graham, already well known and respected in the local catering scene. She has brought with her a wealth of expertise and new ideas to expand the menu and offer an ever-increasing range including healthy options for the discerning diner. Though long resident in Saltash she is a Tynesider by birth and is currently considering offering some of her Geordie specialities including tripe and onions and ham and

pease pudding for Saltash to sample, perhaps during festivities such as Mayfair, as an alternative to more traditional favourites.

'I am happy to be working with local people and using my established contacts to source ingredients locally to guarantee the freshest and tastiest of snacks and meals', Michelle told us. She also promises that over and above the wide array of dishes on the menu she will seek to rise to the challenge of preparing any dish within reason to order and ensure the growing number of Saltash Takeaway customers can enjoy the widest range of finest and freshest food.

A Healthy Choice on Offer to Daytime Visitors & Local Workers

Such has been the interest and enthusiasm for the new menu of individually cooked to order food served each evening from 4.30 p.m. to late each evening, at Saltash Takeaway that owner Dave and Manager Michelle have yielded to customer demand to extend their service to daytime visitors and local workers.

Michelle is seizing the opportunity to offer a new and healthy choice of dishes from freshly prepared sandwiches to delicious selections from the salad bowl – all in addition to fresh hot meals cooked to order if preferred. Already many of those working in the town centre have indicated that there is a demand for lunches to be enjoyed in or outside the premises or taken away and shared with colleagues elsewhere. The new lunchtime menu will be available from midday to 4p.m. so that the growing number of families can come to share a delicious evening meal from Saltash Takeaway.

Extended Hours

The premises also remain open as part of the town's evening economy until 11 p.m., midnight on Thursday and Sunday, and 12.30 a.m. on Friday and Saturday nights.

During these extended hours customers can also enjoy fine food accompanied by fresh locally produced salads and vegetable and locally baked breads, straight from the Saltash ovens, both

white and granary.

While the menu, including fried chicken, kebabs and burgers, may appear extensive, Michelle's selection is not confined to this. As well as eighteen varieties of pizza customers are welcome to ask about creating their own, or perhaps have a 'half and half', all freshly prepared and cooked to order in minutes.

Especially popular are the various 'meal deals', both for takeaway and eat in, while the 'family spectacular' is proving especially in demand at weekends including as it does Southern fried chicken 'to our own secret recipe'. Increasing numbers of families also enjoy selecting from the wide childrens' menu. For the true trencherman the 'massive steakburger' offers a challenging real meal deal, while Michelle herself is



always up to the challenge of preparing to order anything possible not on the menu.

Order Online

It is now possible to order online through the 'Just Eat' app, while all customers, especially busy workers seeking a quick lunch, are encouraged to phone through an order to have it freshly prepared and awaiting them. And Michelle will be delighted to prepare and if required to deliver, to order for private parties. All orders over £9.50 can be delivered free of charge within three miles, and for a small charge beyond that.

There is of course a choice of hot or chilled drinks also to be enjoyed in house or to takeaway.

Keep an eye out too for the changing array of special

offers. On Mondays and Tuesdays customers can currently buy one pizza and have another at half price, while Wednesday is 'facebook specials' day; From those who 'like and share' on facebook Michelle will randomly pick a Wednesday winner to be offered a free meal deal of their choice. On Valentine's Day customers collecting a takeaway were surprised with being offered a red rose to accompany their meal.

Dave and Michelle are thrilled with the reception Saltash has so far given to the new style Saltash Takeaway are working hard to offer their growing clientele even more tasty experiences and special meal deals at their bright and welcoming town centre takeaway.

Saltash are Recruiting New Legion Members

The Royal British Legion is not only about the "Poppy" on Remembrance Day

As our strap-line says "LIVE ON – to the memory of the fallen and the future of the living".

As a national charity (no.219279), the Legion provides lifelong support for members of the Royal Navy, British Army, Royal Air Force, Royal Fleet Auxiliary, Reservists, veterans and their families all year round. Whether it's money worries, a seaside break with the family, careers advice after Service, independent living or care in later life, we're here to help.

If you want to join a network of people who care about, and campaign for, Armed Forces personnel and their families during and after their Service, then we are looking for you to become a member of the Saltash & District branch.

We meet at the Saltash Football Club, Kimberley Stadium, Saltash every 4th Wednesday of the month, 7.30pm for 8.00pm.

For a sense of comradeship and belonging, we involve our members in all kinds of activities, from raising public awareness to fundraising.

Please contact: Branch Secretary -Tiny Lockwood 01752 218572 for more info or email SaltashDistrict.Committee2@rbl.community Facebook – Royal British Legion Saltash and District



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Every Wednesday Morning – Like & Share our FB Page

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Opening Times

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Sat: 2pm – 12.30pm Sun: 2pm – 12(midnight)

To contact us: Tel: 01752 846534 or Text: 07771 314 280

Online: @ Just Eat or See us on 

46 Fore St Saltash PL12 6JL