

Chairman's Report 2006 - 2007

This has been another busy year for Mumbles Community Council. Four events stand out: the Navy Days Festival, the unveiling of Hennebont Gardens, the rededication of the War Memorial and the broadcast of Any Questions.

The Navy Days Festival was a great success thanks to the hard work of the Navy Days Committee under its Chairman, Cllr. R. Wilkinson and its Director of Events, Cllr. A.C.S. Colburn. We were fortunate to have a visit from H.M.S. Shoreham and the Captain and some of the crew were guests of the Council at the Navy Days Concert.

In August we were visited by representatives from Hennebont, the Breton town with which Mumbles is twinned. Mumbles Twinning Association had arranged a very full programme of events but there is no doubt that the highlight of the weekend was the unveiling of the sign naming the seafront gardens Hennebont Gardens. This ceremony, and the Civic Farewell Dinner, was organised by a small sub-committee led by Cllr. Colburn with the help of Cllrs. Rees and Pritchard.

For several years a sub-committee of the Development Committee, Cllrs. Colburn, Phillips and Rees, have been overseeing a scheme to add the names to the War Memorial of those killed on active service in World War 1 and 2. This was completed in time for a moving dedication service on November 11th. Work has now started on the second phase, a memorial to those who have been killed in conflict since 1945.

The Development Committee was responsible for inviting the BBC Any Questions? to broadcast from Mumbles. Our thanks go to Canon Keith Evans and All Saints' Church for allowing the Church to be used and also to Cllr. R. Beynon who liaised with the BBC and who, along with the Development Committee, organised the event.

During the year the Development Committee, under the vigorous leadership of Cllr. Olive Rees, also organised the Mumbles in Bloom competition and the social evening when the winners were presented with shields and tokens.

This Committee was also responsible for the erection of the Christmas Tree and the switch on was signalled by the arrival of Father Christmas. Our thanks go to Mr. Horace Phillips for this service and to the children of Oystermouth Primary School for their carol singing which delighted the large crowd.

The Planning Committee and the Community Planning Committee have been involved with three issues this year, all of which have long term implications for Mumbles. First, in spite of strong objections on the grounds of safety and environmental factors, the Welsh Assembly Government approved the siting of the Welsh Primary School at West Cross. However, the number of pupils has been cut, which may result in modifications to the buildings, and the changes to the road layout, taken together, may lessen but not remove some concerns. We shall see.

The developers of Oystermouth Square have yet to produce detailed plans. The Community Council will continue to follow closely the development plans and keep the public informed.

Finally, in June, the Deposit Draft of the City and County of Swansea's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) was put out for public consultation before going to a Public Inquiry. The Community Council submitted a considered, written response to those parts of the plan which concerned Mumbles. The Chairman of the Community Council and the Vice Chairman attended the Pre-Inquiry meeting in December 2006 when the procedure was explained.

The Inquiry began in March and from the programme it was clear that the only public questioning which might have implications for Mumbles was the day devoted to Tourism and Holiday Accommodation. Cllr. L.Pritchard and the Chairman of the Planning Committee, Cllr. B. Arthur attended but as all the

objections were concerned with the impact on Gower there were no implications for Mumbles.

In January 2006, the City and Council of Swansea began a series of six monthly workshops to devise a strategy for the development of the whole of Swansea Bay, all of which were attended by the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Community Council. The consultants, White Young Green of Cardiff have now submitted their report to the City and Council of Swansea. An exhibition of their proposals is to be mounted in Swansea and probably also in Mumbles. As three of the proposed “ nodes of development” are within the Mumbles area - at Blackpill, Oystermouth Square and the Pier - it is important that local residents are able to give their views.

Apart from these special issues, the Planning Committee, under its Chairman Brian Arthur, has worked hard throughout the year scrutinising plans and making site visits in order that the Community Council is fully aware of all the implications of proposed development. I thank them for all the hard work they have put in.

Finance and General Purposes Committee also shoulders a heavy load. When Alastair Wilson ceased to be Clerk in May 2006, he left a final report which has been considered and analysed by the Committee under its Chairman, Cllr.A.C.S.Colburn. This meant much work for the Committee in addition to its normal duties. During the year the Committee has expended a great deal of effort on the revision of Standing Orders which, if agreed by the Council, should come into force from May 2007.

The Committee is also preparing revised financial regulations which it hopes to introduce soon.

The I.T. Committee has now added Publications to its title. Under its Chairman, Cllr. John Beach, it is not only responsible for the web site, including the Mumbles Book, but also produces the Council Newsletter. The

latter, in a smaller format, is now being produced three times a year which we hope will make it more immediate and enable the Council to respond quickly to new issues and concerns.

The Highways Committee under its new Chairman, Cllr. Philip Swinnerton, has continued to deal with pressing problems of road signage, pavements, parking and street lighting. The proposal to, eventually, extend the bendy bus to Mumbles may bring new problems for this committee. Already there is some public disquiet at the suggestion that it may run along part of the coastal path between Blackpill and West Cross and cause environmental damage in this area not to mention danger to pedestrians and cyclists. This is some years in the future but it will be necessary to monitor the situation.

One Voice Wales arranged a Training Night for Community Councillors which was well attended by those from Mumbles. As the evening progressed it became clear that the Welsh Assembly Government is eager to encourage Community Councils to work in partnership with both principle authorities and local groups, particularly in regard to capital projects. It is gratifying to realise that Mumbles Community Council has already started down this path for it is already in partnership with the City and County of Swansea to provide a new lighting scheme while the Mumbles Tourist Information Centre has approached Herian for a grant to fill a small gap in the funding.

In April 2007 a meeting was held, under the Chairmanship of Cllr C. McNeff, between members of the Community Planning Committee and representatives of the Mumbles Development Trust and the Tourist Information Centre to “explore areas of common interest “ which may enable more partnership agreements to be set up.

Cllr Lilian Pritchard

1st May 2007