

## **ANNUAL TOWNS MEETING 2017 - Amenities Committee Cllr G R Blunden**

I am pleased we continue to encourage and enhance partnership initiatives which have had such a positive impact on various Amenities projects throughout the town.

The Town Council have continued to expand and improve the **festive lights display**, seeking sponsorship to enable the greatest of changes. The display has been appreciated by many commenting in person, in the local papers and on social media. It gives the town a welcome festive glow which is more appealing to visitors and is absolutely crucial to trade. Yet, year on year we have received less and less in the way of donation from traders and organisations. This year, with a project costing over £15,000, we received just £50 in donations.

**Chaucombe Green**, previously known as Len's café site, being the triangle of land adjacent to Old Milton Green now has a heritage display board installed encompassing a large historic map and historic photos of the area. A public meeting regarding **Barton Common Grassland** Restoration Plans took place on Saturday 21 January 2017 at the Friendly Dog Club on Long Meadow explaining plans to restore more grassland on the Common. **Wild flower areas** were introduced last year at Long Meadow and along the A337 Christchurch Road opposite the entrance to the Chewton Glen Hotel. This initiative will be extended on land adjacent to the junction of Milford Road and Lymington Road this year, on the south-east side of the A337 roundabout.

On the Recreation Ground, the skate-park and MUGA have proved extremely popular. The **new play area** on the Rec attracts users from the whole town, and outlying villages. The site has been upgraded with the introduction of a range of new play equipment and natural play features within the existing defined space, retaining the existing large linked unit and creating a visually cohesive scheme that sits comfortably within the wider context of the Recreation Ground, the recently completed projects and the Vision Plan generally. New **outdoor gym equipment** in close proximity to the play site provides easy access for carers of children using the play area, young people using the skate and MUGA facilities, and the wider users of the Recreation Ground.

Two local swimmers Mickey Jones and Alice Tai **Gold Medallists at the Paralympics in Rio** were honoured for their outstanding achievements by the Town Council with two commemorative seats that they unveiled on the Recreation Ground painted gold in recognition of their achievements followed by a Civic Reception at the Memorial Centre in New Milton on Saturday 12 November 2016 to celebrate their success.

**Defibrillators** have been installed in bright yellow cabinets by the Town Council at 7 sites around the town. Instructions on the front of the cabinets have been written with guidance from the NHS Ambulance service to give step-by-step instructions, and inform passers-by what to do in an emergency. Additional defibrillator instructions inside provide further guidance on their use, and there are also verbal instructions.

New Milton has recently become a **'dementia friendly'** town and the Town Council are wishing to help those diagnosed with dementia to enjoy a fuller, social life outdoors doing something therapeutic. Having recently received a presentation from the Mayor of Wimborne about two dementia friendly raised allotments at Kingston Lacey we are now installing three dementia friendly allotment plots at our Becton Lane allotments.

Another innovation being introduced soon is **weekly walking netball** sessions on a softer surface in the town centre that is easier on the joints and more appealing to those wishing to keep fit in a low impact version. Following a taster session at Arnewood School, 22 ladies made it known they would like to continue to play regularly on a suitable surface. The **resurfaced tennis courts** at the recreation ground were deemed a good venue and after due consideration the council is preparing to paint 2 netball courts on the surface, noting a netball court is larger than a tennis court so different coloured markings will not impair the tennis markings.

The **Amenities Committee** is responsible for promoting leisure activities and facilities in the town including maintenance of public recreation grounds, parks, sports fields, open spaces, allotment sites, flower/shrub beds, bus shelters, donated seats and similar areas which are the responsibility of the Council, plus markets and Christmas Festive Lighting displays that contribute so much to the town's community spirit.

We continue to work closely with **conservation groups** throughout the town, especially those at Long Meadow, Ballard Water Meadow and Andrew Lane Neighbourhood Group regarding the Lower Field at Ashley.

I would like to thank everyone involved in providing these amenities, and in actively promoting our town.