

SWANLEY TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2018 - 2019



Swanley is a town and civil parish in the Sevenoaks District of Kent, England.

It is located approximately 15 miles (24 km) southeast of central London, adjacent to the Greater London boundary and within the M25 motorway.

The population at the 2011 census was 16,226.

Swanley Town Council formed in 1974. The Conservative Party has a majority of councilors on the town council with 2 Labour seats, 1 UKIP and 3 Independents.

Christchurch Ward

Cllr Laurence Ball (Conservative)

Cllr John Barnes (Conservative)

Cllr Shanker Gaire (Independent)

Cllr Ray Morris (Conservative)

Cllr Victor Southern (Conservative)

St Mary's Ward

Cllr Clare Barnes (Conservative)

Cllr Lesley Dyball (Conservative)

Cllr Michael Hogg (Labour)

Cllr Elizabeth Komolafe (Labour)

Swanley Village

Cllr Tony Searles (Conservative)

White Oak Ward

Cllr Paul Darrington (Conservative)

Cllr Laxmi Gaire (Independent)

Cllr Jim Halford (UKIP)

Cllr Claire Barnes (Conservative)

Cllr Nina Scott (Conservative)

Cllr Harry Willingale (Independent)

Swanley Town Council elects a Mayor and Deputy Mayor annually at its annual general meeting.

The Mayor for 2018/19 is Cllr Lesley Dyball.

The Deputy Mayor for 2018/19 is Cllr Paul Darrington

Swanley Town Council operates its powers and duties through a committee system.

These committees, wherever possible, reflect the political balance of the Council.

The Council and its committees make the policy decisions of the Council, the CEO/Town Clerk carries out the decisions of the Council and has some delegated powers under Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 to ensure the smooth day to day running of the Council.

Development Control Committee

Considers responses to planning applications on behalf of the Council

- Cllr Laurence Ball
- Cllr John Barnes
- Cllr Paul Darrington (Chair)
- Cllr Jim Halford
- Cllr Michael Hogg
- Cllr Michael Horwood
- Cllr Ray Morris

Policy and Finance Committee

Reviews the financial performance of the Council and considers monthly expenditure

- Cllr Laurence Ball
- Cllr Clare Barnes
- Cllr Paul Darrington
- Cllr Michael Hogg
- Cllr Michael Horwood (Chair)
- Cllr Ray Morris
- Cllr Victor Southern

Estates and Facilities Committee

Oversees parks, open spaces and assets of the Council

- Cllr Clare Barnes
- Cllr John Barnes
- Cllr Paul Darrington
- Cllr Elizabeth Komolafe
- Cllr Ray Morris
- Cllr Nina Scott (Chair)
- Cllr Victor Southern

Personnel Committee

Oversees staffing matters

- Cllr Lesley Dyball (Chair)
- Cllr Clare Barnes
- Cllr Laxmi Gaire
- Cllr Elizabeth Komolafe
- Cllr Tony Searles
- Cllr Nina Scott
- Cllr Victor Southern
- Cllr Harry Willingale

Senior Council Staff

- Chief Executive Officer
- Civic Manager
- Responsible Financial Officer
- Swanley Link Manager
- Parks Director
- Sales and Marketing
- Venue Manager

- Mr Stephen Nash
- Mrs Toni Roast
- Mr Steve Innes
- Mrs Claire Cormack
- Mr Ryan Hayman
- Mrs Suzy Barnbrook
- Mrs Kerina Keir

CEO

To act as Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service to Swanley Town Council with overall responsibility for the effective corporate and operational management of the Town Council in the provision of cost effective high quality services and amenities which best serve and reflect the interests and expectations of the Swanley community and its environment. To provide professional, legal and policy advice for decision making to the Council. To manage and oversee all of the estates and facilities owned by Swanley Town Council and including the parks and open spaces. To maintain relationships with all Town Council premises stakeholders and ensure supportive working. To develop a proactive schedule of annual maintenance for Town Council estates and facilities.

RFO

To undertake the role of Responsible Finance Officer appointed under the provisions of Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972. To provide a complete financial and accounting service for the Council. To ensure that best professional standards and practices are applied to the finance function.

CIVIC MANAGER

To manage the various activities and events put on for the local community and promotion of the Council's services in the parish and to co-ordinate and develop the following initiatives:- Swanley in Bloom campaign, Fireworks Night, Christmas lighting, Lantern Parade, Remembrance Sunday Parade, Mayor at Home and Charity Ball.

Other Responsibilities: Monitor Absence, Sickness & Lateness, Administer Holiday Cards and Holiday requests, Carry out investigations, Grant Aid Applications & Donations, Encourage participation in Community Events from local businesses, Actively promote Community involvement in Events,

SALES & MARKETING MANAGER

Focus on developing a marketing plan for Swanley Town Council. Working with the Events Manager to ensure all Town Council events are promoted and maintain a high profile within the community. Develop and deliver a communications plan to raise the Town Council's profile locally. Develop and update relevant areas of the website and social media.

To meet budget targets as set by the CEO and RFO. Encourage broad participation by local business and the community in the quest to improve the environment and the town's image. Identify sponsorship and funding for the Town Council, working with Events and Finance departments to secure this funding.

VENUE MANAGER / SUPERVISOR

To manage venue effectively and efficiently, fulfilling all service, cost and quality parameters defined by the CEO, to ensure customers receive a high quality service at the best possible profit for the Town Council. To engage with Community Groups and provide a range of activities for Commercial and Community benefit.

PARKS DIRECTOR

To coordinate all park activities and efficient and effective maintenance of public open spaces and woodland including play areas and the associated equipment. To ensure good Staff and Public relations are maintained between STC, Swanley Café, New Barn Railway and others to project a friendly and co-operative image at all times. To further develop and enhance income streams for Swanley Park through existing or new activities such as Circus, 1812 event and to seek sponsorship, partnerships, grants or donations to achieve this. To market Swanley Park in conjunction with the CEO, Sales and Marketing Officer and other staff ensuring local and regional awareness of the facility. To manage all Park Rangers and ensure they are adequately trained on all activities, certificated in First Aid, Child Protection, H & S, DBS, COSSH, Manual Handling, inducted, properly attired and capable.

SWANLEY LINK MANAGER

Ensure the smooth running of the LINK facility and liaison between partners. To effectively manage the staff at the LINK centre to provide adequate cover at all times, ensure staff are properly trained and able to fulfil their roles. To carry out appraisals of staff and report any issues relating to difficulties to the CEO. Attend all stakeholder meetings and ensure the building report and inspections ensure a safe environment for visitors and staff. To work with other town council staff to ensure a range of new services can be provided and that SPTL visits continue to offer best value to users.

Swanley Town Council owns a variety of open spaces and buildings in Swanley. The Council, as a 'corporate body' is also the Trustee of Swanley Recreation Ground. A large proportion of officials time is spent managing the large portfolio of open spaces and land assets owned and maintained by the Town Council.

Asset	Title Deed Number
Archer Way & Newland open space	K518904
Bus shelter - Azalea Drive	K465342
Civic Centre, Alexandra Suite, Clocktower	K980832
Football pitches	K532178
Footpath from Nightingale to Rec	K979730
High Firs Open Space 2	K527988
High Firs Open Space 1	K527989
Kettlewell allotments	K755155
Lower overflow car park	K505609
Open Space on Beechenlea Lane 1	K211877
Open Space on Beechenlea Lane 2	K486133
Petham Allotments & Open Spaces	K579699
Petham Court Farm	K600884
St Marys Recreation Ground (Trustees)	K980833
10 Station Road	TT18411
Swanley Paddling Pool	K504137
Swanley Park	K407898
Swanley Park Bungalow & Swanley Park (Yard)	K520500
The Oaks Clinic	K282317
The Oaks Clinic Ground floor	TT17049
The Olympic, Bowls Pavilion & Golf Range	K304959
The Woodlands	K555857
West View Open Space	K36203

Other assets of a lesser value can be found documented on the Town Councils web site www.swanleytowncouncil.gov.uk

I would like to take this opportunity to look back over the past 12 months and recall the community events which Swanley Town Council has put on for local residents and visitors to our town. The St George's Day event in April was well attended with a variety of stalls and attractions to entertain the crowds in the town centre. This was followed by Armed Forces Day in June held on the Recreation Ground which is fast becoming a firm favourite in the community events calendar and which attracted even greater numbers of visitors this year. The 1812 weekend festival in August ran, for the first time, over two days and we hope this will increase in size and variety of community stalls over the coming years. Those who braved the wet and cold weather enjoyed live music and fireworks on the Friday evening, and a day of entertainment provided by live bands and artists on the Saturday. Firework Night in November, however, was dry (for a change!) and the Recreation Ground was packed with local residents enjoying the free firework display and a huge, toasty warm bonfire.

Remembrance Day was very special this year, it being the centenary of the end of World War I. Swanley Town Council's lasting tribute to the fallen of Swanley was 113 soldier silhouettes, adorned with poppies and mounted on the perimeter wall of ASDA, and unveiled in spectacular fashion by Sir Michael Fallon, myself and representatives from the local community, schools and groups. The Town Council has received so many positive comments about this memorial and we are extremely proud to remember our heroes of The Great War in this way. Two weeks later and the planting of over 600 sapling trees in Swanley Park by local groups, individuals and family members of those from Swanley who died in World War I created Remembrance Wood. This was a collaborative venture involving the Town Council, Swanley History Group and Swanley Wildlife and Nature group which was extremely rewarding and which we hope will be a successful and lasting community legacy.

The newly titled Light Up The Town, allowed local residents a day of free entertainment in the town centre. Fortunately the rain stopped in time for the Christmas light switch on and the lighting up of the tree which brought out what we think is the largest crowd for this annual event.

Looking forward to 2019 now, we hope to build on our community events to provide something for all of our residents to enjoy. Please look out for the banners on the lamp posts and the posters around the town which will advertise our various events throughout the year.

I have enjoyed meeting so many of you as I have attended various events and been introduced to local groups and organisations since my term of office began last May. I would particularly like to congratulate local residents and groups who received certificates and Awards in the Sevenoaks District Council Making It Happen Awards in February.

I would like to say thank you for the warm welcome I have received wherever I have gone in and around Swanley, and I look forward to meeting more of you as my Mayoral year begins to draw to a close.

With every good wish

It's been a great year all round at Swanley and I am pleased to be involved in many of the new events, activities and services being provide by the Town Council for its residents. This would not be possible without the support and confidence of our Councillors and the tireless work of our staff which has helped me improve the services which we offer.

We have now taken back the grass cutting contracts from Kent County Council and with the same funding we are able to provide more cuts per year and respond much faster to requests and concerns from our residents. Alongside this the Town Council has taken on additional contracts at local schools which has helped increase income to the council while providing a much better service and reduced costs to those schools involved.

Despite Sevenoaks District Council cutting £24,000 from their contribution to Swanley Link at short notice we have been able to maintain the services at the same level and even take on some additional responsibilities amongst the staff there. While the District Council will withdraw all their funding next year and make no contribution at all, the Town Council is confident of maintaining services for its residents.

We have been making improvement to Swanley Park over the last 2 years and most residents are not aware that this is the first time the Town Council has run the park activities in nearly 30 years. We have provided a new water pool for small children, electric bikes and a digger machine in addition to replacing the entire pedalo fleet. A new roof was recently put on one the barns in the park and this will be converted now for community use in the future. The café has a new covered veranda which will protect people from the sun and from light showers and is now open 11 months of the year, which is a major change.

We have worked with local groups to plant 600 trees at the lower end of the park so that in future years there will other areas for walking and enjoying wild life. A Circus was brought into the park and will be repeated again this year having been so popular. Since the start of 2019 we have had the 'Great Outdoors' in the park providing activities for young children and this has helped increase the number of visitors over the winter. Along with Every Step Counts, a well-being walking group which is run by our very own Mayor Cllr Lesley Dyball all these activities are helping us provide for all age groups.

In 2017 we launched our Neighbourhood Plan and in 2018 we have established a number of Working Groups and a Steering Group who meet regularly to put ideas together. When eventually completed it is hoped that this will help shape our town in the future in a way that has been determined by our residents.

During 2018/19 we have continued with changes to save money and bring in smarter ways of working, with the long term goal of ensuring the sustainability of venues and to allow improvements to existing services.



The Park

The Park continues to be a Flagship Facility for the council and its residents and is enjoyed all year round now thanks to many new activities which were introduced in 2018. This has also provided an improved café area to help accommodate more people and will see an extended play area in the next few weeks.

The Parks Director has provided great leadership and training to park staff and we now have a well-motivated, well trained and optimistic team of people to support our activities. There are many new projects in the pipeline and I know that I am eager to see them put into place for the enjoyment of local residents and visitors.

Neighbourhood Plan

This is a key project for the town at present and is now in its second year of with still more volunteers and residents needed to get involved. Once complete it will provide developers with the vision that you, the residents, want for our town and demonstrate that we are committed to keeping it this way for the future.

Staff Responsibilities

A variety of responsibilities have changed for some individual members of staff and this was to better align them with their job roles and provide more effective management. This has worked well and staff fully understand their roles and how they fit into the wider picture of activities. Regular staff meetings and briefings have confirmed tasks and ensure deadlines are met or changes agreed.

Silhouettes

The silhouettes to remember the fallen of Swanley in WW1 will be a permanent reminder to everyone of the sacrifices made by people of Swanley to everyone who sees them. The hope is that similar displays will be created to enhance the town and provide areas of interest for visitors and residents to spend time. The current display will be changed in a small way each year to keep this in peoples minds and ideas for how to change the display will become a local competition.

Swanley Town Council is committed to building and maintaining open communication lines with the residents of the Town. Our website and social media pages are constantly being updated and we welcome comments from residents as to their content. All meeting documents are available from the Town Council's website or in hard copy on request at the Link or from the main office.

The 'Town Crier' is a regular newsletter delivered to residents providing news about the town and the Town Council and there are plans for a more frequent electronic version being made available. The Town Council organises and supports many community events throughout the year including:

Events 2018-2019

2018 was a very busy year for events with some 19 events taking place throughout the year. Some of the smaller events included:-



12th March 2018 Fly the Commonwealth Flag

Where Swanley Town Council took part in Commonwealth Day raising the flag at 10.00am.

28th April 2018 Swanley in Bloom Launch

Which took place on a cold and wet and windy day in the Town Centre.

12th May 2018 Craft Market

Held in Swanley Town Centre to provide small businesses the opportunity to get their crafts known locally and the opportunity to sell their wares.



24th May School Cluster Council

Has proved to be of great interest to local primary Schools. There are opportunities to build on this event in 2019.

28th June- 3rd July & 11th - 16th October Themed Events

Who set up a variety of stands in Swanley Town Centre giving the public the chance to visit stands and sign up for various contracts or purchase goods.

Some of the favourite events were back again including:-

27th February 2018 Mayor At Home

Afternoon tea and entertainment for senior citizens who live in Swanley. Although snow had fallen over night more than 60 people enjoyed an afternoon tea and entertainment.

March 2018 The Great British Spring Clean

More than 100 pupils, teachers, residents and local took part collecting more than 50 bags of rubbish was collected and disposed of.

11th and 12th July 2018 Luna Cinema

In Swanley Park showing Bridesmaids and Grease on two consecutive days for which Swanley Town Council received £1,695.79 even though England were playing in the world cup.

30th June 2018 Armed Forces Day

Which was nearly double the size of the previous year. This was supported by grants from KCC courtesy of Michael Horwood and from the MOD.

9th July Just Bin It Competition

There were more than 400 entries this year and the Mayor Cllr Lesley Dyball had a hard task judging the 3 categories.

24th and 25th August 2018 1812 Charity Festival

This was renamed from the 1812 this year and an extra day was added. Even the heavy downpours could not stop a record number of people coming to see the Fireworks. The following day there was a Folk Festival with seven acts performing throughout the day and evening. Entry to both days was free to the public.

2nd November 2018 Bonfire Night

Bonfire Night was held on Swanley Recreational Ground and was once again free to the public. The bonfire featured for the second year and proved to be very popular. The Firework display was once again brilliant.



11th November 2018 Remembrance Day Parade

From Swanley Town Centre followed by wreath laying and a service of Remembrance.

1st December 2018 Light Up The Town

On the 1st December in Swanley Town Centre. This was a whole day of activities and live entertainment with the lights including some new lights for 2018 being switched on at 6.30pm.

23rd December 2018 Christmas Lunch Olympic

Residents once again enjoyed a Christmas dinner with entertainment subsidised by Swanley Town Council with the Mayor and Councillors helping with the serving.

23rd December 2018 Swanley Town Carol Service

Was held for the second year in St Mary's Church with the amount of people attending more than doubling.

5th February 2019 Mayor at Home

This is a favourite event of the Mayor and was particularly good this year with a good turn out and a very friendly atmosphere, entertainment being provided by a local Swanley resident Madelyn Smedley

There were some new events for 2018 these were:-



22nd April St George's Day

Was a new event held in Swanley Town Centre. This proved to be very popular and a bigger and better St George's Day is planned for 2019.



12th July 2018 South & South East In Bloom

Swanley was entered into the Town category of South & South East In Bloom for the first time since 2004 and were very pleased to receive a Silver Award.



11th November 2018 Silent Silhouettes

To commemorate 100 years since the end of World War 1.

A permanent display of 111 Silent Silhouettes or Tommie's in stainless steel, one for each of those named on the Swanley war memorial who lost their lives in WW1 were mounted on the ASDA wall in Bartholomew Way.

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL CLLR RAY MORRIS

This is the end of a 4 year term of office with elections for new Town Councillors in May. I am pleased to report that this term ends in a far better situation than when it started in 2015 and this year has been a very positive year as the Finance Reports will show. The town centre is much improved particularly the summer flowers and the Christmas lights.

The Town Clerk and his officers have worked hard with the normal town events such as 1812 firework night and Remembrance Sunday, with the addition this year of the silhouettes, as well as introducing a number of new events that may well turn into regular fixtures. These community events are always greatly appreciated by residents.

The year was dominated by pressure of development. The town centre proposals by U&I, which were refused, progressed to an appeal and we await the Inspectors decision. The Town Council agrees that the town would benefit from improvements to the town but the proposals were not appropriate for Swanley as there isn't enough parking provided and the height of some the buildings is excessive.

The consultation on the District's Draft Local Plan, which saw the local Green Belt sites not recommended for development, came to an end and the plan will be sent to the Inspector. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many residents who made such a good case for preserving the Green Belt around Swanley, it made an enormous difference and the final draft plan wouldn't have been possible without your action. The Green Belt in this area is under constant threat but I confirm that the Town Council remains determined to protect our Green Belt.

The Mayor, Cllr Lesley Dyball, has been an asset to the town and, on behalf of the Council members, I would like to thank her for her commitment attending to her many duties. She has been ably supported by the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Paul Darrington, who I would also like to thank for his contribution this year supported by his charming wife, Glynnis.

I would like to thank all councillors and officers for their work over the past 4 years but particular thanks must go to Cllr Victor Southern, who, together with the Finance Committee and Finance Officer, Steve Innes, have made our accounts transparent and easy to understand.

Finally, I would like to thank the Town Clerk, Steve Nash and all his officers and staff for their professional work over the past year. The Town Council is very fortunate to have such a good C.E.O. and team going into the next civic year.

To all the councillors who are not standing again for the council, may I wish you well for the future. I wish the new council good luck and the new councillors for 2019-2023 my very best wishes for their 4 years of office.

Cllr. Ray Morris
Leader
Swanley Town Council
March 2019

The Personnel Committee has met three times during the year. We have created a new Staff Handbook which has taken some time to put together and has been agreed with our HR advisors. This gives the council and its staff all the information they need to understand their rights and responsibilities.

Some work was undertaken working with staff to re-align responsibilities and create more effective positions which has helped reduce costs while not detrimentally affecting any of our services.

Swanley Town Council is committed to training and development to ensure that all staff are equipped with up-to-date knowledge and skills to deliver quality services. All staff have received training in several areas relevant to their roles and responsibilities, and one manager is currently undertaking the Cilca * qualification. Two other staff have started NVQ's in Supervisory Management and we have a new Apprentice in the Park.

Our Park has been going through a number of changes to provide new activities, new events and to re-furbish existing equipment. The staff are being trained appropriately and we launched a 'Junior Ranger' scheme which will be repeated in 2019. This not only provides valuable training and work experience for young people but also allows working parents an opportunity to engage their children in worthwhile activities.

- Certificate in Local Council Administration

I would like to thank the residents of Swanley and fellow councillors for their support in the rejection of inappropriate developments within our town. The following months will be challenging and have a considerable bearing on our future. Below is a synopsis of the main development considerations that would affect all of our lives for many years.

The Woodlands Hilda May Avenue

This site has been vacant for several years and during that time has been subjected to both vandalism and arson. I am pleased to report that STC have sold the facility and plans for a much needed 75 bedroomed care home have been submitted. The architectural drawings look very attractive. Surrounding trees will not be removed as they are covered by preservation orders.

Car park adjacent to Horizon House

The development of two residential blocks on this site was opposed by STC and SDC on grounds of insufficient parking. However, this application went to appeal on the 19th Jan. 2019 and we are awaiting a decision.

Land between Beechenlea Lane and the railway

The application by Cooper Estates to build circa 700 new homes on this Grade 2 agricultural and Green Belt land has been withdrawn from the local plan. Making this decision was assisted by the tremendous opposition from local residents and STC.

Sevenoaks Suns

While Sevenoaks Suns have made a presentation to STC, as yet, no formal application has been received. The proposal would be for them to fund and develop a multi-sport complex on land at the rear of the Olympic.

Bevan Place and the Meeting Point

Both of these sites which are owned by SDC have been vacant for over three years. Sevenoaks now have plans for the development of Bevan Place, comprising of four storeys for both retail and residential use. The Meeting Point would be re-built to incorporate residential and commercial uses.

U&I Town centre development

STC and SDC are opposed to the size of this proposed development. We appreciate that our town centre is in need of rejuvenation. However, we are opposed to the scale and height of the proposed buildings and the subsequent reduction in parking facilities. It should be remembered that apart from Horizon house at eight storeys, all other developments in Swanley have been kept to a maximum of four levels. A Public Enquiry appeal has been scheduled for 26/03 to 29/03 2019 resuming 2/4 to 3/4 2019. Considerable public opinion against this development in its current format has been expressed. Concerns range from lack of parking to loss of light and traffic congestion.

This has been a year of consolidating and building on the changes effected last year to improve the financial position of the Council. I am pleased to say that we are in a healthier financial position and have still been able to support and improve all of the great events and activities we provide for the residents of Swanley.

As a committee, we are made up of seven councillors meeting each month. Our primary objective is to scrutinise and agree all actual and projected income and expenditure, with the exception of staff remuneration. This includes reviewing and validating the following reports:

- Monthly bank / cashbook reconciliation;
- Monthly payments out;
- Aged creditors and debtors;
- Income and expenditure across each venue within the Council
- To examine the income sources of the Council and any official's reports pertaining to such matters; and,
- To agree, with other officials, of setting the annual budget for consideration by the full Council.

In the Responsible Financial Officer's report, you will see the information relating to the aged creditors and debtors (the money we owe to others and the money due to us); this is the best position we have ever known.

The staff have achieved this through payments in advance and by more accurate accounting to ensure the council is better protected from late payments. This information, along with the clear and extensive reporting to the Council, has enabled us to make any decisions on an informed and rational basis so that the residents get best value.

We have also reviewed and introduced a number of Policies and Procedures over the year, culminating in a new Councillor Handbook and Staff Handbook; this will ensure that each employee and councillor has a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities to the Council.

The Council's accounts for the last financial year are to be presented to the external Auditor by early June 2019 and we anticipate that the submission will be approved without any adverse or advisory comments. Our Audit reports have been very positive with minimal remedial action required and due in no small part to our RFO Mr Steve Innes.

I should add that we are not complacent and we continually to seek more ways to improve our transparency and accountability and improve our income while reducing our expenditure through smarter working.

Overview

Now in my second year as the Responsible Financial Officer, the changes effected last year have come to fruition and worked their way through to an improved financial position.

Much focus was placed on cost reduction through: improved procurement of goods and services; review and rationalisation of supplier contracts; and better use of resources. This has resulted in a reduction in expenditure of nearly £65,000.00 for the year.

The Council is provided with clear and transparent information and reports each month across all the venues, which has facilitated better decision making and greater benefits for the residents of Swanley.

Budget Performance

2018 / 2019 again saw an improved performance in respect of income / expenditure across all venues.

Civic Centre

We have reduced the expenditure through the Civic Centre by £52,000.00 without compromising the main events we host, namely, 1812, Swanley in Bloom, Armed Forces Day, Firework Night and the Christmas Lights switch on. This was despite having two new events in the calendar which were St Georges' Day and the Silhouettes display.

The Alexandra Suite

The performance of the Alexandra Suite has improved again this year, with a surplus of £91,700.00 compared to £70,500.00 last year. The number of functions throughout the year has increased thereby improving the income, whereas costs have been maintained by rationalising purchases across both venues and sharing staff at both sites.

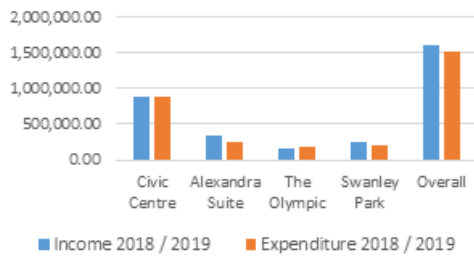
The Olympic

It has been a challenging year for the Olympic, but since October 2018, the Venue Manager at the Alexandra Suite has assumed responsibility for this this venue also; as a result, the last four months has seen the Olympic run a surplus each month. With the use of the venue picking up again, either through functions or hiring of its facilities, it is expected that the figures for 2019 / 2020 will show a surplus for the first time in a good number of years. As we secure additional hirers this will continue to improve and we hope to attract previous users back.

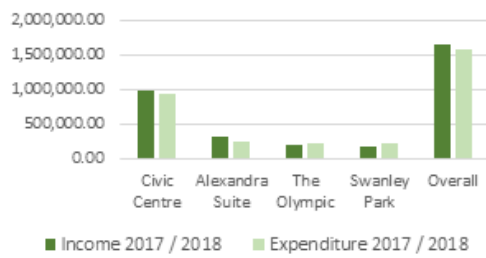
Swanley Park

This is only the second year in which the Council has had operational responsibility for the running of the Park, having previously been run under Concessions. Last year the performance was impressive, but this year even more so with new activities and income streams provided. The Park will be in balance for 2018 / 2019 and considering the range of activities and opportunities provided for the residents of Swanley and beyond this is a remarkable achievement.

Income / Expenditure 2018 / 2019

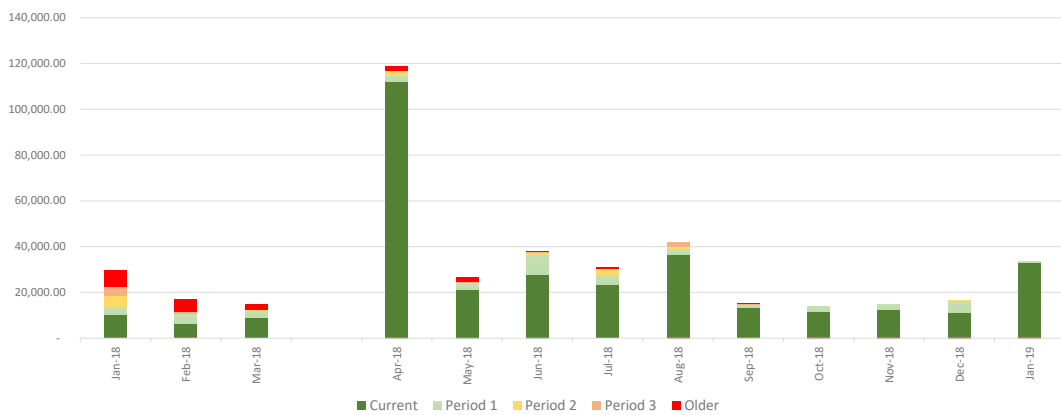


Income / Expenditure 2017 / 2018

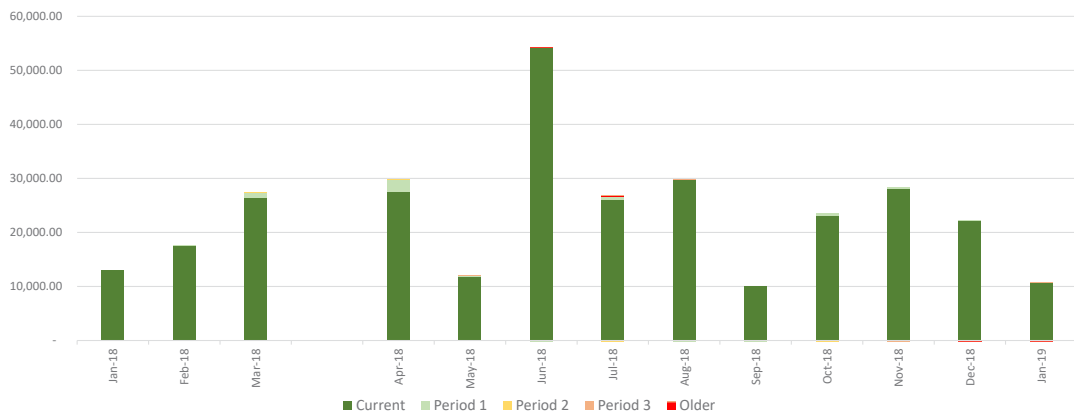


Our position in relation to aged debtors and creditors has never been better; much improved processes are in place enabling earlier detection and remedial action.

Aged Debtors



Aged Creditors



During 2018, greater emphasis was placed on the Aged Debtors and Creditors to ensure that we not only meet our supplier commitments, but also rigorously chase any outstanding payments due. New procedures were put into effect across the Council, and this has paid dividends with the both Debtors and Creditors showing a much improved position compared with last year.

The last 12 months have been very busy with more than 19 community events having been provided by Swanley Town Council. The Armed Forces Day was bigger and better than last year and was attended by several thousand people. The ever popular 1812 concert and Fireworks had a day added in the form of a Folk Festival. There were performances throughout the day from various artists and bands.

With it being 100 years since the end of World War 1 the unveiling of 110 Silent Silhouettes took place before the usual Remembrance Day Parade and service. This is a permanent commemoration for all those named on the Swanley War Memorial who lost their lives in WW1.

Firework Night was once again celebrated with a large Bonfire and Fireworks on Swanley Recreation Ground. The Luna Cinema provided two nights of cinema showing Bridesmaids and Grease in Swanley Park and this was attended by more than 1000 people. This brought in an income of over £1700 with no outlay by Swanley Town Council. This was slightly down on the amount for 2017 mainly due to the World Cup with England playing on one of the nights. DNG bouncy Kingdom provided entertainment for the various events put on by Swanley Town Council.

In 2018 new events were included these were St George's Day on the 22nd April in Swanley Town Centre which proved to be very popular and has now been added to the annual calendar of events. Also for the first time since 2004 Swanley entered the South and South East in Bloom completion and we were very pleased to receive a Silver Award.

Christmas in Swanley began with the "Light up the Town" event on the 1st December in Swanley Town Centre. There were various craft and community stalls with entertainment throughout the whole day. Santa was once again present in his Grotto. The Swanley Town Civic Carol Service attendance doubled from the previous year and the Christmas lunch with entertainment was held at the Olympic on the Sunday before Christmas.

SWANLEY PARK

Parties

Swanley Park parties have become a real hit and generated a fantastic income last year. Over the past 3 years there has been a great increase in bookings, you can see below the increase yearly on the bookings.

Year	Type of Party	Total bookings
July - November 2017	Survival Parties	16
February - November 2018	Survival Parties	16
February - November 2018	Nerf Parties	23
	NEW FOR 2019	

So far this year we already have 5 confirmed parties!!!



Half Term Activities

We reached record Sales February half term running Nerf War sessions every day twice a day!



Summer 2018

We certainly reached a record number of people visiting the park last summer we had great activities for the children to include: Circus Workshop, Bouncy Kingdom, Punch & Judy, Magic Show, Birds of Prey Displays, Live Singing, Face painting, Balloon Modelling and Animal Encounters.



The Great Outdoors

They joined Swanley Park in September last year and have settled in well. They have a great following on social media when I approached them in July 2018 to move location and see Swanley Park they fell in love. This is going to generate an extra footfall through the park especially out of peak hours.

THE ALEXANDRA SUITE & THE OLYMPIC

Venue Events

Events have been well attended again this year. We had a record sales of over 200 guests to the 70's & 80's Night. We also had an Elvis night at both venues which was sold out. This year we have a Movie Mayhem night and a Frankie Valli tribute. The venues events are becoming more and more popular.

We welcomed back the Quiz night on the second Thursday of every month at The Olympic, this has grown monthly it started with 5 tables in the bar area and we are now filling the bar area and Wentworth room with teams.

Christmas and New Year was a great success at The Alexandra Suite. The Dinner New Year's Eve party was moved to the larger suite as numbers increased. The Olympic hosted the family party and the feedback received from the customers was good and they will make it an annual affair.

Wedding Fair

We exhibited at Brands Hatch Motor Vison in September and we were surprised by the number of people who stopped and chatted to see our wedding packages. From this fair we had 3 wedding bookings.

We are hosting our own wedding fair in April to showcase our venues, this will be supported by our suppliers.

ADVERTISING

Facebook

Social Media is where we receive our main interest, below shows how Facebook has increased over the year to date.

	March 2018	March 2019	New Followers
Swanley Town Council	1,971	2,376	405
Swanley Park	8,794	11,522	2728
The Alexandra Suite	867	937	70
The Olympic	384	450	66

Addition to Facebook we are now gaining followers on Instagram & Twitter.

Instagram

Swanley Town Council	129 followers
The Alexandra Suite	314 followers
The Olympic	167 followers

Twitter

Swanley Town Council	66 followers
The Alexandra Suite	1066 followers
The Olympic	539 followers

Banners

Each event is promoted with banners around the town of Swanley on railings and lamp posts.

A Boards

This year we will have A Boards displayed at lots of different locations.

E-Shot

Unfortunately due to the GDPR regulations last year we lost a 1/3 of our email contacts, which we are currently rebuilding.

Town Crier

The information included in the Town Crier editions proves to be working and we receive enquires from this. We also sell spaces to local businesses and groups to advertise.

Swanley Business Network Meetings

The Network meetings for Swanley are still going strong, to celebrate our first year of Swanley Networking we held an expo with 32 exhibitors. The event was a great success and was opened by Sir Michael Fallon.

Please do pass on our details to any businesses you feel could benefit from being involved, and we would be happy to invite them to join us at future events. Please contact Suzie on 01322 665855.

Closing Statement

Sales and Marketing has been very successful over the last year with record sales on our party nights, party bookings and activities for the children. We are looking at advertising opportunities in further areas. For advertising opportunities or to join our database, so you don't miss out on events and activities!! Please contact Suzie on 01322 665855 or email sbarnbrook@swanleytowncouncil.gov.uk

As a departing Town Councillor, I wanted to start this report by conveying my gratitude to the Swanley Town Council staff who have done so much to drive huge improvements to our Estates and Facilities over the past four years. The past two years have seen a programme of maintenance and repair which has continued to improve each of our sites and this in turn reduces the burden on members of staff in ensuring they have the right tools for the right job.

Our play areas and open spaces are well used with one adult Football Team and Two Junior Teams playing regularly at Swanley Rec. Our courts are well used with around 200 netball players turning out each week during their season which is an incredible number. We provide space and facilities for a Bowls Club, Boxing Club, Athletics Club, a Snooker Hall and now in its second successful year Swanley Rugby Club.

Additions to Swanley Park have increased income significantly for the council and provided residents with a park they can enjoy, feel part of and feel justifiably proud of. My thanks go to all the people involved in making the park such a wonderful place and especially to the Parks Director Ryan Hayman for really raising the bar.

The Alexandra Suite has seen some decorative improvements over the last year and will see some additional improvements coming forward as a result of extra income. Our CEO has worked with all Managers to reduce spending and increase income and the Alexandra Suite Manager Kerina Keir has centralised our purchasing power to provide greater savings at the Alexandra Suite and Olympic Venue.

Swanley Link has had a major part of its budget cut by Sevenoaks District Council but The Manager Claire Cormack has kept all services running effectively and added in some new events. I am aware this is an important asset for local residents and I hope it will continue to provide a service for our residents for many years to come.

Swanley has much to be proud of in the facilities it has and in the services which are provided for its residents. The town council will continue to make improvements and add to its portfolio of facilities and land in the future and I am proud to have been part of this process.

My thanks go to all of you who have volunteered and supported our events throughout the year and I wish you all the very best for the future.

2018 has been a hugely successful year for Swanley Park.

We have achieved widespread improvements on a tight budget whilst in return yielded vastly increased visitor numbers and customer satisfaction. The Park, for its first ever time, has produced a profit for Swanley Town Council. This money will be re-invested into a continual progression plan for the facility.

April – June: The year began with construction of a new activity, Hand Boat Pool. The Tree-Trek was moved to a new location and the purchase of two inflatables created another new activity, Bouncy Castle Zone. In addition, an event was introduced to the Park, an Easter Egg Hunt organised by Making Miracles.

May, saw our record breaking day in terms of visitors and income on a set day. A Circus visited the Park for the first time and raised money for a local charity. June continued to be a busy spell for the Park with two new attractions opening; Battery Racing Cars and a JCB Digger Ride.

July - September: The following three months were among our busiest. There was the introduction of leased stalls who offered a range of services from the sale of candy floss to holding reptiles. Entertainment was provided free of charge and included; Punch & Judy, Petting Zoos and Birds of Prey. The end of the holidays were met by the annual 1812 Fireworks display. Despite torrential weather, visitors still held out to enjoy the spectacular. The following day was met by yet another new event, a Folk Festival was organised by an industry expert, the acts were popular and despite poor weather many stayed the whole day.

October – March: October, like the previous months, was up on visitors. By November 1st, all equipment was packed away for the winter period. This gave the opportunity to concentrate on maintenance and introducing exciting new activities. In December, The Great Outdoors moved to the Park offering a great outdoorsy play-area. February, saw a partial re-opening which was well received as unseasonably warm weather led to the Park being busy once again. By the end of March, a new Waterslide Ride, extended Great Outdoors play-area and refurbished Pool should be completed.

A quarter of a million visitors came through the doors of Swanley Link as the building continued to be a focal point for many Swanley residents. Many made use of the 20+ organisations who offer their services from the building. These include Swanley Town Council, Libraries and Registrations, Kent County Council Day Care Service, Post Office, West Kent Housing Association, West Kent Extra, Victim Support, Ellenor, Imago, NHS Health Checks, Pension Wise, Sevenoaks District Council, Job Centre Plus, Carers First, MIND and the Community Warden.

The year was kicked off with a well-received quiz night and the start-up sessions for the Digital Den which have been fully booked since starting.

A waiting list is available for local children who wish to take part in future Digital Den sessions. Digital Den and Coding special event days are currently being planned; this will allow for more children to experience and use the digital den equipment.

Over 1300 transactions were carried out at the Swanley Town Council desks on behalf of Sevenoaks District Council and 200 appointments were made by residents wishing to benefit from the assisted blue badge application scheme that is on offer in the building. Meet and Greet staff will be happy to make an appointment for you if you or someone you know could benefit from this service.

Senior Passport to Leisure members enjoyed the variety of trips offered with nearly 500 taking part on excursions which included: Victoria and Albert Museum, Bletchley, Stratford upon Avon, Tina Turner and Faversham Brewery.

Internationally Acclaimed Crime & Thriller Author- Rachel Amphlett visited the library in the Swanley Link to share her experiences and to sign copies of her books. Another favourable event with the local residents.

Once again, I was overwhelmed by the residents and organisations that supported the Knit 1 Purl 1 Poppy Appeal, poppies received during 2018 were used for the Remembrance Silhouettes in Swanley. The year drew to a close with a poignant WW1 Remembrance evening hosted by Andrew Skipper which was held on the eve of Armistice Day. An event which seems to have been thoroughly enjoyed by those who attended.

Keep a look out for local advertising during 2019 as more events are planned.

As Venue Manager of The Alexandra Suite and The Olympic, I am responsible for the functions and events held within the venues throughout the year with the support of Kerry Rose allowing us to bring both venues together as one team. All packages/menus have been revised to include The Olympic allowing us to offer a third function room for weddings and parties.

Weddings

We have again improved our wedding packages and are offering more personalised packages which our customers prefer as they are unique to them with looking to expand to The Olympic. We have already secured a wedding reception for July 2019.

Party Nights

We are continuing with our party nights:

- Motown/Soul: this is now very popular and we have held our fifth event in February 2019
- Elvis, basket meal at The Olympic which was very successful
- Charity Ball

In October 2019 we held our second charity ball on behalf of the Mayor; this was again successful and raised monies for the Mayors charity.

Christmas 2018/2019

We had a very successful Christmas period with all weekends sold out for private and our own Christmas functions. Although it was a very busy period, we had tremendous feedback from our customers especially both of our Christmas weddings that were held on the last weekend. We have now confirmed 2019 dates, continuing with the successful casino nights and introducing Frankie Valli and Elvis.

NYE

After moving The New Year's Eve Dinner Dance to The Pavilion for a number of years, we have now built it up enough to move it back to The Alexandra Suite which has seen many regular guests return to us and have a very successful evening.

The family party was transferred to The Olympic allowing us to offer The Belfry as a children's room which again we will build up over the next few years.

School Proms

The proms continue to be successful. We have secured our regulars and gained 2 new schools for 2019.

Regular Hirers

In addition to hosting our regular hirers', we have welcomed The History group back to us.

Market Research bookings continue to grow and we are now able to offer The Olympic as a second venue.

New Events

2018/2019 we have welcomed 2 evenings of wrestling which is very popular with the children.

We have also held 2 boxing shows with a third one booked for April 2019 which are highly successful and produced a record bar take for us.

So with all that is going on, we are looking forward to a very busy and exciting 2019: one of the highlights being our newest Christmas event: Frankie Valli and Elvis.

Conferences

The Olympic has now secured regular income from We Buy Any Car and Sky.

The Olympic is very busy during the week with conference bookings and funerals.

Quiz Nights have proved really popular at The Olympic and we are looking to hold our own charity quiz.

In 2017/18 Swanley Town Council's element of the Council Tax collected by Sevenoaks District Council was £99.83 per band D property.

This amount is multiplied by the average number of band D properties to give the 'precept' value. The Precept is the amount that the District Council passes onto parish and town councils in order to carry out their powers and duties.

For Swanley in 2017/18 this amount was £539,867.

Swanley Town Council needed to provide a 2.43% increase in Council Tax for the forthcoming year 2018/19 for residents.

How do we compare to Parish and Town Council's with a similar precept amount?

	Band D Tax 2018/19	Band D 2019/20	Tax % Increase
Edenbridge	140.14	144.33	2.99 %
Sevenoaks Town	114.95	118.43	3.3%
Crockenhill	124.41	124.41	0.0%
Swanley	102.26	105.32	2.99%

