

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

APRIL 2022

THE MAYORS REPORT – CLLR MATT ROGERS

The pandemic forced Driffield Town Council, like many organisations, to take stock and re-evaluate their priorities, which they did, for the better. Taking over in May 2021 from Cllr Amanda Croft, who had done a sterling job leading our council for two years through unprecedented times, I was determined that we should forge ahead with vigour our mission to ensure that Driffield should emerge from the pandemic with strength and vibrancy.

Our onus on the town centre and its economic survival was central to our approach, without a vibrant and successful town centre at its core a community can flounder. Working with the Town Centre Steering Group, using the Town Centre Action Plan commissioned in partnership with the ERYC, as our blueprint, the Discover Driffield Loyalty Card Scheme was launched with great success, secured with funding from Love Your High Street. In the summer the council agreed to finance and seek match funding for the installation of the Umbrellas above Market Place, an idea from local resident and Town Centre Steering Group member, Maggie Lynch. This coupled with the introduction of picnic benches and parasols gave Market Place a totally new lease of life. The Tidy Team transformed the town centre with new planters featuring bay trees and beautiful wooden seating, the summer baskets provided free of charge to struggling town centre businesses brought colour and the bunting and Shop Where Your Heart Is flags all combined to say Driffield is very much alive and open for business!

In July Driffield Town Council secured further funding from Love Your High Street to recruit our first ever Town Centre Officer, and we welcomed Jill Baldwin to the team, highly experienced in the regeneration of market towns in Ryedale. Jill set to work turning Umbrella Plaza into an entertainment space with live music and the residents and visitors alike. The Wold Rangers Way launch in August further established Driffield as a destination to visit.

We had a successful stand over the two day Driffield Show and this year saw us take over the Remembrance services.

The work of the council has been wide and varied throughout the year as we continued to commit ourselves to making a real difference to the town and its success, making an impact on many aspects of our community life and detailed in the committee reports. Due to the hard work of our External Funding Officer, Fiona Turner, we have accessed a considerable amount of funding for our projects and has meant we have achieved so much more.

We said farewell to two councillors, Kevin McLeod and Cath Scarlett, both hard working and dedicated members of our council, we welcomed Cllr Fred Smith to the team recently and hope he has an enjoyable time with us.

We would very much have liked to report that our plans regarding the arts centre at Number 43 were going well, however, due to the pandemic our application for a Public Works Loan is still awaiting consideration as there is a delay.

We move on from strength to strength, having just employed two further Tidy Team operatives so that we can deliver even more services and rely less on external contractors. Our commitment to ensuring Driffield keeps moving forward is our priority and I would like to thank our team and councillors for their hard work and dedication throughout the year.