

Tow Law Town Council News

newsletter@towlawtowncouncil.org.uk

REMEMBERING WORLD WAR ONE

On a cold winter day last November (Sunday 11th November 2018) local dignitaries, including County and Town Councillors, and many members of the public took part in the yearly remembrance ceremony. This time the ceremony was particularly poignant as it marked the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War.

At 11 am on the 11th November 1918 combat in the First World War ended with an armistice leading to an eventual signing of the Versailles Treaty on 28th June 1919, formally ending the war.

Families throughout the Country suffered the loss of loved ones with almost a million soldiers killed in action whilst serving with the British armed forces, this included just over 500,000 with no known grave. Added to that more than 2 million were wounded.

Altogether there were more than 8 million deaths and 21 million wounded when taking into account casualty figures from all the combatants involved in the war.



The Fire Service and Piper Andrew Horn pay tribute to the Fallen at the War Memorial © Ritchie Coatsworth

Battle's Over a Nations Tribute

The Town Council received an invitation to join in the National Commemoration called the Battle's Over, a unique series of events in the morning and evening of November 11th.

After the Council agreed to take part instructions were sent from the Pageant Master. Firstly, there was a request for a lone Piper to join 1000 other bagpipes nationwide to play "The Battle's O'er" at the War Memorial and because we

have War Graves in the Town, we also asked the piper to play at the Cemetery.

Our piper Andrew Horn a local fireman came with his crew and a large fire engine. The morning was dark and very foggy, so the firemen shone their powerful torches on one of the newly cleaned grave stones and Andrew played "Amazing Grace", a truly moving tribute, not a dry eye to be seen. We are indebted to Arthur Middleton, Chairman of Bishop

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Auckland's British Legion, a piper himself for locating Andrew.

It was decided to erect a beacon on the Millennium Green. We found a local blacksmith, Graeme Hopper, to make and erect the beacon.

All those Villages, Towns and Cities across the UK and other Countries where young men were recruited to fight were to sound the "Last Post" at 6.55 pm then light a beacon at 7 pm, it was agreed to break the silence in between with a whistle. Prior to and after this a small programme of events was devised starting at 5 pm with Stanhope Band playing whilst the public assembled.

Notices were displayed asking those who attended to hold a name card, of the 131 lost service personnel from Tow Law, Satley, Sunnyside and Thornley with a light. Once assembled the Vicar Revd. Geoff Lawes read the "Tribute to the Millions" after which the 131 names were read out by Dr. Louisa Gidney. With the reading of each name the holder of that name turned off their light. Next the Hymn "I vow to thee my country" was sung.

After the beacon was lit the Vicar read the 4th verse for "The Fallen" by Laurence Binyon "Those who grow not old". This was immediately followed by the singing of verses 1 and 3 of "The National Anthem" Then the public dispersed whilst the band played "The slow march

of the DLI". Thanks, must go to the band, the Vicar, Dr Gidney, all of the Councillors that helped and took part, plus the inhabitants of the Town and Villages for joining in a very memorable event.

The morning event was attended by at least 30, or more, it was so difficult to count in the dark and fog. In the evening there must have been around 200 members of the public on the Millennium Green.

THE TOWN COUNCIL

The Town Council is based at the Community Centre at Ironworks Road. The office is currently manned most weekday afternoons but may be closed occasionally so the Clerk can attend to other business. Please note that the office hours for the Town Council will be changing from April 1st to Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday afternoons between 1.30 and 3.30 pm.

The Town Clerk Geoff Smith can be contacted by telephone on **01388731444** or you can email him at **towlawtc@hotmail.com**

Town Council meetings are normally held on the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 6.30 pm in the Community Centre. Upcoming meetings for 2019 (all Tuesdays) are 19th March, 16th April and 21st May.

The public are welcome to attend the non-confidential part of the meeting but must provide at least 3 working days' notice of any issues to

be raised at the meeting. Failure to comply with the 3 day rule may lead to the Council not being able to hear the issue due to not having sufficient time to investigate and provide answers to the issue(s) raised.

Agendas are available on the notice boards at the Community Centre, on North Point Hotel in the High Street, opposite the Co-operative store in the High Street (near Church Lane/Highfields) and at the entrance to Pennine View. In addition the latest agenda is available on our website see (www.towlawtowncouncil.org.uk) as well as minutes from previous meetings.

Editor's Note

See page 4 for details of current members of the Town Council.

COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT

It's been a busy few months since the last newsletter, so I'll give everyone a brief update on goings on and if you'd like more information about anything included here, or an another issue entirely please do get in touch.

Firstly, many of you will have heard rumours about the future of the Home Group estates Weardale Crescent and Coronation Avenue prompted by the number of empty properties. There was decision made by the Home Group board to demolish eight houses across the two estates, which is distressing

news. However, they have also committed to investing into four houses in an attempt to bring more people into the estates, which seems to be working. I have been in regular discussion with Home Group, with residents and with our MP about this. My overriding concern is to protect residents who live on the estates from any disturbance, and so far Home Group seem to be listening. If you have any concerns, please contact me and I will ensure your voice is heard.

There is a lot of positive news to share though. One of my main concerns has always been road safety, and although it has proven difficult to make meaningful progress I have some updates. We have had a school crossing patrol (lollipop signs) approved by the County Council for Castle Bank and the Council is currently recruiting. My attention is now turned fully to the junction by the Monument, and hopefully I will be able to report some more progress on this soon and Tow Law will take back another service we lost years ago. With the help of the

Town Council, a survey is being prepared for parents to gauge their opinions on this. If you are a parent of a child at one of our primary schools and you want to contribute, you can contact me or the town clerk directly and we will ensure your opinion is counted.

Working with Durham Constabulary and the County Councillors from the Crook and Willington Council divisions, I have also contributed from my Neighbourhood Budget to a £25,000 Community Speed Van project which will be used by police and the community to help slow down traffic on our roads. It will be fitted with a speed matrix, number plate recognition and a camera triggered by speeding vehicles to help police trace regular speeders. This is expected to be the first such vehicle in the country and will be solely for use in Tow Law, Crook, Willington and our neighbouring villages.

I have also spent a great deal of time working on play areas. Last year we received a new

play area on the Millennium Green courtesy of the Town Council. To follow up from this, I'm pushing for a further £28,000 investment to provide an outdoor gym on the Millennium Green, and to renovate the Tow Law Community Centre play area which is badly in need of a new fence and a new piece of equipment. I hope to finish these projects by the Summer. Finally, I'd like to thank everyone who has reported anti-social behaviour on the Millennium Green to the police by calling 101. With your help I've been able to get regular police and Neighbourhood Warden patrols to help combat this issue, although there is evidence it is continuing. Please do continue to call 101 if you see anything as it does truly help.

As usual feel free to contact me on 03000 268 719, or at Richard.manchester@durham.gov.uk.

Tow Law BMX Track

The Town Council has been asked by County Councillor Manchester if they would



Tow Law BMX Track

consider taking over responsibility for this site from Durham County Council.

Concerns raised by members of the Town Council, included possible repairs to the fencing that may be needed, the possibility that additional insurance would be required and a question of whether the site is used often enough to justify these and possible future expenses incurred in maintaining the facility.

The Town Council would very much value any input from local residents on this matter. Please contact the Clerk or a Councillor if you have any views you would like to share.

It has been agreed not to take on this site without further public consultation.

WEAR VALLEY SPEEDWATCH UPDATE

The Speedwatch team have recently added Smith Street onto the Tow Law rota because of the Blessed John Duckett R.C. School based there.

We are currently doing an average of two sessions per month in the town.

Working together with the Police we recently took part in the National Speed Awareness Campaign in the Tow Law. Sunnyside, Stanley, Willington and Crook areas. This resulted in numerous speeding letters being sent out.

Members of Tow Law Town Council

Councillor

Jeff Gale (Chairman)
T. Batson
K. Geraghty-Shewan
J. Fowler
C. Hemingway
H. Wilsher
P. Stokes
F. Nicol
E. Mather
G. Tyers
C. Batson
M. Dyer

Contact Information

01388 731033
01388 730257 – office

01388 731422

07484785205
01388 731124

Please note that Councillors without a contact number can be contacted via the Clerk

We should have the Community Speedwatch Van (see County Councillor report) up and running within the next few months pending any delays, it will act alongside the current Speedwatch programme. This will be an excellent device used by volunteers to assess different roads and locations, it will make processing data more efficient. There will be press campaign to launch the van nearer the time.

The Speedwatch team are still seeking new volunteers. If you are interested in giving up some of your free time for this worthwhile endeavour could you please contact Harold Wilsher on 07484785205 for further details. New faces will always be made very welcome.

Submission of Articles

To submit an article for the next edition of this newsletter email:

newsletter@towlawtowncouncil.org.uk

Alternatively you can leave it at the Tow Law Town Council office at Tow Law Community Centre. The closing date for articles for the next edition is **May 17th 2019**.

All articles should be in Microsoft Word format and any accompanying photographs should be separate from the article and not less than 300 dpi resolution.

Visit the Town Council website at www.towlawtowncouncil.org.uk