

SWANLEY TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2019 - 2020



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 Independent.

SWANLEY TOWN COUNCILLORS

Christchurch Ward

Cllr Laurence Ball (Conservative)
Cllr John Barnes (Conservative)
Cllr John Domigan (Conservative)
Cllr Melissa Foster (Conservative)
Cllr Clare Barnes (Conservative)

St Mary's Ward

Cllr Lesley Dyball (Conservative)
Cllr Jackie Griffiths (Labour)
Cllr Connie Lee (Labour)

Swanley Village

Cllr Tony Searles (Independent)

White Oak Ward

Cllr Paul Darrington (Conservative)
Cllr Sarah Andrews (Conservative)
Cllr Glynnis Darrington (Conservative)
Cllr Val Letchford (Conservative)
Cllr Jen Tuckfield (Conservative)
Cllr Andrew Skipper (Conservative)

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

The Mayor for 2019/20 was Cllr Lesley Dyball

The Deputy Mayor for 2019/20 was Cllr John Barnes

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 Paul Darrington (Chair)
Cllr Glynnis Darrington (Deputy Chair)
Cllr Sarah Andrews
Cllr Laurence Ball
Cllr Clare Barnes
Cllr John Barnes
Cllr Jackie Griffiths
Cllr M Horwood

Policy and Finance Reviews the financial performance of the Council and considers monthly expenditure
Cllr Michael Horwood (Chair)
Cllr Val Letchford (Deputy Chair)
Cllr John Barnes
Cllr Glynnis Darrington
Cllr Paul Darrington
Cllr John Domigan
Cllr Connie Lee
Cllr Jen Tuckfield

Estates and Facilities Committee Oversees parks, open spaces and assets of the Council
Cllr Sarah Andrews (Chair)
Cllr Laurence Ball (Deputy Chair)
Cllr Clare Barnes
Cllr John Domigan
Cllr Melissa Foster
Cllr Jackie Griffiths
Cllr Tony Searles
Cllr Jen Tuckfield

Personnel Committee Oversees staffing matters
Cllr Lesley Dyball (Chair)
Cllr Clare Barnes (Deputy Chair)
Cllr Glynnis Darrington
Cllr Melissa Foster
Cllr Michael Horwood
Cllr Connie Lee

Senior Council Staff

Chief Executive Officer	Mr Stephen Nash
Assistant Town Clerk	Mrs Toni Roast
Responsible Financial Officer	Mr Steve Innes
LINK Centre Manager	Miss Claire Cormack
Park & Open Spaces Director	Mr Peter Goddard
Sales and Marketing	Mrs Suzy Barnbrook
Venue Manager	Mrs Kerina Keir
Venue Supervisor	Mrs Kerry Rose

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.

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.

ASSISTANT TOWN CLERK

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, Light Up The Town, St George's Day, Remembrance Sunday Parade, Mayor at Home and Charity Ball.

Other Responsibilities Monitor Absence, Sickness & Lateness, Administer Holiday Cards and Holiday requests, Carry out investigations, 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 AND OPEN SPACES 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 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, COSHH, Manual Handling, inducted, properly attired and capable. To organise the 1812 event and other large events that take place in the park.

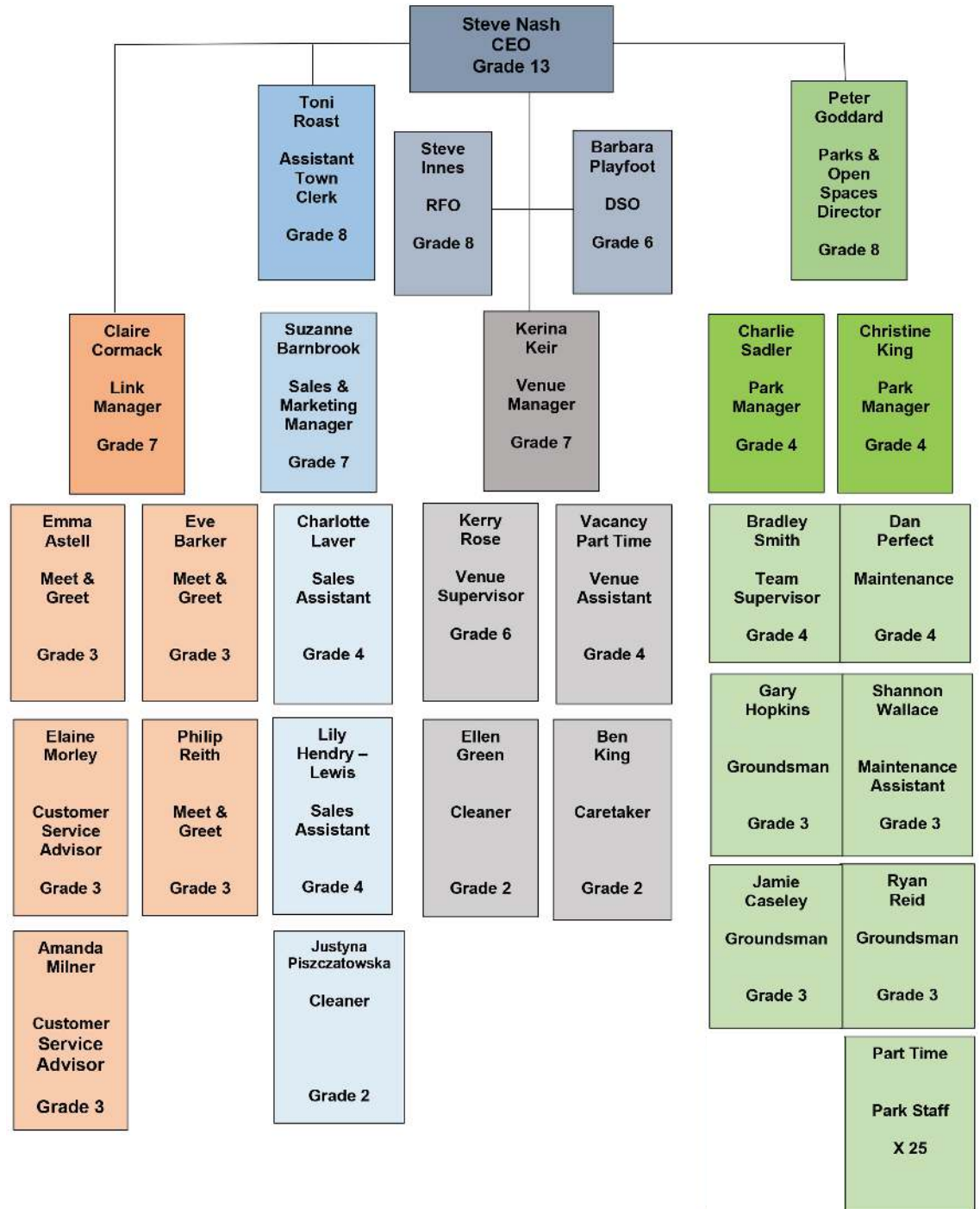
LINK MANAGER

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 stake holder 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 ORGANISATIONAL CHART 2020



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 official's time is spent managing the large portfolio of open spaces and land assets owned and maintained by the Town Council.

Archer Way & Newland open space	Title Deed Number	K518904
Bus shelter - Azalea Drive	Title Deed Number	K465342
Civic Centre, Alexandra Suite, Clocktower	Title Deed Number	K980832
Football pitches	Title Deed Number	K532178
Footpath from Nightingale to Rec	Title Deed Number	K979730
High Firs Open Space 2	Title Deed Number	K527988
High Firs Open Space 1	Title Deed Number	K527989
Kettlewell allotments	Title Deed Number	K755155
Lower over flow car park	Title Deed Number	K505609
Open Space on Beechenlea Lane 1	Title Deed Number	K211877
Open Space on Beechenlea Lane 2	Title Deed Number	K486133
Petham Allotments & Open Spaces	Title Deed Number	K579699
Petham Court Farm	Title Deed Number	K600884
St Marys Recreation Ground (Trustees)	Title Deed Number	K980833
10 Station Road	Title Deed Number	TT18411
Swanley Paddling Pool	Title Deed Number	K504137
Swanley Park	Title Deed Number	K407898
Swanley Park Bungalow & Swanley Park	Title Deed Number	K520500
The Oaks Clinic	Title Deed Number	K282317
The Oaks Clinic Ground floor	Title Deed Number	TT17049
The Olympic, Bowls Pavilion & Golf Range	Title Deed Number	K304959
West View Open Space	Title Deed Number	K36203
59 Dale Road, House	Title Deed Number	K402193
29 Springfield Avenue, House	Title Deed Number	K91287
67b Cherry Avenue, House	Title Deed Number	K787193
37 Willow Avenue, House	Title Deed Number	
56 Greenacre Close, House	Title Deed Number	

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

My Annual Report looks back at the past 12 months and reviews the Community Events calendar organised by Swanley Town Council for the benefit of local residents and visitors to our town. We are indeed very fortunate to enjoy so many events across the year which are free of charge for our local residents, and which provide a range of entertainment and activities to recognise and celebrate special days.

The St George's Day event was held last April in the Town Centre, the newest community event in the calendar and well attended in this its second year. There were a variety of stalls and attractions to entertain the crowds including Punch and Judy shows, stilt walkers, balloon modelling and crafts for the children, food and drink stalls and entertainment throughout the day.


Armed Forces Day, held to celebrate the contribution our service men and women make to the country has become one of the highlights in the events calendar. This annual event gives the opportunity for our local clubs and organisations to showcase their activities, sign up and recruit members and raise their profile within the local community. The June event was quite challenging for participants and visitors due to the very high temperatures which hit 30° that day. Nevertheless despite the heat, the wall-to-wall sunshine certainly brought plenty of spectators along to the arena events and the numerous stalls provided by local groups, sports clubs and charities.

The 1812 festival held over two days during the August Bank Holiday weekend was incredibly popular in 2019, the glorious weather definitely played its part! The annual event on Friday night saw a record number of visitors in Swanley Park, in excess of 8000, enjoying an evening of free entertainment. The lovely weather which continued into Saturday boosted visitor numbers again for Day 2 of the festival which provided a wonderful line-up of groups and solo artists performing throughout the day.

It was indeed a privilege and honour for me to present our prestigious Honorary Freeman of the Town Award to Mr Edward Needham at the 1812 Firework Night, made very special by the fact that this was witnessed by the huge crowds in the park. People stood to their feet and applauded as Mr Needham who is a Swanley resident (and importantly one of our few remaining D-Day Veterans), was presented with his framed Certificate by me.

Firework Night in November held on the Recreation Ground was packed with crowds enjoying the free firework display and warming themselves around the huge bonfire. As if that wasn't enough we also had the funfair, and a number of food and drink stalls. The Guy Fawkes competition has now established itself as a regular feature of this event.

The Remembrance Sunday Parade and Service was attended as usual by Sir Michael Fallon However, this was the last time he would attend as our MP as he retired from Westminster shortly after.



The route through the town to St Marys Church was lined with crowds watching the marching band leading the parade of uniformed groups, local organisations and representatives from the community headed up by me, marching to the War Memorial to lay our wreaths in Swanley's annual act of remembrance. The permanent Soldier Silhouette memorial on the Asda wall was added to this year by way of additional large poppy displays and refreshed poppies on each of the silhouettes. Remembrance Wood in Swanley Park was also increased this year with more sapling trees planted in late November.

Light Up The Town, with its incredibly popular Santa's Grotto this year, provided a day of free entertainment in the town centre. The crowds were treated to a variety of musical entertainment, the amazing stilt walkers changed their dazzling costumes throughout the day and danced along to the music. Local traders set up their stalls selling mulled wine, craft ales and ciders, and delicious burgers and hot dogs and a festive atmosphere descended on the town centre. The day culminated in the Lantern Parade led by me and the stilt walkers down to the tree where the lights were switched on to the crowd countdown and much applause as darkness fell.


Our Community Events 2019 calendar drew to a close with the most wonderful, uplifting Christmas Carol Service held in St Mary's Church attended by Civic dignitaries, local councillors and a church full of local residents. Of course, no carol service would be complete without being followed by refreshments, mulled wine and mince pies!

Looking forward to 2020 now, we aim to build on our community events, which will continue to be provided free of charge for Swanley residents, always aiming to provide something for the whole community to enjoy. Please look out for our Town Council banners on the lamp posts, posters around the town, notices on our boards and regular features in the Town Crier which will advertise our various events throughout the year.

I would like to give a special mention and to Father Dane Batley-Gladden, who has provided pastoral support for me in my role as Mayor for the past two years and who has led us in prayer at the start of Full Council meetings.

Cadet Warrant Officer Thomas Longbon has been the Mayor's Cadet for this civic year, and I have been grateful for his support at various events, most especially accompanying me at my Charity Ball and also at the Remembrance Day Parade. I was honoured to be in attendance at the Lord Lieutenant's Awards Ceremony at Penshurst Place in September when CWO Longbon was presented with the Lord-Lieutenant's Cadet Award, an incredibly prestigious award and I feel privileged to have been served by such an outstanding Cadet this year.

As my second consecutive Mayoral year draws to a close I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the local groups, organisations, schools, churches, charities and individuals who have invited me along to share some



of their special events. I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting all of you. On behalf of all of our residents I am extremely grateful for everything you do and for your valuable contribution towards making a positive difference to our community.

This has been a very active, productive and challenging year for the Town Council and I am pleased to report that all current projects are on target and some new activities are up and running.

The sale of the Woodlands has now been realised and this funding has been re-invested into other projects and activities, including:

The building of a new Splash Pool at a cost of £356,000 which will provide a place for young and old to cool off during the summer months. The work should be completed by early April and we will be promoting this to a wider audience to make sure it is well used. The old Splash Area had reached the end of its economic life and was no longer fit for purpose. The new pumps alone will ensure that all water is cleaned before being released and that cleanliness levels are automatically achieved through a smarter filter system.

The Council has paid back a loan to the County Council of £530,000 which will allow us to borrow for other projects in the future for community resources, if that is needed. Some negotiating with KCC allowed us to reduce this amount from over £630,000 a saving of over £100,000.

The Town Council has purchased a number of houses that will be rented out at commercial rates to provide some sustainable income for the future and has added nearly £2 million of assets to our portfolio. The income from these houses will more than double the income available from simply putting those funds into a high interest account. Some of the potential uses of this funding could be to build affordable housing for the future, continue to improve our existing facilities and support local initiatives.

I am also pleased to report that Swanley Town Council has obtained the Local Council Award which recognises best practice in councils of this size. It demonstrates that both staff and councillors have been trained to an appropriate level and that the council complies with its legal obligations. In the next few weeks we hope to hear that we have now also obtained the Gold Standard in this award which is the highest level available and again demonstrates clear improvements.

In 2018 we installed the WW1 Silhouettes on the Asda Wall and the response from many of you was very pleasing to hear. This display was added to at the end of 2019 with some giant poppies and in the coming year there will be further enhancements to the display. The display was funded by the Heritage Lottery and local business sponsors and the hope is that this display will last 100 years for everyone to enjoy.

I am looking forward to another exciting year with Swanley Town Council

During 2018/19 a number of additional changes had been introduced 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.

Swanley Park is the jewel in our crown but all the venues are performing very well with the Alexandra Suite filling all bookings over the Christmas period and the Olympic making its first profit in almost 10 years.

The Rugby Club will have planning permission soon to build changing facilities, a small car park and club house and we hope to see them grow over the coming year. Their success has been fantastic both in achieving their league position and in attracting junior members to the club.

The new Parks and Open Spaces Manager is in place and is busy with the recruitment of young people to run the activities there. Staff are attending additional training courses to provide other activities for schools and local youth groups.

New Activities for Swanley Town Council

We are now set up Doggie Day Care in the park for use by local residents and visitors alike. Your pets can be left with our staff and will be walked around our beautiful park and receive plenty of cuddles while you are out shopping, at work for the day or simply feeling under the weather.

Light Up the Town

This event is growing year on year and we would like to see more and more groups and individuals getting involved. We have secured a regular sponsor toward the Christmas Lights and some additional sponsors for some of the activities at the Light up the Town Event. But we still need more people and more stalls involved so please pass on information and encourage participation.

Neighbourhood Plan

We are pleased that two of the theme groups are in a position to submit their plans to the District Council with the other theme groups close behind. We hope this will influence future developments for the town and show developers that we have an idea for how our town should be developed and they should be mindful of this in the future.

Assistant Town Clerk – Toni Roast



The last 12 months have been very busy with more than 19 community events provided by Swanley Town Council.

The Great British Spring Clean which took place on the 1st and 2nd March this year attracted more than 100 volunteers including students from St Mary's and St Paul's Primary Schools who have both taken part in litter picks in July too. More than 3 tons of rubbish has been picked up and disposed of.



22nd April 2019

St Georges Day in the Town Centre was bigger and better than last year and the day was packed with free entertainment from a choir to Mrs Back 2 Front with her Punch & Judy show and the traditional Morris Dancers. The Mayor of Swanley Cllr Lesley Dyball awarded prizes to the best dressed damsel.



29th June 2019

The Armed Forces Day was well attended even though it was very a very hot day. Entertainment was provided by Sam's Ballroom, Local Vocals and The silhouette singers. The stunt motor display was simply stunning and wowed the crowds. Mrs Rosemary Dymond DL inspected the cadets before the raising of the flag and parade.



10th November 2019

For Remembrance Day additional large poppies made from individual poppies which were crocheted by local people and were added to the 110 soldiers put up in 2018. The Parade was attended in even greater numbers this year with all uniformed groups represented.



1st November 2019

Firework Night was once again celebrated with a large Bonfire and Fireworks on Swanley Recreation Ground and there were 2 fantastic entries into the Guy competition with both being awarded joint first place.



10th & 11th July 2019

The Luna Cinema provided two nights of cinema in Swanley Park showing The Greatest Showman and Mamma Mia Here we go again. More than 800 people attended over the 2 days bringing in an income of nearly £1700.00 with no outlay by Swanley Town Council.



4th July 2019

In addition to Swanley In Bloom we decided to enter four categories for South & South East In Bloom this year following our success in 2018 and were extremely pleased to win Silver for Swanley Town and The Recreation Ground and Silver Gilt for Swanley Park and the Nature reserve.



17th - 19th October 2019

The new Oktoberfest event which took in October in the Alexander Suite was well received by those who attended. Special Oktoberfest beers were available alongside a variety of ciders and a gin bar. Entertainment was provided by a wide cross section of bands from a traditional Oompah band to rock and folk bands and Nick Griffiths a talented local performer.



7th December 2019

The popular "Light Up the Town" event took place on the 7th December in the Town Centre with a whole day of entertainment from choirs to stilt walkers. The Christmas lights were switched on by the Mayor of Swanley Cllr Lesley Dyball. Santa was kept very busy this year helped by his naughty elves who were busy giving out sweets and helping children make Christmas Cards and Lanterns.

22nd December 2019

The Civic Carol Service in St Mary's Church is proving to be a popular addition to the events provided by the Town Council and a packed Church sang carols and listened to a variety of readings from bible readings to poems including "A Night before Christmas" followed by Mince Pies and Mulled Wine.

11th February 2020

The Mayor of Swanley, Cllr Lesley Dyball hosted the Mayor at Home event for Swanley's senior citizens which was attended by over 100 people a record for this event. Sandwiches, cake, tea and coffee were served by staff assisted by pupils from Orchards Academy. Entertainment was provided along with Bingo and a raffle.

This is the end of my first year as Leader of Swanley Council and there is plenty to celebrate and look forward to in the coming months and for the rest of 2020.

The events we organise for our residents have all grown in size year on year and we expect to continue this trend throughout 2020 with events like, St Georges Day, Luna Cinema, Circus, 1812 and Folk Fest, Bonfire Night and Christmas Fair. We hope you will all make an effort to attend and support these events because it is you the residents of Swanley and our visitors that make them successful.

I am particularly pleased with the operation of the council which is now more efficient, more transparent and engages with a variety of residents groups on a daily basis. That is supported by the fact we have obtained the Local Council Award and is a National Accreditation, which is evidence based good practice. This year we have also applied for the Gold Award which is the highest attainment possible.

The award is only possible by investing in training for our staff and councillors to ensure they are appropriately qualified and follow recognised policies and procedures.

While we do not have the power to stop developments we have been working with local residents to formulate a Local Plan which will help to influence future developments in the town. This plan is shortly to be reviewed by the District Council and will ultimately be incorporated in their own Local Plan for the area.

The sale of the Woodlands has been achieved and the funds have been re-invested in local housing which will provide the town council with sustainable income for the future. It has also added nearly £2 million to our asset register which will increase in value each year.

Other improvements are also reported in this document such as the new Splash Pool, ANPR cameras, refurbishment of existing buildings, Doggie Day Care in the park and improvements to the café in the park.

As a council we continually look to improve our service and to provide new facilities for you our residents and we are currently exploring ideas and information around the provision of a cemetery, new sports facility, recycling plastics and the purchase of more land. Working with our residents and local business is the key to success and we will be looking to establish more networking opportunities and partnerships over the coming year which will mutually benefit us all.

I would like to thank my fellow councillors for their efforts and input to the work of the council in 2019-20 and also our staff who not only work daily to provide excellent services, but also give of their own time to support the work of Swanley Town Council.

The decision was taken last year to change the remit of this committee to deal primarily with complaints and grievances, and to convene meetings only if required rather than diarising regular meetings throughout the year as previously was the case, often then requiring to be cancelled due to lack of business. As a result the Personnel Committee has not met during the past 12 months, and it is worth noting that the committee has not had to deal with any complaints or grievances for the past 3 years. Updated and new policies and procedures are put before Full Council for approval and day to day staffing matters are dealt with by our CEO.

Swanley Town Council is committed to continuous 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 the areas relevant to their roles and responsibilities.

The Civic Manager has now successfully completed her Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA), and as a result her job title, approved by Full Council, changed to Assistant Town Clerk. The Link Manager is currently studying for her CiLCA qualification.

The new Parks Director took up his post in December 2019 and is undertaking various training courses and certification. He has completed the Construction Design and Management (CDM) Regulations Certificate, the main set of regulations for managing the health, safety and welfare of construction projects. He will shortly be doing his Operational Playground Inspector training, and will be a qualified First Aid Instructor by the end of March 2020.

All staff have undertaken Terrorist Threat training, Safeguarding and Health and Safety. Two parks staff will shortly be receiving their Foundation Safety and Rescue Training, followed by Paddlesport Instructor Qualification.

Ground staff have attended Routine Playground Inspector courses, and hold NTPC National Awards for Ground Spraying and Strimming and Chainsaw Certification.

We will continue to invest in our staff and Councillors to ensure that we remain an effective council and that we provide the best of services to our residents.

I would like to thank the residents of Swanley and fellow councillors for their comments relating to developments in our town. We are an advisory committee to Sevenoaks District Council and while in many instances, our comments are appreciated, unfortunately in some instances our observations are not heeded. There are many challenges ahead, most notably the Town Centre development by U&I, this application was opposed by both Swanley and Sevenoaks councils but upheld upon appeal. Please be assured that your local council will be working hard to achieve the best result from this development for our residents. Below is a resume of the main current local planning considerations.

The Woodlands Hilda May Avenue

At last the sale of this property has been concluded and we are hopeful that the construction of a much needed 75 bed roomed care home will now proceed. The surrounding trees will not be effected as they are covered by preservation orders.

Bevan Place (former Working Men's Club)

This site which is owned by Sevenoaks District Council has been demolished and covered by hoardings for four years. We are still waiting for information concerning when this site will be developed for both retail and residential use.

Meeting Point (27- 37 High Street)

There are plans to build 17 new homes on this site together with a Business Hub with parking to the rear. While Swanley town council welcome the business hub and its potential, we have objected on the grounds of insufficient parking, requesting an alternative parking solution is provided.

Sevenoaks Suns

We are still waiting for a formal application from the Suns for the development of a multi- function sport complex on the land owned by Swanley Town council. This would be located next to the Olympic in Beechenlea Lane.

Whiteoak Leisure Centre

Our leisure centre is now fifty years old and is now not a practical facility to be retained. The land where the sports complex is located is owned by Sevenoaks District council and it has been decided that a new facility will be built here together with associated housing. Unfortunately, this new centre will be smaller than the one that it is replacing and the request by Swanley Town council that, we should have a larger premises in line with our growing population was rejected on cost.

This has been a further year of consolidating and improving the financial position of the Council. With the sale of the Woodlands now complete and the sale monies received we are now in a much healthier financial position. The monies are being used to purchase properties which will provide a sustained income over the years to come, and to improve the existing assets and activities of the Council. We have also been able to support and improve all of the great events 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 that the Council's position remains healthy with all our venues performing well. We continue to maintain a focused approach to our creditors and debtors (the money we owe to others and the money due to us), and ensure we receive the best value for money from the purchase of daily goods and services across the venues and, indeed, with regard to any large capital expenditure.

The Council's accounts for the financial year are to be presented to the external Auditor by early June 2020 and we anticipate that the submission will be approved without any adverse or advisory comments as has been the case for a number of years now. Our Internal Auditor reports his findings twice a year and each report has been very complimentary regarding the Council's accounting and procedural practices.

We will always ensure there is operational rigour and transparency across the Council, and strive to improve our income and service delivery while reducing our expenditure.

Overview

Similar to last year, much focus was placed on cost reduction through better procurement of goods and services, and smarter use of resources. In addition, all revenue streams were reviewed to improve the level of income across the venues.

Each month the Council is provided with clear and transparent information and comprehensive reports which provides for better decision making and greater benefits for the residents of Swanley.

Budget Performance

2019 / 2020 was a year of consolidation, building on the changes and improvements introduced the previous year.

Civic Centre

With the sale of the Woodlands now realised the Council is now in a much stronger financial position. This has enabled the Council not only to purchase properties within Swanley to provide sustainable income for the future, but also invest in our existing facilities to improve the experience for regular customers and to attract new business, too.

The Alexandra Suite

The performance of the Alexandra Suite continues to improve every year, providing the Council with much valuable income, with a surplus likely to exceed £100,000 this year. Costs have been maintained, while income has increased through additional bookings and regular reviews of prices.

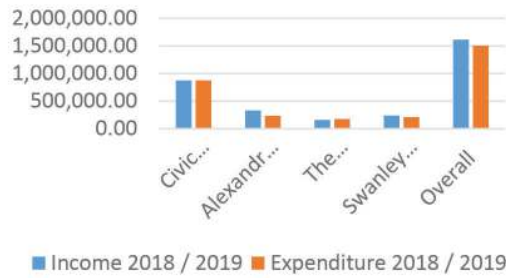
The Olympic

The venue has underperformed over the previous ten years returning losses each year. But following the changes to its service delivery; a review of its expenditure; and, pooled use of resources with the Alexandra Suite, the Olympic now returns a balanced performance. Continued reviews will take place to further improve the position and ensure it returns a healthy surplus in the years to come.

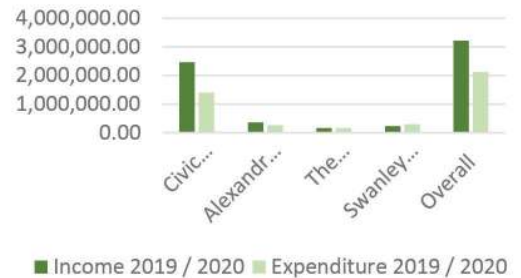
Swanley Park

The Park has consolidated its performance again this year, whilst making much needed improvements to its infrastructure and facilities. New income activities were introduced providing a much wider range of offerings to the residents of Swanley and beyond.

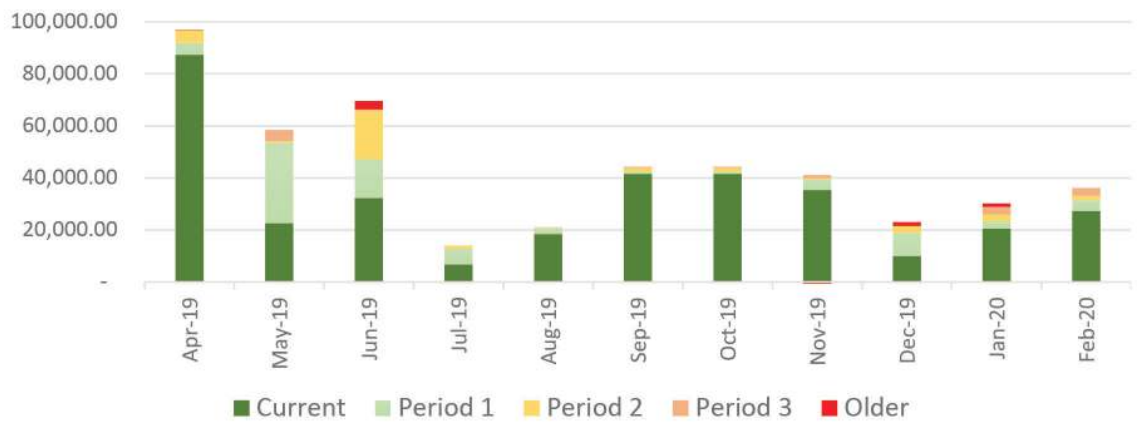
Income / Expenditure 2018 / 2019



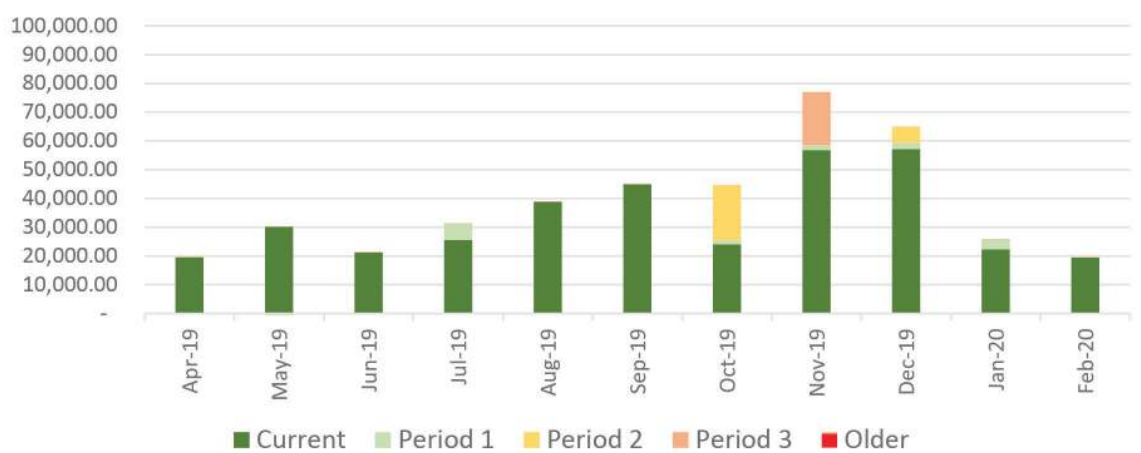
Income / Expenditure 2019 / 2020



Aged Debtors



Aged Creditors



Swanley Park – Parties

Swanley Park parties are continuing to be very popular and the feedback we receive from our customers is fantastic! We have certainly started a trend as there are now areas close by offering similar parties. We heavily promote these parties on the new Swanley Park website as well as the Town Council website. Social media groups for families and our own Social media pages!

The party bookings have doubled in 2019 and 2020 we have new ideas and party packages to offer! I think it's certainly going to be the "coolest" place in town to hold children's parties.



NERF WARS



SURVIVAL



LASER

Half Term Activities

Nerf sessions are continually booked and very popular running 2 sessions daily throughout kids February, Easter, May, Summer & October half terms.

Summer 2019

Again another great summer at the park with over 15 attractions open and we introduced the new plunge slide for 2019 "Kids loved it" additional activities for the children were: Magic Shows, Punch and Judy, Amazing Animal Encounters, Bouncy Kingdom, Birds of Prey Displays, Treasure Hunt, Face painting and Balloon Modelling.

Swanley Town Council / Venue Events

Monthly events at The Alexandra Suite and The Olympic are very well attended, it's nice to see we have a regular clientele that support the events.

Christmas and New Year was a great success, welcoming different companies and new faces. We are currently in the process in planning our 2020 brochure.

Sleeping Beauty Pantomime was a sell out this year, we added additional sessions for local schools.

Wedding Fair

We hosted our own wedding fair in April 2019 to showcase our venues, which was a great success securing wedding sales, a new date for this year is being planned to showcase the new refurbished venues.

Advertising

Social Media is where we receive our main point of sales. Below shows the increase in followers on Face book from March 2018 – 2019.

Facebook

	March 2018	March 2019	New Followers
Swanley Town Council	2,376	2,602	↑ 226
Swanley Park	11,522	14,149	↑ 2627
The Alexandra Suite	937	1038	↑ 101
The Olympic	450	500	↑ 50

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

Banners/A Boards

Each event is promoted with banners around the town of Swanley on railings and lamp posts. We are also advertising further afield.

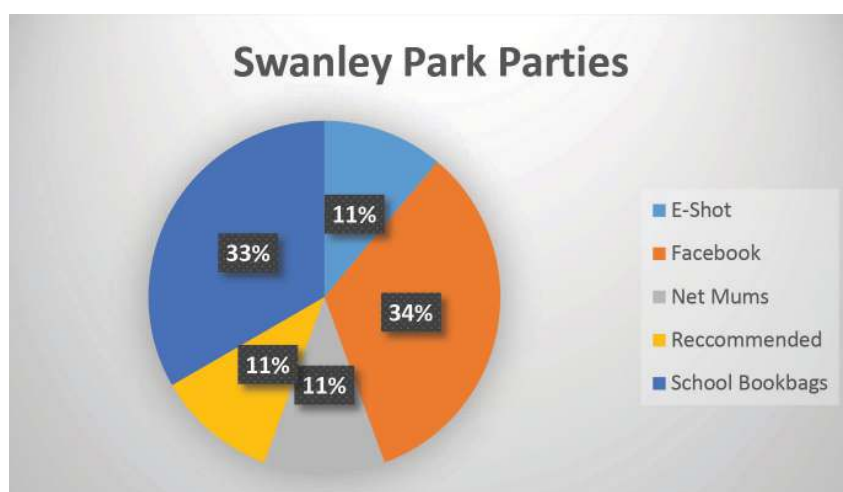
E-Shot

Emails go out to a database of around 3540 contacts, which is increasing daily.

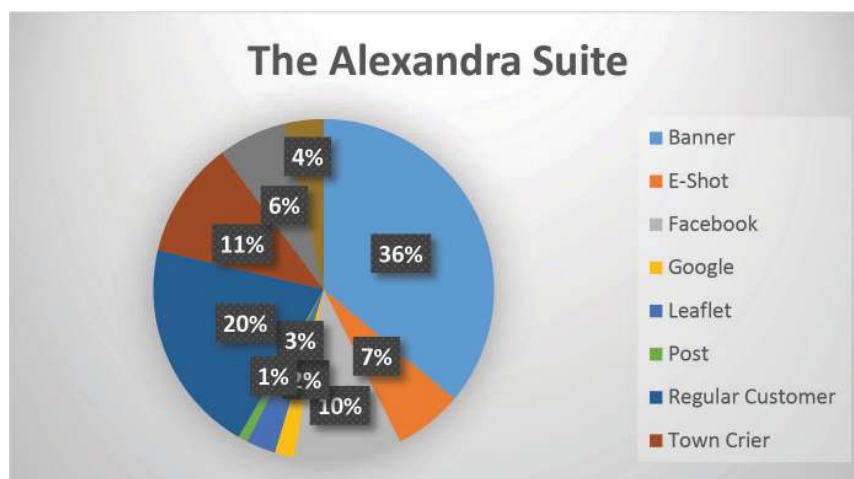
Town Crier

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 – If you have an event or business you would like to promote in the next edition please call Suzie Barnbrook – 01322 665855.

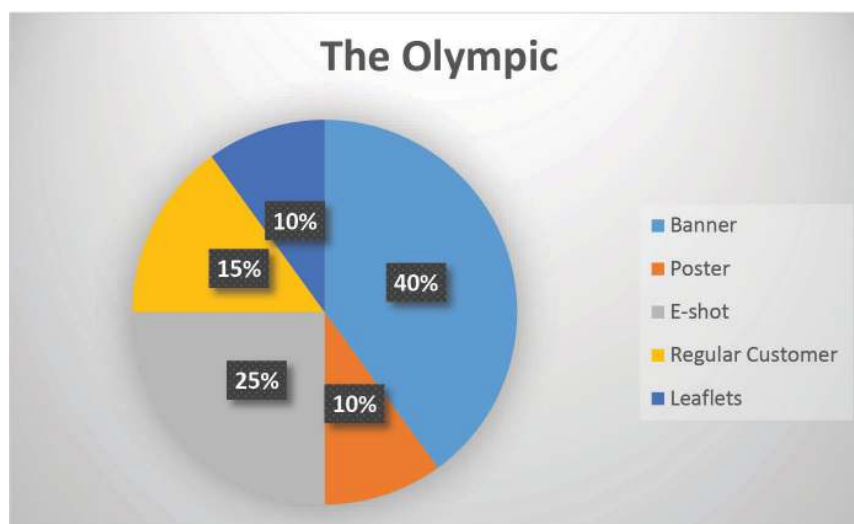
The Pie Charts below show the sources of advertising for events, activities and bookings.



The Alexandra Suite



The Olympic



Closing Statement

Sales has been very successful over the last year with record sales on our monthly events, venue bookings and activities for the children. Each event is well attended and there was definitely a record footfall at the 1812 night last summer! We are looking at more and more advertising and sponsorship opportunities with local businesses. Swanley Park is not far from 15,000 followers on our Facebook page and we hope we will reach this by end of the year.

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 committee, we are made up of eight councillors meeting 4 times per year. Our primary objective is to ensure our facilities meet the needs of our residents and provide value for money. In addition, we ensure our Estates and Facilities are maintained to a sufficient standard. In these times of much reduced income from central Government, it is vital these areas not only perform for the residents but also produce an income for future development and enhancement.

The Council's position remains healthy with all our venues performing well. Although some areas could be doing even better, we will continue to strive to do this in the coming year.

Having secured the resurfacing of the netball/tennis courts, St Marys Road, making them safe and fit for purpose once again, we will endeavour to ensure these facilities are readily available to all. These courts are now even more essential for the health and welfare of our residents.

Due to the recently passed plans, SDC will rebuild White Oak Leisure centre, reducing many of its facilities and the loss of the sports hall.

We organised 3 Park Spring Cleans last year which saw the clearing of the exercise area, filling of holes, coppicing, path and cycle rack clearance and replanting of the Swanley Twinning garden. A huge thank you to those that helped, it was very much appreciated.

We will continue to ensure we provide the best facilities we can, improving and maintaining them for residents and visitors alike. Our Park has seen many changes over the past few years and I welcome Pete Goddard, our Parks and Open Spaces Director who has taken up the reins from Ryan Hayman.

Ryan worked tirelessly to get the park back to how it once was and will leave his legacy of changes. Although we still have some way to go, I am sure Pete and his team are up to the challenge and will continue the good work to further improve the park and its facilities. Suzanne Barnbrook, Sales and Marketing Manager along with her team, continue to ensure the Alex and Olympic are 'go to venues' providing entertainment, a home too many Clubs and churches and a much thought of and well run facilities.

Well done to all the staff at STC facilities who strive to make their areas better than they were and improve upon what there is.

2019 has been a hugely successful year for Swanley Park. We have achieved widespread improvements on a tight budget whilst in return yielding vastly increased visitor numbers and customer satisfaction.

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 the 'Bouncy Castle Zone'. In addition another event was introduced to the Park, 'The Easter Egg Hunt' organised by Making Miracles and was very well attended by hundreds of young children (and not so young). In May we saw our record breaking day in terms of visitors and income on a single day, which will be hard to beat. We had Happy Circus visit the Park and this raised some funding for a local charity and is due to visit again in 2020. June continued to be a busy spell for the Park with visitor numbers staying high and lots of positive feedback on the parks services.

July – September:

These three months were among our busiest despite the odd rainy day but those hardier local residents carried on visiting, walking their dogs and enjoying a coffee in the café. There was the introduction of activity 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 and we hope to expand on this further this year along with displays on the hard standing. The end of the holidays were signalled by the annual 1812 Fireworks display which was the best attended event in the last 10 years where we were virtually at capacity.

This event has now been expanded to two days to include a Folk Festival on the Saturday and we hope to expand this further this year, both in terms of content and activities. Eventually we would like to see a whole weekend of music in the park for everyone to enjoy.

October – March:

October, like the previous months, was up on visitors and the good work being done by the Marketing Officer. By November 1st all equipment was packed away for the winter period and put into storage, repaired or disposed of. This gave the opportunity to concentrate on maintenance and introducing exciting new activities for 2020 which we hope will be enjoyed by all.

In December, a New Management Team were appointed and the Great Outdoors moved to the Park offering a great outdoorsy play-area which is now owned by the town council. January saw the acquisition of Laser gun's and vests, for a new party activity which is already proving popular with the half term parties virtually sold out. In the February half term, we had a partial re-opening with more than £50,000 being spent on re-furbishing the café kitchen and redecoration. This is a huge investment by the concession holders in the café and we hope they will continue to stay with us and provide an excellent service.

Another good year for the Swanley Link which has supported many organisational events in the past year, these have included: NHS and Sevenoaks District Council Consultations, Mental Health Awareness, Eleanor – Death Matters, and Dementia Friends. Residents continued to make use of the many organisations that can be found in the building. There is a wealth of knowledge on site and if an individual doesn't know the answer to a public or voluntary services question or query then they normally know someone who does.

Special evening events have been diverse and have included a celebration of D – Day, a commemoration event marking the 75th anniversary of the Normandy Landings and an evening book talk from Robert Hume who spoke about the victims of Jack the Ripper.

Although Swanley Town Council staff performed over 10,500 transactions on behalf of Sevenoaks District Council, we were disappointed to learn that Sevenoaks had decided to go ahead with their decision to stop funding these. Further information will be available shortly at desks one and two.

Staff were busy providing 310 Swanley Park parking permits for Swanley residents; we are expecting this number to increase considerably with the introduction of year round parking charges using Automatic Number Plate Recognition. Free parking is still available for Swanley Ward residents so please visit desks one and two for more information to ensure that your vehicle is registered before you use the park from April 2020.

Once again we were overwhelmed by the donations of knitted and crocheted poppies and we believe these look stunning on the silhouettes at the Memorial Corner in Bartholomew Way.



Although it was disappointing to hear that the Café was closing back March, luckily it wasn't too long until new provider had been found and Piccalillys café opened in September providing a bustling, friendly place to have a cup of tea or coffee and to sample some great food. If you haven't already paid Piccalillys a visit, please do so, it's a great addition to the Swanley Link

Our Senior Passport to Leisure membership increased during 2019 with members enjoying trips which included: Kew Gardens, the National Army Museum and Winchester Christmas Market. Desk one and two at the Swanley Link have more details if you are interested in joining.

Our Meet and Greet staff continued to help with Blue Badge applications, if you or someone you know would like help completing a blue badge

application, then please speak to a member of staff who will be able to assist and book an appointment for you.

As we look forward to the rest of 2020, we were delighted that Swanley Link was successful in their application to be accepted for 'Working to Become Dementia Friendly Recognition Symbol', we are looking at putting our pledges into action during the coming year. Keep a look out for dementia friendly events and information sessions during 2020.





The Alexandra 2019/2020

The venue is in the process of being updated. The Pavilion has been decorated with modern colours and The Alexandra has had new carpet, refurbished dance floor, curtains and partitions enabling us to offer the lounge area to smaller functions and conferences.

Food Hygiene Rating

On 25th April 2019 we received a visit from Environmental Health and are pleased to report we received a 5* rating of which we are extremely proud.

Weddings

We held our wedding open day in April with our new suppliers “Stylish Weddings” who dressed both rooms. This was successful in securing bookings for 2019/2020.

In July 2019 we had our biggest wedding involving 170 guests having a 3 course meal. This was a huge test for The Alexandra. It was a great success and we went onto serve a charity dinner dance in November 2019 with similar numbers.

Party Nights

We are continuing with our party nights:

- We hosted another successful Motown/Soul evening with a record number of tickets sold.
- We have new events planned for 2020: Through the Decades and a Michael Jackson Tribute evening.

Charity Ball

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



Christmas/Panto 2019

We had a very successful Christmas period with all weekends sold out for private and our own Christmas functions. We introduced Frankie Valli which proved very popular and our casino evenings go from strength to strength. Although it was a very busy period, we had tremendous feedback from our customers.

The panto was a huge success and we were able to put on an extra private date for a school. We are aiming to offer this to all the schools for this 2020.

NYE

Our dinner dance for New Year's Eve is now very well established, catering for a 100 guests, with many regular customers returning to us.
School Proms

The proms continue to be successful. We have secured our regulars and gained new schools for 2020.

Regular Hirees

In addition to hosting our regular hiree's, we have welcomed a new church group to The Pavilion on a twice weekly booking.

Market Research bookings continue to grow at both venues.
We will continue to host our regular football and boxing presentations.

The Hindu Festival will return to our venue in 2020 and dates have been secured for the next 5 years including extra bookings throughout the year.

We look forward to another successful year The Alexandra Suite.



The Olympic 2019/2020

During the last year The Olympic was decorated with modern colours; offices upgraded and redesigned; and bar shutters installed – all of which has allowed the venue to enhance its offerings to existing customers as well as attract new ones. Eventually new carpet will be installed with a dancefloor which will attract more private functions.

Regular Events

The Quiz evening, Karaoke and darts are now well established leading to regular customers booking private parties with us.

The Olympic now has its own darts team who won the 2019 summer league and are on course to win 2019/2020 winter league. Having a darts teams allows us to open on a Tuesday evening offering our snooker members a chance to play.



Ultimately we are aiming to open in the evenings on a regular basis.

Weddings/Functions

The Olympic is gaining more private bookings due to improving service and building a good reputation largely due to all venue staff working together.

We are continuing with our party nights:

- We hosted another successful Elvis basket meal which was sold out.
- We are introducing a Rat Pack basket meal night in April and this is already sold out.
- We will also be celebrating VE day in May, and will open for Euro 2020 in June and July showing the games live and welcoming families.

Regular Hires

In addition to hosting our regular bookings, we have started to accommodate Market Research bookings.

The Hindu Festival held their week event with us in October which proved challenging as we had to run it alongside regular hiree's, but it turned out to be a real success.

We look forward to another successful year at The Olympic.

In 2019/20 Swanley Town Council's element of the Council Tax collected by Sevenoaks District Council was £105.32 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 2019/20 this amount was £539,867.

Swanley Town Council needed to provide a 3.01% increase in Council Tax for the forthcoming year 2020/21 for residents.

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