



IT WASN'T quite Celia Johnson and Trevor Howard, but the Mayors of Cromer and Sheringham look like they enjoyed their 'brief encounter' on the Bittern Line last July.

They met half-way at West Runton to launch a new leaflet extolling the "unrivalled attractions" of the two towns, part of a joint marketing initiative which could see a Crab & Lobster



Festival in the towns next summer – please see page three.

"You don't have to look far in Cromer or Sheringham for something to do – all ages are catered for," says Mayor Hilary Thompson.

"And while we lost Woolworths this year, it's not all gloom and doom – I've opened two new shops in the past year and there seems a very positive air around the town. We've got the past and we're looking to the future.

"We're looking ahead positively and it should be a good summer for Cromer. The amount of public participation we've seen at Council has also been marvellous. That's what we're all here for – we're all in this together and it's no good just moaning and not doing anything about it."

Hilary Thompson and Noel Gant with 'Crabs and Shannoeks' Town Criers



## Two years after the great debate and vote... What would you want to see in North Lodge Park?

TWO YEARS ago there was much debate and controversy about North Lodge Park, culminating in a 'Parish Poll' which saw a 94% vote against a car park in the park.

The question of how to update and improve the area remained unresolved. In October 2007 the Town Council agreed facilities should be provided for all ages, including a picnic spot, bandstand, additional seating, and a new skateboard area.

*What's been happening since?*

A Working Group was set up last year chaired by Paul Ingham of NNDC, who own the park, comprising representatives of local interest groups including the Cromer Preservation and Green Spaces societies.

"Nothing has been ruled in or out," says Cromer in Bloom chairman Jim Bond, "although there are some strong feelings about a skate park.

"We have been focusing on what Cromer and North Lodge Park needs as a whole, rather than piece-meal improvements, to cater for all age groups all year round, both day and evening, which could include summer evening events, for example."

The next stage will be to compare wish-lists – eg areas for toddlers and teenagers, a performance space, picnic areas, lavatories – and agree general principles to formulate a design brief.

"We've agreed what must be retained, such as the two shelters and a boating pool, not necessarily where it

How can we make the most of North Lodge Park, including the tea-room and boating pool (inset)



is now which constrains development of the tea rooms: in effect we have a blank canvas with some features that will be kept."

Once a design brief is formulated, decisions need to be made how to come up with a 'Grand Design' – and raise the funds. "The two go in tandem. For example, a design competition run by the Landscape Institute would cost more money but increase the chance of significant Lottery funding; a less

expensive option would be to look for local designers."

Depending on the size and nature of funding, work could be done in one go or spread over several seasons.

"There's a lot more to it than just adding a few more benches, and with design, procurement and funding so interlinked there's a lot of ball-juggling," adds Jim. "But there are so many benefits for both residents and visitors it's important we get it right."

## North Lodge (almost) complete too

THE OLD boiler's been replaced and refurbishment of the building is now complete with one important exception: due to the layout of the historic building it is not as access-friendly as everyone would like.

Although temporary ramps make North Lodge 'DDA compliant', the Town Council has always sought a better, permanent, solution. Plans presented last summer estimate a ramp and lift to the side of the building could cost £35,000. Pictured above right: the ancient heating system



## Brides of all ages...at North Lodge

LOCAL girls took to the catwalk last September to model bridal wear at the Wedding Fayre organised by the Town Council to promote ceremonies at the newly-refurbished North Lodge Park venue.

"We've already had five new bookings which covers our costs," said Town Clerk Julie Chance. "It raised the profile of the venue, and we hope to host another Wedding Fayre this September."

North Lodge wedding fees are £200 for Cromer residents, £250 for non-residents (Registrar fees extra)





Cromer Town Councillors and staff pictured before the main February meeting. Standing from left: Town Clerk Julie Chance; Cllr Jean Amis; Cllr John Edwards; Admin Assistant Sally Gill; Cllr Sophie Abel; Cllr Tony Nash; Cllr Keith Johnson, Deputy Clerk Janet Warner; Cllr John Lee; Cllr Robert Read.

Seated from left: Cllr Gwen Smith; Cllr Vera Woodcock MBE; Cllr Yvonne Nolan (Deputy Mayor); Cllr Mary Northway; Cllr Beverley Edwards. Not pictured: Mayor Hilary Thompson, Cllr Duncan Abel, Cllr Phil Harris, and Cllr Vanlint, who has since resigned and will be replaced by election or a co-opted member.

## Your Cromer Town Councillors – and what they do

THE 'first tier' of local government after District and County councils, in terms of direct representation Town and Parish councils are the closest to local people, with roughly one Cromer Town Councillor per 300 local electors.

Cromer Town Council comprises 16 members elected every four years in two electoral wards (or districts), Cromer Town and Suffield Park. Councillors elect a Mayor and Deputy Mayor each May at their Annual Meeting, the first meeting of the 'town council year'. Unlike District or County Councillors, Cromer Town Councillors receive no pay or expenses other than occasional travel costs.

The full Town Council meets every six weeks at 7pm on Monday evenings in the North Lodge Council Chamber to discuss and decide policy on matters of local interest, often raised by local residents, who are welcome to attend all meetings of the Council and have the opportunity to ask questions on any matter concerning the town during the Public Participation section early in every meeting.

Between the six-weekly full Council meetings, much of the Town Council's work is carried out by five Committees:

- Works and General Purposes – meets quarterly to look after Town Council

property, eg cemeteries, street lights, benches etc. Next meeting 23 June.

- Planning and Environment – meets monthly to make recommendations on planning applications to NNDC, who make the decisions. In 10 months to the end of February, the Committee considered 57 applications. Also considers transport, highways matters, and licensing applications. Next meeting 9 April.

- Community Economic Development – meets quarterly to plan the future development of Cromer. Next meeting 18 June.

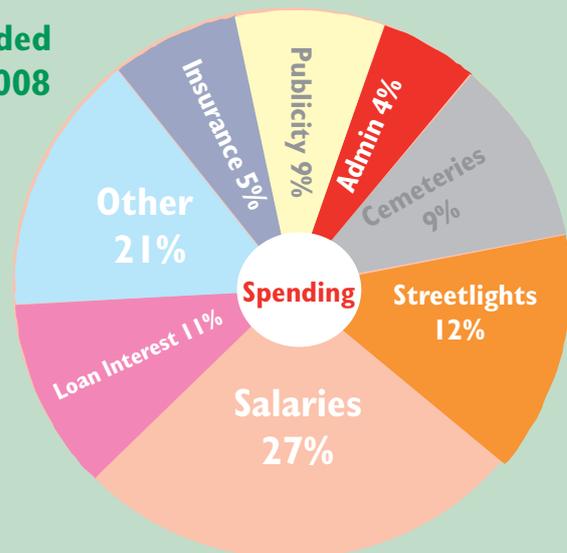
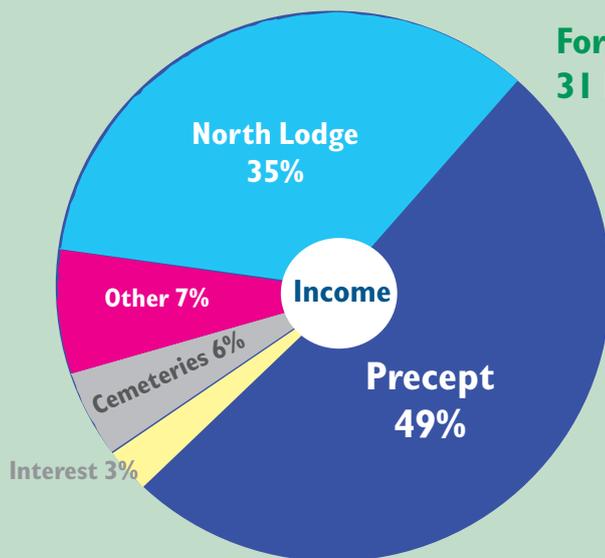
- Publicity – meets quarterly to promote Cromer through leaflets, websites, Bloom, Christmas Lights, New Year Fireworks, and supports Cromer Carnival, Twinning, and other events. Includes representatives from the Chamber of Trade, RNLI, and VEO who organise Cromer Carnival. Next meeting 16 June.

- Strategy – meets quarterly to look after staff, North Lodge, audit, insurance, and to review policies of the Council. Next meeting 28 April.

All meetings are held at 7pm in the North Lodge council chamber, and all are welcome to attend and speak at meetings during 'Public Participation'.

## CROMER TOWN COUNCIL INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

For year ended  
31 March 2008



Income for the year 2007-8 was £243,641 (up £59,694 or 32% from £183,947 in 2006-7). Cromer Town Council's main source of revenue is the precept – the sum of money NNDC raises on its behalf from Cromer householders as part of their Council Tax. In the year 2007-8 the precept was £119,000, for the year ending 31 March 2009 it is £122,000. For the year 1 April 2009-31 March 2010 the precept will be £134,700.

Expenditure for 2007-8 was £158,302 (2006-7: £163,981). Salaries and admin costs (£48,923) accounted for 31% of expenditure. The 'Other' figure (£42,025) includes Election Expenses (£4,281); grants to Cromer PPF (£3,250), Cromer in Bloom (£2,187) and Twinning (£1,262); £1,900 to the Audit Commission; and miscellaneous expenses such as the new Churchyard Flagpole (£2,249) and bus shelter (£1,435)

# Purr-fect day as big cats roam the Park



## Meanwhile...in St Mary's Road



LOCAL dignitaries, Jag enthusiasts and bemused passers-by gathered in St Mary's Road to see Kate Sayer (inset below) unveil a plaque on the St Mary's Road house where her father lived.



**CROMER** Town Council hosted a special day on 24 May to commemorate one of the world's great car designers – Cromer's Malcolm Sayer. Born in Cromer and latterly educated in Great Yarmouth, Sayer designed iconic models from the 1940s to the 1960s including the C, D and E type models and the XJ13 and XJS cars. Organised by Mike Tomlin of the Challenger E Type Owners' Club and supported by the Town Council, the main feature of the day was a magnificent display of cars in North Lodge Park, followed by a trip to Great Yarmouth High School.



# Claws! Crab & Lobster Festival planned for 2010



**REMEMBER** the Norwich elephants? Cromer could have a range of colourful crustaceans if plans for a Crab & Lobster Festival crawl off the drawing board.

The Town Council, working with Sheringham Town Council, has set up a working group to plan the 2010 event in June or September to celebrate Cromer's most famous product.

"We are always looking for ways to promote the town and bring visitors into the town, particularly out of the main holiday season," says Town Clerk Julie Chance.

"It's a great way of developing our marketing initiative with Sheringham, and in these challenging times, another way to emphasise that there's always something special about the seaside in Cromer."

The aim is not just to promote the

two towns, but to inform, educate and entertain too, with links with the museums on the history of local crab-fishing and demonstrations of crab-pot making and fishermen's ganseys.

With the proof of the pudding in the eating, Councillors Duncan Abel and John Edwards are talking to local celebrity chefs and Cromer restaurants about becoming involved in special seafood dem-



onstrations and promotions

Local artists Kate Royle and Norah Gaston are starting to organise artistic events, including art and photography exhibitions, competitions, and a sculpture trail around the town.

Other events for the weekend could include crab fishing contests from the pier, crab dressing exhibitions and competitions, local clog dancing, and bands around the town. And who knows, there may even be calls for a revival of the planned Millennium Sculpture "Claude."

"A number of people have indicated an interest in helping to organise the event," says Carnival Chairman Tony Shipp who came up with the idea. "If anyone wants to contribute to the Crab Festival they should call Julie, Janet or Sally on 01263 512254."



## Beach huts boost for Museum

**THE 'Bathing Beauties' exhibition of futuristic beach-huts in October boosted the Lifeboat Museum's half-term visitor numbers from 500 in 2007 to more than 3,000 visitors. Aimed at "re-imagining the English seaside" it is hoped to stage a similar exhibition in the Lifeboat Museum this October half-term.**

■ This year's New Year Day Firework Display raised a record £7,429.65.

# Where do you think they were?

**IT'S NOT** exactly Cromer's Domesday Book, but the Town Council's "Register of Burials" at the new cemetery is now available on a computer database after being painstakingly transferred from the original ledgers by Admin Assistant Sally Gill.

The work's taken 18 months, about three hours a week, cross-referenced with the Register of Graves, and reveals much about Cromer's changing social history over the past 100 years.

With 4,400 entries from the first in September 1904 (Henry Durrant, Farm Bailiff, of Central Road) the register lists name, age, address and place of burial, and 'Rank or Profession': the first page alone includes Fisherman, Innkeeper and Jobmaster, Travelling Showman, Spinster, Widow and Pauper. Later 1911 entries list 'Gentleman' and 'Independent Means'.

"The Register features many old local family names – Blogg, Nockels, Davies – and gives a real sense of Cromer history," says Sally. "For example, the impact of the 1919 flu epidemic, and eight burials on 28 July 1942 after the Baedeker raid bombs on Garden Street.

"And although many people reached a good age from the beginning of the century, there were a lot of stillbirths in

early years, which had drastically reduced by the 1940s."

As well as healthcare advances, the register indicates a major change in professions from the 1950s when women became listed for their jobs rather than just as 'wife of...' while 'Retired' becomes an increasingly common description from the 1960s, although records become less comprehensive as the Register lists only burials, not cremations.

The new database can be searched by address, and this too shows Cromer changing. Early addresses are mainly in the town centre, but from the 1930s Suffield Park increasingly features. The Register also shows the most frequently appearing Cromer surnames, with no fewer than 52 Nockels, 65 Smiths, 42 Davies and 22 Bloggs.

The job was clearly something of a labour of love for Sally. "I used to do about an hour at a time on the Register between other jobs and sometimes I couldn't put it down!

"We did it to ensure these unique records wouldn't be lost in the event of fire or theft, and could also be stored off-site," she adds. "We do get people trying to trace relatives, and if someone only has a surname and a rough idea of the year we can now call up the information much more quickly.

"Although we don't want to be overwhelmed with enquiries, we're happy to help trace relatives and ancestors."



*Admin Assistant Sally Gill transfers entries from Cromer's Register of Burials to a new computer database.*



## Blogg boat on the way home

**IT'S LIKELY** to be a long voyage, but Henry Blogg's fishing boat has set off on its journey back to Cromer. First stop is Lowestoft's International Boat Building Training College, where repairs and refurbishment can take place – providing funding of around £20,000 can be secured.

"The project seems becalmed, with some confusion about whether any grants will be available," says Julie Chance. "The Town Council has earmarked £10,000 match-funding, but repairs are estimated at £28,000-£30,000."

It is hoped to site the refurbished boat on the grass in front of the rose garden behind the Lifeboat Museum.

## Old Chapel hosts Christmas events

**REFURBISHED** by the Town Council, the Old Chapel on Holt Road hosted a double Christmas spectacular – the Town Council's first Christmas Tree Festival and the annual Carol Service.

Over 400 visitors saw the 14 splendidly decorated trees, raising funds for local causes, including £280 for Cromer in Bloom. The Carol Service was an equal success, with wonderful contributions from the Junior School Choir and the Sea Scouts who provided mince pies and mulled wine.

## Quality Council

CROMER was the first Town Council in Norfolk to gain Quality status in 2004, and can now claim another first – after Sally Gill passed the Certificate in Local Council Administration (Janet Warner was the first part-time Admin Assistant to qualify) Cromer is now the only Town Council with all three CiLCA-qualified staff.

*Pictured below: Julie Chance and Janet Warner receive their CiLCA certificates from former Norfolk MP Gillian Shepherd, flanked by previous Cromer Town Clerk Di Dann.*



## Biking (and digging) for Twinning victory

**NORFOLK** is renowned for "doing diff'rent", and the celebrations marking last year's 10th twinning anniversary with the German town of Nidda, near Frankfurt, were certainly novel.

New Cromer Mayor Hilary Thompson (right) cycled 515 miles in six days to Nidda last May accompanied by local PC Gary Medlar (bottom left) to raise £4,647 for youth projects which helped get the club at the new Community Centre in Garden Street – formerly the WI Hall – off to a flying start.



And at the end of January, twinning vice-chairman Alastair Mayes planted a 6 ft horse-chestnut sapling in the cemetery which he'd nurtured from a conker brought back from Nidda.

Mighty oaks from small acorns grow, and next year Cromer celebrates 30 years of twinning with French town Crest, with events already planned around the town. If you'd like to get involved with twinning, please call Tina Leighton on 01263 511829.

