

Mayor's aim is to get the young involved in town

by Rachael Woods

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The new Mayor of Tenterden, Cllr Justin Nelson, says that improving communication between the town hall and residents will be one of his first priorities.

He has pledged that "every media channel will be open" in engaging young and old alike in the life of the town hall.

"I want to improve our communications and tell residents what we are doing and why, and hopefully to get some constructive feedback," he said.

The town's former deputy mayor, Cllr Nelson, 61, wants to see a monthly newsletter sent out via email and social media that could be also be picked up from the town hall.

Cllr Nelson, a commercial lawyer at Nelsons Legal Limited in Bells Lane, who works alongside his wife Anne, is also keen to encourage teamwork between colleagues.

"I want to build on the teamwork that exists between our town councillors, staff, other authorities and the wider community," he said.

He spoke of the need for dialogue with the town's youngsters, especially in the wake of the Lipton Group's report into how the town's £3.5m cash windfall from the sale of Tent 1 housing land should be spent. During the consultation it had been difficult to recruit young people and afterwards the focus groups had lacked young members.

Cllr Nelson said that the re-ordering of the Recreation Ground, one of the key priorities identified in the Lipton report, was something he was keen to get on with.

Improvements to the town hall will focus his energies too.

"The town hall is a fine building, but it needs attention," he said. When the assembly hall is being used by Tenterden Operatic and Dramatic Society (TODS), councillors have to meet in the compact mayor's parlour which means "we have to sit cheek by jowl as it's a bit of



Cllr Justin Nelson, the new Mayor of Tenterden

Picture: Stuart Kirk Photography

DEDICATED AND ACTIVE CIVIC TEAM

Cllr Sue Ferguson was elected as deputy mayor, a position for which four nominations were received. Town clerk Phil Burgess said: "Justin Nelson was elected unopposed as mayor following two years of service by our former mayor Pam Smith. Justin has been a dedicated and conscientious councillor since 2011 and a very strong chairman in recent years - a natural choice for the role of mayor."

He added: "Sue Ferguson won a hard-fought contest to take on the role of deputy mayor. Sue joined the council in 2013 and is a very active and Tenterden-focused councillor. She will

a squeeze to get in", said Cllr Nelson, who added that it would be ideal to have a good sized meeting room, leaving the assembly hall free for community use.

The regeneration of the High Street, which has 17 empty premises, is important to the new mayor who is backing a recently-launched destination management plan for Tenter-



suit the role well."

Cllr Ferguson said: "I'm honoured to be elected as deputy mayor and I'm looking forward to working with the new mayor Justin Nelson and the whole council. I will do my very best to promote Tenterden over the coming year."

den. "It will attract more tourists but I also want to encourage residents to use the High Street as their own," he said.

He does not plan to follow in former mayor Pam Smith's footsteps by going for a two-year term of office but said that during his year he would do his best to promote Tenterden and its standing beyond the town.