

Colin Kinloch

Presentation of Honorary Freeman of the Town & Hundred of Tenterden
Speech by Cllr Sue Ferguson, 21 April 2022, Tenterden Town Council



Colin Kinloch

I am delighted to support the nomination that Colin Kinloch be awarded Honorary Freeman of the Town & Hundred of Tenterden.

I consider myself lucky to have known Colin for over 25 years and I would like to tell you about some of things that he did for Tenterden.

Colin did an enormous amount of work for the Town. He had a vision – to smarten up Tenterden – he infected other people with his enthusiasm, he persuaded people to agree with him, and he sourced grants in order to follow his vision.

Colin Kinloch, Honorary Freeman of the Town & Hundred of Tenterden

So where did it all start?

It started with the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) a regional development agency set up in 1999 to promote the South East. SEEDA had £7 million and Colin was keen to get some of this for Tenterden, one specific grant he wanted for Tenterden was the Kent Rural Towns programme, a grant for smaller rural towns in Kent and Medway. Tenterden Town and Rural Partnership (which later became Tenterden Improved) came into being.

So going back to Spring of 2004 --- Steering Group was formed – multiple groups in the town worked together under Colin’s leadership. Tenterden Improved, the Weald of Kent Preservation Society, the Chamber of Commerce, Ashford Borough Council, Tenterden Town Council, Wittersham Parish Council, Tenterden and District Residents Association, the Leisure Centre Trust and some local businesses.

The steering group was divided into four working groups. Colin’s aim was to:

- Reduce clutter and inappropriate furniture in the High Street
- Have more sensitive control on building appearance
- Protect and repair verges and greens
- Make the countryside and footpaths accessible
- Do something with Heronden Gatehouse (which had been boarded up since being destroyed in the 1987 hurricane)
- Reduce litter
- Improve areas of neglected land behind the High Street/Lanes
- Deliver the first phase of the cycle track from St Michaels to Tenterden

This was quite a list for Colin, enough to make a good-sized contribution to his in-tray!

Eventually in 2005 Colin and the Steering Group published a Healthcheck and Action Plan for Tenterden (with funding from the Channel Corridor Partnership and Kent County Council) – it was a snapshot - life in the town, social structure & community, local economy, traffic, accessibility, natural environment, leisure and then all they had to do was to work out how to improve it all. One of the main questions - What kind of town and community do you want Tenterden to be in the future.

After the Healthcheck and Action Plan in 2005 came the Tenterden Streetscape Masterplan for Tenterden – this was commissioned on behalf of Tenterden Improved by Ashford Borough Council. Its purpose – to help the Tenterden community plan for future development and in particular the shaping of its

streetscape and public realm spaces.

The Tenterden Streetscape Masterplan covered the High Street and Lanes from West Cross to the Fairings. It analysed the streetscape of the town, including design, materials, furniture and signage and made costed recommendations for significant improvements in the town.

I can just see Colin walking down the High Street with sheafs of papers in his hands ticking “*Yes I like it*” – and crossing “*No I don’t*”. The bent bare metal railings outside Caffè Nero got a resounding cross, along with the weeds and poorly fitting street furniture. There were specific recommendations for the coach park, Coombe Lane and part of Station Road - an important arrival point in the town which Colin said - was an unwelcoming, bleak and featureless area.

In May 2007 there was a public presentation and a consultation – things were definitely moving forward! And then work started!

It was out with the nasty bent unpainted sprawling metal railings, the messy street furniture and Colin brought in a new heritage look for Tenterden – black and gold. Colin wanted to do things properly – everything had to be organised and catalogued and be in its right and proper place! Colin definitely cared about the value of research and he cared about appearances.

Yorkstone paving was laid in Tenterden High Street during 2007-2008, new Tenterden walking maps were produced, an artist was commissioned to draw a map of Tenterden, heritage railings & heritage noticeboards were installed, the cycle track became a reality, a brand new Tenterden Town website was commissioned, the Tour de France were persuaded to come to Tenterden in 2007, a food fayre for the community was put on – the precursor to Tentertainment, the steps in the Coach Park were remodelled and work started on the lanes to bring Tenterden up to the right standard – Colin’s standard!!

If you walk down the High Street today you can see Colins’s touches and his lasting legacy – the Yorkstone on the pavements and widening of the pavement outside the Town Hall, the town map notice boards (donated by the Weald of Kent Preservation Society) the heritage finger posts, the heritage railings. Colin wanted to tidy up Tenterden and improve the heritage look.

Many years later he was at it again. Ashford Mayor Councillor Callum Knowles recalls that Colin was the catalyst for the Kilnfield Nature Reserve in Tenterden. Colin said to Callum “something needs to be done here – can you help”. Councillor

Knowles took up the challenge and today we have the Kilnfield Nature Reserve in Tenterden – this was typical Colin – he had a vision and then persuaded others to make it happen.

In conclusion Tenterden was definitely “Improved” under Colin’s watch! Without Colin - Tenterden wouldn’t look how it does today.

Thank you

Cllr Sue Ferguson

21 April 2022