

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24



Chipping
Norton
Town Council

FOREWORD BY TOWN MAYOR SANDRA COLEMAN

The Town Council takes pride in serving our community through the services and facilities we provide, including the Town Hall, playgrounds, sports fields, cemetery, and open spaces. We collaborate with West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council to enhance and improve our town.

Since 2019, we've improved our working practices by professionalising our operations and have developed a strategic plan for long-term continuity. We prioritise community engagement through formal meetings, events, councillor surgeries, and consultations.

We've undertaken projects based on community feedback, such as scoping out a potential wheeled sports area and works to restore Pool Meadow. Our initiatives aim to enhance our town's amenities and foster community involvement.

Please take the time to review this important document outlining our efforts.

Sandra Coleman

TOWN MAYOR



COMMITTEE PRIORITIES

COMMUNITY

Over the course of the last year, the Community Committee has been instrumental in enhancing the quality of life in our neighbourhood through several notable achievements. The Committee spearheaded the installation of play equipment at Cotswold Crescent Play Area, creating a vibrant and engaging space for local children and families to enjoy.

In a commitment to the community, the Committee established the Keep Chippy Beautiful working group, fostering collaboration and innovative solutions to address various challenges faced by the town. This dedicated group had a very successful Clean Up event in the autumn, with further events scheduled for Spring next year.

Additionally, the Community Committee successfully oversaw the first part of the Town Hall restoration project. With a keen eye on preserving our town's historical and cultural heritage, this ambitious undertaking is a testament to the Committee's dedication to maintaining and improving communal spaces for the benefit of all residents.

Cllr Sandra Coleman

CHAIR, COMMUNITY CTTE



FINANCE AND RESOURCES

In the past year, the Finance and Resources Committee has demonstrated dedication to community support. Through the allocation of £28,000 in Community Grants, the Committee has empowered local initiatives and projects, fostering growth and enrichment across our community.

Furthermore, the Committee's commitment to excellence was recognised with the receipt of the Foundation Award for good practice in town councils by the National Association of Local Councils. This prestigious acknowledgment underscores the Town Council's exemplary standards and effective management in contributing to the overall well-being of our town.

Cllr Ian Finney

CHAIR, FINANCE AND RESOURCES CTTE



STRATEGIC PLANNING

In the last year, the Strategic Planning Committee has been instrumental in enhancing our town's infrastructure and fostering sustainable practices. Notably, the Committee successfully installed bike repair stations in the town centre, promoting eco-friendly transportation and a healthier community.

Additionally, the Committee played a pivotal role in overseeing both the Planning and Traffic Advisory sub-Committees, advocating for a thoughtful and strategic approach to the town's development and traffic management.

Furthermore, the Committee demonstrated forward-thinking leadership by overseeing the Cycling Action and Build Chippy Better working groups. These initiatives reflect the Committee's commitment to proactive planning, community engagement, and the pursuit of a more resilient and vibrant town.

Cllr Mike Cahill

CHAIR, STRATEGIC PLANNING CTTE



OUR TOWN HALL

The Town Hall has seen significant developments and challenges throughout 2023. This annual report provides an overview of key updates in bookings, community group activities, facility maintenance, and finances.

Highlights

Over the past year the Town Hall has:

- Hosted bookings from over 115 unique customers and community groups;
- Held more than 50 different types of events;
- Introduced the Barclays and TSB Banking hubs;
- Introduced 3 new fitness sessions for over 50s;
- Partnered with Chipping Norton Theatre for music and dance events.

The Town Hall bookings and bar generated circa £60,000 in income for the Town Council.

Maintenance Progress:

- Completed Phase 1 of building works, including repairing Ladies toilet walls and decorating the Lower Town Hall.
- Implemented ongoing maintenance recording and developed schedules for planned maintenance.



Tania Kirby

FACILITIES AND EVENTS OFFICER

EVENTS 2023-24

THE PICNIC IN THE PARK

Chipping Norton came alive with joy and excitement during the King's Coronation 2023 Picnic in the Park. The event, dedicated to the newly crowned monarch King Charles III, captivated over 400 attendees. From the temporary skate park provided by Rollback World to performances showcased at the gazebo, the air was filled with cheers and applause.



CHIPPING NORTON PRIDE

Chipping Norton's first Pride event was a huge success. The event was attended by over a thousand people who all contributed to the joyous atmosphere, that everyone valued and enjoyed.



CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH-ON & BIG CHIPPY SINGALONG

We are delighted that due to updated infrastructure and professional installation, we were able to host a Christmas Lights Switch-On event for Chipping Norton in 2023.

There was a truly amazing turn-out for the Switch-On and Big Chippy Singalong, with a fabulous community of people joining together to celebrate the start of the Yuletide season.



SPORT AND PLAY



COTSWOLD CRESCENT PLAY PARK

The new equipment at Cotswold Crescent play area was installed at the end of July 2023, just in time for the summer holidays. We've been delighted to receive positive feedback from people using the site. On Monday 21st August the Oxfordshire Play Association held a successful play day at the park.

SKATEPARK PROJECT

In May 2023, Chipping Norton Secondary School students urged the Council to support a skatepark proposal, which was endorsed by the Community Committee. Positive discussions with Chipping Norton Regulated Pastures Trustees were held. Next steps involved a community consultation and collaboration with local skateboarders to develop design principles. These principles will guide the tender process for selecting a contractor, with a focus on incorporating a planting scheme to complement the area's surroundings. It is hoped that the skatepark could be installed by summer 2025.



Plans for location and funding are underway, with a petition garnering over 500 signatures. In June, a pop-up skatepark at New Street Rec during the King's Coronation event demonstrated community interest. Following advice from Skateboard GB and industry experts, New Street Recreation Area was identified as the preferred location.

OPEN SPACES

POOL MEADOW

Pool Meadow is a unique and ancient area of natural beauty and tranquility that runs alongside the stream along Worcester Road, close to the site of an associated Ancient Monument where a Norman Castle once stood. In June 2022 the Council agreed to have a feasibility study undertaken by Beaumont Rivers Ltd which has now been completed.

The study focuses on protecting and improving the biodiversity and access of Pool Meadow; preserving and highlighting the heritage of the area; as well as improving the flood risk to downstream communities. The Council will work towards implementing the recommendations of that study during 2024.



WORCESTER ROAD CEMETERY

As part of the Council's commitment to climate action, it was agreed to leave a wild area in Worcester Road Cemetery. A team of volunteers spent a morning scarifying and sowing yellow rattle seeds to create a bee and insect-friendly wildflower meadow, as well as tidying up and clearing the cemetery. Yellow rattle is a great plant to start a wildflower meadow. It suppresses grasses to allow wildflowers to bloom.

MILLENNIUM GARDEN

You will now find a beautiful new curved style bench in the Millennium Garden. This is designed for families and groups to be able to sit together and enjoy this lovely green space in the heart of our town.



WHERE DOES THE CHIPPING NORTON TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET COME FROM?

The primary source of income for most Parish Councils comes from the Precept, which is a share of the Council Tax that is collected from each household by the District Council. This is calculated on an average household (Band D property).

Chipping Norton Town Council does not receive any direct funding from central government or from business rates. The rest of its budget comes from income from some of the services it provides, such as the Town Hall and cemetery, and from its reserves. The precept for 2023-24 was £344,684.

TOTAL 2023-24: £120.84 per Band D Household per year

For the year from 1 April 2024 the average taxpayer will be asked to pay £130.51 towards the services provided by Chipping Norton Town Council. This is an increase of £9.67 per annum from the previous year and will generate £375,832 of an overall projected income of £510,647.

While the Town Council had frozen the precept during the previous financial year to acknowledge that many residents were struggling to make ends meet during the cost of living crisis, the Council itself faces significant cost pressures due to the level of inflation, so allowances for this have been made in its budget estimates.

Some facilities and services such as maintenance of public open spaces and play areas generate no income for the Town Council as they are free for public use at the point of delivery.

As with most organisations, the most significant cost is staffing and related resources. Without the Town Council staff the organisation would be unable to meet its statutory requirement or deliver on any of its aspirations.

THE 2024-25 BUDGET IN MORE DETAIL:



Town Hall
£49,700



Community Grants and Core Funding
£28,000



Corporate Management, Admin and Resources
£230,800



Recreation Areas
£22,500



Worcester Road Cemetery and Closed Churchyard
£14,700



Events
£11,000

TOTAL 2024-25: £130.51 per Band D Household per year

SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY

One of the ways that Chipping Norton Town Council supports local communities is via the Grants to Voluntary Bodies Scheme. This year, the Town Council pledged £28,000 towards community projects, or 8% of the overall annual budget.

Additionally, the Town Council agreed to support three key organisations for three years, giving them the security to plan longer projects.

Core Funding (3 Years)

- Chipping Norton Theatre - £3,000 per annum
- Chipping Norton Lido - £5,000 per annum
- Chipping Norton Museum & History Society - £3,500 per annum

Grants Awarded Round 1, July 2023

- 1:1 Mentoring - £1,600
- CN Cricket Club - £1,600
- CN Music Festival - £1,200
- CN Scouts - £1,600
- Citizen's Advice West Ox - £1,600
- Cleanslate - £800
- CN Green Gym - £400
- CN Lawrence Home Nursing Team - £1,592
- Oxfordshire Play Association - £400
- Remix Youth Club - £1,200
- CN Royal British Legion - £400
- Thrive North Oxfordshire - £2,000
- Volunteer Link Up - £1,600

Grants Awarded Round 2, Feb 2024

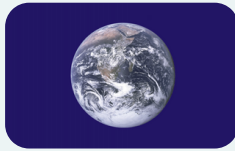
- CN Community Church - £1,000
- CN Town Festival - £1,000
- CN Trefoil Guild - £200
- CN School PTA - £1,000
- CN Community Suppers - £800
- Cotswold Art Through Schools - £1,000
- CN Green Gym - £750
- OP Woodcraft, Mental Health Furniture Restoration sessions - £1,560
- Remix Youth Club - £500
- St Mary's Church, Life Skills - £1,000

FLYING THE FLAG FOR CHIPPING NORTON

The installation of the new flagpole at The Millennium Garden gave us the flexibility to fly a whole range of flags on behalf of the Town Council and local organisations. Between April 2023 and March 2024 we flew:



The Earth Day & Ecology flag, 22nd April 2023



St George's Cross, 23rd April 2023



The King's Coronation Emblem, 6th May 2023



The Refugee Nation flag, 20th June 2023



The Armed Forces Day flag, 24th June 2023



The Pride Progress flag, 1st July 2023



The NHS flag, 5th July 2023



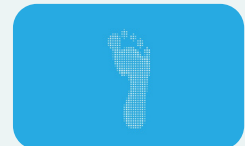
The RAF Ensign, 21st August 2023



The United Nations flag, 24th October 2023



The Royal British Legion flag, 28th October 2023



The Human Rights flag, 10th December 2023



The Suffrage flag, 8th March 2024



The Commonwealth flag, 11th March 2024

ISSUES THAT MATTER TO CHIPPING NORTON



The Council is committed to keeping the ‘big issues’ in Chipping Norton on the agenda.

Chipping Norton Town Council collaborates closely with Oxfordshire County Council and West Oxfordshire District Council to address the traffic, travel, and parking challenges faced by the town. These issues include heavy goods vehicles causing congestion, parking reaching capacity, complex town centre junctions, and insufficient pedestrian crossings. The Traffic Advisory Sub-Committee, comprising of council members and stakeholders, actively engages in finding solutions. This involves advocating for and contributing to the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and conducting site visits with highways officers to prioritise junction improvements and crossings.

Traffic and highways

Additionally, initiatives such as supporting the introduction of a 20mph scheme in 2023, launching the Rusty Riders initiative, and the purchase of a speed indicator device for Churchill Road demonstrate the Council's commitment to enhancing road safety and traffic management within Chipping Norton.



East Chipping Norton Development

Land to the east of Chipping Norton has been designated as a Strategic Development Area by WODC with plans to build approximately 1,200 homes.

In response to this, in addition to crafting the East Chipping Norton Vision Statement in 2019, the town council launched the Build Chippy Better group in 2022. Comprised of Town Councillors and volunteers from the local community, its purpose is to enable residents to voice their opinions on various aspects of the site, including biodiversity, road access, and housing.

A significant recent development is the designation of part of the site as a Scheduled Monument by Historic England. This recognition indicates that the archaeological finds on the site, dating from the Romano-British period (1st-4th Century AD) and including a settlement, shrine, bathhouse and cemetery, are of national importance and warrant protection for future generations. This milestone is an exciting development for Chipping Norton, and the next steps are eagerly anticipated.

STREET SIGN RESTORATION

Before



After



Chipping Norton's much loved old street signs have been in need of some TLC for many years. West Oxfordshire District Council no longer produce these iron signs, and therefore if replaced they would be the updated name plates. Therefore, with WODC's blessing, we have started a programme of stripping and re-painting the signs. Our maintenance operative has dedicated time and expertise on the first few signs, and will continue to replace and renew over the coming months.



Sandra Coleman
Town Mayor



Steve Akers
Deputy Town Mayor



Rachel Andrews



Ben Bibby



Mike Cahill



Tom Festa



Ian Finney



Jo Graves



Alex Keyser



Dom Rickard



Athos Ritsperis



Michael Rowe



Mark Walker



Emily Weaver



Sharon Wheaton



Natasha Whitmill



**Chipping
Norton**
Town Council

MANAGEMENT TEAM



Luci Ashbourne

Town Clerk & CEO



Alison Packer

Responsible Finance Officer



Katherine Jang

Deputy Clerk and Estates Manager



Tania Kirby

Facilities and Events Officer

Our small and friendly office team is headed by Luci Ashbourne, Town Clerk and CEO to Chipping Norton Town Council.

Our offices are based in The Guildhall, Market Street, OX7 5NJ and are open to the public from 9am-1pm weekdays. Feel free to pop by with any questions you may have and we will try to help. We can also help signpost residents to Oxfordshire County Council and West Oxfordshire District Council where appropriate.

Alternatively, our phone lines are open 9am-1pm weekdays on 01608 642 341.

Should you wish to email a specific member of staff, you can also reach us via email:

Town Clerk - townclerk@chippingnorton-tc.gov.uk

Deputy Clerk - deputyclerk@chippingnorton-tc.gov.uk

Responsible Finance Officer - finance@chippingnorton-tc.gov.uk

Town Hall and Events - events@chippingnorton-tc.gov.uk



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