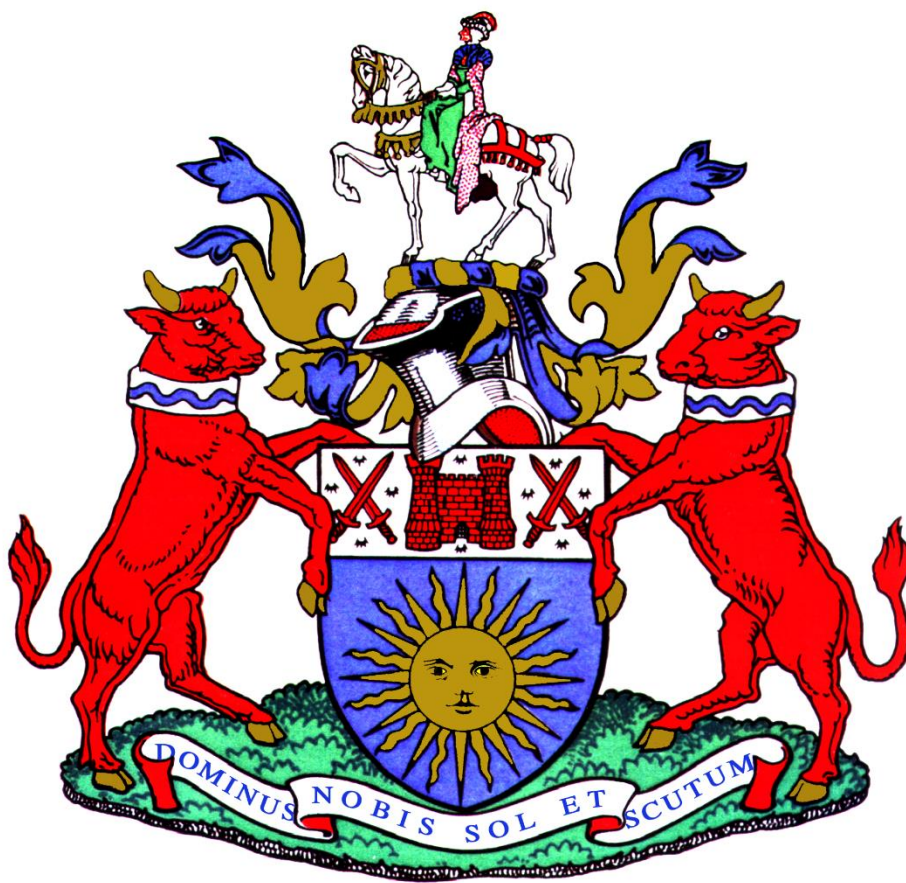


Banbury Town Council



**ANNUAL REPORT
2016 - 2017**

REVIEW OF THE YEAR BY TOWN MAYOR CLLR GORDON ROSS

It was with great pride that I became Mayor of Banbury in 2016.

The year has been extremely busy and time has gone very quickly. I have fulfilled many engagements and supported as many local charities, voluntary organisations, and Banbury-based groups as my schedule would allow.

I hope I also played a part in promoting the town and its heritage at many events in Banbury and the surrounding area.

I have made many new friends and acquaintances and shared thoughts and ideas to improve and encourage local activities.

He said: "I have seen at first hand the amazing work of charitable organisations in the town and I acknowledge the importance of people who do voluntary work in the community.



"Wherever I have gone, I've met people who work for the good of others and enjoy themselves in the process.

"It is quite extraordinary.

"My annual civic dinner was a 'night at the races' and raised £1,309 for the Citizen Advice Bureau and the Lions Club of Banbury."

Banbury Town Council organises some wonderful annual events including Canal Day, Banbury and District Show, Food Fair, and the Christmas Lights Switch On. Old Town Parties and the Street Organ Festival also take place in the town centre.

Each one goes from strength to strength. The purpose of

the events is two-fold. First, they provide free days out for residents of the town and surrounding area, and secondly they attract people to the town centre and generate additional trade for shops and other businesses.

Our servicemen and women are not forgotten. Armed Forces Day, Remembrance Sunday and Battle of Britain Day are always well supported.

This has been a wonderful year that I will never forget.

It has been an absolute privilege to be the Mayor of Banbury and I have many memories that I will treasure for the rest of my life. I must thank everyone who has helped me during the year, particularly my wife Mary whose support has been unwavering.

Thank you all. I've loved every minute of it, and if I've helped a good cause or two somewhere along the way, then it has all been worthwhile.

Cllr Gordon Ross
Town Mayor 2016-2017



CLOSE TO THE PEOPLE

Banbury Town Council is the first tier of local government and is therefore closest to the people.

Banbury is one of the biggest town councils in the country with an annual budget of around two million pounds. The council strives to improve the quality of life for the people of Banbury and works to enhance the attractiveness of the town as a place in which to live, work, visit and invest.

Its objectives are

- * To provide a strong and independent voice for Banbury
- * To provide high standard and cost-effective services
- * To promote Banbury as a clean, safe, welcoming and prosperous town
- * To preserve and enhance the traditions, character and identity of the town
- * To work in partnership with others to achieve more for Banbury

Banbury Town Council was formed in 2000. It meant Banbury once again had its own voice after 26 years of being run by Cherwell District Council.

The town had been without its own voice since 1974 when the former Banbury Borough Council was disbanded under Local Government Reform.

The town council works with other councils and public agencies – including Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council – which also provide services in Banbury.

The services and facilities provided by the town council include

- Allotments
- Parks, open spaces and play areas
- Annual events
- Bus shelters
- Cemeteries
- Civic events promoted by the town mayor
- Grants to voluntary organisations
- Provision of litter and dog litter bins
- Public clocks
- The town hall

HOW IT WORKS

Banbury Town Council has 22 elected members and three main committees – the Resources Committee, the General Services Committee, and the Planning Committee.

The Resources Committee is responsible for finance, property, policy, personnel matters, civic functions, and has links with other public bodies, involvement in crime prevention and community safety, and communication with the local community

The General Services Committee looks after cemeteries, parks, play areas, open spaces, allotments, sports pitches, in bloom, litter bins and dog litter bins, culture, entertainment and arts

The Planning Committee concentrates on town and county planning and development, input into the local plan, The Built Heritage Working Party, highways and transport, provision of bus shelters.

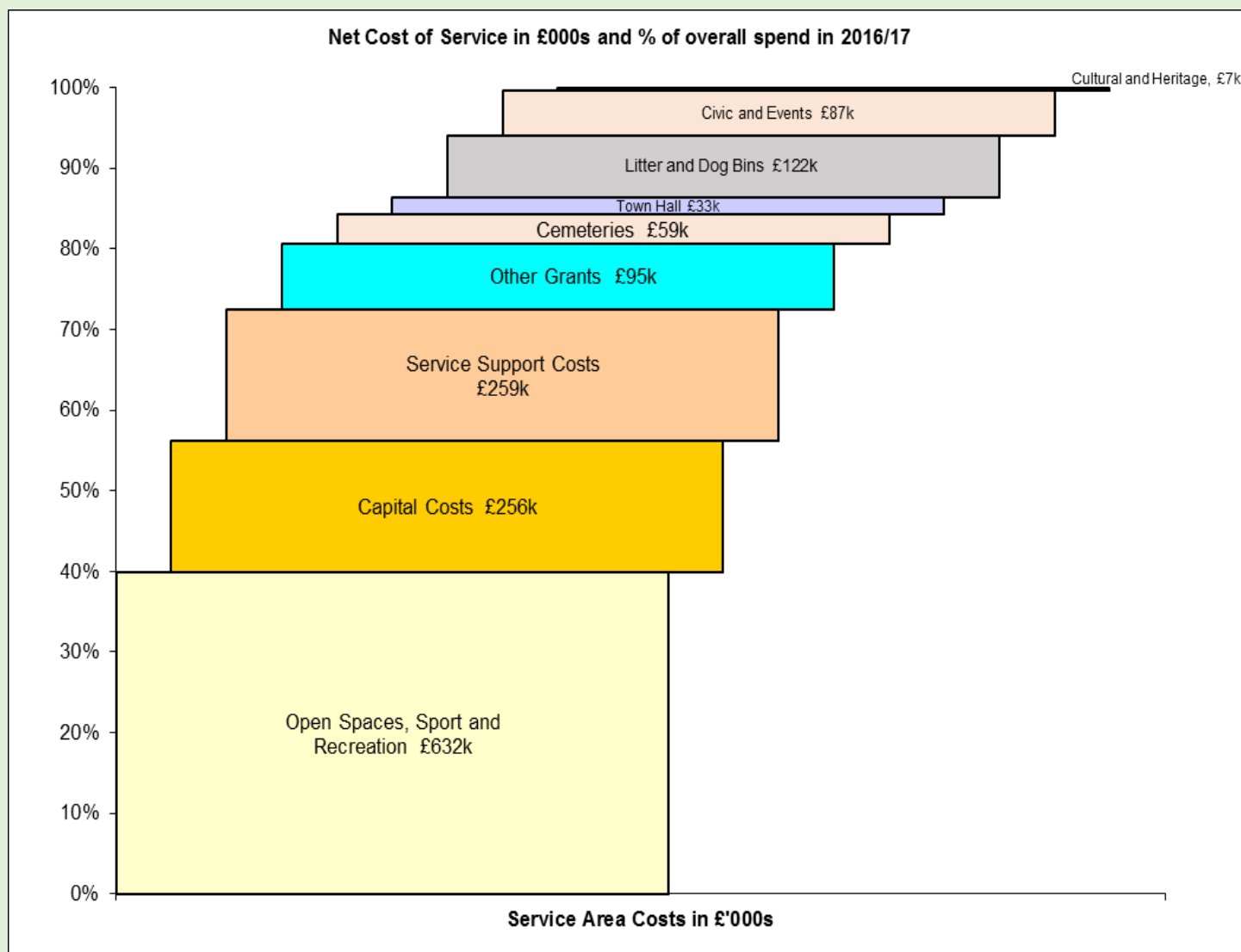
COMMITTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

The Resources Committee looks after money matters and the council's properties and landholdings. It controls the council's spending and oversees the annual budget. It works hard to keep council tax as low as possible.

In 2017, for the seventh year in succession, the council voted not to increase its share of the council tax bill. The average band D levy, therefore, stays at £122.12 – the equivalent of £2.35 per week per household.

Leader of the council Kieron Mallon said: “We are a responsible council that spends money wisely. We will not be cutting or reducing services. We will be undertaking a number of improvement projects including Easington Recreation Ground, the town hall, and providing new bus shelters.”

The diagram below shows the costs of services provided by the council.



The council is committed to conducting its business in accordance with the law, regulation and standards to ensure public money is safeguarded, properly accounted for, and spent efficiently and effectively. The council receives no government funding and does not receive money from business rates. The council's income comes from charges made for services, investments, and council tax.

The General Services Committee manages and maintains the town's 120 parks and open spaces. It oversees the maintenance of two cemeteries, six allotment sites, 66 play areas, recreation facilities and outdoor gyms, 234 litter and dog litter bins, five senior football pitches, two cricket squares, a bowls green, plus junior football pitches.

The general services committee is responsible for the council's popular annual events – the Banbury and District Show, Food Fair, Canal Day, the Christmas Lights Switch-On, and the Old Town Summer Party – which all attract extra visitors to the town centre. Armed Forces Day, Battle of Britain Day, and Remembrance Sunday are also well supported.

Banbury and District Show in June is one of the town's main events. It is an all-day, free to enter, fun-filled event with something for all the family. It fills Spiceball Park – Banbury's biggest open space – and with two arenas and hundreds of stalls plus other attractions. It is a busy, thrill-packed event that never fails to entertain.

Banbury Food Fair in August is hugely popular. An estimated 15,000 food and drink fans pack the Market Place every year to watch cooking competitions and demonstrations. They sample and buy goods from more than 100 stalls and enjoy alfresco Sunday lunches. TV personality, restaurateur, and cooking school owner Jean-Christophe Novelli was the guest star in 2016. He gave exciting cooking demonstrations in the town hall. The **Flower and Produce Show** runs in conjunction with the Food Fair and enables local growers, producers and crafters to exhibit their wares. Each year it attracts more than 600 entries in 93 classes.



Canal Day in October celebrates Banbury's canal history and re-creates the days when the waterway was an important route for industry – bringing coal and other goods from the West Midlands. The event attracts boats, boaters and visitors from far and wide – and local people turn out in their thousands to see the attractions and take in the atmosphere.

Christmas Lights Festival launches the festive season in Banbury. An afternoon of music, food and entertainment builds up the excitement before a local celebrity switches on the town's Christmas street lights.

Banbury in Bloom - Banbury's floral displays in the town centre and in its parks are designed to make Banbury an attractive place in which to live, work, visit and shop. The council continues to work with schools and the local community on a range of horticultural and environmental projects. Planting Day in People's Park attracts hundreds of pupils from the town's primary schools and sees the youngsters designing and laying out their own flower beds.



The Planning Committee meets every four weeks to consider planning and traffic-related issues in the town. In 2016/2017 the committee considered 373 planning applications compared to 381 in the previous year.

The committee works in partnership with other organisations to achieve more for Banbury.

The committee oversees the work of the Town Centre Partnership (organisations that deliver services in the town centre to improve Banbury as a place to live, work, visit and invest), the Built Heritage Working Party (members of town, district and county councils, the Civic Society, CPRE, Chamber of Commerce, and the Historical Society who work to preserve Banbury's heritage for future generations), and the Traffic Advisory Committee (which brings together members and officers of the town, district and county councils plus representatives of other local organisations to deal with highway and traffic issues).

BANBURY TOWN HALL FOR WEDDINGS, PARTIES, MEETINGS, ETC

Banbury Town Hall is a magnificent building that can be hired for weddings, parties, business conferences, public meetings, society dinners, and commercial sales. It is fully licensed for marriages and civil ceremonies and also for music, dancing, and the sale and consumption of alcohol.

The town hall is now a superb venue with facilities that are unique in the area. Suitable for large or small occasions the building, with its town centre position, is ideally situated and furnished and decorated to provide a day to remember. Anyone with a wedding or any other event in mind is invited to call at the town hall and ask to be shown around. The town hall is a Grade 2 listed building with Gothic features.



The offices of the town council are in the town hall. To contact the council call 01295 250340 or write to Mark Recchia, Town Clerk, Banbury Town Council, Town Hall, Bridge Street, Banbury, OX16 5QB or go to the website: www.banbury.gov.uk

Grant Aid

The town council assists a wide variety of local organisations with grants that enable them to function for the benefit of all sections of the Banbury community. Full details of this year's grant recipients can be found on the council's website together with details of the Small Grants Scheme.

HOW DECISIONS ARE MADE

The council's committees make decisions on issues put before them or make recommendations that are discussed at full council meetings – where the recommendations can be approved, rejected, or sent back to the committees for a rethink. Council officers – the men and women who work at the town hall – can advise councillors, but in practice they work with the decisions made by the elected members.

The mayor is elected by councillors, and he or she will have served as a councillor. The mayor is a civic figurehead – the public face of the council. He or she acts as chairman at council meetings but has no executive powers. He or she has no authority to organise, arrange, or promise anything for groups or individuals but can pass on requests which then have to go through the committee/council procedure.

All meetings of the council are held at the Town Hall, Bridge Street, Banbury. They take place on Tuesdays and commence at 6.30pm unless otherwise stated. Meetings are open to members of the public.

2017			
Council	General Services	Resources	Planning
Tuesday, 9 May Tuesday, 27 June Tuesday, 26 September Tuesday, 21 November	Tuesday, 6 June Tuesday, 5 September Tuesday, 31 October Tuesday, 12 December	Tuesday, 13 June Tuesday, 12 September Tuesday, 7 November	Wednesday, 3 May Wednesday, 31 May Wednesday, 28 June Wednesday, 26 July Wednesday, 23 August Wednesday, 20 September Wednesday, 18 October Wednesday, 15 November Wednesday, 13 December
2018			
Tuesday, 23 January Tuesday, 20 February Tuesday, 17 April	Tuesday, 30 January Tuesday, 27 March	Tuesday, 9 January Tuesday, 6 February Tuesday, 3 April	Wednesday, 10 January Wednesday, 7 February Wednesday, 7 March Wednesday, 4 April

The Annual Town Meeting will take place on Thursday 15 March 2018. This is not a Banbury Town Council meeting but an annual meeting of Banbury's residents; specifically the local government electors registered in the town of Banbury. It provides a valuable forum for residents to hear what the town council has been doing over the past year and its plans for the coming year. **The 2018 Annual Council Meeting and Mayoral Inauguration will be on Tuesday 8 May.**

TOWN CENTRE SNOW WARDENS

Banbury's pedestrianised streets will be kept free of snow and ice after Cherwell District Council answered a call for town centre snow wardens.

The two councils will work together each winter for the safety of shoppers, workers and visitors. The town council appealed in January for businesses to help with the gritting of pavements in the shopping streets – and Betts Butcher in Church Lane was the first business to sign up to the scheme.

Now, the district council – perhaps the biggest business in the area – has taken responsibility for Market Place, Parson's Street, High Street, Broad Street (High Street to George Street), Butchers Row and Bridge Street.

The town council's snow warden scheme, which has been running since 2013, has 100 volunteers who grit the roads and streets where they live. The scheme began when Oxfordshire County Council reduced its gritting programme.

HIGH STEWARD ROLE REVIVED

The ancient role of High Steward of Banbury has been revived after a gap of almost 50 years.

Long-serving former MP Sir Tony Baldry was appointed to the position by Banbury Town Council at a special ceremony in the town hall. He is the latest in a long line of High Stewards and will become a leading figure in the pageantry and civic traditions of the town.



The post had been occupied continuously from the time of Queen Mary Tudor (who reigned from 1553 to 1558) until 1968 when the previous holder of the post – Lord Saye and Sele of Broughton Castle, the father of the current lord – passed away.

In today's civic hierarchy a High Steward, who has to be at least a knight of the realm, is an 'officer of dignity and influence' but with few specific duties and no monetary rewards.

In the middle ages, a High Steward had great authority and oversaw the administration of local courts on behalf of the lord of the manor. By the 17th century the importance of the office had declined to a mainly ceremonial role and remains that way.

Sir Tony said: "Banbury is a wonderful town with a remarkable history. I was proud to represent its residents in Parliament for more than three decades.

"I am honoured to be appointed High Steward and will do my utmost to uphold the office in a proper manner. Although I will have no specific duties it will, I hope, provide me with the opportunity to play a constructive part in the life of the town."

SUPPORT FOR THE HORTON

Banbury Town Council stood shoulder to shoulder with 'Save the Horton' campaigners in a bid to prevent savage cuts to services at the town's hospital.

A protest banner flying from the balcony at the town hall demonstrated the strength of feeling of elected members and officers at the council.

Conservative and Labour councillors were united in the bid to stop the Oxfordshire University Hospitals Trust from downgrading essential services at the Horton.

Leader of the council and Conservative group leader Kieron Mallon said: "Banbury is the biggest town in Oxfordshire and a fully-serviced hospital is a necessity, not a luxury.



Labour group leader Steve Kilsby said: "The proposed cuts make no sense and will put the health and safety of townspeople and village residents at risk. Even the trust's own medical staff said the planned cuts were a bad idea."

£10,000 TO SAVE CHURCH ROOF

Banbury Town Council has given £10,000 to help save the roof of St Mary's Church.



A £60,000 emergency fund was launched early in 2016 after timbers supporting the roof of the town's parish church were found to be in a dangerous condition. Damage to the roof of the church was discovered in 2015 but workers carrying out the original repairs found new problems that could have led to the collapse of the roof.

St Mary's Church is one of Banbury's most important buildings. It is a Grade 1 Listed Building and the town's civic church. It is a place used for live entertainment and is a true centrepiece of the community. The town council hopes its donation will encourage others to contribute.

Thanks to tight budgeting during the last financial year the council had £10,000 which it could donate without cutting back on other projects and services.

LUCY IS YOUNGEST COUNCILLOR



Nineteen-year-old Lucy Donaldson became Banbury's youngest-ever councillor after local elections in May.

Her election as a member for the Hardwick West ward helped the Conservatives stay in control of the town council with a 12-10 majority.

Lucy, daughter of long-serving councillor and former mayor John Donaldson, said: "I did a lot of canvassing and hoped to pick up the young persons' and the women's votes.

The Conservatives held on to power despite ward changes. The council went from eight wards to 12 after changes ordered by the Boundaries Commission.

Leader of the council Kieron Mallon said: "The result of the election was hard to predict. None of us were sure about the effects of the ward changes.

Labour Group leader Steve Kilsby said: "It was a long and difficult campaign, but all the parties behaved honourably and can hold their heads high."

JACK FRISWELL AND GEORGE PARISH



Two Banbury stalwarts passed away in 2016. Former mayor and dedicated fundraiser Jack Friswell died in August, and tireless Horton Hospital campaigner George Parish – also a former mayor – passed away in November.

George Parish



Jack Friswell

NEW FUNDING FOR SPICEBALL PARK MAKEOVER

The second phase of the River Cherwell makeover in Spiceball Park got underway after additional funding of £93,300 was secured from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The grant, combined with £64,000 from Banbury Town Council, £4,000 from Cherwell District Council and £27,295 from Grondon Waste enabled the new phase of the Wild Banbury project to focus on the Spiceball Park and Hanwell Brook wetland. The scheme is a joint venture with BBOWT – the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust.



Neil Clennell, BBOWT's director of conservation and education in Oxfordshire, said: "When we started work last autumn the river was almost hidden from people walking and cycling through the park. Now, many more people can watch wildlife from the riverside paths."

Cllr Colin Clarke, chairman of the town council's general services committee said: "We are delighted with the progress so far in Spiceball Park. This is an enormous environmental step in the right direction for all park users."

Andrew Short, estates director at Grondon Waste Management, said: "Environmental initiatives are very important to us as a business, and this is a fine example of what can be achieved to improve an area for the local community.

Judith Hartley, BBOWT's project manager, said: "We know the local community really loves these wild spaces. I'm looking forward to many more experiences which will help Banbury's wildlife to flourish."

MEMBERS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL



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