



Banbury Town Council

Annual Report 2018-2019

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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 and a half 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 Re-organisation. 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 council will continue to appoint representatives to serve on a wide range of outside organisations including local voluntary bodies. Much of the work of a town councillor takes place outside meetings of the town council, and much of that work is undertaken representing the town council on various bodies in the town. We appoint over 25 representatives each year to organisations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, Banbury Air Training Corps, the Civic Society and the Sunshine Centre.



Top - Banbury Town Hall, and below - the new skate ramp in Spiceball Park

REVIEW OF THE YEAR BY THE TOWN MAYOR (Cllr Shaida Hussain)

It was an absolute privilege to be Mayor of Banbury for 2018/19. It was a massive honour that I will never forget.

The year was extremely busy and time passed very quickly. I made many new friends – people from all walks of life – and I learned a great deal about what goes on in Banbury.

I fulfilled many engagements and supported as many local charities, voluntary organisations, and Banbury-based groups as my schedule would allow.

The number of people involved in charity work is quite astounding and the work they do provides essential assistance for many people who need support in a variety of ways. I was humbled by the dedication and enthusiasm of the volunteers who ask for no reward for their efforts.

I would like to thank everyone who invited me to their events and made me feel welcome. Every engagement was different and I came away from many of them with increased knowledge and a new perspective of life.

I enjoyed meeting members of the public at the fabulous family events organised by Banbury Town Council.

They included Canal Day, Banbury and District Show, two food fairs, the Christmas Lights Switch On, the town's first-ever music festival and the Flower and Produce Show. Being part of those were opportunities to relax and have fun. I organised a walk in Spiceball Park that raised a substantial sum of money for my charities.

Remembrance Sunday in 2018 commemorated the 100th anniversary of the end of World War One and it was a special privilege to be part of that.

Soldiers from Banbury liberated the town of Erquelinnes in Belgium at the end of the war and I was asked to send a speech to be read out at the remembrance celebrations there. My words were framed and now hang in Erquelinnes' museum.

I shall look back on my year as mayor with fond memories. There were sad and sobering moments and there were times of great amusement and laughter. It was seeing so many aspects of life that made the year so memorable and I have much to look back on – and I must consider how to put what I have learned to good purpose in the future.

I must thank everyone who has helped me during the year, particularly my family and friends.

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**Cllr Shaida Hussain
Town Mayor 2018/2019**

REPORT BY CHAIRMAN OF THE RESOURCES COMMITTEE (Cllr Kieron Mallon)

As chairman of the Resources Committee and leader of the town council, I can report that the committee has met six times since the last Annual Town Meeting and has discussed a very wide range of matters. It is impossible to list them all so I will simply highlight some matters of note.

The committee is responsible for

- Finance
- Property
- Policy
- Personnel matters

We all know that many local authorities around the country are this year increasing their council tax demands – but I am happy to tell you that Banbury Town Council is not one of them.

The town council's portion of the total council tax bill will stay at £122.12 for Band D properties for 2019/2020. It means the town's council tax levy hasn't increased since 2010 while services during the same period have been very much improved.



Cllr Mallon

Thanks to wise policy-making in previous years we can continue to improve our services without asking our residents to pay more. I think this is a remarkable achievement.

Let us take a closer look at this year's budget. Some of these points will also be covered by Cllr Clarke in his report.

People's Park is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year and we are planning big improvements there.

We have set aside funds to create a park café, provide toilet facilities, and make further improvements to footpaths and landscaping. We are also spending £125,000 on play area refurbishments at other sites including Howard Road and we are making improvements at St Louis Meadow.

We have purchased extra land in Hardwick to extend the existing cemetery. The new land will provide burial space for townspeople for the next 70 years.

In addition, burial charges for town residents aged under-16 have been scrapped.

To encourage sport, we are halving the cost of hiring cricket pitches for T20 matches and we have taken over the management of sports pitches at Merton Street which will provide further income for the council.

We've built a new state-of-the-art skate ramp costing just over £100,000 in Spiceball Park.

We can do these things because we are now reaping the rewards of good policy decisions made in the past."

Look at it this way. Our council tax precept works out at £2.35 per week.

So for the price of a cup of coffee every week – and that's per household, not per person – we provide cemeteries, parks, children's play areas, the town's free annual events, sports pitches, allotments, bus shelters, dog waste bins and we support crime prevention initiatives.

To me, that is excellent value for money. Cllr Clarke's report lists the number of parks, play areas, etc.

Looking ahead, we will continue to make the town a better place in which to live, work and play and a more attractive place to visit.

It is our duty to look after the town's public buildings and in 2018 we employed contractors to clean the stonework of the town hall.

The work has made this magnificent grade two listed building a truly outstanding focal point that we can be proud of.

It is anticipated that the clean-up will boost the town hall as a hiring venue – for weddings and civil ceremonies, for business meetings and conferences, exhibitions, commercial marketing and sales – and for individuals and families who want to celebrate specific occasions.

The town hall is a commercially viable proposition as a hire venue and is producing valuable income for the council.

Our annual grants scheme helps tremendously with the amount of work that the town's good causes – mostly run by volunteers – can do and our new initiative to award more smaller grants of up to £500 is working well.

It means that many more good causes can be helped and the grants, therefore, will benefit a greater number of people who, for various reasons, need assistance with their everyday lives.

There are still challenges.

We are continuing to work with the BID project – the Business Improvement District – to regenerate the town centre and keep the old streets alive and thriving.

Our annual events play an important part in encouraging people to come to the town centre – and in addition we will put everything we can into other initiatives that will promote 'old' Banbury while embracing the 'new.'

Banbury Town Council can be pleased with its financial situation.

The council's finances have been helped by the number of new houses that are contributing to the tax coffers but forward planning in previous years has also kept the tax figure down.

Policy decisions we have taken in the past are paying off and, all in all, this council has proved yet again that it can be trusted with taxpayers' money.

I would remind members of the public that all town councillors are proud to represent the people of Banbury, and they do so in a voluntary capacity.

Our councillors bring experience from many different fields and they give up their valuable time free of charge.

We continue to encourage and support the crime prevention schemes in and around the town, and the town council was a founder member of the Banbury, now Cherwell, Crime Partnership.

We also continue to be key partners in a range of other formal partnerships, including the Town Centre Partnership. We continue to work with our partners, including Banbury BID, to improve the quality of life in the town and to preserve the unique character of Banbury.

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE (Cllr Colin Clarke)

I am pleased to present this annual report of the General Services Committee, which manages all day-to-day services and facilities provided by the town council.

2018 was a good year and we can look back with satisfaction and forward with anticipation.

Our annual events are something that townspeople of all ages look forward to and support in huge numbers.



Cllr Clarke

The events are going from strength to strength and it seems that whatever we touch turns to gold.

A new event in 2018 – the Friday night Music Festival – was a massive success. The Market Place was packed with music fans from early until late.

It was loud, it was good and the people wanted more. And they will get more.

We are organising the music festival again for 2019 and after last year's success, I'm sure it will be even busier this year.

In 2018, we brought back Town Mayor's Sunday after a few year's absence and this too was a resounding success.

Our other events – the Banbury and District Show, Taste of Spring mini food fair, Armed Forces Day, the August Food Fair with the Flower and Produce Show, Battle of Britain Day, and the Christmas Lights Festival – were, as always, extremely well supported.

Canal Day will be put on hold for 2019. Building work for the Castle Quay 2 project will go ahead this year. It will reduce the space available and create health and safety issues.

Remembrance Day was very special in 2018 – recognising the 100th anniversary of the end of World war One.

This year we are organising a very special event. In July we will celebrate the 100th anniversary of People's Park.

The park was opened in 1919 to celebrate peace at the end of World War One. Much of the land was given to the town by businessman George Ball who declared in his will that the park should be a place of recreation for all classes of the public.

Our centenary celebrations will – as he wished – be for everyone.

The General Services Committee is the council's 'green' committee.

Banbury Town Council is responsible for the maintenance and management of the town's parks, recreation grounds, cemeteries, open spaces and allotments. This includes over fifty play and teenage areas, ninety open spaces, and twelve neighbourhood parks, including People's Park and Spiceball Country Park. St Mary's Churchyard is also looked after by the council.

Our parks and open spaces total in excess of 90 hectares – more than 220 acres – equivalent to approximately 140 football pitches. We also look after around 10,000 trees, and 8,662 metres (around five and a half miles) of hedgerows.

We have six allotment sites. Two are directly controlled by the council and four are run by allotment associations. Plots are in great demand and there are waiting lists for all sites.

So, what have we done in the last year and what are we going to do in the future.

I will outline the main projects for the coming year.

They include a café and toilets in People's Park. Members of the public have asked for these facilities and this anniversary year is the perfect time to go ahead with the first major improvements to the park for many years.

Other projects this year will include the refurbishment of play areas at a number of sites including Howard Road plus improvements at St Louis Meadow.

We are reviewing our grounds maintenance contract – particularly at the possibility of bringing some parts of the contract 'in house' by employing people to maintain our cemeteries and some parks.

This will give us more control over the work done in selected and important areas.

One considerable achievement this year is that after many months of negotiating we have purchased extra burial land next to the Hardwick Hill cemetery. The new land will be sufficient for burials in Banbury for the next 70 years.

We have just taken over from the developers the sports facilities off Merton Street – a football pitch and changing facilities.

Work is continuing in St Mary's Churchyard. Last year we carried out a great deal of wall restoration there and this year we are looking to open up the views and undertake comprehensive re-landscaping.

The first phase of improving footpaths in People's Park has been completed and the second phase will go ahead this year.

New paving around the war memorial was installed in time for Remembrance Sunday 2018 and that, with the improvements to the railings, has made the memorial something to be extra proud of.

Work being carried out along the riverside in Spiceball Park is continuing.

In a joint venture with the Berks, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust the council has participated in a project that can best be called a wildlife makeover.

The work began in October 2015 and has opened up the riverside area, improved natural habitats for fish, birds and river plants, and created a relaxing space where people can enjoy being close to nature.

The trust has now appointed Judith Verdon as the full-time leader of the project. Jude has been part of the makeover from the start, but has combined Banbury with other projects elsewhere. She will now be able to concentrate solely on Spiceball.

We went ahead with the regular school events including Sunflower Workshops, Hanging Basket Workshops, and Planting Day in the Park – all for pupils at the town's primary schools. Those events will continue in 2019.

The provision of attractive, safe parks and open spaces remains a high priority and the council's park ranger team continues to work with volunteers at the community garden in People's Park.

We continue to have a substantial number of snow wardens on our books – though more are always wanted – and more businesses have signalled their intention to help keep roads and pathways clear of snow and ice.

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE (Cllr Tony Ilott)

I am pleased to be presenting this report as chairman of the town council's Planning Committee.

The committee meets every four weeks to consider planning applications, traffic orders, and any statutory consultations that may be ongoing. Between February 2018 and February 2019, the committee considered 340 planning applications compared to 449 of the previous year.

The town council has a system in place whereby members are informed of applications in their ward.

If they have no objections or concerns and it is a routine matter, it is handled by the town clerk and myself as committee chairman under our scheme of delegation.

However, if a town councillor has concerns about an application, if it is deemed to be of strategic importance to the town, or if it is a contentious issue, the application is considered by the full planning committee.

The planning committee tries to make decisions that are in the best interests of the town as a whole.

The main issues this year have been:

- Monte Blackburn Ltd development of the land adjacent to the M40 J11 and west of Daventry Road Banbury. Part A: Full planning application - the development of a new priority junction to the A361, internal roads and associated landscaping with two commercial buildings having a maximum floor space of 33,110m² and with a flexible use within Class B2 or B8 and ancillary Class B1 offices. Part B: Outline planning application – the development of up to two commercial buildings having a maximum floor space of 16,890 square metres and having a flexible use within Class B2 or B8 and ancillary Class B1 offices, with all other matters reserved for future approval. This is described as an opportunity to build on Banbury's strength as a storage, distribution and industrial hub in Oxfordshire and the wider area. This revised application does not include the petrol station which was part of the original application for this site.
- A reserved matters application for the Banbury 16 allocated site - layout, scale, external appearance and landscaping for 216 units. This will assist with providing Banbury with its quota of new homes.
- An outline proposal by Trinity College for up to 320 dwellings at the Banbury 18 allocated site at Drayton Lodge Farmhouse. The proposal includes affordable housing, a local centre of 0.5Ha providing (retail and community facilities), landscaping, public open space, playing fields, allotments, access and associated infrastructure. This development will assist Banbury in fulfilling its housing supply quota by providing an urban extension.
- A full planning application by Bellway Homes Ltd for 83 dwellings. The site is located within the Banbury 2 policy site on Hardwick Hill. This development will further contribute to Banbury's housing targets.
- An approved application for up to 63 apartments on the caravan park at Station Approach by Land Group (Banbury) Ltd. This will be one of the first developments within the Banbury 1 Canalside area. The development will open the gates for the regeneration of this area and provide central, sustainably located accommodation.



Cllr Ilott

- An approved application for 25 flats on the Robert Keith Cars site in Cherwell Street by Darlow Hemphill Ltd. The development is free of car parking and will encourage residents to use other modes of transport. The development is visually attractive and provides edge of town centre accommodation.
- A reserved matters application for 232 dwellings at the Banbury 5 site off Warwick Road by Persimmon Homes Ltd. This application covers the second phase of the development and deals with the appearance, landscaping and layout of the scheme.

The planning committee notes the work of the Banbury Traffic Advisory Committee which brings together members and officers from the county, district and town councils with representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, bus companies, rail users, and the Civic Society to discuss all transport issues in relation to the town.

By working in partnership with other organisations we achieve more for Banbury, and the planning committee also provides representatives on the Town Centre Partnership. This is a partnership of organisations delivering services in the town centre.

The aim of the partnership is to improve Banbury town centre for the benefit of the people of Banbury and to create a desirable, and attractive place to live, work, visit, and invest in.

BANBURY'S ANNUAL EVENTS

Please check Banbury Town Council's website www.banbury.gov.uk for changes, timings etc. The events are organised by Banbury Town Council and **all are free to enter**.

A TASTE OF SPRING (28 April, 10.30am to 4.30pm)

A mini-food festival that celebrates great food and drink. Stalls fill the Market Place with plenty of choice to browse, sample and buy. This event is a 'taster' for the Food and Drink Festival in August.

FILM FRIDAY (31 May, 5pm)

A one-off, two film spectacular in People's Park to launch the park's 100th anniversary celebrations.

BANBURY AND DISTRICT SHOW (9 June, 10.30am to 4.30pm)

This fabulous all-day event fills Spiceball Park with arena entertainment, funfair, stalls, demonstrations, displays, plenty to eat and drink. Fun for all the family.

ARMED FORCES DAY (29 June, 10am to 2pm)

An event that highlights the armed forces. Members of the public mingle with serving military personnel and veterans. Marching bands, military vehicles, displays, demonstrations, and opportunities to 'have a go' at various military skills. Great for children and grown-ups.

PEOPLE'S PARK CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS (14 July, 10.30pm to 3.30pm)

A family day out in People's Park hosted by the mayor of Banbury with fun, games, music, food and drink. In 2019 this will be replaced by a celebration to mark the park's 100th anniversary.

BANBURY MUSIC MIX (26 July, 6.30pm to 10.30pm)

The best in live music in Banbury Market Place. 6.30pm until late. Food and drink available. Great sounds from local bands

BANBURY FOOD AND DRINK FESTIVAL (18 August, 10.30am to 4.30pm)

View, sample and buy great food and drink made by small producers. Well over 100 stalls in Banbury Market Place. Chef cookery demonstrations in the town hall.

BANBURY FLOWER AND PRODUCE SHOW (18 August, 1pm to 4.30pm)

Runs in conjunction with the Food and Drink Festival the event showcases the work of local gardeners, food producers and crafters. Exhibits on display after the judging.

BATTLE OF BRITAIN DAY (15 September, 11am to 12.30pm)

A parade marches up High Street and along Horsefair to St Mary's Church for a service to commemorate the Battle of Britain in 1940.

BANBURY CANAL DAY

The 2019 event will not take place because of building work along the canalside.

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY (10 November, 10am to 1pm)

A town centre event that commemorates those who served in all wars. A procession through town is followed by a service in St Mary's Church and a wreath-laying ceremony at the war memorial.

CHARITY CHRISTMAS BAZAAR (23 November, 9.30am to 3.30pm)

Local charities run stalls in the town hall to raise funds. The bazaar is hosted by the town mayor and there are plenty of ideas for Christmas gifts and stocking fillers.

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS FESTIVAL (24 November, 1pm to 6pm)

An event that launches Christmas in Banbury. Funfair, live music, food, drink, entertainment, Father Christmas, and a local celebrity to switch on the festive street lights. A firework display follows the switch-on. All in the town centre.

DATES OF COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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 the public.

2019			
Council	General Services	Resources	Planning
Tuesday, 7 May Tuesday, 25 June Tuesday, 17 September Tuesday, 19 November	Tuesday, 4 June Tuesday, 3 September Tuesday, 29 October Tuesday, 10 December	Tuesday, 11 June Tuesday, 10 September Tuesday, 5 November	Wednesday, 1 May Wednesday, 29 May Wednesday, 26 June Wednesday, 24 July Wednesday, 21 August Wednesday, 18 September Wednesday, 16 October Wednesday, 13 November Wednesday, 18 December
2020			
Tuesday, 14 January Tuesday, 11 February Tuesday, 7 April	Tuesday, 28 January Tuesday, 24 March	Tuesday, 7 January Tuesday, 4 February Tuesday, 31 March	Wednesday, 8 January Wednesday, 5 February Wednesday, 4 March Wednesday, 1 April

The Annual Town Meeting will take place on Monday 9 March 2020. 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 2020 Annual Council Meeting and Mayoral Inauguration will be on Wednesday 20 May.

COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES

Banbury Town Council looks after parks, play areas and open spaces, sports grounds, annual events, the town hall, cemeteries, allotments, bus shelters, civic events, crime prevention initiatives, dog litter bins.

Cherwell District Council oversees building regulations and planning, by-laws, council tax, environmental health, food safety and hygiene, footpaths and bridleways, grants for various activities, home safety, housing, local licensing, markets and fairs, museums, planning, refuse collection, parking, and sports centres.

Oxfordshire County Council is responsible for consumer protection, education, fire service, footpaths and bridleways, libraries, minerals and waste policies, police, refuse disposal, social services, transport and transport planning, highways, traffic, public transport, road safety, street lighting, footway lighting.

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

MEMBERS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL



Colin Clarke
Calthorpe South
Conservative

01295 258916



Tony Mephram
Calthorpe South
Conservative

07487 773193



Nick Harrison
Calthorpe
North
Conservative
01295 256069

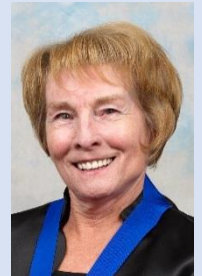


John Colegrave
Easington South
Conservative

01295 262049



Kieron Mallon
Easington
South
Conservative
01295 269177



Tina Wren
Easington
North
Conservative
01295 250434



Hannah
Banfield
Town Centre
Labour
07725 608105



Claire Bell
Grimsbury
Labour
01295 271227



Andrew Beere
Grimsbury
Labour
01295 255996



Shaida Hussain
Grimsbury Labour
01295 277096



Lucy
Donaldson
Hardwick West
Conservative
01295 271712



David Beverly
Hardwick West
Conservative
07969 081864



Tony Illott
Hardwick West
Conservative
07854 258889



Nathan Bignell
Hardwick West
Conservative
07447 247057



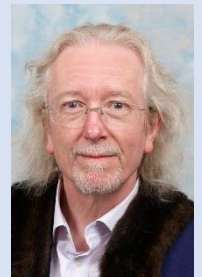
Arash Fatemian
Hardwick East
Conservative
07500 930522



Surinder Dhesi
Neithrop North
Labour
01295 596791



A Milne Home
Neithrop South
Conservative
01295 258027



Steve Kilsby
Park Road
Labour
01295 255512



Barry Richards
Ruscote
Labour
01295 369518



Mark Cherry
Ruscote
Labour
01295 261937

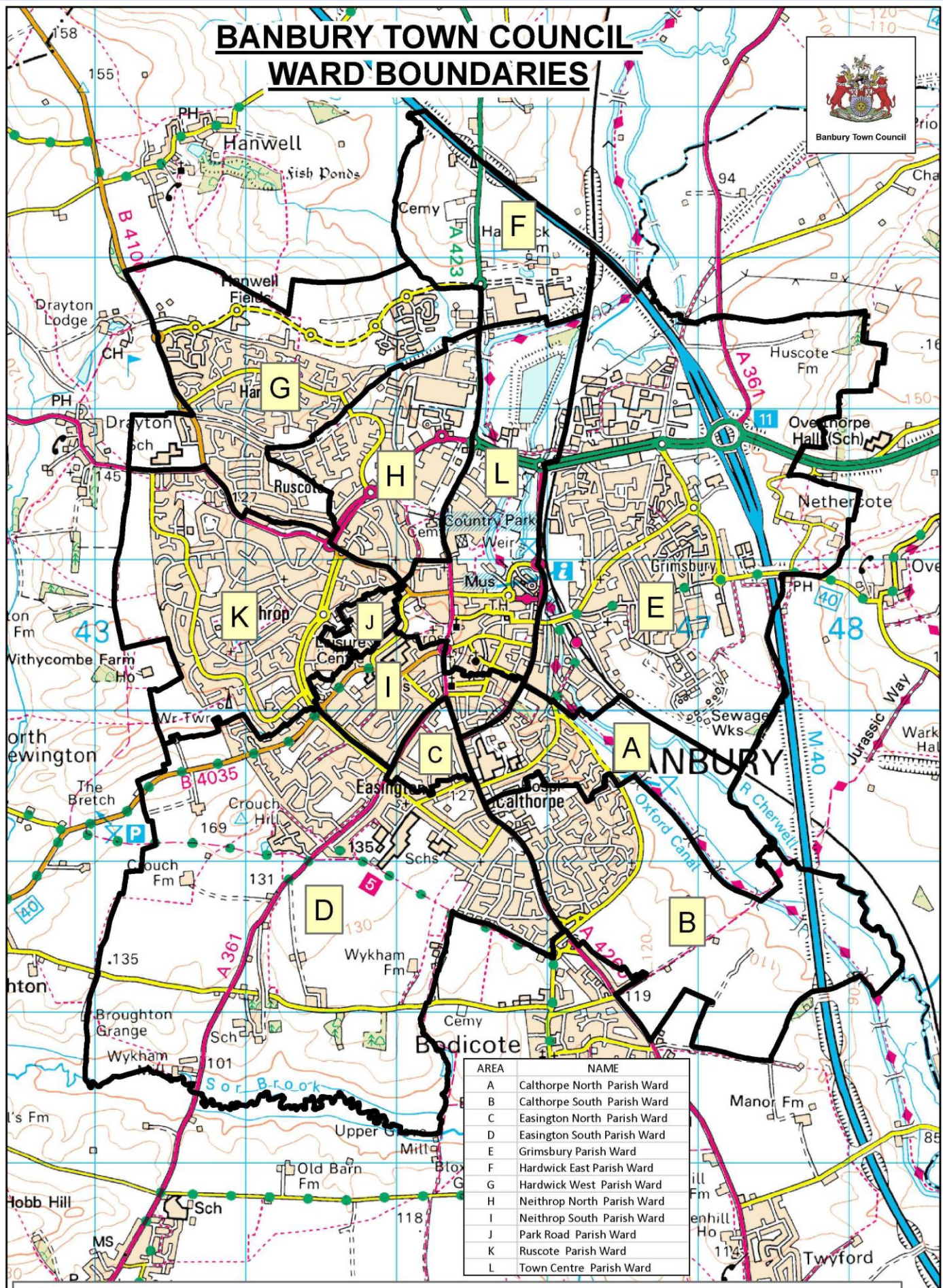


Gordon Ross
Ruscote
Labour
01295 276706



Sean Woodcock
Ruscote
Labour
sean.woodcock.labour
@gmail.com

BANBURY TOWN COUNCIL WARD BOUNDARIES



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