



Banbury Town Council

Annual Report 2015/2016

(Distributed to every home in Banbury)

REVIEW OF THE YEAR BY TOWN MAYOR CLLR TONY MEPHAM

My second term as mayor of Banbury has given me the opportunity to renew old acquaintances and make new friends.

It has been an absolute privilege to be town mayor, to meet so many interesting people, and become involved in so many worthwhile projects.



At Bark in the Park with bulldog 'Tony'

My wife Lesley has again enjoyed being the town's mayoress.

We want to pay tribute to the number of people who take part in voluntary and charity work, and we have been inspired by the amount of good they do.

The year has gone quickly and we have supported as many charities, voluntary organisations, and Banbury-based groups as my schedule would allow.

We have introduced several new events to the annual

calendar and perhaps the most successful of those was Bark in the Park.

It was a day when local people were invited to bring their dogs to People's Park and celebrate the part pets play in everyday family life. We were quite surprised by the number of people who came and the enormous variety of dogs they brought with them.

I have supported the annual events organised by Banbury Town Council – Banbury and District Show, Town Mayor's Sunday and Hobby Horse Festival, Canal Day, Food Fair, and the Christmas Lights Switch On – and I hope they continue to go from strength to strength.

I was also honoured to support Armed Forces Day, Battle of Britain Sunday, and Remembrance Day.

Lesley and myself wish the new mayor, Gordon Ross, every success and can only hope that he gets as much enjoyment from his year in office that we have.

We wish the town of Banbury and its people good fortune. It is such a great place in which to live – a town with a remarkable history, and we are sure, a prosperous future.



At my inauguration



Inspecting the troops at Armed Forces Day

WORKING FOR AND WITH THE COMMUNITY

Banbury Town Council is a local council that welcomes the views of its residents – and takes steps to discover what those views are.

In 2015 the council carried out a survey in which it asked townspeople what they thought and what they wanted from the town's parks and green spaces.

The council took notice of the views expressed and as a result there have been improvements to the safety and security in People's Park. New lights and improved CCTV have been installed. A similar survey is being carried out in 2016.

As one of three councils governing north Oxfordshire (Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council are the others) the town council is the one closest to the electorate and the only one that represents just Banbury people.

The town council looks after local services and works hard to improve the quality of life for people living in Banbury. It seeks to enhance the attractiveness of the town as a place to live, work, visit and invest.

The council

- Provides a strong and independent voice for Banbury
- Preserves and enhances the traditions, character and identity of the town.
- Promotes Banbury as a clean, safe, welcoming and prosperous town.
- Provides high standard and cost effective services.
- Works in partnership with others to achieve more for 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



A stunt rider at the Banbury and District Show 2015

THE INS AND OUTS OF YOUR COUNCIL

Banbury Town Council has 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, Annual Events, Civic Functions, Links with other Public bodies, Involvement in Crime Prevention and Community Safety, Communication with the local community

The General Services Committee looks after Cemeteries, Parks, Play Areas, Open Spaces, Allotments, Sports Pitches, In Bloom, Bus Shelters, Litter Bins and Dog Litter Bins, Winter Maintenance, 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.

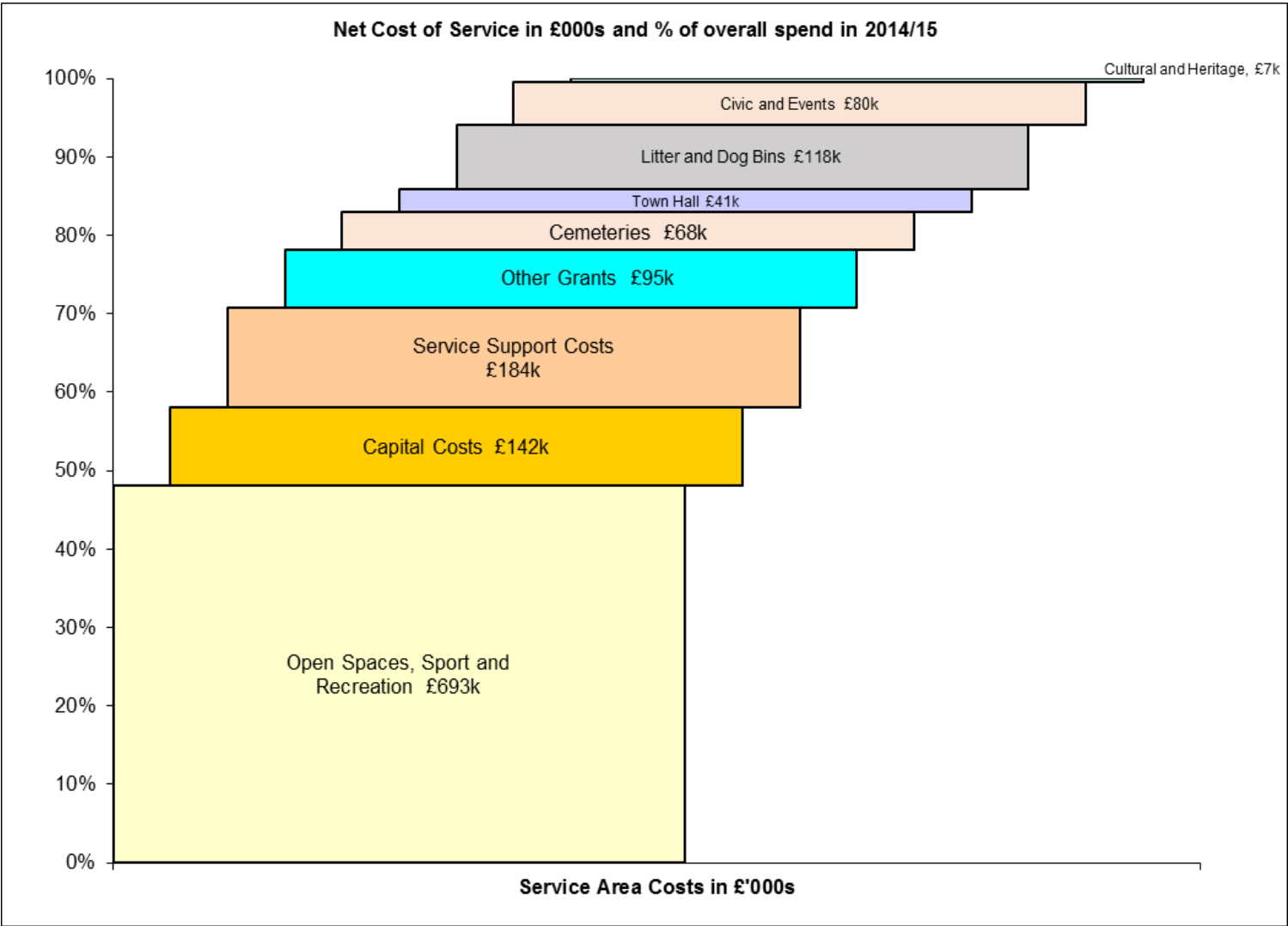
WHAT THE COMMITTEES DO

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 2016, for the sixth 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 which is just £2.35 per week per household.

The committee is also 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 Parties – which all attract extra visitors to the town centre. Armed Forces Day, Battle of Britain Day, and Remembrance Sunday are also well supported.

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



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 Planning Committee meets every four weeks to consider planning and traffic-related issues in the town. In 2015/2016 the committee considered 381 planning applications compared to 390 in the previous year.

It submitted detailed representations to the planning authority regarding the new local plan, the community infrastructure levy, and Oxford's unmet housing need.

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 and representatives of other local organisations to deal with highway and traffic issues).

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 TOWN'S ANNUAL EVENTS

Banbury and District Show in Spiceball Park is an all-day, free to enter, fun-filled event with something on offer for all the family. It covers two fields in the park – and with two arenas and hundreds of stalls plus other attractions it is a busy, thrill-packed event that never fails to entertain.



Crowds gather to watch Rustie Lee

Banbury Food Fair in August has become a firm favourite with food and drink lovers and is hugely popular with local people. An estimated 15,000 food and drink fans pack the Market Place to watch cooking competitions and demonstrations. They also sampled and bought goods from more than 100 stalls. TV chef Rustie Lee was the star attraction in 2015. The Flower and



Rustie Lee in action

Produce Show runs in conjunction with the Food Fair and attracts more than 600 entries in 93 classes.

The first-ever **Bark in the Park** was a huge success with hundreds of pet lovers bringing their dogs to a fun day in People's Park. The afternoon's entertainment included a dog show with fun classes for pedigree animals and crossbreeds.



Carley Poulton and her pets at Bark in the Park

The event ended with a parade of dogs and presentations to pet judged to be the Best in Show. Carley Poulton is pictured, left, with her pets.

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 goods from the West Midlands further south. It 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 Switch-On in November welcomed X-Factor winner Sam Bailey as the celebrity guest. Thousands of fans braved the rain and turned up in Bridge Street for the switch-on and many more gathered throughout the afternoon to watch the programme of stage entertainment.

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.

BANBURY TOWN HALL FOR WEDDINGS, PARTIES, MEETINGS

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, 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 to 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.

The council is a keen supporter of local charities. Leader of the council Kieron Mallon said: "In 2016 we will double the amount of funding we give to Banbury's good causes. We have £60,000 to share between charities and other groups who work for the benefit of the Banbury Community."

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 committee 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.

2016			
Council	General Services	Resources	Planning
Tuesday, 10 May Tuesday, 28 June Tuesday, 27 September Tuesday, 15 November	Tuesday, 7 June Tuesday, 6 September Tuesday, 25 October Tuesday, 13 December	Tuesday, 14 June Tuesday, 13 September Tuesday, 1 November	Wednesday, 4 May Wednesday, 1 June Wednesday, 29 June Wednesday, 27 July Wednesday, 24 August Wednesday, 21 September Wednesday, 19 October Wednesday, 16 November Wednesday, 14 December
2017			
Tuesday, 24 January Tuesday, 28 February Tuesday, 18 April	Tuesday, 7 February Tuesday, 28 March	Tuesday, 10 January Tuesday, 14 February Tuesday, 4 April	Wednesday, 11 January Wednesday, 8 February Wednesday, 8 March Wednesday, 5 April

The Annual Town Meeting will take place on Thursday 16 March 2017. 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 2017 Annual Council Meeting and Mayoral Inauguration will be on Tuesday 9 May.**

SPICEBALL RIVERSIDE LOOKING GOOD

The riverside in Banbury's biggest open space has been given a facelift to improve habitats for fish, birds and river plants – and create a relaxing space where people can enjoy being close to nature.

Spiceball Park's waterside is now a pleasant and attractive place where visitors can enjoy all the facilities. The project created shallow banks to encourage more plants to grow and to help clean the water.

Fishing in the Cherwell (right) and (next page) part of the catch



Fish in the River Cherwell were counted in preparation for the makeover. The fish count was done so that before-and-after figures could be used to gauge the success of the project.



Nature conservationist Vaughan Lewis carried out the electrofishing study. They used electric shock treatment to stun fish in a 75-yard stretch of the river so they could carry out the count.

They said the number of fish was above average for rivers similar to the Cherwell. The species found included pike, perch, roach, dace, gudgeon, bleak, bullhead and bream.

One of the 'fishermen' Phil Court said: "It was a positive day and we were pleased with the variety of fish found in the Cherwell."

The Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust, which oversaw the project, obtained a grant of £31,000 from the Environment Agency.

CLEAN FOR THE QUEEN

A call for volunteers went out in early 2016 to schools, businesses and community groups across Cherwell to support a Clean for the Queen campaign that made the town spick and span for Her Majesty's 90th birthday.



From left: Cllr Tony Ilott, Cllr Kieron Mallon, MP Victoria Prentis, Ben Dyche of CDC's street cleansing team, and Cllr Tina Wren at one of Banbury's new-style recycling litter bins

The initiative was backed by Banbury Town and Cherwell District Councils in partnership with North Oxfordshire MP Victoria Prentis. The Clean for the Queen campaign was devised by Country Life magazine in association with Keep Britain Tidy.

Cllr Kieron Mallon, leader of Banbury Town Council, said: "Like the Jubilee a few years ago, the Queen's 90th birthday was a momentous occasion and many people joined the tribute to Her Majesty. Lots of people pulled together and each tackled a small area to really make a big difference."

Mrs Prentis said: "This was a great opportunity to make sure Banbury was clean and tidy in time for HM The Queen's official 90th birthday on 21 April. It was fantastic to see the country coming together."

New-style litter bins were installed around the town as part of the clear-up.

And a massive litter pick got underway in Banbury in March with a comprehensive tidy-up of an ancient transport route that skirts the town.

Members of Banbury Town Council, local MP Victoria Prentis, and residents (see pic right) worked together to remove litter from Saltway – a bridleway that was used in Roman times to transport salt from Droitwich in Worcestershire to London.

Now a footpath and Sustrans cycle route, Saltway is a well-used facility that runs along the western edge of the town.

Starting at White Post Road in Bodicote the group walked to Giants Cave collecting rubbish as they went,



MEMORIAL GETS LISTED STATUS

Banbury's war memorial (pictured below) has been awarded listed building status by Historic England. The monument, in People's Park, has been added to the list of Buildings of Special Historic Interest.

Approval for the Grade II listing was given by John Whittingdale MP, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, after Historic England submitted recommendations – and the listing came into effect in September 2015. Cllr Kieron Mallon, leader of Banbury Town Council, which is responsible for the memorial, welcomed the listing.



He said: "The monument is something that Banbury people are rightly proud of. It was erected in 1922 to honour the 325 men and one woman from the town who lost their lives in World War One.

New inscriptions were added after the Second World War to pay tribute to those who died in that conflict."

"The memorial is the centrepiece of the wreath-laying ceremony in Banbury on Remembrance Sunday each year, and to know that it is now a protected monument will be appreciated by many – particularly the descendants of those whose names are carved in the stone and to the veterans who turn out to remember fallen comrades."

Susan Thompson, analysis officer for Historic England, said: "Listing helps us to mark a building's significance and celebrate its special architectural and historic interest. It provides protection so that the monument's special interest can be properly considered in managing its future.

She added: "Banbury's memorial has been listed because it is an eloquent witness to the tragic impact of world events on the local community – and to the sacrifices made in the conflicts of the 20th century. The design is interesting. Historic England considers it to be a substantial, imposing, and well-proportioned Celtic cross – made of Portland Stone."

She said: "Listing does not mean that alterations cannot be made – in fact in the vast majority of cases applications to make changes to a listed building are approved."

The listing was made under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Area) Act 1990.

PHONE BOX LIBRARY OPEN FOR BORROWING

Banbury's phone box library was saved from closure by public opinion and was finally up and running in July 2015.

The phone box, outside St John's RC Church in South Bar, attracted national publicity when a local resident installed shelves and books. The idea was that passers-by would borrow the books and return them – and add new reading material to the collection.

The mini-library closed within weeks when BT ordered the removal of the books on health and safety grounds after a phone box user complained.

But Banbury Town Council joined members of the public in protesting at the closure and the campaign reached national newspapers and TV.

The library was rescued after the council and BT came to a unique agreement.

BT offered a second red kiosk to stand next to the existing box – and the council agreed to install it and maintain it.

Banbury company Hawkins Steel volunteered to fit the new box with safe shelving and after a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by representatives of the council, Hawkins Steel, BT, and members of the public, the phone box library finally opened for business.

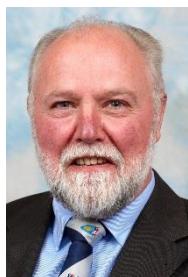


The opening ceremony

MEMBERS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL



Colin Clarke
Calthorpe South
Conservative
01295 258916



Nigel Morris
Calthorpe South
Conservative
01295 259365



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
07796 990364



Andrew Beere
Grimsbury
Labour
01295 255996



Shaida Hussain
Grimsbury
Labour
01295 277096



Lucy Donaldson
Hardwick West
Conservative
01295 271712



John Donaldson
Hardwick West
Conservative
01295 271712



Tony Ilott
Hardwick West
Conservative
07854 258889



Nicholas Turner
Hardwick West
Conservative
01295 730250



Arash Fatemian
Hardwick East
Conservative
07500 930522



Surinder Dhesi
Neithrop North
Labour
01295 255135



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
07794 249198

