



# Banbury Town Council

## Annual Report 2019-2020

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*Banbury Town Hall.*

### 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's High Steward Sir Tony Baldry with Deputy Mayor Surinder Dhesi and the Fine Lady on a White Horse at the People's Park 100th anniversary celebrations**

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 council 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 groups including local voluntary bodies.

Much of the work of a town councillor takes place outside the council chamber representing the council on various organisations in the area.

## REVIEW OF THE YEAR BY THE TOWN MAYOR (Cllr John Colegrave)

Farmer John Colegrave brought the countryside to town when he became mayor of Banbury in May 2019.

Cllr Colegrave celebrated his appointment by bringing livestock and agricultural equipment to the town hall – and cattle, sheep and lambs greeted guests as they arrived for the inauguration ceremony.

It was an evening of anticipation and emotion.

Cllr Colegrave became mayor 52 years after his mother Patricia held the same high office.

He said: “I’m very proud to be wearing the same robes and the same chain of office that my mother wore in 1967. If I can do the job as well as she did, I’ll be very happy.”

Cllr Colegrave’s wife Julia became mayoress and Cllr Surinder Dhesi was appointed deputy mayor.

Looking back on his year, Cllr Colegrave said: “It was an eventful year cut short by the coronavirus outbreak which meant that from mid-March all mayoral engagements were cancelled. I will stay in the post until a new mayor can be elected.

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

“Banbury is an amazing town with many charitable groups working for others – often without thanks or publicity and I acknowledge the contributions of those who do voluntary work in the community.

“Banbury Town Council organises some wonderful annual events including Banbury and District Show, Food Fair, Music Mix, Christmas Lights Switch On. Armed Forces Day, Remembrance Sunday and Battle of Britain Day. They are always well supported and I hope they are not too badly affected by the virus crisis.

“The events are important. They provide free days out for residents and generate extra trade for shops, pubs etc.

“It has been an absolute privilege to be the Mayor of Banbury and I have many memories that I will always treasure.



*The countryside came to town*



*The winners of the Christmas card competition*



*Opening Howard Road play area*

**Cllr John Colegrave**  
**Mayor of Banbury 2019/2020**



## Report by the Chairman of the Resources Committee (Cllr Kieron Mallon)



Banbury Town Council concentrates on making our town a better place in which to live, work, and visit. There are many things that contribute to being a happy town – and this council sees its job as bringing all the different parts together.

Let's have a look at what we do.

Money is important and council tax is always a major issue.

Banbury Town Council has an enviable record of low taxation while providing excellent services.

This council has its priorities right and is proud that it can provide those services without raising its tax demand.

Since 2010, the only thing that's gone up is the quality of our services.

I can confirm, for the 10<sup>th</sup> year running, that the town's portion of the council tax bill for 2020/2021 will stay at £122.12 for Band D properties.

Our council tax precept works out at £2.35 per week – and that's per household – not per person.

This council's finances are helped by the number of new houses that boost tax revenue – but it still means, as I've said before, that for less than the price of a cup of coffee per family per week, we provide cemeteries, parks and open spaces, children's play areas, the town's free annual events, sports pitches, allotments, bus shelters, dog waste bins and litter bins.

Wise policy decisions in previous years mean we can continue to improve our services without asking residents to pay more.

So what have we done in the past year – and what can we look forward to. The café and toilets in People's Park are going ahead and work on the toilets has already started.

Work on the café/coffee shop will follow in the near future.

It's not just People's Park that benefits from investments

Last year we spent £230,000 on play area refurbishments at Howard Road, St Louis Meadow and a number of other sites.

In the coming year we will fund improvements of play and multi-use games areas at Stanbridge, Hill View, and Ferriston play area, and continue our ongoing programme of footpath repairs in People's Park.

The purchase of extra land in Hardwick to extend the existing cemetery has been completed and we now have enough burial space for the next 70 years.

What else are we are doing for our residents?

Our annual grants scheme helps tremendously with the amount of work the town's good causes – mostly run by volunteers – can do.

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

Charities and good causes in Banbury can apply for grants of up to £500.

A special fund has been created to help organisations through the coronavirus crisis (see footnote)

I must mention our annual events. We had 16 planned between April and November but some have been cancelled because of coronavirus.

The events play an important part in creating wealth and trade in the town by encouraging visitors to come to here and spend money.

They will continue as soon as possible.

In addition, we put everything we can into other initiatives that promote Banbury – the old town and the ‘new.’

We look after the town’s public buildings including the town hall.

This magnificent Grade Two listed building a truly outstanding focal point that we can be proud of.

The town hall is experiencing growing demand as a hire venue – and is producing valuable income for the council and, therefore, for the town.

This council works well with other organisations.

We will continue to support the Save the Horton action group and in November 2019 we passed a resolution deploring the permanent downgrading of the Horton’s maternity unit.

We also criticised the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group’s public consultation and evidence-gathering exercises.

This council recognises that the real-life birthing experiences of local mothers cannot keep being overlooked and we will do all we can to ensure their voices are heard.

As founder members of the Cherwell Crime Prevention Scheme, we support a number of important crime prevention initiatives.

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.

This council is a key partner in a range of other formal partnerships, including the Town Centre Partnership. We will continue to work with our partners to improve the quality of life in the town and to preserve the unique character of Banbury.

We are also very proud of our relationships with Cherwell District Council and Oxfordshire County Council, which have seen the three authorities working together on important projects.

This brings me to Climate Change.

In January this year, this council committed to playing its part in tackling climate change.

This council agreed to host a meeting to discover what climate change work is already being done by other tiers of local government and what they have planned for the future.

The meeting will involve Oxfordshire County Council, Cherwell District Council and ourselves and will enable this council to commit to ways of tackling climate change without duplicating what is already underway.

This council is conscious of the need for action – but we have to be practical if we want to be effective.

Everyone has to be involved and we will consult with members of the public and businesses to plan our way forward.

To control climate change, councils, local businesses and residents must work together and this council will organise that togetherness and achieve a cleaner future.

That will begin, as agreed in January, as soon as conditions allow.

Just a word at this point on what Banbury Town Council is already doing.

This council owns and maintains more than 10,000 trees, over five miles of hedgerows, and 220 acres of grassland in its parks, sports fields, open spaces and cemeteries.

We know that trees, hedges and grass absorb carbon dioxide and produce oxygen.

Younger trees do this better than older trees and this council has been planting – and will continue to plant – many more new trees in the coming years.

Our new grounds maintenance contractors already have this in hand.

What we are doing is quite significant - but we are not complacent. More needs to be done – and this council is committed to doing it.

Having said that, the future looks good.

Banbury is a debt-free council. Investments in recent years continue to pay dividends, and will continue to do so in the years ahead.

This council will continue to manage the town's finances in a proper manner and carry on providing the services that townspeople need and depend on.

I would remind members of the public that all town councillors represent the people of Banbury in a voluntary capacity.

Our councillors bring experience from many different walks of life and they give up their valuable time free of charge. A large proportion of a town councillor's work takes place away from the town hall, and much of that work is undertaken representing the town council on various bodies in the town.

**Footnote: As this report is being prepared, coronavirus is at its peak. However, Banbury Town Council is continuing to operate in difficult circumstances but some things are affected. The council has cancelled some of its annual events and closed the town hall for hirings, but the council is working hard to maintain its services.**

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*Youngsters celebrate People's Park's 100th anniversary.*



*Music Mix in the Market Place*

## Report by the Chairman of the General Services Committee (Cllr Colin Clarke)

2019 was a busy year and we achieved a great deal. We are looking to achieve even more in 2020 and in the longer future.

This committee's responsibilities include the organisation of our annual events, the upkeep of our parks and play areas, maintenance of our cemeteries, and the running of six allotment sites (four of which are managed by allotment associations).



Our annual events provide wonderful free days out for residents, but from our point of view they are not just a chance to have fun.

The events have another important purpose.

They bring people into the town centre and those visitors boost trade by spending money in the shops, pubs and restaurants.

The hope is that they like what they see and they make Banbury a regular destination for shopping and/or leisure purposes.

The events are something that people look forward to and support in huge numbers. Sadly, some 2020 events have been cancelled because of coronavirus.

One new event last year was the Teddy Bear's Picnic.

It was a simple idea. Families were invited take snacks and teddy bears to People's Park and we provided music, games and a small funfair.

The response was amazing. The park was packed with happy adults and smiling children just relaxing and having fun.

The picnic was the last of a series events that celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening of the park.

Another new event in People's Park was Film Friday. We hired a big screen and showed two movies. First house was for the younger audience with the late film for adults – and again people turned out in large numbers.

Other work to commemorate the centenary included the building of a new pillar at the Bath Road entrance, more-attractive notice boards, and tree planting.

The Friday night Music Festival was a massive success with the Market Place packed with music fans from early until late.

Our other events – Town Mayor's Sunday, Armed Forces Day, Flower and Produce Show, Battle of Britain Day, Remembrance Sunday were, as always, extremely well supported.

Canal Day didn't happen in 2019 because of building work on the canal side and it won't happen this year – but it will be back – bigger and better than ever.

The general services committee is the council's 'green' committee.

It oversees

- over fifty play and teenage areas,
- ninety open spaces,
- twelve neighbourhood parks, including the historic People's Park and Spiceball Country Park.

We also have five sportsgrounds – Horton View, Easington Rec, Moorfields, Hardwick Fields and Merton Street.

In addition, we maintain St Mary's Churchyard.

Our parks and open spaces total in excess of 90 hectares – more than 220 acres – equivalent to approximately 140 football pitches.

We also maintain around 10,000 trees, and 8,662 linear metres of hedgerows. That's around five and a half miles.

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

Last year we spent more than £230,000 updating 15 of our parks and play areas – in particular a full makeover at Howard Road,

In addition, we've spent around £18,000 on essential running repairs at many of the town's play areas.

In the coming year we will fund improvements to multi-use games areas at Stanbridge and Hill View parks and at Ferriston play area.

That spending is separate from the funding for the much anticipated café and toilets in People's Park.

Members of the public asked for these facilities – and we listened and are providing what they wanted.

Building work on the toilet building has started.

In fact, it is a multi-purpose construction. There will be ladies, gents and disabled toilets, an office for park staff, and a covered demonstration area where school children and community groups can be involved in garden activities such as making bird boxes and creating hanging baskets.

The new buildings will be of sustainable timber construction and will complement the town council's recent decision to be climate change active.

Sustainable timber retains the carbon the tree absorbed while growing and is, therefore, a 'green' material. The internal lining of the building will be a recycled material which is ecologically approved and fire-resistant.

The buildings will also use energy-saving technology for heating and hot water.

The toilets, rest room and demonstration area were scheduled to be opened by the end of June but coronavirus has caused a considerable delay. The café will be started later in the year.

This council's trees, parks, open spaces and hedgerows mentioned earlier also contribute towards Banbury's aim to become carbon neutral.

In June last year we celebrated the opening of the new skate ramp in Spiceball Park. It's a terrific facility and people who know about these things describe it as one of the best in the country.

It is certainly well used and was £100,000 well spent.

Our two cemeteries are a credit to the town. They are maintained in immaculate condition and are true places of rest.

Last year we completed the purchase of extra burial land next to Hardwick Hill cemetery. The new land will be sufficient for burials in Banbury for the next 70 years.

We have reviewed our grounds maintenance contract – and we are bringing some parts of the contract 'in house' by employing staff to maintain our cemeteries, People's Park and St Mary's Churchyard.



Other parks and open spaces are being maintained under a new contract with local company 4<sup>th</sup> Corner Landscaping.

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

In a joint venture with the Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust the council is involved in a wildlife makeover project that has transformed the River Cherwell in Spiceball Park.

Work is continuing and has been extended to Hanwell Brook Wetland Area, Bridge Street Park and the Mineral Railway.

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

Last year, new woodland trails were laid out and these are proving popular with members of the public.

We went ahead with the regular events including Sunflower Workshops, and Hanging Basket Workshops – for pupils at the town's primary schools.

Sadly, because of persistent heavy rain in the days leading up to, and on the day of the event, Planting in the Park – when pupils compete to see which school can plant the best flower bed – had to be cancelled.

The general services committee is responsible for the town's allotments which are in great demand and there are waiting lists for all sites.

We continue to have a substantial number of snow wardens (about 100) on our books – though more are always wanted – and, in addition, more businesses have signalled their intention to help keep roads and pathways clear of snow and ice.

The General Services Committee is committed to providing high quality services at the lowest possible cost to council tax payers.

**Coronavirus is affecting the council's 2020 programme. While we are working hard to minimise the disruption, it is inevitable that not everything will go ahead as planned.**

**Some events are being cancelled and other work is on hold. But everyone is working as best they can in difficult circumstances to keep services running wherever possible.**

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*Teddy Bears Picnic in People's Park*



*At the Food Fair in the Market Place*



## Report by the Chairman of the Planning Committee (Cllr Tony Ilott)



The Planning Committee meets every four weeks to consider planning applications, traffic orders, and any statutory consultations that may be ongoing.

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, the application is handled by the Town Clerk and myself, as 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 it is a contentious issue, the application will be considered by the full Planning Committee.

The Planning Committee makes decisions that are in the best interests of the town as a whole.

In total, between January 2019 and January 2020, this council has considered 394 planning applications compared to the 340 of the previous year. Major applications were

1. 18/01614/ 83 houses for Bellway on Southam Road.
2. New OCC primary school on same site
3. 850 dwellings as next substantial phase to Bankside development – nearing completion on all the original phases
4. Next significant development alongside M40 for dbSymmetry 19/00771/F
5. Revised proposals for new waste transfer and recovery facility by Grundons at Thorpe Mead
6. Details of CQ2 to ensure swift delivery of this town centre re-generation scheme
7. Numerous proposals for town centre living accommodation by the formation of high quality homes above existing ground floor shops, offices, etc.

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 from the Chamber of Commerce, bus companies, rail users, Civic Society, and together to discuss all transport issues.

By working in partnership with other organisations we can 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 the creations of a desirable, and attractive place to live, work, visit, and invest

**It should be noted that the coronavirus restrictions are affecting day to day business**

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***Right, Mayor John Colegrave receives  
Banbury's new Fairtrade certificate  
from members of the Fairtrade committee***



## Banbury's annual events 2020 check [www.banbury.gov.uk](http://www.banbury.gov.uk) for virus up-dates, etc.

### **A TASTE OF SPRING (Sunday 19 April, 10.30am to 4.30pm, Banbury Market Place)**

A mini-food festival that celebrates great food and drink.

### **FILM FRIDAY (8 May, 5pm People's Park)**

A film spectacular in People's Park to commemorate VE Day

### **VE DAY TEA DANCE (Sunday 10 May, 2.30 to 4.30, Banbury Town Hall)**

Move to the music of the 40s, 50s and 60s.

### **BANBURY AND DISTRICT SHOW (Sunday 14 June, 10.30am to 4.30pm, Spiceball Park)**

Arena entertainment, funfair, stalls, demonstrations, displays, plenty to eat and drink. Fun for all the family.

### **ARMED FORCES DAY (Saturday 27 June, 10am to 2pm, Banbury Town Centre)**

An event that highlights the armed forces. Military personnel and veterans. Marching bands, military vehicles, displays,

### **TOWN MAYOR'S SUNDAY AND PROCESSION (5 July, 10.30pm to 3.30pm, People's Park)**

A family day out in People's Park hosted by the mayor of Banbury with fun, games, music, food and drink.

### **BANBURY MUSIC MIX (Friday 24 July, 6.30pm to 10.30pm, Banbury Market Place)**

The best in live music – Banbury Market Place. 6.30pm until late. Great sounds from local bands

### **BANBURY FOOD AND DRINK FESTIVAL (Sunday 16 August, 10.30am to 4.30pm, Banbury Town Centre)**

View, sample and buy great food and drink made by small producers. Well over 100 stalls.

### **BANBURY FLOWER AND PRODUCE SHOW (Sunday 16 August, 10.30am to 4.30pm)**

The event showcases the work of local gardeners, food producers and crafters

### **TEDDY BEARS' PICNIC (Thursday 27 August, 11am to 3pm, People's Park)**

Everyone invited to bring food, drink, chairs, blankets and most importantly, their Teddy Bears. Great for kids.

### **MOTOWN MAGIC (Friday 4 September, 7pm to 10.30pm, Banbury Market Place)**

It's back to the Motown era. Totally vinyl sounds to dance the night away.

### **BATTLE OF BRITAIN DAY (Sunday 20 September, 11am to 12.30pm)**

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

### **A DAY OF TRANSPORT (Sunday 4 October, Town Centre and Tooley's Boatyard, 10.30am to 3.30pm)**

Celebrating Transport in all forms.

### **REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY (8 November, 10am to 1pm, High Street, St Mary's Church, People's Park)**

Remembering those who served in all wars. Procession, service in St Mary's and wreath-laying at the war memorial.

### **TOWN MAYOR'S TOY APPEAL (23 to 29 November, Banbury Town Hall, 9am to 3.30pm Monday to Friday)**

Collecting Christmas toys for the children of the town's needy families. Distributed by the town's children's centres.

### **CHRISTMAS LIGHTS FESTIVAL (Sunday 29 November, 1pm to 6pm, Banbury Town Centre)**

Funfair, live music, food, drink, entertainment, Father Christmas, fireworks, and switching on the festive street lights.



*Battle of Britain Day*



*Christmas Lights Switch-On*



## 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.

2020			
Council	General Services Resources		Planning
Tuesday 19 May Tuesday 23 June Tuesday 15 September Tuesday 17 November	Tuesday 2 June Tuesday 1 September Tuesday 27 October Tuesday 8 December	Tuesday 9 June Tuesday 8 September Tuesday 3 November	Wednesday 6 May Wednesday 27 May Wednesday 24 June Wednesday 22 July Wednesday 19 August Wednesday 16 September Wednesday 14 October Wednesday 11 November Wednesday 16 December
2021			
Tuesday 12 January Tuesday 9 February Tuesday 13 April	Tuesday 26 January Tuesday 23 March	Tuesday 5 January Tuesday 2 February Tuesday 30 March	Wednesday 6 January Wednesday 3 February Wednesday 3 March Wednesday 31 March

The Annual Town Meeting will take place on Monday 8 March 2021. 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 2021 Annual Council Meeting and Mayoral Inauguration will be on Tuesday 8 May.

**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.



*Above: Armed Forces Day*



*Right: Banbury and District Show*



## MEMBERS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL



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Conservative  
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Tony Mephram  
Calthorpe South  
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Tony Ilott  
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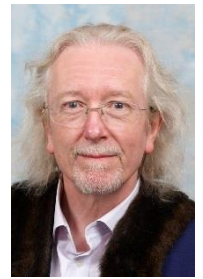
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