



MARLBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16



TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENTS

Town Mayor's Report _____	1
Planning Committee _____	6
Finance and Policy Committee _____	9
Property Committee _____	13
Staffing Sub-Committee _____	15
Amenities and Open Spaces Committee _____	18
Civic and Ceremonial _____	22

TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT

COUNCILLOR MARGARET ROSE

This has been a busy year for our Town Mayor, Councillor Margaret Rose which has been punctuated by more than 100 civic and other events in Marlborough where she has met so many of the town's community, voluntary and charity groups as well as representing Marlborough throughout Wiltshire and further afield.

She masterminded the delightful Alice's Enchanted Picnic event in Priory Gardens last summer and arranged for our surprise guests – Scouting for Girls – at the Christmas Lights Switch-on. Most of all, she will be remembered for the magnificent work she has put into raising money for The Brain Tumour Charity, exceeding any amount raised for the Mayoral Charity in recent years.

The Town Mayor is our First Citizen and also Chairman of the Council and responsible for chairing the Full Town Council which has met nine times during the year.

Here's a quick tour of some of the events, projects and issues dealt with over the course of the year. This and reports from the Town Council's committees, gives a taste of the enormous amount of work covered by this small local authority.



ALICE IN.... PRIORY GARDENS



What was it the Mad Hatter said? "There is a place. Like no place on Earth. A land full of wonder, mystery and danger!" He was right. That place was Priory Gardens on Sunday, 5th July at Alice's Enchanted Family Picnic hosted by our Mayor. No danger though, just lots of fun to help celebrate the 150th anniversary of Lewis Carroll's Alice's Adventures in Wonderland. Our Mayor even had a stand-off with the Queen of Hearts!

Artistic Director, Anna Friend and the Marlborough Young Actors showed real talent, never stepping out of their Wonderland characters during an afternoon packed with families and their young children enjoying arts and crafts, face painting, competitions and various stalls. There

were excellent performances too from pupils at the Marlborough Academy of Dance and Drama all choreographed beautifully by Cheryl Heuston.

The Mayor was delighted that so many came along to enjoy a summer's day in a really special public open space right in the centre of Marlborough - a community event for the whole family. A very friendly White Rabbit collected for the Mayor's chosen cause - the Brain Tumour Charity.

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH-ON – 20TH NOVEMBER

This year's successful Christmas Lights event was brought together through real collaborative effort with the Town Council, Rotary, Lions, Wiltshire Council, the Showmen's Guild, our Neighbourhood Policing Team and retailers all playing their part. A Christmas Market lined the centre of the High Street linking up to a children's funfair and there was late night shopping. We were entertained with fantastic performances from the St John's Jazz Band, Marlborough Academy of Dance and Drama and the Community Choir.

It was made all the more memorably festive with special guests, Scouting for Girls, performing their single – Christmas in the Air. The band helped our Mayor officiate during her presentation to our Citizen of the Year before the countdown to the Lights Switch-on.



MARLBOROUGH'S CITIZEN OF THE YEAR 2015

At the Christmas Lights Switch-on former Mayoress, Mrs Jenny Smithers, was announced as Marlborough's Citizen of the Year. From a racing background, Jenny was born in Rockley and has lived in the Marlborough area all her life, spending huge amounts of her time volunteering to help those less fortunate than herself. From an early age and alongside raising her family and supporting her husband, Derek, as Town Mayor, she volunteered to help those with physical or learning difficulties. Most of us will know her for the non-stop work she has done for the last 20 years

supporting Mencap in the roles of both Chair and Secretary. She's organised Christmas parties, summer events, cricket matches, skittles evenings and much more. She has fund raised endlessly to make the local branch of Mencap the thriving group it is today and one that so many rely on.

REMEMBRANCE PARADE AND ARMISTICE DAY – NOVEMBER 2015



On Remembrance Sunday, hundreds lined the High Street to watch as the Parade marched to the New Road War Memorial led by the Phoenix Brass Band and the 4th Military Intelligence Battalion. Our Town Mayor and her Councillors, the Chairman of Wiltshire Council's Area Board, the Commanding Officer of 4MI Bn., the Royal British Legion, the Emergency Services, the Cadet Forces, Scouts, Brownies and Guides all came to pay their

respects to those who had lost their lives in war. Many laid wreaths at the foot of the Memorial before marching back to the Town Hall and then onto a Remembrance Service at St Mary's Church.

At 11am on Wednesday, 11th November, everything came to a halt in the High Street as a siren marked the start of a 2 minute silence to mark Armistice Day. The last post was sounded by well-known and accomplished local trumpet player, Basil King. The Mayor and Town Councillors stood alongside their staff with the Principal of St John's Academy proudly standing with her pupils. Alongside, the Mayor, 4MI Bn. and the Royal British Legion, the Head Boy and Girl from St John's laid a wreath at the 7th Wiltshire Regiment War Memorial at London Road.



MARLBOROUGH YOUTH COUNCIL

Under the guidance of Cllrs Lisa Farrell and Justin Cook, the Youth Council is busy working on a full agenda of plans – input to the new play equipment at Coopers Meadow, new seating at the Skate Park and more. Our young Councillors are currently designing a logo. In March, members turned out on a cold Saturday morning to litter pick as part of the Clean for the Queen campaign. They worked up and down the High Street, at the Recreation Ground at Salisbury Road and right up to Tesco collecting loads of rubbish. There was lots of good feedback and appreciation from the public too.



SHOPMOBILITY



We are delighted to be working alongside the Area Board and The Mobility Store, based at the George Lane Car Park, to launch a Shopmobility Scheme in Marlborough. With funding from both councils this exciting community-based project will benefit local residents and visitors to the town. It's a service that helps those with mobility problems (whether through disability, illness or injury) to get around independently without having to rely on friends or family. For an annual membership fee, the scheme offers the hire of powered scooters or wheelchairs at low daily rates to use for shopping and other activities around town.

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



Marlborough
Area Neighbourhood Plan



Councillors Hall and Cook are Chair and Vice Chair of the Steering Group heading up the production of the Marlborough Area Neighborhood Plan. Another milestone has been reached with our application for the designation of our

Neighbourhood Area having been accepted by Wiltshire Council. This means the parishes of Marlborough, Mildenhall, Preshute and Savernake will be working together towards a Neighbourhood Plan for the whole of the area. The Steering Group will be asking for comments about Marlborough's future from residents, businesses and organisations right across these parishes. A Communications Strategy and Project Plan are in place and plans towards a Housing Needs Assessment of the whole area are well underway.

CCTV



Funded by the Town Council and the Area Board, CCTV was installed in the High Street in 2015/16 and has already helped to secure arrests and prosecutions for the police. It is widely commented as being one of the best local systems in the county. The two remaining cameras will be fixed over the coming weeks. This is governed by the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice 2013.

FAIRTRADE STATUS

Marlborough was awarded Fairtrade status in 2015/16. The Town Council's decision to support the campaign was key to meeting criteria for this. This all came together in a very timely fashion during Fairtrade Fortnight between 29th February–13th March.



COMMUNITY SPEED WATCH



Town Councillors, Alec Light and Lisa Farrell have stepped forward to lead on establishing a Community Speed Watch Scheme in Marlborough. A group of volunteers has recently undertaken training with the police and will shortly be seen out in Marlborough. It's not speed enforcement but, it is a very useful tool to help monitor and reduce speeding traffic. Information is recorded and passed to the police, which results in a warning letter being sent to the registered keeper of the speeding vehicle.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN: COUNCILLOR MARIAN HANNAFORD-DOBSON

All Town Councillors sit on this committee (with the Mayor in an ex-officio role so with no vote) and have met every 2 weeks over the year to consider planning applications, road closures, premises licences, works to trees and relevant planning associated consultations.



PLANNING APPLICATIONS

It's important to remember that the Town Council is a consultee on planning issues – decisions are made by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) – Wiltshire Council. Here's a look at the number of planning applications received this year:

Town Council Comment	Planning Applications
No objection	133
Objection	18
Works to Trees	
No objection	31
Objection	1
Total Applications Received	183

These figures represent a 15% increase on those received during 2014/15. Of the total applications received in 2015/16, Wiltshire Council refused four (one of which the Town Council had not raised objections to) and seven were subsequently withdrawn.

Over the last year, there have been controversial planning applications or appeals in respect of development at Baylie Acre and Newby Acre, Rabley Wood View, the Crown Estate Land west of Salisbury Road and the new primary school. In the case of the last two, objections by Town Councillors related to traffic and access issues and not that the Council objected to much needed housing or a school. With more proposed development coming forward, Councillors remain concerned about how infrastructure will be able to keep up with new development – a point regularly raised with developers and the LPA.

Where applications have been for decision by Wiltshire Council's Eastern Area Planning Committee and the Town Council has objections to raise (usually in support of local residents), members of the Committee have spoken during that Wiltshire Council

meeting. Our two Unitary Councillors – Councillors Stewart Dobson and Nick Fogg - are also very active in representing local people on planning issues.

TREES

Marlborough's Tree Warden, Councillor Bryan Castle, has a vast knowledge of the town's trees and advises on various applications for works (e.g. felling) by the Committee. A total of 32 applications were received in 2015/16.



TRANSPORT

The Town Council has representatives (Councillors Hannaford-Dobson and Allen) with seats on the Area Board's Community Area Transport Group (CAT(G)) looking at Highways and transport issues across the Community Area. Issues raised and influenced by the Town Council at this group include traffic orders, speed limits, metro counts, Highways project spending, dropped kerbs, signage, waiting and parking restrictions and weight limits and freight restrictions.

In 2015/16, new arrangements were put in place to test out a solution to problems with HGVs in Silverless Street which has seen congestion and damage to buildings, particularly at the Kingsbury Street end. Wiltshire Council has recently issued an Experimental Traffic Order with "No Entry" signs on the A346 (Herd Street) entrance to Silverless Street. This will not make Silverless Street one way and although drivers won't be able to turn into Silverless Street from the A346, they will still be able to exit the road at either end. Any comments on this Traffic Order should be sent to Wiltshire Council.



YELLOW LINES

In 2014, the Town Council supported a small number of local requests for changes to parking and waiting restrictions in Marlborough. Following public consultation by Wiltshire Council, with the exception of one for parking restrictions in London Road at the entrance to Five Alls Court, all have been agreed – Frees Avenue, Hyde Lane, Cardigan Road, Lower Prospect, Kennet Mews/Kennet Place. Any new or extended lining is expect to go ahead in June.

CONSULTATIONS

The Planning Committee takes up opportunities to respond to consultation exercises. For example, in early 2016, Councillors discussed Wiltshire

Council's Review of Subsidised Bus Services. It's response to the possible cuts in local bus services was that Marlborough Town Council does not support any reduction in subsidised services as they would cause serious economic and social disadvantage to the town.



There was also a consultation about what projects might be included under the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). This is a planning charge paid by developers and introduced by the Planning Act 2008. It's a tool for local authorities to help deliver infrastructure in an area. Town Councillors put forward a number of suggestions to add to a list for Wiltshire projects including improvements to Marlborough's pavements, public footpaths and rights of way, an expansion of the cemetery and measures to improve air quality such as the de-priming of the A346.

AIR QUALITY

Marlborough Town Council supports Transition Marlborough's initiative to improve air quality in Marlborough and shares its concerns about the overall impact on the health of residents and has urged urgent dialogue with Wiltshire Council to discuss the matters raised and supports ongoing discussions with the Area Board to keep the issue moving forward.

CAR PARKING

Councillors recognise that the lack of car parking space in Marlborough remains a real concern and it's clear that there are particular problems around a lack of parking for residents and for those on low incomes working in the town. Identification of a suitable site for car parking will be covered by the emerging Marlborough Neighbourhood Plan.



FREE PARKING DAYS FOR SPECIAL EVENTS

In March, Wiltshire Council announced that its scheme for allocating two free parking days to towns across the county would be passed to town councils. Marlborough Town Council has received an allocation of spaces and is now responsible for any onward provision of free spaces to event organisers. The Town Council is currently looking at how to operate a fair process for offering up these spaces.

FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN: COUNCILLOR ANDREW ROSS

The Council Tax you pay helps towards a variety of services. The largest proportion is for those provided by Wiltshire Council - education, roads, car parks, bin collections, social services and planning right across the county. Then comes your contribution towards Wiltshire Police Authority and Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Services. A small proportion of your Council Tax, around 10% of the overall annual bill, is for the running of your own Town Council which provides your most local services. The Town Council receives no direct grant from central government and no share of business rates.



WHAT YOU GET FOR YOUR MONEY

Maintenance and management of Town Council-owned assets – Town Hall, various commercial and residential properties, Marlborough Common, The Green, Salisbury Road Recreational Ground, Elcot Lane Playing Fields, Skate Park, Children's Play Areas, The Priory Gardens, Wye House Amenity Gardens, St Mary's Churchyard, Stonebridge and Cooper's Meadows, Allotments, War Memorials, Town Floral Displays, Football Pitches and the Cemeteries as well as more than 1,500 trees

Consultation and assessment of all relevant planning applications

Administration of burial records, cemetery space, plaques and memorials

Christmas lights

Event management – royal visits, Christmas lights switch-on event

Administration of a Small Grants Scheme

Emergency planning

Local communication via the website, social media, newsletter and notice boards

Work towards securing external funding and implementing new projects

Information about Wiltshire Council services

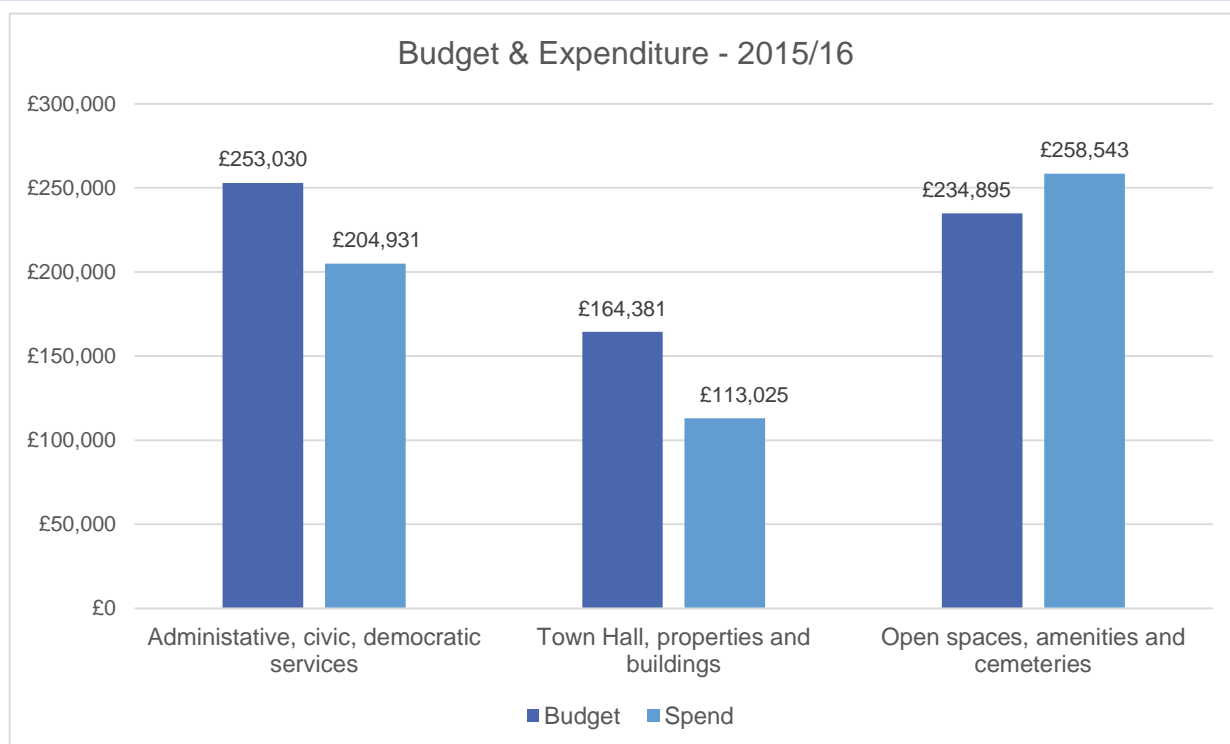
Liaison with other external agencies

Civic work around Military links, Remembrance Day Parade etc.

Each year, Councillors scrutinise Town Council budget lines carefully to ensure best value but, there are costs over which there is little or no control – tax, superannuation, national insurance, utilities, business rates, etc. The Town Council receives no revenue funding from central government and a council tax support grant passed on from Wiltshire Council will no longer be paid from 1 April 2017.

Central government has put in place measures that impact hugely upon the resources of principal authorities such as Wiltshire Council where a number of savings and cuts are in place - £25m savings have to be identified over the next year. In turn, this financial squeeze has resulted in more services being devolved to town and parish councils (i.e. grass cutting and litter picking). There is no funding to accompany these services or the various asset transfers being offered. Marlborough Town Council has just taken on the George Lane toilets and has expressed an interest in taking on other buildings too. Decisions to move ahead with these have been based on retaining them as community assets to ensure that the town can keep on providing services for its residents and help maintain a thriving local economy.

EXPENDITURE AGAINST BUDGET FOR 2015/16

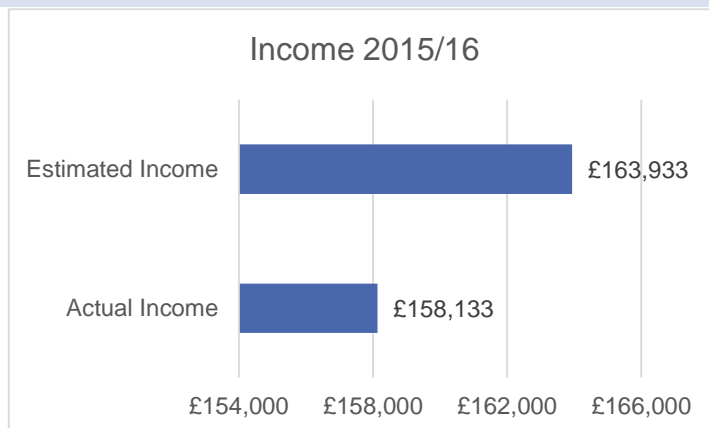


The budget spend during the year is summarised in this chart. It is important to remember that these figures are taken from the unaudited accounts and are indicative only at this stage. The accounts will be closed down on 10th May and audited accounts will then be available for the public to view.

The budget overspend of some 10% with regard to open spaces and amenities budget is largely due to additional legal fees around community asset transfers and spend towards play equipment for the new Orchard Road Play Area (which is to be reclaimed from Section 106 monies).

INCOME

Around 25% of the overall budget requirement is met through income other than local council tax. The Town Council looks to maximise income where it can to help keep the precept demands on local residents as low as it sensibly can. This is met by rents received from residential and commercial properties, cemetery fees, sports pitch hire and other fees and well as bank interest.



In 2015/16, income has not met expenditure and this is due largely to the decrease in the number of cemetery fees taken for burials and ashes interments.

RESERVES

Guidance is that general reserves should usually lie within the range of 3-12 months of gross expenditure. As at 31st March 2016, these stand at £253,964.83. Ear marked reserves total £202,253 and these have been set aside for specific projects that, in 2016/17, will include the Neighbourhood Plan for Marlborough, works to the Town Hall and George Lane toilets, open spaces projects, a cemetery extension and CCTV.

FIXED ASSETS

The Town Council owns the Town Hall, the Council offices and residential, community and commercial properties. Other assets include open spaces (e.g. Priory, Wye House and Plume of Feathers Gardens). Infrastructure assets include play areas and associated equipment as well as vehicles and equipment needed to maintain all of our sites.

BORROWING

The Council has no loans.

COUNCILLOR ALLOWANCES

Only the Town Mayor receives an allowance for civic duties. In 2015/16 this was £3,400. There is also a set travel allowance of £650 to cover travel expenses (the current Mayor has attended more than 100 in Wiltshire and further afield during 2015/16).

A small budget of £500 has been set aside for Councillors travel expenses. Only £194 of this has been drawn down in 2015/16.

LOCAL COUNCIL TAX (PRECEPT) FOR 2016/17

In order to cover the likelihood of taking on more services on over the next few years and to meet budget requirements, Councillors made a decision to raise the precept by a modest 4.96% for 2016/17. This rise equates to an increase of just over £7.40p per year or 61p a month or 14p a week for an average Band D Council Tax payer towards the running of Marlborough Town Council and the services it provides.

SMALL GRANT SCHEME 2015/16

With a budget of £6,600, the Finance & Policy Committee has granted awards to eight organisations, all meeting criteria showing that the work they do benefits Marlborough:

Grant Recipient	Amount	Grant Recipient	Amount
Marlborough Gardening Association	£300.00	Alzheimer's Support	£500.00
Macular Society	£500.00	Greatwood Charity	£928.00
Splash	£960.00	Bobby Van Trust	£400.00
Bruce Trust	£1000.00	Relate Mid Wiltshire	£540.00
TOTAL			£5128.00

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN: COUNCILLOR NOEL BARRETT-MORTON

The Property Committee is responsible for all Town Council owned properties including the magnificent Town Hall. The income stream from the Town Hall and Council-owned properties raises approximately 25% of budget requirements - all helping to keep down the precept bill.



TOWN HALL

The day to day running of the Grade II Listed Town Hall is managed by our Office Manager, Sue Fry, who also oversees the work of our Caretaker, Alan Brown and his Deputy, Mark Harding. All have done good jobs looking after the hall's various venue spaces.

Following previous years' re-decoration programmes, this year's works have included the stripping, varnishing and sealing of the wooden floors which has not been undertaken for at least 15 years, repairs to the automatic glass doors, repairing lead inserts on the stained glass windows and repairs to the Assembly Room curtains. Internal alarm and surveillance systems are also now in place to increase the overall security of the building.



An approximate breakdown of bookings for 2015/16 is:

Function	Bookings
Wedding receptions	7
Wedding ceremonies	16
Sales, craft fairs, fundraising coffee mornings	27
Meetings (excluding Town Council)	32
Film nights	41
Private parties, training events, fundraising nights, other	58
Total	181

These figures reflect a slight dip in hiring of 13% over the previous year.

COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES

The Council owns three shops and six residential properties. Where lease clauses stipulate landlord's responsibilities, regular inspections take place and maintenance works are programmed in. During the last year, works to these properties have included redecoration ahead of a new tenancy agreement and replacement carpets. A professional valuation of all Town Council-owned properties has been undertaken as well as a review of Town Council-owned residential properties resulting in updated Tenancy Agreements and a modest rent rise.

Different arrangements are in place for some Council-owned assets from which community groups or Trusts operate (e.g. The Merchants House, the Bowls Club, Rugby Club, etc.).

In 2015/16, the Bowls Club was allocated funds under a Section 106 Agreement¹ linked to the development of the new Care Home at Salisbury Road. These funds will be used for new bowling green matting as well as various improvements to the Clubhouse building.

PUBLIC TOILETS

From April 2016, Wiltshire Council will no longer be providing public conveniences and the toilets at George Lane Car Park in Marlborough were amongst those set for closure. The Town Council recognised the importance of providing these facilities to its residents and visitors and has taken on this building via a Community Asset Transfer. Currently, there is no funding to provide toilet provision at George Lane and with high running costs for the building and much needed investment, Town Councillors have decided to sell the public conveniences at Chantry Lane and use the proceeds to upgrade these facilities. This will then offer much improved services all at one site, so helping to meet the town's local and tourism needs.



It will mean that the George Lane toilets will be temporarily closed and those at Chantry Lane will be open until a sale has been agreed so that renovation work can begin at George Lane. It is hoped that these toilets will re-open in 2017.

¹ "Section 106 (s106) agreements" are a valuable mechanism for securing a range of requirements in connection with planning permissions and relevant to the needs of the local area and various policies

STAFFING SUB-COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN: COUNCILLOR PEGGY DOW

The Staffing Sub-Committee meets as required to deal with various staffing and management issues. Headed-up by qualified Town Clerk, Shelley Parker, the Council employs 9 full time and 3 part time members of staff who deal with the day to day running of its administration, services, grounds and property portfolios as well as providing support and advice to Councillors and implementing their decisions.

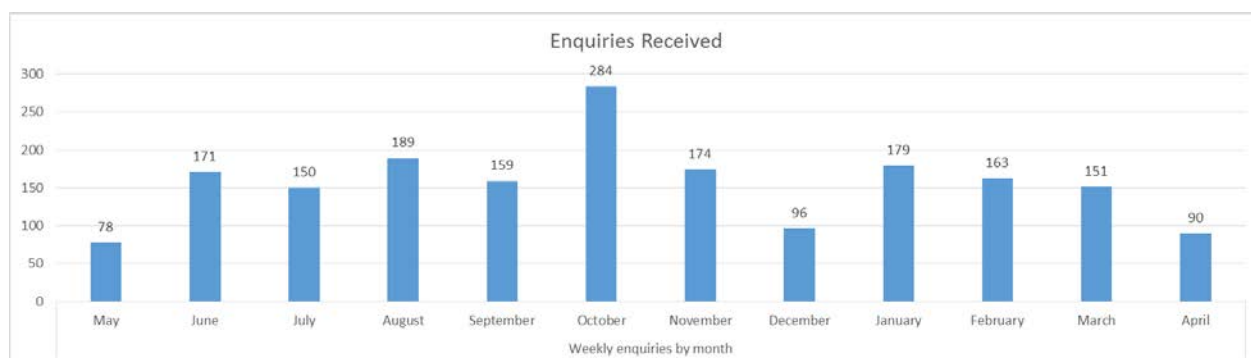
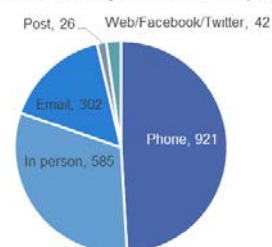


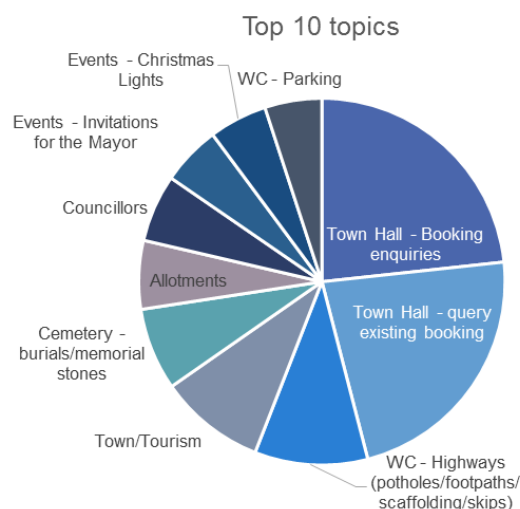
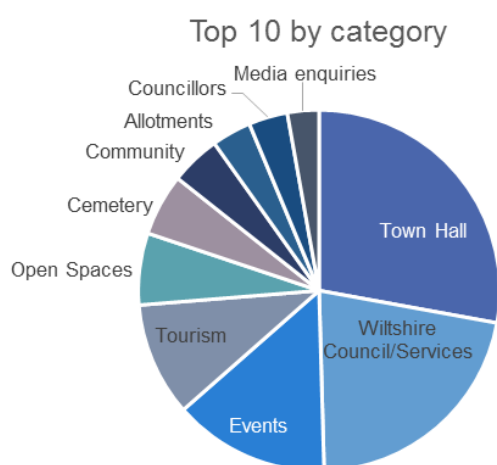
Staff are based at 2 sites – the Council Offices at 5, High Street and the Workshop at the Recreational Ground at Salisbury Road. The Town Clerk and Senior Managers, Sue Fry and Richard Beale, oversee day to day administration, accounts, event management, civic occasions, tourist information and property services as well as the upkeep and maintenance of our gardens, cemeteries and other open spaces. Also covered are the many enquiries received from residents and visitors to the town.

Work load will increase further as services are devolved to town and parish councils from Wiltshire Council together with the transfer of assets. Efficiencies are already being put in place to meet these challenges which will include some weekend coverage.

The following gives an idea of the enquiries received by our enquiry point on a daily basis. These figures exclude other business-related enquiries received direct by members of staff.

How we received your 1,876 enquiries





SOME FURTHER STATS

In 2016/17, the office received over 900 items of correspondence via postal services and more than 30,000 e-mails. The Grounds Team cut grass at Council-owned sites at least 14 times, planted 5,000 bedding plants, 100 saplings (through a grant from the Woodland Trust) and 25 mature trees. Also planted were more than 7,000 spring bulbs and just under 200 shrubs. Our team has also recycled approx. 50 tons of woodchip to Stonebridge Meadow and our allotment sites as well as around 40 tons of green waste for use as compost.

TRAINING

Training is important to the Council's development, resilience and success and helps staff to become more efficient and productive and where work can be undertaken in-house rather than outsourced to contractors, it saves costs too. This year staff have received the following training:

Administrative Team	Code of Conduct
	Charitable Trusts
	Social Media Training
	Accounts Training
Grounds Team	Practical Horticultural Skills – Level 2
	Advanced Horticulture – Level 3

OUR AWARD WINNING APPRENTICE

In November, Michael Haines, our Horticulture Apprentice, was presented with an award by Claire Perry, MP at a special Apprentice Awards Ceremony at the new Wiltshire College Campus in Chippenham. This was for outstanding commitment to his apprenticeship programme. Horticulture Apprentice 2015 - a huge achievement. A very big well done to him. Congratulations go to Richard Jones who is also working his way through a horticultural course.



WORK EXPERIENCE



In July 2015, local sixth former, Ellie Jerome, was with us at the Town Council offices learning more about the town and parish council sector - the first tier of local government. This was a taster towards her future aspirations to study politics at university. Amongst other things, Ellie spent time working alongside staff in the front office, took a tour of the town to visit those areas for which the Town Council is responsible, sat in on a briefing for the Town Mayor and

helped to prepare for a Full Council meeting. We wish her well for her future studies. We will be welcoming a St John's GCSE student for a few days in the summer of 2016.

Councillors' thanks go to all staff – Shelley Parker, Sue Fry, Linda Chapman, Alan Brown, Dawn Whitehall, Barbara Chandler, Richard Beale, Nigel Weatherly, Ryan Atcherley, Mark Harding, Richard Jones, Aaron Presley and Michael Haines

AMENITIES AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

CHAIRMAN: COUNCILLOR GUY LOOSMORE

The Amenities and Open Spaces Committee has met five times in the last year. Integral to its work is the Grounds Team based at the Workshop at the Recreation Ground at Salisbury Road which is headed up by the Grounds & Estates Manager, Richard Beale. The team maintains various open spaces in and around Marlborough - The Common, The Green, Priory and Wye House Gardens, the Recreation Ground, Jubilee Field at Manton, play areas and much more. They cut grass, pick litter, plant and look after floral displays and bedding and keep an eye on the condition of trees – all the things that make a difference to residents and make a real impact on our visitors.



This year the Grounds Team helped to gain Marlborough an award from South West in Bloom's Pride in Parks competition. Wye Gardens was awarded a 3 star award so a great first entry into this regional competition.

SOUTH WEST IN BLOOM

An important partnership is that of the Town Council and Marlborough in Bloom. It was good news again for those who worked hard towards South West in Bloom 2015. At an award ceremony at the prestigious Britannia Naval College in Dartmouth, regional prizes were announced by special guest, Jonathan Dimpleby and our MiB team were called up to the stage to collect another Silver Gilt award.

Individual groups around the town were also award winners in the Its Your Neighbourhood Scheme - Action for the River Kennet (ARK) for its work at Stonebridge Meadow which also picked up the Monk Trophy for the best use of native plants, Manton in Bloom, Marlborough Waterfront Association and Friends of the Old Victorian Cemetery. Two of these entries – Stonebridge Meadow and Marlborough Waterfront Association - were placed in the top ten of all 500 entries.



A special discretionary award was given by the judges to The Lamb Inn in the Parade which won the title of third best pub in the whole of the South West for its fantastic floral displays.

The awards were passed on to their worthy recipients at the MiB AGM in the Town Hall on 7th October by proud, hard-working Chairman, Anne Crawley, the main driver behind this year's efforts. There were thanks to MiB's many sponsors, pubs, shops, the Town Council's Grounds Team and a special mention for photographer, Eric Gilbert, who has captured Marlborough in beautiful images throughout the seasons.

S106 PROJECTS



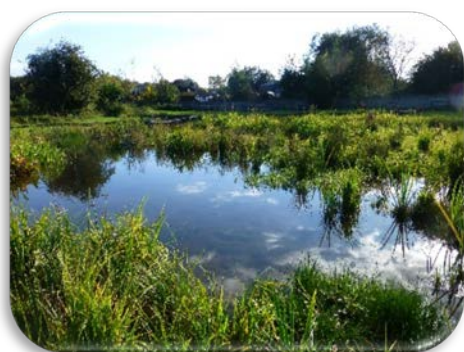
Work has been completed on the levelling of land at the Common to enable a better training area for young rugby and football players as well being a better recreational space for all to enjoy. A Trim Trail is now in place too.

The land at Orchard Road has now

been transferred to the Town Council and work to install the new play area will begin in June 2016.



STONEBRIDGE MEADOW



The meadow is jointly owned by the Town Council and Action for the River Kennet (ARK). Funding was obtained by ARK to install a reed bed and pond at the site and this has now been completed and will be officially opened in May 2016. Our Grounds & Estates Manager has worked hard with Project Officer, Anna Forbes, on the day to day management of the meadow as directed by the Stonebridge

Management Committee made up of representatives from the Town Council and ARK. Many residents and visitors enjoy a variety of activities that take place at the site, particularly during the summer months.

COOPER'S MEADOW

This meadow was formally transferred to the Town Council by Wiltshire Council during 2015/16. Sheep will continue to graze there during the summer months and there are plans to improve the play area through Section 106 funding and there'll be design input from our own Youth Council. Improvements will be made to the surrounding amenity area too and a User's Group has been established to help inform the Amenities and Opens Spaces Committee.

Councillors are immensely grateful for the huge improvements made by ARK to the river at this site which attracts a wealth of wildlife and is delightful.



PRIORY GARDENS



This remains an important piece of tranquil open space accessible to the public from the High Street. As well as work to trees and the gardens, work was completed to rebuild part of its historic wall for health and safety reasons. A wonderful recreation of the historic wall has been crafted and further rebuild and refurbishment work will take place in future.

CEMETERIES (FREES AVENUE)

The Grounds Team continues to keep this a peaceful and tranquil area. There has been a decrease in the number of burials and ashes interments over the last year or so.

Burials and Interments 2015

Ashes interments	11
Burials	9

Burials and Interments 2016

Ashes interments	7
Burials	8

The Council continues to search for additional space for an extension to the cemetery.

In the last year contractors were commissioned to re-surface the approach road and to widen it to allow for better parking for cemetery visitors. This is an enormous improvement.



THE COMMON

The Common continues to be popular as a venue for all types of events and activities. Various sports and interest groups continue to use it and meet regularly alongside dog walkers and local residents as part of the Common Users Group which helps advise the Council on current issues and new projects. The mesh installed about 18 months ago has helped to protect the surface from damage and Councillors are looking at the possibility of installing more to enable more event parking.



MEMORIAL STONE

Our thanks go to Mark Nash for the excellent work he has done to voluntarily restore the memorial stone on The Common which is there to commemorate the 347th Station Hospital based there during WWII.

TREE WORK

All trees on Town Council-owned land are inspected every three years - we are responsible for about 1,500 in all. An inspection took place in 2015/16 when the trees were examined by a qualified arboriculturalist. This is an important exercise which helps to keep trees healthy and safe. Identified priority work has already been undertaken. Sadly, some trees had to be felled including a few at the Common. With both Dutch Elm Disease and Horse Chestnut Leaf Miner, we were faced with severely weakened trees that were susceptible to sudden death and at risk of falling within a year. The Town Council will be looking to replace some of those felled.

There was tree planting at the Village Green at Elcot Lane. This great community project funded by the Town Council and Area Board was masterminded by the Elcot Lane Residents Group. Scouts, Cubs, the Town Council Grounds Team and volunteers all worked together to plant trees and shrubs to help enhance this important piece of open space.



RE-VAMPED BOROUGH SIGNS



We have A-level Art students from St John's International Academy to thank for helping out with the refurbishment of our blue signs at the entrances to Marlborough. Our Grounds Team took these down and have re-painted them and we asked Mike Harrison of the Art Department if he and his students could help us out with painting the crests. They have done a great job in bringing these back to life. Included in the project were Emma Beasley and Sophie Gibb. The

re-vamped signs have now been returned to their rightful places - very many thanks to St John's students.

CIVIC AND CEREMONIAL

The Town Mayor is supported by our Civic Secretary, Linda Chapman, who works hard co-ordinating the Mayor's many engagements and annual Town Council-led civic events including Mayor-Making, civic services and dinners as well as Remembrance Day. Mrs Chapman also works in close liaison with 4 Military Intelligence Battalion.



OUR NEW TOWN CRYER

This year we have found a fabulous new Town Cryer! Mr Michael Tupman, MBE who took over the role from his predecessor, Alfie Johnson at a special ceremony in March 2016. Most will already know him as Marlborough's well-loved and much respected former Special Constable. Alfie held the post for 21 years until he retired in 2015 and has now officially relinquished the role and handed over the bell to his successor. We are delighted to have appointed someone

who is perfect for the role - a wonderful voice, real authority and a bit of a performer who will fit in perfectly with our Civic Team. Our thanks go to David Sherratt for his help in preparing our Town Cryer for his new position.

FAREWELL TO...



This year we also said farewell to our Beadle, John Yates, who has retired from the position after around 5 years. We wish him well as he continues with the many activities he contributes to in the town. The role of Beadle will now be taken up by our new Town Cryer.

OFFICERS OF DIGNITY

We are proud too of our Macebearers - Bob Dobie, Barry Mercer and Geoffrey Snelgrove (our reserve). These are all honorary positions and stretch back many years. We rely on our Officers of Dignity to retain tradition and historic significance to many civic and other events. This year they have attended 14 events including the Mop Fairs, College Carol Service, civic services, the opening of the Jazz Festival and more. A slightly unusual civic appearance this year was that they, with the Mayor, featured in a video alongside pop stars, Scouting for Girls!



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