



MARLBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17

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TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT

Town Mayor's Report

Councillor Noel Barrett-Morton

A busy year for our Mayor and First Citizen, Councillor Noel Barrett-Morton. He has represented Marlborough at more than 120 events throughout the county, beautifully supported by his wife and Mayoress, Susan. He has supported community and voluntary groups in the town, maintained close links with the 4th Military Intelligence Battalion and hosted a Civic Dinner in its honour, opened many local events, supported sporting occasions, hosted the Queens 90th Birthday celebrations in the Town Hall and switched on the Christmas lights as well as raising funds for Swift Medics and Wiltshire Air Ambulance.

In addition to his civic role, the Mayor is the Chairman of the Town Council with responsibility for chairing Full Town Council meetings. As Chairman, he has presided over 13 of these meetings with issues such as the devolution of services and asset transfers from Wiltshire Council. So far, the Town Council has agreed to take over the public toilets at George Lane and refurbish them and, more recently, to take on the Youth Centre at St Margaret's Mead. Both of these facilities would have been closed had the Town Council not stepped in. Also, the purchase of two residential flats from a Housing Association which are currently being refurbished and will be available for rent over the coming months.

Each year the Town Council sets its precept or local tax for the following year and for 2017/18, the Town Council, regretfully, had to make a decision to increase this by 16.55%. It wasn't a decision taken lightly but, without this increase it would not have been in the resilient position necessary to ensure that the town has modern public toilets, a youth centre and be ready for other devolved services.

Here's a 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 increasing amount of work covered by this small local authority.

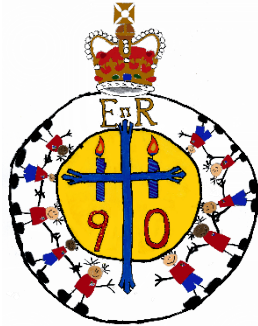


**Wiltshire
Air Ambulance**
funded by you, flying for you

TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT

Happy 90th Birthday to Her Majesty

On Sunday, 12th June, our community marked the Queen's 90th birthday at a well-attended Civic Service at St Mary's Church followed by celebrations at the Town Hall. It was all arranged between Churches Together and the Town Council with a focus on the Queen as well as a look at how Marlborough had changed during those years. The congregation was made up of local community and voluntary groups sitting alongside the Town Mayor, the Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Richard Handover, CBE, Mayors from across the county and our Town Councillors.



Afterwards the whole congregation moved across to a bunting clad Town Hall for a glass of Bucks Fizz and a royal cupcake and glasses were raised with three cheers for the Queen. Those attending also had a chance to look at a small exhibition of Marlborough memories with newspaper clippings, old photographs, Church Registers and the old Council Minute Books from 1926, 1953 and 1977 – all significant royal dates. Running on the screen throughout the event was film footage of Queen Elizabeth's life – as a small child, her wedding to the Duke of Edinburgh, the 1953 Coronation, her Silver, Golden and Diamond Jubilee years and more.

The Town Mayor, wielding a telescopic selfie stick, and ably assisted by Marlborough News Online, took a selfie to

commemorate the occasion. As many as possible, squeezed behind the Mayor to create this special memory.



Remembrance Parade and Armistice Day – November 2016



At 11am on Friday, 11th November, everything came to a halt in the High Street as a siren marked the start of a 2 minutes silence with the last post sounded by accomplished local trumpet player, Basil King. The Mayor and Councillors stood on the steps of the Town Hall alongside the Head Boy, Alex Williams and Head Girl, Anna Gent from St John's Academy, surrounded by their fellow pupils. Then the Mayor, an officer from the 4th Military Intelligence Battalion, a representative from the Royal British Legion and the Head Boy

TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT

and Girl laid wreaths at the 7th Wiltshire Regiment War Memorial at London Road.



As usual, the Remembrance Parade on Sunday, 13th November was another memorable and moving occasion beginning in the High Street with an inspection of the Parade by our Mayor and Lt. Col. Matt Jones, Commanding Officer of 4th Military Intelligence Battalion. The whole Parade - made up of 4MI soldiers, Town Councillors, the Royal British Legion, Scouts, Brownies, Cadet Forces and others - marched behind the Phoenix Band down to the War Memorial at New Road where 2 minutes' silence was respected and more than 20 representatives from various local groups laid wreaths before moving on to a Service of Remembrance at St Mary's Church. Another special event which saw many people turn out to pay their respects.



The Mayor also laid poppies on war graves in both of our cemeteries - something done with pride every year.

4th Military Intelligence Battalion

Again another year when the links between 4MI and Marlborough remain strong. Soldiers from the Battalion are called on by the Town Council to help out at many community events during the year and also join our teams in cricket and golf matches. In particular, their presence at Remembrance Sunday is an important part of the year for the town. This year the Mayor was able to host a Civic Dinner in honour of the Battalion which was given the Freedom of Entry to Marlborough in 2011. To commemorate the Homecoming Parade which took place in November 2013, Councillors were given a print of this historic occasion – a lovely gesture.



Welcome Reception for Newcomers

New (and nearly new) residents received a warm and enthusiastic welcome to the town at a welcome reception held on Wednesday, 21st September 2016. This event was to welcome new residents to the

TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT

town and let them know about the many and diverse groups and organisations that offer opportunities to get involved in the community, have fun and even learn new skills. Volunteers and Town Councillors were on hand to chat and provide information. Feedback was good and we hope to repeat the event over the next couple of years.

Many thanks to all who came along and to the volunteers who were ready and waiting to welcome them and chat about their organisations.



Christmas Lights Switch-On – 18th November 2016

Even the rain couldn't dampen the spirits of those who came along to watch Marlborough's Christmas Lights Switch-on on Friday, 18th November. There was plenty to do and see with a market stretching along the High Street, stage performances from choirs and dance groups, children's fairground rides and a chance to meet Father Christmas in his

Grotto at the Town Hall. In the lead up to the switch-on at 7pm our Mayor was taken by Santa in his sleigh along the High Street to the stage where he was announced by our Town Crier, Mike Tupman and M.C., Nigel Kerton. There the Mayor wished everyone a very happy Christmas and presented the town's Citizen of the Year, Anne Crawley, with her award before they both joined in the countdown to switch on the lights.



None of this would have come together without the hard work from the Rotary Club with their marshals and busy elves in the Town Hall, the Lions Club, Wiltshire Council, the police, 4th Military Intelligence Battalion, the Showmen's Guild and more. Also all those in the choirs, bands, and dance group, who put in hours of practice towards their performances. The Town Council passes its thanks onto them all.

Marlborough's Citizen of the Year 2016

Chair of Marlborough in Bloom, Anne Crawley, was our Citizen of the Year. From a teaching background, Anne moved to Marlborough about 5 years ago from London and it wasn't long before she was involved in activities in the town. Anne has thrown herself into community work. She joined the In Bloom group more than two

TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT

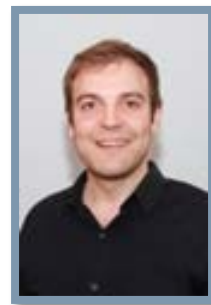
years ago and quickly stepped into the then Chair's shoes to head up the committee. She has shown real enthusiasm and energy, galvanizing organisations, residents, businesses and shops into action.

She has worked tirelessly to unite the whole community towards success in the Royal Horticultural Society's South West in Bloom competition and this year helped bring home some impressive silverware to reward the town's efforts. On receiving her award, Anne was keen to say that it also belonged to the many local volunteers who had turned out throughout the year, whatever the weather, to help transform their town.



following the principles of the Surveillance Commissioner.

Neighbourhood Plan



Councillors Hall and Cook are Chair and Vice Chair of the Steering Group heading up the production of the Marlborough Area Neighbourhood Plan which deals with future land use and covers the parishes of Marlborough, Mildenhall, Preshute and Savernake. The Steering Group is made of representatives from these parishes as well as Wiltshire Council and interested groups and individuals from across the area. There have been a series of Open Days coupled with initial public consultation. Early on it was clear that the 2 most important areas of concern were the lack of affordable housing and car parking capacity. To ensure robust consultation, a Housing Survey was undertaken (with 1,000 responses) as well as a business and employment survey. A Car Parking Study has recently been commissioned.

Work is dealt with via four working Parties – Housing Needs, Traffic and Parking, Business & Employment and Countryside & Recreation which all report to the main Steering Group. A website has been set up at www.manp.co.uk.

CCTV

Funded by the Town Council and the Area Board, CCTV has been installed in the Town Centre over the last two years and has been an invaluable deterrent to crime and a tool to help the police build up evidence to secure arrests and prosecutions. In the last year, police have visited the Town Council offices to view footage on 31 occasions. It is widely commented that the system is one of the best in the county. All data is collected lawfully in line with a Code of Practice



PLANNING COMMITTEE

Planning Committee

Chairman: Councillor Mervyn Hall



All Town Councillors sit on this committee (with the Mayor in an ex-officio role so with no vote) and have met every three weeks over the year to consider planning applications, road closures, premises licences, works to trees and relevant planning associated consultations. In total, the committee met 17 times in 2016/17.

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 compared to 2015/16:

	2015/16	2016/17*
Town Council Comment	Planning Applications	Planning Applications
No objection	133	136
Objection	18	10
Total applications received	151	146

**to 3 April 2017*

Of the total applications in 2016/17, Wiltshire Council refused four applications and eight were subsequently withdrawn. Of the four refused, the Town Council had raised objections to one. We were notified of four appeals.

Over the last year, there have been a small number of controversial planning applications and appeals including those concerning Rabley Wood View, a new boarding house at Marlborough College, Kingsbury Square, Lloren House, a Radio

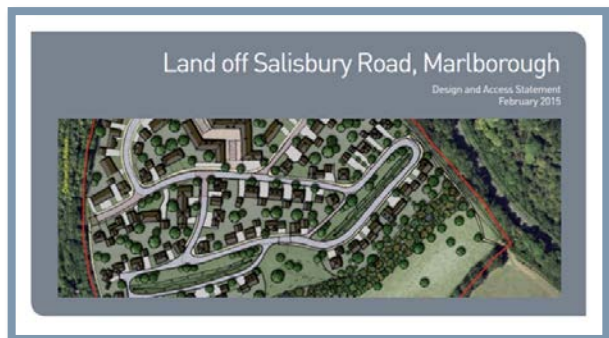
Base Station at St Peter's Church and a Village Green at Barton Park. In each case, Councillors were mindful of local opinion and weighed this up against material planning considerations and policies set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Wiltshire Core Strategy. The Town Council sent written representations against development on the appeals for Rabley Wood View and Newby Acre. The Planning Inspector ruled in favour of planning permission being granted at Rabley Wood and upheld the LPA decision to refuse planning permission at Newby Acre.



Councillors insisted that they were consulted about a proposal for a recycling facility just outside the parish boundary which affected residents at Manton.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Robust reasons for objections were put forward with which the Planning Officer agreed and the application was rejected. There has also been the withdrawal by McCarthy & Stone (developers of 27 retirement homes at Granham Hill) from a S106 Agreement for £334,625 towards affordable housing in Marlborough. The Town Council raised strong objections to this breach of a legal agreement, but the developer's viability statement was agreed by Wiltshire Council.



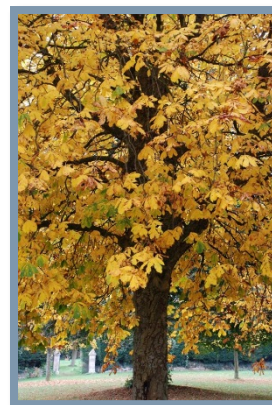
The Town Council requested early involvement with the development by Redrow at the Salisbury Road site formerly owned by the Crown Estate in particular to safeguard the proposal to build a much-needed hotel. It has also stressed the importance of its involvement with the future of St Peter's School following the opening of the Marlborough St Mary's Primary School.

Councillors remain concerned about how infrastructure will be able to keep up with new development – a point regularly raised with developers and the LPA.

Our two Unitary Councillors (who are also Town Councillors) - Cllrs 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). A total of 47 applications were received in 2016/17.



WORKS TO TREES

	2015/16	2016/17*
No objection	31	44
Objection	1	3
Total	32	47

**to 3 April 2017*

Transport

The Town Council's representatives to the Area Board's Community Area Transport Group (CATG) are Cllrs Marian Hannaford-Dobson and Richard Allen. This group looks 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. Air Quality is an increasingly important issue too.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

In 2016/17, it has agreed to a project for a suitability assessment for a 20mph limit for a number of roads in Marlborough and earlier in the year, new footway at Manton. Councillors also urged the Area Board to hold a public meeting for residents of Kingsbury Street and surrounding area about speeding traffic, HGVs, parking and pedestrian safety. A request for a freight limit for George Lane has also been requested.



The poster is for a Residents Meeting on Wednesday 15th March at 7 pm. It features a red header with the council crest and the text 'RESIDENTS MEETING Wednesday 15th March at 7 pm'. Below this is a blue sign with a white truck icon and the text 'Unsuitable for HGVs' with an arrow pointing right. The main body of the poster is blue with white text. It says 'UP YOUR STREET' and then 'Some residents in your area have expressed concerns about traffic, HGVs, pedestrian safety and parking in Kingsbury Street'. It continues: 'This meeting is your opportunity to discuss these issues with Area Board Wiltshire Councillors'. At the bottom, it says 'This invitation is being delivered to households only in YOUR local area, please do come along'. A red footer contains the meeting location and contact information: 'The meeting will take place in the Court Room, Town Hall enquiries@marlborough-tc.gov.uk / 01672 512487'.

CATG also deals with a number of issues logged on Wiltshire Council's Issues Log at every meeting. It's here that the Town Council continues to press for re-surfacing at The Parade and George Lane.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge that local planning authorities can place on development in their area. The money generated through the levy will contribute towards the funding of infrastructure to support growth. Where a Neighbourhood Plan has been published, a town or parish council is entitled to have 25% of this levy and where there is no Plan, only 15%. The Town Council has, in the last month, received notification of payments under this scheme. There is strict criteria about how this money can be spent.

Allocation of car parking spaces for events

In the last year, Wiltshire Council announced that its scheme for allocating free parking spaces for events would be passed to town councils. Marlborough Town Council now receives an annual allocation of spaces and is responsible for any onward provision of free spaces to event organisers. This comes with responsibility for signage and the Town Council has now purchased a supply of cones, Road Closure signs and barriers to be able to deliver this service.



FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

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, etc. right across the county. The proportion of your Council Tax (known as the precept) and around 10% of the overall annual Council Tax bill collected by Wiltshire Council is for the running of your own Town Council which provides your most local services. Also collected by Wiltshire Council are the precepts set by Wiltshire Police Authority and Wiltshire Fire & Rescue Services.



How your Town Council spends 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 Coopers Meadows, Allotments, War Memorials, Town Floral Displays, Football Pitches and the Cemeteries as well as more than 1500 trees

Management of public toilets

Management of a CCTV system

Consultation and assessment of all relevant planning applications

Administration of burial records, cemetery space, plaques and memorials

Maintenance and erection of Christmas lights

Event management – Royal Visits, Civic dinners, Christmas Lights Switch-on Event and other community events

Administration of a Small Grants Scheme

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

Work towards securing external grant 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, Town Councillors scrutinise budget lines carefully to ensure best value but, there are costs over which there is little or no control – tax, superannuation, national insurance, local government

national salary rises, utilities, business rates, etc. The Town Council receives no revenue funding from central government and a council tax support grant previously passed on from Wiltshire Council stopped

FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

with effect from 1 April 2017. Neither does it receive a share of revenue from Business Rates.

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 income is generated by rents received from residential and commercial properties, cemetery fees, sports pitch charges, open space and Town Hall hire as well as bank interest.

The Town Council also looks for external grant funding and in 2016/17 it was successful in its bids for grants from Wiltshire Council's Area Board towards replacement Christmas Lights (£4,720) and the toilets (£1,000) and from a central government grant scheme (Locality) for £2028 towards the Neighbourhood Plan.

Devolution of Services and Asset Transfers

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 have had to be made so that social care services can be properly maintained. There is a knock-on effect to town and parish councils - some services

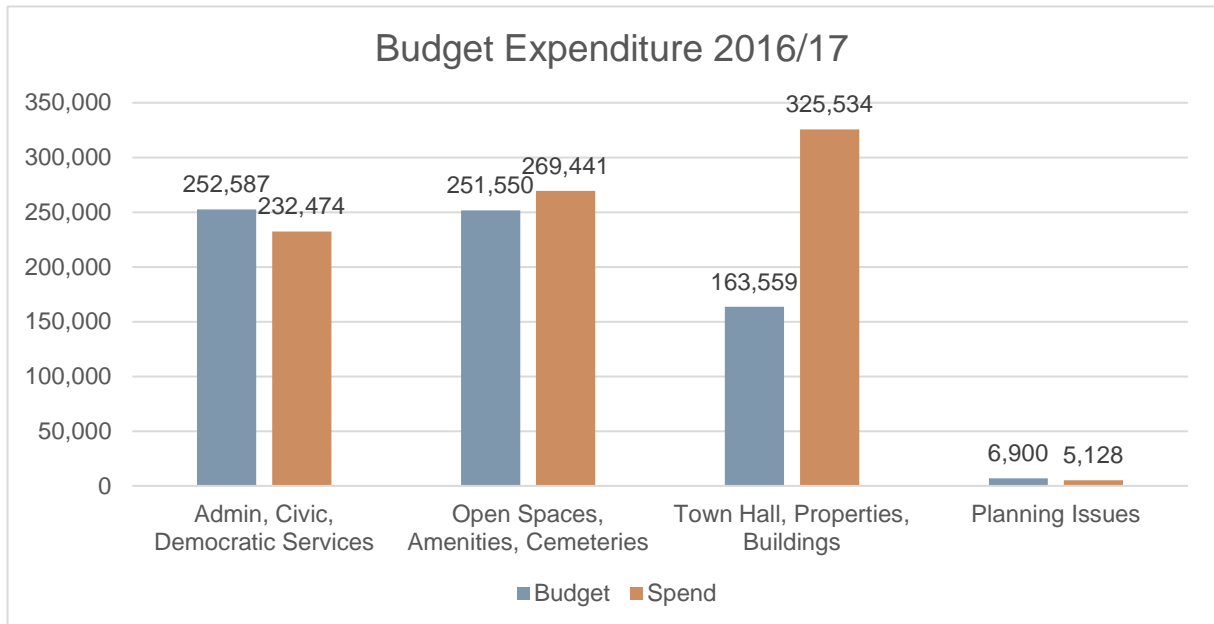
and community assets have been offered to Marlborough Town Council to take on. In 2016/17, we took on the public toilets at George Lane and have refurbished the building with a public works loan (the contract for the new toilets was £82,900 plus a 10% contingency - £90,190). (These would have been closed unless the Town Council had taken them on.) The Town Council has also agreed to take on the Youth Centre at St Margaret's Mead, the running costs, estimated at £22,800 pa, were included as an element in the precept set for 2017/18. More services are also likely to be devolved, for example, grass cutting and litter picking. There is no funding to accompany these services or the various asset transfers being offered to the Town Council.

Additions to the Property Portfolio

Unforeseen expenditure in 2016/17 was the purchase of 2 small flats from a Housing Association. These were in a building jointly owned with the Town Council and bought at total purchase price of £155,000. This has meant that the building at 3, Kingsbury Street is now in the sole ownership of the Council and once the flats are refurbished, they will be available to rent. This unbudgeted expenditure was covered by the Town Council's General Reserves.

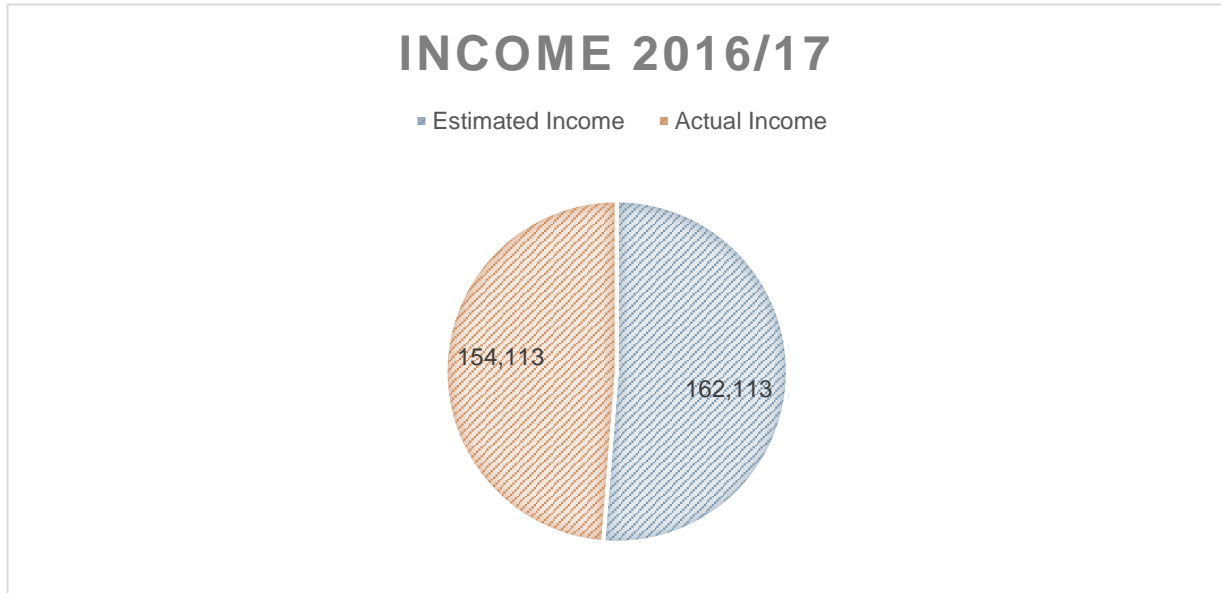
FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

Budget Expenditure and Income - 2016/17



The 7% budget overspend in the Amenities and Open Spaces budget is largely due to changes in staff costs and legal and professional fees. The large overspend in

the Property budget reflects the purchase price of the 2 new flats and associated legal fees.



The chart shows a reduction of just under 5% in budget income. This is mainly due to a decrease in income from cemetery fees and a commercial property vacancy so a reduction in rent collected.

Grant income is not included in these figures nor the public works loan towards the refurbishment of the public toilets.

It's important to remember that these figures have been taken from unaudited accounts. The Annual Return and full audited accounts will be published by the end of June and will be available for the public to view.

FINANCE AND POLICY COMMITTEE

Reserves

As of 31st March 2017, general reserves (also known as free reserves) are £160,971. Ear marked reserves total £300,903. (These are set aside for specific projects). So, overall reserves are £461,874.

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 Gardens, Wye House and Plume of Feathers Gardens), play areas and associated equipment as well as vehicles and equipment needed to maintain all of our sites.

Borrowing

In 2016/17, the Town Council took on a loan from the Public Works Loan Board of £90,190 at a preferential annual rate of interest of 1.62% with annual payments of £9,805.66 over a 10 year period. This was to fund refurbishment work at the public toilets at George Lane.

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 120 in Wiltshire and further afield during 2016/17).

A small budget of £500 has been set aside for Councillor travel expenses. Only £34 of this has been drawn down in 2016/17.

Small Grant Scheme for 2016/17

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

GRANT RECIPIENT	AMOUNT
Mencap	£200
St John's Ambulance	£300
Prospect Hospice	£2,040
Jubilee Centre	£1,116
Merchants House	£844
Phoenix Band	£1,000
Manton Pre-School	£300
Bobby Van Trust	£350
Revitalise	£450



PROPERTY COMMITTEE

Local Council Tax (Precept) for 2017/18

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 16.55% for 2017/18. This rise to £182.67 equates to an increase of £25.94p per year or £2.16p a month or 49p a week for an average Band D Council Tax payer towards the running of Marlborough Town Council and the services it provides.

Property Committee

Chairman: Councillor Guy Loosmore

The Property Committee is responsible for all Town Council owned properties including the 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 busy Caretaker, Alan Brown.



An approximate breakdown of bookings for 2016/17 is:

Function	2015/16	2016/17
Wedding receptions	7	5
Wedding ceremonies	16	18
Sales, craft fairs, fundraising coffee mornings	27	25
Meetings (excluding Town Council)	32	37
Film nights	41	33
Private parties, training events, fundraising nights, other	58	55
Total	181	173

PROPERTY COMMITTEE

To ensure the future of this historic building, Councillors have agreed that as recommended by a structural engineer, professional inspections take place every five years. Work continues around day to day maintenance through service agreements, annual machinery checks and health and safety inspections.

Commercial and Residential Properties



The Council owns three shops and eight residential properties. In the last year, two studio flats at 3, Kingsbury Street have been purchased from a Housing Association. With this new purchase, the building, previously jointly owned by the Town Council and the Association is in the sole ownership of the Council. These flats are currently undergoing extensive refurbishment and when completed will be ready for rent.

Following a review, Town Councillors commissioned external professional agents, Carter Jonas, to undertake the management of all of its residential and commercial properties.

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, Golf Club, Boxing Club, etc.).

Public Toilets

In April 2016, Wiltshire Council closed its toilets at George Lane Car Park. The Town Council recognising the importance of providing these facilities to its residents and visitors, took on this building via a Community Asset Transfer. It was originally intended to sell the public toilets at Chantry Lane to fund the refurbishment work, but this would have meant a period of time when Marlborough would have been without any public toilets. So, instead, it took out a public loan from the Public Works Loan Board - a statutory government organisation that lends at preferential rates to local authorities. A proper tendering process was undertaken, a project manager appointed and the work is now nearing completion for an April opening.

There will be a usage charge for the toilets of 20p which will help to offset running costs – cleaning, utilities, business rates, etc.



Once the new, modern toilets are open, the site at Chantry Lane will close and will be sold at auction and the proceeds used to fund Phase 2 of the George Lane project which, depending on decisions to be made by the new Council, may include a small

STAFFING SUB-COMMITTEE

Tourist Information Point which fits in well with the town's increasing tourism needs.

Youth Centre



The Town Council submitted an expression of interest in taking on this building along with the Corner House (a former Children's Centre) at George Lane Car Park. These are both included in a proposed bundle of assets for eventual transfer to Marlborough Town Council. Wiltshire Council has now proposed that we take on the Youth Centre

(which was due to be mothballed after the May elections) under a 7 year lease.

Councillors will continue to press for an asset transfer of the building.

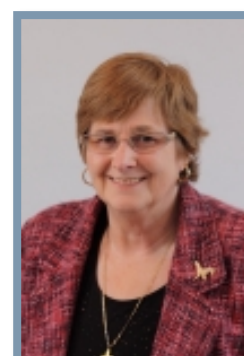
Prior to agreeing to this, Town Councillors commissioned a full professional building survey which confirmed that the building was in good structural condition, but with some external repair work needed and a re-modelling of the internal space to make it more accessible for use by community groups.

Running costs were investigated and projected revenue expenditure (circa £22,800 pa) forecast and an element to cover this included in the precept for 2017/18. A number of interested groups have come forward to use the facility and this will help, eventually, to offset these costs. Councillors will be looking now to raise capital expenditure for refurbishment and redecoration works over the course of the year.

Staffing Sub-Committee

Chairman: Councillor Peggy Dow

The Staffing Sub-Committee meets as required to deal with various staffing and management issues and has met five times over the last year. The staff is headed-up by qualified Town Clerk, Shelley Parker and in 2016/17 the Council employed 9 full time and 3 part time members of staff. 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 have overseen day to day administration, accounts, event management, civic occasions, tourist information, managed commercial and residential property portfolio 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 and sharing of information via our website and social media.

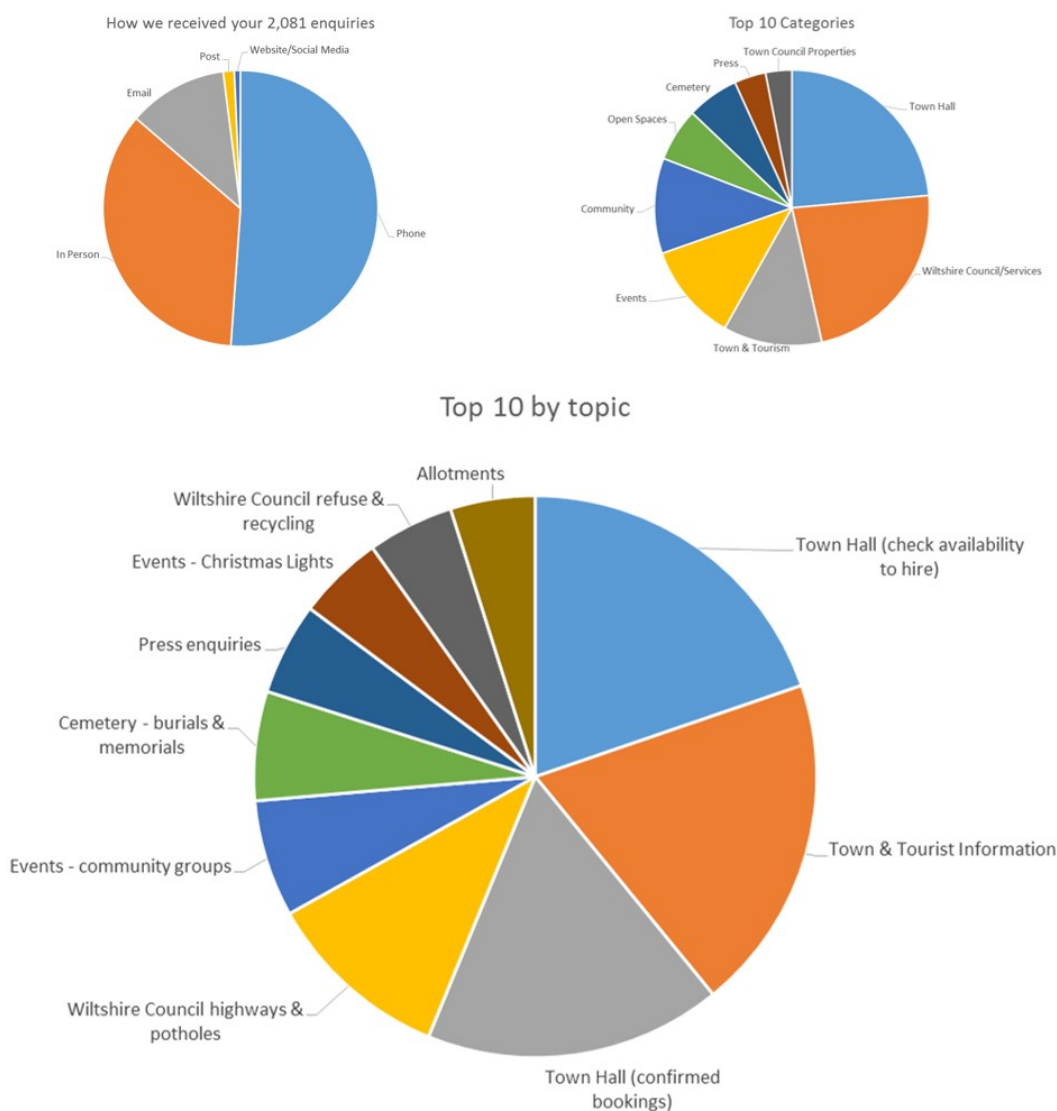


STAFFING SUB-COMMITTEE

Work load has increased considerably in the last year as the Town Council has taken on the toilets at George Lane and its small staff has overseen the refurbishment of this site as well the upgrading of two flats purchased from a Housing Association. There is now more responsibility for event management around the Mop Fairs, Christmas Lights switch-on and other events including associated signage and event parking. Responsibilities will increase further following confirmation that the Town Council will be taking on the running of the Youth Centre and the Christmas Market, a service which Wiltshire Council can no longer administer. Efficiencies have been put in place to meet these challenges which will now include some weekend coverage from the Grounds Team.



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.



Training

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

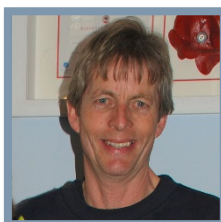
TRAINING

Advanced Horticulture (an apprenticeship)
Planning
Cemetery Management
VAT
First Aid
IT Training
Certificate of Local Council Administration

There is also a training budget in place for Councillors.

Farewell

After 25 years working for the Town Council, our Senior Groundsman and Deputy Town Hall Caretaker, Mark Harding, has retired.



Mark has given the town a superb service whether looking after our public gardens, play areas, cemeteries and other open spaces or the Town Hall and will be remembered for his high standards, wide horticultural knowledge and conscientious approach – he will certainly be missed.

We say farewell too to Richard Beale, our Grounds Manager, who has steered the Grounds Team towards many improvements across the town and he will be remembered particularly for his enormous contribution to the In Bloom campaigns. We wish him every success in his new venture.



Work Experience

In July 2016, we were delighted to welcome Karla Jackson, a Year 10 student at St John's Academy, who spent a week with us. She used a variety of skills in her short time working alongside our staff, learning about the way a small local authority works. She toured the town visiting the parks, play areas, cemeteries and other open spaces within the Town Council's responsibilities.

Karla also archived some historic documents and took photographs of the upper floors of the Town Hall and even took minutes at a meeting.

Thank you for your help, Karla. We wish you well in your studies and future career.



Karla Jackson at work in the Town Hall

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

Amenities and Open Spaces Committee

Chairman: Councillor Lisa Farrell

In total the Amenities and Open Spaces Committee will have met five times in the last year. Integral to its work is our Grounds Team based at the Workshop at the Recreation Ground at Salisbury Road which, until April, was headed up by the Grounds 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, cemeteries, play areas and much more. They cut grass, pick litter, maintain our street furniture and bus shelters, 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 have a real impact on our visitors.



South West in Bloom



An important partnership is that between the Town Council and Marlborough in Bloom and its entry into the RHS South West in Bloom competition. The town was judged on the hottest day of the year – 19th July 2016. All the hard work paid off. At the SWiB Awards Ceremony on 6 October at the Somerset County Cricket Ground in Taunton, representatives from Marlborough were repeatedly called up onto the stage to receive awards presented by Downton Abbey creator, Lord Julian Fellowes. Marlborough won a Silver Gilt award and the South West Travel

Association Cup too. The town did extremely well in the Its Your Neighbourhood scheme with 12 entries from the town as well as The Lamb collecting silverware for the best floral display by a pub in the South West!

Another special award went to Marlborough Waterfront (the fabulous garden at Kennet Place) named as the joint winner of the London and Manchester Trophy for the most outstanding environmental initiative.

Congratulations go to all those who worked really hard towards the community entries and main competition.

That's the MiB committee headed up by Anne Crawley, businesses, schools, the Town Council's Grounds Team, shops and all those



AMENITIES AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

volunteers who help put Marlborough on the map.

S106 Projects



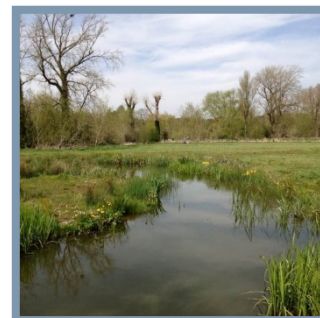
The new play area at Orchard Road was installed in time for the summer holidays. This project, a long held ambition for Councillor Alec Light, was funded by money (£18,988) contributed by developers through a S106 Agreement linked to the building of houses on the former St John's School site. This new facility was opened by the Mayor on 22nd July 2016.

The play area at Cooper's Meadow is the next one to receive a much needed uplift via Section 106 funds. Councillors are working with members of the Youth Council on its design.

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 dipping pond at the site which was officially opened by Claire Perry, MP in May 2016. Our Grounds Manager has worked hard with ARK

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 of all ages enjoy a wide variety of activities that take place at the site, particularly during the summer months. A meeting to review the site's Management Plan will be open to the public and is due to take place soon.

Wye Gardens

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



AMENITIES AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

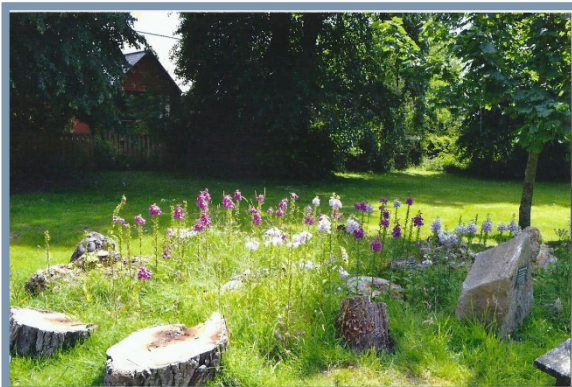
Cemetery

A number of improvements have been agreed for the cemetery which includes new Cemetery Regulations, a new noticeboard, and removal of broken metal fencing and the repainting of the entrance gates. The Council continues to search for additional space for an extension to the cemetery and this is being addressed through the Neighbourhood Plan.

BURIALS AND INTERMENTS	2014/15
Ashes interments	11
Burials	9
	2015/16
Ashes interments	7
Burials	8
	2016/17
Ashes interments	15
Burials	14

Old Victorian Cemetery

Councillor Margaret Rose has headed up the Friends of the Old Victorian Cemetery with a number improvements at this closed cemetery. Her volunteers, supported by the Grounds Team, have been planting



wild flowers, creating a Foxglove Dell and cutting back overgrowth and more to highlight a really beautiful, historic part of the town. This will be entered into the South West in Bloom Competition 2017.

The Common

Events and activities continue to take place here. As well as continued use by the Rugby Club, Youth Football Club, Golf Club, Marlborough Model Flying Club we will soon be welcoming a new Tennis Club. This year we have seen a circus, seven car boot sales, pigeon liberations and even a Stunt Show! It has also been used for overflow parking for town events.



The Common Users Group meets regularly to discuss and give feedback to the Council on issues and new projects – new members are always welcome.

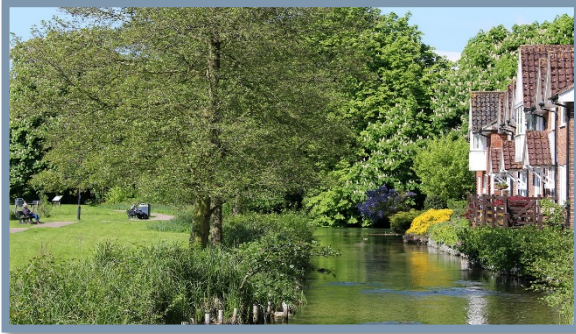
On the advice of a qualified arboriculturalist, a number of diseased trees had to be removed from Frees Avenue. A new plan for replacement trees is being drawn together.

Cooper's Meadow

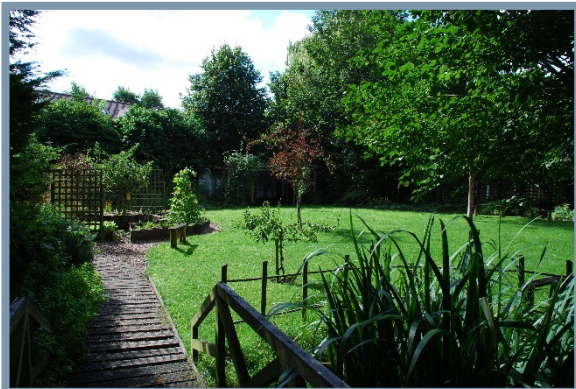
A licence will again be issued for grazing for sheep in Cooper's Meadow in 2017 and we will be welcoming them back in late spring.

AMENITIES AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

Councillors will be looking at enhancing the amenities in this area over the next year and will continue to work with ARK on these improvements.



Plume of Feathers



In support of the excellent work done by the Richmond Fellowship for those needing

mental health support, Councillors have renewed its lease, at a peppercorn rent, so the Fellowship can continue to work on this beautiful garden in the centre of town. The Fellowship has some excellent projects involving local schools coming up over the next year.

Beehives



To highlight Marlborough in Bloom's bee inspired theme for South West in Bloom and to help reverse the decline in population of this busy pollinator, Councillors agreed to place 3 beehives on Town Council-owned land in the town - Cooper's Meadow, the Old Victorian Cemetery and Stonebridge Meadow. This was done under the direction and management of an experienced and qualified beekeeper.

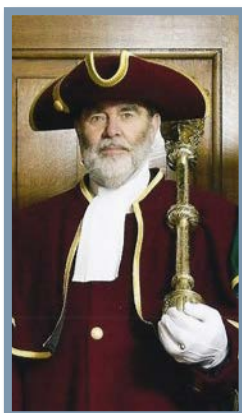
Civic and Ceremonial

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

Officers of Dignity

Our honorary Macebearers - Bob Dobie, Barry Mercer and Geoffrey Snelgrove (our reserve) attended 13 civic events this year which have included the Merchant's House Peppercorn Rent Ceremony, Mop Fair Opening, Remembrance Day, Christmas Lights Switch-on, Marlborough College Carol Service and more.

This year we have said farewell to Geoffrey Snelgrove who has kindly helped out with some events and we would like to thank him for his loyal service to Marlborough and its traditions. If you are interested, in joining us as a reserve Macebearer, do let us know.



other separate appearances at other Town Crier competitions, two BBC Wiltshire slots and various 'shouts' around the town. His win at Bowood entitles Marlborough to host the next Wiltshire Town Crier Championship and this takes place on Saturday, 23rd September 2017.

Our Town Crier

Last year we found a fabulous new Town Crier - Mr Michael Tupman, MBE who, before his retirement, was a well-known and much respected Special Constable. He has made a magnificent start and after only a few weeks in the role won the title of Wiltshire's Champion Town Crier at a competition at Bowood House. He has also attended 13 civic events alongside his fellow Officers of Dignity as well as 11



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Special thanks go to Councillors Stewart Dobson, Marian Hannaford-Dobson, Margaret Rose, Richard Allen, Justin Cook, Alec Light and Billy Lam who will be stepping down from the Town Council in May. We wish all of them very best wishes for the future and pass our appreciation for the contribution they have made to Marlborough during their time in office. A special acknowledgement goes to Councillor Stewart Dobson who has served Marlborough for 46 years, starting with the Borough Council and then the Town Council – a really impressive length of public service.

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