



Wokingham Town Council

Town Hall, Market Place, Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 1AS
Tel: 0118 978 3185 www.wokingham-tc.gov.uk
Town Clerk: K. Hughes

This Council Meeting is open to the Public and Press
Please notify the Officer or Chair if you wish to record the meeting

12th September 2023

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend the meeting of the **Civic Committee** to be held in the **Diamond Jubilee Room, Town Hall, Wokingham** at **7.30pm** on **Monday 18th September 2023** for the purpose of considering and resolving upon the subjects and matters set out in the agenda below.

Yours sincerely

K Hughes
Town Clerk

Contact Officer Nikki Payler, Civic Officer
Direct line: 0118 974 0882 Email: civic@wokingham-tc.gov.uk

AGENDA

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

To receive any declaration of interests from Members on the business about to be transacted.

3 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OR PUBLIC

The Chair to answer questions raised by members of the Council or public.

This is an opportunity for the people of Wokingham to ask questions of, and make comments to, the Town Council. Members of the public are requested to restrict their questions and comments to three minutes. Questions which are not answered at this meeting will be answered in writing to the person asking the question. To ensure an informed response, please send your questions to the Town Clerk at least three working days prior to the meeting.

4 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

To receive and resolve the Minutes of the proceedings at the meeting of this Committee held on 19th June 2023 (pages 16776 to 16778), copy attached, as a true and correct record.

5 MONITORING REPORT

To receive the Monitoring Report dated 12th September 2023 (copy attached), for information.

6 COMMITTEE'S BUDGET

To receive an update on the Committee's budget as of 31st August 2023 (copy attached).

7 HERITAGE OPEN DAY SUNDAY FEEDBACK

To discuss and share feedback about the day, so it can be considered in future planning (see feedback attached).

8 CIVIC AWARD SELECTION MEETING

To identify a member to join the Chair, Vice-Chair and the Mayor at the Civic Award Selection meeting taking place on Wednesday 6 December at 10am.

9 CIVIC CHURCH SERVICE

To receive, consider and resolve the Civic Officer's report 02/2023-24 dated 12th September 2023.

10 WEARING OF COUNCILLOR ROBES FOR ANNUAL HISTORICAL PHOTOGRAPH

To receive, consider and resolve the Civic Officer's report 03/2023-24 dated 12th September 2023.

11 BUDGET REQUESTS FOR 2024-2025

To consider and request to F&P any additional funding required for 2024-2025 including the following:

- a) Museum Accreditation and its Open Days - To receive and consider the Civic Officer's report 04/2023-24, dated 12th September 2023, and request funding from F&P, if supported.
- b) New budget line to allow for Mayor's chaplain/celebrant expenses - To receive and consider the Civic Officer's report 05/2023-24, dated 12th September 2023, and request funding from F&P, if supported.
- c) Budgeting for replacement of mayoral chain - To receive and consider the Civic Officer's report 06/2023-24, dated 12th September 2023, and request funding from F&P, if supported.
- d) Beating the Bounds walk - To receive and consider the Civic Officer's report 07/2023-24, dated 12th September 2023, and request funding from F&P, if supported.
- e) Wokingham Remembers website - To receive and consider the Civic Officer's report 08/2023-24, dated 12th September 2023, and request funding from F&P, if supported.

12 INFORMATION ITEMS

- a) Mini-Mayor feedback form from 2022-2023
- b) The new Mini-Mayor that has been appointed for 2023-2024 is Leah Vas from Floreat Montague Park Primary school
- c) WTC's Christmas Music is being co-ordinated and run on the day by morearts, due to the organisation having left over grant funds as a service provider.
- d) The 2023 Remembrance Church Service will be held at All Saints Church.

13 COMMITTEE INFORMATION

- a) To receive information items raised by members
- b) Identify any specific items for marketing purposes

Civic Committee: Cllrs Adrian Betteridge, Rachel Bishop-Firth, Phil Cunnington, Warren Dixon, Maria Gee, Alwyn Jones (Vice-Chair), Keith Malvern, Adrian Mather (Chair) and Margaret Lucey.

In order to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998, all persons attending this meeting are hereby notified that this meeting will be recorded. The purpose of recording proceedings is that it acts as an aide-memoir in assisting the clerk of the meeting in the compilation of minutes. The recordings are held in a secure location and deleted once it has been resolved that the minutes are a true and correct record.

In accordance with The Openness of Local Government Bodies regulations 2014, persons attending this meeting may make their own recordings of the proceedings subject to the Council's Policy on Filming, Recording & Reporting on Council and Committee Meetings (copy available on request).

19th June 2023 - draft

Minutes of the proceedings of the **CIVIC COMMITTEE** meeting held on this day in **the Main Hall, Town Hall, Wokingham** from 19:30 to 21:15pm.

PRESENT

Chair: Cllr A Mather (Chair)
 Councillors: R Bishop-Firth, P Cunnington, M Gee, A Jones (Vice-Chair),
 K Malvern, M Lucey.

IN ATTENDANCE

Civic Officer

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from Cllrs A Betteridge and W Dixon.

MEMBERS' INTERESTS (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OR PUBLIC (Agenda Item 3)

No questions were received.

CIVIC OVERVIEW (Agenda Item 4)

The committee members received the Civic Officer's report which provided an overview of the work of the Civic Officer.

The report noted that the work includes the following and the civic committee may be required to make decisions on matters relating to any of these topics:

- mayoral support
- management of Macebearer/Mayor's Attendant and Honorary members
- mayoral regalia
- civic events and activities.

The Chair asked the Civic Officer to talk this through to help raise their awareness of the work of the committee, for the new members. Members asked a number of questions and had a number of thoughts including the following:

- An emphasis was placed on the importance of WTC being inclusive and continually reaching out to our wider community, in all that WTC does.
- To ask Councillors if they have any useful contacts to share with Officers which might be helpful when sharing information, with key groups in the community, about WTC's work, or to find out if there is anything WTC can do to support them. However, it was recognised that as this spans across the whole of the Council and not just civic, this should be discussed further at the next Strategy working party to ensure WTC is consistent with its approach.

ACTION: Civic Officer

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____

Civic Committee 19/06/2023

16776



CIVIC COMMITTEE MINUTES (Agenda Item 5)

**RESOLVED
30659**

It was proposed by Cllr Bishop-Firth and seconded by Cllr Malvern and it was

that the Minutes of the Civic Committee meeting held on 20th March 2023 (pages 16706 to 16708), be received as a true and correct record and that they be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

**RESOLVED
30660**

It was proposed by Cllr Bishop-Firth and seconded by Cllr Malvern and it was

that the Minutes of the Civic Committee meeting held on 4th April 2023 (pages 16718 to 16720), be received as a true and correct record and that they be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

MONITORING REPORT (Agenda Item 6)

The Monitoring Report dated 13th June 2023 was received and noted.

a) Purchase new badge and ribbon for Mini-Mayor

Civic Officer to purchase.

b) Arrange for mayoral badge of office to be repaired and 2 new links to be added

Civic Officer to make arrangements.

c) To consider the purchase of a new mayoral badge and chain of office at some point in the near future.

As discussed in previous civic meetings, the committee agreed that in some point in the near future, consideration should be given to purchasing a new Mayoral chain and badge of office. The Civic Officer will explore options and bring to the committee at a future civic meeting.

COMMITTEE'S BUDGET (Agenda Item 7)

A report on the Committee's budget expenditure to 31st May 2023 was received and noted.

MAYOR'S SUNDAY FEEDBACK (Agenda Item 8)

a) The committee received copies of thank you letters from the Deputy Lieutenant and the High Sheriff.

b) The chair invited feedback about the day so it can be considered in future planning.

Whilst, previous discussions have taken place at recent civic meetings, members discussed the Civic Church service further. The Civic Officer advised that a civic service was planned as previously agreed, and adjustments were made for the focus of the service to be for the whole of the Council and not personally for the Mayor. Due to 2023 being an election year for WTC, plans had to be made in advance and unlike the years in between, there was limited time to make any further adjustments. Members discussed the following:

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____

Civic Committee 19/06/2023

16777



- The church Service was not well attended by the public.
- Some members missed the parade.
- WTC now has a wider mix of faiths and atheists amongst its Councillors, with different views which it needs to take into account.
- Some members felt it might be worth re-considering holding the civic service on a separate day as it was done prior to 2017.
- Some members queried who the service is for.

It was agreed that further discussions should take place at a future civic meeting to determine the best solution going forward. The Chair suggested a meeting with the Civic Officer and Town Clerk to outline a report in preparation for the next discussion.

ACTION: Civic Officer

CEREMONIAL FLAGS REQUEST (Agenda Item 9)

The committee received the Civic Officer's report outlining a request from the Grounds and Bloom Officer to display the ceremonial flags during July for the regional and national RHS Wokingham in Bloom judging days.

**RESOLVED
30661**

It was proposed by Cllr Bishop-Firth and seconded by Cllr Gee and it was that members were in full support for the flags to be displayed.

ACTION: Civic Officer

INFORMATION ITEMS (Agenda Item 10)

It was noted that the Town council's annual newsletter will be distributed to all households within the town boundary from 26 June.

COMMITTEE INFORMATION (Agenda Item 11)

There were no information items.

- a) No information was raised by members.
- b) The Civic Officer asked Councillors to share information about Armed Forces Day, taking place on Saturday 24 June to help raise awareness. The Civic Officer will email Councillors with the details.

CHAIR'S SIGNATURE _____

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Monitoring Report: Civic

Date: 12 September 2023

Date Action Agreed	Item for Action (to include any resolution number)	Person Actioning	Proposed Completion Date	Progress
20.3.23	Purchase new badge and ribbon for Mini-Mayor	CO	Sept 2023	This has been ordered
20.3.23	Arrange for mayoral badge of office to be repaired and 2 new links to be added	CO	ASAP	This is now with Fattorini
20.3.23	To consider the purchase of a new mayoral badge and chain of office at some point in the near future	CO	Not set	Committee to consider when felt appropriate – see report (agenda item 11c)
19/06/2023	<u>Civic funerals</u> The Committee asked for clarification of the criteria for those eligible for a civic funeral.	Civic Officer	23/9/19	Those eligible are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serving Councillors • All Past Mayors (serving or not) • Current members of staff <p>It should be noted that although eligible, a civic funeral is not always taken up and WTC will always liaise with the family to be guided by them.</p>
19/06/2023	Identify the dates/occasions that WTC currently recognise on social media and ask Councillors if they have any useful contacts to share with Officers which might be helpful in reaching out to share this information with key groups in our community, or to ask if there is anything WTC can do to support.	Civic Officer	Not set	Civic Officer updated Town Clerk and Marketing Officer following meeting. <p>The Town Clerk is currently looking at community engagement and will work with Marketing Officer to begin collating this information, to support all of WTC's activities.</p>

WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Monitoring Report: Civic

Date: 12 September 2023

Wokingham Town Council Principles

Service
All residents of Wokingham Town deserve high quality services.

Distinctiveness
Wokingham Town is proud of its distinctive nature as a modern market town with an ancient heritage

Sustainability
Wokingham Town will aim to be a sustainable community.

Inclusivity
Wokingham Town will be welcoming to all

The Council's principles are noted here as a useful reference for members in discussions at Council meetings as they should always be considered.

The key principles for Civic will be distinctiveness and inclusivity but these will of course not be exclusive, and the committee will take all of these into consideration when making decisions.

06/09/2023

Wokingham Town Council

Page 1

10:17

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 31/08/2023

Month No: 5

Cost Centre Report

	Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available
<u>302 Civic</u>						
4333 Newsletter	4,477	5,211	5,000	(211)		(211)
4335 Operation Bridge Costs	3,565	0	0	0		0
4362 Civic Receptions	824	776	2,800	2,024	384	1,640
4365 Heritage Day	2,959	1,874	3,850	1,976	683	1,293
4369 Remembrance Day	996	0	2,800	2,800		2,800
4370 Christmas Music	115	0	1,000	1,000		1,000
4371 Honoraria	1,400	0	1,400	1,400		1,400
4372 Chair's Allowance	3,500	1,750	3,500	1,750		1,750
4373 Civic Transport	0	0	100	100		100
4374 Official Gifts	361	138	500	362		362
4375 Christmas Cards	215	0	300	300		300
4376 Insignia & Dress	2,944	1,374	3,000	1,626	1,107	519
4377 Civic Awards	1,262	0	2,000	2,000		2,000
4378 Silver Talks	71	8	50	43		43
4399 Mayor's Sunday	2,587	2,501	5,000	2,499	384	2,115
4523 Museum Accreditation	794	25	10,000	9,975	250	9,725
Civic :- Indirect Expenditure	26,071	13,657	41,300	27,643	2,807	24,835
Net Expenditure	(26,071)	(13,657)	(41,300)	(27,643)		
Grand Totals:- Income	0	0	0	0		
Expenditure	26,071	13,657	41,300	27,643	2,807	24,835
Net Income over Expenditure	(26,071)	(13,657)	(41,300)	(27,643)		
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(26,071)	(13,657)				

Heritage Open Day Feedback

A really well organised event .. thank you ...
I was particularly inspired by my chat with the 'lacemakers'
Resident

Thank you for arranging this. My children had a lovely time having a go at the crafts and Lego building.
Resident

We loved it - especially looking at the 2 jail cells - we had no idea they were there!
Resident

Sue and Maggi join me in thanking everyone who worked so hard to make Saturday such a success. We had a really good day.
North Down Lacemakers

We had a great day and was nice to be involved in something that supports the town that we are based in. We do a lot in other towns but first time we have done something in Wokingham, which is great as we got to see some old faces and introduce what we do to new ones too. It was a great day, and the photos are lovely. Thanks again.
Brickies (Lego)

Once again you did a fabulous job. There is so much to do in arranging something like this and it was seamless. Much enjoyed by everyone too.
Lucy Zeal, High Steward

Thank you for the attention you gave to yesterday's event in the Town Hall. It was all very worthwhile and much appreciated. And successful!
Peter Shilam, historian

Leah did have a lovely time and a wonderful experience too on Saturday. And we as a family were happy and proud to be a part of the Leah's first event as A Mini Mayor.
Jolene, Mum of new Mini-Mayor

I have you to thank for what turned out to be a happy and successful day. You always look after me. 21 booklets were sold by Liz and Stan, which is quite good. It was also good to see so many familiar faces.
Jim Bell, local historian



Wokingham Town Council

Civic Officer's Report 02/2023-24

To: Civic Committee
Date: 12 September 2023
Subject: Civic Church Service

1 REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To continue the discussion about the church service element of the Mayor's Sunday event, following June's civic meeting. Feedback from civic members included the following:
- 1.1.1 The church Service was not well attended by the public (however, it should be noted that there was little time to promote this, and although guests were invited to the whole event, i.e., the ceremony and the civic service, some guests chose to leave after the ceremony).
 - 1.1.2 Some Councillors missed not having the parade (a decision was taken not to include this in November 2022 due to less support from uniformed organisations compared to their eagerness to attend the Remembrance parade). However, the public do welcome seeing local traditions and seeing the Mayor and Councillors in their regalia.
 - 1.1.3 Some members felt it might be worth re-considering holding the civic service on a separate day as it was done prior to 2017.
 - 1.1.4 Some members queried who the Church service is for.
- 1.2 It is important to note that WTC offers distinctiveness through its contribution to civic life within the town. Its traditions are important to uphold whilst at the same time recognising change, and ensuring any new proposals continue to be aligned with the Council's vision and principles.

2 BACKGROUND

For reference, attached is some information, taken from Civic Ceremonial (a handbook, history and guide for Mayor's Councillors and Officers), 5th Edition by Paul Millward.

- 2.1 A civic church service has traditionally been organised following the election of the new Mayor each year. In the past this was held on a separate day to the Annual Council meeting (Mayor's Sunday ceremony) in the Town Hall, a few weeks later. However, in 2017, a step-change was made to join these together to make one event as they are so closely linked.
- 2.2 A vast majority of local authorities organise an official church service for their Mayor each year. Whilst there is no requirement that this must take place, WTC is a traditional Council, and this has been a long-standing tradition.
- 2.3 Whilst this occasion marks and welcomes the new Mayor, it also marks the strong historic links between the Council and the Church. This dates back to 1894 when parish councils were first established when a number of their responsibilities were separated from the

Agenda Item 9

Church. A relationship remains strong between the Council and our local Churches as we share lots of key aims to support our community.

- 2.4 WTC has rotated its attendance at different Wokingham Churches for its service, where possible. WTC has taken guidance from each Mayor Elect, if known, as to where they would like the Church service therefore reflecting any personal preferences.
- 2.5 The Mayor in the past, has given a reading at previous services held.
- 2.6 The service itself can be seen as an opportunity for the Council to come together at the start of the year, to pause and reflect before embarking on the year ahead and to consider the core values we all seek, regardless of faith or belief.
- 2.7 For information:
 - 2.7.1 In 2020, no church service was held, and was cancelled along with many other events due to the covid pandemic
 - 2.7.2 In 2021, a small church service was held at St. Paul's Church, with restricted numbers due to the covid pandemic
 - 2.7.3 In 2022, no church service was held, at the Mayor's request
 - 2.7.4 In 2023, a church service was held at Wokingham Methodist Church (as it was agreed to retain the Church service in the Council Calendar, and for it to continue to be held on the same day as the Mayor Making ceremony at a civic meeting held in November 2022. It was noted that an allowance should be made to enable the Mayor the flexibility to respect their own personal views and beliefs, whilst still acting as First Citizen of the town and meeting the expectations of the broadest community they are representing. This discussion that took place at the civic meeting was as a result of it being questioned whether or not it is in the gift of the Mayor, to decide if a civic service should be held or not).\
- 2.8 It should be remembered that 2023 is an election year at WTC and this year it gained 15 new Councillors. There is now a wider mix of faiths, and some Councillors are not connected to any religion.
 - 2.8.1 The Wokingham Ministers within Churches Together in Wokingham acknowledge that not everyone has a Christian faith, but all guests are welcome in their Churches. It is hoped that in any service, it allows everyone attending to 'pause and reflect' and to use that time as they wish. The ministers recognise this does not always mean in prayer.
- 2.9 In any election year, planning the Mayor's Sunday event is more challenging. This year, mayoral selection took place 6 working days before the event which meant that it was essential that the high-level plans were already in place.
- 2.10 Once the Mayor Elect had been voted upon, the Civic Officer, discussed any personal requirements with them and recognised that as the Mayor Elect was not aligned to a faith, it was important for the Mayor Elect not to receive a personal blessing at the civic service and to ask for it to be positioned in such a way as to offer support to the whole town council and its work in the year ahead. The incoming Mayor's views were taken into account with the choice of hymns, readings and poems where possible.
- 2.11 If an incoming Mayor is aligned to a different faith, not aligned with our Wokingham Churches, the Civic Officer would of course be happy to work with them to consider other venues.

3 OPTIONS TO CONSIDER

Whichever approach is agreed going forward, there should be a consistent annual approach and not one which should be under discussion each and every year, i.e., either no service or a service should be held.

There seems to be 3 different options to consider:

- 3.1 To retain the Civic Church Service in its current format, following the ceremony at the Town Hall on Mayor's Sunday. An allowance to be made to enable the Mayor the flexibility to

respect their own personal views and beliefs, whilst still acting as First Citizen of the town and meeting the expectations of the broadest community they are representing.

3.2 To cease holding the Civic Church Service.

3.3 To make changes to separate the civic service from Mayor's Sunday and hold as a stand-alone occasion perhaps in June or July, as it was done in previous years and consider there might be a place for a new civic coming together (to re-brand the occasion) to celebrate the new Mayor and the year ahead, and to welcome the diversity of our local community. It could be tailored accordingly to be an inclusive occasion with readings/poems, guest speakers for inspiration, e.g. the Mayor's charity, and a choir/singing group as examples. This could make the event more attractive and more of a marketable event to share with our community.

3.3.1 WTC could consider planning a civic service in a secular venue, but options would be limited to Church community halls, school halls, WBC Leisure Centre or its own Town Hall (but this has limited capacity). A religious element could be included if this is the wish of the Mayor, or there could be no religious element. Wherever it was held, an individual would need to lead the service and some consideration would need to be made about who this would be if it was not a Church Minister, e.g., perhaps a celebrant.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The key associated costs for the Church Service event are as follows:

4.1.1 Road closures for the parade (approx. £2200, if held)

4.1.2 Possible hire cost of alternative venue (if option 3.3 supported)

4.1.3 Possible entertainment cost (if option 3.3 supported)

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Consideration should be given to all of the above, and a consistent approach should be agreed and resolved upon for 2024-2025 and onwards, to allow for forward planning.

5.2 Any decisions to propose changes to the current model should be recommended to Full Council, to ensure all Councillors are in agreement.

5.3 If no agreement can be reached, the format for proceedings will remain the same with the Ceremony at the Town Hall, being followed by a Church Service, as agreed in November 2022.

Nikki Payler

Civic Officer

Agenda Item 9

Church Services

Information taken from Civic Ceremonial, 5th Edition by Paul Millward (pages 132-134)

The vast majority of local authorities organise an official church service for the Mayor each year. Such a service is usually held on the Sunday following the election of the Mayor (or as near to that date as possible).

Of course, it should be remembered by all that the church service is a traditional way of asking for God's guidance on the Mayor for the forthcoming year and also to mark the strong historic links between Council and Church. The personal belief of the incumbent is of much lesser importance than the symbolism of the service.

Some authorities, however, have quite rightly sought to mark the multicultural aspect of their town or city and included, a strong non-Christian element into the proceedings. In Nottingham, the Lord Mayor's Inter-Faith Chaplaincy Team helped to organise a joint Lord Mayor's Installation and Service in the 'neutral' surroundings of the City's Council House.

The church where the service is held is generally selected by the Mayor and the councillors and officers of the authority should support him/her, whatever their own beliefs. However, some authorities maintain the tradition of an official service in the parish or cathedral church each year with a further, more personal, service in the place of worship of the Mayor's choosing. Whatever format is chosen, it is important that the Mayor's Chaplain (or adviser) plays a part in arranging or conducting the service. Similarly, it is usual for the 'First' and 'Second' Citizens (the Mayor and Town Clerk) to read the lessons or play a prominent public role in the proceedings.



Wokingham Town Council

Civic Officer's Report 03/2023-24

To: Civic Committee
 Date: 12 September 2023
 Subject: Wearing of Councillor robes for annual historical photograph

1 REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To discuss the wearing of Councillor robes for WTC's annual photograph, as this was questioned by some Councillors, prior to it being taken before the July Full Council meeting.
- 1.2 It is important to note that WTC offers distinctiveness through its contribution to civic life within the town.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Mayor's, the Town Clerk's and Councillors' robes, together with chains and badges of office are the outward signs of the civic offices they hold.
- 2.2 Similarly, the wigs and gowns of the law, the gowns of graduates and undergraduates of universities, and even the uniform of the police and armed forces, are all outward and visible signs of the offices and duties of the wearers.
- 2.3 Wokingham Town Council has always appropriately marked formal civic occasions, with the wearing of robes.
- 2.4 Historic photographs show that Councillors even wore robes at Council meetings.
 - 2.4.1 However, it is evident that adjustments have been made along the way, e.g. robes are no longer worn at Council meetings.
- 2.5 An annual photograph is taken of the Mayor, Town Clerk, Councillors and Honorary members as a snapshot in time to keep as a historical record. In the past, it was taken at Civic Sunday when a Civic Church Service was held separately from Mayor's Sunday, in June. Now, it is usually taken just before one of the first council meetings of the year.
- 2.6 *For reference, below is some information, taken from Civic Ceremonial (a handbook, history and guide for Mayor's Councillors and Officers), 5th Edition by Paul Millward.*

"The Mayor can clearly be seen as a symbol of the Authority and its area, with the insignia of the mace, robes, chains of office, etc. The Mayor, through the office of Mayor and its trappings, connects the present day with history and acts as a symbol of continuity."

"A modern role for the Mayor is that the office symbolises an open society. Prior to the twentieth century, the choice of Mayor was, in reality, very restricted but today the First Citizen can (and does) come from any class, gender or ethnic background. The First Citizen no longer is the privilege of the white middle/upper class male and the new diversity reflects the more open and democratic society we now live in."

Agenda Item 10

- 2.7 While the powers of the civic mayor may have diminished over the years, the role has retained its importance in the history and cultural heritage of our country.
- 2.8 It is important to note that the wearing of robes is linked with the holder of the office (albeit a Mayor or a Councillor) and not the individuals themselves.
- 2.9 Our residents have demonstrated, through feedback via our most recent survey and visits to the Town Hall, that they have an appetite for our town's history and traditions, and they enjoy seeing our regalia.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Consideration should be given as to whether an annual photograph should continue to be taken.
 - 3.1.1 If Councillors support continuing to capture an annual photograph, a decision should be made and resolved upon about the continuity of the wearing of robes.



Wokingham Town Council

Civic Officer's Report 04/2023-24

To: Civic Committee

Date: 12 September 2023

Subject: Museum Accreditation Update and budget request (shared project with Civic & Arts & Culture)

1 REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To offer an update to the committee.
- 1.2 It is important to note that WTC offers distinctiveness through its contribution to civic life within the town.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As a reminder, before WTC can apply for museum accreditation, a physical collection of items needs to be regularly accessible to visitors for at least 20 days a year, even if this is a partial day and only in one room.
- 2.2 In order to meet this requirement, regular Open Days commenced at the Town Hall from April this year, at which we have opened the Diamond Jubilee Room. People have come in and chatted with officers and our volunteer and learnt a little about our history.
- 2.3 Open Days have been themed, where possible, to include showing some of our regalia, sharing information about the mosaics and opening the cells.
- 2.4 Visitors are keen to see more of the Town Hall when they come, so where possible, they are accompanied and shown the main hall and war memorial etc as well on the day.
- 2.5 The Open Days have attracted a number of visitors and have been appreciated by those who have joined us. Feedback has included the following:

“Great hidden gem, very interesting, thanks.”

“Have lived locally for over 45 years and have never been inside the Town Hall. My grandson and I had a very enjoyable visit. So many interesting things we never knew.”

“What a pleasant surprise! Walking around the town admiring buildings, it was fascinating to uncover more of the history of Wokingham.”

- 2.6 WTC can now demonstrate it is delivering this, and it can take steps to apply for accreditation. Once this has been applied for, WTC would be badged as ‘working towards accreditation’ and would then have three years to make sure the necessary processes are in place to record how its historical items should be stored, cared for and preserved for future generations.

Agenda Item 11a

- 2.7 To make improvements to the Open Days, it seems sensible to request some funding to support these further, e.g. for more publicity such as a feather flag, flyers, signs for A boards etc.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To request £1000 from F&P to support the promotion and ongoing improvement of WTC's Open Days.



Wokingham Town Council

Civic Officer's Report 05/2023-24

To: Civic Committee

Date: 12 September 2023

Subject: Budget request for Mayor's chaplain or celebrant expenses

1 REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To request a small budget to allow for expenses, if required for a Mayor's chaplain/celebrant.
- 1.2 It is important to note that WTC offers distinctiveness through its contribution to civic life within the town.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Wokingham Town Mayor has traditionally always chosen a chaplain to support them in their term of office as Mayor. This is an honorary role.
- 2.2 Such support has been offered by means of offering a prayer at Council meetings, and at events such as Remembrance and Mayor's Sunday, and any personal support as required.
- 2.3 A Mayor's Chaplain has, typically, been an individual who has lived very locally.
- 2.4 This year, the Mayor has chosen to appoint a human celebrant to support her in her year.
- 2.5 As the appointed celebrant this year does not live as locally, it feels appropriate to offer them some expenses for travelling and parking costs as it wouldn't be expected for them to be out of pocket to take on this role.
- 2.6 With Councillors now having a broader mix of beliefs and non-beliefs, it is more likely that if a chaplain or celebrant is appointed in the future, they too may not live locally, and WTC should be mindful of this going forward.
- 2.7 For the remainder of this financial year, it has been agreed internally that the Mayor's appointed celebrant will be reimbursed for her travelling and parking costs and this will be taken from the civic budget line 302/4399 Mayor's Sunday, as there is some underspend.

3 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To request from F&P that a new budget line is created from 2024-2025, to allow travelling and parking expenses up to £175.00 to be paid for a Mayor's chaplain/celebrant, if required.



Wokingham Town Council

Civic Officer's Report 06/2023-24

To: Civic Committee
 Date: 12 September 2023
 Subject: Budgeting for Mayoral chain and badge

1 REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To give some thought to budgeting for a new Mayoral chain and badge.
 1.2 The following was resolved upon in April 2023:

That at some point in the near future, consideration should be given to purchasing a new Mayoral chain and Badge of Office and the existing one should be retired and suitably displayed so it is preserved for historical purposes and future generations. It was recognised that if it was continued to be used as regularly as it currently is, it could require more and more repairs and become more costly for the Council over time and the item may not last the same number of years.

- 1.3 It is important to note that WTC offers distinctiveness through its contribution to civic life within the town. Civic regalia is a symbol of continuity, of local identity and of civic pride.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Until such time, a new mayoral chain and badge is purchased, the following approach was agreed in the meantime, at the April meeting:

To retain the visibility of this piece but to reduce how much it is worn, the Mayor should wear it on special occasions only, mostly with the robe. On other occasions, the Mayor will wear the badge and chain traditionally worn by the Mayoress/Consort. This pre-dates the Mayor's chain and badge and was purchased privately in honour of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee in 1887 and worn during that year by the first Mayor of Wokingham, Alderman Thomas Manley Wescott. Despite this being older in age, and it being as valuable, it is lighter and easier to wear, and much less problematic to maintain.

The Mayor's Partner should wear the silver chain originally purchased for a Mayor's Partner to wear if male.

A new badge and ribbon should be purchased for our Mini-Mayors to wear.

A velvet backing is not required for the Mayoral chain and badge of office.

No further shields would be made and added to the existing chain except for the two remaining shields for Mayors who have served up until this time.

Going forward, new shields for the current chain could either be made and added to the display case in the parlour or, different shields added/engraved to a new chain if purchased.

- 2.2 This interim approach has only been in place for a short time, and so it will be useful to seek feedback from the current Mayor about this in due course.

Agenda Item 11c

- 2.2.1 Restricting the wearing of the mayoral chain and badge to special occasions will most certainly reduce the wear and tear of this historical item.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Enquiries were previously made about purchasing a new mayoral chain and badge:
 - 3.1.1 Many options are available and the cost to commission a supplier to design and produce a new mayoral chain and badge of office is currently unknown as this could vary greatly due to requirements.
 - 3.1.2 The production of a replica could be costly, and it has been indicated by one supplier that this could cost more than £20,000.
 - 3.1.3 Other enquiries have varied; one supplier quoted a cost of £8,000 to produce a chain with a badge with WTC's Coat of Arms from solid sterling silver with a polished parcel gilt finish. Another supplier offered an estimate of between £7,000 and £20,000 depending on the materials used.
- 3.2 Given the heritage of Wokingham Town Council, and the importance it places on this, when a purchase for a new mayoral chain and badge is commissioned, careful consideration should be given to a suitable design, material used and something fitting for such a historic Council.
- 3.3 If WTC were to commission a new mayoral chain and badge of office, this is likely to be at a significant cost and in the financial climate, any decisions on such purchases need to be carefully considered.
- 3.4 It would seem prudent for WTC to plan and budget ahead for this purchase and to ensure it takes enough time to carefully consider options available.
- 3.5 WTC could request some funds to be set aside over a few years to lessen the impact of the full expenditure in one financial year.
 - 3.5.1 For example, if the aim is for a purchase to be made in 2027-2028, and WTC would like to budget for £20,000, it could request funds from F&P, to budget for £5,000 in years 2024-2025, 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 and 2027-2028
 - 3.5.2 It should also be factored in that if such an investment is made, and the item remains in public use for another 130 years, the cost per year would work out at £154 if £20,000 was spent.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Consideration should be given as to whether the civic committee would like to plan and budget ahead for the replacement of a new mayoral chain and badge in a few years' time.
- 4.2 If this idea is supported, members should agree the following:
 - 4.2.1 a target timescale to make a new purchase.
 - 4.2.2 an annual amount to request that should be earmarked, if WTC wishes to budget for this over several years.



Wokingham Town Council

Civic Officer's Report 07/2023-24

To: Civic Committee
Date: 12 September 2023
Subject: Budget request for Beating the Bounds 2024

1 REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To consider a suggestion received from a WTC Councillor, to revive an ancient practice, known as Beating the Bounds, which was carried out to ensure the knowledge of parish boundaries was maintained and passed from generation to generation. This involved swatting local landmarks with branches to maintain a shared mental map of parish boundaries.
- 1.2 For reference, see [wikipedia.org/wiki/Beating_the_bounds](https://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beating_the_bounds) and www.wokinghamsociety.org.uk/Boxsoft_Wokingham_in_the_News_1771_to_1999/mobile/index.html

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 For reference, attached is a map of Wokingham's town boundary.
- 2.2 Newspaper articles from the Reading Mercury note that a form of this was done here in Wokingham in 1929, 1930, 1954 and 1973 (when it took the form of more of a sponsored walk).
- 2.3 From reading some of the history, it seems it was traditional to do this around the Whitsun (the late Spring May Bank Holiday)
- 2.4 If WTC is keen to revive this tradition, it would be a new event that the Council has not co-ordinated before and would therefore require additional officer time to plan, manage and deliver. At this point in time, it is not felt that it could be absorbed into the calendar of events due to limited officer capacity.
- 2.5 As WTC does not have any experience with managed walks, the Civic Officer has sought the advice of the Wokingham Lions Club as they already deliver annual Spring and Autumn walks.
 - 2.5.1 They have very kindly undertaken a walk/cycle of Wokingham's town boundary and have fed back their findings.
- 2.6 If a decision is taken to take this idea forward, whoever it is managed by, this is an opportunity for as many Councillors as possible to be present on the day in their actual wards. The Wokingham Lions Club have indicated they would be keen to see Councillors in their regalia, if managed by them.

3 FEEDBACK FROM WOKINGHAM LIONS CLUB

- 3.1 Parts of the boundary are not accessible due to the railway and private land in some areas; in particular at the bottom of Wescott West, therefore the exact boundary cannot be followed.

Agenda Item 11d

- 3.2 The trail that was followed was 16 miles.
- 3.3 Parts of the walks are of little interest.
- 3.4 Would this route be too far for many of Wokingham's residents? (The Lions advised that they have approx. 500-600 people taking part in each of their Spring and Autumn walks. At these walks, people can choose to walk, 5, 10 or 15 miles but only 20% of people walk the full 15 miles).
- 3.5 Changes would need to be made in the Wescott West area as full access is not possible. This could reduce the walk to approx. 14 miles but then it would not be walking the full boundary.
- 3.6 Public liability insurance (PLI) would need to be in place.
- 3.7 The event would need to be marshalled on the day. Before and after the event, directional and information signs along with cones would need to be put in place and taken down.
- 3.8 Signs/cones would need to be made and sourced for the day.
- 3.9 High viz jackets would be required for marshals.
- 3.10 For a walk of this length, agreed toilet stops would need to be agreed in advance at every 5 miles
- 3.11 First aid provision would need to be in place.
- 3.12 Drinking water should be made available/accessible.
- 3.13 The event organiser would need to manage entries and correspond with entrants, taking payments if it is a chargeable event. If chargeable, would payments be taken as fundraising profits? If so, for who?
- 3.14 Would any medals be required for winners or for everyone taking part?
- 3.15 The act of 'beating the bounds' whereby local landmarks were swatted with branches to maintain a shared mental map of parish boundaries would need to be considered. This could be done at key points around the boundary where Councillors and Honoraries are present to greet people along the route.
- 3.16 The advantages of the Wokingham Lions Club managing this would include:
 - Their PLI is already in place and would cover this (approx. £500)
 - They are experienced in managing such events
 - There would be very minimal officer capacity required to support this
 - They would fully plan and organise including planning the whole route, sourcing and putting in place directional signs, planning toilet stops, sourcing marshals, high viz jackets, drinking water, sourcing sticks for beating the boundaries, first aid provision, management of entries and money, publicity, purchase of any medals etc
 - They already have a database of a few thousand people who take part in their walks and events who they could market this to
- 3.17 The disadvantages for the Wokingham Lions Club could be:
 - It is possible that this could detract from their other Spring and Autumn walks which could mean less money raised at those.

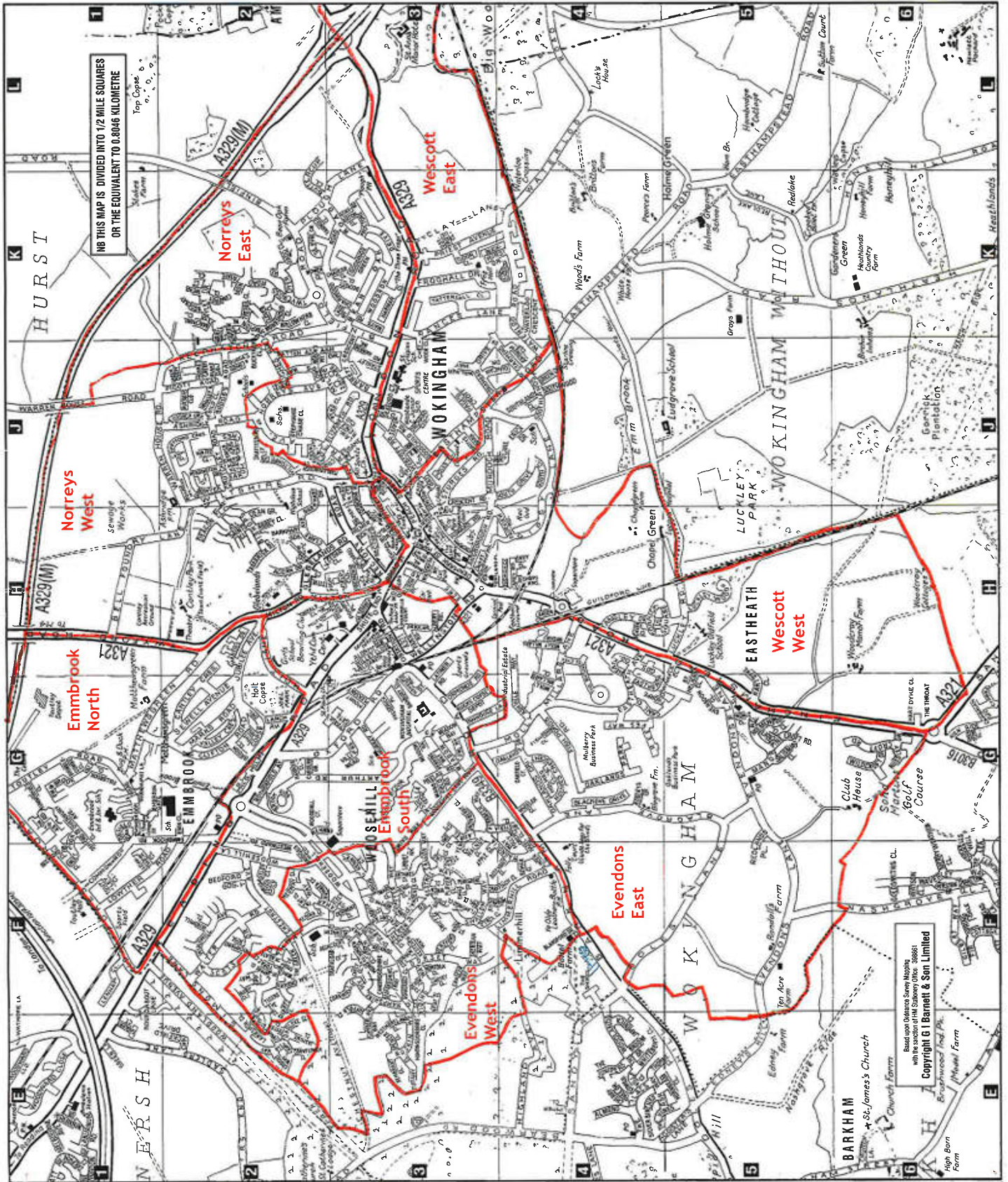
4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Wokingham Lions Club has advised that with financial support from WTC, they would consider trialing this event, within their calendar of events.
- 4.2 The Wokingham Lions have estimated that they would be seeking approximately between £3000-£4000 to manage this for the Town Council, if WTC asks them to take this on which

would cover all their costs. In addition, they would hope to have a surplus to firstly cover any shortfalls from the other walks and if any profits are remaining, they would like to add these to their fundraising totals to distribute to the community.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 To consider if this request is one that the Civic Committee supports as a concept.
- 5.2 This could be carried out in 2024 as a trial to gauge interest, and interestingly there is an opportunity to market this in 2024 aligned to the following anniversaries:
 - 5.2.1 130-year anniversary of when the parish councils were first established as a number of its responsibilities were separated from the Church (as a result of the Local Government Act 1894, also known as the Parish Councils Act).
 - 5.2.2 50- year anniversary of when local government was reformed in England and Wales on 1 April 1974, as a result of the Local Government Act 1972. Much of the administration of the town was taken over by Wokingham District Council, now Wokingham Borough Council. Wokingham remained a Parish Council which, in view of its historic past, was given the title of Town Council and retained its Mayor, its coat of arms, its ceremonies and base in the Town Hall.
- 5.3 If the idea is supported, WTC should:
 - 5.3.1 Ensure it has the commitment of Councillors for as many as possible to attend the event on the day, representing their ward.
 - 5.3.2 Request funds from F&P for £4000 to ask the Wokingham Lions Club to manage this event for the Council.
 - 5.3.3 Consider the timing of the event, so that it wouldn't clash or compete with any other key WTC or Wokingham Lions events.





Wokingham Town Council

Civic Officer's Report 08/2023-24

To: Civic Committee
Date: 12 September 2023
Subject: Wokingham Remembers website - ownership

1 REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 WTC has been asked if it would like to take on the ownership and management of a website called 'Wokingham Remembers': www.wokinghamremembers.com
- 1.2 To consider the request in principle, taking into account both the additional costs it would come with, and the management of its content.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 'Wokingham Remembers' was established as a website in 2011 by two residents and remains under the ownership of one of them. It was set up to accommodate research into the local effects of 1914 – 18 First World War and stories about many of the individuals that were affected. It became a useful aid for local groups, organisations and individuals. Officers at WTC continue to use this website to search for information when enquiries are received, and it shares details about the site to others including school groups.
- 2.2 Over time, the owner recognised that researchers and contributors wanted to use the website to see information added about other subjects outside of the First World War and to include material of local significance.
- 2.3 Therefore, 'Wokingham Remembers' expanded its terms of reference beyond the period covering the First World War.
- 2.4 The owner has recognised that there are benefits to this expansion of its content, but there are also challenges as the structure originally set up does not lend itself to the amount of additional new material now on the site, to allow users to easily navigate their way around to find information.

3 CHALLENGES AND CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The owner is concerned about the future of this website and wants to make sure the information is preserved to share with our future residents.
- 3.2 If they continue to manage this themselves, they are personally paying the ongoing costs for it to run and be maintained.
- 3.3 There is no contingency, should the owner not be in a position to continue to manage this over time, which poses a risk of the information being lost.
- 3.4 Moving the ownership to Wokingham Town Council would ensure its longevity and continuity.
- 3.5 Officers recognise the value of the historical information that has been researched and recorded in 'Wokingham Remembers' and would like to ensure this information is not lost.

Agenda Item 11e

- 3.6 WTC has now been given shared access with the owner to 'Wokingham Remembers' to remove any key risks, although ownership remains with the owner at the moment.
- 3.7 The amount of content and scope of 'Wokingham Remembers' does pose some challenges including the following:
- 3.7.1 The management of ongoing queries and requests relating to the site is unknown and WTC does not currently have capacity to absorb additional work.
 - 3.7.2 There are some concerns that the website links to other software and it is not known how these are supported so further investigation may be required.
 - 3.7.3 There is some crossover and duplication of information with that on WTC's own Virtual Museum.
 - 3.7.4 It is questionable whether 'Wokingham Remembers' should be restructured to better accommodate its broader scope or should some content be moved onto WTC's Virtual Museum, where there is more of a structure, to keep the scope clearer? Either option would involve significant time to do this and a potential cost, if a third party was involved.
 - 3.7.5 Such changes may not be able to be made in the short term but if WTC was to take on ownership, its future development might need to be planned across future years. WTC would require time to develop a plan for this to ascertain the best approach.
 - 3.7.6 The owner's preference is to see all the current content on 'Wokingham Remembers' remaining on there and for the site itself to be restructured.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 To request £1500 to cover the hosting of the website, if WTC decide to take on the ownership
- 4.2 There is likely to be additional unknown costs, to support further development of the site; this may include engaging with an external provider, or an intern for example.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 To discuss and consider if WTC would like to take on the ownership and management of the 'Wokingham Remembers' website.
- 5.2 If WTC supports this,
 - 5.2.1 It is recommended that WTC positions its response, that it would only take on the ownership if the owner is in agreement with the following:
 - WTC will be able to reconfigure the website and its content as it sees fit to ensure it complements its own historical information that it holds.
 - WTC may not be in a position to manage queries and requests. If ownership is acquired, WTC may only be able to host it as a static site until such time it is in a position to be able to apply any ongoing resources, development time and funding to it.
 - Any future development work is unlikely to be carried out in the short term as WTC would need to plan for this, along with budgeting for additional costs as required.

A request for £1500 to F&P is required, to support the cost on an ongoing basis (not from civic budget line) from the next financial year 2024-2025.