



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

07th May 2024

Dear Councillor,

You are hereby summoned to attend the **FIFTY-FIRST ANNUAL MEETING** of **WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL** to be held in the **MAIN HALL, TOWN HALL, WOKINGHAM** on **Sunday 12th May 2024 at 12:00 noon** for the purpose of considering and resolving upon the subjects and matters set out in the Agenda below.

Yours sincerely

K Hughes
Town Clerk

AGENDA

Procedure

The retiring Mayor and Deputy Mayor remain in office until a new Mayor is elected (Local Government Act 1972, Section 15(4) and (7). The retiring Mayor or, in their absence, the retiring Deputy Mayor, must take the Chair at the commencement of proceedings. (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12, Part II (1&2) refers)

- 1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 2 COMMUNICATION**
The retiring Town Mayor will address the meeting
- 3 ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR**
The retiring Town Mayor will invite nominations for the office of Town Mayor for the ensuing year.
 - (a) The nominations will be put and Council will vote
 - (b) The Town Clerk will declare the Councillor duly elected
- 4 DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**
 - (a) The Declaration of Acceptance of Office will be made by the Town Mayor and witnessed by two Councillors
 - (b) The Town Mayor will be invited to take up the Mace.
- 5 ADDRESS BY TOWN MAYOR**
The meeting will be addressed by the new Town Mayor

6 NOMINATIONS FOR THE OFFICE OF DEPUTY MAYOR

Nominations will be invited for the office of Deputy Mayor for the ensuing year

- (a) The Town Mayor will put the nomination(s) on which the Council will vote
- (b) The Town Mayor will declare the Councillor duly elected

7 HIGH STEWARD AND TOWN HONORARIES

- (a) To note that Mrs Lucy Zeal remains High Steward for Wokingham
- (b) It will be proposed and seconded that the following Town Honoraries continue in their appointments:
 - a) Mr Nigel Hopkins as Town Crier;
 - b) Mr Martin Bishop as Honorary Constable;
 - c) Mr Neil Hodgson as Honorary Constable;
 - d) Mr Bernard Burton as Honorary Meteorologist;
 - e) Mr Damon Emes as Honorary Bugler;
 - f) Major James Chappell as Honorary Parade Marshal
- (c) and that Mr Paul Bailly be appointed as a new Honorary Constable

8 ADJOURNMENT

It will be proposed and seconded that the remaining business of this meeting be adjourned to 7.30pm on Wednesday 15th May 2024.

REFRESHMENTS

The Town Mayor invites you to join them for refreshments at the conclusion of the meeting.

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.

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07th May 2024

Adjourned **FIFTY-FIRST MEETING** of **WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL** to be held in **THE MAIN HALL, WOKINGHAM TOWN HALL**, at **7.30pm** on **Wednesday 15th May 2024** for the purpose of considering and resolving upon the subjects and matters set out in the Agenda below.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'KHughes'.

K Hughes
Town Clerk

AGENDA

9 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

10 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

11 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

To receive and confirm the minutes of the proceedings of the Council Meeting held on 9th April 2024 (*pages 16948 to 16953, copy attached*) as a true and correct record.

12 MINUTES OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- a) To receive the draft minutes and any recommendations of the Planning and Transportation Committee meeting held on 23rd April 2024 (*pages 16954 to 16957, copy attached*).
- b) To adopt the approved minutes of the Planning and Transportation Committee meeting held on 19th March (*pages 16942 to 16947, draft copy circulated with April agenda pack*)
- c) To receive the draft minutes and any recommendations of the Finance and Personnel Committee meeting held on 30th April 2024 (*pages 16958 to 16967, copy attached*)

13 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

- a) To receive any communications or announcements from the Mayor.
- b) To receive the Mayor's list of engagements since the last Council meeting (*copy attached*) as a true and correct record.

14 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL AND PUBLIC

To receive any questions from either Council Members or the Public.

15 ATTENDANCE REGISTER

To receive the Attendance Chart extracted from the Attendance Register of Members at Council and Committee meetings for the past year (*copy attached*).

16 LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

- a) To receive nominations for the role of Leader of the Council
- b) The Mayor will ask for a vote to be taken.

17 STANDING COMMITTEES – MEMBERSHIP

To resolve that the following Standing Committees be elected for the ensuing year (Local Government Act 1972, Section 101 (1)(a)).

For Information:

- I. In accordance with Standing Order No 19b – if other Members wish to stand, then no Member shall serve on more than two Standing Committees
- II. Relevant Standing Orders 18 and 19

(a) AMENITIES COMMITTEE

1. MEMBERSHIP – ANNOUNCEMENT OF NOMINATIONS

The Town Clerk will announce those nominated for Membership of the Amenities Committee for the ensuing year. This committee has delegated authority in accordance with Standing Order 18.3a and shall consist of nine members.

2. CHAIR/VICE-CHAIR

- (a) The Town Clerk will ask for nominations along with proposed and seconders for a Chair of the Amenities Committee
- (b) The Town Clerk will ask for a vote to be taken
- (c) The newly elected Chair will ask for nominations along with proposers and seconders for a Vice-Chair of the Amenities Committee
- (d) The Chair will ask for a vote to be taken

3 ANNOUNCEMENT

The Mayor will announce the names of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Amenities Committee for the forthcoming municipal year.

(b) PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

1 MEMBERSHIP - ANNOUNCEMENT OF NOMINATIONS

The Town Clerk will announce those nominated for Membership of the Planning and Transportation Committee for the ensuing year. This committee has delegated authority in accordance with Standing Order 18.3b and shall consist of nine members.

2. CHAIR/VICE-CHAIR

- (a) The Town Clerk will ask for nominations along with proposed and seconders for a Chair of the Planning and Transportation Committee
- (b) The Town Clerk will ask for a vote to be taken
- (c) The newly elected Chair will ask for nominations along with proposers and seconders for a Vice-Chair of the Planning and Transportation Committee
- (d) The Chair will ask for a vote to be taken

3 ANNOUNCEMENT

The Mayor will announce the names of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Planning and Transportation Committee for the forthcoming municipal year.

(c) FINANCE & PERSONNEL COMMITTEE

1 MEMBERSHIP - ANNOUNCEMENT OF NOMINATIONS

The Town Clerk will announce those nominated for Membership of the Finance and Personnel Committee for the ensuing year. This committee has delegated authority in accordance with Standing Order 18.3c and shall consist of nine members.

2. CHAIR/VICE-CHAIR

- (a) The Town Clerk will ask for nominations along with proposed and seconders for a Chair of the Finance and Personnel Committee
- (b) The Town Clerk will ask for a vote to be taken
- (c) The newly elected Chair will ask for nominations along with proposers and seconders for a Vice-Chair of the Finance and Personnel Committee
- (d) The Chair will ask for a vote to be taken

3 ANNOUNCEMENT

The Mayor will announce the names of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Finance and Personnel Committee for the forthcoming municipal year.

(d) CIVIC COMMITTEE

1 MEMBERSHIP - ANNOUNCEMENT OF NOMINATIONS

The Town Clerk will announce those nominated for Membership of the Civic Committee for the ensuing year. This committee has delegated authority in accordance with Standing Order 18.3d and shall consist of nine members.

2. CHAIR/VICE-CHAIR

- (a) The Town Clerk will ask for nominations along with proposed and seconders for a Chair of the Civic Committee
- (b) The Town Clerk will ask for a vote to be taken
- (c) The newly elected Chair will ask for nominations along with proposers and seconders for a Vice-Chair of the Civic Committee
- (d) The Chair will ask for a vote to be taken

3 ANNOUNCEMENT

The Mayor will announce the names of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Civic Committee for the forthcoming municipal year.

(e) ARTS & CULTURE COMMITTEE

1 MEMBERSHIP - ANNOUNCEMENT OF NOMINATIONS

The Town Clerk will announce those nominated for Membership of the Arts & Culture Committee for the ensuing year. This committee has delegated authority in accordance with Standing Order 18.3e and shall consist of nine members.

2. CHAIR/VICE-CHAIR

- (a) The Town Clerk will ask for nominations along with proposed and seconders for a Chair of the Arts & Culture Committee
- (b) The Town Clerk will ask for a vote to be taken
- (c) The newly elected Chair will ask for nominations along with proposers and seconders for a Vice-Chair of the Arts & Culture Committee
- (d) The Chair will ask for a vote to be taken

3 ANNOUNCEMENT

The Mayor will announce the names of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Arts & Culture Committee for the forthcoming municipal year.

18 EMERGENCY COMMITTEE

To approve the membership of the Emergency Committee to be the same as the Finance and Personnel Committee

19 STRATEGY WORKING PARTY

- a) To receive nominations for the working party
- b) The Town Mayor will ask for a vote to be taken

20 COUNCIL REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES

To appoint members to represent the Town Council for the forthcoming year:

- Emmbrook Village Hall Management Committee (2 representatives)
- Wokingham Borough Parish Liaison Forum (1 representative, 1 deputy)

To appoint a council representative for organisations in line with the council's main grants policy:

- Wokingham Citizens Advice
- Keep Mobile
- Link Visiting Scheme
- Wokingham Job Support Centre
- Wokingham Lions
- First Days Children's Charity

21 **AUDIT 2023/2024**

- a) To receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report (AGAR page 3) for the year ending 31st March 2024, including the written report from the Internal Auditor (dated 29 April 2024), *(copy attached)*
- b) To review the effectiveness of the internal audit performed by the Council for the year ending March 2024
- c) To confirm the recommendation of the Finance and Personnel Committee to appoint Claire Connell as the Internal Auditor for this council for the financial year 2024/2025

22 **ANNUAL RETURN 2023/2024**

- a) To receive and approve the Annual Governance Statement 2023-24 (section 1, AGAR page 4) for the year ending 31st March 2024 *(copy attached)*
- b) To receive and approve the Annual Accounting Statements 2023-24 (section 2, AGAR page 5) for the year ending 31st March 2024 *(copy attached)* including to note and approve a restatement of staffing costs and other costs for the 2022-23 financial year.
- c) To receive and approve the annual return variance review which accompanies the annual return to the External Auditor *(copy attached)*
- d) To receive and note for information a full copy of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ending 31st March 2024 *(copy attached)* and to note the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights as Monday 10th June 2024.

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.

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09th April 2024

Minutes of the proceedings of the **TOWN COUNCIL** held in the Main Hall, Town Hall, Market Place, Wokingham on 09th April 2024 from 7.30pm to 9.05pm.

PRESENT:

Chair: Cllr S Gurney (Mayor)

Cllrs: A Betteridge, R Bishop-Firth, B Callender, R Comber, S Cornish, A Croy, W Dixon, A Domingue, A Fraser, M Fumagalli, A Jones, T Lack, K Malvern, M Malvern, A Mather, A Medhurst, N Nagella, H Richards, I Shepherd-Dubey, L Timlin.

IN ATTENDANCE:

Lisa Davison - RFO

Katy Hughes – Town Clerk.

Helen Jefferies – Mayor's Celebrant

2 members of the public

Thoughts of the day were given by the Mayor's Celebrant Helen Jefferies, prior to the start of the meeting.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from Cllrs B Alvi and M Gee.

MEMBERS' INTERESTS (Agenda Item 2)

None were declared.

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

There were no questions raised.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COUNCIL MEETING (Agenda Item 4)

It was proposed by Cllr R Comber and seconded by Cllr I Shepherd-Dubey and the following was

**RESOLVED
30802**

that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Council Meeting held on 30th January 2024 (pages 16911 to 16915) be received as a true and correct record and that they be signed by the Chair.

A vote was taken and was approved. One member abstained from voting.

CASUAL VACANCY (Agenda item 5)

Members received a speech from two applicants for the Town Councillor vacancy for the Norreys East ward. Applicants were asked questions in turn by the Chair, Cllr S Gurney, after which the item was moved to a vote.

Following a vote by show of hands, it was

**RESOLVED
30803**

CHAIR INITIALS _____

Full Council Meeting 9th April 2024

16948



That Mrs Chetna Jamthe be co-opted to Wokingham Town Council to fill the vacancy for the Norreys East Ward.

Mrs Jamthe was invited to join councillors at the table and signed a Declaration of Acceptance of Office, witnessed by the Town Clerk.

MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS (Agenda Item 6)

The Mayor reported on her attendance at a number of engagements since the last council meeting, and thanked councillors for their support at the Lunar New Year and Tabletop Takeover council events.

The Mayor encouraged members who liaise with local community groups to consider inviting the Mayor to their events to help raise the profile of the events.

The Mayor welcomed Councillor C Jamthe to the town council.

The Mayor extended best wishes to those councillors standing for positions at the upcoming borough council elections.

The Mayor reminded Councillors of the upcoming May Fayre event run in the town centre by Wokingham Lions and encouraged them to attend.

The Mayor welcomed Lisa Davison, the council's newly appointed RFO

The Mayor's list of engagements since the last Council meeting was also received.

Cllr R Comber, Mayor-Elect 2024-25, announced his choice of candidate for the role of Deputy Mayor for the 2024-25 civic year as Councillor L Timlin. Following discussion, the Town Clerk reminded members that in accordance with the council's Standing Orders, both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor role will be formally elected at the Annual Meeting of the Council held on Sunday 12th May.

ARTS AND CULTURE COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 7)

Cllr B Callender reported on discussions regarding the alignment of committee events with the council's adopted strategy and with plans to encourage uptake of participation from older children at this year's Children's Book Festival held at the meeting of the Arts and Culture Committee on 15th January 2024.

It was proposed by Cllr B Callender and seconded by Cllr A Domingue and the following was

**RESOLVED
30804**

that the approved minutes of the proceedings of the Arts and Culture Committee meeting held on 15th January 2024 (pages 16899 to 16901) be adopted

A vote was taken and was unanimous.

CHAIR INITIALS _____

Full Council Meeting 9th April 2024

16949



A copy of the draft minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 11th March 2024 (pages 16923 to 16925) was received by members.

Cllr B Callender drew members' attention to further discussions held on the Council Strategy and the extent to which committee events support the council's adopted strategy. He extended thanks to Cllr A Domingue for leading this aspect of the committee discussion.

Cllr B Callender reported on committee discussions regarding requests for additional commercial stalls at the council's Fun Day event due to be held on 25th May 2024.

Cllr I Shepherd-Dubey asked about discussions on a Human Library project and Cllr M Fumagalli gave a brief explanation. Further information will be circulated to councillors regarding an upcoming Human Library event due to be held in London later this month.

Cllr B Callender extended his thanks to the Arts & Culture Officer for her support of the committee.

AMENITIES COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 8)

A copy of the approved minutes of the committee meeting held on 7th November 2023 was received by members.

It was proposed by Cllr T Lack and seconded by Cllr M Malvern and the following was

**RESOLVED
30805**

that the approved minutes of the proceedings of the Amenities Committee meeting held on 7th November 2023 (pages 16858 to 16860) be adopted.

A vote was taken and was unanimous.

A copy of the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 12th March 2024 (pages 16926 to 16928) we received by members.

Cllr T Lack reported that the committee had awarded a new 5-year contract for grounds maintenance at an annual cost of £32,000, increasing annually by RPI.

Cllr T Lack reported that the committee had received and considered a request for the installation of a new bench near Meadow Way in Woosehill and had sent out consultation letters to local residents. He reported that feedback from the consultation will be brought to the May committee meeting for further consideration.

Cllr A Betteridge enquired regarding the extent of the consultation, and it was noted that this matter will also be discussed at the next committee meeting.

Cllr T Lack reported that Cllr A Croy and Cllr B Callender had recently undertaken training to enable them to volunteer as graffiti cleaners, and thanked them for their work in cleaning up the town area.

CHAIR INITIALS _____



Cllr T Lack reported that the Annual E-bike event was being moved to later in the year, and the event will be extended, working with the WBC My Journey Team.

Cllr R Comber asked about reference to cultivars at Gypsy Lane Allotments and references in the recent meeting minutes to a pump track.

CIVIC COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 9)

It was proposed by Cllr A Mather and seconded by Cllr A Jones and the following was

**RESOLVED
30806**

that the approved minutes of the proceedings of the Civic Award Select Committee meeting held on 6th December 2023, (pages 16889 to 16890) be adopted.

A vote was taken and was unanimous.

A copy of the draft minutes of the meeting of the Civic Committee held on 18th March 2024 (pages 16933 to 16941) was received by members.

Cllr A Mather highlighted the number of significant topics discussed at the meeting and the reports written by the Civic Officer. He noted discussions on the topic of the war memorial, and reported that the committee had agreed to establish a working party, to include Cllr A Mather, Cllr A Betteridge, Cllr A Jones and Mr D Dunham (Mace Bearer) and Mr J Chappell (Parade Marshall) to consider options of how the town council's Remembrance events could be extended to involve more public participation.

Cllr A Croy expressed a wish to be involved in the working party, and following discussions it was confirmed by the Town Clerk in accordance with the council's adopted Standing Orders (25(b)) that all Councillors are entitled to attend working party meetings.

PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 10)

It was proposed by Cllr I Shepherd-Dubey and seconded by Cllr N Nagella and the following was

**RESOLVED
30807**

that the approved minutes of the proceedings of the Planning and Transportation Committee meeting held on 6th February 2024 (pages 16916 to 16922) be adopted

A vote was taken and was unanimous.

A copy of the draft minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 19th March 2024 (pages 16942 to 16947) was received by members.

Cllr I Shepherd-Dubey reported on committee discussions regarding the locations of the secure cycle storage, repair to a bus shelter window and an in-year funding

CHAIR INITIALS _____



request to go the Finance and Personnel Committee for funding for speed watch and welcome signage.

Cllr I Shepherd- Dubey reported that an extensive response was submitted to the borough council on the A329 Active Travel consultation and thanked Cllr A Betteridge for his input into this.

MAYORAL SELECTION COMMITTEE (Agenda Item 11)

It was proposed by Cllr S Gurney and seconded by Cllr R Comber and the following was

**RESOLVED
30808**

That the minutes of the proceedings of the Mayoral Selection Committee held on 18th March 2024 (page 16929) be received and approved.

A vote was taken and the minutes were approved. Two members abstained.

STRATEGY WORKING PARTY (Agenda item 12)

Cllr S Gurney reported that the Strategy Working Party had met on 31st January 2024 and again on 20th March 2024. At the meetings, the working party had discussed suggestions for the WBC Overview and Scrutiny Committee, use requests for Elms Field and the Matthews Green and Montague Park Community Facilities.

Cllr S Gurney reported that discussions had been held with a provider looking to run the Matthews Green Community Facility and that a proposal for financial support from the town council may come to a future meeting. Further information has been requested from the borough council regarding the Montague Park facility.

Cllr A Croy reported that town centre vibrancy (as raised to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee) was currently being considered by the borough council.

Cllr A Domingue reported that she had attended the Borough Parish Liaison Forum meeting where borough and parish communication, a borough-wide vision and litter bins were discussed.

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WORKING PARTY (Agenda item 13)

Cllr S Gurney reported on a meeting of the ATM working party held on 5th March 2024 which had been chaired by Cllr M Gee.

Cllr S Gurney reported that the date has been confirmed as Saturday 18th May, with a market stall between 10am and 2pm, and the formal opening of the meeting in the Reme Room at 11am.

Cllr S Gurney noted that the event will be an opportunity to engage with residents, talk about what the town council does and seek input from residents.

CHAIR INITIALS _____



The Town Clerk reported that as the date coincides with International Museum Day, there is a plan to also have a small museum open day event in the Diamond Jubilee Room.

The Town Clerk will email members to create a rota for the day.

Cllr A Croy raised a query regarding one aspect of the Annual Town Meeting.

EXTERNAL REPRESENTATION (Agenda Item 14)

There were no meeting reports

WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL CHARITABLE TRUSTS (Agenda Item 15)

It was proposed by Cllr S Gurney, seconded by Cllr A Domingue and the following was

**RESOLVED
30809**

To appoint the Town Clerk as Secretary and the RFO as Treasurer for the King George V Playing Fields Trust and the Leslie Sears Playing Field Trust, for which the town council is the sole trustee.

It was proposed by Cllr S Gurney and seconded by Cllr R Comber and the following was

**RESOLVED
30810**

To approve the opening of new bank accounts in the trust's names, to manage trust transactions, in accordance with guidance issued in the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) Practitioners Guide 2023, section 5.110

The Mayor closed the meeting at 9:05pm.

CHAIR

CHAIR INITIALS _____



23rd April 2024

Minutes of the proceedings of the PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE meeting held on this day in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Wokingham from 19:30 to 20:30

PRESENT

Councillors: Cllr Shepherd-Dubey (Chair), Cllr N Nagella (Vice Chair), Cllr L Timlin, Cllr W Dixon, Cllr K Malvern, Cllr A Croy, Cllr A Betteridge, Cllr B Alvi, Cllr Lack

IN ATTENDANCE

PT Officer
Cllr C Jamthe

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

None.

MEMBERS' INTERESTS (Agenda Item 2)

None

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

None

PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE MINUTES (Agenda Item 4)

**RESOLVED
30811**

It was proposed by the Cllr Betteridge and seconded by Cllr Malvern, and it was that the minutes of the Planning & Transportation Committee meeting held on 19th March 2024 (pages 16942 to 16947) be received as a true and correct record and that they be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

ACTION: PT OFFICER

MONITORING REPORT (Agenda Item 5)

The Monitoring Report dated 17th April 2024 was received and considered.

SECURE BICYCLE STORAGE IN WOKINGHAM TOWN

The Planning officer updated the Committee on the progress of the project since the last P&T meeting.

There was a steady increase in usage during March.

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____



When we have a predicted 3 days in a row of dry weather the roofs of the lockers will be painted with the environmentally friendly paint.

The PT Officer has chased up the Committee's request on any update on the 'release' mechanism whereby a locker is available once a bike is removed by hirer. The PT Officer received confirmation that this is on the Spokesafe 'road map' but a date has not been given.

As the Carnival Hub lockers are performing better than the Denmark street lockers the PT Officer investigated the possibility of moving the lockers at Denmark Street to a more viable location. The figures for this have been passed on to the Committee for consideration.

BUS SHELTERS

There has been a glass panel smashed on the shelter in Wellington Road (shelter WBC replaced recently). This was replaced with polycarbonate panel on 11th April.

Cllr Croy mentioned that there is graffiti on the shelter in Crutchley Road that is on the polycarbonate panels and his attempts to remove graffiti have just smeared it. The PT Officer will investigate whether cleaning will be possible.

The Bi yearly cleaning of all the shelters took place in March.

ACTION: PT OFFICER

COMMITTEE'S BUDGET (Agenda Item 6)

A report on the Committee's budget as of 31st March 2024 were received and noted.

PLANNING APPLICATIONS (Agenda Item 7)

**RESOLVED
30812**

The following applications were received and considered, and it was that the Committee would make comment as shown.

240395 66 Finchampstead Road Wokingham RG40 2NS

Full application for the proposed change of use, refurbishment and extension of existing physiotherapy/dwelling to Class C3 residential. Following demolition of existing cottage and an erection comprising of 3no. residential units plus associated parking and landscaping.

The Committee have some concerns regarding this development.

With the additional hard standing has the predicted affect on drainage been considered? **CP1 – 4 Sustainable development - Drainage**

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____



Have the environmental elements of the development been considered enough. Will there be any solar panels on the roof? CP1 – 12 – Sustainable development – (a) renewable energy.

240720 Wokingham Baptist Church Milton Road RG40 1DE

SECTION 211 NOTIFICATION FOR WORKS IN A CONSERVATION AREA T1, Yew Fell.

The Committee strongly object to the cutting down of this beautiful and historic tree.

The tree can be sympathetically trimmed as a viable alternative to removal.

231579 25 Murdoch Road Wokingham RG40 2DQ

Full application for the proposed erection of a single storey side/rear extension and a single storey rear extension, plus changes to fenestration to provide accessible ensembles, one additional bedroom and communal areas.

The Committee have no objections and support this application. It is good to see the investment in this building.

240523 Greenfields House Edneys Hill Wokingham RG41 4DT

Full application for the change of use from storage Barn to residential dwelling.

There are some concerns that this is a development in a countryside area.

240903 24 Murdoch Road Wokingham RG40 2DF

Full application for the proposed erection of a single storey, west side extension and a single storey, east side rear extension, loft conversion. Following the demolition of the existing east side rear extension. This to provide 2no. two-bedroom flats.

The committee object to this application.

The removal of the trees before the development is a major concern and this is happening more frequently with developments in Wokingham.

This development is seen as over development.

Development in heritage location.

Previously the windows were not replaced for like (timber) and this is not in keeping with heritage requirements. It is a concern that the developments will not be in keeping with a building in a heritage area.

The development is seen as massing.

CP1 Sustainable development 1 – Quality of environment.

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____



CP3 General principles for development

A – Mass

C – Ecological, heritage, landscape, geological

G – Open space

CP 9 – Scale and location of development proposals

TB24: Designated Heritage Assets (Listed Buildings, Historic Parks and Gardens, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and Conservation Areas)

ACTION: P&T OFFICER

INFORMATION ITEMS (AGENDA ITEM 8)

Cllr Betteridge asked if we could discuss the issue of tree removals, prior to developments and the TPO process. The PT Officer will add this to the next P&T Agenda.

CHAIRMANS SIGNATURE_____

CHAIRMANS INITIALS _____



30th April 2024

Minutes of the proceedings at the meeting of the **FINANCE AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE** meeting held on this day in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Wokingham from 7.30pm to 9.45 pm.

PRESENT

Chair: Cllr M Gee

Councillors: Cllrs B Callender, R Comber, T Lack, H Richards, I Shepherd-Dubey.

IN ATTENDANCE

RFO: Lisa Davison

Town Clerk: Katy Hughes

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from Cllr B Alvi and Cllr S Gurney (ex officio)

MEMBERS' INTERESTS (Agenda Item 2)

Cllr R Comber declared an interest in agenda item 13 (Mayoral Allowance) and it was agreed that he would participate in any discussion but not vote on the matter.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OR THE PUBLIC (Agenda Item 3)

No questions were received.

MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND PERSONNEL COMMITTEE MEETING (Agenda Item 4)

**RESOLVED
30813**

It was proposed by Cllr H Richards and seconded by Cllr T Lack and it was

that the minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Finance & Personnel Committee held on 23rd January 2024, pages 16902 to 16910 be received as a true and correct record and that they be signed by the Chair.

A vote was taken and it was unanimous.

YEAR END BUDGET REPORT 2023-24 (Agenda Item 5)

The Town Clerk gave a verbal report on TC report 11/2024, noting underspends and additional income for the financial year, and balances of reserves at financial year end.

During discussion, the Town Clerk was asked to enquire regarding ward boundary changes for the town.

AUDIT 2023-24 (Agenda Item 6)

- a) The RFO reported on the post-year end internal audit visit carried out on 24 April. It was noted that the audit outcome was positive and the internal auditor has agreed all the figures for the year end.

CHAIR INITIALS _____



- b) Members reviewed a report on the effectiveness of the internal controls at Wokingham Town Council. Following review, no matters of concern were raised by members. Cllrs T Lack and B Callender were asked to draw the attention of their party groups to this report, as it highlights the evidence on which Full Council can assert Yes responses to section 1 Annual Governance Statement of the annual return.
- c) Members reviewed the letter from Claire Connell, the proposed Internal Auditor for the town council for the 2024-25 financial year. Members noted the proposed program of audit work, qualification and experience and independence of the Internal Auditor.

It was proposed by Cllr R Comber, seconded by Cllr B Callender and members

**RESOLVED
30814**

To appoint Claire Connell as Internal Auditor for Wokingham Town Council for the 2024-25 financial year.

A vote was taken and it was unanimous

ANNUAL RETURN 2023-24 (Agenda Item 7)

- a) Members received and considered the financial statements for the year ending 31st March 2024.
It was noted that members of the outgoing council should be listed in the report of council information for the financial year, noting those whose terms had ended in May 2023.
Members noted comments from the RFO regarding the fixed asset register and noted a work item to review and check all the council's assets in the coming year.
- b) The RFO gave a verbal report on the annual return variance analysis report and noted that the template used for the information is that required by the external auditor, PKF Littlejohn. It was noted that it is a variance of actual spend against actual spend between the 2023-24 and 2022-23 financial year and not a report of variance against budget.
- c) The RFO gave a verbal report on the numbers to be provided to the External Auditor for the Annual Return. She reported that following a meeting of the charity trustees for the King George V Playing Fields Trust, a separate bank account has been set up and funds received on behalf of the trust have been removed from the council's accounts.

Following review, it was proposed by Cllr H Richards and seconded by Cllr B Callender and members

**RESOLVED
30815**

to recommend the financial statements, the annual return variance analysis and the completed Annual Return to full council for approval on 15th May 2024.

A vote was taken and it was unanimous

CHAIR INITIALS _____



**INVESTMENT STRATEGY AND CCLA PROPERTY MARKET UPDATE
(Agenda Item 8)**

- a) The Town Clerk reported on two minor updates to the Annual Investment Strategy for Wokingham Town Council, to reflect the sale of units listed under 'long-term' investment and investment of funds into a short-term interest-bearing fund.

Following review, it was proposed by Cllr R Comber, seconded by Cllr T Lack and members

**RESOLVED
30816**

to approve the adoption of the updated Annual Investment Strategy for the 2024-25 financial year.

A vote was taken and it was unanimous

- b) Members noted the sale of 50% of the units held in the CCLA Local Authority Property Fund (LAPF) and the Town Clerk noted that a round sum was due to be transferred into the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund.
- c) Members noted that the committee will consider the remaining investment in the LAPF at a future meeting.

IN YEAR GRANTS FUND (Agenda item 9)

The Town Clerk reported on TC Report 05/2024 and proposed in-year grant fund, the 'WTC Culture and Community Grant Fund (CACGF)'.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr T Lack, seconded by Cllr H Richards and members

**RESOLVED
30817**

to approve, subject to the addition of the below wording, the new in-year grant fund, to commence in the 2024-25 financial year.

The grant fund document to read:

'This new fund invites organisations and community groups to apply for financial support towards cultural events and activities that contribute to and support the diversity and vibrancy of our town. The grant fund will also consider applications for short-term urgent funding needs arising as a result of unexpected circumstances.'

Grant policy item 8.5 to read:

'Recipients must advise the Town Council prior to disposing of any resources or equipment funded, part-funded or supplied by the town council as part of a grant application within two-years.'

A vote was taken and it was unanimous

POLICIES AND STRATEGIES (Agenda item 10)

The Town Clerk reported that two additional policies were required as part of the town council's compliance with the Transparency Regulations (2015)

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**RESOLVED
30818**

Following review, it was proposed by Cllr R Comber and seconded by Cllr B Callender and members

to approve the adoption of the Anti Fraud and Corruption policy and the Whistleblowing policy.

A vote was taken and it was unanimous

PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE IN-YEAR FUNDING REQUEST (Agenda item 11)

Cllr I Shepherd-Dubey reported on the request from the Planning and Transportation Committee for in-year funding for their welcome and speed watch signage project for town boundary roads.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr B Callender, seconded by Cllr I Shepherd-Dubey and members

**RESOLVED
30819**

to approve in-year funding of up to £4,350 to allow the project to progress in the 2024-25 financial year.

A vote was taken and it was unanimous

MATTHEWS GREEN COMMUNITY CENTRE (Agenda item 12)

The Town Clerk reported that no information had been received from the academy trust regarding a proposal for funding for equipment for the community facility.

The Town Clerk was asked to follow up with the academy trust.

MAYORAL ALLOWANCE (Agenda item 13)

The Town Clerk reported on TC Report 09/2024 regarding the payment of a Mayoral Allowance.

The Town Clerk reminded members that HMRC will only treat the payment as not liable to tax provided that it is a sum reflecting the costs incurred by the office and that it contains no element of remuneration. Members noted the challenge of ensuring that all expenditure is receipted, due to the nature of the role.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr I Shepherd-Dubey and seconded by Cllr H Richards and members

**RESOLVED
30820**

to approve the proposal, with a view to it being reviewed in one year.

A vote was taken. One member abstained and Cllr R Comber, with a declared interest, participated in the discussion but did not vote.

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE (Agenda Item 14)

The following lists of payments from the F&GP and the Clerk's Drawing Accounts were received. It was proposed by Cllr R comber and seconded by Cllr T Lack and it was

RESOLVED

CHAIR INITIALS _____



30821

to approve:

- (a) The list of costs from 1st January 2024 to 31st March 2024 totalling the sum of £359,459.02 paid from the F&GP Account, this includes £140,000 transferred to the Clerk's Account
- (b) The list of costs from 1st January 2024 to 31st March 2024 totalling the sum of £133,248.12 paid from the Clerk's Drawing Account

A vote was taken and it was unanimous

CIL MONITORING REPORT (Agenda item 15)

- (a) Members received a report detailing the latest information received from WBC regarding Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).
- (b) Members noted CIL funds received in the 2023-24 financial year have been transferred to a separate CIL earmarked reserve.
- (c) Following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr M Gee and seconded by Cllr T Lack and members

**RESOLVED
30822**

to approve the transfer of remaining CIL received in previous financial years to the newly established CIL earmarked reserve.

A vote was taken and it was unanimous

INSURANCE (Agenda item 16)

The Town Clerk reported on TC Report 10/2024 regarding the council's insurance cover and a recent meeting with the council's insurance broker ahead of the renewal of the council's annual insurance policy in July. The Town Clerk noted that the council is in a long-term agreement with A J Gallagher and this will be the third year of a three-year agreement.

The Town Clerk reported that valuations undertaken in 2022 and 2023 for the council's civic regalia, artwork and silverware had been factored into the current year's insurance and that the insurers had offered an alternative option for cover which the council could take up from the insurance renewal date.

- (a) Following extensive discussion the Town Clerk and RFO were asked to seek further clarification on the cover options from the broker and to bring the proposal back to the next meeting.
- (b) The Town Clerk reported on a request for in-year funding to carry out a reinstatement valuation for the town hall for insurance purposes. Following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr R Comber and seconded by Cllr H Richards and members

**RESOLVED
30823**

to approve a budget of up to £1,500 to undertake a reinstatement valuation for the town hall.

A vote was taken and it was unanimous

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STANDING FINANCIAL REGULATIONS (Agenda item 17)

- (a) Members received and noted the updated addendum to the Standing Financial Regulations for 2024-25
- (b) Members consider a request from the Town Clerk to update the expenditure sign off limit for the Amenities Officer. Following initial discussion, Cllr T Lack proposed a variation to the proposal, to set the Amenities Officer's limit to 1%, in line with the Grounds and Bloom Officer. This proposal was seconded by Cllr R Comber and members

**RESOLVED
30824**

to approve the amended proposal for the update to the SFRs

A vote was taken and it was unanimous

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (Agenda Item 18)

It was proposed by Cllr M Gee, seconded by Cllr T Lack and it was

**RESOLVED
30825**

that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted i.e. commercial, financial and personnel, it was advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded and instructed to withdraw.

A vote was taken and it was unanimous

LEASE MATTERS (Agenda item 19)

- (a) The Town Clerk reported on a request received from the leaseholder for the RYND restaurant at the town hall, requesting a period of rent-holiday whilst the unit was closed for refit and redecoration ahead of a re-opening under a new name and offering.

The Town Clerk noted that the lease will remain with the current holder and no other changes have been identified that would require any amendments to the lease.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr T Lack and seconded by Cllr R Comber and members

**RESOLVED
30826**

to approve a 50% rent reduction for 2 months.

A vote was taken. Four members voted in favour and two members voted against. The motion was carried.

- (b) The Town Clerk gave a verbal update to members on matters relating to the renewal of the Timpson lease.

- (c) The Town Clerk reported on a request from the Wokingham Horticultural Association (WHA) for a thirty-year extension to the current lease of land from the town council at the Ormonde Road allotment site, on which the WHA building is located. 17 years remain of a 20-year lease issued in 2021, so the extension would give 47 years and run until 2071. This lease extension would provide greater security of tenure to allow the WHA to begin fund-raising for

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building improvement works. All other aspects of the lease would remain the same.

**RESOLVED
30827**

Following discussion, it was proposed by Cllr M Gee and seconded by Cllr H Richards and members

to approve the request.

A vote was taken and it was unanimous

The RFO left the meeting at 9:38pm

STAFFING UPDATE (Agenda Item 20)

The Town Clerk gave a verbal update on staffing matters.

The meeting ended at 9.45pm

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Date: 25/04/2024

Wokingham Town Council

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Time: 12:26

F & P and Current Accounts

List of Payments made between 01/01/2024 and 31/03/2024

Date Paid	Payee Name	Reference	Amount Paid	Authorized Ref	Transaction Detail
01/01/2024	Wokingham Borough Council	Std Ord	2,893.00		Th chambers 2104329
03/01/2024	Wokingham Borough Council	Std Ord	59.80		Hawkins Way 0007370707
04/01/2024	O2	DDR 0401	351.73		27719572/O2
05/01/2024	SAGE	Std Ord	66.00		Payroll
08/01/2024	Hiscock	Std Ord	2,317.12		WTC insurance payment
08/01/2024	Google Ireland Limited	DDR 080124	41.40		4860027840/Google Ireland Ltd
09/01/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4912	BACS Pymnt	32,874.52		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4912
09/01/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4916	BACS Pymnt	16,904.93		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4916
10/01/2024	Google Ireland Limited	ON ACC ERR	41.40		Purchase Ledger DDR Payment
10/01/2024	Google Ireland Limited	ON ACC ERR	-82.80		Purchase Ledger DDR Payment
10/01/2024	Barclaycard Commercial	DDR 170124	1,445.16		6425907/Barclaycard Commercial
10/01/2024	Barclaycard Commercial	DDR 100124	44.00		010034751223/Barclaycard
16/01/2024	Castle Water Limited	DDR 160124	80.58		10001023019/Castle Water Limit
17/01/2024	Barclaycard Commercial	DDR 170124	56.93		WOKDECOR 201223/Barclaycard
17/01/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4922	BACS Pymnt	11,207.43		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4922
17/01/2024	Clerk's Drawings Account	IMPREST	50,000.00		tx Main to Clerks
23/01/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4927	BACS Pymnt	7,467.24		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4927
24/01/2024	Barclaycard Commercial	DDR 240124	90.77		DOBBIE /GBO465/Barclaycard
25/01/2024	Total Gas & Power Ltd	DDR 2501	1,890.01		325062347/24/Total Gas & Power
25/01/2024	Total Gas & Power Ltd	DDR 250124	321.48		325204841 / 24/Total Gas & Pow
25/01/2024	HMRC	DDR	7,435.91		HMRC
26/01/2024	ARVAL	DD	599.24		HK72 FNE WO7317
26/01/2024	Grenke Leasing Limited	Std Ord	467.32		Hire of copier
30/01/2024	Focus Group	DDR 300124	122.15		6823050/Focus Group
30/01/2024	Focus Group	3001	848.86		6823189/Focus Group
31/01/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4931	BACS Pymnt	12,269.27		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4931
31/01/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4934	BACS Pymnt	1,400.40		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4934
31/01/2024	Google Ireland Limited	310124	41.40		1001/COR ON ACC/Google I
31/01/2024	alloment payment	CC	8.49		allotment payment
03/02/2024	Wokingham Borough Council	Std Ord	59.80		Hawkins Way 0007370707
05/02/2024	SAGE	Std Ord	66.00		Payroll
06/02/2024	O2	DDR 060224	331.12		28263809/O2
07/02/2024	Google Ireland Limited	DDR 070224	41.40		4903733033/Google Ireland Limi
08/02/2024	Hiscock	Std Ord	2,317.12		WTC insurance payment
12/02/2024	Barclaycard Commercial	DDR 120224	44.00		010034750124/Barclaycard
13/02/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4940	BACS Pymnt	2,154.40		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4940
13/02/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4941	BACS Pymnt	2,496.00		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4941
13/02/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4942	BACS Pymnt	1,320.00		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4942
13/02/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4945	BACS Pymnt	11,866.51		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4945
16/02/2024	Castle Water Limited	DDR 160224	27.69		10001288168/Castle Water Limit
16/02/2024	DD STAFF	BACS	301.00		DD STAFF
16/02/2024	DD STAFF	BACS	-301.00		DD STAFF
19/02/2024	Barclaycard Commercial	DDR 190224	2,007.65		GIFTVOUCHER/ERR Barclaycard
20/02/2024	Total Gas & Power Ltd	DDR 200224	6,991.50		328776563/24/Total Gas & Power
20/02/2024	Total Gas & Power Ltd	DDR 2002	197.26		328776596/24/Total Gas & Power
20/02/2024	Total Gas & Power Ltd	DDR2002 24	25.55		328776520/24/Total Gas & Power
21/02/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4952	BACS Pymnt	11,243.48		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4952

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Finance & Personnel Meeting 30/04/2024

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F & P and Current Accounts

List of Payments made between 01/01/2024 and 31/03/2024

Date Paid	Payee Name	Reference	Amount Paid	Authorized Ref	Transaction Detail
22/02/2024	Clerk's Drawings Account	Imprest	30,000.00		tx Main to Clerks
22/02/2024	HMRC	DDR	8,014.43		HMRC
26/02/2024	ARVAL	DD	599.24		HK72 FNE WO7317
27/02/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4954	BACS Pymnt	3,071.00		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4954
29/02/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4956	BACS Pymnt	8,295.30		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4956
29/02/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4960	BACS Pymnt	2,356.82		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4960
29/02/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4964	BACS Pymnt	4,780.80		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4964
29/02/2024	Focus Group	DDR 2902	848.22		6824109/Focus Group
29/02/2024	Focus Group	DDR 290224	122.15		6823957/Focus Group
29/02/2024	Twofold Limited	DDR290224	71.96		17466/Twofold Limited
29/02/2024	allotment payment	CC 5784	-8.49		allotment payment
05/03/2024	SAGE	Std Ord	66.00		Payroll
06/03/2024	O2	DDR 060324	334.27		28847230/O2
07/03/2024	Google Ireland Limited	DDR 070324	41.40		4923320489/Google Ireland Ltd
08/03/2024	Hiscock	Std Ord	2,317.12		WTC insurance payment
11/03/2024	Barclaycard Commercial	DDR 110324	44.00		010034750224/Barclaycard
12/03/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4967	BACS Pymnt	1,165.50		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4967
13/03/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4968	BACS Pymnt	14,204.63		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4968
13/03/2024	Clerk's Drawings Account	Imprest	60,000.00		tx Main to Clerks
18/03/2024	Total Gas & Power Ltd	DDR 180324	272.12		331889300/24/Total Gas & Power
19/03/2024	Barclaycard Commercial	190324	3,322.89		3909930/Barclaycard Commercial
19/03/2024	Barclaycard Commercial	DDR 190324	5,188.19		TIMP 310124/Barclaycard
20/03/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4973	BACS Pymnt	6,353.24		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4973
20/03/2024	Total Gas & Power Ltd	DDR 200324	1,522.24		332074275/24/Total Gas & Power
20/03/2024	Total Gas & Power Ltd	DDR 2003	0.30		332074275/24/Total Gas & Power
21/03/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4975	BACS Pymnt	4,303.20		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4975
21/03/2024	Castle Water Limited	DDR 210324	32.19		10001664213/Castle Water Limit
26/03/2024	ARVAL	DD	599.24		HK72 FNE WO7317
28/03/2024	HMRC	BACS	8,105.00		HMRC
28/03/2024	Focus Group	DDR 2803	131.80		6824800/Focus Group
28/03/2024	Focus Group	DDR 280324	910.84		6824956/Focus Group
31/03/2024	WBC	WBC STO	-59.80		WBC
Total Payments			359,459.02		

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Clerk's Drawings Account

List of Payments made between 01/01/2024 and 31/03/2024

Date Paid	Payee Name	Reference	Amount Paid	Authorized Ref	Transaction Detail
01/01/2024	Wokingham Borough Council	Std Ord	250.00		Office 3 2239762
01/01/2024	Wokingham Borough Council	Std Ord	337.00		Market tolls 1016075
01/01/2024	Wokingham Borough Council	Std Ord	259.00		Office 1 2035191
01/01/2024	Wokingham Borough Council	Std Ord	320.00		Woosehill 101493X
01/01/2024	Wokingham Borough Council	Std Ord	329.00		Info Centre 1045161
03/01/2024	Peninsula	Std Ord	167.44		HR support
09/01/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4913	BACS Pymnt	3,889.37		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4913
09/01/2024	DD ALLOT STAFF	BACS	159.88		DD ALLOT STAFF
15/01/2024	Jan Salary	BACS	26,139.09		Jan Salary
17/01/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4923	BACS Pymnt	4,305.04		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4923
17/01/2024	BLOOM STAFF DD	BACS	287.43		BLOOM STAFF DD
19/01/2024	Castle Water Limited	DDR 190124	15.00		10001088582/Castle Water Limit
23/01/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4928	BACS Pymnt	3,726.05		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4928
24/01/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4930	BACS Pymnt	617.50		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4930
24/01/2024	DD Staff	BACS	171.19		DD Staff
31/01/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4932	BACS Pymnt	2,028.65		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4932
31/01/2024	Petty Cash	302706	53.36		Petty cash cheque
02/02/2024	HON SS STAFF	BACS	1,085.50		HON SS STAFF
03/02/2024	Peninsula	Std Ord	167.44		HR support
13/02/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4944	BACS Pymnt	290.95		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4944
14/02/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4946	BACS Pymnt	3,560.32		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4946
14/02/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4949	BACS Pymnt	4,681.86		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4949
15/02/2024	Feb Salary	BACS	27,660.61		Feb Salary
16/02/2024	DD STAFF	BACS	301.00		DD STAFF
21/02/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4951	BACS Pymnt	1,598.40		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4951
27/02/2024	F & P and Current Accounts	PL4954	3,071.00		PL4954 JON MOTT
28/02/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4955	BACS Pymnt	480.10		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4955
28/02/2024	Castle Water Limited	DDR 280224	9.43		Purchase Ledger DDR Payment
29/02/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4957	BACS Pymnt	2,767.62		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4957
29/02/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4961	BACS Pymnt	1,603.60		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4961
29/02/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4963	BACS Pymnt	311.48		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4963
29/02/2024	DD STAFF	BACS	134.19		DD STAFF
03/03/2024	Peninsula	Std Ord	167.44		HR support
07/03/2024	050324 Staff	BACS	430.93		050324 Staff
08/03/2024	060324 DD	BACS	400.00		060324 DD
13/03/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4969	BACS Pymnt	4,566.13		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4969
15/03/2024	Mar salary	BACS	27,892.81		Mar salary
20/03/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4971	BACS Pymnt	2,951.34		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4971
22/03/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4976	BACS Pymnt	1,976.92		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4976
22/03/2024	BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4977	BACS Pymnt	125.00		BACS P/L Pymnt Page 4977
22/03/2024	Bank charges	BACS	21.00		Bank charges
22/03/2024	AL292 STAFF	BACS	284.00		AL292 STAFF
22/03/2024	DD	BACS	900.00		DD
22/03/2024	Optalis	BACS	1,642.80		Optalis
28/03/2024	Castle Water Limited	DDR 280324	11.25		10001738559/Castle Water Limit
31/03/2024	King George V Playing Field	302707	1,100.00		Charge for use of field

Total Payments 133,248.12

CHAIR INITIALS _____

Finance & Personnel Meeting 30/04/2024

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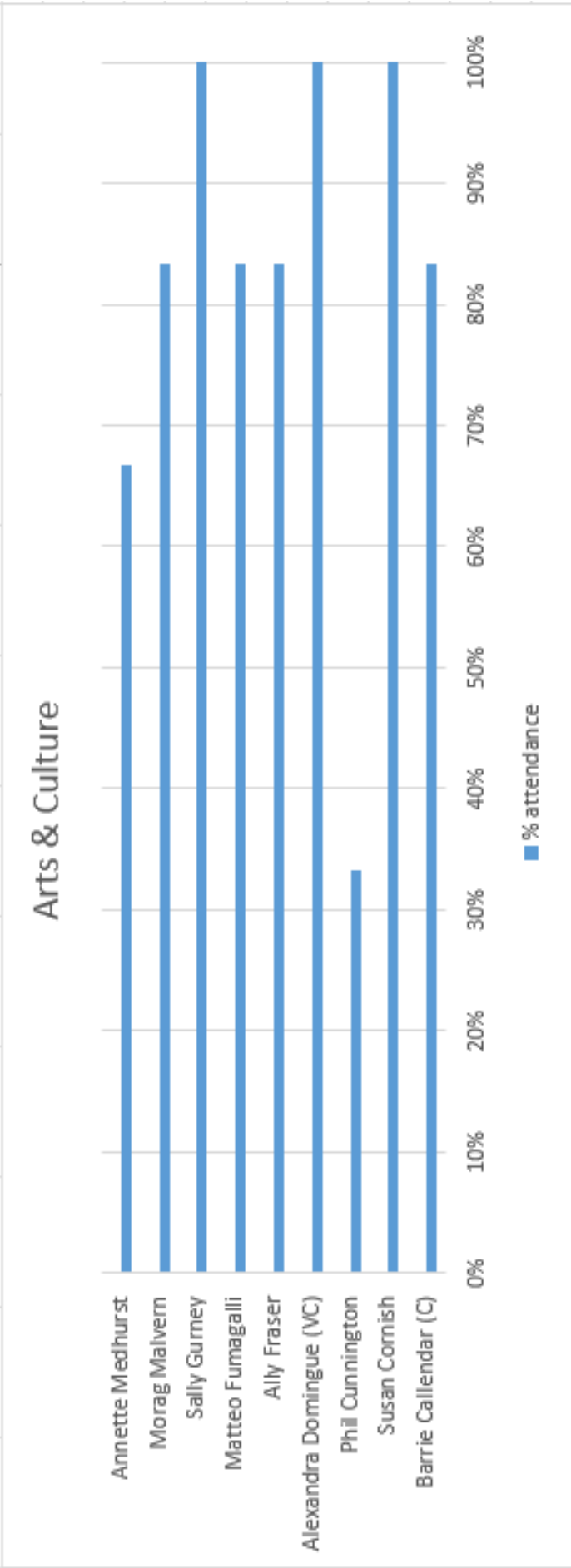
**Engagements since Last Council Meeting
(8 April 2024 to 12 May 2024)**

Date	Time	Engagement	Who attended
Thurs 11 April	6.00pm	Wokingham Town Council Invited to meet the discoverers of the recently discovered apple cultivars	Mayor Mayor's Attendant
	7.45pm	Wokingham Horticultural Association Invited to attend AGM	Mayor Mayor's Attendant
Sat 13 April	11.30am	Wokingham Repair Cafe Invited to Opening	Deputy Mayor
Fri 19 April	12.30pm	WADE Invited to attend Open Day	Deputy Mayor
Sat 20 April	11.30am	Maya's Refillables Invited to attend 2 nd year anniversary	Cllr Tony Lack and Mrs Claire Lack
Thurs 25 April	7.00pm	Wokingham District Scouts Invited to attend St. George's Day BBQ	Deputy Mayor
Sun 28 April	10.30am	Wokingham Beekeepers Association Invited to attend tree planting to mark 150 th anniversary	Deputy Mayor
Mon 29 April	6.00pm	Wokingham and Emmbrook Football Club Invited to open new kitchen	Mayor Mayor's Attendant
Mon 6 May	11.00am	Wokingham Lions Club Invited to open May Fayre	Mayor, Consort Mayor's Attendant Mini-Mayor
Tues 7 May	10.00am	Attending the funeral of former Cllr Barbara Bench	Mayor, Mayor's Attendant
	7.00pm	Berkshire Search and Rescue Dogs Invited to attend and present medals	Mayor

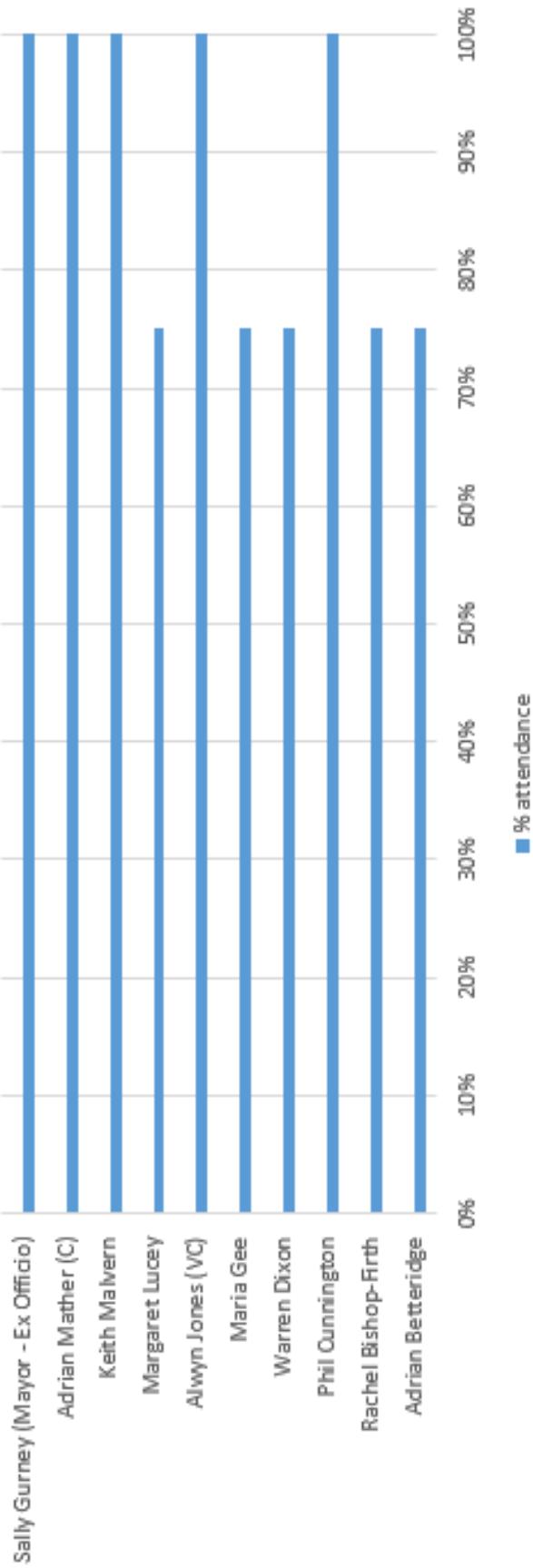
Total of Engagements in 2023/2024 from 22 May 2023 to 12 May 2024

Attended by the Mayor =	74
Attended by the Deputy Mayor =	13
Attended by both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor =	4
Attended by a Past Mayor =	1
Attended by Other =	

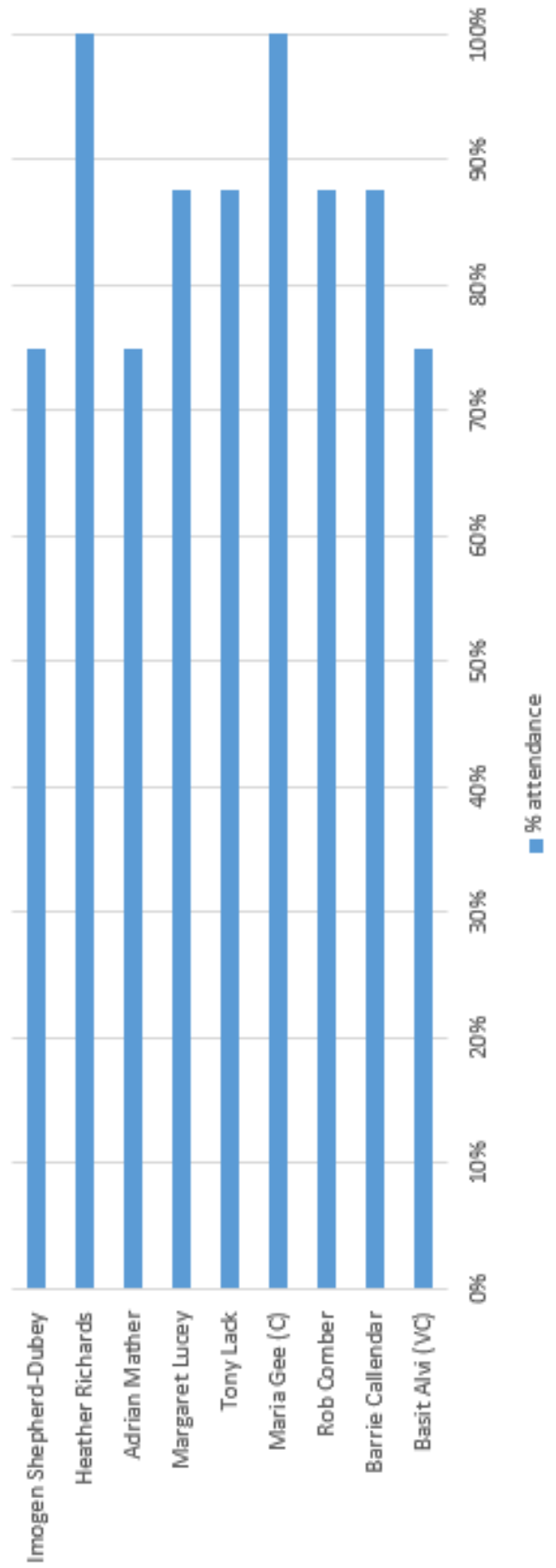
2023-2024 Attendance Register Graphs



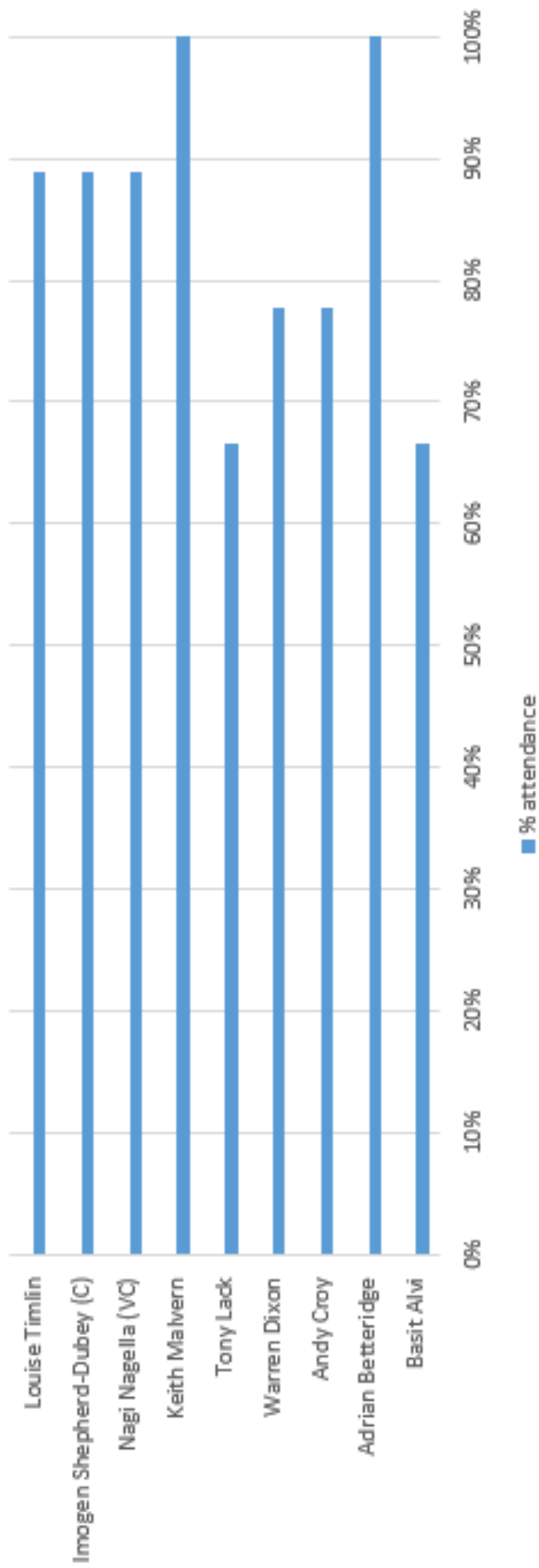
Civic



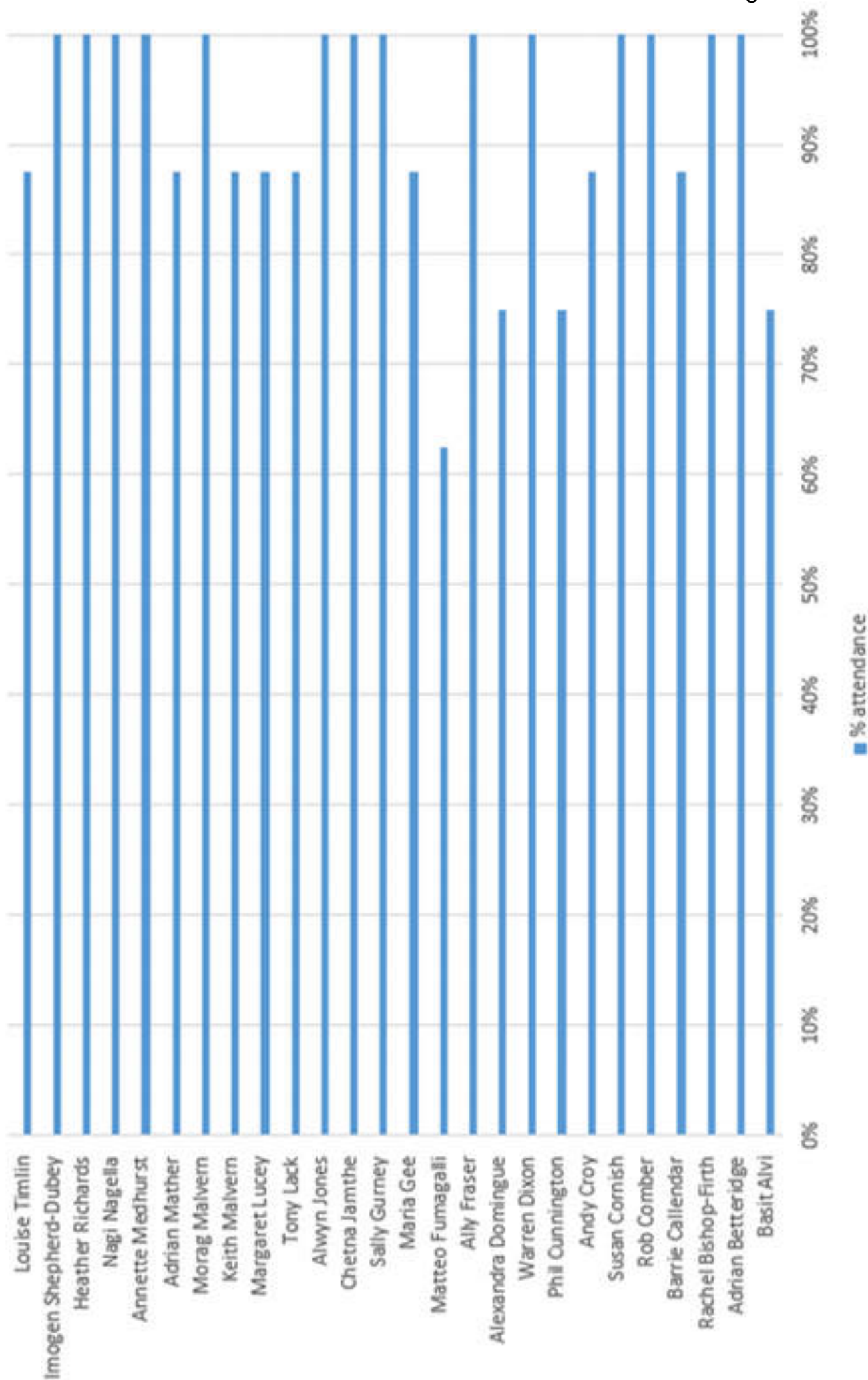
Finance & Personnel



Planning & Transportation



Full Council



Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24

WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

wokingham-tc.gov.uk

During the financial year ended 31 March 2024, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2023/24 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2022/23, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2022/23 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2023-24 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2022-23 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. (For local councils only)	Yes	No	Not applicable
Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	✓		

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

15/08/2023 20+22 FEB 2024 24/04/2024

Claire Connell

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

Claire Connell

Date

29/04/2024

*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Claire Connell MA, ACA, CTA

Chartered Accountant and Chartered Tax Adviser

86 Silverdale Road

Earley

Reading RG6 7LT

Tel: 0118 966 9706

Email: accounts@claireconnell.co.uk

Ms Katy Hughes
Town Clerk
Wokingham Town Council
Town Hall
Market Place
Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1AS

29th April 2024

Dear Katy

Internal audit for the year ended 31st March 2024 – final report

As a result of my work carried out at the year-end visit, I am pleased to report that I have completed my internal audit review and I agree with the amounts included in the Accounting Statements on the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) which will be submitted to the external auditors (as shown in Appendix 2). Appendix 1 summarises the audit work completed this year.

I have also reviewed the draft Financial Statements with Lisa and agreed the disclosures included within them. The figures included in the Financial Statements are consistent with those provided in the AGAR. These statements are for the benefit of the Council, are supplementary to the AGAR and are not audited.

There are no new matters arising to which I need to draw your attention and no outstanding matters from previous years.

I have completed the Annual Internal Audit Report within the AGAR prior to the Council approval of the AGAR as my work for the year is now complete. The external auditors have stated that my internal audit report gives important evidence for the Council to consider when completing assertions 2, 6 and 7 on the governance statement.

Kind regards

Yours sincerely



Claire Connell

Appendix 1: Summary of internal audit work covered in 2023-24

<u>Annual Return Section</u>	<u>Assertion met?</u>	<u>Comments</u>
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	Yes	Omega, Bookings and Allotments packages are used, kept up-to-date and are accurate. There is a suitable level of reporting to Council.
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	Yes	Testing and review of systems shows that expenditure is properly incurred, payments approved and VAT appropriately accounted for. Procurement procedures have been properly followed and contracts have been advertised on the Contracts Finder website when required.
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	Yes	Minutes, Standing Orders, Standing Financial Regulations, insurance cover and the Risk Register (last revised in November 2023) indicate that there are proper risk assessment and management procedures. The Council Officers meet with the insurance broker each year to ensure that the insurance cover is appropriate.
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	Yes	Budgeting and reporting are carried out in a thorough and robust manner.
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	Yes	No issues were found during testing and review of systems.
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	Yes	Petty cash expenditure is low due to the availability of a Council credit card. Income is now being taken into petty cash as a result of the lack of banking facilities in the town. There have been a few minor issues in the recording of transactions with the new system but these were all corrected by the year end and there should not be any issues in the current year.
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	Yes	Payroll is operated correctly in-house.
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	Yes	An adequate fixed assets register is maintained in Excel and this includes the long-term investment (which is now half the value previously shown due to the sale of half of the units). This register has been updated for changes in the year.

/continued overleaf

I. Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.	Yes	Monthly reconciliations are performed. These are not currently reviewed by councillors although the Practitioners' Guide recommends that this happens.
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	Yes	These assertions have been met.
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2022/23, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt.	Not covered	Not covered – the Council had a limited assurance review of its 2022/23 AGAR
L. The authority publishes information on a free to access website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with any relevant legislation	Yes	The AGARs for the past five years are available on the Council website in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 Larger councils are also encouraged to comply with the Transparency Code 2015 as best practice, which WTC endeavours to do. The information provided has been reviewed and updated this year.
M. The authority, during the previous year (2022/23) correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (<i>evidenced by the notice published on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set</i>).	Yes	The Council correctly provided for the exercise of public rights in all aspects.
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	Yes	Yes, the Council correctly complied with the publication requirements for the AGAR.
O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	Yes	The Council is sole trustee for two charities. The day to day management of the land is delegated to WTC. Charity trustee meetings are held when necessary and at least annually. Separate bank accounts are held for the charities.

Appendix 2 – AGAR accounting statement figures

AGAR box number		2022/23	2023/24	Internal auditor comments
1	Balances brought forward	605,645	937,945	Agreed
2	Precept	1,014,210	1,118,820	Agreed to government central precept record
3	Total other receipts	697,594	553,777	Agrees to records in Rialtas
4	Staff costs	599,151 (restated)	567,739	Agrees to records in Rialtas Previous year figure is restated to correct a small amount of salary which had been disclosed within other payments last year
5	Loan interest/ capital repayments	0	0	No borrowing currently
6	All other payments	780,353 (restated)	892,316	Agrees to records in Rialtas Previous year figure is restated to correct a small amount of salary which had been disclosed within other payments last year
7	Balances carried forward	937,945	1,150,487	

8	Total value of cash and short-term investments	994,536	1,163,044	Agrees to bank reconciliations
9	Total fixed assets and long-term investments	3,426,398	3,443,027	Agrees to fixed asset register and includes remaining Property Fund investment
10	Total borrowings	0	0	No borrowing currently

For local councils only		Yes	No	N/A	
11a	Disclosure note re Trust Funds (including charitable)	✓			<i>The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.</i>
11b	Disclosure note re Trust Funds (including charitable)	✓			<i>The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions</i> Internal audit note: the opening of the bank account and transfer of funds at year end means that the charity transactions have now been excluded from the Council accounting statements

*

We acknowledge as members of Wokingham Town Council our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024, that:

		Yes	No	'Yes' means that this authority:	RFO's Comment
1	We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.			Prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	The internal audit report (March 2024) notes: "The accounts are maintained on Omega and kept up-to-date. The bookings and allotments packages are also used. These packages are adequate for the Council's needs."
2	We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.			Made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.	The internal audit report (March 2024) notes: "Once again, there are no significant matters to draw to your attention, controls remain very strong." The post-year end internal audit report (April 2024) notes: "There are no new matters arising to which I need to draw your attention and no outstanding matters from previous years"
3	We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances			Has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.	No incidents of non-compliance were identified in the internal audit visits
4	We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations			During the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts	The notice of public rights to view the unaudited accounts was published on the website and on the council's notice boards on 13 th June 2023. The electors rights period ran from 19 June to 28 July 2022. The notice of conclusion of audit was published on the website on 4 th September 2023 and on the council's noticeboards.
5	We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required			Considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.	The internal audit report (March 2024) notes: "Council minutes were scrutinised. The management of risk was reviewed. There are procedures in place to ensure that the risk register is regularly considered by Council and where appropriate, its committees."
6	We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems			Arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give	The Internal auditor visited on 15 August 2023, 20 th and 22 nd February 2024 and 24 th April 2024.

				an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.	“Interim audit reports were received by the Finance and Personnel Committee as part of the agenda for the committee meetings held on 26 th September 2023 and 30 th April 2024.”
7	We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit			Responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit	<p>At the Finance & Personnel Meeting held on 26th September 2024, the External Auditors certificate and opinion regarding the completion of the annual return for the year ended 31 March 2023 was received and it was noted that the External Auditor had raised a matter as follows:</p> <p>“We note that section 1, box 9 and Section 2, boxes 11 (a) and (b) in respect of trust funds are inconsistent. The smaller authority has confirmed that it does act as sole managing trustee for trust funds, and the figures in section 2 do note include trust transactions. Thus the response should have been ‘Yes’, ‘Yes’, and ‘Yes’ respectively. The smaller authority should ensure the AGAR is fully completed in future”</p> <p>The committee noted the completed AGAR and the comment from the External Auditor. The Town Clerk noted that the wording of the question in relation to trust fund expenditure had been ambiguous, which had led to the RFO selection the incorrect response. The Town Clerk reported that feedback to the External Auditor would be given regarding this, by the council’s Internal Auditor.</p>
8	We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.			Disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.	<p>As part of the year end process we have reviewed regular expenditure to ensure all expected instances of invoices have been received and recorded within the financial accounts for 2023-24.</p> <p>invoices for work carried out (or orders reasonably expected to be received) but not invoiced before year end have been accrued for in the accounts.</p> <p>Outstanding moneys due to the town council have been chased and reminders sent to those customers with funds owing. Funds outstanding at year end have been included within the debtors.</p>
9	(For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including	Yes	No	N/A	<p>Has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts</p> <p>The Council is sole trustee for two charities. The day-to-day management of the land is delegated to WTC. A Trust meeting has been held in the financial year and new bank accounts are now open for the charitable trusts.</p>

	financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit						Consequently, funds received by the town council in the 2023-24 financial year for King George V Playing Fields Trust have been paid across to the charity's account, so the town council is now compliant with the requirement for trust income to be held and reported separately to council funds.
--	--	--	--	--	--	--	---

Claire Connell MA, ACA, CTA

Chartered Accountant and Chartered Tax Adviser

86 Silverdale Road

Earley

Reading RG6 7LT

Tel: 0118 966 9706

Email: accounts@claireconnell.co.uk

The Councillors
Wokingham Town Council
Town Hall
Market Place
Wokingham
Berkshire RG40 1AS

15th April 2024

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased to accept the appointment as your internal auditor. The purpose of this letter and the attached Standard Terms of Business is to set out the basis on which I am to act and to clarify our respective responsibilities.

I am bound by the ethical guidelines of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales and accept instructions to act for you on the basis that I will act in accordance with those ethical guidelines.

1 Roles and responsibilities

- 1.1 The council is responsible for maintaining adequate accounting and financial control functions and for preparing financial statements that have been prepared in accordance with current practices and guidance.
- 1.2 As internal auditor I am responsible for reviewing whether the systems of financial and other control are adequate and effective. I am required to complete the Internal Auditor's Report within the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. I will also provide a written report of the findings of the audit.

2 Internal audit

- 2.1 I will carry out the internal audit in accordance with the guidance provided in "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils: A Practitioners' Guide" (G&A).
- 2.2 An internal audit plan will be drawn up in consultation with the responsible officers and with reference to the council's risk assessment. This plan will be based on the internal audit checklist as set out in section 4 of G&A and modified to reflect the activities of the Council. Please see Appendix 1 for details.
- 2.3 The internal audit plan will ensure that the internal audit work covers the necessary areas so that the assurances to be given in the annual audit report can be made.
- 2.4 You will make available all necessary books and records and will allow direct access to those charged with governance in order that the internal audit work can be carried out.
- 2.5 A timetable will be agreed to ensure that my annual report is available at the required time as part of the annual return process.

3 Period of engagement

- 3.1 This appointment will be renewable on an annual basis.

4 Remuneration

- 4.1 The fee for the internal audit will be agreed each year in advance of the work commencing. The fee for 2024-25 will be unchanged from 2023-24 at £280 per day.

5 Agreement of terms

- 5.1 The terms set out in this letter and my attached Standard Terms of Business (last revised August 2023) shall take effect immediately upon your countersigning this letter and returning it to me or upon the commencement of the internal audit for the accounting period ended 31st March 2025.
- 5.2 Once it has been agreed, this letter and the attached Standard Terms of Business (last revised August 2023) will remain effective until they are replaced. I shall be grateful if you could confirm your agreement to these terms by signing the enclosed copy of this letter and returning it to me immediately.

Yours faithfully,



Claire Connell

I confirm that I have read and understood the contents of this letter and the attached Standard Terms of Business (last revised August 2023) and agree that they accurately reflect the services that I have instructed you to provide.

Signed Dated

For and on behalf of Wokingham Town Council

Appendix 1- detailed audit testing

This is based on section 4 of G&A. The tests may need to be revised during the year if activities at the Council change significantly.

Audit Area on AIAR	Tests to include
Appropriate books of account have been properly kept throughout the year.	Ensure the correct roll forward of the prior year cashbook balances to the new financial year Check a sample of financial transactions in cashbooks to bank statements, etc: the sample size dependent on the size of the authority and nature of accounting records maintained
This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	Review standing orders and financial regulations Test checks of invoices Check items above de minimis amount are competitively purchased Review s137 spending if GPC not in place Review minutes for authorisations Review payment procedures and use of debit/ credit cards
This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	Review minutes and risk assessments Review insurance cover Ensure play areas are monitored appropriately
The precept resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored and reserves were appropriate.	Review reports to council Review minutes for evidence of council discussion Review earmarked reserves
Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	Test checks on income from market, allotments, rent and room hire. Review of debtors Review of VAT returns Review of CIL income and grant income
Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for	Test checks for receipts and approval of expenditure Review of topping up procedure
Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	Test calculations, rates of pay and authorisations Review contracts of employment
Asset and investment registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	Review asset register. Review insurance schedule and cashbook to ensure no significant items are omitted If applicable, ensure that any fixed asset investments are correctly treated

Periodic and year-end bank reconciliations were properly carried out.	Review frequency and authorisation of bank reconciliations. Review year end reconciliation in detail
Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis, agreed to the cashbook, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	Check correct basis used. Check statements agree with cashbook. Test audit trail
The authority publishes information on a free to access website / web page, up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation	Check the website to ensure that all required documentation is published in accordance with the required legislation.
The authority, during the previous year, correctly provided for the period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations	Review the Public Notice from the previous year and ensure that it was published on the website in advance of the period commencing and that it covered 30 working days including the first 10 working days of July
The authority complied with the publication requirements for the prior year AGAR	Check that the statutory disclosure / publication requirements in relation to the prior year's AGAR have been met as detailed on the front page of the current year's AGAR
Trust funds – responsibilities as a trustee met	Confirm that the filing of documents with the Charity Commission is up to date Confirm that the Charity meetings and accounts are recorded separately from those of the Council

Appendix 2 – My local council experience

I am a Chartered Accountant and Chartered Tax advisor. I gained many years' experience dealing with audits and reviews of accounting systems when I was a partner in a firm of Chartered Accountants in Surrey.

Since moving to Berkshire I have set up my own practice as a Chartered Accountant and I have been working with town and parish councils since 2010. I currently visit four councils on a regular basis to offer accountancy support (visiting three on a monthly basis and one quarterly) and am internal auditor to over twenty-five councils, which have precepts ranging between £4,000 and £2 million . I therefore have experience of the role of Internal Audit from “both sides of the fence”.

I have been a member of the Internal Auditors' Forum since its inception and recognise the need to keep abreast of changes within the sector.

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

We acknowledge as the members of:

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024, that:

	Agreed		
	Yes	No*	'Yes' means that this authority:
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.			<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.			<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.			<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.			<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.			<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.			<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.			<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.			<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A
			<i>has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>

***Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £	
1. Balances brought forward	605,645	937,945	Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records. Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	1,014,210	1,118,820	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	697,594	553,777	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	restated 599,151	567,739	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	restated 780,353	892,316	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	937,945	1,150,487	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	994,536	1,163,044	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	3,426,398	3,443,027	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	✓			The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	✓			The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2024 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval



Date

02/05/2024

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:



as recorded in minute reference:



Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved



Wokingham TC
Year ended 31 March 2024
Annual return review

	<u>Mar-23</u>	<u>Mar-24</u>	<u>Variance</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>Commentary</u>
1 Balances brought forward	605,645	937,945			
2 Precept	1,014,210	1,118,820	104,610	9.35%	Increase of 149 Band D properties and 7% increase on precept
3 Other income	697,594	553,777	-143,817	-25.97%	-267,648 Decrease in CIL funding from last year 90,577 CCLA LAPF divested this year 20,389 Higher interest on investments this year 4,866 Increased insurance costs recharged to tenants 10,070 Market Shared Prosperity grant received this year -1,640 Lower income for Bloom -500 Lower income for hiring banner space
4 Staff costs	599,151	567,739	-31,412	-5.53%	
5 Loan interest and repayments	0	0	0	0	
Annual return review, continued	<u>Mar-23</u>	<u>Mar-24</u>	<u>Variance</u>		<u>Commentary</u>
6 All other payments	780,353	892,316	111,963	12.55%	46,739 Playground upgrade 32,874 Cost of May 2023 election 8,000 Accrual for August bi-election 18,516 Higher Town Hall repairs & maintenance costs 15,642 Trampoline replacement -6,300 Lower footpath upgrade costs than last year -4,536 No asset valuations this year 617 Higher wedding external catering costs 445 Higher councillor training costs
7 Balances carried forward	937,945	1,150,487			See reconciliation to cash balances following See analysis of earmarked reserves as per balance sheet & Note 11
8 Bank balances and investments	994,536	1,163,044			See schedule of bank balances + reconciliations

See schedule of movement on assets - A stock take of assets has been undertaken during 2022-23 to physically verify items shown as the Town Council is applying for Museum accreditation. Assets not located were removed from the register and shown as disposed and those assets which had not been previously shown but were considered to be of community significance were added at a £1 gifted value. Further work will continue during the next financial year which may impact figures next year.

9	Fixed assets	3,426,398	3,443,027	16,629	0.48%
10	Total borrowings	0	0	0	

Annual return review, continued			Mar-23	Mar-24	Variance
11	Controlled charities are properly accounted for	Yes	Yes	Yes	n/a
Other detailed information required					
7	Balances carried forward				
	Reserves per accounts 31 March 2024			1,150,487	
	Debtors				
	Debtors for Council services			-40,170	
	Other debtors: tenants' bank deposits			-20,579	
	VAT recoverable			-537	
	Prepayments			-30,521	
	Creditors				
	Purchase ledger balances			28,735	
	Receipts in advance			19,591	
	Tenant deposits held			19,078	
	Accruals			30,628	
	Letting and other deposits			6,331	
	Bank balances per box 8 (see below)			1,163,044	
8	Bank balances and investments				
	Current accounts				
	F & GP			757,842) See bank reconciliations
	Clerk's drawings			55,137)
	PayPal account			0)
	Treasury deposit account			350,000	
	Petty cash			65	
	Total per box 7 (see above)			1,163,044	

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24 Form 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities*:

- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or
- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:
 - are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or
 - have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2023/24

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
 - The **Annual Internal Audit Report** **must** be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
 - **Sections 1 and 2** **must** be completed and approved by the authority.
 - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2024**.
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2024**. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
 - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
 - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2024
 - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
 - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
 - Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability **Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate** will be returned to the authority by email or post.

Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on the authority website/webpage:

Before 1 July 2024 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2023/24**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2023/24**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2024 authorities **must** publish:








- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review. It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

*for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2023/24

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty) and is properly signed and dated. Any amendments must be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2024.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chair, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (**Section 2, page 5**). An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the bank reconciliation is incomplete or variances not **fully** explained then additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2023) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2024).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which **must** include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2024**.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?		
	Has all additional information requested, including the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights , been provided for the external auditor?		
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?		
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?		
Section 2	Has the Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval?		
	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chair of the approval meeting?		
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?		
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2024 been reconciled to Box 8?		
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?		
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? NB: do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.		

***Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices**, can be downloaded from www.nalc.gov.uk or from www.ada.org.uk

Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24

WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

wokingham-tc.gov.uk

During the financial year ended 31 March 2024, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2023/24 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2022/23, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2022/23 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2023-24 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2022-23 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. (For local councils only)	Yes	No	Not applicable
Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	✓		

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

15/08/2023 20+22 FEB 2024 24/04/2024

Claire Connell

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

Claire Connell

Date

29/04/2024

*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

We acknowledge as the members of:

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024, that:

	Agreed		
	Yes	No*	'Yes' means that this authority:
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.			<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.			<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.			<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.			<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.			<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.			<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.			<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.			<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A
			<i>has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>

***Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £	
1. Balances brought forward	605,645	937,945	Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records. Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	1,014,210	1,118,820	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	697,594	553,777	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	restated 599,151	567,739	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	restated 780,353	892,316	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	937,945	1,150,487	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	994,536	1,163,044	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	3,426,398	3,443,027	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	✓			The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	✓			The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2024 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval



Date

02/05/2024

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:



as recorded in minute reference:



Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved



Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2023/24

In respect of

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02 as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/> .

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2024; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor’s limited assurance opinion 2023/24

(Except for the matters reported below)* on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. (*delete as appropriate).

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

3 External auditor certificate 2023/24

We certify/do not certify* that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2024.

*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name

ENTER NAME OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

External Auditor Signature

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YYYY



**WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL
NOTICE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS AND PUBLICATION OF UNAUDITED ANNUAL
GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 Sections 26 and 27
The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234)

1. Date of Announcement: **Monday 3rd June 2024**
2. Each year the smaller authority's Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) needs to be reviewed by an external auditor appointed by Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd. The unaudited AGAR has been published with this notice. As it has yet to be reviewed by the appointed auditor, it is subject to change as a result of that review.

Any person interested has the right to inspect and make copies of the accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records must be made available for inspection by any person interested. For the year ended 31 March 2024, these documents will be available on reasonable notice by application to:

L M Davison (Responsible Finance Officer)

Wokingham Town Council

Town Hall
Market Place
Wokingham

Between the hours of 9.00am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday

Commencing on **10th June 2024** and ending on **19th July 2024**

3. Local Government electors and their representatives also have:
 - The opportunity to question the auditor about the accounts; and
 - The right to make an objection which concerns a matter in respect of which the appointed auditor could either make a public interest report or apply to the court for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful. Written notice of an objection must first be given to the auditor and a copy sent to the smaller authority.

The appointed auditor can be contacted at the address in paragraph 4 below for this purpose during the inspection period at 2 above.

4. The Audit is being conducted under the provisions of the The Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 and the National Audit Office Code of Audit Practice 2015. Your audit is being carried out by:

PKF Littlejohn LLP (Ref: SBA Team), 15 Westferry Circus, Canary Wharf, London E14 4HD

This announcement is made by:

L M Davison
Responsible Finance Officer

LOCAL AUTHORITY ACCOUNTS: A SUMMARY OF YOUR RIGHTS

Please note that this summary applies to all relevant smaller authorities, including local councils, internal drainage boards and 'other' smaller authorities.

The basic position

The [Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014](#) (the Act) governs the work of auditors appointed to smaller authorities. This summary explains the provisions contained in Sections 26 and 27 of the Act. The Act and the [Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015](#) also cover the duties, responsibilities and rights of smaller authorities, other organisations and the public concerning the accounts being audited.

As a local elector, or an interested person, you have certain legal rights in respect of the accounting records of smaller authorities. As an interested person you can inspect accounting records and related documents. If you are a local government elector for the area to which the accounts relate you can also ask questions about the accounts and object to them. You do not have to pay directly for exercising your rights. However, any resulting costs incurred by the smaller authority form part of its running costs. Therefore, indirectly, local residents pay for the cost of you exercising your rights through their council tax.

The right to inspect the accounting records

Any interested person can inspect the accounting records, which includes but is not limited to local electors. You can inspect the accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records. You can copy all, or part, of these records or documents. Your inspection must be about the accounts, or relate to an item in the accounts. You cannot, for example, inspect or copy documents unrelated to the accounts, or that include personal information (Section 26 (6) – (10) of the Act explains what is meant by personal information). You cannot inspect information which is protected by commercial confidentiality. This is information which would prejudice commercial confidentiality if it was released to the public and there is not, set against this, a very strong reason in the public interest why it should nevertheless be disclosed.

When smaller authorities have finished preparing accounts for the financial year and approved them, they must publish them (including on a website). There must be a 30 working day period, called the 'period for the exercise of public rights', during which you can exercise your statutory right to inspect the accounting records. Smaller authorities must tell the public, including advertising this on their website, that the accounting records and related documents are available to inspect. By arrangement you will then have 30 working days to inspect and make copies of the accounting records. You may have to pay a copying charge. The 30 working day period must include a common period of inspection during which all smaller authorities' accounting records are available to inspect. This will be 1-12 July 2024 for 2023/24 accounts. The advertisement must set out the dates of the period for the exercise of public rights, how you can communicate to the smaller authority that you wish to inspect the accounting records and related documents, the name and address of the auditor, and the relevant legislation that governs the inspection of accounts and objections.

The right to ask the auditor questions about the accounting records

You should first ask your smaller authority about the accounting records, since they hold all the details. If you are a local elector, your right to ask questions of the external auditor is enshrined in law. However, while the auditor will answer your questions where possible, they are not always obliged to do so. For example, the question might be better answered by another organisation, require investigation beyond the auditor's remit, or involve disproportionate cost (which is borne by the local taxpayer). Give your smaller authority the opportunity first to explain anything in the accounting records that you are unsure about. If you are not satisfied with their explanation, you can question the external auditor about the accounting records.

The law limits the time available for you formally to ask questions. This must be done in the period for the exercise of public rights, so let the external auditor know your concern as soon as possible. The

advertisement or notice that tells you the accounting records are available to inspect will also give the period for the exercise of public rights during which you may ask the auditor questions, which here means formally asking questions under the Act. You can ask someone to represent you when asking the external auditor questions.

Before you ask the external auditor any questions, inspect the accounting records fully, so you know what they contain. Please remember that you cannot formally ask questions, under the Act, after the end of the period for the exercise of public rights. You may ask your smaller authority other questions about their accounts for any year, at any time. But these are not questions under the Act.

You can ask the external auditor questions about an item in the accounting records for the financial year being audited. However, your right to ask the external auditor questions is limited. The external auditor can only answer 'what' questions, not 'why' questions. The external auditor cannot answer questions about policies, finances, procedures or anything else unless it is directly relevant to an item in the accounting records. Remember that your questions must always be about facts, not opinions. To avoid misunderstanding, we recommend that you always put your questions in writing.

The right to make objections at audit

You have inspected the accounting records and asked your questions of the smaller authority. Now you may wish to object to the accounts on the basis that an item in them is in your view unlawful or there are matters of wider concern arising from the smaller authority's finances. A local government elector can ask the external auditor to apply to the High Court for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful, or to issue a report on matters which are in the public interest. You must tell the external auditor which specific item in the accounts you object to and why you think the item is unlawful, or why you think that a public interest report should be made about it. You must provide the external auditor with the evidence you have to support your objection. Disagreeing with income or spending does not make it unlawful. To object to the accounts you must write to the external auditor stating you want to make an objection, including the information and evidence below and you must send a copy to the smaller authority. The notice must include:

- confirmation that you are an elector in the smaller authority's area;
- why you are objecting to the accounts and the facts on which you rely;
- details of any item in the accounts that you think is unlawful; and
- details of any matter about which you think the external auditor should make a public interest report.

Other than it must be in writing, there is no set format for objecting. You can only ask the external auditor to act within the powers available under the [Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014](#).

A final word

You may not use this 'right to object' to make a personal complaint or claim against your smaller authority. You should take such complaints to your local Citizens' Advice Bureau, local Law Centre or to your solicitor. Smaller authorities, and so local taxpayers, meet the costs of dealing with questions and objections. In deciding whether to take your objection forward, one of a series of factors the auditor must take into account is the cost that will be involved, they will only continue with the objection if it is in the public interest to do so. They may also decide not to consider an objection if they think that it is frivolous or vexatious, or if it repeats an objection already considered. If you appeal to the courts against an auditor's decision not to apply to the courts for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful, you will have to pay for the action yourself.

For more detailed guidance on public rights and the special powers of auditors, copies of the publication [Local authority accounts: A guide to your rights](#) are available from the NAO website.

If you wish to contact your authority's appointed external auditor please write to the address in paragraph 4 of the *Notice of Public Rights and Publication of Unaudited Annual Governance & Accountability Return*.