

ANNUAL REPORT 2012–2013



Chairman's Report

I am coming to the end of my Mayoral year, but also the Council itself is drawing to a close its six-year term of office. Local elections will take place on 2nd May 2013 and a new body of Councillors will be in place for the next municipal year.

I think every Councillor intends to achieve something during their term of office and in the last six years I believe that Warminster Town Council has achieved a lot. The last year has been a very busy one for me, with the Jubilee celebrations and Olympic Games taking place, and Warminster's military parades. I have been honoured to represent the town at our Jubilee events and the homecoming parade of 3rd Yorks, plus many more events. I have managed to attend 105 formal engagements during my year in office. My particular interest has been about maintaining, improving and providing new footpaths and cycleways, preserving what is good whilst looking at opportunities to provide more.

We have an increasingly busy town centre, a parking partnership offering a refund for up to two hours of parking, a local job club, as well as strong relationships with local organisations and churches who provide a wealth of voluntary service. Nothing is ever perfect, but there are many people working behind the scenes to try and improve what we can offer within very limited budgets.

The Council has sought to improve the welfare of citizens within the town and I hope that we leave a stronger legacy than we inherited. Warminster is a wonderful town and I am proud to live here.

Warminster Civic Centre



Warminster Town Council operates its administration offices through the Civic Centre, so if you ring the Town Council you will also contact the Civic Centre.

Since reopening the Civic Centre in November 2011, bookings have increased month on month and we are now hosting a variety of personal, commercial and organisational events. The range of bookings demonstrates that the building can be flexible enough to meet the needs of almost any hirer. We have been delighted to welcome back wrestling to the Centre this year, along with various types of keep-fit classes, the newest being kick boxing. We have set up monthly film matinees, held Christmas, wedding, job and craft fairs, pamper evenings and blood donors, as well as general meetings.



The Changing Places facility provides a state-of-the-art room for those with severe disabilities who need support when washing or changing. If you would like to know more about this facility then please visit and we will be happy to show you around.

The area of land to the side of the Centre is in the process of being handed over to the Town Council from Wiltshire Council. Planning permission has been gained to remove and replant six sycamore trees which were going into decline. The area will also be replanted with grass seed and remain as a community area, but will now be maintained by the Town Council.

Town Development

This remains one of the busiest committees and is chaired by Councillor Tony Nicklin. The committee reviews any projects that have been suggested by the public, and the following outlines some of the issues that have been dealt with during the year.

Waiting restrictions or new yellow lining is often requested to prevent inconsiderate parking. A full review was carried out in 2010, but with the relevant legal process taking over twelve months, the actual painting of the lines has only just been carried out at various places within the town.

We are trying to establish a 'Walkers are Welcome' accreditation for the town. This involves the establishment of a working group to gather the required evidence to achieve this. Establishing a new group of volunteers is difficult, but it is hoped to complete this within the next twelve months.

A full review of the town signage has taken place with officers from Wiltshire Council. A new plan is likely to be agreed within the next few months so that old, damaged or out-of-date signs can be removed and new ones installed where required.

New trees will be planted in Boreham Road by the end of April. This means there will be six trees planted along this road, in tree pits that were initially blocked up. All trees are ornamental, will not grow too large but will be pretty enough to enhance the area. When finances are available, additional trees will be considered along the same road.

Plans for Yeates Field have nearly been completed to incorporate a community orchard within the field. Planting will begin this season. The Town Council has entered into a new lease with the National Trust for the next 15 years at an annual rent of £500.



A new working group was set up to carry through the process for a government pilot project called Frontrunner. Linked to local planning, a site at Boreham Road was considered for the community to decide on a proposal to offer self-build plots for development. The first consultation stage took place in March with a public event which was completed at Warminster Library on 5th April. An online and paper questionnaire were produced and the results of the community view published in late April.



Warminster Christmas Lights will have a new home from early April. The existing storage facility will no longer be available and the lights will move into the ground floor of Dewey House.

A pump track has been suggested for the town from a local cycling group, and at the same time the resurrection of the old BMX track has also been requested. Further developments of these projects will go forward for the next Council to consider.

The Town Council is an active member of the Community Area Transport group (CATg) which is run by Warminster Community Area Board, under Wiltshire Council. Projects have been completed in partnership with the group and include pedestrian improvements to Copheap and Woodcock Road and Boreham Road/Bishopstrow roundabout. A full review of traffic in Folly Lane was undertaken, which could not deliver all of the resident's requests but has brought additional signage to warn drivers about their speed.

We still distribute, free of charge, biodegradable dog bags for owners to use in picking up their dog waste and these can be collected at the Civic Centre.

Planning

The Planning Advisory Committee, chaired by Councillor Sue Fraser, meets more than any other committee of the Council, coming together every three weeks to consider all planning applications submitted to the Principal Authority, Wiltshire Council.

Representation from members of the public, objecting to or supporting planning proposals, make for lively meetings. This year has seen discussions on potential strategic sites registered within the town, bringing concerns from residents about what these developments might mean for the town.

Outline approval was given by Wiltshire Council for 23 dwellings on land east of Damask Way, despite hard-fought action from a local residents group, supported by the Town Council, to have the application refused.

Work has started on the old Beckford Hospital site for a new dementia unit with 82 beds.

The old children's home in Boreham Road has also started its redevelopment, with a provision of affordable housing.

There have been many individual planning applications for extensions, conservatories and works to trees. The majority of applications were given the support of the Members and any objections were linked to conserving buildings and features where it was thought appropriate.

On a commercial basis, the town saw the completed redevelopment of the snooker club and gym into new offices for the rags group, which is a welcome new home for this established business.

An initial application had been put forward by J D Wetherspoon to redevelop the Bath Arms, but was withdrawn following listed building concerns, and an amended application has been submitted.

It is anticipated that the future will bring discussions on a development site that has been identified in the Core Strategy and is known as the West Warminster Urban Extension, plus discussions on the registered strategic land sites and development of land east of The Dene. The Planning Committee will do its utmost to engage with the public to establish their views on all applications.

CCTV

The Members undertook a review of the camera system in September 2012 and considered all the options available to them, which included whether they wished to continue with the service. The costs of supporting the CCTV system this year were higher than normal due to vastly increased maintenance costs. The repairs required to the old system impacted on the contract available to the Council and a renegotiation was required. The cost of the new contract meant that the Council would have to find an additional £13,000 to service cameras for which parts were becoming obsolete, which was neither expected nor sustainable. This had an impact on the decision to upgrade the equipment. The Members decided that the service continues to be essential to the town and agreed to replace all the cameras. The new system is nearly completed and it has been possible to carry out the improvements without any loss of service during the replacement exercise.

The Council has maintained its contribution of £42,500 towards the service and all grant funding and income will also be maintained. Costs of electricity and fibreoptic lines will increase, but it is hoped to recoup some costs during the year as the repair bill should be almost zero. The new LED monitoring

will also reduce the amount of electricity the system uses and improve the carbon footprint at Dewey House. All excess funds not spent during the financial year are placed into an earmarked reserve to support future capital costs.

Steve Howell and his team at CCTV were awarded a Certificate of Merit from Wiltshire Police for their dedicated work in keeping Warminster and Westbury safe.

CCTV Activity Report April 2012–March 2013

Reviews	143
Arrests	35
Criminal Damage	15
Antisocial Behaviour	20
Drink Driving	9
Fighting	32

Communications

Communications take many forms as the Council tries to engage with all of its electorate. The quarterly newsletter is difficult to distribute to all households in the town without spending a large amount of money on delivery, and this is money which can be utilised more valuably elsewhere. A decision was taken to publish the newsletter in the centre pages of the Warminster Journal, to try and reach more readers. Residents do not have to purchase the Journal to have access to the newsletter as the Town Council holds the pdf files and will print copies on request. The pdf is also published on our website. In addition all unsold inserts from the Journal are returned to the Civic Centre and are available on request.

We advertise all our meetings weekly in the Warminster Journal, as well as posting notices on our internal and external notice boards at the Civic Centre.

The National Code of Data Transparency is recognised by the Town Council and it observes the principles of getting as much information uploaded onto the website as possible. We make available details of all Council expenditure, the organisational chart of the staff, the amount of grants awarded to organisations, Council policies and our Asset Register.

To keep information up to date every committee and working group of the Council looks at relevant press releases to send to our media contacts. We are published in most of the local papers in and around Warminster, and feature on local radio, in magazines and occasionally on TV.

Enterprise Warminster

A Warminster in Business group was set up in February 2012 to look at ways of regenerating enterprise and entrepreneurship in the town. This was later renamed Enterprise Warminster (EW), and the Warminster Parking Partnership was subsumed into the group.

EW originally split into six sub-groups but this did not work effectively for most of the groups, so meetings are now held of EW as a whole. Members are at liberty to form sub-groups to follow specific projects should they wish. EW meetings are held at 6pm on the first Tuesday of every month.

The following is a summary of the projects and work undertaken by EW:

The EW Youth Group initiated Warminster Town Council's first job fair on 9th October 2012 which was attended by 209 jobseekers and was regarded as a success by exhibitors and participants, and a second job fair is to be held on 17th April. A fortnightly job club has been set up in the Library as a result of the first job fair.

EW members from Serendipity canvassed retailers in the town to attend a presentation from the MyHigh.St team to establish interest in getting Warminster online as a MyHigh street. The presentation was held on 24th January and had a positive response, with more than the required number of ten businesses signing up to the scheme, including the Civic Centre and Information Centre. The site will go live imminently on www.myhigh.st once all participating shops have uploaded their products. This will enable customers to shop or to reserve items online, but will also encourage shoppers to visit the town as it will showcase the independent retailers, as well as the town itself.

Two events were arranged in conjunction with Acton for Market Towns (AMT) to look at improving the tourism and retail offers in the town. The first event was hosted by Hidden Britain to 45 invited representatives from local businesses and organisations, including tourism, activity and accommodation providers. This event was tailored specifically for Warminster and the surrounding villages to look at how the area can better sell itself as a tourist destination. The extensive feedback from Hidden Britain is being evaluated, and a follow-up meeting with the Hidden Britain team is being planned to look at setting up a tourism plan.

The second event was a retail evening hosted by Metamorphosis specifically aimed at how Warminster retailers can encourage more customers to buy from their shops. This looked at such things as product placement, customer service and customer psychology. A detailed retail plan has also been drawn up by Chris Montagu, a member of EW, and will be looked at by EW in conjunction with the outcome of the Metamorphosis event.

Full Council proposed that Warminster should strive to acquire the status of a 'Walkers are Welcome' town, and passed the project to EW. It has been difficult to acquire representatives from walking groups to set up the steering group necessary to move this forward, but there are now a number of people who are prepared to join. A number of associations have been approached, including West Wilts Ramblers, Warminster Walkers and Footpath Holidays.

In addition to the specific projects above, EW also considered discussion papers regarding improvements in George Street, the Western Car Park and Central Car Park, all stemming from the Town Plan. Further work is required for the Central Car Park, which address the issue of the bus and coach stands and the location of the markets, amongst other considerations.

It was decided by Full Council in June that parking refunds should be extended from one hour to two hours as from 1st July 2012, since the take-up of the scheme indicated there would be adequate funds to cover this. After some lengthy negotiation Wiltshire Council agreed to allow stickers advertising the scheme to be placed directly onto the pay and display machines above the tariff list. This has made a huge difference to public awareness of the scheme, as the previous advertising boards were not all clearly visible because of difficulties in finding suitable posts on which to attach them.

There is evidence of an increase in the take up of the WPP scheme since July 2012. Although it was expected that the value of the refunds would increase, since up to £1.20 is being refunded rather than 40p, the number of vouchers presented for refund has also increased significantly, from an average of 372 per month for the first 13 months of the scheme to an average of 610 per month since July. There are also two new businesses that have signed up to the scheme.

Events 2012

The Picnic in the Park, organised in celebration of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee on 3rd June, was a hugely entertaining event, with music ranging from folk with Tim Steer and Chico Holton to classical from pianist Kerry Bishop and harpist Laura Keay, and including the Military Wives' Choir and a family karaoke from Richard Raw. There were circus skills workshops, dance demonstrations, magic shows, Wessex Blades fencing workshops, bouncy castles, a visit from the White Rabbit and Red Queen, and loads of stalls to browse around. The wonderful bustards put in an appearance on the putting green, and with a variety of refreshments being offered by the park tea rooms, the Lakeside Centre and food vendors, there was something for everyone. The day culminated with a flotilla of hand-made boats from Warminster's schoolchildren, judged by the Jubilee Prince and Princess with the help of two Yeomen of the Guard who sprang to the rescue when a gust of wind upturned most of the boats! The damp weather certainly didn't dampen anyone's spirits on the day, which was a great success thanks to the organisational skills of Barry Mole who coordinated the events for the Jubilee weekend.



The evening of 3rd June continued the celebrations with a family disco at the Civic Centre in the early evening followed by a Jubilee nightclub with a disco from Richard Raw and live music from Soul Commotion.

On Sunday 4th June a fireworks display at Battlesbury was arranged, including the lighting of a beacon as part of the national Jubilee celebrations. Prior to the display, entertainment was provided by Soul Commotion, Richard Raw and the Military Wives Choir while the crowds gathered waiting for dusk and the fireworks. The display was choreographed to the music of Queen, and lasted for a spectacular 20 minutes thanks to grant funding from the Area Board. The Army built the beacon and lent their expertise to putting on the display, including providing a beer tent. This was a magnificent end to a truly celebratory Jubilee weekend.

Warminster Festival



The theme of last year's festival was 'Hidden Treasures'. A review of the constitution was undertaken by the new committee who took up office in 2011, giving clarity but keeping the basic principles of a festival that had always been intended to be a community event. A vision was produced that concentrated on the importance of showcasing local talent and local organisations were invited to take part. A 'Friends of the Festival' was also started, which gathered momentum and was a great success. A festival logo was designed, and it is hoped that the next committee will take forward the brand.

A lot of effort was undertaken in obtaining business sponsorship. There is no doubt that the festival brings business into the town, but it proved difficult to get businesses to view the festival as an opportunity rather than a plea for charity. The festival organisers are indebted to those businesses who sponsored adverts or events. The committee started with a small amount of money from the previous festival, but due to the success of the 2012 Festival has now amassed a fund of £4000 to put towards the 2014 Festival.

A new event for 2012 was the launch of the programme which, along with a monthly newsletter, proved extremely popular and advertised the events well in advance. In addition a number of competitions were run to gain participation. Ticket prices were kept low and despite the usual anxiety about filling events, many people bought tickets at the last minute and as a result several events were oversubscribed or full.

The timing of the festival has been variable in the past, and for 2012 the committee were constrained by the dates of the Jubilee, Olympics and Carnival. October seems to have worked well and it would make sense to keep these dates for the future.

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The next festival should take place in 2014, but as yet there is no committee in place. A new Chair, Secretary and Treasurer are required to take the next event forward. A public meeting has been scheduled for Tuesday 30th April 2013 at the Civic Centre with an invitation to anyone interested in taking up the mantle.

Garden Competition

Warminster in Bloom's Garden Competition 2012 had an Olympic and Jubilee celebratory theme. There was a disappointing number of entries to this year's competition, which in part could have been due to the appalling weather, but entries have been dwindling over the years. As a result the Council has decided to trial holding an indoor produce and flower show at the Civic Centre in September 2014. There is insufficient time in 2013 to draw up the list of classes and find the necessary qualified judges, so arrangements are being made to enlist the required expertise for next year. There will be children's classes as well as the usual adult classes that would be expected at such a show, and it is hoped the new format will encourage greater participation from residents.

Grants

A total of 43 grants were agreed and paid for from the Town Council budgets and the Dewey Trust. These covered a whole range of different organisations from Friends of Warminster Park, St Johns Ambulance, CAB, Highbury Youth FC, Warminster and Westbury Talking Newspaper, the Athenaeum Trust, the Carnival, Foodbank, Smallbrook Meadows, Christ Church Youth Café, the Swimming Club, Wessex Blades, the Allotment Association and many more. Some of the grants were given in the form of equipment rather than funds, for example a new starting system for the Swimming Club which uses lights for the benefit of deaf members, and some junior outfits and equipment for Wessex Blades' increasing youth membership. In addition the Council is the main financial supporter of the Information Centre and Community Radio.

A new budget has been set aside for the coming year called the Olympic Legacy, where a sum of money has been made available to encourage people to be more active following on from the Olympics. If you are starting a new activity club that you feel may fulfil the Olympic Legacy, please let us know.



Grant recipients and Garden Competition winners receiving their awards at September's awards evening

If your organisation has not had the benefit of a grant from the Council, please contact the Civic Centre to discuss your requirements. Grant application forms are available from the Civic Centre and online. Applications must be received at the Civic Centre by 31st May, and grants will be decided by the Finance & Assets Committee in July and be given at an awards ceremony in September.

List of complaints received this year, 01/04/2012–31/03/2013

22.06.2012	T Simpson-Steele	Civic Centre staff
02.07.2012	J Gough	Trees adjacent to Civic Centre
14. 8.2012	S Hope	Graffiti
02.10.2012	Regal Court	Collection of waste
19.09.2012	M Mace	Drivers – alleyway off George St.
17.10.2012	D Drew	Car parking charges whilst giving blood
30.10.2012	racs Group	Rats behind Bath Arms
23.11.2012	Barnfield-Jones	State of Robin Close
14.02.2013	L Fowler	Parking on double yellow lines
07.03.2013	M Davis	White lining in town centre needs renewing
07.03.2013	R Turner	Road works delaying travel
11.03.2013	L Halliday	New yellow lining Alcock Crest
18.03.2013	S Enza	Trees adjacent to Civic Centre
20.03.2013	L Clarke-Small	Litter

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Town Clerk, Heather Abernethie, and her staff at the Civic Centre and CCTV for the support I have received from them during my term of office. I have been honoured to represent the town during this year when so many events have taken place, and have come to appreciate how many people in our community are working tirelessly in their own time for the benefit of all. I would also like to thank my fellow Councillors, who also work as volunteers, for their support during the past year, and to wish my successor the very best for the year to come.



Councillor Rob Fryer
Mayor of Warminster

31st March 2013

FINANCIAL REPORT 2012–2013

The end of the Council's financial year is 31st March and shutdown of the accounts will take place on Wednesday 17th April 2013 to account for all expenditure and income. This report gives details of the income and expenditure to 31st March 2013 with a breakdown of our current situation. Once the accounts are completed these figures may have changed. The full audited accounts are available to the public and this is advised on completion of the process. To finalise the annual return the final accounts are usually published and adopted by the end of June each year.

The elected Members approved the accounting statements prepared in the way prescribed by law and requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations and proper practices. They have maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption, and reviewed its effectiveness. Proper arrangements are in place to safeguard the public money and resources in their charge.

All reasonable steps have been taken to assure themselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and codes of practice that could have a significant effect on the ability of the Council to conduct its business or on its finances. It has only done things that is has the legal power to do so and has conformed to codes of practice and standards in the way it has done so.

The Council provided proper opportunities during the year for the exercise of elector's rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations. Members of the public have been given opportunities to inspect and ask questions about the Council's accounts.

The Council carried out an assessment of the risks facing the Council and took appropriate steps to manage those risks including the introduction of controls and/or external insurance cover where required.

During the financial year the Council has carried out an effective system of internal audit of the Council's accounting records and control systems. It 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 the council. All matters raised in those independent reports from the internal and external auditor were responded to and corrected where necessary.

The Council has disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant. These have been included in the financial statements.

The elected Members understand that they are responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of control in place relating to the preparation of the accounting statements.

Heather Abernethie MILCM

Town Clerk & RFO
31st March 2013

**SUMMARY OF INCOME & EXPENDITURE
TO 31st MARCH 2013**

	Actual YTD £	Annual Budget £
General Administration		
Expenditure	165,545	180,561
Income	412,136	411,818
Civic and Democratic		
Expenditure	7,782	5,500
Income	39	0
Reserves	2,060	0
Policy and Communications		
Expenditure	5,004	6,500
Income	0	0
Grants and Projects		
Expenditure	65,138	64,561
Income from EMR	3,607	0
Events		
Expenditure	12,591	7,675
Income	3,700	0
Streetscene		
Expenditure	10,065	10,000
Income	0	0
CCTV		
Expenditure	63,841	63,617
Income	64,063	63,617
Dewey House		
Expenditure	16,918	19,510
Income	6,000	0
Churchyards and Open Spaces		
Expenditure	15,600	12,800
Income	4,875	1,468
Civic Centre		
Expenditure	62,129	81,329
Income	46,583	53,392
Total Expenditure	506,994	530,295
Total Income	537,396	530,295

	£
The Precept amounted to	453,318
Total Current Assets	294,921
Creditors	27,382
Net Current Assets	267,538
Long-term Liabilities	
Public Works Loan Board	469,166
Current Year Fund	30,403
General Reserve	91,351
Earmarked Reserves:	
Capital Projects	105,059
Town Development	10,150
Enterprise Warminster	20,373
CCTV	0
Town Plan	2,107
Grants	2,893
Training	2,270
Yeates Field WACO	2,933

In 2012–13 Warminster Town Council was made up of 12 Councillors. The town was divided into two wards, Warminster West and Warminster East, and six Members represented each ward. From May 2013 the town will be divided into four wards: Warminster West, Broadway and Warminster East, with three Councillors each, and Copheap with one Councillor. This adjustment has been made in readiness for the local elections on 2nd May. Following the elections a new Council of 13 Councillors will be formed on 13th May 2013 at the Council's Annual Meeting. The Council is led by the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor, who are elected each May at the Annual Meeting.

WARMINSTER WEST

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Town Council meetings and committee meetings are held at the Civic Centre and are open to the public. The public are welcome to attend the majority of Council meetings, either to listen or to speak in the public session.

Dates and times of meetings and agendas are posted on the notice boards at the Civic Centre, and are listed on our website at www.warminster.uk.com. Meetings are also listed in the *Warminster Journal*.

Minutes of Council Meetings can also be found on our website or requested from the Civic Centre.

The Town Council offices at the Civic Centre are open Monday–Friday, 9.30am–4.30pm and the public are welcome to call in during those hours.

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