

ANNUAL REPORT 2011–2012



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

My Mayoral year has been exhilarating, exciting and at times exhausting, and has just whizzed by! There have been some darker moments with the sad passing of our fellow councillor Martin Baker and the death of six soldiers from Warminster's garrison in Afghanistan. Although the latter was a hugely sad event to have to deal with, the reaction of the townspeople and the support they gave to the Yorkshire Regiment when it held its re-deployment parade on 16th March was magnificent. The whole town was united in wishing the troops farewell prior to their tour of Afghanistan, emphasising the strength of our links with the army which had been further reinforced earlier in the year with the signing of the Armed Forces Community Covenant.

Judging by all the organisations and groups that have welcomed me over the past year, Warminster doesn't need any lessons on the Big Society – it already has one! I have attended over 200 meetings, events, dinners and church services – managing to forget only one – and it has been a humbling experience to see how much hard work is undertaken by so many people who give so much on a voluntary basis to make our town the great place that it is. As a Town Council we are delighted to be able to support many activities and initiatives with grants which are decided each July, so if you are a group that has not already benefited from funding from us, please contact us for details.

In this report we look back at the activities of the Town Council over the past twelve months and what we have achieved.

Warminster Civic Centre



The refurbishment of the Assembly Rooms was completed in November 2011, and the Town Council re-opened its offices in its new premises on Monday 28th November. The first event to be held at the Civic Centre was a nearly-new sale of mother and baby items on 26th November, followed by the Mayor's Civic Tea Party on 4th December, so the centre was off to a flying start! Regular bookings range from zumba to sequence dancing, and pilates to mini rugby, but the centre has also hosted the prestigious Wiltshire Health and Wellbeing Awards and a wedding fair, as well as Council meetings. The range of bookings is testament to the versatility of the Civic Centre, and there have been many positive comments on both the excellent facilities and in particular the courtesy and efficiency of the staff, so it is proving to be a great asset for the town.

The building was officially opened on 14th February by Mrs Sarah Rose Troughton, HM Lord Lieutenant for Wiltshire.

The refurbishment of the building has been undertaken with particular regard to the requirements of the Disability and Discrimination Act. The Changing Places toilet provides state-of-the-art facilities for the severely disabled and there is also a standard disabled toilet. Baby-changing facilities are available in both the male and female toilets. This means the Civic Centre is equipped to the highest possible standards to meet the needs of all Warminster's residents and visitors.



Warminster Town Plan

The last public consultation of the Town Plan was held in July 2011, after a four-year period of Planning and earlier consultations. The final draft of the plan was adopted by the Council in September 2011. The next stages are to have the document become a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which will be an addition to the Wiltshire Core Strategy. Further detailed work is required on suitable development ideas for the Central Car Park area, and a detailed traffic assessment. It was clear from the consultation exercise that traffic build up in the town continues to be a frustration for residents. These two areas of work will require funding and no decision has been taken yet on how this work will be carried out or by whom.

Town Development

The Town Development Committee looks at various projects that have been suggested by the public. During the past year these have included the following:

Bus shelters – A new bus shelter was provided at St Andrew’s Road for which part funding was received from the Warminster Area Board. There were also two shelters provided at Firbank Crescent and Imber Road to replace the old ones that had fallen into a state of disrepair.

A36 roundabouts – Requests had been submitted that the four roundabouts on the Warminster bypass be better maintained to support Warminster in Bloom’s efforts for 2012, and possibly planted with bedding plants. It was felt that the untidy state of the roundabouts gave an unfavourable impression of Warminster at these entrance points to the town. Unfortunately because the A36 is a trunk road it comes under the jurisdiction of the Highways Agency, who emphasised that the essential requirements of the roundabouts in this rural setting were to restrict visibility to a point where drivers do not race across them, and also to have planting at the verges that discourages deer from wandering onto the carriageway. Planting on the roundabouts would involve breaking the topsoil, which may disturb any underground services, and bedding plants were inappropriate for rural highways. The Highways Agency accepted that some maintenance should be undertaken, such as weed spraying and general cleaning, but there would be no possibility of further beautifying the roundabouts.

Footpath from Portway to Newopaul Way – It had been difficult to develop the footpath on this stretch of land because only the eastern section of the land between Portway and Newopaul Way was adopted by Wiltshire Council. It was initially agreed 30 years ago, when Crusader Park was developed, that part of the planning permission was to create this footpath. Unfortunately the work was not carried out, and steps are now required to obtain the land from the current owners. They have initially indicated their agreement, and work will continue to try and bring this footpath into use. This route will be of great benefit to the workforce on the Newopaul Way site, particularly now that Dents has relocated there. Voluntary groups will be involved in clearing the path once the paperwork is complete.

Traffic and transport – Many issues have been raised in the last year, such as traffic calming, parking restrictions, speeding and pedestrian crossings. Residents in Beech Grove have made representation to the committee to consider a permanent restriction in the Grove to restrict access. This has been referred to the Community Area Transport Group (CATG) to investigate.

Residents of Folly Lane have requested that a speed limit of 20mph be imposed in the lane because there are no pavements and the opening of the Rugby Club has increased the amount of traffic at certain times. This has resulted in danger to pedestrians and to animals. The lane is frequently used by dog walkers as well as children and adults accessing the leisure facilities. This issue has also been referred to the CATG for further action.

Other transport issues include the extension of double yellow lines in various parts of the town to deter on-street parking where visibility or access is compromised, and the improvement of pedestrian safety by the insertion of a pedestrian crossing in Fairfield Road and improvements to the crossing points in Imber Road and Woodcock Road. In addition, discussions have been held with Sustainable Transport at Wiltshire Council concerning improving rail links across Wiltshire by providing a service between Warminster and Swindon via Melksham, and improving the pedestrian and cycling facilities within the area of Warminster Station.



Dog fouling – The issue of dog fouling had been taken up by a working group to focus on the Warminster Common area. It was found that keeping the grass cut and the introduction of new bins had helped keep the problem down in this area, as had spraying faeces with paint to shame offenders. However, although the pilot scheme had worked well it would be difficult to obtain funds to carry out similar schemes in other problem areas. It was noted that dog wardens did not appear to be issuing tickets to offenders and enforcing the law. The number of dog wardens in Wiltshire had been reduced from nine to two, and not a single ticket had been issued in Warminster. The question of whether CCTV could be used to name and shame offenders was raised, but this was ruled out. Wiltshire Council has decided that social marketing and education, rather than enforcement, are the way forward.

Yeates' Field – Yeates' Field is owned by the National Trust who lease it to the Town Council. Proposals have been put forward for converting part of the field to fruit orchards and wildflower meadows, but any projects will need to be subject to the Town Council and the National Trust agreeing any amendments to the current lease or negotiating a new one. The Town Council and National Trust feel the proposals for the field are worthy of support, but the lease is due to expire in 2015 so discussions need to take place over the impact of any changes on the current lease and whether it will be possible to negotiate an extension.



Taking Action on School Journeys (TAOSJ) – Sambourne School's involvement in the TAOSJ scheme in 2009–10 resulted in a pedestrian crossing being placed at the top of Sambourne Road outside the school, to which the Town Council contributed funds. This was much appreciated by the staff, parents and children of the school. The Minster School has produced a TAOSJ travel plan for 2011–12 which highlights the need to improve the pedestrian crossing at the bottom of Sambourne Road, by installing a length of coloured high friction surfacing on the approaches to the crossing. This will make the crossing more visible to approaching traffic and will assist with vehicle stopping distances. The school has also requested a footpath be created between the Weymouth Arms public house and the Council car park, allowing safe access to the school without having to cross the car park. This has been referred to the CATG for help with funding.

Recycling – New blue-lidded wheelie bins have been provided by Wiltshire Council for recycling cardboard and plastic bottles. This, in addition to the black boxes for recycling paper, glass and cans, and the green garden waste bins, means that most household recycling can be done at the kerbside and has resulted in the mini recycling sites in Warminster being used less. As a result Wiltshire Council is considering reducing the number of mini sites and also discontinuing the summer evening opening hours of 5–7pm on Wednesdays and Thursdays at the recycling centre in Furnax Lane. These proposals are to be put to residents for feedback by 28th May 2012.

Planning

The Planning Advisory Committee is the busiest of the Town Council's sub-committees, meeting every three weeks to discuss plans put forward for development within the town. This committee had been ably chaired for some years by Councillor Martin Baker, and his sad death in December 2011 has been keenly felt.

Many of the plans approved during 2010–11 have now come to fruition. Princess Anne presided over the opening of the new Dents factory in Furnax Lane on 9th December 2011, and the Waitrose supermarket on the old Dents site in Station Road was officially opened by Dr Andrew Murrison MP on 29th March 2012. Costa Coffee opened on 25th March in the Three Horseshoes Walk, and is proving popular with residents and visitors. The biogas plant is now operating in Deverill Road, although the visitors' centre has yet to open.

DENTS
Established
1777

COSTA
FOR COFFEE LOVERS



Proposals to convert the ground floor of the Old Fire Station in The Close into a wine bar and café were recommended for approval by the majority of the committee, but were turned down by Wiltshire Council on licensing grounds.

The conversion of the Beckford Centre into an 80-bed nursing home for domiciliary and dementia care, with car parking, is underway. This development is part of the Older People's Accommodation Strategy which will modernise the way older people's accommodation will be provided for in the future, adopting an integrated system and responding to needs in local communities. The nursing home will be run by the Order of St John. Councillor Burden was pleased to see the plans had observed the needs of patients with mental health issues in such a positive way. The developers were willing to retain the plaque erected by Lord Rivers in the original building in 1920, and place it in the new building in recognition of the history of the site.

Plans from St John's Church of England Primary School to demolish its existing Pratten hut and build a new single storey four-classroom met with wholehearted approval by the committee, who were delighted that the school was able to modernise at last.

Bishopstrow College has received planning permission to convert 76 Boreham Road from a residential dwelling into a residential institution for their students. This will support their existing facilities at Bishopstrow. This conversion was seen as a positive expansion of a local firm and would create additional jobs.

CCTV

During 2011, parts of the monitoring equipment used in the control room were converted from analogue to digital. This has resulted in a more efficient method of providing information and reviewing footage when requests have been placed by the police.

In addition, the inclusion of four cameras in the Three Horseshoes Walk has greatly improved coverage in the town. Linking camera footage together helps provide a better quality evidence pack for crimes that have been committed and the Three Horseshoes Walk cameras have improved the gathering of data in shoplifting cases, and in anti-social behaviour and criminal damage cases. CCTV works in cooperation with the Neighbourhood Policing Team, Shopwatch, Pubwatch and the Street Pastor scheme to make Warminster a safer place in which to live and work.



The costs of supporting the CCTV system remain fairly static. The largest costs related to the repairs and maintenance of the cameras and cable lines from BT Redcare. The Town Council provides £42,500 from the precept to cover costs, and income and grants amount to £20,000. In the last financial year the total cost of running the system amounted to £63,157. There are also funds held in Earmarked Reserves which are used to replace cameras or upgrade systems when required. Salary costs support one full-time person and three part-time contracts as well as volunteer hours. The Town Council is always looking for volunteers to join the team, so please get in contact if you would like to apply.

During 2012/2013 the CCTV Committee is likely to come under the Finance & Assets Committee with the partnership becoming a working group. Plans are under discussion to modify the system over the next three years and replace the large dome cameras that have been in place since 1999 with more up-to-date models.

CCTV Activity Report, Warminster, May 2011–February 2012

Reviews	165
Arrests	38
Cases ongoing	19
Awaiting court	14
Criminal Damage	15
Antisocial Behaviour	18
Urinating in Public	7
Drink Driving	8
Fighting	27

Communications

The Communications Committee has produced all copies of *engage* and encouraged all committees to consider press releases on relevant business. Good coverage is seen in local publications and improvements have been made to the Council's website to try and establish another avenue for communication with local residents.

In addition, dealing with negative press was discussed at great length in view of the unacceptable personal attacks that had been made by local vanity websites. The Members continue to believe that positive publicity is productive against this kind of practice and continue to try to inform the public about all aspects of local council business.

As part of the local community engagement strategy, a newsy type communication is emailed quarterly to local groups asking them to circulate it amongst their members in an effort to spread information. Weekly advertising is undertaken in the *Warminster Journal* to promote all meetings held by the Council and journalists attend most meetings and report on decisions made.

A forward work plan is produced with this committee which helps provide a forecast of likely events and civic requirements for the remainder of the municipal year.

Policies within the Council were also updated during the year, with recommendations made by this committee on the issuing of grants.

The national Code of Recommended Practice on Data Transparency was adopted by the Committee and staff within the council have been working on getting as much information uploaded to the website as they can. So far all expenditure over £500 is published, and the following information:

- An organisational chart of the Council's staff
- Details of Councillors' expenses and allowances
- Grants to voluntary organisations
- Polices
- The Asset Register

There are still some items to arrange and these continue to be worked on to provide suitable information to the any observer of the web site. Any requests for details of Council business can be made through any member of staff at the Civic Centre.

A full review of the production of *engage* is being undertaken as the council moves into 2012/2013. Details are at the planning stage, but it is likely that a different avenue will be explored.

Events

The pre-deployment parade of 3rd Battalion The Yorkshire Regiment, on 16th March, was a wonderful occasion that was a display of Warminster's community spirit at its best. The unexpected but welcome attendance of HRH Prince Andrew, as Colonel-in Chief of the regiment, made the organisation of the event far more complicated than had originally been thought, as many last minute changes had to be made. The huge efforts made by the police, army and Town Council ensured that the parade took place without a hitch, and was a truly memorable occasion for all the thousands of residents who came out to give their farewell wishes to the troops.

The sad death of six soldiers from the regiment the week prior to the parade made the whole event, including the private church service following the parade, all the more poignant for everyone involved.



The Events 2012 working group has been planning events for the year, in particular for the weekend of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. Barry Mole has been co-opted to organise the Picnic in the Park that is arranged for Sunday 3rd June to coincide with the national Big Lunch, and is also liaising with the army over the beacon and fireworks display to be held on Monday 4th June. The Picnic in the Park will be a real family extravaganza, with marquees, magic, musicians and much more. There will be circus skills, bouncy castles, candy floss and ice cream, and lots of stalls to browse around. Following a royalty-themed fancy dress competition, a Jubilee Prince and Princess will be crowned, and there will also be a Build a Boat competition for schools and children, with a flotilla of the boats on the lake.

Warminster Community Radio has at last obtained its full-time licence and went live on 1st April 2012 on 105.5fm. Music specialist presenters offer entertainment from a variety of genres, from the popular to the more unusual. Magazine programmes contain features of general interest, in particular promoting local organisations, charities, clubs and groups. Local news, guests and information are available on a daily basis. WCR signed a 25-year lease with the Town Council on 1st August 2011. The Town Council has made a decision to support WCR with their running costs as they are not able to raise revenue through advertising. This is a great service for those local residents who are not able to keep up with local news through other forms of communication.



Warminster Festival committee is in full swing planning the biannual festival which will be held on 6–20 October 2012. The theme of the Festival is Hidden Treasures, and the committee wishes to celebrate and showcase local talent as well as bringing in entertainment from outside. Over 50 events have been confirmed, from poetry and prose to beer festivals and rugby, with a whole range of music events in between. The Festival will have a grand opening in the park on 6th

October, where the 'flight of bustards' will be launched, but there are two events already underway – the poetry competition that was launched on 25th January 2012 by Lucy English, which closes on 1st August and has a £100 first prize, and the Treasure Hunt which had its first clue published in the March edition of the Festival newsletter.

Warminster in Bloom

Unfortunately it was not possible to hold a garden competition in 2011, but Warminster in Bloom's Garden Competition 2012 is going ahead, with an Olympic and Jubilee celebratory theme. The six classes are as follows:

- Class 1:** Most Celebratory Garden (Jubilee or Olympic theme)
- Class 2:** Most Celebratory Hanging Basket or Container
- Class 3:** Best Celebratory Display – Commercial Premises
- Class 4:** Best Children's Garden – Schools
- Class 5:** Best Sheltered Accommodation/Residential Home Garden
- Class 6:** Best Allotment

The first prize in Class 1 has been sponsored by Selwood Housing. The closing date for applications is 6th July 2012, and judging will take place on 10th and 13th July. Application forms can be downloaded from the Town Council website or are available from the Civic Centre.

Warminster Parking Partnership (WPP)

Warminster Parking Partnership's refund scheme for the first hour's parking began in June 2011, and was a little slow to take off. The offer was extended to two hours' free parking for the whole of December, which was repeated in March to encourage shoppers back following the post-Christmas period. The following monthly breakdown shows that the take-up of the scheme has not been as high as was hoped – although the December and March figures show an increase in payments made, the fact that £1.10 was being refunded rather than 40p indicates that fewer shoppers were presenting tickets in December and March than had done so in November and February. It has now been agreed that the WPP will come under the umbrella of the new Warminster in Business Steering Group which has been set up to look at enterprise and entrepreneurship in Warminster, and includes members of local businesses and organisations.



June 2011	£ 64.00
July 2011	£ 85.20
August 2011	£162.80
September 2011	£152.80
October 2011	£144.80
November 2011	£203.20
December 2011	£294.30
January 2012	£144.80
February 2012	£190.00
March 2012	£227.70

Grants

The Town Council continues to give its support to many organisations through its grants awards, and in addition to its funding of WCR also supports the running of the Information Centre with an annual sum of £12,000. Organisations that have benefited from annual grants include Shopmobility, Tynings Allotments, the Carnival Committee, the Athenaeum Trust and the Festival Committee. There are numerous other clubs and organisations that have been helped in the past year.

List of complaints received this year, 01/04/2011–31/03/2012

14.04.11	Mr S Burn	CCTV, Agendas, Various
31.05.11	Mr S Burn	Asbestos Assembly Rooms Refurb
24.10.11	Mrs A Hadley	Great Bustard Project
10.11.11	Mrs A Hadley	Great Bustard Project
17.11.11	Mrs A Hadley	Great Bustard Project
22.11.11	Mrs A Hadley	Great Bustard Project
04.01.12	Mrs Tavendale	News Year's Eve Fireworks
27.03.12	Mrs S Adams	Civic Centre Booking

Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Town Clerk, Heather Abernethie, and her staff at the Civic Centre and CCTV for the support received during my term of office. It has been an honour and a pleasure to represent the town at the various functions I have attended, and I have enjoyed immensely the opportunity to meet so many people from such differing organisations and walks of life. I would also like to thank my fellow Councillors for their support during the past year, and to wish my successor the very best for the year to come.



Councillor Pip Ridout
Mayor of Warminster

31st March 2012

FINANCIAL REPORT 2011–2012

The end of the Council's financial year is 31st March and shutdown of the accounts will take place on Tuesday 24th April 2012 to account for all expenditure and income. This report gives details of the income and expenditure to 31st March 2012 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.

Warminster Town Council acknowledges that it is their responsibility to ensure that there is a sound system of internal control, including the preparation of accounting statements. They approve the statements, which are prepared with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit regulations and proper practices prescribed by law.

An adequate system of internal control is in place which includes measures designed to detect fraud and corruption. The effectiveness of these controls is reviewed. Proper arrangements have been made to safeguard the public money and resources in its charge.

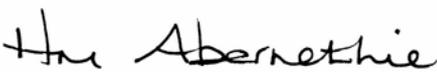
Reasonable steps have been taken by the Members to ensure that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and codes of practice that could have a significant effect on the ability of the council to conduct its business or its finances. It has only carried out things that it has the legal power to do and has conformed to codes of practices and standards in the way it has done so.

The Council has provided proper opportunities during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Account and Audit Regulations. This has enabled those persons interested to have the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about the Council's accounts.

Assessment of the risks, both financial and other, facing the Council have been carried out and appropriate steps taken to manage those risks which includes the introduction of internal controls and/or insurance cover where required.

Throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the Council's accounting records and control systems has been carried out. A competent person has been employed to inspect and audit the Council's internal controls to ensure that they meet the needs of the Council. Appropriate action on all matters raised in the internal and external audit have been dealt with. External Auditing will continue with Mazars who have recently been awarded a five-year contract by the Audit Commission to monitor small parish and town councils.

Members have considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on the Council and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.



Town Clerk & RFO

30th March 2012

**SUMMARY OF INCOME & EXPENDITURE
TO 31st MARCH 2012**

	Actual YTD £	Annual Budget £
General Administration		
Expenditure	122,568	146,359
Income	406,939	405,779
Civic and Democratic		
Expenditure	2,576	5,000
Income	0	0
Policy and Communications		
Expenditure	6,151	6,750
Income	0	0
Grants and Projects		
Expenditure	43,639	57,461
Income	24	0
Events		
Expenditure	11,073	14,100
Income	0	0
CCTV		
Expenditure	61,852	63,157
Income	63,140	63,157
Dewey House		
Expenditure	26,934	17,200
Income	1,880	2,000
Churchyards and Open Spaces		
Expenditure	11,051	15,615
Income	1,323	1,625
Civic Centre		
Expenditure	78,516	107,990
Income	17,840	39,171
Capital Expenditure		
Expenditure	223,564	189,412
Income	7,067	4,312
Finance Expenditure	596,891	623,044
Income	498,213	518,044

The Precept amounted to	447,279
Total Current Assets amount to	328,228
Creditors	37,885
Net Current Assets	290,342
Represented by:	
Current Year Fund	-98,682
General Reserve	206,769
Earmarked Reserves:	
Capital Projects	141,851
Finance and Resources	5,372
Town Development	10,150
CCTV	13,894
Town Plan	2,107
Capital Financing Account	1,229,996
Grants	6,500
Training	440

Warminster Town Council is made up of 12 Councillors. The town is divided into two wards, Warminster West and Warminster East, and six Members represent each ward. The Council is led by the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor, who are elected each May at the Annual Meeting.

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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 Dewey House, 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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