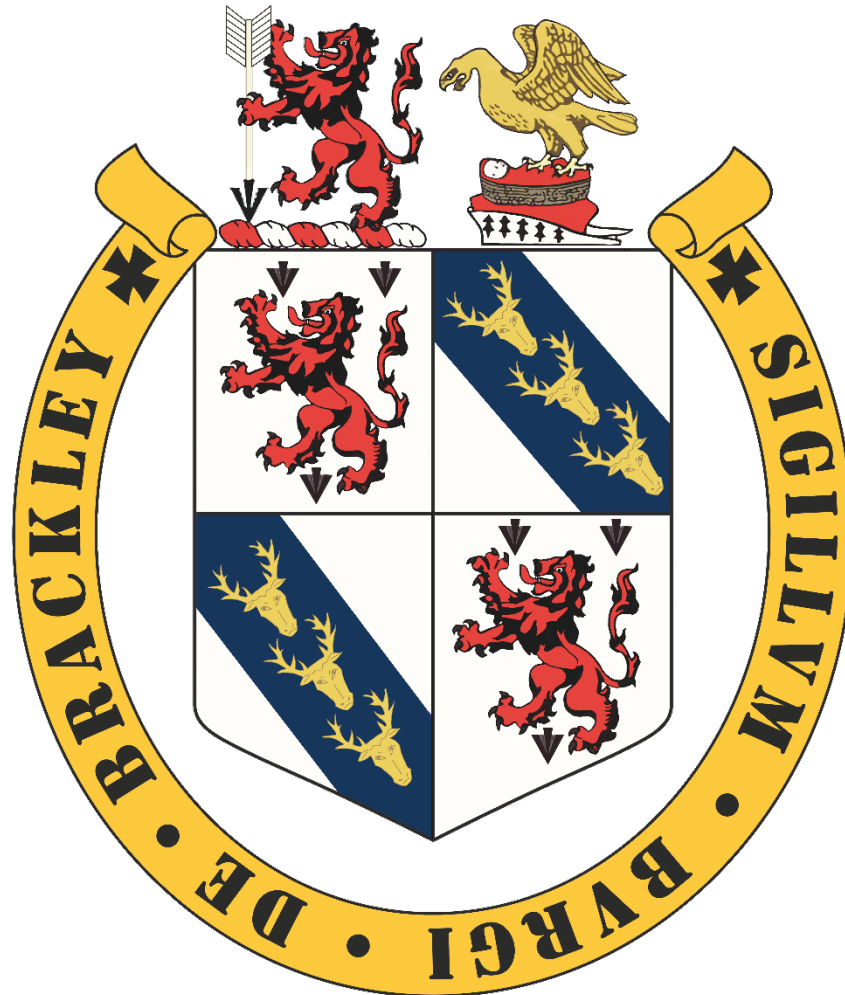


# BRACKLEY TOWN COUNCIL



## AGENDA & MINUTES

For the consideration of the Meeting

To be held on

Monday 3 February 2025



**BRACKLEY TOWN COUNCIL**

20 High Street, Brackley, Northants, NN13 7DS

Telephone: (01280) 702441

[www.brackleynorthants-tc.gov.uk](http://www.brackleynorthants-tc.gov.uk)  
[town.clerk@brackleynorthants-tc.gov.uk](mailto:town.clerk@brackleynorthants-tc.gov.uk)

To: All Brackley Town Councillors

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of **Brackley Town Council**, to be held on **Monday 3 February 2025** at the Town Hall. Meeting at 7.05 pm.

29 January 2025



Town Clerk

**AGENDA**

***Members of the Press and Public are invited to attend***

**365/24 Apologies for Absence**

**366/24 Town Mayor's Announcements**

**367/24 Public Participation**

The meeting is open for the public to address the Council on matters relevant to its business. The session will last for a maximum of 15 minutes with any individual contribution lasting a maximum of 3 minutes. Members of the public should address their representations through the Chair of the meeting. Please state your name and address before asking your question.

**368/24 Declarations of interest**

Members are asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests in items on the agenda, **and the nature of that interest**, in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, the Brackley Town Council Code of Conduct and Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

**369/24 Approval of Minutes**

To receive and, if accepted, approve the minutes of the meeting of Council on Monday 13 January 2025.

**Recommendation** – to approve the minutes of the meeting of Council on Monday 13 January 2025.

**370/24 Committee Minutes**

To receive the following approved Committee minutes:

Planning & General Works 16 December 2024 and 13 January 2025

Direct Responsibilities 16 December 2024

Finance & Policy 16 December 2024

**Recommendation** – to receive the Committee minutes en block

**371/24 Questions for Chairs Relating to Received Minutes**

To provide an opportunity for Councillors to ask questions relating to received minutes for committees of which they are not members.

**372/24 Unitary Council Representative** – if available.

**373/24 Appointment of Councillors for Monthly Payment Audit**

Two councillors are required to sign and approve the monthly payment audit following the next Finance and Policy Committee meeting or in the office on Tuesday 18 February between 10am and 2pm.

**374/24 Proposed Events 2025/26 - attached**

The proposed events calendar for 2025/26 is attached.

**375/24 Proposed Election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor Procedure and Mayoral Handbook – versions 2 attached**

Further to discussions at the last Full Council meeting, these two documents are presented to members again for consideration and approval

**Recommendation:** to adopt the new Election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor Procedure and Mayoral Handbook.

**376/24 Town Centre Task & Finish Group – attached**

Members are asked to receive the minutes from the Town Centre Task & Finish Group together with the Association of Town and City Management 2024 Review and 2025 Outlook Report and Town Centre Manager's Report.

**377/24 Consultation – Strengthening standards and conduct framework for local authorities**

Members are asked to consider and respond if they wish to the government's consultation on strengthening standards and conduct framework for local authorities in England. Please see <https://tinyurl.com/2p8xhnmy> for all the details.

**378/24 Matters for Discussion**

## BRACKLEY TOWN COUNCIL

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Minutes of **Brackley Town Council**, held on **Monday 13 January 2025** at the Town Hall. Meeting at 7.05 pm.

Present: Mayor – Cllr E Wiltshire  
Cllrs F Baker, C Cartmell, G Judd, J Kew, S Langford, S Manley, K Nash, B Tiller, A Watt, S Weaver, E Wiltshire, P Wiltshire and L Young.

Officers: Deputy Town Clerk and Estates Manager.

### 323/24 Apologies for Absence

Apologies received and accepted from Cllrs Bagot-Webb, King and Sharps

### 324/24 Town Mayor's Announcements

30 Nov Christmas light switch on, lantern parade and market  
7 Dec Coffee morning at College House, Brackley  
Brackley Care Home – opening their Christmas market  
USAF Embassy dinner at Chesterton Hotel  
Deputy Mayor opened Waynfilet School Christmas Fair  
Deputy Mayor Brackley Jubilee Choir Christmas concert  
8 Dec Provincial Masonic Christmas carol service, Peterborough Cathedral  
Deputy Mayor Brackley Christmas tractor run  
14 Dec NMPAT carol concert at Bracken Leas School  
17 Dec Christmas window judging in Brackley  
22 Dec Brackley Town Council Christmas carols on the square  
29 Dec Brackley Christmas car show

### 325/24 Public Participation

None.

### 326/24 Declarations of interest

None.

### 327/24 Approval of Minutes

On the proposition of Cllr P Wiltshire, it was **RESOLVED** to:

approve the minutes of the meeting of Council on Monday 2 December 2024.

### 328/24 Committee Minutes

On the proposition of Cllr Manley, it was **RESOLVED** to:

receive the Committee minutes en block

Planning & General Works 18 November 2024 and 2 December 2024

Finance & Policy 18 November 2024.

**329/24 Questions for Chairs Relating to Received Minutes**

None

**330/24 Unitary Council Representative****Cllr Baker**

We are working hard to get all-our schools involved in the Youth Forum project at WNC. This is an initiative for young people to put forward their views. Schools work with us to hear their concerns about what is happening in their area. These young people will meet with the member relevant to their concerns to give their views. They will also have the opportunity to visit a Meeting in Parliament.

We ran a pilot in Northampton, and we are now, I am pleased to say, including the other secondary school in our District. the first meeting for many schools takes place next week.

We are also running an awards scheme for schools on healthy eating. Today I visited Pineham Barns school to give the first level award to them. The children had done a lot of work on growing vegetables and herbs and using them in their cookery classes and having conversations with their meal providers to make meals healthier. Also coming up with ideas for exercise to keep fit.

We have a healthy eating team working with our primary schools to help them with ideas to be able to receive the awards.

**331/24 Appointment of Councillors for Monthly Payment Audit**

The two councillors to sign and approve the monthly payment audit in the office on Tuesday 21 January between 10am and 2pm are Cllrs Tiller and P Wiltshire.

**332/24 Approval of Budget**

On the proposition of Cllr Nash it was **RESOLVED** to:

approve the budget of £1,402,326 recommended by the Finance & Policy Committee and following the public consultation.

**333/24 Approval of Precept 2025/2026**

On the proposition of Cllr Young, it was **RESOLVED** to:

approve the precept request of £1,095,354 which equates to a Band D charge of £181.88 (an increase of 2.75%) and agree the completion and signing of the request to WNC.

**334/24 Proposed Election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor Procedure and Mayoral Handbook**

On the proposition of Cllr Kew, it was **RESOLVED** to

Make amendments, circulate it to all councillors and bring it back to Full Council in February.

**335/24 Matters for Information**

None.

**336/24 Exclusion of Press and Public**

On the proposition of Cllr P Wiltshire, it was **RESOLVED** that

in accordance with Section 1 (2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the public and press is excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the item set out below on the grounds that publicity would be prejudicial to the general interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

**337/24 Intruder Alarms – Egerton Hall and Town Hall**

On the proposition of Cllr Manley, it was **RESOLVED** to

Upgrade the intruder alarms at Egerton Hall and the Town Hall for £2,803.12 and agree that the expense will come from Capital.

**338/24 Purchase of New Tractor**

On the proposition of Cllr Kew, it was **RESOLVED** to

Purchase a New Holland T5s. 110 tractor.

Meeting Closed at 20:12

Signed:

Dated:





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Minutes of the **Planning & General Works Committee** held on **Monday 16 December 2024** in Brackley Town Hall, Market Place, NN13 7AB.

Present: Councillors Bagot-Webb (Chair), Kew, King, Langford, Manley, Nash, Weaver, E Wiltshire and P Wiltshire.

Officer: Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk

**304/24 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies received and accepted from Cllrs Baker and Watt.

**305/24 Declaration of interest**

None.

**306/24 Public participation**

None.

**307/24 Minutes**

On the proposition of Cllr P Wiltshire, it was **RESOLVED** to:

approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 December 2024

**308/24 Planning Applications**

Members considered the planning applications as outlined on the attached schedule. Comments will be submitted.

**309/24 Matters for Information**

Meeting closed 19.21

Signed:

**APPROVED**

Dated:

13/1/25

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Application Number	Closing Date	Location	Proposal	Town Council Comments
<a href="#">2024/5350/FULL</a>	25/12/24	4 Banbury Road Brackley NN13 6AU	Change of use from offices (Class E) to 2 no. flats (Class C3)	Strongly object. Detrimental to the neighbourhood. There is no parking provision for 2 flats. First floor should not be changed from commercial to residential in the town centre.
<a href="#">2024/5563/S73</a>	30/12/24	Land South Of Turweston Road Brackley	Variation of condition 1 Plans S/2017/0342/MAR(Reserved matters application pursuant to outline permission S/2017/0601/EIA (Variation of conditions to planning permission S/2011/0141/MAO (Residential development comprising up to 350 dwellings and access from Turweston Road (outline) (includes Environmental Statement) To seek approval for the rewording of some of the ecological conditions, and the removal of the outdated condition Code for Sustainable Homes)) to vary house types plots 1-75	Comment Can we clarify whether there is going to be a shortcut access for pedestrians to get onto Valley Road or the Turweston walk so that residents can get to the town centre quicker?
<a href="#">2024/5596/FULL</a>	1/1/25	Unit 3, Top Station Road, Brackley, NN13 7UG	Internal remodelling of light industrial / office units and new proposed two storey entrance to improve accessibility and approach. Alterations to existing façade inclusive of openings to replace roller shutters with glazed curtain walling. Resetting existing parking layout to improve efficiency and allow for accessible parking space inclusive of 3No Electrical Charging stations. Provision of covered cycle storage stand for 12No bikes. New proposed bin store and external landscaping. Proposed solar array to roof. 2No proposed canopies over accessible / goods entrances.	Support

WV 13/1/25

Minutes of the **Planning & General Works Committee** held on **Monday 13 January 2025** following in Brackley Town Hall, Market Place, NN13 7AB.

Present: Councillors Baker, Kew, Langford, Manley, Nash (Vice-Chair), Watt, Weaver, E Wiltshire and P Wiltshire.

Officers: Deputy Town Clerk

**339/24 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies received and accepted from Cllrs Bagot-Webb and King.

**340/24 Declaration of interest**

None

**341/24 Public participation**

None

**342/24 Minutes**

On the proposition of Cllr Manley it was **RESOLVED** to:

approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 December 2024

**343/24 Planning Applications**

Members considered planning applications as outlined on the attached schedule. Comments will be submitted.

**344/24 Matters for Information**

Appeal - 16 Buckingham Road – an application to which we gave considerable thought when we discussed it earlier in 2024. We had strong objections and this was supported by the Planning Officer – over-development of a small property.

Meeting closed at 20.37

Signed:  


Dated: 20/1/25

## BRACKLEY TOWN COUNCIL

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Application Number	Closing Date	Location	Proposal	Town Council Comments
<a href="#">2024/5611/FULL</a>		9 Rowan close Brackley NN13 6PB	Proposed single storey side extension, garden room, green house, porch extension with associated internal and external works	Support
<a href="#">2024/5770/FULL</a>	30/01/2025	The Croft Buckingham Road Brackley NN13 7EL	Demolition of garages and erection of two storey front / side extension and single storey rear extension	Support but regard needs to be give to the design guide in the Brackley Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. The property is adjacent to a conservation area.
<a href="#">2024/5669/ADV</a>		Poppyfields Way/Northampton Road Roundabout Brackley NN13 6RE	4 no. non-illuminated signs installed facing roundabout entrances	Strongly object. The roundabout is at one entrance into the town and does not reflect the market town. Too much of a distraction for drivers.

**APPROVED**

Copies of all council papers are available to download at: [www.brackleynorthants-tc.gov.uk](http://www.brackleynorthants-tc.gov.uk)

Minutes of the **Direct Responsibilities and General Purposes Committee** held on **Monday 16 December 2024** in Brackley Town Hall, Market Place, Brackley, NN13 7AB.

Present: Cllrs Cartmell, Judd, Kew, Langford, Manley, Sharps, Tiller (Chair), E Wiltshire, and Young.

Officers: Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk

**310/24 Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllrs Baker and Watt

**311/24 Declaration of interest**

None

**312/24 Public participation**

None

**313/24 Approval of minutes**

On the proposition of Cllr Kew, it was **RESOLVED** to:

approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 September 2024.

**314/24 Minutes of the Brackley Town Council Town Centre T&F Group**

On the proposition of Cllr E Wiltshire, it was **RESOLVED** to:

receive the approved minutes and to approve the recommendation as listed below:

Cllr Sharps and Cllr Young request approval to comment on behalf of BTC on the WNC new local plan consultation to propose keeping commercial properties as commercial properties in Brackley town centre, rather than allowing them to be changed to residential use.

**315/24 Matters for Information**

None

Meeting Closed: 19:32

Signed: 

Dated: 20.01.2025



Minutes of the **Finance and Policy Committee** held on **Monday 16 December 2024**, at Brackley Town Hall, Market Place, Brackley, NN13 7AB.

Present: Cllrs Bagot-Webb, Cartmell, Judd, King, Nash, Sharps, Tiller, Weaver, E Wiltshire, P Wiltshire and Young (Chair).

Officers: Town Clerk and Deputy Town Clerk

**316/24 Apologies for absence**

None.

**317/24 Declarations of interest**

Cllr E Wiltshire – Mayors expenses

Cllr Sharps – SNYE

**318/24 Public participation**

None.

**319/24 Approval of minutes**

On the proposition of Cllr Tiller, it was **RESOLVED** to:

approve the minutes of the meeting of the Finance & Policy Committee on Monday 18 November 2024.

**320/24 Finance reports**

On the proposition of Cllr King, it was **RESOLVED** to:

Receive and approve the finance reports en block.

- a) List of accounts for December Payment Schedule of £120,302.94
- b) Bank Reconciliation November 2024
- c) Balance sheet November 2024

**321/24 Second Draft Budget**

On the proposition of Cllr King, it was **RESOLVED** to:

approve the draft budget to enable public consultation via the Brackley Town Council website. The results of the consultation will be tabled at the Full Council meeting in January for the final approval of the budget.

**322/24 Matters for discussion**

None

Meeting closed: 19:44

Signed:

**APPROVED**

Dated: 20/01/2025

31st March 2023

31st March 2024

31st March 2023		31st March 2024	
<b>Current Assets</b>			
13,588	VAT Control A/c	13,989	
7,296	Prepayments	0	
2,110,298	Current Bank Accounts	2,761,512	
0	Creditors	1,883	
<b>2,131,182</b>		<b>2,777,384</b>	
<b>2,131,182</b>	<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>2,777,384</b>	
<b>Current Liabilities</b>			
15,312	Creditors	0	
3,163	Accruals	0	
650	Receipts in Advance 2023/24	650	
4,940	Receipts in Advance 2024/25	30	
1,000	Damage Deposits	1,400	
<b>25,065</b>		<b>2,080</b>	
<b>2,106,117</b>	<b>Total Assets Less Current Liabilities</b>	<b>2,775,304</b>	
<b>Represented By</b>			
297,387	General Reserves	719,607	
115,253	EMR - Town Hall	113,978	
183,314	EMR - Capital Projects	183,314	
69,982	EMR - Open Spaces	69,982	
348,025	EMR -Skate Park	73,332	
24,050	EMR - Town Centre	24,050	
21,200	EMR - Cemetery	21,200	
9,518	CIL	65,634	
40,000	EMR - Vehicle Costs	40,000	
57,913	EMR - WNC Toilet Refurb	57,621	
293,579	s106 - Radstone Central Park	235,435	
0	s106 - Foxhills Open Space	242,823	
20,482	s106 - The Glebe	13,932	
25,000	EMR - Egerton Hall	25,000	
20,000	EMR - Old Fire Station	11,586	
20,000	EMR - Public Toilets	20,000	
50,000	EMR - Office& IT Infastructure	23,362	
25,000	EMR - Events	25,000	
1,907	EMR - CCTV	1,907	
0	s106 - Foxhills	220,330	

**APPROVED**



Balance Sheet as at 31/12/2024

31st March 2023

31st March 2024

25,000	EMR Christmas Lights	9,665
1,677	EMR Brackley Flowerbeds	1,677
10,000	EMR The Loft	10,000
14,000	EMR Trees	14,000
432,292	s106 Cent.Park Play Equipment	432,292
539	s106 Turweston Road North	539
0	s106 Bronnley	4,569
0	s106 Foxhills LEAP	114,469
<hr/>		<hr/>
<b>2,106,117</b>		<b>2,775,304</b>
<hr/>		<hr/>

The above statement represents fairly the financial position of the authority as at 31/12/2024 and reflects its Income and Expenditure during the year.

Signed :  
Chairman

**APPROVED**

Date : 20/01/2025

Signed :  
Responsible  
Financial  
Officer

**APPROVED**

Date : \_\_\_\_\_

**Bank Reconciliation Statement as at 31/12/2024  
for Cashbook 1 - Current Bank Accounts**

<u>Bank Statement Account Name (s)</u>	<u>Statement Date</u>	<u>Page No</u>	<u>Balances</u>
Current Account - 00059916	31/12/2024		669,888.58
Treasurers Account - 26055660	31/12/2024		6,510.00
Capital Account - 25225068	31/12/2024		405.58
Deposit Account - 00228866	31/12/2024		2,084,693.97
			<u>2,761,498.13</u>
<b><u>Unpresented Payments (Minus)</u></b>		<b><u>Amount</u></b>	
21/08/2024 1286 Argos		-14.00	
			<u>-14.00</u>
			2,761,512.13
<b><u>Unpresented Receipts (Plus)</u></b>			
		0.00	
			<u>0.00</u>
			2,761,512.13
		<b>Balance per Cash Book is :-</b>	<b>2,761,512.13</b>
		<b>Difference Excluding Adjustments is :-</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b><u>Adjustments to Reconciliation</u></b>			
17/01/2024 BACS FuelGenie		0.00	
			<u>0.00</u>
		<b>Unreconciled Difference is :-</b>	<b><u>0.00</u></b>

**Signatory 1:**

Name L YOUNG ..... Signed [Signature] ..... Date 20/01/2025

**Signatory 2:**

Name ..... Signed ..... Date .....

## EVENTS CALENDAR 2025/26

Date	Event	Location/Time	Comments
23 April	St. Georges Day	Location: Piazza Time: TBC	
8 May	VE Day 80 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary	Location: Town Park Time: TBC	
TBC	Mayor Making (Civic)	Location: Town Hall Time: 12pm- 2pm	
6 August	Teddy Bear Festival	Location: Town Park Time: 10am-2pm	
17 August	Classic Cars in the Park	Location: Town Park Time: 11am-4pm TBC	
1 November	Fireworks	Location: St Johns School Field Time: 5:30pm -7pm	
9 November	Remembrance	Location: Town Centre Time: 2:45pm	
11 November	Armistice	Location: Town Centre Time: 11am	
15 & 16 November	Lantern workshops	Location: Fire Station or Egerton Hall	
29 November	Christmas Market, Lantern Parade and Light Switch on	Location: Town Centre Time: 3pm-7pm	
7 December	Christmas Tractor Run	Location: Town Wide Time: 6pm Set off	5 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary
21 December	Christmas Carols	Location: Piazza Time: 6pm	
28 December (TBC)	Christmas Classic Cars	Location: Piazza Time: TBC	



# **DRAFT**

**Election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor**

## **Policy for the Election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor**

### **Background**

The 1972 Local Government Act s7815 (2) requires that the first item of business at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council is to elect a Chair/Mayor for the municipal year.

The 1972 Local Government Act sch 12 para 7(2) in a year which is a year of ordinary elections of parish councillors, the annual meeting of a parish council shall be held on, or within 14 days after, the date on which the councillors elected at that election take office and in any other year the annual meeting shall be held on such date in May that the parish council may determine.

The current custom and practice at the Town Council is to pre-select the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. The election and installation take place at the Annual Meeting.

Traditionally the Deputy Mayor would step forward to become the Mayor and the election process would be for a new Deputy Mayor. If the Deputy Mayor is unable to take the position of Mayor, this policy sets out a revised process for the nomination of a Mayor Elect and Deputy Mayor Elect, and subsequent installation in both election and non-election years.

It is customary for the following criteria to be met when selecting the positions of Mayor and Deputy Mayor:

- Have served a full term as a councillor.
- Have an attendance record of 80% or above in the preceding year.
- Have not previously held the position of mayor.
- Preferably served as deputy Mayor in the preceding year.
- Preferably chaired a committee within the last two years.

In the event that no councillors meet these criteria, previous mayors may be considered based on the number of years since they last held the position.

The elected Mayor or Deputy Mayor are able to delay their appointment by one year due to personal or work commitments.

### **Nomination and Election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor**

#### **1 In a non-election year (see also section 6)**

- 1.1 At the meeting of full council held in March the outgoing Mayor will call for written nominations for the office of Mayor and Deputy Mayor.
- 1.2 Nomination will be by written submission, proposed and seconded by two members of the Town Council and countersigned by the nominee.
- 1.3 Completed nominations must be submitted to the Town Clerk within 7 days of the issue of the call for nominations which happens at the March Full Council meeting.

- 1.4 A special meeting of the Town Council will be held within 28 days of the issue of the call for nomination (the March Meeting) where the only items of business are to elect the Mayor-Elect and Deputy Mayor-Elect.
- 1.5 The Town Clerk shall circulate the names of the nominated candidates with the agenda.
- 1.6 The candidate achieving the clear majority (see voting below) will be nominated as Mayor at the Annual Meeting of the Council held in May. This will be the first item of business. The outgoing Mayor will Chair the start of the meeting. The election of the Deputy Mayor shall be the second item of business.
- 1.8 At the Annual Meeting of the Council in May, the successful candidate will sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office and take the chair for the remainder of the meeting.
- 1.9 There will be a Ceremonial Installation of the Mayor at a date to be arranged following the Annual Meeting of the Town Council.

**2 In an election year (where the Annual Meeting must be held within 14<sup>1</sup> days of the election) (see also section 7)**

- 2.1 As soon as possible after the elections, the Town Clerk will issue a call for written nominations for the office of Mayor to all councillors to allow sufficient time for the Annual Meeting of the Town Council to be held within 14 days. A schedule of dates will be issued in an election year (2025 schedule attached).
- 2.2 Nomination will be by written submission, proposed and seconded by two members of the Town Council and countersigned by the nominee.
- 2.3 Completed nominations must be submitted to the Town Clerk.
- 2.4 The Town Clerk shall circulate the names of the nominated candidates with the agenda.
- 2.5 The Annual Meeting of the Council will be held no later than fourteen working days after the election where the first item of business will be the election of the Mayor.
- 2.6 The successful candidate will immediately sign a Declaration of Acceptance of Office and take the chair for the remainder of the meeting.
- 2.7 There will be a Ceremonial Installation of the Mayor at a date to be arranged following the Annual Meeting of the Council.

**3. Voting**

- 3.1 Before the vote for each election:
  - 3.1.1 The proposer of each candidate shall be allowed to speak for up to three minutes, in alphabetical order of the candidate's surname.
  - 3.1.2 Each candidate shall be allowed to speak for up to three minutes, in alphabetical order of the candidate's surname.
- 3.2 Where there is only one candidate for a post, a vote shall be taken which will be by a show of hands as to whether to elect or not elect the nominated candidate.

---

<sup>1</sup> Working days include Saturdays but exclude Sundays and Bank Holidays

- 3.3 If the nominated candidate is not elected then the council will agree arrangements for a re-opening of nominations, allowing at least 48 hours for candidates to be nominated in accordance with the process outlined above.
- 3.4 Where there is more than one candidate for the post, the election will be carried out by recorded vote which will be by show of hands.
- 3.5 Where there are more than two candidates, the successful candidate must achieve a clear majority (of all councillors present at the meeting when the vote takes place excluding abstentions). Where there is no clear majority, the candidate achieving the lowest number of votes will withdraw and a second ballot held. This process will continue until there is a clear majority.
- 3.6 The casting vote of the Chair, usually the outgoing Mayor of the meeting, will settle a tie in votes.

#### **4. Nomination of Mayor During the Municipal Year**

- 4.1 The Deputy Mayor will take on the position of Mayor for the remainder of the year and the vacancy will be to fill the position of Deputy Mayor. If the Deputy Mayor is unable to take the position of Mayor, Para 4.2 will be followed.
- 4.2 Where a vacancy for the office of Mayor occurs during the municipal year, the process for the election of a new Mayor will be in accordance with this policy except that the timetable shall run from the date of the vacancy rather than of the election.
- 4.3 The Deputy Mayor will assume the responsibilities of the role of Mayor and chair the election of the Mayor which will take place as the first item of business at the next meeting of Brackley Town Council.

#### **5. Nomination of Deputy Mayor During the Municipal Year**

- 5.1 Where a vacancy for the office of Deputy Mayor occurs during the municipal year, the process for the election of a new Deputy Mayor will be in accordance with this policy except that the timetable shall run from the date of the vacancy rather than of the election.



## **6. Schedule for Non-Election Year**

March Full Council Meeting – call for written nominations for the office of Mayor and Deputy Mayor

Within 7 days of March meeting – completed nominations to Town Clerk

Within 28 days after March meeting – special meeting held to elect Mayor-Elect and Deputy Mayor-Elect

Annual meeting in May – Mayor and Deputy Mayor elected.

Ceremonial installation of Mayor at a date to be arranged following the annual meeting.

## **7. 2025 Election year schedule for the election of Mayor and Deputy Mayor**

1<sup>st</sup> May – Election Day

5<sup>th</sup> May – Bank Holiday

6<sup>th</sup> May – Election results day

6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup> May – New Councillors to sign Declarations of acceptance of office

8<sup>th</sup> May – VE Day

12<sup>th</sup> May – Nominations call and committee member requests

13<sup>th</sup> May – Close nomination window

14<sup>th</sup> May – Annual Meeting of the Council agenda issued

19<sup>th</sup> May – Annual Meeting of the Council plus committee meetings. The Annual Meeting of the Council will be adjourned after the selection of committee membership as usual, then the Committee meetings will be held. On the 2<sup>nd</sup> June the continuation of the Annual Meeting of the Council will take place.

24<sup>th</sup> May – Celebration of the election of the Mayor

26<sup>th</sup> May – Bank Holiday

2<sup>nd</sup> June – Continuation of the Annual Meeting of the Council

***Note – these dates may be subject to change due to uncertainty of the results being issued by WNC and the possibility of an additional Bank Holiday for VE Day.***



# DRAFT

**Mayoral Handbook**

## **1. Introduction**

The Mayoral Handbook has been produced to assist the Mayor and Deputy Mayor in understanding their role and responsibilities and provide some useful information which may be of assistance when undertaking civic duties.

The handbook is intended to be used as a guide to assist Mayors and council employees to apply a consistent approach when dealing with civic functions. Not all eventualities will be covered by this handbook; however, assistance is always available from officers.

## **2. Background – Town Mayor**

Section 245 (6) of the Local Government Act 1972 gives Parish Councils the power by resolution to allow themselves the title of Town Council and the Chairman of a Town Council is entitled to the title of 'Town Mayor'.

A Town Mayor has the same rights and duties as a Parish Council Chairman. The office and leadership role of Town Mayor must be respected by all members of the Council.

## **3. The Importance and Role Of Town Mayor**

The Mayor, as First Citizen of the town, should act as a focal point in times of crisis, tragedy or triumph. The history of Mayoralty is important because it is the one well known and continuous factor in people's experiences. The power of the Mayor has undoubtedly reduced throughout the centuries, but the Office continues to have a central part to play in modern Local Councils and modern society and part of this role is as a result of the traditions it inherits.

The Mayor represents the town as a whole and the Office is held in deep respect. The Mayor should adopt an impartial role in discharging the duties of the Office and be scrupulously fair in conducting business at formal meetings of the Council.

The Mayor, by virtue of the Office, can use their position to stimulate community pride, encourage business, promote the voluntary sector and encourage social cohesion. A Mayor also has the responsibility of attending a considerable number of meetings of Council, with dignitaries and other engagements and is in the public eye for the whole year.

The Mayor is the ambassador of the Town and can help in the promotion of the Council's objectives in the local community. They should use their influence and standing in the role to stimulate community pride, encourage business, and promote the voluntary sector.

The Town Council has certain expectations of the Mayor during the Civic year:

- That the Mayor is appointed to serve the people of Brackley
- That the Mayor is the figurehead and public face of the Town Council

The role of Mayor does not confer any powers to be exercised other than those of a Town Councillor. During the civic year the Mayor will be asked to support a wide variety of events throughout the Town Council area.

#### 4. Deputy Mayor's Role

The Deputy Mayor will be expected to attend all the annual Civic functions and chains of office should be worn as appropriate. As a general rule the chain of office should be worn at all the major annual Civic events and when the Deputy represents the Mayor at official engagements. However, at all other events/receptions attended by the Mayor in an official capacity the Deputy Mayor's chain of office should not be worn unless they have been specifically requested to do so by the Mayor.

The Deputy Mayor will deputise for the Mayor at those functions which the Mayor is unable to attend. All invitations will be sent to the Mayor initially and if they are unable to attend, they must advise the Officers who will contact the Deputy Mayor with a request that they attend a particular function.

The Deputy is also an ex-officio on council committees.

Under normal circumstances, the Deputy Mayor will be required to provide their own transport for attending functions and be responsible for their chain of office. If the Mayor is not present at a Full Council meeting, the Deputy will preside. In effect, the Deputy has no standing as a Deputy Mayor when the Mayor is present but assumes the precedence and standing of the Mayor when they are deputising for the Mayor.

#### 5. Is Being Mayor Right For You?

For those chosen or thinking of putting themselves forward, being Mayor is different from being a Councillor; it has different rules, different working hours, different restraints and is a physically and mentally tiring job. It can, however, be a hugely enjoyable and rewarding role.

Councillors should consider the following factors:

**Effect on Family and Friends** - The Mayor will inevitably be "out of the house" more than an ordinary Councillor and often at unsocial hours. A Mayor's social life is disrupted and supplanted with a new social life not of their making and thus keeping up with their own interests and friends may prove more difficult.

**Effect on Career/Job** - Careful discussions will need to take place with the Mayor's employer, if appropriate, to ensure a good balance is maintained. Some employers make provision for leave for employees fulfilling a public role.

**Effect on Political Career** - The Mayor is traditionally neutral and steps back from politics for the term of Office. That is not to say they do not have a vote in Council - they continue to play a role in the decision making of the Council and in the event of an equity in voting are expected to exercise their casting vote.

**Effect on Personal and Religious Beliefs** - As Mayor, a Councillor represents all sections of the Council, not merely those who support a particular political, social or religious view. It is the role of the Mayor to acknowledge, celebrate and support diversity in the area. A Mayor will be invited to institutions they are politically opposed to, and church services opposed to their own religious beliefs. It must be remembered that the Office of Mayor belongs to the public and not the individual that occupies it.

**Pomp and Ceremony** - Some Mayors will feel uncomfortable with the formality of the traditional Office of Mayor. There are Chains of Office to wear and numerous protocols to follow. The public may expect such trappings of Office. Mayors should operate within such constraints but should not be afraid to add their own personality and flair to the proceedings.

**Effect on Non-Councillor Interests** - The Mayor, as they do in their capacity of Councillor, must act within the Code of Conduct and as such must be conscious of their private activities and any potential impact they might have on their public role.

**Effect on Mayor's Partner** - The Consort will be expected to play a full part in the Mayoral Role. It must, however, be stressed that whilst a Councillor is in politics because they want to be, it may be difficult for their partner to be pushed into a public role.

**Mayor's Relationship with other Councillors** - The Mayor is amongst, but separate from, other Councillors. They will spend less time on Committee work and there may be some loss of "political" contact. Senior members will undoubtedly seek the Mayor's help in promoting Council initiatives and as such they are likely to see a wider cross-section of Council work than before.

**Mayor's Relationship with their Constituents** - The Mayor is still a Councillor, and their constituents will still need help.

The Mayor should undertake the following duties:

- Attending and chairing Town Council meetings. The Town Mayor can attend all other meetings of the Town Council and is ex-officio.
- Being the figurehead at Town Council organised events.
- Attending events and functions within Brackley, organised by other organisations and bodies.
- Attending events and functions outside of the Town Council area organised by other organisations and bodies.
- Giving a monthly report on their activities to each meeting of the Full Town Council.
- Acting as host on behalf of the Town Council at civic functions.
- Undertaking official openings and presentations.

## **6. Mayoral Skills**

If you consider yourself suitable for the position of Mayor, there are certain skills that are required to carry out the role effectively.

### **Leadership**

- Advanced ambassadorial skills to be able to represent the Council in a variety of settings.
- Mentoring the Deputy Mayor.
- Ability to lead civic ceremonies, promote the civic role and encourage community participation.

- Ability to carry out the role with dignity and gravitas, affording the office of Mayor respect.

### **Chairing**

- Advanced chairing skills, in order to manage the business of Full Council meetings.

### **Organisational Skills**

- Ability to plan and prioritise meetings / events and entrust engagements to the Deputy Mayor.
- Team Working and Relationship Building
- Ability to build strong, effective relationships between the Council, its partners and communities.
- Ability to act with political neutrality.
- Tact, diplomacy and the ability to mediate and broker agreement across political groups.

### **Communication**

- Ability to communicate the Council's messages and themes out into the community and to work towards achieving the council's social, economic and environmental aims.
- Advanced listening and public speaking skills and basic speech-writing skills

### **Knowledge**

- Advanced knowledge of the civic role and responsibilities and the Council's Code of Conduct and constitutional arrangements and Standing Orders.
- Advanced knowledge and understanding of the customs and beliefs of different cultural groups which make up the diverse community of the Council area

## **6. Formal Address Of The Mayor**

The full title of the Mayor is The Mayor of Brackley, Councillor (Name) or The Mayor of Brackley. The positions of 'Mayoress' and 'Mayor's Consort' are not recognized by statute. They are usually the partner of the Mayor, although they can choose any person they wish to act in that capacity.

## **7. Preparing For The Role**

**Be committed** - There can be a heavy time commitment. You will be spending a considerable amount of time on council duties.

**Get your family behind you** - Recognise the likely impact on those close to you, especially your partner, children and/or any family member you have chosen as your consort/escort.

**Get advice** - Talk to the outgoing Mayor and previous incumbents about anything and everything to do with the role. They will each have their own tips for survival.

**Check and practise your skills** - The role requires a different mix of skills from those of a general councillor, particularly in terms of self-presentation and public speaking. Recognise your shortcomings and get some practical training if you think you need it.

**Talk to your Officers** - They are there to help you and can advise you on most aspects of the role. Invest some time early on in building good working relationships with the mayoral support staff in particular. They will be crucial to your success.

**Read the Mayor's Handbook** - It will contain detailed guidance on issues such as the role, protocols, appropriate clothing, and giving and receiving gifts. This is essential preparation.

**Attend events that the current Mayor is attending Watch closely** - Think how you would handle the situation, and what changes you would make to be effective and create the right impression.

**Start distancing yourself from controversial matters** - Once you are Mayor you will need to be outside of party politics and non-partisan when chairing meetings. Don't take on the role if you are not prepared to be apolitical for a year.

## **8. Support For The Mayor**

The Deputy Mayor will support the Mayor throughout the year by representing the Council when the Mayor is unavailable or has another engagement.

Day-to-day administrative support for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor is provided by the Officers of the Council. The Admin Officer will deal with invitations for the Mayor to attend various functions. The Mayor will inevitably receive some invitations directly, which should be passed to the office for attention.

The contracted duty for the Clerk to attend Civic events covers – Remembrance, Mayor Making, and Full Council meetings. The requirement does not extend to Civic Dinners, Burns Night Suppers, or any other event that the Mayor may choose to put on.

The Mayor can use/book the BTC venues free of charge for such events, subject to them being available, though the Mayor does not have precedence in booking the venues if they are already booked out.

The Mayor is responsible for the setting up and clearing away of any venue used to host an event and BTC staff should not be used for this purpose.

The Mayor is responsible for making posters advertising their Fundraising events, and posting these on the Mayor's Facebook page, BTC comms will then share this information on the Town Council Facebook page if appropriate.

## **9. Dietary Requirements**

The Mayor should inform the Clerk of any dietary requirements, such as vegetarian and/or diabetic.

**Dress Code** The Mayor should look smart and well-groomed at all engagements.



## **10. Political Activities**

The Mayor's role is apolitical; political points should not be made. The Mayor should not attend any political gatherings in their capacity as Mayor and no reference to politics should be made during conversation or during speech. Your political colleagues should support you in this and respect your neutrality, enabling the office of Mayor to be seen as 'above politics'.

## **11. Mayor's Allowance**

The Mayor has a budgeted allowance to meet the expenses of the office (LGA1972, ss15 (5) and 34 (5)). The Local Government Act does not stipulate the type of category of expenditure for which the Mayor may use the allowance. However, it is commonly described to recompense for the expenses of their office:

General Expenditure items – associated with their roles:

- Clothing
- Donations to charities (including without attending events)
- Collections
- Personal hospitality (including lunches and dinners)
- Cost of tickets for the Mayor and consort
- Mayor Making expenses
- One-off events held by the Mayor

It is important that the purpose to which the allowance is put can withstand public scrutiny. Much of it will be used for hospitality.

This expenditure is reimbursed to the Mayor on the presentation of a completed expense form and receipts where possible.

The Deputy Mayor's Allowance follows the same guidelines and is there to ensure that the Deputy Mayor can carry out the duty of Deputy Mayor.

## **12. Civic Costs - £5000**

This is used for the following:

- Past Mayor's medals
- Mayor Making Buffet
- Remembrance Day costs
- Armistice Day costs
- Christmas Carols
- Christmas Cards and postage
- Official photographs during the year
- Civic regalia costs
- Any other town civic event-related costs in the year

### **13. Fundraising events**

During the Mayoral year, it is traditional for the Mayor to put on fundraising events during their term. These events must be self-funding and not financially supported by the Mayor's Allowance or the Civic Costs budget.

In the unlikely situation that a proposed event fails to sell enough tickets to cover the entire cost of putting the event on, the event cannot go ahead.

Any money raised must first be used to cover the cost of the event, any money left over then goes into the Mayor's Fundraising Account.

Any money raised in buckets at events must be presented to the Finance Officer as soon after the event as is practical. Finance Officers will then count and collate these funds and bank as quickly as possible.

### **14. Civic Insignia And Use Of Mayoral Chains**

The Mayor's chain is the outward sign of the Civic Office held, and The Mayor should wear the chain at ceremonial occasions, such as the Civic Service, Remembrance Day etc. The Mayor may also wear the chain, when officially invited as Town Mayor, to external functions.

#### **Civic Regalia – Guidelines for Safekeeping:**

- **Council's Responsibilities** - The Council will maintain insurance cover for all civic regalia.
- **The Mayor's Responsibilities** - The Mayor must ensure the specific conditions of the Council's insurance are followed as outlined in the guidance below; and as far as is practical follow the other guidelines as to the safe custody of the regalia. The Mayor is responsible for the maintenance of the regalia including any damage or wear and tear, etc.

The chain would normally also be worn at functions outside of the Town Council area when invited in an official capacity. Permission is required from the Mayor or Chairman of a principal or Parish/Town Council to wear the chain in that Council area. There are some exceptions to this, such as where an official invitation specifies that chains should be worn.

#### **Other Practical Measures**

- The chains, unless being worn, should be kept in the case provided by the Council.
- The chains should not be left unattended in their case and should not be left in an unlocked vehicle.
- The chains should not be cleaned with anything other than with a soft cloth. Any damage or wear and tear should be reported to the Town Clerk's office as soon as possible.
- Chains should not be loaned or placed in the custody of any other person other than the Town Clerk.

- The Mayor and Deputy Mayor should inform the Town Clerk's office immediately if their Chains of Office are lost, mislaid, stolen or otherwise missing in order that the Council's insurers can be informed.

## **15. Mayor's Events**

The Mayor receives invitations to a range of events and every invitation is considered equally. If the Mayor cannot attend a function, the Deputy Mayor is asked to attend on behalf of the Mayor.

### **Annual Civic Service**

This is usually organised by Officers of the Council in consultation with the Mayor and marks the completion of the Mayor's year of Office.

The format of the Service is entirely for the Town Mayor to decide but must be within budget and held within the parish boundary. Civic dignitaries from the Council's designated list together with leaders from local community groups, organisations, colleagues, friends and family should be invited.

### **Remembrance Day Parade & Service**

The Mayor is expected to attend the Remembrance Day Parade and Service on Remembrance Sunday.

## **16. Gifts And Hospitality**

When the Mayor attends an event to which they have been invited they may be presented with a token of appreciation – often in the form of a bouquet of flowers. According to the Code of Conduct, any such gifts that have a value of more than £25 must be reported to the Town Clerk.

## **17. Council Meetings**

Annual Parish Meeting - This is separate to the Annual Meeting of the Council. It is a legal requirement that all Parishes in England hold an 'Annual Parish Meeting' to which all local electors are entitled to attend. It must be held between 1st March and 1st June each year and must start no earlier than 6.00pm.

**Full Council Meetings** - The Mayor has a number of statutory functions to undertake as set out below:

- If present at Town Council meetings, they must chair the meeting. (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12, paragraph 5 (1)).
- Has a casting vote in the event of a tie in any voting at a Town Council meeting.
- Should ensure, together with the Town Clerk, that the Council makes legal decisions.
- Has a duty to ensure that the items on the Agenda are properly followed.
- If the Mayor is not present at a Council meeting, the Deputy Mayor should preside.

## **The Basics**

Legally, the primary duty as Civic Mayor is to act as chairperson in presiding over meetings of their Full Council. In this role, you must ensure the proper conduct of meetings in compliance with both the law and the Council's own Standing Orders and procedural rules.

The Mayor is also required to:

- Decide whether or not to call an extraordinary meeting of the Council in line with Standing Order (6).
- Exercise, if they wish to, a 'casting' vote at Council in the event of an equal vote on any issues.
- In the role, they will be advised by the Council's Clerk or Deputy Clerk.

## **Importance of the Chair**

Committee meetings are a mainstay of the political management process, and it is the chair's job to ensure that the business of the council is conducted effectively in the council chamber.

There are no hard and fast rules about how to chair a council meeting. The approach the chair takes and the style they adopt will depend largely on the nature of the meeting, the people involved and their own personality.

Chairing council meetings can sometimes be a demanding process because of the personalities involved. People respond in different and sometimes unpredictable ways when trying to convince others of their point of view, particularly when this is overlaid with the essential politics of local government.

Arguments are common and conflict is not unusual. Recognising that people often behave differently in committees can help the Mayor, tactically, to be more effective in chairing meetings.

Much of this role is about watching and listening to group behaviour and using their own judgement about when to intervene and when to sit back as discussions unfold and people exchange views or come into conflict.

## **Effective Chairing**

Effective chairing provides for clear leadership and direction, ensuring that discussions are held within some framework for debate, that is based on an agreed agenda and adhering to established ground rules, Standing Orders and the ethical governance framework of the Council.

It results in debates which are focused and balanced, involving discussion from all members who wish to articulate a view, particularly where conflicting opinions are being expressed. Enabling decisions to be reached, allowing members to agree on the way forward and any further action that needs to be taken.

Effective chairing also contributes to team working, allowing members to build rapport and contribute to committee discussions. This can often help to inform, unite and inspire people. Ensuring that resources are used effectively, saving time and energy and allowing information, views and evidence to be gathered in an efficient and timely manner.

### **Chairing Council Meetings:**

Be seen to be apolitical - Be firm, but fair to all sides. Look in all directions when inviting contributions and note who is waiting to speak.

Know your Standing Orders - Know them without having to look them up, particularly those related to the rules of debate, motions, seconders, amendments, voting, points of order and personal explanations.

Keep to time - Be punctual, stick to the agenda and don't let individual members 'hijack' the debate.

Be attentive to the subject under discussion

Prepare well and read the agenda papers thoroughly. Know what the 'hot topics' are and the points of likely contention.

Have pre-meetings with officers

Get to know what is really going on behind the scenes so that you can distance yourself from the contentious issues.

Be human

Keep calm, remain tolerant and be polite. Facilitate, don't dominate.

Use the support available

Ask for the advice of your officers if you feel exposed.

### **18. Chair's Additional Responsibilities**

The Council's Policies and Procedures (including Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, Scheme of Delegation) provides for the instances when the Mayor exercises functions in addition to that of other members. These include the following:

- The Town Mayor should be consulted on the content of the agenda (as the legal signatory, the Clerk has the final say).
- Motions on the agenda shall be considered in the order that they appear unless the order is changed at the discretion of the chair of the meeting.
- The Chair of the Council may convene an extraordinary meeting of the Council at any time.

## **19. Dealing With The Press And Media**

The press will frequently ask the Mayor or Deputy Mayor to comment on issues. The Mayor, as Chairman of Council, should only speak on behalf of Council on issues that have been discussed by Council. If the matter has been discussed, the Mayor is at liberty to divulge that which Council has resolved but no more. As Chairman of Council, by inference, it appears that the Mayor speaks on behalf of the Town Council, which indeed they should, on ratified issues carried by a majority vote.

It may be helpful to remove the word 'I' from any statement to the Press. If the word 'I' is removed, it must be replaced with either 'we' or 'Council', which focuses the mind and reminds the Mayor that they are issuing a statement not as themselves, but as the representative of Council.

Reference should be made to the Communications Working Group, who issues press releases on behalf of the Town Council. Requests from the press or other media for an oral or written comment or statement from the Council, its Councillors or staff should be handled in accordance with the Council's policy in respect of dealing with the press and/or other media.

### Handling the Media

- Don't respond to press calls that come out of the blue. Ask for background information and a deadline, then respond when you have prepared your answer.
- Think of key messages and good, punchy quotes you can give to the media.
- Don't point the finger, complain or consistently say 'no comment'. This could give you a bad reputation.
- Build a long-term relationship with the media. For example, write letters and suggest news stories.
- Don't use jargon or council-speak, and don't use inflammatory words – these might come back to haunt you.
- Act quickly and have a consistent approach to media enquiries. Be honest, concise and helpful.

## **20. Interested In Becoming Mayor?**

If, after considering the information within this Handbook, the role of Mayor is something that interests you and you would like to put yourself forward for, you are encouraged to speak to your fellow Councillors, the current Mayor and the Town Clerk regarding the role. They will be best placed to offer you guidance and answer any questions you may have.

# AGENDA

## Brackley Town Council Town Centre Task & Finish Group

Meeting held Thursday 16 January 2025 17:30  
in Brackley Town Council Offices

Group members: Cllrs F Baker, J Kew, S Sharps, B Tiller, E Wiltshire, L Young, and Samantha Hosking, Town Centre Manager (TCM)

### 1. Apologies

Apologies received and accepted from Cllrs Baker, Sharps, Young  
Cllr Tiller was voted in as chair.

### 2. Approve previous Minutes – 26 September 2024

**Trails** – there used to be quite a good history trail with a guidebook. Walking tours have been done before. Cllr Tiller will see if he can find it.

**Digital trails** – in Northampton they are doing boards that link to the tour. It would be good to get the history society involved. Cllr Wiltshire will talk to Rosemary Leeper and ask her to contact TCM.

TCM is going to push the Heritage Open Days more and have more activities on for the weekend. Magdalen school would like to be involved this year and the TCM is going to approach the other schools. The days are being promoted through Northamptonshire Tourism Board.

**Gift card scheme** – this is no longer going forward as too expensive.

**Markets** - TCM would still like the contact details for the organiser of the food market from Cllr Sharps. There has been a food festival which BTC was involved with, but it was run by someone else. Cllr Tiller will facilitate a meeting with the organiser and TCM. TCM has a contact for a market trader who would be keen to help organise an artisan food market.

**Street Furniture** - TCM to ask Ali about BTC taking control of street furniture and benches.

Cllr Tiller has 2 wrought iron bench sides c1940s – TCM wonder if Men in Sheds will take them on to create new bench in High Street sponsored by Men in Sheds?

#### Approval of minutes: Cllr Tiller

**Actions:** Cllr Tiller to find history tour information and set meeting with food festival contact  
Cllr Wiltshire to speak to Rosemary Leeper  
TCM to approach other schools regarding Heritage Open Days, talk to Ali re street furniture and speak to market trader re artisan market  
Cllr Sharps to give contact details of organiser of food market to TCM

### 3. Current activities TCM update

**Christmas market** – 3 retail businesses took up our offer of a free stall. They did well and the other bricks and mortar businesses were happy with the footfall. The early entertainment worked well to draw people in. SNYE and the elf workshop worked really well.

**Christmas marketing** – previously discussed at the business forum and we had Facebook posts and flyers. The feedback was that we need to do this a bit earlier next year.

**Christmas shop window competition – the Mayor and Cllr Lister (WNC) and TCM judged the windows.** Men in Sheds made trophies.

**Next Business Forum** - the next one will be on Tuesday 11 February at 6.30pm in The Plough. All Task & Finish Group councillors welcome.

**Empty premises strategy** – TCM has met with the vacant premises specialist and they are getting some information together and liaising with landlords for interested parties. We need to keep a balanced mix of businesses in Town.

Vacant premises specialist suggested having retro Victorian style professional artwork signage on brickwork around Waitrose to let customers know antiques cellar is there. We need to really promote Antiques Cellar as this is a unique visitor attraction for Brackley.

**Car park opportunities** – land behind old gym is still for sale. WNC Car parks team have looked at it and have agreed that the site would be suitable however, it is dependent on cabinet and whether they can find the funds - is it a good use of public money and are we going to get enough spaces to make it worthwhile? There is also much resistance to charging for parking. TCM to keep pushing on this but obviously the longer it takes to find funds, the more likely it is to be sold. It was suggested that we ask our WNC councillors to push this forward.

**Association of Town and City Management** – TCM has had a couple of meetings where the discussions included town centre footfall, retail details and what was expected for 2025. The TCM will do a report and send it round to the Task & Finish Group members.

#### 4. Events for 2025

Markets – it was mentioned at the last meeting that farmers markets are on the decline – TCM suggests that we don't go for another regular one but do event markets more frequently.

Looking at BTC list of events – there are gaps in April, June/July and September. It would be nice to do spring event in April – not as big as Christmas market but something with artisan food traders or flowers? Thinking 5<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> as the schools will be broken up. Could be something that involves local organisations – choirs, Morris men, dancing etc. However, library are looking at Maypole and Morris Men too for spring.

TCM to look at something for easter – there is a company that will provide large eggs and a rabbit.

Brackley's Got Talent– Cllr Tiller happy to be involved again if required but not to do 5 weekends in a row as was very tiring. Ad hoc weekends and span it out a bit.

TCM – possible to book out TH should the weather be bad for the events.

St George's Day – Mayor is doing afternoon tea in the Town Hall. Could we get schools involved? Hobby horse jousting? Slaying the dragon?

Possible activity in summertime – a ball run – few towns that do it and there would be quite minimal organisation. Could have community groups involved.



## **5. Banking hub and additional town centre AT**

TCM applied to Bank Access UK and they refused a hub. We could go to appeal?  
TCM will contact Taylors Vets about having another cash point machine installed in the Lloyds building.

**Action** – TCM to do a report to council to see if they want to do an appeal.

## **6. Town Centre shop local campaign and web page brief**

TCM getting together a brief and a designer to come up for a brand for Brackley High Street marketing campaign. This image will then be utilised for all our marketing.

Couple of examples:

[Love Oundle | Oundle - A great place to live, visit & do business](#)

[Your local site for Daventry and the surrounding area.](#)

[Visit Henley | Official Town Guide for Henley](#)

TCM will get proposals together and take it to council.

**Action** – TCM to send proposals to Council once ready.

## **7. Piazza community use**

This had been mentioned at town council meeting – the charges are £100 for a weekday and £175 at weekends. But free for Community groups/activities. TCM could use it for free for community events. TCM would like to encourage Community groups to use the Piazza to provide activities that increase footfall and create vibrant atmosphere.

There was a suggestion about having a community picnic – we put table and chairs out and you are welcome to bring a picnic and spend the afternoon with friends.

TCM would like to investigate possibility of having a mock cattle market, opportunity to see farm animals and celebrate heritage of rural market towns. People loved the reindeer at the Christmas Market, there is a local Alpaca farm for example.

## **8. Visit to successfully regenerated town**

Not many local towns have been regenerated – one suggestion was Henley on Thames. Most of the others are Cotswold towns but they are destination towns.

Suggestion made that if councillors/staff are out in a town and like the look of something, please photograph it. If there is a shop/stall they would like to see in Brackley then pop in and ask them if they would like another shop in Brackley. This approach has worked well in Daventry.

Could Magdalen school be partly used as a museum? Is it worth having a conversation with school – although museums have to be volunteer run. TCM to mention to WNC Regeneration Team.

There is a possibility of having a business grant scheme – including shop frontage scheme. Through this scheme the Regeneration Team could have a look at The Crown and the outside of the building to make it better and at least not affect other businesses.

**9. Brackley branded reusable Coffee Cup**

Investigation is still going on. TCM wondered if we wait until we have the branding complete, but councillors agreed no and to proceed. Not plastic – bamboo or steel options.

It was suggested that the TCM also investigates providing branded shopping bags, similar to jute WNC Small Business Saturday bags.

**10. Any other business**

Cllr Kew mentioned that a member of the public had asked for an update of what has been happening since TCM in post. TCM to prepare a full report and send to Task and Finish Group for reference. And consider how best to report to keep members of the public informed.

**11. Date of next meeting**

Tuesday 18 March 2025 at 17:30

# ASSOCIATION OF TOWN AND CITY MANAGEMENT

## 2024 REVIEW AND 2025 OUTLOOK

### ATCM - Economic pressures will still affect town centres in 2025

- Increase in National Debt means tax revenue is servicing debt rather than going on services. All councils are facing difficult choices. Which means key town centre regeneration programmes will be challenged.
- Increase in cost of business borrowing caused by international conflicts and influences.
- Increase in Employers NI and changes to small business rate relief are of concern.
- Recent figures show UK economy has grown 0.1%, with pubs, restaurants and construction doing well.

### Andrew Goodacre, CEO BIRA – British Independent Retailers Association, Representing non-food retailers

#### Review Christmas 2024

High Streets were stronger than retail parks on Saturday before December 2024 and High Streets also did best during post-Christmas slumber. (MRI Software)

Black Friday more popular and is now Black November - affecting December sales. 2024 saw unusually high Black Friday discounts, but still not enough to 'save Christmas' and may mean more large store closures.

High Street in December, pre-Christmas visits were not to buy main presents but to meet friends, relax and for leisure e.g. Xmas markets. December 2024 footfall was affected by the stormy weather which cancelled many events.

#### Outlook for 2025

Retail has never been more challenging. Customers are buying food items, but consumer confidence/spend is still stark. Even with reduction in inflation and increase in salaries, customers still do not feel better off due to other significant price increases in necessary items such as car insurance.

There is evidence that people are saving more and spending less on retail due to continuing economic uncertainty and media presenting negative economic narrative.

We need to focus on the positives:

- The government are offering positive growth messages.
- A significant proportion of goods are still bought on the High Street.
- Even with reduced footfall, when customers are in town their intention to spend is higher.
- New Business Minister for Small Businesses confirmed there is a Labour plan to continue with High Street/Town Centre revitalisation focus.

Businesses are fearful of the changes in Business Rates and to Employer NI. However, not all businesses will be affected by increases in NI. A few will benefit from the increased Employment Allowance.

Small businesses are not price competitive; they trade on unique/quality offer. But if consumer confidence is low, increasing prices to counter business rates/NI costs could be the wrong way to go.

13,000 stores in UK closed last year, and we are expecting the same this year. However, many stores are being repurposed for other uses or broken down into smaller units.

Retail and hospitality are not growing **BUT independent retail IS resilient, creative and positive and will survive**. We do need the economy to pick up, 0.1% growth is not enough for consumers to feel good about spending.

**Marketing also needs to focus on positive message**, many campaigns since covid have been focused on Support the High Street. Businesses no longer need this message. Campaign messages must focus on the positives that local independents offer: **high quality, social/friendly, knowledgeable, local**. Also don't make consumers feel guilty about shopping online, the truth is everyone shops in a multiple of ways and will continue to do so.

#### Headline asks of High Street businesses to support them:

- Activities and markets in towns. However, Christmas markets are becoming samey so offer diverse/quality/unusual activities.
- Safe High Streets – reduce theft, rough sleeping, drugs, ASB.
- Clean, neat, tidy and well-kept streets – maintain and clean.

Well-presented businesses – all businesses need to take responsibility for how their premises are presented including clearing weeds and litter as well as refreshing paintwork and window displays. Don't expect councils to maintain everything outside your shop.

**Food and beverage draw people into High Streets and are the more dominant sector BUT you must also have retail to support hospitality too – these are interdependent businesses and need to work together.**

The natural change of order will lead to less retail as we have seen. Not due to government policy or lack of support – consumer behaviour is the player. High Streets were anchored by retail, now hospitality/leisure is the anchor, but retail still has an important role.

**Retailers need to integrate hospitality and leisure experiences into their businesses, e.g.:**

- Book Shop with café
- Gift Shop with craft lessons
- Bakers with cake making sessions
- Florists with flower arranging classes

**Examples in Brackley & Towcester**

- Beautifully Different private shopping evening with prosecco
- Hopping Hare Candle shop – candle and scent workshops
- Cre8 – Pottery shop pottery decorating parties
- Old Hall Bookshop – author speakers and book signings

Retail parks are not suffering from declining footfall and high vacancy rates. WHY?

Accessibility, convenience, brands, safety, choice, free parking. Little hospitality, yet people are shopping.

High Streets need to learn from that and be accessible, convenient, safe, with free parking.

**Richard Lim – Retail Economics**

We are through the worst of the cost-of-living crisis. Consumer confidence is improved but still challenging and remains a concern. Falling inflation does not mean falling prices everywhere. On average families are still paying 20% more on household bills than 2-3 yrs ago. Increases in wages haven't kept up.

**Online sales** have flatlined since pandemic with significant slowdown in penetration rate. Post pandemic came down to 26.9% and last 3 years have seen negligible increase. Customers don't like to pay for deliveries/returns. People often skip between in store and online. 49.7% of UK online sales rely on physical touch along the customer journey. Testing/feeling the item in store, then buying online. Stores are changing to utilise this, by installing digital ordering points and returns drop-off points in store. Using the stores for marketing their products.

**Generative AI** is influencing consumer choice. Conversational searches and summaries of reviews becoming popular. E.g. Google, Apple integrated AI looking at calendars, purchase history and making product recommendations.

**Social commerce** – with advertising on FB, Tiktok, Instagram, X, Snapchat. Retailers need to take advantage of these advances in technology.

**Growth of evening economy** – especially competitive socialising; indoor golf, electronic darts, bowling, sports events.

**Return to the office.** Many businesses are mandating a return to work and reduction in homeworking, which will affect the footfall in High Streets at lunchtime and after work.

**Physical retail 2025** – on localised High Streets there is a new mix of leisure, residential, hospitality - retail is not the gravitational pull. We need to curate a balanced High Street.

**Sustainability will be core to businesses** as we approach 2030 Net Zero goals. Circular economy, climate responsive pricing, preloved e.g. Vinted doing well.

Should retailers match hours to increase in evening hospitality to make the most of evening footfall? You would need to look at statistics for individual locations.

## **Town Centre Manager Report 20/01/2025 Town Centre Revitalisation Achievements and Ongoing Work**

### **EVIDENCE GATHERING AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

Since taking the post, the Town Centre Manager (TCM) has focused on identifying national High Street trends, understanding Brackley's unique challenges and engaging with key stakeholders. The TCM has collaborated with national organisations like the Association of Town and City Management and the High Street Task Force, sharing best practices and insights. Regular communication with other Town Centre Managers has also provided valuable lessons on various initiatives.

The TCM has gathered evidence through Brackley High Street Business forums, discussions with Brackley Town Council (BTC), local organisations, charities, and a public survey. This has helped identify key issues and the desired direction local people would like to see their town centre take.

The TCM has engaged with WNC teams to raise awareness of Brackley's High Street issues and to garner support and assistance with several initiatives which would require WNC funding or intervention. Examples include long stay car park feasibility study, new masterplan for Brackley Town Centre and collaboration with the Economic Growth & Inward Investment team for business funding, advice and tourism awareness.

### **COMMUNICATION, ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIP BUILDING**

#### **Businesses**

Improving communication between businesses in the town to provide peer to peer support, provide a network for communication with TCM and empower businesses to be engaged in the revitalisation process.

- Started business forum meetings.
- Start town centre business WhatsApp group for quick communication and sharing of ideas/information, (TCM to develop further with another group for Hospitality sector).
- Continually dropping in on businesses around the Town Centre to monitor issues.

#### **Landlords/Commercial agents**

The TCM has appointed a High Street vacant properties specialist to assist with contacting and building relationships with all commercial agents, landlords and their property managers.

- Building cooperative relationships with landlords and agents to improve the mix of town centre businesses.
- Successfully introducing potential tenants to landlords/agents.

#### **Community Organisations**

The TCM has met with several local organisations to seek their help with town centre events to increase footfall in the town centre and raise awareness of businesses. This partnership can be of mutual benefit, where the local organisation can also benefit from raising their profile and the event can be an opportunity to raise funds.

#### **Members of the public**

With growing pressures on town centre businesses and the effects of the pandemic in changing consumer behaviours it was suggested in a High Street business forum that we hold a town survey to understand the community's future use of the High Street. This was carried out in June 2024, the survey results have now been processed and the results are available for stakeholders. 734 respondents are a reasonable sample of the population, which can provide guidance in deciding on relevant initiatives to revitalise the High Street. The results will be taken into consideration alongside research, costs and best practice advice. The results

can also be shared with businesses and landlords showing when customers want to be in town, at what times and what they would like to see provided.

**Brackley Town Council**

Engage with Brackley Town Council to understand key areas for improvement, be aware of ongoing issues and background knowledge and keep the Town Council updated on initiatives and progress. Meetings with the Town Centre Task & Finish group will be more frequent.

**MARKETING AND AWARENESS**

- Simple 'shop local' advertising included in Town Talk and Life in Brackley magazines and on banners/posters around town. Using the TCM Facebook page to connect with other Brackley Facebook groups with High Street news/events/shop local messaging.
- Raising awareness of Brackley High Street's needs internally within WNC across a number of teams and directorates, as well as working with WNC comms to promote Brackley wherever possible.
- Currently developing a High Street Campaign brand and message with potential for a High Street webpage promoting High Street businesses, activities and heritage.



'Discover Brackley Gems' Marketing with Flyers/Posters and a series of Social Media Posts highlighting businesses on the High Streets with images of their Christmas stock. Encouraging people to think local for Christmas gifts, foods, treats, meals and pampering.

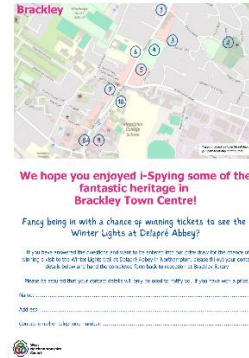


**ACTIVITIES/EVENTS/MARKETS**

Events, music and activities are key to improving vibrancy and boosting footfall in town centres as well as providing entertainment and instilling positive community pride in the town. The TCMs intention is continue providing more similar events.



**Trails** encouraging families visiting the town centre to take part and providing entertainment through activities for both local people and visitors. The TCM has helped organise three trails and more will be planned.



**Brackley's Got Talent Event** was held every Saturday afternoon in August on Brackley Piazza showcasing local individual artists and groups of all ages. Coordinated by Town Councillor Bernie Tiller and the TCM, this was a community event providing a vibrant atmosphere which improved footfall to the town centre and engaged passers-by. Business owners have mentioned that the events brought additional customers into their businesses, and they saw higher spend. Approx. 75-120 people constantly milling around the town centre and watching the performances during the Saturday afternoons, which is usually a very quiet time for Brackley. The TCM received many positive comments about the events from residents and businesses, including from a dance company who were grateful for the opportunity to promote their small business while supporting the town centre. Therefore, the TCM will be looking to provide more events of this nature.



**Heritage Open Days** is a National Heritage event and is useful for improving awareness of the heritage of Brackley. The TCM contacted organisations around Brackley & Towcester to promote Heritage Open Days and encourage them to take part and prepared a town centre heritage trail. The intention will be to encourage even more participation in 2025. The TCM also organised a **Heritage Exhibition** at Brackley Town Hall involving the local History Society and re-enactors from Sealed Knot, and presented articles found in the Brackley Town Council archives. Visitors were engaged with the exhibitors and enjoyed browsing through archives and photographs.

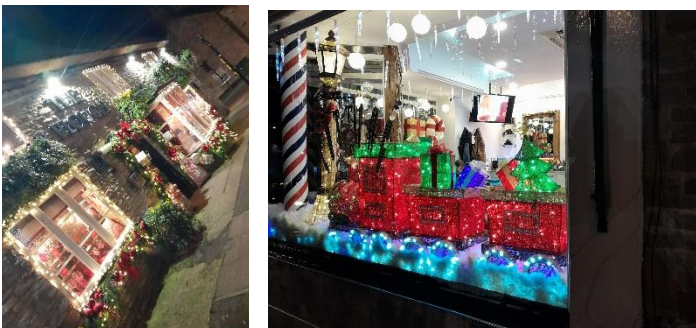




**Brackley Light Switch-on, Lantern Parade and Christmas Market** – Organised by Brackley Town Council. The TCM assisted by liaising with local businesses and requested adjustments to support the businesses by attracting more customers to them during the event. Local shops were given the opportunity to have a free stall on the market to signpost and promote their business, e.g. butchers sold cooked burgers and sausages from their shop; a new homewares shop brought their Christmas stock and advertised their new shop; a café owner sold hot chocolate and mulled wine on the market. Other shops were all open. The TCM also organised additional street musicians during the afternoon and a magician and worked with a local business and SNYE to provide an Elf Grotto with children’s activities. With the aim of encouraging people to stay in the town centre for longer.



**Brackley Shop Window Display Competition** – Cllr Lister and Cllr E Wiltshire (Brackley Mayor) joined the TCM in judging festive shop window displays in Brackley. The winners have been informed, and there will be a formal award photoshoot to help publicise those businesses very soon. The local Men In Sheds Charity have offered to make trophies for the Winners, thereby supporting their local town and raising awareness of their charity.



**Spring Town Centre Community Entertainment/Market:** Planned community activities and street entertainment tbc, possibly Saturday 5th April. This is early days for planning, suggestions welcome. A local market trader has offered to assist with inviting/organising ‘artisan’ market holders. Plus, local musician is happy to help organise street entertainment. The intention would be to hold community led activities on the Piazza and possible Burgess Square. TCM to start arrangements and contact community groups who might like to be involved and work with local businesses as well.



The TCM would also like to encourage businesses in town to decorate shop windows for Spring/Easter and consider getting involved in a Spring/Easter trail.

### **VACANT HIGH STREET PROPERTIES**

An issue for Brackley & Towcester, as for many UK High Streets, is long term vacant commercial properties in the town centre. There are a variety of reasons why this is the case, but there are opportunities for working with landowners and commercial agents to address barriers to re-leasing. To address this, a High Street vacant property consultant, Iain Nicholson from PRBI, has been appointed to work alongside the TCM in further developing positive working relationships with landlords and commercial agents, focusing on bringing commercial properties back on the market and actively seeking new businesses to fill these vacant spaces, whether that is long term tenants or meanwhile uses such as temporary community spaces and pop-up shops. The consultant started late October 2024 and will provide focus and expertise in this area for a year. Through discussions with landlords, we hope to encourage and influence a balanced mix of businesses within the High Street.

### **SUPPORT FOR LOCAL BUSINESS**

The TCM is also continuing to provide 1-1 support for businesses moving into the town by signposting them to WNC partners for start-up business advice and training, as well as helping to put potential businesses in touch with landlords.

Liaising with WNC teams on behalf of businesses and where necessary expediting urgent issues.

### **BANKING/CASH ACCESS**

The TCM has been working on a Brackley Banking Hub Application – refused by Cash Access UK. But the TCM has encouraged Lloyds to hold their Community Banking team in the Brackley Town Hall office and encouraged Barclays Community Banking van to move from Sainsbury's to the Piazza, keeping banking services in the High Street.

The TCM is investigating possibility of locating a 24/7 Cashpoint back in the Town Centre. Nearest ATMs are based inside Waitrose, PO and Coop and so customers are reliant on their opening times.

### **FUTURE INITIATIVES**

There are plenty of additional initiatives which are being developed, some examples are permanent Heritage Trail (info boards and digital tour), improvements to street furniture, signage and public realm.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, please feel free to contact me:

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