

THATCHAM TOWN COUNCIL



ANNUAL REPORT

2022 - 2023

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Mayor of Thatcham Cllr Jeff Brooks

MAYOR'S REPORT

I am delighted to provide this report to the Town Council's Annual Report. It has been a year where life has returned to the normal state that we enjoyed before the pandemic began in March 2020. People have been able to come together and our events were fully reinstated and have been enjoyed by thousands of people. It has been very good to see people mixing again without fear and the necessary isolation of the Pandemic is, thankfully, a thing of the past.

There have been some positive changes in the way that we interact, and the Council has embraced technology that allows people to participate remotely by video and we are lodging these video recordings on YouTube – this has meant that the Council and its decision making is more accessible and the Pandemic accelerated that change. People are also more aware of their potential to transmit illnesses – not just Covid – and that is potentially more healthy for our community.

With the end of social distancing, we

were able to return to our ambitious events programme. The Mayor-making meeting was very well attended and I hope to continue to develop this as a major part of the Civic calendar.

We also enjoyed supporting many Groups who celebrated the Queen's Jubilee celebrations in early June. We began the Jubilee weekend with our Beacon lighting ceremony on Friday evening on Dunston Green. With schools contributing choirs, street entertainment and ending in an excellent firework display after the beacon was lit, a very good turnout marked the start of the celebrations in some style.



I personally attended 10 Street Parties over the weekend – simply turning up and wishing the residents a very happy afternoon – all my visits were appreciated and with the weather being kind everybody seemed to be enjoying themselves immensely.



By the end of August, I had attended or carried out 44 events in what had been a busy four months. Leading the Reading Pride march with other Berkshire Mayors on the 3rd September was a highlight and then we had the very sad and unexpected death of the Queen on the 8th September. We marked this with a well-attended event on the Broadway on 11th September where I read out the Proclamation of the ascension of our new King.

Part of the Mayor's role is to support any Charities that reach out to us and there have been many excellent events helping build the profile of ordinary people raising money for charities – often because of a personal experience involving illness or bereavement.

Later in June we held our Funday, and this was attended by several thousand people on a nice dry day at the Henwick Worthy field. We are adding more and more entertainment each year including a stage with musical entertainment which lifted the event this year. It was good to involve many different groups from our community including some of the asylum seekers who have been residing at the Regency Park Hotel. This event is a very firm fixture in our calendar as is the United Service of Remembrance held at the Cemetery on 17th July. This was particularly poignant for me as it would have been my Father's 100th Birthday and we visited his resting place after the service.



People like Sarah Jones who had her head shaved on the Broadway Green to raise money for Cancer Care, the excellent Mousefest at St Mary's Church, which I hope will return in years to come, and the Castle Pub, running a series of events to raise money for Newbury Cancer Care. I am supporting two Charities as the Mayor – Daisy's Dream and Thatcham Tornadoes – and they have been very active and a pleasure to work with.

Our Festival kicked off in mid-October and was chock full of exceptional events – entertaining, informative and involving. There were too many to list here and mentioning some may detract from others, but the 10-day festival takes a great deal of organising by our staff and all those people who take part. I attended 31 of the events and enjoyed them all – it gets harder to improve on the programme year on year, but our excellent events team always seem to manage it.

Also, in October I was extremely pleased to open our Jubilee Sensory Garden adjacent to the Town Council Offices in Brownsfield Road. This wonderful facility will provide a peaceful place where people who may have dementia or other issues can experience the joys of nature including fauna, vegetables and even a bug house! A very lovely area for the Town.

The pace of events was maintained though the autumn with our Remembrance Day parade back to its best and, again, the weather held for us.

The Christmas season kicked off with the lights switching ceremony and the Mayor's Carol service as well as several other invites to excellent events – I thank everybody for their invites which I have been delighted to take up.



The Mayor's role is multi-faceted but is best summed up, in my view, by the word accessible – to any/all people and groups that may wish to have a friendly supporter who can help them raise the profile of their cause and help provide the Community Leadership that is so vital in our thriving town.

The Mayor, of course, is simply the "front man or woman" – it is the Council staff who work so diligently to develop our events and deliver our services to the people of Thatcham. They are a pleasure to work with and I take great pride in their efforts and achievements led by our excellent Town Clerk, Mel Taylor.



Councillors also devote their time to support our residents and I am grateful to them all and especially Mark Lillycrop, who has been an excellent Deputy Mayor and Mandy Cole for being a fine Lady Mayor – teaching me the ropes that she is so familiar with as Lady Mayor to Cllr Mike Cole.



I look forward to celebrating the Coronation in the coming months and to unveiling my Legacy Tableau which consists of 45 scenes of the Queen's reign by exceptional Crafters across our Town and District.

It has been a privilege to be your Mayor and I am honoured to have represented the Council and our residents in over 140 events at the time of writing.

**Councillor Jeff Brooks,
Mayor of Thatcham 2022/23**

"Part of the Mayor's role is to support any Charities that reach out to us and there have been many excellent events helping build the profile of ordinary people raising money for charities."



Leader of the Council Cllr Lee Dillon

COUNCIL LEADER'S REPORT

Dear Fellow residents

As the Leader of the Town Council I am delighted to present our year-end report that makes up the following pages.

You will see the achievements and outcomes delivered by each committee and I want to give my thanks to our officers and councillors for their commitment. This year's report also sees the final year of the current administration with elections due this May.

The last four years have been one of the most challenging periods in local government history. We were proud to play our part with our targeted response during Covid, helping arrange food drops and prescription runs. Our grants process has helped groups recover too following loss of income when everything had to be shut down.

Those financial pressures from lack of bookings also impacted our council and this was made worse with the international fallout from the war in

Ukraine and the increase in energy costs and inflation affecting all our cost centres.

Despite those challenges we have still delivered our Council Strategy having listened to your concerns and put in place investment where it counts. This year and over the plan period we have seen the installation of fully accessible play equipment enabling all to enjoy our parks, we have made visible improvements to the Broadway Green, solar panels have been installed on our buildings, more wildflower planting has taken place and an enhanced grounds maintenance contract awarded- increasing litter picking in our hotspot areas.



Along with delivering projects, we have also been a strong voice for the Town. We have responded strongly with our concerns on the current Local Plan and in particular the Northeast Thatcham allocation of 1500 homes. A special thanks must go to Cllr Pike and Cllr Lister for their diligence and skill in bring together such a comprehensive response.

Thatcham Town Centre Strategy Final Draft



NEW masterplanning

urban

HemingwayDesign

We are also working with Master planners, local businesses, community groups and local sport bodies to enhance our town centre.

Our collection of civic events continues to be a success bringing the community together whether through a sole event like the Remembrance Sunday or all day events like the amazing family fun day and we are committed to these still for future years.

Councillor Lee Dillon
Leader, Thatcham Town Council



Recreation & Amenities Committee

Cllr Mark Lillycrop, Chairman

RECREATION & AMENITIES REPORT

The Recreation & Amenities Committee is responsible for the Town Council's public buildings and community centres, open spaces, recreation grounds, play areas, London Road Cemetery and St. Mary's Churchyard, as well as Henleys Allotments, the weekly market and a variety of street furniture around the town.

The Committee also oversees the Town Council's joint partnerships with West Berkshire Council, which provide funding of c.£40,000 to Henwick Worthy Sports Ground and c.£26,000 to Kennet Leisure Centre.

The following provides just a snapshot of our actions and achievements over the past year.

Play Areas and Public Open Spaces

Thatcham benefits from 16 children's play areas, 12 of which are managed by Thatcham Town Council.

The Town Council is committed to accessibility and inclusivity, to ensure that children of all abilities are able to play together, wherever possible.

As a result of substantial investments in accessible equipment across the town in recent months, we have been able to provide:

- a ramped jeep springer at Turnfields Recreation Ground, which allows a wheelchair user to be at the heart of the play experience with other friends. The unit incorporates many tactile features and role play opportunities for users of all abilities;



Turnfields accessible play equipment

- a flush roundabout at Kennet Heath Play Area, allowing up to six children, including a wheelchair user, to spin together, with seating available for parents and carers to accompany their child;
- a playhouse at Moorside Play Area, which has eleven ground level play features and lots of tactile and sensory stimuli, to aid the cognitive development of younger users;
- play panels at Dunstan Green and Lamb Close Play Areas and a rain wheel at Dunstan Green which provide visual, tactile and auditory stimulation for all users.

We're grateful to West Berkshire District Councillors directing £19,950 from their Councillor Bids' funding, to add to £21,000 from the Town Council's funds from Community Infrastructure Levy receipts, to make this exciting project possible.

In addition, various pieces of equipment were replaced throughout the year, such as new crawl tunnels, springers, mirror panels and monkey bars, plus play surface improvements and re-painting at the skate park.

Grounds maintenance work continued throughout all the open spaces, with improvements to pathways, fencing, car parks, trees and hedges.

Community Buildings

The Town Council's community halls host activities and classes throughout the year, with many new hirers attracting members of the public to enjoy the facilities.

Burdwood Community Centre is home to Thatcham Pre-school five days a week, and during the evenings the hall is used for regular classes for a range of activities.



Frank Hutchings Community Hall provides a base for the West Berkshire Therapy Centre who have exclusive use of Hall 2, offering a specialised therapy gym facility for people with disabilities. See <https://www.westberkshiretherapycentre.org.uk/> for details of this amazing local service.

Both halls are designed for community use and currently offer fitness and exercise classes, a range of dance classes, martial arts, slimming club, dog training, arts and crafts, baby sensory classes, sport classes such as netball, adult leisure activities and social clubs to name just some.

The Town Council also supports Thatcham Community Larder, who provide a valuable low-cost community food scheme, a variety of support networks and a social gathering space at Frank Hutchings Community Hall each Wednesday. Find out more about the Larder at: <https://www.sofea.uk.com/community-larder/thatcham-community-larder/>

Both halls have spaces available for private events and parties, as well as regular bookings. We were really pleased to recently introduce an easy online booking platform to our website, making it easy for anyone to view availability and make a booking for either of our halls.

Further details about the halls, regular classes and the booking platform can be found on our website:

www.thatchamtowncouncil.gov.uk

London Road Cemetery

London Road Cemetery provides a peaceful and tranquil haven for the bereaved to visit their loved ones. It's also a centre of local history with the oldest graves dating back to the 1890s.

We've invested in our grounds maintenance over the year, which has improved the appearance of the Cemetery and thanks to a grant from the Veolia Sustainability Fund, we were pleased to create a wildflower meadow in the Cemetery and we're looking forward to seeing this blossom over the coming months.

London Road Cemetery welcomes both burials and cremated remains interments and these can be arranged directly or through a Funeral Director – please contact the Town Council for more information or visit <https://thatchamtowncouncil.gov.uk/council/council-facilities/london-road-cemetery/>



Henleys Allotments

Allotments continue to be a very popular pastime and Henleys Allotments prove no exception by providing 180 tenants with the opportunity to grow fresh produce. We currently operate a waiting list, find a tenancy application form on our website at:

<https://thatchamtowncouncil.gov.uk/council/council-facilities/henleys-allotments/>

Thatcham Town Council has a strong working relationship with Thatcham Allotment Gardening Club who are a great support to the allotment community.

We thank our Allotment Steward, Jackie, for her hard work and support.



Thatcham Market

Thatcham's weekly Friday Market in The Broadway continued to grow in size and popularity throughout 2022 with an ever-increasing range of stalls. These included fruit and vegetables, butchers, fishmongers, flowers, donuts, baking, grocers, hot drinks, hot food, cakes, books and games, a recycling station, pet food and promotional stalls for local business and charities.

It's easy to have a stall at our market, either as a regular or casual trader, and we welcome all enquiries. Find an application form on our website at: <https://thatchamtowncouncil.gov.uk/council/council-facilities/market/>

September 2022 also saw the return of the very popular French Market, which we're looking forward to welcoming back again in April 2023.

We thank our Market Manager, Chris (from the Pets' stall) for his support on market days.



Thatcham Market



RMD Adventure Learning

The Town Council's partnership with RMD Adventure Learning has continued to thrive throughout 2022/23, providing Detached Youth Workers on the streets of Thatcham.

The partnership brings specialist youth workers to the town for 6 hours a week, to provide support to young people, principally up to the age of 18 years. As a complement to the town's existing club-based youth work, the Detached Youth Workers:

- provide information and advice to young people
- encourage young people to be active participants in their communities
- encourage and support young people to explore and access life enhancing opportunities
- support young people in their own personal development and encourage them to develop positive relationships with others
- acknowledge young people's rights and provide opportunities for them to understand and exercise those rights, and
- encourage young people to lead healthy lifestyles.

RMD Adventure Learning can be found around the town on Monday and Friday evenings, where they welcome the community to engage with them.



To keep updated on their work follow @RMDAdventureLearning on social media or visit www.rmdadventurelearning.co.uk



Join us!

Meetings of the Recreation and Amenities Committee are held 8 times a year and we welcome residents' attendance. If you can't attend in person, you can join us live on Zoom, look out for the Zoom link on individual meeting agendas on our website.

See the Town Council's website, Facebook page, newsletters, and public noticeboards for details of future meetings or find recordings on our YouTube channel www.youtube.com



(search for Thatcham Town Council and subscribe to keep up to date).

OUTSIDE BODIES

Each year, the Town Council appoints representatives to serve on the managing bodies of local community groups. Representatives then report back to the Recreation and Amenities Committee. The Town Council has representation on the following bodies:

Friends of Thatcham Library, The Thatcham (Old Bluecoat School) Charity, Thatcham Allotment Gardening Club, Thatcham Dementia Friendly Community Forum, Thatcham Memorial Foundation, Thatcham Parish Hall Management Committee, Thatcham Town Cricket Club Committee and West Berkshire Heritage Forum.

Reports from these organisations and more information can be found on pages 59-64.

**Councillor Mark Lillycrop,
Chairman**

"Thatcham Town Council has a strong working relationship with Thatcham Allotment Gardening Club who are a great support to the allotment community."



Town Centre Committee, Cllr Owen Jeffery, Chairman

TOWN CENTRE COMMITTEE REPORT

The Town Centre Committee was established in May 2021 for the purpose of ensuring that Thatcham Town Council's collective point of view was heard in all matters regarding the civic and business hub of the town.

The Committee consists of ten Members with the primary function of 'developing and implementing plans to improve and enhance the Town Centre for the benefit and enjoyment of residents and visitors, and to support the local commercial and business economy, working with partner agencies, as needed, and to work with town centre businesses and other agencies to promote Thatcham town centre and its businesses'.

It's been a busy year, which has seen us working with many partners to support and improve the town centre.

Several residents contacted the Town Council to express their concerns and difficulty accessing local pharmacies. I have had several conversations and meetings with stakeholders (Lloyds

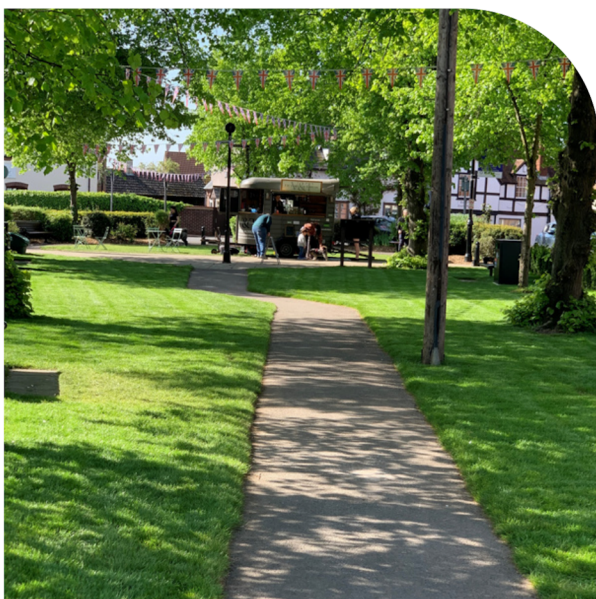
Pharmacy, Thatcham Medical Practice, Boots the Chemist and the Health & Wellbeing Board) to try and address the issues, caused primarily by a national shortage of pharmacists. However, queuing in all weathers outside has been largely eliminated following co-operation with Lloyds, Boots and the Medical Practice, to all of whom I wish to give my sincere thanks.

Along with the Town Clerk, I met with a representative of Barclays Bank who was looking at the feasibility of bringing a mobile bank to the town centre. Whilst this proposal hasn't managed to progress as yet, we remain open to enabling this, if Barclays find they are able to facilitate. Similarly, we were asked by some residents to look at the possibility of a banking hub opening in the town centre. Whilst we're supportive of the concept, our research showed that hubs were being trialed in more remote areas without access to any banking facilities. However, we'll retain a 'watching brief' to see how the trials progress.

We've been busy improving the infrastructure within the public toilets, bringing the old systems up to a better specification and switching to vandal-resistant infrastructure whenever possible. Sadly this valued amenity is often subject to vandalism but we work hard to address issues as swiftly as possible. We know how valued the public toilets are.

We're happy to be working with West Berkshire Council, who were successful in securing government funding for the installation of Changing Places facilities in Thatcham and Hungerford. We're hopeful that a facility can be accommodated in the public toilets in The Broadway and we're looking forward to seeing this progress over the coming months.

The exceptionally dry summer we experienced sadly took its toll on some of the newly planted hedging around the Broadway Green. Some bushes are showing signs of recovery but it's likely we'll have to replace several.



We continued to work with the Thatcham Branch of the Royal British Legion, and those with local expertise, to relocate to Victoria Cross Stones currently housed in the central paved crossing to a new, more respectful location, on raised plinths at the southern end of The Broadway. We hope to unveil the stones in their new location in spring 2023.

In September 2022 we were proud to open the "Jubilee Sensory Garden" in Brownsfield Road, as Trustee of Turnfields Recreation Ground Charity.

We worked with partners at Dementia Friendly West Berkshire and AgeUK to ensure we got the design right. We're grateful to West Berkshire Council for a Community Infrastructure Levy grant, which, together with the Charity's own funds and a grant from the Town Council, made the garden possible. The garden is open for everyone to enjoy. As well as specially selected landscaping, you'll find a variety of seasonal fruit and veg, to which you can help yourself.

The garden is maintained by a local gardener, who's happy to offer advice if she's in the garden when you visit. The garden provides a beautiful, tranquil space to sit, relax and enjoy in all seasons of the year.



In November 2022, we welcomed the introduction of a Public Spaces Protection Order, obtained by West Berkshire Council in partnership with Thames Valley Police. During a consultation, the proposed Order was supported by almost 85% of respondents. PSPOs allow Councils to place restrictions on certain behaviours in an area. Details of the Order covering Thatcham town centre, which is in place for three years, can be found at: <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/article/40841/Public-Spaces-Protection-Order-PSPO-for-Thatcham-Town-Centre>.

In the coming weeks we're looking forward to seeing the final report from Hemingway Design, commissioned by West Berkshire Council to undertake Place-Making Strategies for Thatcham and Hungerford Town Centres. As a key stakeholder, the Town Council has taken an active role in feeding into the consultation, alongside representatives of many organisations active in our town, with many interesting ideas being put forward.



We'll partner with West Berkshire Council to examine and assess the recommendations, aimed at 'protecting and boosting the high street and town centres enhancing their vitality and economic prosperity'.

A copy of the final draft strategy can be found by clicking the following link.
[Thatcham Town Centre Strategy Final Draft.](#)

All of our Committee meetings are held in the Council Chamber at the Council Office in Brownsfield Road and are open to Members of the public. We welcome, and encourage, your attendance. Alternatively, you can join us live on Zoom, look out for the Zoom link on individual meeting agendas on our website. See the Town Council's Website, Facebook page, Newsletters and public Noticeboards for details of future meetings.

**Councillor Owen Jeffery,
Chairman**



Planning & Highways Committee

Cllr Simon Pike, Chairman

PLANNING & HIGHWAYS REPORT

Overview

The Planning & Highways Committee consists of eight elected Councillors and meets every three weeks on a Tuesday evening; this frequency of meetings is needed to meet the deadline for responding to planning applications. It is responsible for a range of other planning and highways matters, almost all of which involve some engagement with West Berkshire Council.

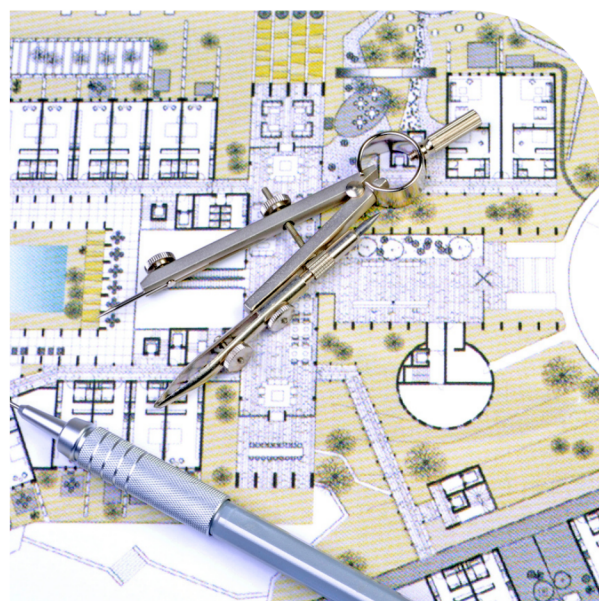
Planning

Thatcham Town Council is an advisory consultee to West Berkshire Council for planning and highways matters. The final decisions are made by West Berkshire Council, as the Local Planning Authority. During 2022-23 the Committee has considered 64 applications – a decrease on 2021-22, when 82 applications were considered.

Over the last year, the Committee has considered a wide range of planning applications, including major developments, commercial developments, flood prevention schemes, new dwellings, substantial.

house extensions, changes of use, and new premises licence applications.

The Committee considers all aspects of an application, including its scale and appropriateness for its location, its impact on neighbours, and parking provision. Some of the responses include quite detailed analysis. We have been pleased to note that, in most cases when we have objected to a planning application, West Berkshire Council has reached the same conclusion - but it also makes objections on legal grounds that are outside our remit.



Under the Council's policy, minor impact planning applications - such as conservatories, garage conversions and single-storey constructions - are not considered by the Committee, unless they are subject to representations to West Berkshire Council (i.e. letters of objection from neighbouring properties).

The Committee also considers applications for alcohol licensing and tree preservation orders.

Consultations

The Committee has spent a considerable amount of time during 2022/23 actively engaged in the development by West Berkshire Council of its Draft Local Plan for the period 2022-2039.



In early 2020, the Town Council responded to the Regulation 18 consultation on this plan and during the past year we have initiated discussion and engagement with West Berkshire Council regarding the upcoming Regulation 19 consultation.

The Regulation 18 Consultation proposed a strategic site of 2500 homes to the north east of Thatcham, with 1250 of these expected to be built in the next plan period of 17 years.

In the Regulation 19 Consultation, this was revised to 1500 homes in the next plan period, with conflicting information as to whether the development would continue beyond that.

There was also opportunity to engage with the consultancy developing a '30 year vision' for West Berkshire which would form part of the plan documentation.

The Committee provided scrutiny and comment on the following documents presented by the consultants:

- Draft West Berkshire Visioning baseline report – Local Plan Review
- Draft Newbury & Thatcham Socio-economic baseline & property market assessment.

Unfortunately, these comments were not included in the final versions of these reports that were part of the Evidence Base for the Regulation 19 consultation on the draft Local Plan.

The Committee has spent much of 2022/23 reviewing documentation feeding into the Draft West Berkshire Local Plan 2022-2039 and reviewing and preparing Thatcham Town Council's response to West Berkshire Council's Regulation 19 consultation on the Local Plan Review 2022-2039. The Town Council's final submission to the consultation can be viewed at: <https://thatchamtowncouncil.gov.uk/response-to-west-berkshire-local-plan-review-proposed-submission-regulation-19-consultation>

Planning Inquiries

The Town Council has participated actively in the appeal to the Planning Inspectorate concerning Land at Lawrences Lane. It has been given the status of a 'Rule 6 Party', meaning that the Town Council has comparable status to the appellants and West Berkshire Council.

The Town Council has been represented in the hearings by me as Chairman of the Committee which will have lasted for around six days. The Committee has submitted a number of documents to the Inquiry describing the Council's views, and three Councillors provided expert witness statements.

Eastern Area Planning Committee

The Town Council was also represented at West Berkshire Council's Eastern Area Planning Committee concerning a proposed development to the rear of 14-16 Chapel Street.

The Town Council occasionally receives informal requests for comments from utility companies, prior to them installing infrastructure under permitted development rights (which means that they do not need to obtain planning permission from West Berkshire Council, only inform them). As a result of comments from the Committee, the colour of the new mast in the grounds of the telephone exchange was changed from green to grey.

The Planning Tracker introduced by the Committee a year ago on the Town Council's website, as an extra function,

continues to provide residents with an easy means of viewing planning applications in Thatcham and their status, by typing a postcode into the web portal, this makes the planning process more transparent and accessible to our residents.

The 'Planning Tracker' can be accessed via our website or on the following link: <https://www.hugofox.com/community/thatcham-town-council-19988/planning-tracker/>



Highways

As well as planning, the Committee considers matters regarding highways and road safety. During 2022/23 the Committee has had the opportunity to scrutinise and comment on several highway consultations including:

- West Berkshire Council Winter Service Plan 2022/23
- West Berkshire Council Bus Survey 2022
- West Berkshire Council Draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2022-27

- West Berkshire Council Moving Traffic Offences Enforcement Powers Consultation.
- West Berkshire Council Cycleway Lighting Scheme (Henwick Playing Field - A4 Bath Road)
- West Berkshire Council Motor Vehicles Prohibited Experimental Traffic Road Order (TRO) Lawrences Lane (6-month consultation)
- Transport for the South-East Strategic Investment Plan

The Committee was also asked by West Berkshire Council for its recommendations for a road and building names suggestions for the new Lower Way development and the Committee put forward several suggestions for West Berkshire Council to consider.

The Committee applied for funding through the Great Western Railway Community Fund for a Wayfinding Project from the station to the town centre and the Colthrop Estate. On this occasion the application was unsuccessful. Future projects will be considered to put forward for the next round of GWR funding.

The Committee has addressed various questions and concerns from the residents of Thatcham with regard to condition of the roads, signage, cycleways, visibility and obstructions by highlighting them to West Berkshire Council, and encourages residents to do the same through the West Berkshire Council 'Report a problem' page on it's website at <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/reportaproblem/>

Thatcham Flood Forum

Thatcham Flood Forum is a voluntary organisation which supports the local community and raises awareness of flooding matters.

The Forum works closely with, and supports, West Berkshire Council with implementation of the Thatcham Surface Water Management Plan. It is currently assisting West Berkshire Council with the remaining flood alleviation schemes for Thatcham as part of a 10-year plan following the floods of July 2007.

Thatcham Town Councillors are members of the Forum and report on its activities to the Planning & Highways Committee. You can read more about the Flood Forum in their report on page 59. More details about the Flood Forum can be found on their website by following the link:
<https://www.thatchamfloodforum.org.uk>

Speed monitoring

Residents can advise Thatcham Town Council of parking, highways maintenance and speeding issues, either by contacting the Town Council directly, or at Councillors' Surgeries. These are either reported to West Berkshire Council or logged to carry out speed monitoring.

Grit Bins

Thatcham Town Council is responsible for several grit bins around the town that provide residents with access to grit for self-distribution on local highways and footpaths.



The bins are routinely refilled during the winter, as well as in response to resident's requests. Grit bins can be provided for residential public roads, with the exception of highways that are on West Berkshire Council's gritting routes. An application for a grit bin, along with the Town Council's Grit Bin Policy, can be found at the following link:

<https://thatchamtowncouncil.gov.uk/council/council-facilities/street-furniture/>

Meetings of the Town Council are open to members of the public and the Committee welcomes residents' attendance. During the Covid pandemic the Town Council conducted its business remotely via Zoom, now that meetings have returned to the Chamber the technology allows members of the public and interested participants to take part in hybrid meetings, making the planning process more accessible. Recordings of the meetings are also available on our YouTube and video links can be found on the website or on social media feeds.

**Councillor Simon Pike,
Chairman**



Finance & General Purposes Committee Cllr Mike Cole, Chairman

FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

The Finance & General Purposes Committee consists of nine Members with the primary role of managing and monitoring the Town Council's budget. The Committee reviews the Council's actual and projected income and expenditure at each of its quarterly meetings, whilst also monitoring the use of Earmarked funding, the level of Reserves held and the Council's long-term financial investments.

As in the previous two financial years, the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic continued to have a detrimental effect on the Town Council's budget during 2022/23, with income from services we provide reduced and the cost of our routine expenditure increased.

However, careful management throughout the Council has meant the overall effect has been controlled through careful assessment of expenditure and use of reserves.

Despite having to carefully manage our own budgets, we were pleased to still be able to provide valuable financial assistance to many organisations that support our local community.

More information can be found in the Grants Sub-Committee report on page 28.

Budget 2023/24

The cost-of-living crisis, soaring inflation and the continuing effects of the pandemic, made it a near impossible task preparing the budget and precept for the next financial year 2023/24, with Council ultimately approving an essential, but below inflation, 8.75% increase to meet our own increasing costs. This will provide a precept of £885,361 to support a total budget of just over £1million, with the difference raised through services we provide to residents.



Citizen's Advice West Berkshire

Our funding commitment to Citiizen's Advice West Berkshire continued with funding of £4,350 to faciliate regular outreach Citizen's Advice sessions in Thatcham that we know are essential to our residents. These sessions are held at Burdwood Surgery and Thatcham Medical Practice. Visit <https://citizensadvicewestberkshire.org.uk/getting-advice/face-to-face-at-other-locations/> for details of how to book an appointment.

Thatcham Youth

Similarly, we continued to provide valuable funding to Thatcham Youth with an annual grant of £7,000 to support Vision Youth Club for 7-11 year olds, The Zone Youth Club for 11-14 year olds and the monthly family Roller Disco. However, we were saddened to hear of the closure of the Roller Disco at the end of 2022, due to the supplier closing their business.

Details about the fantastic activities Thatcham Youth provide in our town for children, young people and their families can be found on their website: www.thatchamyouth.org.uk

The Thatcham (Old Bluecoat School) Charity

In 2013 the Town Council entered into a Service Level Agreement with The Thatcham (Old Bluecoat School) Charity to provide a grant of £1,000 per annum. This agreement allows the Town Council use of the Old Bluecoat School for up to fifteen days per annum and is mostly utilised during the annual



	0	(1,000)	0	(100)
Subsidiary	208	660	544	837
Investments	(1,042)	(5,052)	(2,976)	(9,451)
Share dividends paid	(1,683)	(1,363)	(3,024)	(2,481)
Interest in financing	(2,513)	(6,751)	(5,382)	(7,390)
Property and equipment	(498)	(491)	(934)	(1,055)
Companies, net of				
disposals, net of	(8,627)	(69)	(9,502)	(69)
Investments	(10,047)	(5,896)	(21,346)	(13,313)
Investments	6,061	1,836	8,886	2,706
Investments	7,835	2,603	15,371	4,030
Investments	(292)	447	(358)	1,174
Investments	(5,568)	(1,570)	(7,883)	(6,527)
Investments, end of	\$ 10,610	\$ 4,023	\$ 10,610	\$ 4,023

Thatcham Festival when the much-loved local landmark provides the perfect venue for local exhibitions and other Festival events.

Representation on External Organisations

The Town Council provides representation on the following external organisations' Committees, which report back to the Council via our representatives.

Reports on the following organisations are provided to this Committee, and more information can be found on pages 59-64:

- Greenham & Crookham Commons Commission
- Home-Start West Berkshire
- Thatcham Welfare and Support Society
- Thatcham Volunteer Bureau
- Thatcham Youth
- West Berkshire Suicide Prevention Action Group



Finally, I would encourage residents to come along to our meetings, to understand what the Town Council does and how decisions are made. All Committee meetings are held in the Council Chamber at the Council Office in Brownsfield Road and are open to Members of the public. Alternatively, you can join us live on Zoom, look out for the Zoom link on individual meeting agendas on our website. We welcome, and encourage, your engagement.

See the Town Council's Website, Facebook page, Newsletters and public Noticeboards for details of future meetings.

If you can't make it to our meetings, you'll find recordings of them on our YouTube channel
<http://www.youtube.com> search Thatcham Town Council and subscribe to keep up to date.

**Councillor Mike Cole,
Chairman**



Grants Sub Committee

Cllr Mike Cole, Chairman

GRANTS SUB COMMITTEE REPORT

Thatcham Town Council Grant Awards

The Grants Sub Committee oversees the allocation of Grants to community organisations. This is done through its bi-annual grant funding in January/February and June/July.

Thatcham Town Council has a match funding agreement with Greenham Trust where every £1 awarded by the Town Council is matched by Greenham Trust.

Applications are administered through The Good Exchange to ensure that the recipients receive matched funding from Greenham Trust.

The Sub Committee considers applications selected from The Good Exchange with a connection to Thatcham, where residents of Thatcham will benefit from the grant awarded. Applicants are invited to attend the Sub Committee to present their project and take questions.

During 2022/23 Thatcham Town Council has provided the following grant funding to local organisations providing services to Thatcham, which has been match funded by Greenham Trust:

ORGANISATION	PROJECT	AMOUNT
West Berkshire Homeless	Emergency Utilities and Food Support	£812.50
Thatcham Town Cricket Club	TTCC Browns Sports Field Live Streaming	£1500.00
Parkinson's UK, Newbury	Making the Difference - Yoga, Exercise and Voice Therapies for People with Parkinson's	£226.00
Time to Talk West Berkshire	Time to Talk Thatcham Outreach	£2000.00
West Berkshire Action for Refugees	Providing activities & low-cost transport for asylum seekers in accommodation in Thatcham	£1500.00

ORGANISATION	PROJECT	AMOUNT
Creative Communities	Creative Wellbeing - Surviving to Thriving	£900.00
West Berkshire Draughtbusters	Draught Proofing 2022 - 23	£250.00
West Berkshire Therapy Centre	Hardship Fund 2022/23	£1000.00
Home-Start West Berkshire	Home-Start West Berkshire Baby Bank 2022/23	£500.00
Glendale Church	Glendale Youth Café	£500.00
TUXchange CIC	Increasing storage capacity for donations of free pre-loved school uniform	£288.75
Thatcham Memorial Foundation	Jubilee Play Area	£1000.00
Thatcham Town Football Club	Artificial Turf Multi-User Sports Area	£2,000.00 pledged [1]
TOTAL DONATED		£12832.25

[1] in addition to £5,000 awarded to the project in 2019

A selection of reports / comments from organisations awarded grant funding by Thatcham Town Council and match funded by Greenham Trust are included in the following pages 30-36.



CREATIVE COMMUNITIES – Surviving to Thriving project.

Thatcham Town Council Grant Award £900

Creative Communities (South East) C.I.C is a community interest company established in 2021, providing art-based courses to vulnerable adults across West Berkshire and beyond, with an overall aim of improving physical, social, mental and emotional wellbeing. We work with a number of different groups, including older learners in residential care settings, those struggling with their mental or physical health, adults with learning difficulties and disabilities, as well as parents of school aged children who are finding life difficult.

Last year we were lucky enough to receive a generous grant from Thatcham Town Council and Greenham Trust which allowed us to extend our provision into Thatcham, setting up, among others, a ten-week course at Great Barn court, aimed at older learners, many of whom were isolated and struggling with their mental and physical wellbeing. This programme was so successful we felt that something more long term was required. This year we were fortunate enough to receive further funding from Thatcham Town Council and Greenham Trust, which allowed us to set up a yearlong course at Great Barn Court.

Running every two weeks, the course provides participants with the continuation they so desperately needed. The participants also have the option to get together on the non-teaching weeks for independent study and socialisation. The course has been greatly received and although we started in September, we are still growing, accepting another 6 learners in March!

Last year we ran our first annual art exhibition in Thatcham, which was hugely successful and a fantastic chance to celebrate the work our students had achieved, whilst providing an opportunity for them to all come together and meet others on different courses. All of the participants on the Great Barn Court course this year will also have the opportunity to exhibit their work to friends, family and the community of Thatcham and beyond in the summer.

<https://creative-communities.org.uk/>



WEST BERKSHIRE THERAPY CENTRE - – Hardship Fund 2022/23

Thatcham Town Council Grant Award £1,000

West Berkshire Therapy Centre delivers a unique service in Thatcham, providing a rehabilitation centre equipped with £160,000 of specialised equipment, helping local people with mobility problems. The equipment provides gentle, repetitive movements, easing stiff and reluctant joints and muscles, helping to improve mobility and independence. The cost of the service is funded mainly by clients making voluntary contributions. However, some are unable to afford to offer any donations and grants are vital to balance the Centre's books.

Centre Trustee, John Holt, said 'We were delighted that Thatcham Town Council has supported us with a grant of £1,000 towards our 2022/23 Hardship appeal. This was match-funded by Greenham Trust. The combined amount is sufficient for us to help more than a dozen Thatcham residents with mobility problems to walk further and safer and to have a significant uplift in their psychological outlook and social involvement. One client told us recently how he is now able to sleep on his back for the first time in many years and now get a transforming night's sleep. Most clients tell us about walking further and achieving more.

We are most grateful to Thatcham Town Council for helping to cover some of our costs, allowing us to maintain our service, delivering such important results to local people in real need.'

<http://www.westberkshiretherapycentre.org.uk/>



TUXCHANGE – Increasing storage capacity – pre love school uniform

Thatcham Town Council grant award £288.75

TUXchange is a pre-loved free school uniform service for Newbury and Thatcham that was setup in July 2020.

The local community is encouraged to donate good quality, clean uniform that they no longer need so that it can be passed on to another family.

If a family wish to donate or are in need of uniform, they contact me via the TUXchange Facebook page or website. I arrange to collect donations directly from their home, I then sort through them, add it to my stock sheet, and store the items.

Requests for uniform are checked against the stock sheet and if the items are available, I will deliver them directly to the person's home.

During the summer holiday's things are done a little differently. I hold 'pop-up' shops in Newbury and Thatcham where families can visit, look through stock, take what they need and drop off donations. The Furniture Project also help by placing a large donation bin at their premises where families can drop items off.

Due to the sheer number of requests and donations coming in there are no collections or deliveries during this period. All of the stock (around 500-600 items) has until recently been stored in my home but due to capacity I'm unable to take further donations. Each year the service has grown and with the cost-of-living crisis I anticipate that the demand for pre-loved uniform will significantly rise.

The funding has enabled me to rent a storage unit (for the next year) and this extra space means that I can accept donations and increase the stock so that I can help more families.

<https://tuxchange.org/>



HOME-START WEST BERKSHIRE – Baby Bank

Thatcham Town Council grant award - £500

Home-Start West Berkshire was delighted to receive this generous financial support from Thatcham Town Council. The Baby Bank service receives donations of preloved baby and children's equipment from families within the community, the goods are then gifted to families experiencing financial hardship. The project supports the most vulnerable families at a the most critical time, and it also has a positive environmental aspect through recycling. This funding, which is so gratefully received, supports us to be able to maintain our storage space and contributes to our project and volunteer costs. Thank you for helping us to maintain this vital resource for Thatcham families.

<https://home-startwestberks.org.uk/>



HOME START WEST BERKSHIRE - Emergency Utilities and Food Support

Thatcham Town Council grant award -£812.50

"Once again we are indebted to Thatcham Town Council for their generous support of our work. Over the last year the need for our Befriending service to support those newly in tenancies and those who have been feeling the effects of the Cost-of-Living Crisis which has drastically added to their poverty. Our Befrienders spend their time assisting with managing tenancy queries, Council Tax and utility bills and supporting with visits to different services. All West Berkshire Homeless members are volunteers - the Charity has no paid staff or premise. We can only continue our work with those on the poverty line, those sofa surfing and those struggling to maintain tenancies with the support of the local community, companies, and grants such as the one received from the Thatcham Town Council. Thank you!"

<https://home-startwestberks.org.uk/>



PARKINSON'S UK - Making the Difference - Yoga, Exercise and Voice Therapies for People with Parkinson's.

Thatcham Town Council grant award - £226

We are most grateful to have received grant funding from Thatcham Town Council, which was matched by Greenham Common Trust. Your funding allows us to run special therapy sessions for people living locally with Parkinson's.

These sessions have been designed to help people manage their lives more easily and to promote social inclusion and wellbeing.

We arrange physical exercise such as yoga and chair-based exercises. Yoga can help with slowness and stiffness, improve balance and flexibility, and increase muscle strength and power. It can also relax blood pressure, help control weight gain, and increase breathing strength and lung capacity. Many people also report having better mood and sleep, while going to group classes is a way of meeting others and being more socially active. The chair-based exercises keep the mind active; the body moving, improve posture and helps flexibility and strength.

One of the main symptoms of Parkinson's Disease is a reduction in the ability to speak clearly. Voice therapy addresses volume and clarity of speech which can make it difficult for others to understand and can lead to feelings of social isolation. Attending voice therapy not also builds better communication but also involves group work and support, which can be very companionable.

This therapy includes both speech and singing. The latter is provided by the Berkshire Maestros and forms the Parkinson's Singing Cafe.

<https://www.parkinsons.org.uk/>

PARKINSON'S^{UK}
CHANGE ATTITUDES.
FIND A CURE.
JOIN US.

TIME TO TALK - Thatcham Outreach



Thatcham Town Council grant award - £2,000

Time to Talk West Berkshire is a free confidential counselling service for young people in need aged 11 to 25. We support young people in a number of locations including the family hub in Thatcham. Our mission is to provide a counselling service which helps young people deal with their specific challenges in a sustainable way. We are incredibly grateful to Thatcham Town Council for their donation, which has had such a positive impact on the young people we have seen. We offer just over 100 counselling sessions across the service per week; we offer 13 sessions per week in Thatcham, this means we can see around 70 young people in Thatcham hub alone each year. Without funding like this we would simply be unable to offer these sessions. Our work is so important and very much appreciated by the young people we see.

“The best thing about counselling was being able to talk to someone, it helped me to see things through different view/ perspective, I felt heard and understood by my counsellor and the issues were topics I wanted to talk about. My biggest learning was that I was not abnormal but was in an abnormal situation. Counselling helped increase my confidence in talking about issues to my mum and older brother. “
Thank you so much for supporting us and the young people we help!

<https://t2twb.org/>

GLENDALE CHURCH – Youth Café



Thatcham Town Council grant award £500

The Youth Café has been running for a year at The Well on Green Lane. It is run by Glendale Church and provides a safe place for young people on a Friday night, to spend time together and wind down after a week at school. We welcome between 12-20 young people each week, between the ages of 12-15. We hope to create a welcoming atmosphere where they feel able to talk with leaders about what's going on in their lives and where we build an expectation of mutual respect.

We would like to use this generous funding from Thatcham Town Council to purchase more resources and provide more opportunities for these young people to access that they may not otherwise be able to. One item that we hope to buy with this funding is a new pool table that can be folded away when not in use.

We would also like to bring in outside organisations to run workshops with the young people. For example, dance workshops, film making, cooking, cadets, and Duke of Edinburgh Award taster sessions, and many more. This funding will allow us to provide these opportunities for free, making it accessible to all our young people. We so appreciate the opportunities this funding will provide.

<https://glendale-church.com/>

WEST BERKSHIRE ACTION FOR REFUGEES - Providing activities and low-cost transport for asylum seekers in accommodation in West Berkshire (Thatcham)

Thatcham Town Council grant award - £1500

West Berkshire Action for Refugees (WBAR) is a volunteer led charity supporting Asylum Seekers and Refugees in the local area. We are currently supporting over 130 Asylum Seekers; with a team of over 30 volunteers providing English language and activity sessions which promotes integration and a better understanding of the British way of life.

With the £1500 grant that we received (with match funding from the Peter Baker Foundation, Greenham Trust and generous donations from supporters) we purchased refurbished bikes for low-cost transport. West Berkshire Council helped to arrange cycle proficiency training and a bike maintenance course with a local cycling business, Ali Bikes. Sovereign Housing provided a disused bike rack which was cleaned up and put to good use; there are now over 20 bikes on site enabling residents to travel to local volunteering and join in local activities off site such as the Well café. The purchase of sports equipment including football boots, weights, skipping ropes and communal games has helped to improve the health and wellbeing of the group. A loan scheme has been set up so that gym equipment can be booked for use in friendship groups.

Yoga and football are all year-round activities and in the summer, residents have joined the local cricket team in Thatcham. One of the cricketers played at County level last summer. Table tennis, snooker, Uno, and chess are popular in the games room. As well as the financial support, Thatcham Town Council encouraged volunteering at the Thatcham Fun Day last summer. This led to further volunteering opportunities with the Canal and Rivers Trust, local charity shops and the Community Resource Group at Greenham. The formation of the environmental group, VIAN, has resulted in a clean-up of the hotel grounds and regular litter picking sessions in Thatcham. VIAN are currently asking for donations of cutlery and crockery so that they can reduce the amount of plastic waste at the hotel. These can be taken to the Thatcham Town Council offices to be passed on to the group.

During 2023 some of the Asylum Seekers will have been in the UK for over a year and may become eligible to work in jobs listed on the Shortage Occupations List, WBAR will be looking for opportunities to assist in finding suitable work.

Claire McCorquodale, Treasurer, West Berkshire Action for Refugees.



Thatcham Town Council Community Project Fund Awards

The Town Council also has a fund for the distribution of smaller grants through the Community Project Fund, up to £250. This fund is administered directly by the Town Council and is in place to support organisations where a smaller amount is sought but will make a big difference. When an application is made by an organisation for a

Community Project Fund award, it is considered by the next appropriate Committee following the application, thus allowing these awards to be considered swiftly throughout the year rather than on a bi-annual basis. A list of beneficiaries of this fund during 2022/2023 are listed here.

ORGANISATION	PROJECT	AMOUNT
Daisy's Dream	Funding for purchase of a gazebo	£189.99
Thatcham Women's Institute	Funding for purchase of a gazebo	£250.00
Thatcham Branch Royal British Legion	Purchase of two Silent Soldiers	£350.00
Newbury Road Club	Purchase of a branded gazebo replacement	£250.00
Thatcham Old Bluecoat School	Bobbie Collins-Wootton's Plaque	£200.00
Thatcham United Reform Church	Thatcham Warm Spaces	£220.00
Thatcham Rugby Club	Thatcham Rugby Club Homework and Games Club	£250.00
Total Community Project Fund awards provided to support the local community 2022/23		£1709.99

A selection of reports / comments from organisations awarded funds from the Community Project fund are included in the following page, 38.

NEWBURY ROAD CLUB – Replacement gazebo

Thatcham Town Council Community Project Fund Award - £250

One of the highlights of the Newbury Road Club social calendar in 2022 was its attendance at the Thatcham Family Fun Day in June. As guests of organisers Thatcham Town Council, this superb event gave the Club an opportunity to showcase cycling in the community, meet and greet lots of new faces and unleash its legendary reverse steer bikes on an unsuspecting audience.

However, the day got off to a very windy start which saw the Club gazebo, along with a few others, heading skywards towards Reading. A replacement was found for the day; however, the gazebo was unfortunately damaged beyond repair. However, all was not lost. Thanks to a generous donation by the Thatcham Town Council Community Project Fund, the Club has been able to fund a new high-end branded Gazebo for its 2023 season of events.

Thatcham Town Council has a history of assisting voluntary groups and societies, clubs, not-for-profit organisations with discretionary awards, where it is felt they will benefit the local community.



“We are thrilled that Thatcham Town Council have generously helped to replace our Gazebo,” said Club Chair, Lorraine Murrell. “The contribution of the Council has been instrumental in the Club being able to fund this purchase and we will use it to promote our Club and the benefits of cycling in events across the community. Look out for it at the next Thatcham Fun Day. We have signed up to take part and we look forward to seeing you there!”

[Newbury Road Club](#) | [Cycling Club](#) |
[Newbury](#)



The Sub Committee looks forward to facilitating further projects for the benefit of Thatcham residents throughout 2023/24, further information on how to apply for funding can be found on the Thatcham Town Council website or by contacting the Town Council at the following email address
enquiries@thatchamtowncouncil.gov.uk

**Councillor Mike Cole,
Sub Committee Chairman**

"We would like to use this generous funding from Thatcham Town Council to purchase more resources and provide more opportunities for these young people to access that they may not otherwise be able to."

Service Level Agreements

Report about Thatcham Youth for Thatcham Town Council March 2023



Thatcham Youth is a registered charity that provides, facilitates and supports provision for children and young people in Thatcham, catering for all ages up to young adults.

Thatcham Youth is based at Moorside Community Centre and manages and organises the weekly Vision Youth Club, for 7-11 year olds, and Zone Youth club for 11-14 year olds, Thatcham Roller Disco which is a family oriented event generally held on the first Saturday of each month at Kennet Leisure Centre, Stoney Lane; as well as free events during the school holidays (Family Fun Days in Easter and Summer Holidays, Reptile Handling events, Sports Mornings and Craft Mornings).

Additionally we hire out Moorside Community Centre outside of school hours for use by local groups and the community for birthday parties and events.

The group is currently overseen by 3 Trustees, with a Management Committee and regular volunteers at all events (though we would always welcome more volunteers to the Management Committee or general volunteering to allow us to increase the number of activities we run), the management committee includes

representatives from Thatcham Town Council.

The upcoming year ending 31st March 2023, has seen a return post pandemic to Vision Youth club being in demand and regularly sells out with on average 45 Young people attending.

The Zone Youth Club has increased attendance and regularly achieves 25 people – partly driven by the Outreach work done during the summer and increasing awareness. Staffing issues (a mix sickness and recruitment) during December and January did mean we had to restrict the numbers at both clubs, but we are now back to a full staff compliment and increased attendee numbers accordingly.

The Roller Disco continued to prove a popular event regularly selling out at 150 attendees, however we had to cancel a couple of events due to a mix of sickness and Leisure centre issues. Unfortunately, our provider ceased his business at the end of 2022 and we are currently seeking out alternative options.

Both the Easter and Summer events all sold out very quickly proving their popularity (Funday, Reptile Handling, Craft Morning, Sports Morning). The

funding we receive from Thatcham Town Council which we are all continuously grateful for and contributes towards the wages of the paid staff on the Youth Club evenings

and towards a new project called Thatcham Youth together (a support programme aimed at addressing some of the child issues as we came out of the pandemic). We are also fortunate to be in Year 2 of a 5 year funding plan from the National Lottery which means we can plan ahead and focus on activities rather than wondering where our future funding may come from. This is particularly relevant given the large churn in staff and recruitment issues seen at the end of the last year meaning we return our focus back to our core delivery in the next 6-9 months as the staff build up their knowledge.

Dave Carter

Report about RMD Adventure Learning for Thatcham Town Council 2022/2023

RMD has evolved and transitioned its work within the town in 2022 addressing the need to offer informal specialist one to one work alongside the detached delivery as well as providing additional funded activities.

The mentoring with counselling skills pilot supported by the town council in late 2021 was the pre-cursor for RMD Adventure Learning in setting up a Chill & Chat provision to support particular young people in the community every

Friday night at The Sports Pavilion in Lower Way.

During the summer holidays of 2022 RMD Adventure Learning successfully ran an activities programme in partnership with Thatcham Youth and Berkshire Youth. This programme was kindly co-funded by the town council and The Good Exchange fundraising platform. RMD Adventure Learning changed its detached day from a Saturday to a Monday in this period and now this has evolved into a dedicated shift at Henwick Worthy Sports Ground for 2023.

Plans for 2023/24

Our Friday night Chill & Chat provision has become successful and we regularly have high numbers of young



people attend to get advice, guidance, support and encouragement as well as providing them with links to specialist services. We now are trying to establish a regular detached engagement on Monday evenings with youths who hang around Henwick Worthy Sports Ground providing them

with advice, guidance, support and encouragement alongside play activities like football and basketball.

This year RMD Adventure Learning will be presenting our inaugural 'RMD Adventure Learning – Thatcham Provision – Young Person of the Year Award' at the annual town meeting in March. This young person has recently turned 18 and will be joining our Thatcham staff team in April 2023. We have been working with this young person for over a year now and it is a joy and privilege to support them in beginning their journey into youth work.

We will also be running in the Easter Holidays a street football event 'The RMD Youth Club Cup' between our two youth provisions (Bishops Green & Thatcham) on Wednesday 5th April. This is a new addition to our activities calendar and links in with our Annual Street Football Tournament and Annual Skate Fest both held in the town during the summer holidays.

We welcome funding opportunities to provide the young people with external activities and events where we get to showcase a different side to them other than the side sometimes displayed in school, at home and in the community.

Vince Parkes (DipCouns)
RMD Adventure Learning



Report about Citizens Advice West Berkshire for Thatcham Town Council February 2023

Over 19% of the clients that we have helped during the past year are from the Thatcham Wards. For the year April 2022 to current (February 2023), we have helped 308 clients from the Thatcham Wards with 1363 different issues. This means that our clients' problems have sometimes involved various different strands and have been complex. 38% of the clients we have helped reported that they had a disability or long-term health condition, 29% of these reporting a mental health problem. We achieved financial outcomes of £74,854 for the clients we helped. 80% of our clients reported that they found a "way forward" and 68% had their "problem resolved" and had improved health.



We have continued to see an increase in the number of clients that need our help with debt problems, which is largely related with the cost of living rises. Historically, the majority of debt problems for the residents of Thatcham was rent arrears whilst currently our biggest debt is fuel debt.

Previously, the most common issue we dealt with in benefits was Universal Credit. Now, the overwhelming majority of people come to us for help with their Personal Independence Payment benefit (a disability benefit).

We are also seeing an increase in homelessness issues, which is very concerning.

In the next year, we are looking to expand our Money Advice Specialist Team to support our clients with the repercussions of the Cost of Living Crisis. We are also recruiting more volunteers in order to be able to reach more clients.

Isabel Esperanca
Citizens Advice West Berkshire

<https://www.citizensadvicewestberkshire.org.uk>



Events Committee

Cllr Jeff Brooks, Chairman

EVENTS COMMITTEE REPORT

Summary

The events programme enjoyed one of its most successful years as audiences returned post pandemic to Thatcham Town Council's main events in record numbers.

With the Town Council determining a carefully balanced financial approach to its events programme, it was agreed that during The Queen's Jubilee year of celebrations, would be a strong component of the year. In addition, income streams (e.g. sponsorship) at events were pursued more actively to allow the events programmes to continue to grow.

Queen's Platinum Jubilee, Thursday 2nd June - Sunday 5th June

To mark the Queen's exemplary 70 years of service, The Palace Household announced a special extended bank holiday weekend so that communities and people throughout the United Kingdom could come together to celebrate the historic milestone.

Beacon Lighting:

As part of a national initiative, Thatcham presented a Beacon Lighting

event which took place on Thursday 2nd June. Activity commenced at 12.30pm with a platinum jubilee proclamation by a Town Crier on the Broadway Green to announce the start of the festivities.

Jubilee themed activities started at 8.30pm at Dunstan Green Park. Arts and crafts activity combined with stilt walkers, dancers, a combined collective of Thatcham Primary Schools Choir, with all these entertainers then parading into the performance area. Performances then took place with the mass primary school's choir, which finished with a performance from Cold Ash Brass Band.

The Beacon was lit at 9.45pm by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Berkshire with the torch handed to him by The Mayor of Thatcham who also welcomed the estimated 1,500 members of the public to the event. A fireworks display, set to specially chosen music from the Town Council was the finale element to the proceedings.

The Big Jubilee Lunch

A number of street parties took place in communities on Sunday 5th June throughout Thatcham to coincide with the national Big Jubilee Lunch street party initiative. One of the largest initiatives was a lunch hosted at Kennet School by Churches Together in Thatcham, with community stalls, games, entertainment and food, all provided for free with the event attracting around 1,200 people.



Thatcham Town Council ensured that communities had information about road closures as well as helping to promote the events and ensuring that The Mayor, Councillor Jeff Brooks, dropped into as many of these events as possible.



Legacy Project

In memory of 70 years of The Queen's reign, an ambitious legacy project was launched in her Platinum Jubilee year. The project was inspired by the Mayor, Councillor Jeff Brooks. A call went out for 'crafter' artists to create 45 different scenes inspired by the Queen's reign. At the time of writing all 45 scenes have been allocated and over 35 completed with an overall tableau of all the pieces to be in place at the Frank Hutchings Community Hall, to open on 12th May 2023.

Family Fun Day, 27th June

The event took place again at Henwick Worthy Sports Ground. This year's Family Fun Day attracted both a record number of stallholders, with over 100 in attendance, as well as a record number of visitors, with estimates of over 11,000 persons.



Visitors spoke of their enjoyment of the quality of the attractions as well as the overall event ambience.



Family Fun Day attractions again included a popular Dog Show with ever increasing number of entries (over 100), sports taster activities supplied by local sports clubs, a petting farm, circus skills workshops, Punch and Judy, fun inflatables area and Fun Fair.

New for 2023 was a 'Royal' themed fancy dress competition to tie in with the Platinum Jubilee, and a music stage which featured bands and musicians from Thatcham as well as a performance from Cold Ash Brass Band. A cycle zone area was created to encourage 'think bike' as an alternative mode to travel to Fun Day. Bike lock areas were set up and people could try their hand on e-bikes as well as conventional bicycles. Another new attraction was a dance zone with 7 different dance schools showcasing dance style from Indian Classical to Street Dance.

Additional toilets, volunteers and event staff, first aid cover and traffic management were all improved to accommodate the anticipated numbers on site and this is clearly something that will need careful planning if the

event is to grow further in the future, which the size of the Henwick Worthy site allows.

United Service of Remembrance, 17th July

United Service of Remembrance took place on Sunday 17th July and was again well attended with a special service, supported by Churches Together in Thatcham and which allowed public who have lost their loved ones in the year, an opportunity to commemorate their interment at London Road Cemetery.



Thatcham Festival, 14th - 23rd October

The 2022 Festival comprised 43 separate events compared with 35 in 2021, the most since it slimmed down to a 10 day Festival. Feedback suggests it was one of the most successful Festival's ever when judged on number and diversity of events, attendances and responding to Town Council objectives.

There was again a strong number of presentations from Thatcham based organisations but there was greater diversity from both local organisations as well as new activity curated carefully from the Festival organisers. This was typified by Hackspace whose retro computer event not only attracted a

record audience of over 100 people, but a younger audience than previous years.



KATS' Ghost Walk also helped broaden the programme as 'something for everyone' appeal with the estimated audience of 150 attracting many from the 30 and under age group.

The Big Thatcham Fest-Off, an event in its second year, profiled the Town's High Street by closing the street and attracting an older teenage plus family demographic to its artisan style market offering and stage of diverse entertainment, which included the headline act 'Beyond the Sons' who consisted of 13-16 year old boys many from Thatcham.



The curatorial element helped to attract a wider style of presentation. The Festival commissioned Sonia Brown to build upon last year's event further. Thatcham Thrives' dance gala was presented at Kennet School with 13

different Dance Organisations from the West Berkshire region showcasing quality presentations with two shows to packed audiences.

Working in partnership with Hungerford Bookshop, The Festival secured a talk with critically acclaimed Robert Harris who presented a first class talk to a full house at Thatcham Town Football Club. His appearance helped to elevate The Festival profile, alongside a growing number of talks on subjects as diverse as Thatcham's history, the environment, refugees as rebuilders of the community, horse racing and children's stories.

There were a number of events that followed an environmental theme within The Festival, encouraging a number of organisations to take part. This included the Sustainable Living Market Thatcham and Newbury which took place at Frank Hutchings Community Hall for the first time, and which attracted some new customers. There was a talk on the 'rewilding' of gardens and roadside verges at The Nature Discovery Centre. There was also a welcome return of 'Apple Day' at the Centre after a 2-year absence with an estimated audience of 600 attending and visiting the many stalls and enjoying the entertainment.



Walks also took place at The Nature Discovery Centre with Graeme Stewart providing his customary bird walks here and at Greenham Common. This latter location also provided a further walk which looked at the history of Greenham Common whilst a new guided walk took place at the Bowdown Woods, BBOWT'S flagship woodland nature reserve.

A fully booked all-day sessions event was presented by Dementia Friendly West Berkshire, at Thatcham Town Cricket Club and which included interactive sessions in the Virtual Dementia Bus which showcased what it might be like to live with dementia. The event also created awareness of Thatcham's 'Jubilee Sensory Garden'. The Festival also included well attended exhibitions by Thatcham Photographic Club and 'Tanya's Art Exhibition' both taking place at the historic Old Bluecoat School. Concerts and workshops by Cold Ash Brass Band, No Strings Attached, Beenham Wind Orchestra, Watership Cantabile, Mark T and Incantata ensured there was a very strong musical element to 2022's Festival.

The Festival used Eventbrite as its booking system for many of its events this year, both paying and free, and the process proved popular with the public as well as providing helpful intelligence for The Festival organisers in their promotion processes.

Remembrance Sunday, 13th November

The event was well supported with around 700 persons parading from Service and uniformed organisations. The event attracted an estimated audience of just over 1,000. The form up area and route remained the same as last year's with the parade starting at Kingsland Shopping Centre carpark and the parade and outdoor commemoration service taking place at Thatcham Memorial Garden and Parade Ground. There was a further service at St Mary's Church.



On Friday 11th November, Armistice Day, a service was held in the Memorial Garden which was attended by a number of retired service personnel, Council dignitaries and members of the public.



Warming Up for Christmas, Christmas Lights Switch-On, 2nd December

As with the 2019 and 2021 event, both sides of The Broadway were closed to traffic and the stage positioned on eastern side of The Broadway with The Stage Bus Company supplying the same stage, back of stage screen and public address system as in 2021. Stage content included the choir of Whitelands Park School, dance from MF Dance, 'Dance with Sonia Brown' and St Mary's Church Choir, (supported by Kennet School) while KATS supplied an extract from their forthcoming pantomime.



As a post lights switch-on event, local youth band 'Beyond the Sons' entertained and brought a younger audience to the lights switch-on. Confetti Magic again supplied special effects including a snow cannon with pyros and streamers in time with the light's countdown.



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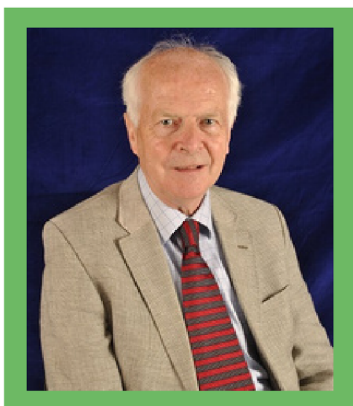
There was a good turnout of community, charity and refreshment stalls with feedback from stallholders stating that they had a very successful evening. 35 stalls operated compared with 27 in 2022. There were improvements made to the layout of stalls and this included providing more options for refreshments on the western side of The Broadway. Estimates on a cold but dry night indicate that the event attendance may be one of the busiest ever with an estimated 3,300 persons representing a 10% increase from 2021's attendance figures!



Festivities also included a popular petting farm, a treasure trail and a best dressed festive, 'royal' themed window display which was won by Thatcham Kitchen Designs. The public could also vote for their own favourite through the Newbury Weekly News and 'The People's Vote' was won by House of Cards for a second year running. Thatcham Town Council was grateful for sponsorship from Elysium Healthcare, Newbury Building Society with the Christmas Tree again being sponsored by Oakley Green Conservatories.

Civic Carol Service, 11th December Presented by The Mayor of Thatcham, Councillor Jeff Brooks, the Civic Carol Service took place on a very frosty evening at St Mary's Church. Music was provided by St Mary's Church Choir and The Barfield Handbell Ringers, with readings from Kennet School & Trinity School and seasonal refreshments served afterwards. A very generous £279 was collected in donations for the Mayor's chosen charities of Daisy's Dream and Thatcham Tornadoes.

**Councillor Jeff Brooks,
Chairman**



Environmental Working Party Cllr Richard Foster, Chairman

ENVIRONMENTAL WORKING PARTY REPORT

During 2022 the Environmental Working Party (EWP) has continued to deliver on the action plan "Towards Net Zero Carbon Emissions by 2030", viewable at <https://thatchamtowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/1-Thatcham-Town-Council-Environmental-Action-Plan.pdf>.

A review during 2022 of the greenhouse gas emissions directly under the control of the Council in 2021 found that its emissions had reduced since the baseline year (2019) by 40%, or 6.0 tonnes, to 8.9 tonnes. This represents good progress towards the net zero goal. The full report is at <https://thatchamtowncouncil.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Thatcham-Town-Council-Carbon-Footprint-Report-2021.pdf>.

For the emissions of the wider community, the Working Party continued to work on seven challenges that everyone can adopt, which can be viewed at <https://thatchamtowncouncil.gov.uk/environment/>.





Towards Net Zero Carbon Emissions by 2030



Prepared by members of the
Thatcham Town Council Environmental Working Party
Adopted by the Recreation and Amenities Committee
on 11th January 2021

We urge all those who live or work in Thatcham to look at their personal carbon emissions, work out how to reduce them to zero, and put their personal plan into practice. The Town Council has recently purchased a thermal imaging camera for lending to Thatcham residents for them to use to identify sources of heat leakage in their homes.

The Working Party has recommended that a Biodiversity Action Plan for the areas of land controlled by Thatcham Town Council be commissioned.

The Working Party continues to work with West Berkshire Council to find ways to improve walking and cycling in the town.

**Councillor Richard Foster,
Chairman**



Community Engagement Working Party Cllr Mark Lillycrop, Chairman

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORKING PARTY REPORT

Thatcham Town Council's Community Engagement Working Party was formed to develop more effective ways of engaging with residents, and we continue to assist Council officers in making our communication and consultation as good as they can be. Thatcham Town Council aims to publicise local events and services via a number of channels:

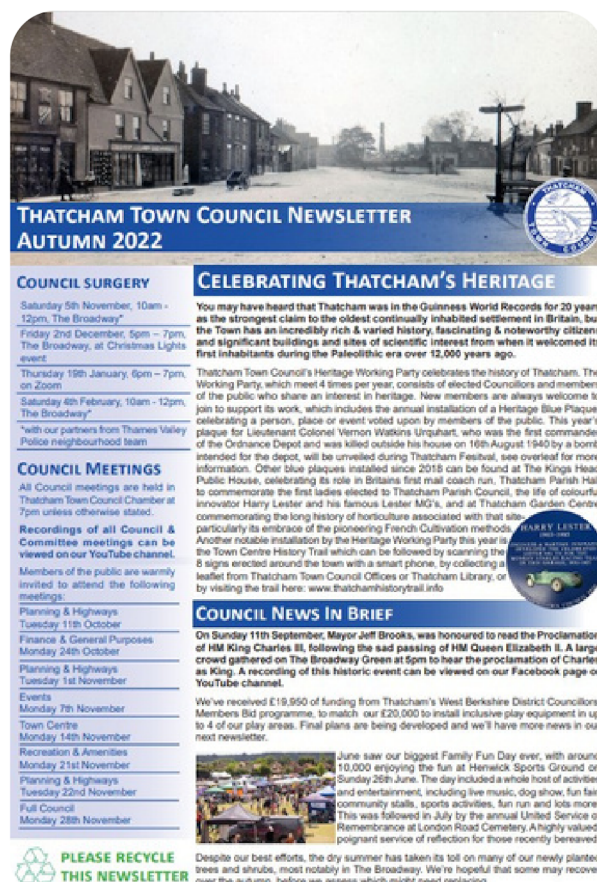
Newsletters and social media

The Town Council newsletter is delivered to homes across Thatcham four times a year, with news and updates from the Town Council and outside bodies. It's also available online through the website.

In addition to the newsletter, the Town Council team provide regular updates on community activities through our Facebook and Twitter feeds; just follow Thatcham Town Council to receive regular posts and notifications.

Council surgeries – coming to you soon.

Surgeries provide a very good opportunity to meet Councillors face to face to discuss issues of concern.



In the past they have taken place on the first Saturday of the month at 10.00 am in Thatcham Broadway, but over the last year we have been trying out a range of locations and dates to bring the surgeries closer to residents across the town.

If you have any questions for Councillors, please check the website for upcoming surgery dates – or contact us direct via phone or email.



Council meetings – attending in person and online.

Full Council and Committee meetings are all open to members of the public. As well as attending in person, you can now view the proceedings online via YouTube. There are notes accompanying each video which help the viewer to find the precise item they wish to watch. The video links can be found on the website and through our social media feeds.



Website refresh

Our website was last renewed in 2012, and the Council has recently made the decision to refresh the underlying platform to bring it in line with the GOV.UK design standards widely used by other councils.

The main aim of this change is to make important local information more easily accessible. The new service provider, Parish Online, currently provide our digital mapping services and are already a trusted partner of the Council. We're looking forward to delivering an exciting, visually appealing, and up to date website during 2023.

A big thank you to Dr Nick Young who has supported our current website for a number of years and continues to provide key digital services to the Council and to Thatcham Historical Society.

Town Guide

We're delighted to announce that the Town Guide will shortly be making a return after an absence of several years. Full of information, maps, details of local organisations and historical background, the Guide will be handy for anyone new to Thatcham or looking to expand their knowledge of the town. It will be distributed through the Council offices, library and other outlets, and will also be available to download in PDF format. Look out for the publication in the early summer.



COUNCIL SURGERY
online

Meet online with 2 Thatcham Town Councillors to discuss your local concerns

Thursday 10th March

19:00 - 20:00

Join us on Zoom:
Meeting ID: 883 5789 1464
Passcode: 386541

Let us know your thoughts.

We're continually reviewing our communications channels, but inevitably with a Thatcham population of 25,000 there will be residents who feel they don't hear from us regularly enough. We're always keen to improve, though – so if you have ideas about community engagement that can help us, please do get in touch.

**Councillor Mark Lillycrop,
Chairman**

Email:

enquiries@thatchamtowncouncil.gov.uk

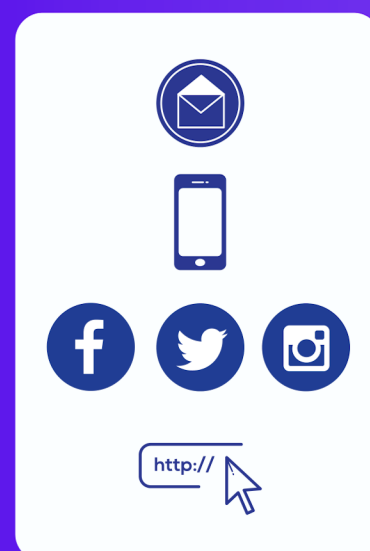
Phone: 01635 863592

Text / WhatsApp: 07503 634761

Social Media: @ThatchamTC

Website:

www.thatchamtowncouncil.gov.uk





Heritage Working Party

Mr Nathan Gregory, Chairman

HERITAGE WORKING PARTY REPORT

The Heritage Working Party considers and makes recommendations to the Recreation and Amenities Committee on developing the public awareness of, and celebrating the history of, the parish, including the developing of a blue plaque scheme in Thatcham.

The Working Party may, at its discretion, co-opt such members of the community as it deems appropriate to assist and offer advice. All co-opted members have the right to vote within the Working Party and it was delighted to recruit 2 new members in 2022/23. It meets quarterly and members of the community are welcome to attend.

In 2018, the Heritage Working Party devised and tested its commemorative blue plaque scheme and the inaugural blue plaque in the new circular style was erected on the Kings Head Public House, celebrating its role in Britain's first mail coach run.

The Working Party acknowledges that there are three rectangular blue plaques already erected around the town, as well as numerous other

plaques and memorials, which it includes in its walks and trails, but that the current scheme uses the iconic circular style.

Since 2018, the Heritage Working Party has unveiled a new blue plaque annually. In 2019 it was on Thatcham Parish Hall to commemorate the first ladies elected to Thatcham Parish Council.

In 2020 it celebrated the life of colourful innovator Harry Lester and his famous Lester MG's and in 2021 it unveiled a plaque on Thatcham Garden Centre commemorating the long history of horticulture associated with that site, particularly when it was known as a school for lady gardeners and its embrace of the pioneering French Cultivation methods.

In 2022, the Working Party launched a public consultation to receive ideas from the public for the subject matter of its 2022 Blue Plaque and thus create a shortlist to work from for the next 3 – 6 years, depending on the feasibility of the subject matter.

The clear winner for 2022 was a plaque commemorating the site where Lieutenant-Colonel Vernon Watkins Urquhart, the Commanding Officer of Thatcham Army Ordnance Depot; G45, was sadly killed in the bombing raid of 1940.



The clear winner for 2022 was a plaque commemorating the site where Lieutenant-Colonel Vernon Watkins Urquhart, the Commanding Officer of Thatcham Army Ordnance Depot; G45, was sadly killed in the bombing raid of 1940. The plaque is situated as near to 141 Station Road as possible, and the Working Party were lucky to be joined by Urquhart's Granddaughter who travelled from Norfolk for the unveiling ceremony. (photos incl)



In 2022 the Heritage Working Party also arranged for the restoration and re-painting of the 5 Georgian water pumps situated within the parish. These are found dotted along the A4 and now look very smart in black with silver finals. You can read more about these pumps here:

<https://nickbits.co.uk/blog/2020/11/thatcham-roadside-pumps>



For 2023, the Heritage Working Party identified that the second highest voted for subject matter was Thatcham Army Ordnance Depot. It was decided that this subject matter and potential location of the plaque could be deemed as being quite similar to 2022's Urquhart subject matter.

It was acknowledged that the Ordnance Depot has played such a huge part in Thatcham's history that it warrants a deeper exploration and that perhaps the addition of an Interpretation Panel and a Blue Plaque could prove useful in acknowledging the rich history associated with the site.



The Working Party have therefore decided to defer the commemoration of the depot to 2024 and bring forward the third subject matter on the list which is the commemoration of Robert Wyatt who opened the Butchers in Thatcham Broadway in 1893. This plaque will hopefully be unveiled during Thatcham Festival 2023 and all are very welcome to attend.

If you would like to join the Heritage Working Party or even just sit in on a meeting, please email enquiries@thatchamtowncouncil.gov.uk or see more about the Working Party here: www.thatchamtowncouncil.gov.uk/thatcham/heritage.

**Mr Nathan Gregory,
Chairman**

Outside Bodies'

OUTSIDE BODIES' REPORTS

THE FLOOD FORUM & SURFACE WATER MANAGEMENT PLAN FUNDING COMMITTEE

The Flood Forum and Surface Water Management Plan Funding Committee (SWMP) oversee the delivery of the flood defence programme that began in 2008, following the devastating flooding that occurred across the town in 2007 and which affected some 1200 homes. The schemes completed to date include Dunston Park, Dunstan Green, Siege Cross, Cold Ash Hill and Tull Way, together protecting around 85% of Thatcham's residents.

Of the remaining three projects, work is now commencing on attenuation ponds at North Thatcham (Bowling Green Road and Heath Lane) and East Thatcham (Floral Way/Bath Rd junction) and we look forward to the completion of these schemes in the coming months. Once completed another 107 properties will be protected from the impact of surface water flooding.

The final element of the SWMP, at the Memorial Fields, is currently at the pre-planning stage,

and West Berks Council will be undertaking a public consultation exercise later this summer before submitting a planning application

Construction work is programmed for 2024 subject to the necessary approvals being granted.

A big thank you to the Flood Forum and SWMP members, who continue to work closely with West Berks and Thatcham Town Councils to secure funding for the flood schemes, and also provide information, lobby Government, and highlight the importance of well managed surface water and drainage systems.

Finally, on behalf of the Forum members I would like to express our sincere gratitude to Stuart Clark, the Principal Engineer at West Berks Council who managed the flood defence projects with complete dedication, and who sadly died last year. Thanks to his strong leadership and determination, our town is now very much better protected against extreme weather conditions.

Councillor Mark Lillycrop

FRIENDS OF THATCHAM LIBRARY

The Friends of Thatcham Library play an essential role in raising funds for the Library through events and activities and helping to maintain the facility as a focal point for book borrowing, learning and play, and online reference and research. They are always interested in recruiting new members – please contact the Library if you are interested.

The team are looking forward to the imminent completion of the structural improvements to the building – including a public toilet and re-sited entrance – which will give them more scope for fund-raising events. This includes a coffee morning to mark the King's Coronation in May. Look out for further information.

Councillor Mark Lillycrop



GREENHAM AND CROOKHAM COMMONS COMMISSION

The Greenham and Crookham Commons Commission (GCCC) was formed following the 2002 Greenham and Crookham Commons Act. Its purpose is to supervise the proper management of the Commons by West Berkshire Council (sub-contracted to BBOWT), including the granting of permission for events held on the commons, and the exercising of their rights by the Commoners.

The GCCC recognises the importance of enabling public enjoyment of the common while carrying out work to ensure the conservation of species, especially birds, that such an important natural habitat requires. It has supported the re-introduction of Park Runs while retaining a close relationship with Park Runs management to ensure they do not affect this conservation work, nor adversely affect other users of the commons.

The GCCC has created a comprehensive website where further information about the commons and the GCCC can be seen. See <https://greenhamcommoncommission.org.uk/>.

Councillor Richard Foster

THATCHAM WELFARE AND SUPPORT SOCIETY

Until the later part of 2022 this charity was better known as Thatcham Nursing Society. The new name seems to describe better what the charity does and hopefully it will make it more accessible to all who need it.

The society aims:

To assist, in cases of financial need, persons resident in Thatcham and around who have health needs of any kind by providing or paying for items, services or facilities which help and assist in their recovery but are not readily available to them from other sources and, where funds allow, in cases of financial need alone.

In the past year it has provided for items such as carpets, air fryers, pulse oximeters, a tumble dryer and with financial assistance towards dental treatment.

Councillor Lourdes Cottam

HOMESTART WEST BERKSHIRE

HomeStart West Berkshire (HSWB) provides a voluntary service to parents of young children who need support. It is part of a national charity, HomeStart UK. HSWB provides a family, who have at least one child under five, with a carefully selected volunteer, who has parenting experience, can visit regularly and can offer emotional and practical support. This friendly parent-to-parent support is a simple yet effective way of enabling families to get back on track.

HSWB also organises group meetings to enable families to meet and support each other in the company of an experienced family group worker.

In Thatcham the number of families supported remains at about 40, but that number as a fraction of the total supported by HomeStart West Berkshire has risen from a quarter to a third.

The demand for this work is increasing while resources at a professional level, e.g. social workers, are reducing, putting more pressure on the voluntary sector. HSWB's highly valued work is limited only by funding and the availability of volunteers. If you or anyone you know might like to become a volunteer please go to <https://www.home-start.org.uk/home-start-west-berkshire> and click "Volunteer".

Councillor Richard Foster

THATCHAM PAROCHIAL CHARITIES REPORT

Thatcham Parochial Charities

There are two principal charities – Thatcham Parochial Almshouse Charity and Thatcham Relief in Need. The Board of Trustees comprises representatives from Thatcham Town Council and the Parish Councils of Cold Ash, Midgham and Greenham, with the Rector and three churchwardens as ex-officio members.

Thatcham Town Council is currently represented by Cllr. Mike Cole and Chris Druce. The Trustees normally meet four times per year.

Both charities are assisted by ancient endowments granted over many centuries, the first recorded one being in 1594.

Thatcham Parochial Almshouse Charity

The object of the Charity is to provide almshouse accommodation for elderly people in need within the parishes of Thatcham, Cold Ash, Greenham and Midgham (the ancient Parish of Thatcham).

There are 14 almshouse flats in Thatcham. Maintenance works highlighted in the Quinquennial report continue alongside general maintenance and improvement.

Sadly two residents passed away during the year and their flats were refurbished and re-let.

Thatcham Relief in Need

The object of the Charity is to relieve, either generally or individually, persons resident in the Ancient Parish of Thatcham, who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress, by making grants of money or providing items or services to reduce that need. The Trustees have a wide discretion regarding the allocation of those funds.

During 2022, the Charity made grants, amounting to £15,114. Grants that were administered were for a variety of requests including disability home access improvements, white goods, flooring and bedding, (especially for those moving into Housing Association properties) as well as supporting the Jubilee Memorial Playground fund and NWN Over 80s parcel fund.

Chris Druce & Councillor Mike Cole

THATCHAM TOWN CRICKET CLUB

The summer of 2022 saw relaxation of c-19 restrictions which had impacted domestic cricket for the previous 2 years. Preparation for the 2022 season began well in the winter with pre-Christmas yoga sessions. This was followed in the new year by a full program of winter nets which were well attended.

TTCC hosted Berkshire 1st XI squad in their pre-season intra-squad warm-up match to prepare for the start of their competitive NCCA T20 campaign. The county were grateful for use of the facilities and were pleased that we were able to provide a good playing surface at such an early stage in the season. The quality of that pitch was an early sign that the pitches were going to be much improved in 2022.

It was pleasing to see the continued progression of the club's younger players into senior cricket with representation and important contributions coming from the juniors across all 3 teams and almost exclusively on Sundays. Sunday cricket was back with a vengeance with a fairly full program of both friendly development fixtures and the inaugural season of the Berkshire Blast Sunday league.

Friday night Junior training was well attended with the social aspect returning to pre-pandemic normal. With a great BBQ throughout the summer making a massive difference to the success of Friday nights.

There was a full program of Berkshire Youth Cricket League fixtures for the juniors and girls. The end of season Family Fun Day was also a great success as usual.

Adult cricket wise unfortunately 2 of the Saturday XI's were relegated from their respective divisions and both teams will be looking to bounce back with promotion at the first time of asking.

Financially despite bar revenue not recovering to pre-pandemic levels we made a surplus especially due to the hard work of our volunteers running the bar, the BBQ, Friday night Junior coaches and most importantly the ground staff. In 2022 the club regained its ECB ClubMark status.

Going forward the club continues to invest in new facilities after the recent purchase of a new electronic scoreboard, a new road roller for the cricket pitch square. Cricket played from Browns Field will be live streamed over the internet via a newly purchased NVPlay system integrated with Cricket Pro Scorer powered by newly installed off-grid solar power battery system. A special thanks goes to ECB / Berks Cricket Foundation, Thatcham Town Council, Greenham Trust / The Good Exchange, TTCC sponsors and members for supporting these projects.

For the forthcoming season, we will again host the annual Berkshire v. Wiltshire Marlborough Cup match on April 9th. Pre-season friendlies commence the week after, with the league season starting on May 6th.



Our outdoor junior practice night will recommence on April 14th with the ECB boys and girls All Stars (5 to 7 years old) on May 12th plus new for 2023 Girls Dynamos (8 to 11 year olds). With the investment of new technology along with increasing the accessibility of girls cricket we hope to forge a stronger link with the local community of Thatcham via its secondary and primary schools.

Various win win opportunities are currently being explored to ensure the next generation of cricketers, volunteers and supporters continue cricket being played in Thatcham since it was first done over 250 years ago!

Councillor John Boyd

Community Partnerships

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP REPORTS

THATCHAM COMMUNITY LARDER

Thatcham Community Larder still supported by Public Protection Partnership and Thatcham Town Council continues to go from strength to strength.

Thatcham Community Larder currently has 95 members who have a paid subscription who can access the food we offer. We still offer the two memberships a single and a family membership. The increase in enquires has tripled in recent weeks too and enquires via social media is greater than we ever thought it would be.

We are more than just food and offer so much more to our community. Here are just some of the ways our Larder engages with the community.



Each week Get Berkshire Active come along and get our community active with a series of chair exercises. The exercises are both physical exercises and exercises to get the brain stimulated too. We offer these exercises to anyone in the community as well as our members at no charge. This has become popular in recent weeks.

We have two ladies who come along fortnightly who give members and non-members of the community the chance to come along and try their hand at various craft projects. These range from sewing projects to card making and there will be a special project for the Kings coronation in May. Again, all of this free of charge and everyone is welcome.

A knit and natter table is set up for anyone wanting to bring along their knitting and join other knitters. Anyone without a project of their own, wool and needles can be supplied (free of charge) and squares are always welcome to be added to blankets that we complete as a larder and have sent to local residential homes.

We still have our book exchange. We still have a wide variety of adult and children's book to be exchanged. There is a children's colouring table too.

At Christmas we held a raffle where every member had a raffle ticket, and every ticket had a prize. Every member child a book wrapped up in Christmas paper too.

The Larder has also become a place where many people have come to for advice. We have many leaflets from organisations from Cristian's Against Poverty to Samaritans to signpost our Community where help can be found. Even helping understand letters and forms when English isn't people's first language. We have helped some of our members with clothes for their children by putting out messages on social media.

Thatcham Community Larder is now on the List of Warm HUB's.

Thatcham Community Larder welcomes everyone in our community with a free cuppa, a slice of cake and always someone to listen and chat to.



VIAN ENVIRONMENT SOCIETY

VOLUNTEER GROUP

In November 2022 West Berkshire Action for Refugees contacted Thatcham Town Council to see if there was an opportunity for a volunteer group to carry out litter picking in the Thatcham area. West Berkshire Action for Refugees had been approached by a group of Refugees staying at Regency Park Hotel, who wanted to set up an Environment Society. Thatcham Town Council Officers met with the Refugees and the leader of the group presented the Council with his vision for improving the local area. He had set up a similar volunteer group in his home country, taking care of the local parks, litter picking, planting trees and helping stray animals.

The leader of the group had been in the UK for approximately 1 year and wanted the opportunity to give something back to Thatcham since he has been made welcome in the town and wanted to say thank you.

The group started with a team of 10 and now has approximately 20 members, they can be seen in their Hi-Vis jackets, on a regular basis, collecting litter all over Thatcham.

They all do an outstandingly thorough job when collecting litter, nothing stops them from getting into the bushes to clear out every last piece of rubbish. They are not put off by the weather or the scale of the task ahead of them.

They have cleared approximately 100 full black sacks of rubbish from our streets and residential areas, including Station Road, Crown Mead, town centre car parks, Kennet Heath, Bowling Green Road & Tull Way.



They have helped Thatcham Town Council to clear buildings, volunteered at Thatcham Family Fun Day and the Christmas Lights Switch On events and whenever they are asked to help in any way they have always respond with enthusiasm and positivity.

Thatcham Town Council support the group by liaising with members of the public to co-ordinate areas to clear. Thatcham Town Council supplied the group with the equipment they needed to start the venture such as litter pickers, collection sacks and on a cold day offering them hot drinks and snacks to refresh them after their litter picking sessions.





Cllr Lee Dillon



Cllr Jeremy Cottam

District Councillors

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR REPORT

Over the last 4-year Council, Councillor Cottam and I have been busy representing the residents of Thatcham Northeast. One of the biggest issues that we have covered is the securing of a tree preservation order at Piggywood, ensuring that this ancient woodland is protected for generations to come, giving local homeowners peace of mind that this site cannot be developed.

Another area that we have focused a lot of our time on has been the planning issues at Lawrence's Lane, I have worked with, and supported, local residents to have their voice heard concerning the illegal traveller's encampment on the east side of the Lane.

We have also supported the removal of traffic on Lawrence's Lane to enable it to become an important access route for residents of Thatcham when accessing the countryside around us.

However, despite these activities, it is clear that our biggest challenge has been fighting the proposed Northeast Thatcham development, as outlined in West Berkshire Council's Local Plan Review 2022- 2039 (Regulation 19 Consultation). Working with fellow Councillors on the Town Council and at the District Council, we are proud to have been part of a group that has submitted a substantial evidence-based response to concerns.

We look forward to continuing to support our residents and if anyone has any questions, please feel free to contact myself or Jeremy Cottam directly.

Councillor, Lee Dillon





Thatcham Town Council

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ThatchamTC