

**Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Council held at the Oakwood Centre on  
Tuesday 6 February 2023 at 8 pm**

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**Present:** *Councillors: J. Anderson (Chairman); K. Baker; D. Bragg; G. Bello; A. Chadwick; K. Charles Bey; J. Cheng; Y. Edwards; D. Errawalla; M. Firmager; K. Gilder; L. Guttridge; M. Holmes; C. Jewell; M. Kennedy; V. Lewis; M. Nagra; B. Rowland; D. Smith; B. Soane; A. Swaddle; J. Taylor*

**Officers present:** *K. Murray, Town Clerk; A. Basra, Finance Manager  
M. Filmore, Deputy Town Clerk;*

**Also present:** *Cllr R. Horskins (virtual attendance)  
6 members of the public*

72. Before the meeting commenced, the Deputy Town Mayor invited representatives from the following organisations, who were recently awarded grants, to address the Council and provide details of the projects the grants will go towards funding:

- Chemogiftbags
- Woodley Volunteer Centre

It was also noted that two written statements of gratitude had been provided by Me2 Club and the Woodley Schools' Cluster, which were circulated to Members.

The Deputy Town Mayor adjourned the meeting to enable photos to be taken of the grant recipients. Four representatives from the grant winners then left the meeting.

73. A maximum of 30 minutes was set aside before the start of the meeting for members of the public to pose questions to the Council in the Town Forum. As there were no members of the public wishing to address the Council the Town Forum did not take place.

74. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Horskins, Sartorel and Singh. Councillor Horskins attended the meeting virtually.

75. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

76. **MINUTES OF COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 5 DECEMBER 2023**

The Deputy Town Mayor presented the minutes of the Council meeting held on 5 December 2023.

**Minute 57: Wokingham Borough Council ASB team presentation**

Following a query as to whether Wokingham Borough Council's Anti-Social Behaviour team had provided a report, as agreed at the meeting on the 5 December 2023, the Town Clerk advised that had not but that he would chase them on this and circulate when received. The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed this would be added to the actions and follow ups.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To approve the minutes of the Council meeting held on 5 December 2023 and that they be signed by the Deputy Town Mayor as a correct record.

Voting: For: 21 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Registered: 1

77. **ACTIONS / FOLLOW UPS**

Members noted the update to actions and follow up items raised at previous meetings, as provided in the agenda.

78. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

78.1 **Minutes of the Planning & Community Committee: 12 December 2023**

Councillor Soane presented the minutes of the Planning & Community Committee meeting held on 12 December 2023.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note the minutes of the Planning & Community Committee meeting held on 12 December 2023.

78.2 **Minutes of the Planning & Community Committee: 9 January 2024**

Councillor Soane presented the minutes of the Planning & Community Committee meeting held on 9 January 2024.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note the minutes of the Planning & Community Committee meeting held on 9 January 2024.

78.3 **Minutes of the Leisure Services Committee: 9 January 2024**

Councillor Smith presented the minutes of the Leisure Services Committee meeting held on 9 January 2024.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note the minutes of the Leisure Services Committee meeting held on 9 January 2024.

78.4 **Minutes of the Strategy & Resources Committee: 23 January 2024**

Councillor Baker presented the minutes of the Strategy & Resources Committee meeting held on 23 January 2024.

**Minute 76: Wheble Park**

Councillor Taylor noted that, during discussions regarding investing in replacement play equipment at Wheble Park, concern had been raised about spending money on land not owned by the Town Council but leased from Reading Borough Council. She asked why this was the case when the Council spend money on the allotments site, which is also leased from Reading Borough Council. Councillor Baker advised that the difference was that the allotments are part funded by allotment tenants, whilst the play area does not provide any income.

**Minute 67: Risk Management Sub Committee**

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To adopt the 2024/25 Risk Management Strategy, as set out in the agenda.

Voting: For: 21 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Registered: 1

- ◆ To note the 2024/25 Risk Register summary pages.

### **Minute 68: Investments Sub Committee**

#### **RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To adopt the 2024/25 Treasury Management Strategy, as set out in the agenda.

Voting: For: 21 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Registered: 1

### **Minute 72: Charges 2024/25**

#### **RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To approve the charges for the Oakwood Centre for 2024/25, as set out in the agenda.

Voting: For: 21 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Registered: 1

- ◆ To approve the charges for Leisure Services for 2024/25, as set out in the agenda.

Voting: For: 21 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Registered: 1

### **Minute 74.2: Budget and Precept 2024/25**

#### **RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To approve the Budget for 2024/25, as set out in the agenda.

Voting: For: 21 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Registered: 1

- ◆ To approve a precept level of £1,164,500 for the 2024/25 financial year.

Voting: For: 21 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Registered: 1

Members noted their thanks for Officers for their excellent work in managing the budget during 2023/24.

### **78.5 Minutes of the Planning & Community Committee: 30 January 2024**

Councillor Soane presented the minutes of the Planning & Community Committee meeting held on 30 January 2024.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note the minutes of the Planning & Community Committee meeting held on 30 January 2024.

### **79. LEADER'S STATEMENT**

Councillor Baker, as Leader of the Council, provided a statement, the content of which is provided at **Appendix A**.

### **80. WOODLEY MEMORIAL RECREATION GROUND CHARITY**

#### **RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note that the Annual Return of the Woodley Memorial Recreation Ground Charity was submitted on 1 December 2024.

### **81. ANNUAL TOWN MEETING SUB COMMITTEE**

Following a query as to what remit would be given to the guest speaker for the annual town meeting, as well as the exhibitionist taking part in the Climate

Emergency exhibition during the day, Councillor Anderson, as Chairman of the sub committee, confirmed this would revolve around actions which can be undertaken to reduce residents' carbon footprint, with the guest speaker framing the situation. It was suggested Wokingham Borough Council's MyJourney team should be invited to attend, and Councillor Anderson welcomed further suggestions from Members.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note Report No. FC 2-24 of the Annual Town Meeting sub committee meeting which took place on 15 January 2024.

82. **OUTSIDE BODIES**

Councillor Smith advised Members that, whilst he was no longer a Town Council representative to the Poor's Land Charity, he would continue to support them to resolve the issues with their heating system.

In relation to his report regarding the Wokingham Borough Council Town Parish Liaison Forum, Councillor Kennedy queried whether it was the case that the Town Council had not had any input on the Borough's Community Vision and Partnership Working. The Town Clerk advised this was that case, but that Sally Watkins (WBC) had attended a recent Clerks Forum meeting, and it had been agreed a second round of consultation would take place involving the clerks.

Councillor Baker updated Members on the Wokingham Borough Council job fair which had taken place at the Oakwood Centre the previous week. Members noted this was the first time the Borough Council's job fair had taken place outside of Wokingham, and that it had been a well attended and successful event.

It was noted that, of the 13 outside bodies on which Councillors were appointed representatives, reports had only been received for 6. Councillor Guttridge had advised that she had been in discussions with Keep Mobile who had indicated they were uncertain why the Council would be interested in their activities. It was requested that Keep Mobile attend a meeting of Full Council in future to provide a presentation on their activities.

**RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note the written reports from Town Council representatives on outside bodies provided to Members at the meeting, and included at **Appendix B**.

83. **TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**

Members noted the details of the events which the Town Mayor and the Deputy Town Mayor had attended since the last Full Council meeting, as provided in the agenda.

84. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

There were no future agenda items suggested by Members.

85. **PUBLICITY & WEBSITE**

There were no publicity or website items suggested by Members.

Meeting closed at 8:41 pm

## LEADERS STATEMENT

Cllr Keith Baker  
6<sup>th</sup> February 2024

Thank you to all the councillors who have participated in all the discussions throughout the Standing Committees. The debates have been very intense with many good points being raised from all sides.

There is a lot of good news in the budget for both residents and charities. The budget setting process has been carried out by officers in the most testing of conditions. With record inflation rates being experienced during the last year it meant the Town Council was not immune to the financial consequences from it. At the beginning of the budget setting process, I asked officers to keep uppermost in their minds the impact of Council Tax on residents' household budgets.

To their credit they have done it again - setting a precept of £106.69 for a Band D property. That is a reduction of 2.8% on last year's precept. In isolation that is extremely good but when compared to the precept of 2021/22 it is an 11% drop over the last 3 years. In absolute terms that is a reduction of £13. It is now the lowest rate since 2016/17, before the pandemic.

Cynics will probably jump in and ask what cuts have been made to achieve this. The simple answer is none. Officers have been magnificent in managing the finances with our income streams growing very well.

The income from the Leisure Centre is around £100,000 higher than budgeted after ignoring the windfall of "Reclaimed VAT" of £133,690. Interestingly whilst this Town Council has not only applied for the rebate and received it WBC are still deciding what to do and have yet to claim anything! Maybe they should come here and see how it should be done!

Both Football and Cricket are continuing to be subsidised at approximately the same levels of previous years. Again, as in previous years both Coronation Hall and Chapel Hall are making small profits.

We are also continuing to share with charities our fiscal success with nearly £67,000 being distributed via grants to charities and individuals with just under half of that amount going to youth related charities.

Turning to Capital projects this financial year has seen an unprecedented investment of £185,000 to cover dozens of projects. Next year £80,000 will be set aside for Buildings and Facilities up from the usual £45,000.

I wonder if either Earley or Wokingham Town Councils can provide a "report" card anywhere as good as the one for Woodley Town Council? Can I close with thanking, on behalf of Woodley residents, all officers who were involved in the budget – it was not easy this year but you came through. You are simply the best.

## REPORTS FROM TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

OUTSIDE BODY	APPOINTED REPRESENTATIVE/S	REPORT PROVIDED	PAGE
<b>ARC</b>	Cllr K. Gilder Mrs S. Flower	No No	- -
<b>Citizens Advice Wokingham</b>	Cllr V. Lewis	Yes	<b>11</b>
<b>Friends of Woodford Park Committee</b>	Cllr R. Horskins	Yes	<b>3</b>
<b>Highwood Management Conference</b>	Cllr K. Gilder Cllr M. Holmes	No No	- -
<b>Keep Mobile</b>	Cllr L. Guttridge	No	-
<b>Poor's Land Charity</b>	Cllr M. Holmes Cllr K. Gilder Mrs S. Flower <b>VACANCY</b>	Yes	<b>4</b>
<b>ReadiBus</b>	Mr A. Heap	Yes	<b>5</b>
<b>Robert Palmer's Almshouse Charity</b>	Cllr D. Bragg	Yes	<b>10</b>
<b>Sonning &amp; District Welfare &amp; Education Trust</b>	Cllr D. Smith	Yes	<b>6</b>
<b>Wokingham Borough Council Climate Emergency Working Group</b>	Cllr Y. Edwards	No	-
<b>Wokingham Borough/Parish Liaison Forum</b>	Cllr M. Kennedy	Yes	<b>7</b>
<b>Woodley Bowling Club Management Committee</b>	Cllr K. Gilder	No	-
<b>Woodley Volunteer Centre</b>	Cllr M. Kennedy	Yes	<b>9</b>

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# OUTSIDE BODY REPRESENTATIVE'S FEEDBACK FORM



**MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2023/24**

This feedback report will be provided to Members at the next Full Council meeting

<b>Name of Outside Body</b>	Friends Of Woodford Park
<b>Name of Representative</b>	Robert Horskins
<b>Capacity appointed; e.g. trustee, director, observer etc</b>	Appointed
<b>Number of formal meetings held / invited</b> (since last report or 1 May)	One
<b>Number of formal meetings attended since last report</b> (since last report or 1 May)	One
<b>Reasons for not attending</b> (if attendance below 50%)	
<b>Please give a brief overview of the Outside Body for Members:</b>	
<p>The Friends of Woodford Park (FoWP) are a group of volunteers who have come together to help improve Woodford Park. Their first job was to create the flower bed near the War Memorial, celebrating late Queen Elizabeth's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday. The official opening was performed by local MP the Rt.Hon. Theresa May in June 2016. 'The RHS Britain in Bloom' recognised their community involvement in gardening achievement with awards in 2016 and 2017.</p>	
<b>Please give a brief synopsis of the Outside Body's activities since the last report:</b>	
<p>Much work has taken place around the park by the group. The established beds have continued to be maintained and restocked when required. Significant work has been undertaken in the raised beds to the front of the Oakwood Centre entrance. The group are often approached by members of the public with questions, comments and feedback made. During the winter months the group does not hold its formal Tuesday volunteer working group. During this period members are asked to keep a watchful eye on the beds and attend to any needs when passing. The groups AGM will be held in late February.</p>	
<b>Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful:</b>	
<p>This report covers the period since I was asked to be the Council's representative late summer '23 on; (although not formally agreed until December's full meeting) I attended a meeting of the group and met members of the Rotary group. I've informally met up with group members in the park on three occasions. If you are interested in joining the group or would like to learn more, you can find more information of their Facebook page or by emailing <a href="mailto:fowp.woodley@gmail.com">fowp.woodley@gmail.com</a>.</p>	

<b>Representative:</b>	RJC Horskins	<b>Dated:</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> January 2024
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# OUTSIDE BODY REPRESENTATIVE'S FEEDBACK FORM



## MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2023/24

This feedback report will be provided to Members at the next Full Council meeting

<b>Name of Outside Body</b>	Poorsland Charity
<b>Name of Representative</b>	Cllr K Gilder Cllr M Holmes and Mrs S Flower
<b>Capacity appointed; e.g. trustee, director, observer etc</b>	3 Trustees
<b>Number of formal meetings held / invited</b> (since last report or 1 May)	One meeting
<b>Number of formal meetings attended since last report</b> (since last report or 1 May)	All three of us attended this single meeting.
<b>Reasons for not attending</b> (if attendance below 50%)	----
<b>Please give a brief overview of the Outside Body for Members:</b>	
<p><b>This Poorsland Charity exists as part of the national Almshouses Charity and Woodley Town Council has 3 appointed representatives as Trustees, with currently one further vacant Town Council position.</b></p>	
<b>Please give a brief synopsis of the Outside Body's activities since the last report:</b>	
<p><b>The ongoing work of the charity is to oversee the general upkeep of the flats, bungalow and outside grounds which are the responsibility of the trustees. Contracts for the firms who carry out the required works are under constant revision.</b></p> <p><b>One of the flats has recently become vacant and processes are currently in place to interview for a new tennant. The new incumbant will need to be a resident of Woodley and in a needy position.</b></p>	
<b>Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful:</b>	

<b>Representatives:</b>	<b>Cllrs K Gilder and M Holmes and Mrs S Flower</b>	<b>Dated:</b>	<b>31st January 2024</b>
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# OUTSIDE BODY REPRESENTATIVE'S FEEDBACK FORM



## MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2023/24

This feedback report will be provided to Members at the next Full Council meeting

<b>Name of Outside Body</b>	Readibus
<b>Name of Rep</b>	Alex Heap
<b>Capacity appointed; e.g. trustee, director, observer etc</b>	Director
<b>Number of formal meetings held / invited to</b>	5
<b>Number of formal meetings attended</b>	4
<b>Reasons for not attending (if below 50%)</b>	
<b>Please give a brief overview of the Outside Body for Members:</b>	
Readibus provides a dial a ride service for the elderly and infirm enabling them to access shopping, social and medical activities that they would be unable to access by conventional transport	
<b>Please give a brief synopsis of the Outside Body's activities since the last report:</b>	
<p>The Readibus Board met on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December</p> <p>The supplier of our new buses has gone into administration, it has been acquired by the Dumarey Group, there will be a delay in the delivery of the latest bus, the 32k deposit is safe</p> <p>On the West Berkshire Council issue a further meeting is being planned in the New Year</p> <p>There are still vacancies for a Treasurer and Secretary to the Board A proposal for the appointment of an Hon Sec will be presented to the next Board meeting on 6 Feb</p> <p>The Board reviewed the latest Management Accounts and the draft income &amp; expenditure for 2024/25</p> <p>The audit group met on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024</p> <p>The charity commissioners Annual Return was sent well before the deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024</p>	
<b>Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful:</b>	
<p>ReadiBus has won equal second place for the 'Making a Difference' Award at the national CT Awards in November. The 'Making a Difference' Award recognises an organisation that has gone above and beyond to support its passengers in the aftermath of the pandemic</p> <p>The next Board meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 6th February 2024 at 6:30pm in Room 4b, Civic Offices, Reading.</p>	

<b>Rep:</b>	<b>Alex Heap</b>	<b>Dated:</b>	<b>31/01/2024</b>
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# OUTSIDE BODY REPRESENTATIVE'S FEEDBACK FORM



## MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2023/24

This feedback report will be provided to Members at the next Full Council meeting

<b>Name of Outside Body</b>	Sonning & District Welfare & Education Trust
<b>Name of Representative</b>	Darren Smith
<b>Capacity appointed; e.g. trustee, director, observer etc</b>	
<b>Number of formal meetings held / invited</b> (since last report or 1 May)	
<b>Number of formal meetings attended since last report</b> (since last report or 1 May)	
<b>Reasons for not attending</b> (if attendance below 50%)	
<b>Please give a brief overview of the Outside Body for Members:</b>	
<b>Please give a brief synopsis of the Outside Body's activities since the last report:</b>	
No report since last meeting.	
<b>Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful:</b>	


<b>Representative:</b>	<b>Darren Smith</b>	<b>Dated:</b>	<b>29<sup>th</sup> Jan 2024</b>
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# OUTSIDE BODY REPRESENTATIVE'S FEEDBACK FORM



## MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2023/24

This feedback report will be provided to Members at the next Full Council meeting

<b>Name of Outside Body</b>	Wokingham Borough/Parish Liaison Forum
<b>Name of Representative</b>	Cllr Mike Kennedy
<b>Capacity appointed; e.g. trustee, director, observer etc</b>	Town Council's appointed representative
<b>Number of formal meetings held / invited</b> (since last report)	1
<b>Number of formal meetings attended since last report</b> (since last report)	1
<b>Reasons for not attending</b> (if attendance below 50%)	100% attendance
<b>Please give a brief overview of the Outside Body for Members:</b>	
Meetings are held quarterly between representatives from the Borough Council and Town and Parish Councils.	
<b>Please give a brief synopsis of the Outside Body's activities since the last report:</b>	
I attended my second Parish Liaison meeting held on 6 December 2023	
<b>Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful:</b>	
<p>I asked the following question <b>"What rationale is applied by WBC in selecting electrical charging points for EVs on the highway? (not car parks).</b> My reason for asking this question relates to the positioning of a charging point in Wheble Drive between Manners Road and Bruce Road which is impossible to use!</p>  <p>◀ Charging point here</p> <p>Note houses are on the left with owners choosing to park cars outside their property making it impossible to use the charging point without completely blocking access.</p> <p>Cllr Smith, the Chairman of the Forum, explained that WBC received capital money from the government to install these charging points throughout the borough. My question prompted a lively debate as some parishes have not been selected for charging points.</p>	

My question will receive a written response, needless to say I'm still waiting. (I have also asked Councillor Fishwick, Executive Member for Highways, for an answer but have not received a reply to date)

There was widespread dismay caused by City Fibre and their method of working when installing fibre optic cable with no apparent co-ordination with other utilities. WBC hold quarterly meetings with utility companies. Planned road closures are made known to Town and Parish Councils.

A financial report on the current situation was presented by Graham Ebers, Assistant CEO and Director of Financial Services supported by Kevin Gordon, Adult & Childrens Services. Mr Ebers described the current financial situation as the worst he has seen in 33 years! He predicted Council Tax would increase by 2.99% and Adult Social Care by a further 2% in the context of CPI increases of 6%. There have been 140 staff reductions with more to come.

The Council applies the principle that value for money starts with demonstrable need; some needs will not be met because there are higher needs. Adult social care provision has increased by 5% while the National Living Wage has gone up by 10%. EHCP (Education Health Care Plans) has increased by 3-6%; Home to school transport budget will increase by £13m by 2026/7 from £11.5m in 2023/24. The overall budget deficit is predicted to be £8m with a further budget gap of £5m in 2024/25.

In response to my question will the Council need to use general fund balances to bring the deficit down the answer was yes. Overall, a most interesting and informative presentation, with the officers actually present rather than joining the meeting remotely as was the case at the last meeting of the forum.

An update from Sally Watkins on the Council's Community Vision and Partnership Working was made. It would appear that Woodley Town Council has not responded. I have taken this matter up with the Town Clerk.

Future agenda item: I suggested Climate Emergency which was generally well received by the meeting. The next meeting takes place mid-February.

**Representative:**

**Cllr Mike Kennedy**

**Dated:**

**30.01.2024**

# OUTSIDE BODY REPRESENTATIVE'S FEEDBACK FORM



## MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2023/24

This feedback report will be provided to Members at the next Full Council meeting

<b>Name of Outside Body</b>	Woodley Volunteer Centre
<b>Name of Representative</b>	Cllr Mike Kennedy
<b>Capacity appointed; e.g. trustee, director, observer etc</b>	Town Council's appointed representative
<b>Number of formal meetings held / invited</b> (since last report)	0
<b>Number of formal meetings attended since last report</b> (since last report)	0
<b>Reasons for not attending</b> (if attendance below 50%)	
<b>Please give a brief overview of the Outside Body for Members:</b>	
<p>Woodley Volunteer Centre was set up in 1982 and evolved from a Good Neighbours Scheme. Originally, volunteers provided support to Woodley residents in a variety of ways such as gardening, DIY, and shopping but now their focus is purely on transporting clients to their medical appointments. Woodley Volunteer Centre receives an annual grant from Wokingham Borough Council (WBC) of £1,750. Clients are able to use their bus passes issued to them by WBC in payment of all medical jobs undertaken. Drivers are reimbursed 50p per mile for their services.</p>	
<b>Please give a brief synopsis of the Outside Body's activities since the last report:</b>	
<p>4 new drivers have been recruited which brought the total to 20. It is very busy in the office particularly with requests for Covid and Flu injections. There are 213 clients on the books and the decision has been made not to take on any new clients until the New Year in order to ensure we continue to meet the present demand. All drivers will be DBS checked in the near future. <b>The planned meeting of WVC due on 17 January 2024 was postponed.</b></p>	
<b>Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful:</b>	
<p>Strategy and Resources Committee awarded a grant of £350 at its last meeting for which the Charity is extremely grateful and has asked me to convey their thanks to the Council. This will be applied towards a new printer, driver's DBS checks and driver's Lanyards. I have transported 34 clients to their GP and hospital appointments since 5 July in my capacity as a volunteer driver. If any member can spare a little of their time to help Woodley Volunteer Centre, please contact them on 0118 969 8849. Appointments are mostly during the day time and on weekdays with some occasional weekend work.</p>	

<b>Representative:</b>	<b>Cllr Mike Kennedy</b>	<b>Dated:</b>	<b>30.01.2024</b>
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## **Robert Palmer Almshouses**

Report following latest meeting in January 2024

I am pleased to advise that this Charity is operating on a stable financial basis with a significant surplus in Income and Expenditure in 2023.

This Grade II listed building requires a lot of maintenance and among other things, the Chimneys were all repointed last year together with decoration and repair work inside a couple of the houses.

Meetings with residents take place on a 6 monthly basis where the trustees listen to all comments and problems and try to resolve them quickly. Recent requests have covered the garden area where the trustees are looking to replace the bench seating for the enjoyment of residents during periods of good weather. The main gardens at the front are very attractive with a large patio area to the rear overlooking the allotments.

A review of the Health and Safety rules is currently underway together with updating of Risk Assessments, which will include an updated Fire safety check.

The next meeting of the trustees is scheduled for April

**Cllr David Bragg**

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# OUTSIDE BODY REPRESENTATIVE'S FEEDBACK FORM



**MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2023/24**

This feedback report will be provided to Members at the next Full Council meeting

<b>Name of Outside Body</b>	Citizens Advice Bureau (Wokingham)
<b>Name of Representative</b>	Vin Lewis
<b>Capacity appointed; e.g. trustee, director, observer etc</b>	Observer
	1
<b>Number of formal meetings attended since last report</b> (since last report or 1 May)	1
<b>Reasons for not attending</b> (if attendance below 50%)	
<b>Please give a brief overview of the Outside Body for Members:</b>	
<p><b>Citizens Advice (Wokingham) (WCAB)</b> offers free, confidential, impartial and independent advice and information to anyone living or working in Wokingham borough. We are a local charity, based in Waterford House in central Wokingham.</p> <p>At Waterford House we offer face-to-face, telephone and email assessments and appointments. We also offer face-to-face drop-in assessments and advice appointments at our Headley Road office in central Woodley.</p> <p>We also have a Mobile Advice Unit that can be found at a number of locations throughout each month. Details of which can be found on our website.</p> <p>Our small team of <b>20</b> staff and <b>83</b> volunteers are committed to giving high quality client centred advice and information and all have a commitment to equality and diversity.</p>	
<b>Please give a brief synopsis of the Outside Body's activities since the last report:</b>	
<p>During these times of Cost of Living / High Energy costs and High Inflation, Wokingham Borough Council provide financial assistance for:</p> <p><b>Household Support Funds</b>  <b>Wokingham Local Welfare Provision (LWP)</b>  <b>Wokingham United Charities essential item grant</b>  <b>Foodbanks and Free School Meals</b></p> <p><b>Other Key Partners</b>  <b>The Cowshed</b> Clothing for adults, children and babies.  <b>First Days</b> are a local Children's Charity  <b>Mind in Berkshire</b> provide the Wokingham Wellbeing Service – free one-to-one sessions to people who may be experiencing mental health issues  <b>Cranstoun</b> deliver the Wokingham Domestic Abuse service  <b>Kaleidoscopic UK</b> are a charitable organisation for survivors of domestic abuse</p>	



Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful:

CEO of WCAB: **Bill Feeny**

Trustees of WCAB:

**Jan Cameron, Anne Deller, Maria Juarez, Alison Lucas, Naomi Lynam**

## Financial Year 2022 highlights

**8,657**

issues reported

**£537k**

debt **WRITTEN OFF**

**4,917**

supported residents

**2,591**

clients

**3,000**

food bank applications processed

**£873k**

income gain to vulnerable residents

### Issues

	Issues	Clients
Benefits & tax credits	2,545	1,479
Benefits Universal Credit	333	182
Charitable Support & Food Ban..	1,022	548
Consumer goods & services	397	209
Debt	1,022	405
Education	39	30
Employment	434	195
Financial services & capability	220	162
GVA & Hate Crime	43	32
Health & community care	171	103
Housing	810	390
Immigration & asylum	116	64
Legal	244	138
Other	77	15
Relationships & family	308	167
Tax	49	37
Travel & transport	76	58
Utilities & communications	751	335
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>8,657</b>	

## Gender



- Female
- Male
- Prefer different t...

## Disability / Long-term health



- Long-Term Health Condition
- Disabled
- Not disabled/no health problems

## Ethnicity



- White
- Asian
- Black
- Mixed
- Other

**Representative:**

**Vin Lewis**

**Dated:**

**05 Feb 2024**