



The Oakwood Centre, Headley Road, Woodley, Berkshire, RG5 4JZ
www.woodley.gov.uk

To: **ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED to attend a Meeting of Woodley Town Council at the Oakwood Centre at 8:00pm on Tuesday 24 June 2025.

The Town Council reserves the right to record and broadcast this meeting. Anybody attending the meeting will, by virtue, consent to having their image and audio recorded for this purpose.

Kevin Murray
Town Clerk

Town Forum

The first 30 minutes of the meeting will be set aside for members of the public to pose questions to the Council.

If there are no questions, the Council will commence business forthwith.

A G E N D A

Prior to the meeting, Dexter Levick (Economic Development Officer - Wokingham Borough Council), will present Members with an update on the Borough's Town Centre Strategy.

1. **APOLOGIES**
2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
To receive any declarations of interest from Members.
3. **MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 6 MAY 2025**
To receive the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 6 May 2025 and to approve their signing as a true and correct record.
4. **ACTIONS / FOLLOW UPS**
To review the actions / follow ups arising from previous meetings of Full Council. **(Appendix 4)**

Page 5

Page 17

5. **FINANCE UPDATE**

To note that the appropriate authorised bank signatories have checked and signed the Council's bank reconciliations up to 31 May 2025.

6. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

To note reports from the following:

6.1	Planning & Community Committee	20 May 2025	Page 19
6.2	Leisure Services Committee	3 June 2025	Page 27
6.3	Strategy & Resources Committee	10 June 2025	Page 31
6.4	Planning & Community Committee	17 June 2025	Page 35

7. **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2024/25**

*The documents for this agenda item are enclosed separately in the **Financial Statements and Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25 Appendix**.*

- a) To approve the Financial Statements for 2024/25 and authorise the signing of the statements by the Mayor and the Town Clerk. Appendix Pages 1 - 10

The Financial Statements have been prepared as supporting accounting working papers to the Accounting Statements as set out in Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

- b) To receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report (as set out in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25). Appendix Page 13

- c) To approve the Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25 as set out in Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and authorise the signing of the document by the Mayor and the Town Clerk. Appendix Page 14

Supporting information to the Annual Internal Audit Report and Annual Governance Statement is provided. Appendix Pages 17 – 37

- d) To approve the Accounting Statements for 2024/25, as set out in Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and authorise the signing of the statements by the Mayor. Appendix Page 15

Attached for Members' information is an explanation of the variances, which has been prepared for the external audit. Appendix Page 38

8. **TOWN / PARISH QUESTIONS AT BOROUGH COUNCIL MEETINGS**

To note that Wokingham Borough Council's new Constitution, effectual from 1 June 2025, includes provision for questions by Town / Parish Councils at meetings of Council, Executive and other committees (excluding Planning).

There will be a standing item on all agendas for WBC meetings allowing 10 minutes for consideration of questions, which must be submitted by the Town Clerk and naming the person who will ask the question at the meeting. The deadline for submission of questions is seven working days before the meeting (general questions) or two working days if the question relates to a specific agenda item.

An internal process will be drafted by officers for consideration as to how such questions might be raised on behalf of the Town Council.

9. **YOUTH STRATEGY**

To consider the following recommendation, made by the Youth Support Services task & finish working group at their meeting held on 16 June 2025:

RECOMMENDED:

- ♦ That Full Council approve amending paragraph 17 of the Council's Youth Strategy to state "The Council will only fund services which take place within the Woodley Town Council boundary, or outside the boundary where funding provides for access for Woodley residents".

A recommendation of this nature would usually go to the Leisure Services Committee, as the working group's parent committee, before being recommended to Full Council for approval. However, in recognition of the desire to progress towards a youth provision commencing in the Autumn, and with the Leisure Services Committee not due to meet until September, the working group requested that this be presented to this meeting of Full Council.

The Council's Youth Strategy currently only permits the funding of services that take place within Woodley, with the intention to help ensure these are accessed by Woodley residents. However, in view of the proposals received and now under consideration, the working group believe that funding services / activities which take place outside of Woodley would also be appropriate, so long as the funding goes towards providing access for Woodley residents.

10. **LEADER'S STATEMENT**

To receive a statement from the Leader of the Council.

11. **OUTSIDE BODIES**

- a) To receive any reports from Town Council representatives on outside bodies. **(Appendix 11)**
- b) To appoint to a Town Council representative to the following outside body:
 - Allotment Tenants' Committee

Page 41

12. **TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**

To note the engagements attended by Councillor Bragg as Town Mayor since the last meeting. **(Appendix 12)**

Page 49

13. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

To consider any items for inclusion in future Council agendas.

14. **PUBLICITY AND WEBSITE**

To consider items to be publicised.

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**Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council held at the Oakwood Centre
on Tuesday 6 May 2025 at 8 pm**

Present: *Councillors D. Bragg (Chairman); J. Anderson; K. Baker; G. Bello; K. Charles Bey; J. Cheng; Y. Edwards; D. Errawalla; M. Firmager; K. Gilder; C. Jewell; M. Kennedy; J. Sartorel; P. Singh; B. Soane; A. Swaddle; J. Taylor*

Officers present: *K. Murray, Town Clerk; M. Filmore, Deputy Town Clerk;*

Also present: *Cllr R. Horskins; Cllr M. Holmes (Virtual Attendance)
2 members of the public*

1. *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.*

2. **ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR**

The existing Mayor, Councillor Anderson, addressed the Council.

Councillor Anderson called for nominations for the office of Town Mayor for 2025/26.

It was proposed by Councillor Baker, seconded by Councillor Swaddle and

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To elect Councillor Bragg to the office of Town Mayor of Woodley for the 2025/26 municipal year.

Voting: For: 16 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Registered: 1

3. **TOWN MAYOR'S DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE**

Councillor Bragg, as the newly elected Mayor, took over as Chair of the meeting and addressed the Council.

The Mayor thanked Members for their confidence in nominating him, stating it was an honour, particularly during such an important year with the 80th anniversary of VE Day approaching. He promised to represent and serve the town with respect and energy.

Councillor Bragg advised that Promise Inclusion would be his chosen charity for the municipal year, whose work supports children and adults with learning difficulties or on the autistic spectrum.

Councillor Bragg confirmed he would sign the Declaration of Acceptance of Office of Town Mayor as soon as possible after the meeting.

4. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Holmes, Horskins, Lewis, Nagra, Rowland and Smith. Councillor Horskins and Holmes attended the meeting virtually.

5. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

6. **ELECTION OF DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR**

It was proposed by Councillor Anderson, seconded by Councillor Baker, and

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To elect Councillor Smith to the office of Deputy Mayor for the 2025/26 municipal year

Voting: For: 16 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Registered: 1

7. **POLITICAL GROUP LEADERS**

7.1 **RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note the appointment of Councillor Soane as Leader of the Conservative Group, and that no Deputy Leader would be appointed.

7.2 **RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note the appointment of Councillor Taylor as Leader and Councillor Edwards as Deputy Leader of the Labour Group.

7.3 **RESOLVED:**

- ◆ To note the appointment of Councillor Jewell as Leader and Councillor Rowland as Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group.

8. **ELECTION OF THE LEADERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL**

8.1 It was proposed by Councillor Gilder, seconded by Councillor Swaddle and

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To elect Councillor Baker as Leader of the Council for the 2025/26 municipal year.

Voting: For: 11 Against: 0 Abstentions: 5 No Vote Registered: 1

Cllr Taylor requested consideration be made for the provision of a description of the role of the Leader of the Council in the Council's Standing Orders. Councillor Baker suggested this be extended to cover the roles of the Town Mayor and political group leaders as well.

8.2 It was proposed by Councillor Gilder, seconded by Councillor Baker and

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To elect Councillor Swaddle as Deputy Leader of the Council for the 2025/26 municipal year.

Voting: For: 15 Against: 0 Abstentions: 1 No Vote Registered: 1

9. **STANDING COMMITTEES**

The Mayor advised Members that, if no changes were to be proposed to the terms of reference, known as Powers and Duties, of the Standing Committees then it would be expedient to approve these en masse. No Members proposed any changes, and it was:

9.1 **RESOLVED:**

- ♦ To approve the Powers and Duties of the three standing committees - Strategy & Resources, Leisure Services, Planning & Community - for the 2025/26 municipal year, which includes setting the number of places on each standing committee at 10.

Voting: For: 16 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Registered: 1

9.2 **Strategy and Resources Committee**

RESOLVED:

- ♦ To note the appointment of Councillors Anderson, Baker, Bello, Bragg, Gilder, Horskins, Kennedy, Nagra, Rowland and Swaddle to the Strategy and Resources Committee for the 2025/26 municipal year.

9.3 **Leisure Services Committee**

RESOLVED:

- ♦ To note the appointment of Councillors Bragg, Edwards, Errawalla, Firmager, Gilder, Jewell, Kennedy, Lewis, Singh and Smith to the Leisure Services Committee for the 2025/26 municipal year.

9.4 **Planning and Community Committee**

RESOLVED:

- ♦ To note the appointment of Councillors Baker, Bragg, Guttridge, Horskins, Jewell, Lewis, Sartorel, Soane and Taylor to the Planning and Community Committee for the 2024/25 municipal year, with one Labour group place remaining vacant at the current time.

10. **MEMBERSHIP OF SUB COMMITTEES, TASK & FINISH WORKING GROUPS AND PARTNERSHIPS**

Under Standing Orders 6.4a, 6.5a and 6.6a respectively, members of the parent standing committees considered the terms of reference as follows:

10.1 **Strategy and Resources Committee**

It was proposed by Councillor Baker, seconded by Councillor Gilder and

RESOLVED:

- ♦ To approve the terms of reference for all committees for whom the Strategy & Resources Committee is the parent committee, as follows:
 - Investments Sub Committee – 4 places
 - Risk Management Sub Committee – 4 places
 - Standing Orders & Financial Regulations Sub Committee – 4 places
 - PR & Marketing Sub Committee – 4 places
 - Personnel Sub Committee – 4 places
 - Woodley Town Centre Partnership – 3 places (including 1 substitute)

Voting: For: 6 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Registered: 1

10.2 **Investments Sub Committee:**

RESOLVED:

- ♦ To note the appointment of Councillors Anderson, Baker, Bello and Bragg to the Investments Sub Committee for the municipal year.

10.3 Risk Management Sub Committee:

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the appointment of Councillors Bello, Bragg, Guttridge and Horskins to the Risk Management Sub Committee for the municipal year.

10.4 Standing Orders and Financial Regulations Sub Committee:

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the appointment of Councillors Baker, Kennedy, Taylor and Swaddle to the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations Sub Committee for the municipal year.

10.5 PR & Marketing Sub Committee:

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the appointment of Councillors Anderson, Errawalla, Swaddle and Taylor to the PR & Marketing Sub Committee for the municipal year.

10.6 Personnel Sub Committee:

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the appointment of Councillors Anderson, Kennedy, Singh and Soane to the Personnel Sub Committee for the municipal year.

10.7 Woodley Town Centre Partnership:

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the appointment of Councillors Baker, Holmes and Singh to the Woodley Town Centre Partnership for the municipal year.
- ◆ For Councillor Singh to remain as a named substitute on the Woodley Town Centre Partnership for the 2025/26 municipal year.

Councillor Baker recommended the Council seek to amend the terms of reference to have three full places for Councillor appointments, with no substitute Member.

10.8 Leisure Services Committee

It was proposed by Councillor Firmager, seconded by Councillor Gilder and

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To approve the terms of reference for all committees for whom the Leisure Services Committee is the parent committee, as follows:
 - Community Youth Partnership – 4 places
 - 3G Pitch Steering Group Sub Committee – 4 places
 - Woodford Park Leisure Centre Development task & finish working group – 4 places
 - Youth Support Services task & finish working group – 4 places

Voting: For: 5 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Registered: 3

10.9 **Community Youth Partnership:**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the appointment of Councillors Bragg, Edwards, Gilder and Holmes to the Community Youth Partnership for the municipal year.
- ◆ To note the appointment of the following voluntary sector representatives to the Community Youth Partnership for the municipal year:
 - Graham Sumblar (Woodley Baptist Church)
 - Trina Farrance (Bulmershe Gymnastics)
 - Sam Milligan (Just Around the Corner)
 - Dylan Harman (1st Woodley Boys' Brigade)
 - Chas Randle (2nd Woodley Scouts)
 - Chinyere Davies (Me2 Club)

10.10 **3G Pitch Steering Group Sub Committee:**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the appointment of Councillors Bragg, Firmager, Lewis and Taylor to the 3G Pitch Steering Group for the municipal year.

10.11 **WPLC Development task & finish working group:**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the appointment of Councillors Edwards, Horskins, Kennedy and Smith to the Woodford Park Leisure Centre Development task & finish working group for the municipal year.

10.12 **Youth Support Service task & finish working group:**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the appointment of Councillors Edwards, Firmager, Gilder and Kennedy to the Youth Support Service task & finish working group for the municipal year.

10.13 **Planning and Community Committee**

Cycling & Walking task & finish working group:

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To approve the terms of reference of the Cycling & Walking task & finish working group for the municipal year, including that there be 5 places on the working group, 2 for Councillors and 3 for outside organisation representatives.

Voting: For: 4 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Registered: 2

- ◆ To note the appointment of Councillors Jewell and Taylor to the working group for the municipal year.

10.14 **Full Council**

Annual Town Meeting Sub Committee:

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To approve the terms of reference of the Annual Town Meeting Sub Committee for the municipal year, including that there be 4 places on the committee.

Voting: For: 16 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Registered: 1

- ◆ To note the appointment of Councillors Anderson, Edwards, Horskins and Kennedy to the working group for the municipal year.

10.15 **Bulmershe Site of Urban Landscape Value (SULV) Joint Sub Committee**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the terms of reference of the Bulmershe SULV Joint Sub Committee.
- ◆ To note the appointment of Councillors Errawalla, Gilder and Taylor to the committee for the municipal year.
- ◆ For Councillor Taylor to remain as the named substitute on the Woodley Town Centre Partnership for the 2025/26 municipal year.

Councillor Baker requested the Town Clerk contact Earley Town Council to seek to amend the terms of reference to have three full places for Councillor appointments, with no substitute Member.

11. **APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

To expedite proceedings, the Mayor proposed that nominations would initially be sought for each outside body. Where there were more nominations than places, an individual vote would take place on that specific appointment. Otherwise, at the end of all nominations being made, an overall vote would be taken on all uncontested appointments. No concerns were raised with regards to this proposal.

The Town Clerk confirmed that, in a change to the published agenda, the appointment of a representative to the Allotments Tenants Committee has been requested by the committee to be deferred to the next meeting of Full Council.

Councillor Soane advised that the Museum of Berkshire Aviation Trust were not aware of his appointment in the previous year. It was agreed this would be followed up.

11.1 Following a recommendation, it was:

RESOLVED:

- ◆ That the following Members, appointed during the 2024/25 municipal as Town Council representatives to outside bodies, continue for the 2025/26 municipal year:

ARC – 2 places

Councillor Gilder and Mrs S. Flower

Berkshire Association of Local Councils – 1 place

Councillor Kennedy

Citizens Advice Wokingham – 1 place

Councillor Lewis

Friends of Woodford Park Committee – 1 place

Councillor Horskins

Highwood Management Conference – 2 places

Councillors Gilder and Holmes

Keep Mobile – 1 place

Councillor Guttridge

Museum of Berkshire Aviation Trust – 1 place

Councillor Soane

ReadiBus – 1 place

Councillor Guttridge

Sonning & District Welfare & Education Trust – 1 place

Councillor Smith

Wokingham Borough/Parish Working Group – 1 place

Councillor Kennedy

Woodley Bowling Club Management Committee – 1 place

Councillor Gilder

Woodley Volunteer Centre – 1 place

Councillor Kennedy

Voting: For: 16 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Registered: 1

11.2 It was then proposed and, following individual votes, it was:

RESOLVED:

- ♦ To appoint the followings Members as Town Council representatives on outside bodies:

Poor's Land Charity – 1 place to serve until 2028

Councillor Charles Bey

Voting: For: 15 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Registered: 2

Wokingham Borough Council Town Centre Strategy Working Group – 1 place

Councillor Soane

Voting: For: 16 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Registered: 1

11.3 Continuing representation on the following outside bodies was noted:

Poor's Land Charity – 3 places

Councillors Gilder and Holmes serving until 2026

Mrs S. Flower serving until 2028

Robert Palmer's Almshouse Charity – 1 place

Councillor Bragg serving to 2028

12. **BANK SIGNATORIES**

It was suggested that a bigger pool of signatories should be considered, noting a recommendation by the internal auditor that responsibility for authorising payments should be spread further. It was commented that, at present, out of the four signatories, authorisation tended to be dealt with by only two of these Councillors on a regular basis. The Town Clerk advised that the auditor's recommendation was that authorisation be shared more evenly amongst the appointed signatories. A further suggestion was made that a bank signatory from outside of the Conservative Group would be welcomed, and Councillor Taylor indicated she would be happy to do so.

Following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED:

- ♦ To appoint Councillors Baker, Bragg, Kennedy, Swaddle and Taylor as signatories to authorise payments and financial transfers on behalf of the Council for the municipal year.

Voting: For: 16 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Registered: 1

13. **MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 6 FEBRUARY 2024**

The Mayor presented the minutes of the Council meeting held on 11 February 2025.

Following a query regarding the quality of the sound recording at meetings, the Town Clerk confirmed that a new system had now been purchased and was due to be installed by the end of May.

Minute 84.4 – Strategy & Resources Committee Minutes: 21 January 2025

The Town Clerk confirmed that, following a request at this meeting to consider reinstating gates on the play area in Wheble Park, details of progress would be reported back to the Leisure Services Committee.

Minute 88 – Outside Bodies

In relation to the Highwood Management Conference, it was highlighted that concern had been raised about a comment made at the Full Council meeting that the extent of Highwood had now been extended to cover South Lake. It was commented that South Lake is entirely within Woodley, and that it would not be appropriate for Earley Town Council, who form part of the Highwood Management Conference, to have any say on this area of Woodley. The Town Clerk confirmed he would follow up this concern after the meeting.

RESOLVED

- ♦ To approve the minutes of the Council meeting held on 11 February 2025 and that they be signed by the Town Mayor as a correct record.

Voting: For: 16 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Recorded: 1

14. **ACTIONS / FOLLOW UPS**

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

15. **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

15.1 **Minutes of the Planning and Community Committee: 4 March 2025**

Councillor Soane presented the minutes of the Planning and Community Committee meeting held on 4 March 2025.

RESOLVED:

- ♦ To receive the minutes of the Planning and Community Committee meeting held on 4 March 2025.

15.2 **Minutes of the Leisure Services Committee: 25 March 2025**

Councillor Firmager presented the minutes of the Leisure Services Committee meeting held on 25 March 2025.

Minute 56 – Actions & Follow Ups

A request was made to update the draft minutes to make it clear that the sports wall referred to is in Wheble Park.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To receive the minutes of the Leisure Services Committee meeting held on 25 March 2025.

15.3 Minutes of the Planning and Community Committee: 1 April 2025

Councillor Soane presented the minutes of the Planning and Community Committee meeting held on 1 April 2025.

Minute 192.1 – Community Speedwatch

A request was made for the Community Speedwatch group to consider undertaking activities on Beechwood Avenue, along the straight section between Reading Road and Woodwaye. Councillor Taylor confirmed this road was on the list of potential roads for consideration. Members were also reminded that an online form was available on the Council's website by which requests for potential speedwatch locations can be registered.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To receive the minutes of the Planning and Community Committee meeting held on 1 April 2025.

15.4 Minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee: 22 April 2025

Councillor Baker presented the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting held on 22 April 2025.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To approve the updated Youth Service Strategy, as set out in the agenda.

Voting: For: 16 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Registered: 1

Minute 95 – Oakwood Centre Frontage

A request was made to consider providing cover for the cycle racks located at the front of the Oakwood Centre. The Town Clerk confirmed this would be considered.

Minutes 82 – Actions & Follow Ups

Following a query in relation to the extension of the lease of Wheble Park, the Town Clerk confirmed that he had been in contact with the Portfolio Manager at Reading Borough Council and that a draft lease was being written up.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To receive the minutes of the Strategy & Resources Committee meeting held on 22 April 2025.

15.5 Minutes of the Planning and Community Committee: 29 April 2025

Councillor Soane presented the minutes of the Planning and Community Committee meeting held on 29 April 2025.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To receive the minutes of the Planning and Community Committee meeting held on 29 April 2025.

16. **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING SUB COMMITTEE**

Councillor Anderson presented the Report No. FC 3/25 of the Annual Town Meeting sub committee meeting, which took place on 25 March 2025.

RESOLVED:

- ♦ To note Report No. FC 3/25 of the Annual Town Meeting sub committee meeting which took place on 25 March 2025.

16. **FINANCE UPDATE**

A query was raised that, in relation to the Strategy & Resources Committee, the end of year figures provided in Report No. FC 4/25 differed to those presented in the budgetary control document at the Strategy & Resources Committee meeting on 22 April. The Town Clerk confirmed the reason for these differences would be reviewed and details provided to all Members.

It was suggested that purpose of individual funding pots should be made clearer, identifying whether they relate to, or could be spent on, capital or revenue spending. The Town Clerk advised that the aim was to provide clearer details in future, with any feedback welcomed. The Deputy Town Clerk advised Members this was the first time an end of year budget report had been provided to Members with the intention of providing greater levels of information. He also requested that queries on reports, such as these, be raised with Officers prior to the meeting wherever possible in order that they can be investigated and for answers to be formulated.

RESOLVED:

- ♦ To note Report No. FC 4/25.
- ♦ To note that the appropriate authorised bank signatories had checked and signed the Council's bank reconciliations up to 31 March 2025.

17. **LEADER'S STATEMENT**

Councillor Baker, as Leader of the Council, read out a statement, included at **Appendix A**.

18. **OUTSIDE BODIES**

Alongside the outside body reports provided in the agenda, the following additional reports were provided to all Members at the meeting:

- Citizen's Advice Wokingham – Councillor Lewis
- Robert Palmer's Almshouse Charity – Councillor Bragg
- Friends of Woodford Park – Councillor Horskins

RESOLVED:

- ♦ To note the written reports from Town Council outside body representatives, as provided in the agenda and at the meeting.

19. **TOWN MAYOR'S ENGAGEMENTS**

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

20. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

There were no suggestions for future agenda items.

21. **PUBLICITY AND WEBSITE**

It was suggested that, in light of the recent enhancement of the Communications & Events Managers role, that they might prepare a report regarding future communication and marketing plans and how these intend to be managed.

Meeting closed at 9:44 pm

DRAFT

LEADERS STATEMENT

Cllr Keith Baker

6th May 2024

First of all I want to pay a massive tribute to the outgoing Mayor, Cllr Juliet Anderson. She has carried out her task with the highest level of professionalism but also with the right level of humility. She will be a hard act to follow but I know David will rise to occasion during his year of office. I want to give my most heartfelt thanks to Juliet from both a personal basis and on behalf of all Woodley residents.

I also would like to welcome Cllr Darren Smith who has been voted into the role of Deputy Mayor. I have known Darren for many years, in many different roles and I know he will do a great job standing in for David.

As we move into a new year I would like to reflect on the previous 12 months. Collectively we have achieved quite a lot during that period. However, one particular achievement should be highlighted that is around the council tax level. From the moment my group took control in 2013 Woodley Town Council had the unhelpful accolade of being the most expensive Town or Parish Council Tax. Together Officers and my group have worked extremely hard to try and remove that "award". All that hard work has finally paid off so that another Town / Parish Council charges more than us.

The numbers are incredibly impressive. From 2013 to now our Town Council Tax has been reduced by nearly 7% in absolute terms and a whopping 58% in real terms. Throughout that period, we have not cut a single service or facility. We have not cut any of the most generous grant regime in the Borough. We have even started to pay off the huge loan taken out to build the Oakwood Centre. In significant contrast our neighbouring Town Council have steadily increased their Town Council Tax with Wokingham Town increasing theirs by 71% and Earley Town by 45%.

The good news does not stop there. Looking towards next year we have major investments planned for the Oakwood Centre café and the Theatre. We will also start, for what I believe is a first in the Borough, a major exercise on engagement with residents on the budget for 2026 / 27. Obviously, this will lead directly to what happens with the Council Tax figure for that year. These are exciting times and I hope all councillors will fully embrace all of these actions.

My last comment on this past year is about attendance of all councillors at any council meetings. Over the last 6 months there has been a marked drop in attendance at these meetings. Some councillors have not even sent their apologies which is not good. Several councillors have been excellent in sending their apologies and I thank them for that. Remember residents bothered to come out and vote for you to represent them at this Town Council. You cannot do that if you do not turn up so please can everyone redouble their efforts to attend as many of the committees you serve on. The residents deserve that.

ACTIONS & FOLLOW UPS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

Meeting Date:		11 February 2025	
Minute	Action	Progress Update	Last Updated
78	Officers to arrange meeting between Town Mayor / Officers and WBC Youth Councillors to discuss achieving the Town Council's Youth Strategy and Youth Service aims.	Will be arranged following discussions with potential providers and consideration of options – due to take place 1 July 2025.	19/06/25

Meeting Date:		6 May 2025	
Minute	Action	Progress Update	Last Updated
8.1	Standing Orders & Financial Regulations Sub Committee to consider including description of Council Leader, Town Mayor, and Political Group leaders in updated SOs.	Added to items for consideration on next SOFR Sub Committee agenda.	19/06/25
10.7	Seek to amend the terms of reference for the Woodley Town Centre Partnership to increase full Member appointments from 2 to 3, removing the current substitute appointment.	Due to be discussed at next meeting of WTCP.	19/06/25
10.15	Town Clerk to contact Earley Town Council to seek to amend terms of reference of the Bulmershe SULV joint sub committee to increase full Member appointments from 2 to 3, removing the current substitute appointment	Town Clerk has contacted Earley Town Council and is awaiting a response.	19/06/25
13	Town Clerk to report progress to Leisure Services regarding the provision of gates on the play area in Wheble Park	Provision of gates will be considered as part of wider play equipment improvements at the park, pending extension of lease and consideration by Leisure Services.	19/06/25

Meeting Date:		6 May 2025	
Minute	Action	Progress Update	Last Updated
13	Town Clerk to follow up concern raised regarding the Highwood now being considered to cover South Lake, with the Highwood Management Conference having responsibility for the area.	Town Clerk seeking further information.	19/06/25
15.2	Update draft Leisure Services minutes (25 March 2025 – Minute 56) to clarify the sports wall referred to is in Wheble Park.	COMPLETE	19/06/25
15.4	To consider providing covered cycle parking at the front of the Oakwood Centre	Will be included for consideration in changes to the front of the centre when pergola installed.	19/06/25
16	To provide Members with an explanation for the differences between end of year income / expenditure figures provided at Full Council and budgetary control figures provided at S&R.	COMPLETE Covered by presentation of end of year figures	19/06/25
21	For the Communications & Events Manager to provide a report on future communications and marketing plans, and how these are intended to be managed, at a future meeting.	A meeting of the PR & Marketing Sub Committee has been scheduled for 14 July 2025, to include future marketing and communications plans. A report of this meeting will be presented to S&R.	19/06/25

Once reported as complete, actions / follow ups will be removed from future reports.

Minutes of a Meeting of the Planning and Community Committee held at the Oakwood Centre on Tuesday 20 May 2025 at 7:45 pm

Present: *Councillors: B. Soane (Chairman); K. Baker; D. Bragg; C. Jewell; V. Lewis; J. Sartorel; J. Taylor;*

Officers present: *K. Murray, Town Clerk; M. Filmore, Deputy Town Clerk*

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

1. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN**

The Town Clerk asked for nominations for the position of Chairman of the Planning & Community Committee for the 2025/26 municipal year.

It was proposed by Councillor Baker, seconded by Councillor Bragg, and

RESOLVED:

- ♦ That Councillor Soane be appointed to the position of Chairman of the Planning & Community Committee for the 2025/26 municipal year.

Voting: For: 7 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Recorded: 1

It was proposed by Councillor Soane, seconded by Councillor Bragg, and

RESOLVED:

- ♦ That Councillor Sartorel be appointed to the position of Vice Chairman of the Planning & Community Committee for the 2025/26 municipal year.

Voting: For: 7 Against: 0 Abstentions: 1 No Vote Recorded: 0

2. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Horskins. Councillor Horskins attended the meeting virtually.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interested made by Members.

4. **MINUTES OF THE PLANNING AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 29 APRIL 2025**

RESOLVED:

- ♦ That the minutes of the Planning and Community Committee meeting held on 29 April 2025 be approved and be signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record.

5. **ACTIONS / FOLLOW UPS**

Members noted the information provided in the Actions and Follow ups document, provided in the agenda.

30 January 2024 – Minute 172

In relation to the replacement of Council noticeboards, the Town Clerk advised that a recommended list of locations was being collated, taking into account the feedback sought from Councillors previously, and that the Amenities Manager had been consulted and a suitable design identified. He explained the design identified was more expensive than expected, and a request would be presented to the Strategy & Resources Committee for additional funding at a future meeting. He also confirmed that the final list of locations would be presented to the Planning & Community Committee for final consideration.

A request was made to ensure a new noticeboard was located at Centre Stage.

12 December 2024 – Minute 116

The Town Clerk advised Members that no company had responded to confirm responsibility for the noticeboard on Loddon Park estate. As such, further consideration would need to be made as to how the Town Council might take over responsibility for this noticeboard.

6. CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To forward comments to the planning authority as detailed in **Appendix A**.

7. PLANNING DECISIONS

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note information on decision notices received from the planning authority since the last meeting, as given in the agenda.

8. PLANNING APPEALS

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the following planning appeal against refusal of planning permission has been lodged with the Planning Inspectorate:

Application:	250141
Location:	91 Reading Road, Woodley, Wokingham, RG5 3AE
Proposal	Householder application for the proposed erection of an annexe to rear for use ancillary to the main dwelling. (Woodley Town Council had no objections to the proposal.)

9. PRIOR APPROVAL APPLICATION

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the following applications for prior approval received by Wokingham Borough Council:

Application:	250979
Location:	79 Woodlands Avenue, Woodley, Wokingham, RG5 3HG
Proposal:	Application for the prior approval of the erection of a single storey rear extension, which would extend beyond the rear wall of the original house by 8.00 m, for which the maximum height would be 4.00 m and the height of the eaves 2.75 m plus a single storey rear extension, which would extend beyond the rear wall of the original house by 4.97m, for which the maximum height would be 4.00 m and the height of the eaves 2.75 m.

Application: 251015
Location: 273 Loddon Bridge Road, Woodley, Wokingham, RG5 4BL
Proposal: Application for the prior approval of the erection of a single storey rear extension, which would extend beyond the rear wall of the original house by 6.00m, for which the maximum height would be 2.98m and the height of the eaves 2.55m.

10. **TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS**

RESOLVED:

- ♦ To note the following applications for works to trees received by Wokingham Borough Council:

Application: 251065
Location: TPO1696/2019, AREA 2 36 Church Road, Woodley, Wokingham, RG5 4QJ
Proposal: T1, Holm Oak – Remove deadwood; prune low branch over highway to 5.2m above ground level. T2, Robinia – Remove deadwood. T3, Elm - Prune low branches over highway to 5.2m above ground level. T4, Robinia – Remove deadwood. T11, Robinia – Remove deadwood.

Application: 251118
Location: TPO 1059/2004, GROUP 1: 16 The Laurels, Woodley, Wokingham, RG5 3BA.
Proposal: G1, Oak x 3 – Crown reduction by 3m.

Application: 251074
Location: SECTION 211 NOTIFICATION FOR WORKS IN A CONSERVATION AREA: 36 Church Road, Woodley, Wokingham, RG5 4QJ
Proposal: T5, Robinia and Elm – Remove deadwood; remove suppressed Elm. T6, Copper Beech - Remove deadwood; prune tertiary branch tips to achieve up to 500mm clearance from overhead service cable. T7, Hornbeam – Remove deadwood. T9, Robinia – Remove deadwood. T12, Ash – Remove stems close to southern boundary fence. G1, Laurel and Hazel – Prune or remove branches and stems in contact with structures to achieve up to 1m clearance. T16, Holly – Remove smaller stems close to neighbouring fence; prune low branches to achieve up to 1m clearance from structures; remove buddleia. T17, Tree of Heaven – Remove to approx. 50mm from ground level.

11. **ENFORCEMENT ISSUES**

RESOLVED:

- ♦ To note the information on enforcement issues received from the planning authority, as given in the agenda.

12. **CYCLING & WALKING TASK & FINISH WORKING GROUP**

Councillor Taylor provided Members with an update on the work of the Cycling and Walking task & finish working group, detailing that the committee was focussed on developing a local cycle network which encourages people to make short, utility or commuting trips by bike. Members noted the committee intended to learn from local and national cycling initiatives, and were working closely with the Active Travel team at Wokingham Borough Council who had indicated, whilst limited, there may be potential budget for improvements to infrastructure, including signage.

It was also noted that the working group were intending on operating a stall at Woodley Carnival alongside officers from Wokingham's Active Travel team at which they would be able to highlight and discuss the committee's work and the benefit Active Travel with residents.

In light of the ongoing nature of the committee's work, it was proposed by Councillor Baker, seconded by Councillor Lewis, that the committee type be changed from a task & finish working group to a sub committee, with Members noting that this meant the group would no longer have an end date stipulated in the terms of reference.

A request was made to consider improving 'no cycling / scooting' signage in the town centre and the Town Clerk confirmed he would speak with the Town Centre Manager to discuss this.

Following a vote, it was:

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To amend the committee's type to Sub Committee, adjusting the terms of reference and committee name accordingly.
- ◆ To amend the committee's terms of reference to increase the number of members from 5 to 6 and to include the addition of a Conservative member onto the group,

Voting: For: 8 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Recorded: 0

- ◆ To note that Councillor Errawalla had been appointed as the Conservative group Member to the Cycling and Walking Sub Committee.

13. **TRANSPORTATION & HIGHWAYS**

13.1 **Community Speedwatch**

Councillor Taylor advised Members there was limited updates to provide, but that she had investigated potential speedwatch locations on Beechwood Avenue following the request made at Full Council from Councillor Kennedy.

13.2 **Highways Issues**

It was noted that the footpath between Hicks estate and the Oakwood Centre was currently closed whilst Wokingham Borough Council undertake works to install a new pedestrian crossing outside the Oakwood Centre, however no sign advising members of the public where they should walk to access the Oakwood Centre was provided. It was requested this be taken up with Wokingham Borough Council.

14. **WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note that the response to Wokingham Borough Council's initial Community Governance Review consultations, which ran from 31 January to 25 April 2025, had now been published on Wokingham Borough Council's engage website, and that draft recommendations will be published shortly, with feedback sought in July, and final recommendations set to go out for public consultation in August.

15. **COMMUNITY ISSUES**

There were no community issues raised by Members.

16. **PUBLICATIONS/INFORMATION**

Members noted that BALC training courses, currently provided free as part of the Council's membership, would cease to be so from April 2026, with Members encouraged to consider any training they might wish to attend now.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note receipt of the following:
 - Promise Inclusion newsletter – April 2025
 - Berkshire Association of Local Councils newsletter – May 2025

17. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

There were no future agenda items suggested by Members

18. **PUBLICITY/WEBSITE**

There were no future publicity or website items raised by Members.

A note of thanks was expressed to the Communications & Events Manager for the quality of recent press releases made on behalf of the Council.

The meeting closed at 8.54 pm

Woodley Town Council

Observations on the following Planning Applications made at the Planning & Community Committee meeting held on 20 May 2025

Application No. & Address	Proposal
250468 8 Butts Hill Road, Woodley RG5 4NH	Householder application for the proposed erection of an outbuilding with gabled roof, including roof lights to facilitate loft storage (part-retrospective).
Observations: No objections.	
250897 14 Selsdon Avenue, Woodley RG5 4PG	Householder application for proposed single storey front extension to facilitate a front porch followed by a two storey side, part two storey and single storey rear extension, along with loft conversion to create habitable accommodation to include 1 No. dormer followed by changes to fenestration and demolition of 1 No. chimney and existing outbuilding.
Observations: No objections.	
251044 82 Woodlands Avenue, Woodley, RG5 3HD	Householder application for the proposed single storey front and rear extension plus garage conversion.
Observations: No objections.	
251075 273 Loddon Bridge Road, Woodley, RG5 4BL	Householder application for the proposed 2no. dropped kerbs.
Observations: No objections.	
250150 3 Fawcett Crescent, Woodley, RG5 3HX	Householder application for the proposed two storey front, side and rear extension, plus changes to fenestration and the conversion of the roof into habitable living accommodation.
Observations: The Planning & Community Committee have considered this application. They noted that this was a revised application, with the application originally sent to the Council earlier in the year and considered by the Committee in February – to which, no objections were raised. However, the Committee could only see newly proposed plans submitted in May and could not see any plans from earlier in the year, so were unable to consider what the changes were. Whilst the Committee did not submit any objections, they did note a concern that a two-storey extension projecting forward of the front elevation was out of character with the street scene.	

250434 44 Coppice Road, Woodley, RG5 3RA	Householder application for the proposed two storey side extension. Plus, the erection of a new porch and changes to fenestration. Following the demolition of the existing chimney.
Observations: No objections.	
251119 17 Reading Road, Woodley, RG5 3DA	Householder application for the proposed replacement of existing rear flat roof with new roof incorporating parapet walls to the sides and insertion of two glazed roof lanterns and a sun tube
Observations: No objections.	
251124 Land at Lands End House, Beggars Hill Road, Lands End, Twyford, RG10 0UD	Permission in principle application for the proposed erection of 1 no. detached dwelling.
Observations: No comment.	

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**Minutes of a meeting of the Leisure Services Committee held at the Oakwood Centre
on Tuesday 3 June 2025 at 8:00 pm**

Present: *Councillors D. Smith (Chairman); D. Bragg; Y. Edwards; D. Errawalla;
M. Firmager; K. Gilder; C. Jewell; M. Kennedy; V. Lewis; P. Singh*

Officers present: *K. Murray, Town Clerk; M. Filmore, Deputy Town Clerk;
E. Whitesmith, Leisure Services Manager*

Also present: *Councillor R. Horskins (Virtual Attendance)
1 member of the public*

1. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN**

The Town Clerk asked for nominations for the position of Chairman of the Leisure Services Committee for the 2025/26 municipal year.

It was proposed by Councillor Bragg, seconded by Councillor Gilder, and

RESOLVED:

- ♦ That Councillor Smith be appointed to the position of Chairman of the Leisure Services Committee for the 2025/26 municipal year.

Voting: For: 9 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0 No Vote Recorded: 1

It was proposed by Councillor Bragg, seconded by Councillor Lewis, and

RESOLVED:

- ♦ That Councillor Firmager be appointed to the position of Vice Chairman of the Leisure Services Committee for the 2025/26 municipal year.

Voting: For: 8 Against: 0 Abstentions: 1 No Vote Recorded: 1

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence received from Members.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received from Members.

4. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 MARCH 2025**

It was noted that the basketball net, which had been requested for the outdoor basketball hoop in Woodford Park, had now been replaced.

RESOLVED:

- ♦ That the minutes of the Leisure Services Committee meeting of 25 March 2025 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

5. **ACTIONS / FOLLOW UPS**

Members noted the update on the actions and follow ups from previous meetings, as provided in the agenda.

5 September 2023 – Minute 17

In relation to the previous request for the potential re-installation of a graffiti wall in Woodford Park, and in acknowledgement of the fact there had been no specific public demand for this, the Committee agreed this should not be added to the Council's project list at this time. It was recommended a potential graffiti wall could be considered by a Youth Council, should one be setup by the Council, in the future.

6. BUDGETARY CONTROL

Members reviewed the Budgetary Control report.

It was noted that income in relation to Woodford Park appears high due to several donations towards memorial benches which had been purchased

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 14/25.

7. WOODFORD PARK LEISURE CENTRE, SPORTS DEVELOPMENT AND ACTIVITIES

The Leisure Services Manager presented Report No. LS 15/25.

Members congratulated the Leisure Services Manager and the leisure centre team for the continued success of the Family Racket Attack sessions during school holidays.

It was noted that, whilst the paddling pool is planned to be closed for the year on the 6th September, the closing date can be pushed back if weather continues to be good into September.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 15/25.

8. PARKS AND BUILDINGS

The Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 16/25.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note Report No. LS 16/25.

9. ALLOTMENTS

The Town Clerk presented Report No. LS 17/25 regarding matters at the Reading Road allotment site.

The Town Clerk confirmed to Members that, following the decision of the Committee at their last meetings, the charging of deposits was currently on hold.

Following a query regarding responsibility for the management of trees and bushes overhanging the highway, the Town Clerk confirmed that the Town Council was responsible for trees situated on the allotment site itself, whilst hedge row alongside the site was the responsibility of the local authority.

It was noted that a Town Council representative was due to be appointed to the Allotments Tenants Committee at the next Full Council meeting.

In relation to the recommendations made in Councillor Kennedy's supporting report, provided as an appendix to Report No. LS 17/25, it was agreed that setting up a specific Allotments Sub Committee would not be required in light of how active the existing tenants committee is. It was also agreed a specific Town Council run annual meeting for tenants was not required as the existing tenants committee AGM takes place in council premises, with officers in attendance and Councillors free to attend.

RESOLVED:

- ♦ To note Report No. LS 17/25.

10. **FRIENDS OF WOODFORD PARK UPDATE**

Members noted the update report from the Friends of Woodford Park (FoWP), provided at the meeting.

In relation to the FoWP no longer maintaining the garden of remembrance, the Town Clerk confirmed this had been the arrangement for some time. He advised that it was difficult to have both two groups, ie the FoWP and Council Staff, maintaining the same area. It was noted this issue had not been raised at the last meeting between FoWP and Officers, with the Town Clerk stating he would bring it up.

11. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

There were no future agenda items raised by Members.

12. **PUBLICITY AND WEBSITE**

There were no publicity and website items raised by Members.

The meeting closed at 8:43 pm

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**Minutes of a meeting of the Strategy & Resources Committee held at the Oakwood
Centre on Tuesday 10 Jun 2025 at 8:00 pm**

Present: *Councillors K. Baker (Chairman); J. Anderson; G. Bello; D. Bragg;
R. Horskins; M. Kennedy; M. Nagra; A. Swaddle*

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

Also present: *Cllr B. Rowland (Virtual Attendance)
2 members of the public*

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

The Town Clerk asked for nominations for the position of Chairman of the Strategy & Resources Committee for the 2025/26 municipal year.

It was proposed by Councillor Anderson, seconded by Councillor Horskins, and

RESOLVED:

- ♦ That Councillor Baker be appointed to the position of Chairman of the Strategy & Resources Committee for the 2025/26 municipal year.

Voting: For: 6 Against: 1 Abstentions: 1 No Vote Recorded: 0

It was proposed by Councillor Horskins, seconded by Councillor Bragg, and

RESOLVED:

- ♦ That Councillor Swaddle be appointed to the position of Vice Chairman of the Strategy & Resources Committee for the 2025/26 municipal year.

Voting: For: 5 Against: 1 Abstentions: 1 No Vote Recorded: 1

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gilder and Rowland. Councillor Rowland attended the meeting virtually.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 MARCH 2025

RESOLVED:

- ♦ That the minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting of 25 March 2025 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

5. ACTIONS / FOLLOW UPS

Members noted the actions and follow ups update, as provided in the agenda.

12 September 2023 – Minute 26

The Town Clerk updated Members that the process for reimbursing VAT charged on sports facilities had moved forward and that it was expected all refunds would be finalised by 1 August, with the outcome reported back to the Committee.

21 November 2023 – Minute 48

In relation to the water bottle filling station for the town centre, it was noted this was now due to be installed on the week commencing 1 July.

21 November 2023 – Minute 57

Members noted the new delegate microphone system had now been installed and that, whilst officers were still getting used to the system, the sound quality of recordings had now significantly improved. As such, this action was complete.

23 January 2024 – Minute 67

The Town Clerk confirmed that he now had a meeting arranged with the Council's IT provider to review, amongst other things, the Council's IT risk assessment.

23 January 2024 – Minute 73

Members noted that, in relation to the potential installation of a borehole at the allotment site, two companies had been contacted to quote for a feasibility study and test drill.

10 September 2024 – Minute 32

The Town Clerk confirmed that an audio loop had now been implemented as part of the Council's new meeting delegate system. As such, this action was complete. Members requested that this be publicised.

26 November 2024 – Minute 41

In relation to the potential extension of the Council's lease of Wheble Park, the Town Clerk advised that draft heads of terms had now been received from Reading Borough Council and that he was now awaiting the final document.

22 April 2024 – Minute 84 e)

Councillors received updated details of the Council's loans, including the dates of payments, from the Finance Manager. As such, this action was complete.

22 April 2024 – Minute 87

Members received an updated version of the Council's capital programme schedule at the meeting. As such, this action was complete.

22 April 2024 – Minute 84 b)

In relation to the high cost of electricity supply to the town centre clock, the Town Clerk advised that he was working with the Council's energy supply broker to move to a new provider, which was expected in the next week.

6.

FINANCE

a) Budgetary Control

The Town Clerk presented Report No. SR 16/25.

RESOLVED:

- ♦ To note Report No. SR 16/25.

b) Payments

An expression of thanks was made to the new Finance Manager for providing a fulsome response to a Councillor's recent finance queries.

Following a query regarding the purchase of items from Amazon, the Town Clerk confirmed officers do shop around and shop local where appropriate but that, often, Amazon was found to be the cheapest supplier.

A query was raised as to whether leasing gym equipment at the leisure centre was indeed the most cost-effective option. The Town Clerk confirmed that the lease was agreed by the Council and that, whilst it appears expensive, all maintenance costs are included and equipment was able to be swapped in and out.

Members noted that payment information was only available for one month due to the agenda being required to be issued only a few days after the last month end. Following discussion, Members asked that payment information be circulated monthly to the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the payments made from the Council's accounts for April 2025, as provided in the agenda and published online, totalling the following amounts:

	Current account	Imprest account
April 2025	£146,389.79	£70,272.45

c) Internal Audit

The Town Clerk provided Members with a progress update with regards to the recommendations made by the internal auditor in the report.

In relation to fixing the IT link between the Council offices and Woodford Park Leisure Centre, the Town Clerk advised that he was working with the Council's IT provider to seek a solution.

Members noted that the new Finance Manager had developed a new policy in relation to debtors, including standard template letters and a protocol to progress towards the Strategy & Resources Committee considering the writing off of debts.

With regards to an issue the internal auditor had verifying the pay of certain officers who had been with the Council for some years, the Town Clerk confirmed that this information had now been provided and that the Council was due to re-issue new contracts, with no changes to particulars, to all staff via a new HR provider shortly.

The Town Clerk advised Members that officers were working on an improved management plan in relation to the Council's earmarked reserves which would feed into budget setting in future years.

Following a query regarding earmarked reserves, the Town Clerk confirmed that the Council does release residual amounts no longer required to be held back into the general reserve, with this decision being made by the Strategy & Resources Committee.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the final audit report of the Council's internal auditors for 2024/25, as provided in the agenda.

d) CCLA PSDF Funds

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the update with regards to the Council's funds within the CCLA Public Sector Deposit Fund (PSDF), as provided in the agenda.

7. **OAKWOOD CENTRE INCOME UPDATE**

The Town Clerk presented the Oakwood Centre room hire and catering income updates.

Members requested that the charts be reduced to reflect only a few years income figures, with a note put against any year affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the Bookings and Room Hire income and Catering income charts, as provided in the agenda.

8. **WOODLEY TOWN CENTRE PARTNERSHIP**

Members noted that a meeting was due to take place shortly between Woodley & Earley Lions and the Woodley Town Centre Partnership with regards to the running of a Woodley beach event in 2026, with the Lions pledging £5k to support this. On behalf of the Town Council and the Partnership, the Chairman thanked the Lions for their support of this event and other initiatives.

A query was raised regarding the lack of detail relating to the Wokingham Borough Council officer report item in the minutes. The Chairman advised that no Borough officer had been in attendance; however, the Executive Member for Economic Development had attended, although he had not expected to provide a report. The Executive Member listened to feedback from attendees and had agreed, in future, that he would be responsible for providing this report.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the report of the Woodley Town Centre Partnership meeting which took place on 16 April 2025.

9. **CAPITAL PROJECTS SCHEDULE**

The Town Clerk provided an updated Capital Projects Schedule at the meeting.

Members thanked officers for their work in completing the projects, noting that the work is managed well by a small team. Congratulations were also extended to the Amenities Team for the new Coronation Orchard, with Members noting excellent feedback from the public.

Following a query, the Town Clerk confirmed that the intention was to update the capital programme process and provide far greater information in future regarding potential projects, rather than just those which have been agreed, providing the Committee with appropriate oversight.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the update on Council projects.

10. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

There were no suggestions for future agenda items raised by Members.

11. **PUBLICITY AND WEBSITE**

Members requested that officers publicise the installation of the water bottle filling station in the town centre.

Meeting closed at 8:31 pm

Minutes of a Meeting of the Planning and Community Committee held at the Oakwood Centre on Tuesday 20 May 2025 at 7:45 pm

Present: *Councillors: B. Soane (Chairman); K. Baker; D. Bragg; L. Guttridge; C. Jewell; V. Lewis; J. Sartorel; J. Taylor;*

Officers present: *M. Filmore, Deputy Town Clerk*

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

19. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Horskins. Councillor Horskins attended the meeting virtually.

20. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Jewell – Agenda Item 5: Current Planning Applications. Councillor Jewell advised that she is a patient at the dental surgery linked to application 251187 – 281-283 Loddon Bridge Road. As such, Councillor Jewell took no part in the discussion or decision relating to this application.

21. **MINUTES OF THE PLANNING AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 20 MAY 2025**

RESOLVED:

- ♦ That the minutes of the Planning and Community Committee meeting held on 20 May 2025 be approved and be signed by the Chairman as a true and accurate record.

22. **ACTIONS / FOLLOW UPS**

Members noted the information provided in the Actions and Follow ups document, provided in the agenda.

23. **CURRENT PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

RESOLVED:

- ♦ To forward comments to the planning authority as detailed in **Appendix A**.

24. **PLANNING DECISIONS**

RESOLVED:

- ♦ To note information on decision notices received from the planning authority since the last meeting, as given in the agenda.

25. **PLANNING APPEALS**

RESOLVED:

- ♦ To note the following decision in relation to a planning appeal lodged with the Planning Inspectorate:

Application: 242147 / 242148
Location: 145 Crockhamwell Road, Woodley, RG5 3JP
Proposal: Installation of / advertising consent for 1 no. communications kiosk with integrated advertising display.
(Woodley Town Council submitted objections to the proposal.)
Decision: The appeal was dismissed

26. **TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the following application for works to protected trees received by Wokingham Borough Council:

Application: 251197
Location: TPO 143/1977, AREA 1: 15 Sandford Drive, Woodley, Wokingham, RG5 4RR.
Proposal: T1, Oak - Fell stem 1 leaving a 2-3m high stump for habitat value and to maintain the stability of stem 2; stem 2 - reduce canopy height and lateral spread on the north and east side of crown by 1-1.5m.

27. **ENFORCEMENT ISSUES**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note the information on enforcement issues received from the planning authority, as given in the agenda.

28. **BUDGETARY CONTROL**

Members noted the Budgetary Control information in Report No PC 4/25.

29. **TRANSPORTATION & HIGHWAYS**

29.1 **Community Speedwatch**

Councillor Taylor advised Members that there had been limited Community Speedwatch activity as she had been focussed on work relating to the Cycling and Walking task & finish working group. She suggested a re-think would be needed after the summer, highlighting that Community Speedwatch would benefit from more volunteers. It was suggested the Council might need a new, independent individual with the passion and capacity to take on the coordination of the group.

29.2 **Highways Issues**

A concern was raised regarding overgrown foliage covering the road signage on the roundabout at Bader Way / A329M. Councillor Baker advised he had raised this over a number of years and whilst it is cut back on occasion, there needed to be a long term solution.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To submit a request to Wokingham Borough Council to clear the foliage and provide a long term solution to the issue of overgrown foliage obscuring signs on the roundabout at Bader Way / A329M.

Councillor Jewell advised Members that she was seeking to resolve an issue with the 'Woodley' sign at Shepherds Hill roundabout which is also obscured.

- 29.3 Members discussed the notification from Wokingham Borough Council of a proposed Traffic Regulation Order amendment to implement car park charges in the Aviation car park to match other car parks surrounding Dinton Pastures.

It was commented that the proposed charges were very high for parking in this location, which it was noted was further away from the main amenities at Dinton Pastures, such as the café, activity centre and play area, than other car parks. Members noted, however, that Wokingham had indicated free parking would remain for those visiting the Museum of Berkshire Aviation, with a 15 minute free drop off / pick up period also in place for those, such as cadets, that use the location to meet.

Concern was raised that the proposed amendment didn't explicitly stipulate free parking for visitors of the Museum of Berkshire Aviation would remain.

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To submit a response to Wokingham Borough Council's proposed Traffic Regulation Order amendment highlighting concern that there is no explicit reference to free parking for visitors to the Museum of Berkshire Aviation.

30. **COMMUNITY ISSUES**

Members noted that the joint Wokingham MyJourney and Cycling & Walking task and finish working group stall at Woodley Carnival had received very positive engagement, with a number of people visiting to discuss active travel and the proposed Woodley cycle network. A number of individuals had taken away maps, offering to support the working group by testing out the proposed routes. Thanks were expressed to both Councillor Taylor and Jewell for organising the stall.

The Chairman advised Members that Wokingham Borough Council are due to issue a license for the providing of a water refilling station in Woodley town centre on 30th June, with a refilling station, funded by a donation from the Rotary Clubs of Loddon Vale and Maiden Erlegh, due to be installed during the first week in July.

31. **PUBLICATIONS/INFORMATION**

RESOLVED:

- ◆ To note receipt of the following:
 - Promise Inclusion newsletter – May 2025
 - Wokingham Volunteer Centre newsletter – May 2025

32. **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

There were no future agenda items suggested by Members

33. **PUBLICITY/WEBSITE**

A request was made for the Council to publicise information regarding planning decisions and how these conquered, or not, with the committee's comments.

The meeting closed at 8.51 pm

Woodley Town Council

Observations on the following Planning Applications made at the Planning & Community Committee meeting held on 17 June 2025

Application No. & Address	Proposal
251115 43 Rowan Drive, Woodley, RG5 4LN	Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey front extension.
Observations: No objections.	
251184 108 Reading Road, Woodley, RG5 3AD	Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension, plus erection of a replacement roof with 2 no. dormers to create first floor accommodation following removal of the existing roof and chimneys, creation of front and rear roof terraces, removal of the front bay window and changes to fenestration.
Observations: Members of the Planning & Community Committee have considered this application. They noted that the application was only minimally different from the previous application – 243176 – with a change in the roof line. As such, they repeated their original objections to the proposed design on the following grounds: - The design, especially the provision of balconies, would be entirely out of keeping and out of character with the street scene. - The size, in terms of massing, would be overbearing on neighbouring properties on both Reading Road and Elmwood Drive.	
251185 5 South Lake Crescent, Woodley, RG5 3QW	Full application for the proposed erection of 1 no. detached three bedroom dwelling with associated cycle store, plus creation of new access and parking for the new dwelling and no. 5 South Lake Crescent following closure of the existing access.
Observations: No objections.	
251187 281-283, Loddon Bridge Road, Reading, RG5 4BE	Full application for the change of use of 283 Loddon Bridge Road to a dental practice, to be used in conjunction with the existing dental practice at 281 Loddon Bridge Road. Including the addition of an open sided canopy link.
Observations: No objections.	
251275 33 Duffield Road, Woodley, RG5 4RL	Householder application for the proposed erection of a first floor rear extension and a single storey rear extension, including fenestration and the demolition of existing conservatory.
Observations: No objections.	

251308 46 Colemans Moor Lane, Woodley, RG5 4BT	Householder application for the proposed erection of a single storey rear extension and a two-storey side extension, including new fenestration and the creation of a new widened dropped kerb.
Observations: The Planning & Community Committee have considered this application and wished to object on grounds that the proposal is: - Overbearing, in terms of massing, to the neighbouring property at 44 Colemans Moor Lane - Overdevelopment of the site Members also noted and wished to support the concerns of the neighbouring property at 44 Colemans Moor Lane that the window shown in bedroom 3 on the plans would overlook the neighbouring property and so would not be suitable for a clear glass window.	
251339 14 Nightingale Road, Woodley, RG5 3LS	Householder application for the proposed two storey side/rear extension, partial garage conversion and changes to fenestration.
Observations: No objections.	
251347 82 Caldbeck Drive, Woodley, RG5 4JX	Householder application for the proposed part two storey, part single storey side and rear extensions following the demolition of the garage. Along with a front porch and changes to fenestration.
Observations: No comment.	

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APPENDIX 11

REPORTS FROM TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES TO OUTSIDE BODIES

OUTSIDE BODY	APPOINTED REPRESENTATIVES	REPORT PROVIDED
ARC	Cllr K. Gilder Mrs S. Flower	Yes
Berkshire Association of Local Councils	Cllr M. Kennedy	
Citizens Advice Wokingham	Cllr V. Lewis	Yes
Friends of Woodford Park Committee	Cllr R. Horskins	Yes
Highwood Management Conference	Cllr K. Gilder Cllr M. Holmes	Yes
Keep Mobile	Cllr L. Guttridge	
Museum of Berkshire Aviation Trust	Cllr B. Soane	
Poor's Land Charity	Cllr M. Holmes Cllr K. Gilder Mrs S. Flower	Yes
	Cllr K. Charles Bey	Yes
ReadiBus	Cllr L. Guttridge	
Robert Palmer's Almshouse Charity	Cllr D. Bragg	
Sonning & District Welfare & Education Trust	Cllr D. Smith	
Wokingham Borough/Parish Liaison Forum	Cllr M. Kennedy	
Woodley Bowling Club Management Committee	Cllr K. Gilder	
Woodley Volunteer Centre	Cllr M. Kennedy	

OUTSIDE BODY REPRESENTATIVE'S FEEDBACK FORM



MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2025/26

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

Name of Outside Body	ARC
Name of Councillor	Shelagh Flower and Cllr Kay Gilder
Capacity appointed; e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	trustees
Number of formal meetings held / invited to	1 AGM via Zoom
Number of formal meetings attended	1
Reasons for not attending (if below 50%)	
Please give a brief overview of the Outside Body for Members:	
<p>ARC is an Adult and Youth Counselling Service based in Wokingham, it also offers support within schools and some GP surgeries. It has a regular surgery at the Oakwood Centre. Training and support is also offered to families and teachers.</p>	
Please give a brief synopsis of the Outside Body's activities since the last report:	
<p>There continues to be an increase in the demands on ARC's service Ensuring we have sufficient funding to meet the increasing need remains an ongoing issue The service provided within schools remains much needed and has bee a great success in engaging young people and addressing their needs,</p>	
Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful:	

Rep:	Shelagh Flower	Dated:	17th June 2025
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OUTSIDE BODY REPRESENTATIVE'S FEEDBACK FORM



MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2024/25

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

Name of Outside Body	Citizens Advice Bureau
Name of Representative	Cllr Vin Lewis
Capacity appointed; e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Appointed
Number of formal meetings held / invited (since last report or 1 May)	1
Number of formal meetings attended since last report (since last report or 1 May)	1
Reasons for not attending (if attendance below 50%)	
Please give a brief overview of the Outside Body for Council Members:	
<p>CAB (Wokingham) provide free, confidential and impartial advice, information and support to anyone living or working in our Borough.</p> <p>Registered Office: Waterford House, Erftstadt Court, Wokingham, Berkshire, RG40 2YF Registered Charity Number: 1027729</p>	
<p>Meeting took place with Rachel Hassan (CEO) & Stephen Price (CIO).</p> <p>Many items discussed</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Funding 2. CAB offices/Locations 3. CAB Bus – normally seen in Woodley Precinct 4. Foodbanks 5. More volunteers needed 	
Please provide any additional information that Council Members might find useful:	
<p>Refreshing to meet the CEO and CIO, both of whom want to do things differently, to improve the way the bureau is funded, staffed to give their clients/customers a better service.</p> <p>FACT - You do not have to be an actual British Citizen to use the service. A popular misconception</p>	

Other support

The Cowshed (Adult clothing, Children's clothing, Baby clothing, School uniform, Noah boxes, Bras at The Cowshed, Prom at The Cowshed, Ukrainian Refugees, Christmas Project, Craft at The Cowshed)

First Days (Everything for a new baby, Safety out and about, Safety at home, Safe sleeping, Safe and clean, Confidence at school: School uniforms and more)

Mind in Berkshire provide the Wokingham Wellbeing Service

Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

Samaritans

Shout is the UK's free, confidential, 24/7 text messaging support service

Hub of Hope is a mental health database of medical and charity support

Cranstoun deliver the Wokingham Domestic Abuse service

Kaleidoscopic UK are a charitable organisation for survivors of domestic abuse

Representative:

Vin Lewis

Dated:

16/06/2025

OUTSIDE BODY REPRESENTATIVE'S FEEDBACK FORM



MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2025/26

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

Name of Outside Body	Friends of Woodford Park
Name of Representative	Cllr Robert Horskins
Capacity appointed; e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Appointed
Number of formal meetings held / invited (since last report or 1 May)	1
Number of formal meetings attended since last report (since last report or 1 May)	0
Reasons for not attending (if attendance below 50%)	Moved outside of area
Please give a brief overview of the Outside Body for Council Members:	
<p>The Friends of Woodford Park (FoWP) are a group of volunteers who have come together to help improve Woodford Park. Their first job, as suggested at the Liaison Committee meeting by a Councillor member, was to create the flower bed near the War Memorial, celebrating late Queen Elizabeth's 90th 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 top awards when entered in 2016 and 2017. Funding for the group has reached £7000 over the years. This has been achieved by Sponsorship from local businesses, Donations from the public and fund raising by the sales of Greeting cards with pictures of the park (as made by a volunteer) and plant sales etc. In addition, a great many of the plants in the gardens have been obtained from public gifting or offered online. Often the plants purchased are from local businesses who are happy to discount. Some of the trees were even provided free by the RHS.</p>	
Please give a brief synopsis of the Outside Body's recent activities:	
<p>A report was given to the last Leisure Services Committee and is included within the minutes of that meeting.</p>	
Please provide any additional information that Council Members might find useful:	
<p>I was in Woodley last week for the Strategy & Resources meeting and for the Carnival. I had a good look around the park and was pleased with how it is presented. The Amenities team and FOWP have done a fabulous job!</p> <p>Can I ask Councillors to think of any ideas, suggestions, they may have to increase the volunteers within this job?</p>	

Representative:	Robert Horskins	Dated:	17/06/2025
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OUTSIDE BODY REPRESENTATIVE'S FEEDBACK FORM



MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2025/26

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

Name of Outside Body	Highwood Management Conference
Name of Representative	Councillors Kay Gilder and Mary Holmes
Capacity appointed; e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Appointed Woodley Town Council members
Number of formal meetings held / invited (since last report or 1 May)	0
Number of formal meetings attended since last report (since last report or 1 May)	0
Reasons for not attending (if attendance below 50%)	-----
Please give a brief overview of the Outside Body for Members:	
<p>The Highwood Management Conference's members meet on an annual basis with an officer of the Wokingham Borough Council, who takes the minutes, and the Head Ranger of Wokingham Borough Council's Dinton Pastures Country Park. There are two councillors from Wokingham Borough Council plus two from Earley Town Council and two from Woodley Town Council.</p>	
Please give a brief synopsis of the Outside Body's activities since the last report:	
<p>Ongoing outdoor work continues by the Wokingham Borough Council's Dinton Pastures Country Park team.</p> <p>The next annual meeting of the Highwod Conference is due to be arranged by an officer of Wokingham Borough Council later this summer and it should also include a prior visit to the sites managed by the Dinton Pastures Country Park team.</p>	
Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful:	

Representative:	Cllr Kay Gilder and Cllr Mary Holmes.	Dated:	17/06/25
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OUTSIDE BODY REPRESENTATIVE'S FEEDBACK FORM



MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2025/26

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

Name of Outside Body	Poor's Land Charity
Name of Representative	Councillors Kester Charles Bey
Capacity appointed; e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Trustee
Number of formal meetings held / invited (since last report or 1 May)	N/A
Number of formal meetings attended since last report (since last report or 1 May)	One formal meeting to sign and accept my appointment as trustee
Reasons for not attending (if attendance below 50%)	N/A
Please give a brief overview of the Outside Body for Council Members:	
The Poor's Land Charity is partly for Woodley residents who are vulnerable in different situations that may need assistance in housing because of their situation. This includes people with slight mental and physical limitations and abilities as this remains private contravention in line with data protection policies. As councillors trustees representatives we try and pull our experience as councillors and human beings to better the lives of residents in Woodley and those coming outside into Woodley.	
Please give a brief synopsis of the Outside Body's recent activities:	
Given that I am new as a trustee to this Charity at this time I'm getting to know the board and the residents with the help of experienced Councillor Kay Gilder who has given me a good background of the charity and what could be achieved and what is expected. I hope to be of service and do my best for the council and residents alike.	
Please provide any additional information that Council Members might find useful:	
I think at this stage there's lots of new and exciting developments that Pauline's charity hope to achieve around housing, energy, security and better engagement. I hope to give a full report at the next full council meeting for councillors to read and ask any questions.	

Representative:	Cllr Kester Charles Bey	Dated:	16 June 2025
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OUTSIDE BODY REPRESENTATIVE'S FEEDBACK FORM



MUNICIPAL YEAR: 2025/26

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

Name of Outside Body	Poor's Land Charity
Name of Representative	Shelagh Flower Cllr Mary Holmes Cllr Kay Gilder
Capacity appointed; e.g. trustee, director, observer etc	Trustees
Number of formal meetings held / invited to	Since April 2025 There has been 1 formal meeting
Number of formal meetings attended	All 3 trustees attended the meetings
Reasons for not attending (if below 50%)	
Please give a brief overview of the Outside Body for Members:	
<p>Alms houses for people in need from designated areas including Woodley Sandford and Charvil</p> <p>It also offers financial assistance to people in need via its Relief in Need fund.</p>	
Please give a brief synopsis of the Outside Body's activities since the last report:	
<p>The Charity has a new resident who has settled well.</p> <p>There remains a focus on ensuring the maintenance of the flats remains a priority.</p> <p>Sadly, our former Chair Pauline Allen died recently which has been a great sadness for us. However we were pleased to welcome Cllr Charles Bey.</p> <p>We remain focussed on the welfare of our residents and planning for the future efficiency of our resources. We are publicising our Relief in Need fund through a variety of means in order to try to reach more people.</p> <p>Our coffee mornings remain popular with residents, a good form of communication with trustees</p>	
Please provide any additional information that fellow Members might find useful:	
<p>There are usually monthly meetings with very regular contact via email outside of the meetings.</p>	

Rep:	Shelagh Flower	Dated:	17th June 2025
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MAYORAL ENGAGEMENTS – 6th May to 24th June 2025

Town Mayor's Engagements

May	8 th	Town Council VE Day 80 th Anniversary Beacon Lighting
	15 th	Promise Inclusion AGM
	18 th	Woodley United FC - 10 th Anniversary & presentation day
	21 st	1 st Woodley Boys' Brigade – Annual display and awards
June	12 th	Woodley Schools' Cluster – Yr 1 Tray Garden Challenge
	13 th	Woodley Carnival Schools' Football Tournament
	14 th	Woodley Carnival
	19 th	Royal County of Berkshire & Surrey Armed Forces Briefing

Full Meeting of the Council

24 June 2025

Agenda Item 7

Financial Statements And Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024/26 Appendix

CONTENTS

Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025	pages 1 – 10
Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024/25	pages 11 – 16
AGAR Section 1	
• Annual Governance Statement	pages 17 – 18
• Final Internal Auditor Review	pages 19 – 37
AGAR Section 2	
• Explanation of Variances	page 38

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Woodley Town Council

Financial statements for 2024/2025

Table of contents and Council information

	<u>Page</u>
Council information	1
Explanatory foreword	2
Income & Expenditure Account	3
Balance Sheet	4
Notes to the Financial Statements	5

Councillors

The following were serving Members of the Town Council as of 24 June 2025:

Kester Charles Bey	Robert Horskins	Janet Sartorel	Mary Holmes
Yvonne Edwards	Darren Smith	Bill Soane	Kay Gilder
Mike Kennedy	Anne Chadwick	Linda Guttridge	Carol Jewell
June Taylor	Majid Nagra	Parvinder Singh	Beth Rowland
Juliet Anderson	Alison Swaddle	Jenny Cheng	Michael Firmager
David Bragg	Greg Bellow	Danny Errawalla	Vin Lewis
Keith Baker			

Councillor David Bragg was appointed Town Mayor and Councillor Darren Smith was appointed Deputy Town Mayor on 6 May 2025.

Town Clerk

Kevin Murray

Responsible Financial Officer

Derren Coe

External auditors

PKF Littlejohn LLP (Ref: SBA Team)
1 Westferry Circus
Canary Wharf
London E14 4HD

Contacting the Council

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Woodley Town Council

Financial statements for 2024/2025

Explanatory foreword

Accounting and audit

Following legislative changes that became effective from 31 March 2011, the Council is no longer subject to a full external audit as its income and expenditure is below £6.5 million. Instead, the Council now falls within the limited assurance audit regime.

The Council's statutory accounts are now included in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for external audit purposes and comprise a summary of income and expenditure, reserves and bank balances and long-term assets and liabilities. The amounts in the statutory accounts represent a summary of the related information presented in more detail within these unaudited financial statements. The AGAR and these financial statements were approved at a Council meeting on 24 June 2025.

The annual return will, in due course, include the external auditor's opinion and will be advertised when received and available for inspection.

Financial responsibilities

The Council is required to (a) plan for the proper administration of its financial affairs; (b) appoint a Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) to have responsibility for the Council's financial affairs; and (c) manage its affairs to ensure economic, efficient and effective use of resources, and to safeguard its assets.

The RFO is responsible for ensuring that the financial statements are (a) prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting, so far as applicable to the Council; and (b) present fairly the financial position of the Council and its income and expenditure at the year end. The RFO has selected suitable accounting policies and ensured that they were applied consistently; made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent; and complied with the Code.

The RFO has also ensured that proper accounting records were maintained throughout the year, and that reasonable procedures were in place for the prevention of fraud and other irregularities.

Commentary on the financial outturn for the year

This year the Council had originally budgeted to fund its activities using £166,011 of reserves to support revenue budget funding, following the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. However, the Council started the 2024/25 year with reserves of £789,057 and at the end of the 2024/25 financial year the Council deficit of £-514.00 from the General Reserve, with activities and bookings income strong across the venues. The year end reserve funds stood at 788,544 as of 31 March 2025.

The Council holds earmarked reserves – which are ringfenced funds, authorised by Committee, for specific projects and investment.

In addition, the Council has repairs and renewals, building and facilities and capital programme funds to which amounts are added and spent from each year.

In 2024/25 the Council received Community Infrastructure Levy income of £870.00, making a total CIL balance of £21,957.66 and total expenditure of £21,957.66 leaving £0.00 balance.

As of 31 March 2025, the Council's general reserves totalled £788,544. Expenditure in the year totalled £3,159,449 (before transfer to and from EMR's) with income of £2,310,117 received.

Signed on behalf of the Council

.....
Derren Coe, Responsible Financial Officer

Woodley Town Council
Financial statements for 2024/2025

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 March 2025

	Year ended 31 March 2025			2024
	<u>Expense</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Net</u>	<u>Net</u>
	£	£	£	£
Leisure Services				
Woodford Park Leisure Centre & 3G pitch	462,524	561,108	-98,584	-89,138
Outdoor sports and recreation	187,779	36,138	151,641	129,582
Play areas	22,528	0	22,528	23,860
Oakwood Centre	217,853	149,517	68,336	20,197
Coronation & Chapel Halls	58,886	80,577	-21,691	-17,578
Town Centre CCTV EMR	149	0	149	68
Allotments	26,377	17,574	8,803	17,232
Woodley Town Centre Partnership	71,213	48,355	22,858	0
Grants under S137 LGA 1972	3,060	0	3,060	3,350
Grants/WTCP (post 17 June 24)	0	0	0	26,928
Other grants	30,000	0	30,000	38,525
Youth services	15,660	0	15,660	34,645
Public amenities	9,357	0	9,357	7,595
Public events	14,090	300	13,790	10,793
Public Toilet	3,350	148	3,202	4,409
OC Building & Facilities	0	0	0	450
WPLC Buildings & Facilities	0	0	0	9,550
PWLB Loan interest and repayments	973,340	0	973,340	174,326
Investments purchases and sales	0	0	0	53,231
Interest from bank accounts	0	4,132	-4,132	-5,087
Yield from CCLA Activities	0	166,393	-166,393	-161,247
Administration and office costs (includes CIL)	605,369	81,376	523,993	308,217
Democratic process	36,444	0	36,444	78,577
Council-wide central costs	421,470	0	421,470	412,426
Capital Programme	0	0	0	170,000
Precept on Wokingham Borough Council	0	1,164,500	-1,164,500	-1,195,649
Net cost of Council services excl EMR contribution	3,159,449	2,310,118	849,331	55,262
EMR support for General Reserves			-60,349	0
EMR support for repayment of PWLB loans			-788,469	13,471
Reduction in general fund for the year			514	68,731
General reserves balance BFW			789,057	857,788
General reserves balance CFWD			788,544	789,057
Transfers to EMR (note 13)			-199,716	
Transfers from EMR (note 13)			1,005,368	
Net transfer from EMR			805,652	

Woodley Town Council

Financial statements for 2024/2025

Balance Sheet as of 31 March 2025

	Note	31 March 2025		31 March 2024	
		£	£	£	£
Current assets					
Stocks			770		521
Debtors and prepayments					
Amounts due for Council services		40,904		28,802	
VAT recoverable		23,678		27,526	
Memorial Ground		42,092		27,827	
Other Debtors		253		253	
Accrued income		13,942		27,734	
Prepayments		51,311		60,102	
			172,181		172,243
Bank and cash balances					
Deposit accounts		106,289		123,975	
Current accounts		15,242		16,148	
CCLA (PWL & INVEST1)		2,481,433		3,326,416	
Petty cash and cash floats		554		525	
			2,603,518		3,467,064
			2,776,459		3,639,827
Less current liabilities					
Creditors and income in advance					
Trade supplies and services		83,050		81,960	
Other creditors + deposits		38,218		34,772	
VAT provision (partial exemption)		11,000		11,000	
Loan interest accrued		2,711		58,647	
Other accruals		21,107		27,941	
Income received in advance		12,860		11,820	
			168,946		226,140
Net assets			2,607,523		3,413,688
Reserves and balances					
Earmarked reserves					
Capital projects			189,384		123,501
Asset replacement			0		25,369
Other earmarked reserves			1,629,595		2,475,760
			1,818,979		2,624,630
General fund as shown on the Income & Expenditure Account (page 5)			788,544		789,059
			2,607,523		3,413,688

These financial statements show a true and fair view of the Council's financial position as of 31 March 2025, and of its income and expenditure for the year ended on that date. These financial statements were approved by the Council on 24 June 2025.

.....
Councillor David Bragg
Town Mayor

.....
Derren Coe
Responsible Financial Officer

Woodley Town Council

Financial statements for 2024/2025

Notes to the Financial Statements

1. Principal accounting policies

Accounting convention

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with proper accounting practices as set out in the SLCC Practitioners' Guide for Local Councils, and as such meet the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011.

Fixed assets and associated long-term borrowings

Fixed assets comprise (a) those tangible assets which are considered to yield benefit to the community, or the services which the Council provides, for more than one year; and (b) long-term debtors and investments. These assets are not included in the Council's balance sheet but are disclosed as within Notes to these financial statements. All expenditure on acquiring or enhancing fixed assets is charged to Income & Expenditure Account in the year in which it is incurred.

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost or (in the case of freehold and leasehold properties) at valuation, less accumulated depreciation to 31 March 2010 where relevant, being the date when accounting and audit requirements were changed, and depreciation was no longer required.

Certain community assets are the subject of restrictive covenants as to their use and/or future disposal. Such assets are therefore considered to have no appreciable realisable value and are therefore stated at nominal values.

Long-term borrowings similarly are not included in the balance sheet but are disclosed in the Notes to these financial statements. Loan repayments are charged to Income & Expenditure Account in the year in which they are incurred.

Capital receipts

Receipts from the sale of fixed assets, and grants or loans advanced for the acquisition or enhancement of fixed assets, are credited to Income & Expenditure Account when received and transferred to reserves until used to finance capital expenditure.

Debtors and creditors

These financial statements are prepared on an accrual's basis in accordance with Accounts & Audit Regulations. Except for expenditure on fixed assets or capital receipts (see above), income and expenditure therefore include amounts due to, or payable by, the Council.

Stocks

Stocks of retail items at the leisure centre are valued at cost. Other stocks are treated as consumed at the time of purchase because the aggregate value at any time is not material in relation to the Council's financial statements.

Pension contributions

Employer contributions to the Berkshire Superannuation Scheme (which is a defined benefit scheme) on behalf of the Council's staff are charged to Income & Expenditure Account on the accrual's basis. Employer contributions are determined by the Scheme's actuaries on a triennial basis and are set to ensure that the Scheme will be funded to meet 100% of its liabilities in accordance with Government regulations for local government pension schemes.

Woodley Town Council
Financial statements for 2024/2025

	<u>31/03/2025</u>	<u>31/03/2024</u>
	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
2. Interest and loan repayments		
Interest payable	119,313	125,473
Loan repayments	854,027	48,853
	973,340	174,326

3. Employee costs and numbers		
Salaries and wages	887,827	852,628
Employer National Insurance contributions	81,358	77,578
Employer pension contributions (see below)	229,380	216,421

1,198,565 1,146,627

Employer pension contributions were paid at 27.2% of employees' pensionable earnings in the year (2024: 27.2%) as determined in the actuarial valuation as of 31 March 2023.

Average monthly no. of employees during the year was:

Full time	23	22
Part time	28	29
	51	51

4. Audit fees		
Fees paid to external auditors for statutory audit services	2,520	2,520

5. Grants to local organisations

The Council made grants to local organisations to facilitate:

Transport for people with limited mobility	14,210	17,325
Counselling and advisory services	14,290	14,600
Youth Services	1,500	6,600
Cultural services	0	0
Environmental services	0	0

30,000 38,525

The Council made grants under Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 where there were no specific enabling powers amounting to:

Pre-17 June 24	3,060	7,500
Post 17 June 24 – Enabling Powers - GPC	0	22,778

The Council received external funding towards capital expenditure:

Specific grants received:		
Community Infrastructure Levy	870	11,208

Woodley Town Council

Financial statements for 2024/2025

6. CCLA Activities

Woodley TC-PWLB	1,105,000	2,000,000
Woodley TC-INVEST1	998,000	1,118,000

	2,103,000	3,118,000
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Dividend Re-Invested

Woodley TC-PWLB	242,809	133,874
Woodley TC-INVEST1	135,624	74,542

	378,433	208,416
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7. Long Term Borrowings

The Council has borrowed amounts from the Public Works Loans Board on various occasions over past years in connection with various capital schemes to purchase or improve its fixed assets. Some of these loans are repayable by annual instalments through precepted sums. Others are repayable on maturity.

	31/03/2025	31/03/2024
Within one year of the balance sheet date	1,294,045	79,027
Between one and two years	46,252	2,069,045
Between two and five years	123,840	132,628
Between five and ten years	68,873	99,598
More than ten years	138,400	145,140
	1,671,410	2,525,438

8. Fixed Assets

	31/03/2024	Additions	Disposals	31/03/2025
Operational land & buildings	5,978,082	2,275	0	5,980,357
Amenities Vehicles and Equipment	208,484	2,606	0	211,090
Equipment/Furn - Chapel Hall	0	6,500	0	6,500
Equipment/Furn - Coronation Hall	0	6,500	0	6,500
Infrastructure/Community	258,793	12,739	0	271,532
Equipment/Furn - Oakwood	72,888	116,608	0	189,496
Oakwood Office Equipment	23,443	0	0	23,443
Equipment/Furn - Outdoor Area	390,815	0	0	390,815
Sports/Leisure Equipment/Furn	760,863	1,784	0	762,647
WPLC Office Equipment	1,238	0	0	1,238

7,694,606	149,012	0	7,843,618
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Woodley Town Council

Financial statements for 2024/2025

9. Capital commitments

The Council had no capital commitments on 31 March 2025 not otherwise provided in these financial statements.

10. Contingent liabilities

The Council is not aware of any contingent liabilities at the date of these financial statements, other than those mentioned in the foreword.

11. Trust funds; Woodley Memorial Recreational Ground Charity

The Council is corporate trustee for this Charity, which is registered in England as number 300098. The Charity owns an area of land in Woodley, known as the Memorial Ground, which is available to the public for sport, recreation and leisure use, but it has no other assets. The Council maintains this land on behalf of the Charity under its general powers for the maintenance of land and open spaces; and the Charity donates to the Council each year, equivalent to its annual income, in consideration for the Council bearing the costs of maintenance.

The costs incurred in the year ended 31 March 2025 were £25,626 (2024: £13,301), to which the Charity contributed its income of £11,275 (2024: £3,990).

12. Related party transactions

The Council awards grants to support several voluntary or charitable bodies, but it does not attempt to influence through awarding the grants. Members also represent the Council on various organisations, but the appointments do not place Members in a position to exert undue influence.

No Members have undertaken any declarable, material transactions with the Council, nor vice versa. Details of any such transactions would be recorded in the Register of Members' interests.

Woodley Town Council
Financial statements for 2024/2025

13.EMR Reserves

	At 1 April 2024	Transfer to reserve	Transfer from reserve	At 31 March 2025
	£	£	£	£
<u>Capital projects reserve</u>				
Capital programme fund	108,391	0	-12,962	95,429
OC Buildings & Facilities EMR	5,560	12,225	0	17,785
WPLC Building & Facilities EMR	9,550	66,619	0	76,169
Repairs & renewals fund	25,369	0	-25,369	0
<u>Other earmarked reserves</u>				
Christmas Lighting EMR	0	15,000	-7,120	7,880
Capital Receipt -Assets	89,400	0	0	89,400
Capital Receipt -Assets Wdly Tennis	0	70,002	-64,880	5,122
Youth Services SLA EMR	4,240	0	-4,240	0
WPLC Changing Room EMR	10,000	0	-10,000	0
Special projects fund	25,040	0	-25,040	0
3G Pitch Noise Survey EMR	621	0	-621	0
WTC sinking fund	79,538	0	-79,538	0
Play Area Reserve	5,979	0	-5,654	324
Climate Emergency EMR	0	8,400	-2,287	6,113
Allotment Roadways EMR	0	1,014	0	1,014
3G Pitch Carpet replace	96,000	12,000	0	108,000
WTC AV Equipment	0	4,605	0	4,605
JAC Loddon Mead EMR	2,500	0	-2,500	0
History Timeline	0	3,250	0	3,250
WP Bursary Fund EMR	1,500	0	-1,500	0
WP Comm Grant Fund	2,767	0	-2,767	0
Election reserve	13,000	6,500	0	19,500
Allotment toilets	2,240	0	-899	1,341
Speedwatch Reserve	971	0	-971	0
Capital Receipt RSV (INV)	1,920,462	0	-695,462	1,225,000
WPLC Refurbishment Reserve	27,419	0	-27,419	0
Allotment security	613	0	-2	611
Anxiety Self Help EMR	779	0	-779	0
Lodden Mead Art Proj EMR	800	0	-800	0
Clock/pagoda reserve	2,984	0	0	2,984
WPLC VAT Reclaimed EMR	133,690	0	0	133,690
PWLB instalment not taken	13,469	0	-13,469	0
CIL Funds EMR	21,088	0	-21,087	0
Town Centre Comm EMR	5,661	0	0	5,661

Woodley Town Council
Financial statements for 2024/2025

Town Centre CCTV EMR	15,000	0	0	15,000
Allotment Environment	0	100	0	100
	2,624,630	199,716	-1,005,368	1,818,979

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25 Form 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities*:

- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or
- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:
 - are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or
 - have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2024/25

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
 - The **Annual Internal Audit Report** **must** be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
 - **Sections 1 and 2** **must** be completed and approved by the authority.
 - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2025**.
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2025**. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
 - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
 - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2025
 - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
 - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
 - Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability **Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate** will be returned to the authority by email or post.

Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on the authority website/webpage:

Before 1 July 2025 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2024/25**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2024/25**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2025 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review. It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

*for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024/25

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty) and is properly signed and dated. Any amendments must be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2025.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chair, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (**Section 2, page 5**). An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the bank reconciliation is incomplete or variances not **fully** explained then additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2024) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2025).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which **must** include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2025**.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?		
	Has all additional information requested, including the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights , been provided for the external auditor?		
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?		
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?		
Section 2	Has the Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval?		
	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chair of the approval meeting?		
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?		
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2025 been reconciled to Box 8?		
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?		
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? NB: do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.		

**Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices*, can be downloaded from www.nalc.gov.uk or from www.ada.org.uk

Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

WOODLEY TOWN COUNCIL

<https://woodley.gov.uk/> PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

During the financial year ended 31 March 2025, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2024/25 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2023/24, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2023/24 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2024-25 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2023-24 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).		✓	
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2023/24 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		

O. (For local councils only)	Yes	No	Not applicable
Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	✓		

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

31/10/2024

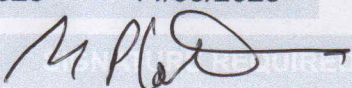
04/03/2025

14/05/2025

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

MIKE PLATTEN CPFA INTERNAL AUDITOR

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit



Date

14/05/2025

***If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).**

****Note:** If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2024/25

We acknowledge as the members of:

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2025, that:

	Agreed		
	Yes	No*	'Yes' means that this authority:
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.			<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.			<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.			<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.			<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.			<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.			<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.			<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.			<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A
			<i>has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>

***Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

DD/MM/YYYY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

ENTER PUBLICLY AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2024/25 for

WOODLEY TOWN COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2024 £	31 March 2025 £	
1. Balances brought forward	3,229,009	3,413,689	<i>Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.</i>
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	1,195,649	1,164,500	<i>Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.</i>
3. (+) Total other receipts	1,205,130	1,145,617	<i>Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.</i>
4. (-) Staff costs	1,146,627	1,198,565	<i>Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.</i>
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	174,328	973,340	<i>Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).</i>
6. (-) All other payments	895,144	944,378	<i>Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).</i>
7. (=) Balances carried forward	3,413,689	2,607,523	<i>Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).</i>
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	3,467,064	2,603,518	<i>The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.</i>
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	Restate 23/24 7,694,606	7,843,618	<i>The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.</i>
10. Total borrowings	2,525,438	1,671,410	<i>The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).</i>

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	✓			<i>The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.</i>
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	✓			<i>The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.</i>

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2025 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

17/06/2025

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2024/25

In respect of

ENTER NAME OF AUTHORITY

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02 as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/> .

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2025; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor’s limited assurance opinion 2024/25

(Except for the matters reported below)* on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. (*delete as appropriate).

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

3 External auditor certificate 2024/25

We certify/do not certify* that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2025.

*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name

ENTER NAME OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

External Auditor Signature

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YYYY

Annual Governance Statement 2024/25**– Section 1 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR)****Item 9 c) on the Council agenda**

Statements	Information for councillors
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	<p>Council's internal auditors have confirmed in the 2024/25 annual report that effective financial management is in place.</p> <p>The accounting statements have been prepared by the Responsible Financial Officer, in compliance with statutory guidelines and proper practices. The internal auditor has reviewed and checked these.</p>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	<p>Responsibility of managers to maintain internal control and review and can confirm that this has happened this year and a rolling and ongoing programme of training for all staff handling cash has been put in place.</p> <p>Recommendations from Internal audit report for the 2024/25 year being implemented.</p>
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non compliance with laws, regulations and proper practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	<p>Town Clerk, managers and council committees make decisions based on information provided in structured, accurate reports to meetings and have opportunity to question and discuss.</p> <p>Information on regulations and any other requirements are reported to the council.</p>
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	<p>The Notice of Public Rights was displayed from 28 June – 8 August 2024 on Council noticeboards and the Council website. The date stated on the notice was incorrect – as previously reported to Council, resulting in assertion 4 requiring a response of NO.</p>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	<p>Risk Management Strategy and Risk Register is reviewed by the Risk Management Working Party annually and presented to Strategy and Resources Committee and Full Council.</p> <p>The register includes the list of items identified, including financial matters, and how the risks are managed and actions taken/to take. Budgetary control reports made to all budget holding standing committees at each meeting. Council signatories can confirm their scrutiny regarding the council's payments.</p> <p>Insurance cover is reviewed annually. The council has fidelity guarantee insurance and business interruption cover.</p>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	<p>Members approved the appointment of internal auditors April Skies at the Strategy and Resources Committee meeting on 27 September 2023 for a 3 year period.</p> <p>The Internal Auditor's reports of the work carried out over separate visits in the year is provided in the Internal Auditor's Annual Report for the year 2024/25 - included in the appendix.</p>

7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	Formal recommendations have been made by the Council's internal auditor for the period. All actions have, or are in the process of being actioned.
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	There were no litigation, liabilities, commitments, events or transactions during or after the year end that have a financial effect on the council.
9. Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the funds/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	The Council is the trustee of the Woodley Memorial Recreation Ground Charity. The charity meets at least annually and the annual return has been submitted to the Charity Commission in accordance with the regulations.

Derren Coe
Responsible Financial Officer
18 June 2025

Kevin Murray
Woodley Town Council

19 May 2025

Dear Kevin

Woodley Town Council - Internal Audit 24-25 **Final Audit**

The internal audit for the 24-25 financial year is now complete. I am pleased to be able to report that I have signed off the internal audit section of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for with one comment, which follows a recommendation raised by external audit.

<u>M: Arrangements for Inspection of Accounts</u>	23-24 notice regarding the period for the exercise of public rights was published on the same day as the period and not published before the start of the period. (External Audit Direction)
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The Council must mark assertion 4 on the 24-25 Annual Governance Statement as “NO”.

As stated in the engagement letter, the scope of our work is limited to completing the audit testing and enquiries we deem necessary to complete Section 4 of the Annual Report for Local Councils in England. We do not provide assurance over or accept responsibility for areas of work not included in this scope, unless specifically agreed with the Council during the financial year.

In providing internal audit services we are not conducting a financial statement audit in accordance with standards and guidelines issued by the Audit Practices Board and our procedures are not designed to provide assurance over the reliability and quality of your financial statements and management information – that is the job of external audit.

We are required by the Annual Internal Audit Report included in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) to review controls in place at the Council against predefined control assertions. These control assertions are set out below, together with the results of my internal audit work for 24-5. Recommendations followed up from the 23-24 audit are set out at Appendix A. At Appendix B I list a schedule of recommendations raised at the 24-25 audit.

The audit was completed over three visits. Interim audits were carried out on 31 October and 4 March, these concentrated on in year financial transactions and governance controls. The final audit was completed on 14 May and concentrated on the statement of accounts and balance sheet.

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A. Books of Account

First Interim Audit

The Council uses the RBS Omega accounting system, an industry specific accounting package to record accounting transactions. Woodley also uses the following modules supplied by RBS that feed directly into the accounting system:

- allotments
- purchase ledger
- sales ledger
- Purchase ordering has been added since my last audit and is being used
- The asset register module has been purchased and is being populated in preparation for the 24-25 accounting statements, following a recommendation raised at last audit.

I note that the RFO is retiring from the Council in June 2025. It is important that the Council prepares for this by:

- Ensuring all key finance processes are documented
- Training alternative staff to operate key financial processes

This will ensure a smooth handover to a new RFO, and ensure adequate back up is in place to enable the Council to function effectively during the handover.

The RFO also explained that he is not currently able to access Woodford Park Leisure Centre finance systems, due to server access issues. This access must be restored, the RFO needs access to these systems to update the accounting system and to carry out checks on income received at Woodford Park.

I have tested the brought forward balances against the audited prior year annual return and can confirm these have been brought forward correctly. Box 7 on the audited accounts for 23-24 was £3,413,689. This agrees to the period 0 balance sheet on Omega.

The Council is VAT registered, necessary because of the income generating activities at the Council. I have confirmed that the Council's VAT returns were up to date, with the claim for the 3 months to 30 September 2024 submitted to HMRC on 8 October 2024. I checked that balances in the return could be agreed to schedules produced by the accounting system. VAT reclaimed of £15,777 for quarter 2 has also been agreed to the Council's VAT control account.

Second Interim Audit

The Council has two significant changes coming up with regard to financial management. The RFO is retiring in June, and a new financial management system is being introduced to replace the Rialtas accounting system. The Council must ensure that access to archived data is retained in line with document retention requirements as part of the closedown of Rialtas. I will carry out an early interim audit in 25-26 to review controls and balances on the new finance system.

Final Audit

The Council supplied the annual return report from the RBS accounting system for the year end audit. I have checked figures in this report back to detailed year end reports produced from the accounting system:

- All comparatives reported in the financial statements have been agreed back to the audited 23-24 accounts, as published on the council website, with the exception of fixed assets, which have been restated – see section H below.
- Accounting statements agreed to detailed annual return reports
- Box 7 - balances carried / brought forward – agreed to balance sheet
- Box 8 – cash – agreed to Cash and investment report
- Box 9 - fixed assets - agreed to asset register

The Council has successfully appointed a new RFO with relevant public sector experience, and will be moving to the new finance system in the next few weeks. It would be sensible to have an additional audit visit in September to walk through transactions in the new finance system, to ensure it is operating as intended.

B. Financial Regulations & Payments

First Interim Audit

Financial Regulations were reviewed at Full Council in May 2024. These incorporated changes to the NALC template that have recently been published, with local amendments to match controls in place at WTC.

The Council gives authority to spend via the annual budget process. The budget is published annually in the budget book. Service managers are permitted to place orders for goods and services against approved budgets. Purchase orders must be raised for all orders where a contract is not in place.

Invoices are sent to the RFO. Once confirmation of receipt of goods or service has been confirmed by budget manager, these invoices are loaded on to the purchase ledger and coded to the relevant cost centre. The RFO prepares the weekly payment run. All invoices are scanned and attached to a batch schedule and sent to the Clerk for review. The invoice batch is then sent to 2 from a panel of 4 councillors, who authorise invoices for payment. The payments are set up at the bank by the RFO and authorised by the Clerk (or back up bank signatories). Invoice batch and evidence of authorisation is filed by the RFO.

The Council has a robust procedure in place to ensure that all expenditure is authorised in line with financial regulations. I selected a sample of 15 transactions from all cashbooks for the first 6 months of the financial year and tested the following:

- Transaction could be agreed back to invoice
- Purchase order in place and authorised appropriately
- Payment approval emails were on file, from 2 councillors,

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- VAT accounting correct
- Direct debit payments approved at a Council meeting
- Expenditure appropriate for the Council

I note that the Council still depends on 2 councillors to authorise payments. This duty should be shared by other councillors at least once a quarter to ensure familiarity with the process.

My testing identified one anomaly, in the process for making debit card payments from the imprest account. Financial regulations require :

“The signatories for payments from the imprest account are the Town Clerk, the Deputy Town Clerk, the Leisure Services Manager and the Committee Officer. Two signatories are required to approve payments from this account.”

This process is not followed for debit card payments made on the imprest account. It is recommended that processes for making debit card payments out of the imprest account is made clearer at the next review of Financial Regulations.

Second Interim Audit

I tested a further sample of 5 transactions from months 7 to 11 of the financial year, all selected from cashbook one. I repeated tests from the first interim audit, and was able to conclude that

- Transaction could be agreed back to invoice
- Purchase order in place and authorised appropriately
- Payment approval emails were on file, from 2 councillors,
- Expenditure appropriate for the Council

Final audit

Non pay expenditure per box 6 to the accounts amounted to £944,378 up from £895,144 in 23-24 .

I carried out further testing of expenditure from month 12 of the financial year – 2 further transactions were audited. For both transactions tested I was able to agree cashbook back to invoice, and to check that :

- An appropriately authorised purchase order was in place
- Evidence of authorisation of payment at bank by 2 councillors was on file (email)
- Expenditure was appropriate for the Council

Accrued expenditure at year end was £21,107. I reviewed the accruals listing . All accruals raised were of the type I would expect to see at this council, and I am satisfied that these costs have been properly allocated to 2024-5:

- March 2025 utilities costs
- External and internal audit costs relating to 2024-25 but not yet invoiced.

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C. Risk Management & Insurance

First Interim Audit

The Council's main insurance policy is with Hiscox Insurance. This was in date at the time of my audit with a start date of 1 April 2024, valid "until the policy is cancelled."

9 buildings are insured. Asset insurance in place for 24-25 is set out below

Item description	Excess	Amount Insured
Total Buildings	£250	£11,469,481
Gates and fences	£250	£29,266
Fixed outside equipment	£250	£78,793
Street furniture	£250	£55,524
War memorials	£250	£35,219
Playground equipment	£250	£566,272
Sports surfaces	£250	£0
Other surfaces	£250	£154,524
Rent receivable	£250	

Woodford Park Leisure Centre is insured at a value of £7m.

I will test the risk assessment, computer back up arrangements and cyber insurance at a later interim audit.

Second Interim Audit

The Council completed the review of the risk management strategy at the Full Council meeting on 11 February 2025 – minute 84.4. I have reviewed the strategy, and it appears appropriate for this larger council, whilst there were no material changes, there is evidence of update in year. The 25/26 disaster recovery plan was adopted at the same meeting.

The Town Clerk confirmed that the Council is working with the ICT contractor to complete an ICT risk assessment in 25-26. This will include cyber security risks and controls around data back up and recovery testing.

D. Budget, Precept & Reserves

First Interim Audit

The Council is in the process of preparing the 25-26 budget – I will review in more detail at my next audit.

I confirmed that the Council continues to receive budget monitoring reports as required by financial regulations. Summary Council income and expenditure reports for the period to the end of Quarter 2 were reported to the September Strategy and Resources committee. Individual sub-committees also continue to receive service specific budget monitoring reports – eg Leisure committee to month 4 at meeting on 3rd September.

Second Interim Audit

The Council has completed the budget and precept setting process for 25-26. This was approved at the Full Council meeting on 11 February 2025 – minute 71.2. A precept of £1,165,759 was set, supported by a detailed budget, which is published in the budget book available on the Council website. The budget is summarised as follows:

Expenditure	£2,638,501
Income (including precept)	£2,229,949
Deficit – to be funded from general reserve	£ 138,552

The treasury management policy was updated at the same meeting, formally setting out the Council's targeted general reserve of £500K, supported by strong earmarked reserves to support the Council's asset base.

Final Audit

Reserves at 31 March 2025 were £2,607,523 (23-24 £3,413,689).

General reserves at year end were £789K. This represents 67% of precept, at the upper mid-point of recommended levels set out in the NALC Practitioners' Guide. I consider this level of general reserve to be appropriate for Woodley, given the level of precept, and well developed earmarked reserves, plus high levels of non-precept income.

Earmarked reserves at 31.3.25 were as follows:

Christmas Lighting EMR	7880.00
Capital Programme Fund	95428.84
OC Buildings & Facilities EMR	17785.21
WPLC Buildings & Facilities EM	76169.49
Cap-Receipt-Assets	89400.00
Cap-Receipt- Silver Fox	5121.71
Play Area Reserve	324.12
Climate Emergency EMR	6113.03
Allotment Roadways EMR	1014.20
3G Pitch Carpet Replace't EMR	108000.00
WTC AV Equipment EMR	4605.34
WTC History Timeline EMR	3249.87
ELECTION RESERVE	19500.00
ALLOTMENT TOILETS	1340.84
CAPITAL Receipt RSV (INV)	1225000.00
Allotment Security	611.23
Clock/Pagoda Reserve	2983.83
WPLC VAT Reclaimed EMR	133689.95
CIL FUNDS	0.16
Town Centre Comm EMR	5660.70
Town Centre CCTV EMR	15000.00
Allotment Environment EMR	100.00
TOTAL	1818978.52

The £1.2m capital receipt reserve is held to fund future repayments of PWLB loans. Other reserves are in place to support the Council's asset base. I remind the Council that further work should be carried out an asset management plan, to ensure funds are in place to fund future maintenance costs for the Council's extensive asset base. There is a risk of insufficient funding for essential repairs and maintenance costs if a costed maintenance plan is not considered as part of budget and precept setting.

E. Income

Second Interim Audit

I carried out testing of Council income at my second interim audit. I selected a sample of transactions from the cashbook for the first 11 months of the financial year. For all transactions tested I was able to agree income recorded in the cashbook back to appropriate documentation:

- Invoice raised by the Council – I checked appropriate fees and charges have been applied, and where discounts have been awarded to regular hirers / local clubs, these are within the 20% threshold permitted in the Council's scheme of delegation, as approved at S&R Committee in June 2023.

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Record of card / cash receipts recorded on till roll at WPLC,

- Gym income – checked to Gocardless system, which is used to collect gym membership income.

My sample included a credit of £70K relating to a proceeds of a land sale received from Woodley Lawn Tennis Club. This has been checked to communication from the solicitor.

I reviewed the Council's sales ledgers. Woodford Park was clear, with all debts recorded current. There are a small number of debts more than 60 days old on the sundry debts ledger. These should be pursued and a process introduced where the sales ledger is checked at least monthly, with debt follow up procedures enforced for any debts older than 30 days.

Final Audit

Precept per box 2 to the accounts was £1,164,500 (23-24 £1,195,649). This has been agreed to third party documentation provided by central government

Income per box 3 to the accounts was £1,145,617 (23-24 £1,205,130).

Further testing of income booked to the cashbook for the final 2 months of the financial year was carried out at the final audit. Transactions were selected from the cashbook and checked to supporting documentation. These included:

- Go cardless statement (gym membership)
- Grant remittance advice – grant from WBC to fund theatre study
- WPLC daily income – cashbook credit agreed to daily reconciliation sheet. 2 higher value transactions have been checked from reconciliation sheet to credit card machine slip
- Room hire – cashbook credit agreed to invoice and to fees and charges schedule.

All income transactions were checked to bank.

F. Petty cash

Petty cash balances at year end were as follows:

Town Council Office – 224.27

Petrol account - 120.00

The petty cash has been counted in March 2025, and reconciled to accounting records. I checked the Council office count from March 2025, and confirmed it has been signed by the Town Clerk and RFO.

G. Payroll

Second Interim Audit

I tested the payroll for August 24. I tested the following payments from cashbook, back to payroll records:

- Net pay paid to staff
- Payment to pension provider
- Payment to HMRC

I also tested pay for four individual staff members, working from payroll records back to contracts of employment. Whilst this generally worked well, I faced issues in verifying the pay of officers who have been with the Council for a number of years. It is recommended that

- the rates of pay of all staff who have been with the Council for more than 3 years should be checked and new contracts issued
- an annual process is introduced, so that at each annual pay award, the rates of pay for each employee is verified back to contract, and a pay award letter issued, stating rate of pay, scale point and hours of work.
- New contracts should be issued whenever staff change hours or a change is made to scale point (other than contractually due increments)

The Town Clerk confirmed that the Council has recently contracted with Peninsula to enhance HR support and documentation.

Final Audit

Staff costs per box 4 to the accounts were £1,198,565 (23-24 £1,146,627).

At the final audit I confirmed that only costs relating to the employment of staff (salary costs / Employers NIC and Pension Costs) were included within staff costs in the statement of accounts, as required by the NALC Practitioners' Guide.

H. Assets and investments

Second Interim Audit

The Council is looking to complete a review of the fixed asset register in 24-25, following previous audit recommendations. A new fixed asset policy was approved at April Strategy and Resources Committee. The RFO is currently working through the asset register to produce a more accurate asset register. This work needs to be completed by March 25 to ensure accurate accounts. It is likely that this will result in a restatement of the 23-24 balance for fixed assets on the AGAR.

I reviewed the draft asset register with officers, and provided guidance on accounting for a number of assets. I remind the Council that a 2 stage reconciliation will be needed for the asset register at year end:

1. Restatement of 23-24 closing balance. I will need to see a reconciliation between the balance on last year's AGAR and the restated balance for 31.3.24, showing all assets removed and added to the asset register
2. Reconciliation of 24-25 asset register with any additions or disposals listed.

Detailed working papers should be retained, these may be requested by external audit.

Final Audit

Fixed Assets at year-end were £7,843,618 (23-24 £7,694,606 RESTATED) Increase in year: £149,012

The Council has restated the 23-24 balance for fixed assets. This is set out below:

Box 7 Fixed Assets 23-24 Audited AGAR	- £7,675,816
Box 7 Fixed Assets 23-24 on current year AGAR	- £7,694,606
Value of Restatement	- £ 18,790

The restatement occurred as a result of a validation exercise undertaken by the Council as part of the process of moving the asset register on to the accounting system.

This identified the following adjustments to the asset register:

Assets not previously recorded on the asset register - now added as an adjustment to the opening balance at 1.4.24	468,607.00
Assets previously recorded on the asset register - now removed as an adjustment to the opening balance at 1.4.24. These assets are no longer held by the Council or were recorded in a way that means that they could not be attributed to specific assets	449,817.00
Net Change to Opening Balance Fixed Asset Register	18,790

The new RFO should ensure that adequate working papers are in place to support this adjustment, in case of queries from external audit.

The asset register has been moved on to the Rialtas Fixed Asset module since my last audit. I have agreed the year-end balance recorded in the accounts back to the asset register held on the accounting system. The asset register appears complete and to record assets at cost or proxy cost, as required by regulations. Additions for the year of £149K have been agreed to a schedule of assets purchased in 24-25 (there were no disposals). The highest value additions in year were :

- Toilets at Woodley Centre - £70K
- Winch at Theatre £19.7K
- New Boiler £14.4K

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I. Bank reconciliations

First Interim Audit

The Council operates 7 cashbooks on the Omega accounting system. Each day the Finance officer logs on to Lloyds Bank and downloads bank statements. The bank statement and RBS cashbook are brought into balance on a daily basis. This is necessary at WTC, given the large number of low value transactions on the bank account, generated by the Leisure Centre.

Monthly bank reconciliations for all bank accounts are promptly after each month end . This is clearly evidenced in the Council's bank reconciliation file. The September 2024 bank reconciliation was tested in detail. I confirmed the following for all 7 cashbooks:

- All balances on the bank reconciliation were agreed back to bank statements / cashbooks
- Arithmetic checked for accuracy.
- Any unrepresented items were checked to subsequent clearance through bank.

At the time of my audit, Councillor review of the bank reconciliations for September had not yet been completed, although file review confirms this control is in place

Second Interim Audit

I checked bank reconciliations – all September bank reconciliations had been reviewed by a councillor and signed as reviewed. Reconciliations had been reviewed to the end of December at the time of my March interim audit.

I note £844K is due to repaid to PWLB on 31 March 2025. Care will need to be taken to ensure that Council accounts match PWLB accounting statements at 31 March 2025 – there were issues with this in 23-24.

Final Audit

Cash at box 8 was £2,603,518 (23-24 £3,467,064)

I confirmed that the year end bank reconciliation has been completed for all bank accounts These were reviewed by Cllr Baker prior to my audit, the review evidenced on the bank reconciliation and on all bank statements (including CCLA deposits) . I reperformed the year end bank reconciliation, and was able to:

- Confirm cashbook balance to accounting system
- Confirm bank balance to bank statement
- Check arithmetic is correct.

Borrowings at box 10 £1,671,410 (23-24 £2,525,438)

The accounts balance at 31.3.25 has been agreed to the year-end statement published on the Debt Management Office website. Loans owed by Woodley at balance sheet date are set out below:

Borrower Name	Loan Number	Advance Date	Maturity Date	Principal Balance Outstanding (£)
WOODLEY TOWN COUNCIL (BERKS)	PW454569	18-Jul-1984	31-Mar-2044	38,019.01
WOODLEY TOWN COUNCIL (BERKS)	PW460907	16-Sep-1986	31-Mar-2026	18,775.08
WOODLEY TOWN COUNCIL (BERKS)	PW467556	04-Oct-1989	30-Sep-2029	30,290.10
WOODLEY TOWN COUNCIL (BERKS)	PW485429	30-Mar-2001	30-Mar-2026	1,225,000.00
WOODLEY TOWN COUNCIL (BERKS)	PW489575	17-Jan-2005	30-Sep-2030	38,442.06
WOODLEY TOWN COUNCIL (BERKS)	PW504186	26-Jun-2015	26-Jun-2030	107,070.06
WOODLEY TOWN COUNCIL (BERKS)	PW505314	31-Aug-2016	31-Aug-2026	17,400.74
WOODLEY TOWN COUNCIL (BERKS)	PW507873	01-Oct-2018	01-Oct-2043	196,413.34
TOTAL				1,671,410.39

J. Year-end accounts

Satisfactory – Woodley has produced accounts on an accruals basis, it is required to do this is required as income / expenditure is in excess of £200k. A reconciliation between box 7 and 8 of the accounting statements has been prepared – the difference is due to year end debtors and creditors. A variance analysis has also been prepared for external audit, this explains changes in accounting statement values between 23-24 and 24-25.

L: : The Authority publishes information on a free to access website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with any relevant transparency code requirements

Final Audit

As a larger Council, with income / expenditure in excess of £200K, Woodley is required to follow the 2015 Transparency Code. The Council meets the requirements of the Code by publication of information on the “Financial” page on the Council website. I checked the following information:

- Payments to suppliers - updated to end of March 25
- Grants awarded - updated to show awards made to date in 24-25
- Schedule of contracts – up to date for 24-25

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M: Arrangements for Inspection of Accounts **First Interim Audit**

The external auditors raised the following point in the “other matters” section of the 23-24 audit certificate.

“We note that the smaller authority did not comply with Regulation 15 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 as it failed to make proper provision during the year 2024/25 for the exercise of public rights, since the notice regarding the period for the exercise of public rights was published on the same day as the period and not published before the start of the period. As a result, the smaller authority must answer ‘No’ to Assertion 4 of the Annual Governance Statement for 2024/25 and ensure that it makes proper provision for the exercise of public rights during 2025/26.”

Whilst I consider this to be a minor administrative error, the directions of the auditors must be followed. I must report that the Council has not met the requirements of this control objective and the Council must mark assertion 4 on the 24-25 Annual Governance Statement as “NO”.

N: Publication requirements 23-24 AGAR

First Interim Audit

I confirmed that the Council has correctly loaded the audited accounts, annual governance statement and audit certificate for 23-24 on to the Council website. The conclusion of audit certificate has been correctly published, with a date of 19 September, in advance of the 30 September deadline but after the date of the audit certificate (18 September). The audit certificate was reported to Council at the September meeting of Full Council (minute 59).

O. Trusteeship

Second Interim Audit

The Council is Trustee of Woodley Memorial Recreation Ground – Charity 300098. The Council submitted the annual return for 23-24 on 20 September 24, before the regulatory deadline. Receipts and payments are below £25K so an independent examination is not required. I have confirmed that the charity meets twice a year, and minutes are recorded. I am satisfied that payments to the Council from the Charity are properly approved at a meeting of the Charity each year.

I would like to thank you and the team at the Council for your assistance with the audit. I attach my invoice and the internal audit report from the AGAR for your consideration. I would particularly like to thank Ash for his help over the past few years, and to wish him well in his retirement.

I look forward to working with you again in 25-26. As discussed, I will arrange an additional audit in 25-26,, to be completed at the end of the summer, to review implementation of the new finance system.



Mike Platten CPFA

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Appendix A Matters Outstanding from 23-24 audit

Matter Arising	Recommendation	Council Response
Councillor review of payments	The Council is dependent on 2 councillors to carry out most of the work in authorising payments to suppliers. This work should be shared with other councillors who are authorised signatories to ensure sufficient back up is in place if main signatories are not available	Actioned. Payment authorisations now being split between signatories
Evidence of councillor review of payments	Evidence of approval to pay from councillors is not adequate. I recommend that email confirmation of approval to process payment runs is saved and stored with payment run filing.	Actioned. Payment approvals saved and stored with payment run filing
Fidelity insurance is set at £250K, this appears low for a council with over £3m at bank at last year end.	I recommend that this should be raised with the insurer.	Fidelity Insurance is £750k and reflects potential risk.
Bank reconciliation	The Councillor completing the review of the bank reconciliation should report the results of this work to a meeting of Council at least once a quarter.	In progress. Bank Rec confirmation to be reported to meetings of Full Council going forwards.
One invoice tested was for room rental by Optalis limited. I note from discussion with the Deputy Town Clerk, that Optalis have not signed a new lease, and are	I therefore recommend that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The room hire rate charged to Optalis is approved at a Council meeting - The Council seeks to finalise the lease with Optalis. At 	Now actioned and approved at Council

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April Skies

Accounting

invoiced as a room hirer. However, I was not able to agree the rate invoiced to Council fees or charges, or a minute of a council meeting confirming the amount to be paid by Optalis.	present this company are able to end the rental agreement with no notice.	
Each officer employed by the Council should be issued a pay award letter each time there is change to the officer's payroll (annual pay rise / change to hours / promotion etc).	This should state scale point / contracted working hours / annual salary	Actioned. Pay award letters issued. Individuals will receive detailed letter when there is a change to their scale point/hours/salary
Payroll standing data	The schedule of standing payroll information retained by the RFO should be checked against contracts for all officers at least once a year, and countersigned by the Town Clerk	Actioned. Schedule signed annually by the Town Clerk
The Leisure Centre Manager sets gym membership fees, this has been the position for a number of years.	To ensure compliance with financial regulations, gym membership fees should be reviewed by Council alongside other fees and charges	Actioned. Gym Membership rates to be included with annual charge setting.
The location of the safe key at WPLC should be reviewed	Ideally this should be stored in a locked or password controlled key safe	In progress - locked key press to be installed
WPLC – safe key	The daily till process should be documented and issued to staff as part of induction processes	In progress. Documented induction being implemented.
WPLC - till and sales system	The daily till process should be documented and issued to staff as part of induction processes	In progress. Documented induction being implemented.
Standing sales data on the room booking / gym manager and till system should be checked annually by the RFO to ensure it agrees to fees approved by Council.	This review should be evidence and retained	Still outstanding

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April Skies

Accounting

I note that the RFO has access to key financial systems at the Leisure Centre.	It is recommended a monthly checklist should be drawn up, the RFO should then access WPLC systems to check on areas such as gym membership balances / completeness of invoicing of room bookings / checks on till balances.	Actioned. Check list in place
There is no presentation of the overall budget position of the Council in year.	It is recommended that this is carried out quarterly in 24-25, and is reviewed by Full Council.	In progress. Report to be presented to meetings of Full Council going forwards.
The Council has adopted a new fixed asset register policy in preparation for a review of the fixed asset register.	I recommend that the Council validates the fixed asset register in line with the new policy. Assets should then be recorded on RBS asset management software.	In Progress

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Appendix B
Matters arising
First Interim Audit 24-25

Matter Arising	Recommendation	Council Response
<p>I note that the RFO is retiring from the Council in June 2025. It is important that the Council prepares for this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring all key finance processes are documented - Training alternative staff to operate key financial processes 	<p>This will ensure a smooth handover to a new RFO, and ensure adequate back up is in place to enable the Council to function effectively during the handover</p>	<p>Noted and handover in progress</p>
<p>The RFO also explained that he is not currently able to access Woodford Park Leisure Centre finance systems, due to server access issues.</p>	<p>This access must be restored, the RFO needs access to these systems to update the accounting system and to carry out checks on income received at Woodford Park.</p>	<p>Still an issue at year end audit</p>
<p>My testing identified one anomaly, in the process for making debit card payments from the imprest account.</p>	<p>It is recommended that processes for making debit card payments out of the imprest account is made clearer at the next review of Financial Regulations.</p>	<p>actioned</p>
<p>I note £844K is due to repaid to PWLB on 31 March 2025.</p>	<p>Care will need to be taken to ensure that Council accounts match PWLB accounting statements at 31 March 2025 – there were issues with this in 23-24.</p>	<p>Actioned</p>

Second Interim And Final Audits 24-25

Matter Arising	Recommendation	Council Response
There are a small number of debts more than 60 days old on the sundry debts ledger.	These should be pursued and a process introduced where the sales ledger is checked at least monthly, with debt follow up procedures enforced for any debts older than 30 days.	
I faced issues in verifying the pay of officers who have been with the Council for a number of years.	<p>It is recommended that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the rates of pay of all staff who have been with the Council for more than 3 years should be checked and new contracts issued - an annual process is introduced, so that at each annual pay award, the rates of pay for each employee is verified back to contract, and a pay award letter issued, stating rate of pay, scale point and hours of work. - New contracts should be issued whenever staff change hours or a change is made to scale point (other than contractually due increments) 	
Earmarked Reserves – fixed assets	I remind the Council that further work should be carried out an asset management plan, to ensure funds are in place wherever possible to fund future maintenance costs for the Council's extensive asset base. There is a risk of insufficient funding being in place for essential repairs and maintenance costs if this is not in place.	

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Explanation of variances – pro forma

Name of smaller authority: Woodley Town Council

County area (local councils and parish meetings only): Berkshire

Insert figures from Section 2 of the AGAR in all Blue highlighted boxes

Next, please provide full explanations, including numerical values, for the following that will be flagged in the green boxes where relevant:

- variances of more than 15% between totals for individual boxes (except variances of less than £200);
- New from 2020/21 onwards: variances of £100,000 or more require explanation regardless of the % variation year on year;

	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	Variance £	Variance %	Explanation Required?	Automatic responses trigger below based on figures input, DO NOT OVERWRITE THESE BOXES	Explanation from smaller authority (must include narrative and supporting figures)
1 Balances Brought Forward	3,229,009	3,413,689				Explanation of % variance from PY opening balance not required - Balance brought forward agrees	
2 Precept or Rates and Levies	1,195,649	1,164,500	-31,149	2.61%	NO		
3 Total Other Receipts	1,205,130	1,145,617	-59,513	4.94%	NO		
4 Staff Costs	1,146,627	1,198,565	51,938	4.53%	NO		
5 Loan Interest/Capital Repayment	174,328	973,340	799,012	458.34%	YES		2 x PWLB loans repaid 775,000, PWLB Capital & Interest paid £24,013
6 All Other Payments	895,144	944,378	49,234	5.50%	NO		
7 Balances Carried Forward	3,413,689	2,607,523				VARIANCE EXPLANATION NOT REQUIRED	
8 Total Cash and Short Term Investments	3,467,064	2,603,518				VARIANCE EXPLANATION NOT REQUIRED	
9 Total Fixed Assets plus Other Long Term Investments and A	7,694,606	7,843,618	149,012	1.94%	YES		Operational land & buildings 2,275, Amenities Vehicles and Equipment 2,606, Equipment/Furn - Chapel Hall 6,500, Equipment/Furn - Coronation Hall 6,500, Infrastructure/Community 12,739, Equipment/Furn - Oakwood 116,608, Oakwood Office Equipment 0, Equipment/Furn - Outdoor Area 0, Sports/Leisure Equipment/Furn 1,784, WPLC Office Equipment 0.
10 Total Borrowings	2,525,439	1,671,410	-854,029	33.82%	YES		2 x PWLB loans repaid 275,000 and 500,000, PWLB Capital paid £79,029

Rounding errors of up to £2 are tolerable

Variances of £200 or less are tolerable