



Chief Officers Report

To Full Council - 10th October 2024

This new report to Full Council is for information and is designed to provide details of work being undertaken by council officers, progress being made, key issues, events planned, and upcoming items for council meetings.

It is design to provide all Councillors with a high-level summary of our current and future activities, and to support them in their role within our town.

Upcoming Events

Mayor's Civic Service; Sunday 13th October 2024, 3pm, St Barts Church
Wiltshire Council Ask The Leader Event; Wednesday 16th October 2024, RWBRFC
Remembrance Sunday Parade and Service; Sunday 10th November 2024, 3pm, High St
Armistice Day Ceremony; Monday 11th November 2024, 11am, War Memorial
Manor House Opening Event; Tuesday 12th November 2024, 1pm
Christmas Market and Lights Evening; Friday 29th November 2024, from 5pm

Budget Planning 2025 – 2026

The draft budget is currently being prepared and will be shared with Councillors at two informal sessions on 6th and 12th November, and then presented to Revenue and Resources Committee on 21st November 2024.

Budget is then reviewed and approved at Full Council on 12th December, before being submitted to Wiltshire Council early January 2025.

Major Projects

Manor House;

Practical completion is due w/e 18th October, and handover of the building. There will then be a period of preparing for operational readiness, training and transition as we move to Manor House on the 30th October 2024. Our current office will close on Monday 28th October, and we will reopen at Manor House on Monday 11th November, at 2pm. Service will continue to be provided by phone and online during the move wherever possible.

Manor House Opening Hours;

9am to 4pm, Monday to Wednesday

9am to 2pm, Thursday and from 6pm from Council Meetings

9am to 3pm, Friday

Manor House Community Rooms:

Initially community rooms will be available to book daytime initially, then expanding into the evenings and weekends, as we get to know the bookings, requirements of setting up, cleaning, and closing the building. I would expect to have community rooms available 10am to 9pm, 7 days a week, by early 2025.

Sale of 117 High Street

Our existing office building is now up for sale, and we have already received a number of offers following visit by perspective buyers.

Coronation Country Park

A site visit with Wainhomes to identify any final issues took place on Wednesday 9th October 2024, and the legal document review is on Monday 14th October 2024, with completion now expected by the end of October 2024.

Town Hall Renovations (Town Hall Trust) and Weekly Market

Renovations of our Town Hall have been delayed due to conservation officer visits and requirements around historic repairs made to the building, and that Highways have not approved temporary traffic lights. There have also been areas requiring more work than first required, balanced with other area in a better state than expected.

Our timeline is now as follows;

- Completion of the works, clearing of the site etc w/c 4th November, ahead of Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day
- Delivery of the Christmas Trees on Sunday 17th November
- Our Wednesday Market returns to the Town Hall area, on 20th November
- Christmas High Street Festival, Friday 29th November
- Town Hall Museum reopens in April 2025, along with an opening event to celebrate the renovations

All traders have been spoken to about the market returning, and we are working on a new plan of the stalls to try and recreate the set up that we had in Boroughfields Carpark.

Memorial Hall (Memorial Hall Trust)

The resurfacing of the carpark is nearing completion, with parking lines completed by 29th October 2024, weather allowing. Thanks to Crapper & Sons and Community First for the grant, and to our contractor HCS Ltd.

A building survey has recently been completed for the hall, showing some signs of subsidence, and areas in need of repair. This work is being planned.

Bassett Skate Park

Ongoing discussions with landowners and developers to find a suitable site for the new skate park, and then a design and build contractor will be appointed. Grant funding is being sort, and community support and engagement continues to build.

Digital Office Transformation

We have kicked off the implementation of Plotbox, our new cemetery management system. Increasing the use of Modern.gov and My Bassett continues.

Merchants House

New tenant is now in Unit 1, I am looking at the potential issue with the very bright sign. And Unit 5 is currently being marketed. The pop-up Town Hall Museum has moved to Unit 5 for the time being.

We have commissioned a buildings survey due to ongoing and regular maintenance issues.

Key Issues

Jubilee Lake Pollution; we are expecting an update from the Environment Agency by the end of October 2024.

Shelly Avenue Drainage; work completed on our land to reconnect the collapsed storm drain, and prevent further flooding onto residents gardens

Progress on Council Resolutions

Jubilee Lake Gazebo; currently being built, with completion towards the end of October 2024

Old Court Play Park; new equipment approved by Amenities Committee. We are going to discuss the final designs with Noremarsch School Council shortly.

New Road Play Park; grant funding secured to revamp the toddler play equipment, start date to be agreed.

Sparrow Lane; confirmation of lease from Wiltshire Council, and to set up a working group to review immediate maintenance required, and future plans for the area

Business Forum

Initial discussions have taken place with business owners in the town, with a planning group meeting during November, and a Bassett Business Forum Networking Event early in 2025.

Forward Plan

Cemetery Fees Report, Full Council

Daisybrook Play Park Transfer, Full Council

Grounds Maintenance and Facilities

Boroughfields Toilets; Two doors repaired, and the toilets have reopened fully.

Audits; Work continues following the Tree Survey, Cemetery Safety Audit, RoSPA Safety Checks and the H&S/Fire Audits, progress is tracked each month.

War Memorial; Repairs are required to the War Memorial, we are seeking quotes from stonemasons

Jubilee Lake; Work is required on the bridges, island and fishing-stations, and the paths down to and around Jubilee Lake. We are currently waiting for the results of the EA investigations, and their recommendations for the area.

Workforce

Future reports will include an update on establishment vs resources, and absence

Strategic Town Plan

Following on from our Councillor Workshop in 2023, working continues in developing our strategic town plan, with an event for residents on Wednesday 2nd October 2024, with a chance to ask questions and to discuss ideas and issues with Town Councillors. Further sessions are being planned.

Our themes include;

Healthy and Safe in Bassett

- Provide services that are accessible, inclusive and promote wellbeing

Bassett Open for Business

- Ensuring a thriving and successful town center and supporting all local businesses

A Thriving Bassett

- The future development of our town, with partners and our community

Cultural and Historic Bassett

- Celebrating and promoting our attractive and vibrant market town, with its rich history, heritage and culture

Bassett's Sustainable Future

- We will protect and enhance our town to minimize the impact on climate change. And keep us on track for a net-zero Council

Christmas Closure

The Council Offices, Community Rooms and Memorial Hall, close on Friday 20th December 2024, and reopen on Thursday 2nd January 2025

Save the Dates - 2025

Mayor's Charity Event – 28th February and 2nd March

Civic Awards Ceremony – 28th March

Town Hall Reopening – 5th April, to be confirmed

Annual Town Meeting – 8th April

RWB Elections – 1st May

VE-Day Event – 8th May

RWB Triathlon – 11th May

Mayor Making – 15th May

RWB Carnival – 17th May

Youth Festival – May/June

RBL Riders Branch National Rally in RWB – 26th to 29th June

Rotary 50th Anniversary Event – 28th June

Music Festival – Summer

Mark Hopkins

Chief Officer

Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)