

Royal Wootton Bassett Town Council - Chief Officer's Report

To Full Council – 6th February 2025

This 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 designed 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 Charity Event – 4th March

Civic Awards Ceremony – 28th March

Bassett business Forum Network Event – 31st March

Budget 2025 – 2026

The budget for 2025-2026 was approved at Full Council on 12th December 2024.

The precept demand was submitted to Wiltshire Council on 7th January 2025.

Major Projects

Manor House; COMPLETED

Manor House Community Rooms:

Community rooms bookings currently available Monday to Wednesday 9am – 3pm. Thursday 9am – 1pm and Friday's 9am – 2pm. Weekly bookings now set up for 4 local groups, and we have had a number of adhoc bookings, including full-day events.

We will increase the amount of time the rooms are available over the next few months, and already have a regular Sunday booking from late February.

Sale of 117 High Street

This is ongoing – completion expected end of February 2025.

Coronation Country Park

Transfer took place on 8th January 2025. Official opening event to take place in April/May 2025, date to be confirmed.

Town Hall Renovations (Town Hall Trust) and Weekly Market

Renovations have now been completed. The reopening is planned for 5th April 2025

The weekly market has returned to its original location around out Town Hall. New market traders have joined, the available space is now full, the first time this has happened for many years.

Thanks to all our market traders for their patience and support during the renovations.

Memorial Hall (Memorial Hall Trust)

A building survey was completed for the hall, showing some signs of subsidence, and areas in need of repair. We are now putting together costs and a plan for the repairs.

Bassett Skate Park

Working Group has been set up. 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

Implementation of Plotbox, a new Cemetery Management System, continues. We are increasing the use of Modern.gov, our governance and paper-less meeting system, and My Bassett, our residents portal, with processes now being digitised through these systems.

Merchants House

Unit 5 is currently being marketed, and currently hosts the very popular pop-up Town Hall Museum.

We have commissioned a buildings survey due to ongoing and regular maintenance issues with this old and iconic building.

Neighbourhood Plan

Ongoing development and preparation for public consultation May/ June 2025

Key Issues

Jubilee Lake Pollution; Environment Agency investigation still continues, and we have asked to meet with the EA to discuss the findings. This is impacting the Angling Club, and also holding up our planned maintenance and development of the lake and park area.

Progress on Council Resolutions

Jubilee Lake Gazebo; COMPLETED.

Old Court Play Park; new Trim Trail COMPLETED.

New Road Play Park; grant funding previously secured to revamp the toddler play equipment, start date late January 2025

Sparrow Lane; initial clearance has been completed, working group meeting 22nd January 2025

Non-Political Council Report, Full Council – February 2025

SiD Phase 2 proposal, Full Council – February 2025

Election Campaign, draft communications, posters to be circulated February 2025

Community Grants new process and application form, Full Council – February 2025

Councillor Training and Induction proposal, Full Council - February 2025

Youth Council Report, Full Council – March 2025

Dog Wash at Jubilee Lake, ongoing, implementation Spring 2025
Youth Provision, working with RISE Trust to secure grant funding for 'enhanced provision'
Games Area, grant funding secured, awaiting quotes, Amenities June 2025
VE Day, ongoing preparations for 8th May 2025
Mural Competition for Boroughfields Toilets, working with the Academy, RISE Trust and NHP Team – launch Summer 2025

Bassett Business Forum

Initial meeting took place on 17th December hosted by The Little Gem, a networking event/ business fair is being planned for 31st March 2025.

Forward Plan

Daisybrook Play Park Transfer, Full Council – March 2025
Cemetery Fees Report, Full Council – May/ July 2025
Asset Transfer and Service Devolution from Wiltshire Council
20mph zones, ongoing work with Wiltshire Council
Merchant House building survey and proposal
Community Fridge – March 2025
Church St Parking – from Allotment Working Group
CCTV Expansion and grant funding
Town Guide – part of Towns Programme grant secured
On going Play Park Replacement Programme
High Street Clock Repairs

Grounds Maintenance and Facilities

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. See the above point about the EA.

Save the Dates – 2025 –

Town Hall Reopening – 5th April, to be confirmed
Annual Town Meeting – 8th April
Coronation Country Park Event – April tbc
RWB Elections – 1st May
VE-Day Event – 8th May
RWB Triathlon – 11th May
Mayor Making – 15th May
RWB Carnival – 17th May
RBL Riders Branch National Rally in RWB – 28th June
Rotary 50th Anniversary Event – 28th June
Music Festival – Summer
Civic Service – 12th October

Remembrance Sunday – 9th November
Armistice Day – 11th November
Christmas Lights – 28th November

Mark Hopkins

Chief Officer

Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)