

Annual Report

2024–2025


CHIPPENHAM
TOWN COUNCIL
Improving the quality of town life



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Contents

Welcome from the Chief Executive	03	Strategy and Resources Committee	08
Mayor's Report	04	Planning, Environment and Transport Committee	10
Leader's Report	05	Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee	12
Human Resources Committee	06	Financial Report	14



Mark Smith
Chief Executive

Thank you for taking the time to read this Annual Report, I hope that it will provide a flavour of the Council and the key events and achievements of the Town Council during 2024/2025.

Can I also recommend you take a look at the Town Council's website (www.chippenham.gov.uk), it contains much information on the Council's decision making, services, facilities and events which are provided for the residents of Chippenham and the local community.

On the 1st December 2024, the council's Human Resources Committee unanimously agreed the implementation of a strengthened Corporate Management Team, to provide more capacity at a senior level within the council.

During January of this year we undertook a three day Corporate Peer Challenge, a peer team of officers and a councilor from several different councils spent three days with us, during this time the talked to over fifty people and representatives from fifteen different organisations. The full report can be found on the Town Council's website.

I was particularly proud of this quote within the report;

'CTC should be confident in its role and in what it achieves for Chippenham. In the view of the peer team, it is doing a great job for the town and external stakeholders that the peer team met with spoke positively about the council. CTC is described by some partners as impressive, approachable, effective and honest with a great sense of community spirit.'

We are nearing the end the delivery of the Corporate Strategic Plan 2022-2026, I am delighted to say that we have made excellent progress in achieving our objectives. Many of these successes rely on working collaboratively with local community groups and organisations. This work is vital and I have no doubt will continue into the future.

We will soon have a new council and the process of understanding their strategic objectives over the next four years will begin in the near future.

I continue to be immensely proud of the officer team that I have now led for the last eight years, we consistently invest in the training and development of our staff as we consider them to be our single greatest asset. We have a one team ethos and work well with our hard working and committed councillors and a range of partners and stakeholders across the town.

Mayor's Report

Throughout the year, I have attended local community events and engagements, visited organisations and individuals, and witnessed the excellent work and commitment of volunteers and paid staff to ensure that Chippenham is a welcoming, safe and vibrant community.

It has been a pleasure to attend and lead key civic events throughout the year including Remembrance Sunday commemorations and the annual community Civic Awards.

I held various coffee and cake mornings to raise money for my chosen charities, Wiltshire Mind and Teen Talk. I would like to express my sincere thanks to all who have supported my fundraising efforts throughout the year.

Becoming Mayor of Chippenham and representing the town has been an honour. As this term of office ends, I am grateful to my Councillor colleagues and Town Council staff for their ongoing commitment and work for the town.

Councillor Conor Melvin
Mayor of Chippenham



Leader's Report

In November 2024, Storm Bert brought torrential rain to the country leaving many areas flooded, including Chippenham as the River Avon burst its banks for the first time since 1960s.

Alongside some residential and commercial properties to be devastated by the flood, Monkton Park and Meadow were damaged by the water. Recovery work is progressing, and at the time of writing, some of the local businesses will soon be reopening.

In February 2025, Councillor Bill Douglas passed away. Bill was a well-respected Councillor, serving on the Town Council, North Wiltshire District Council and latterly Wiltshire Council since the mid 2000's with a passion for highways improvement and traffic speed management, he will be very much missed.

Town Council services continue to deliver for the local community with a broad range of activities and opportunities for engagement. Working in partnership with local community groups and organisations,

some of which will be outlined in this Annual Report.

The largest capital projects delivered this year saw the opening of a brand new 3G all-weather pitch, and a new carpet on the original 3G pitch at Stanley Park. The facility is now fit for the future and as Wiltshire's only double 3G site, can fully support the demand of Chippenham and the surrounding areas.

We have hosted a very successful programme of events this year, highlights include the well-attended service for Remembrance Sunday, Christmas lights switch-on, Summer Party in the Park, and Park Yoga.

As always, I encourage you to stay engaged with the work your local Councillors are doing, and watch or attend Council meetings which is where decisions are made. The meetings are open to the public and are streamed on YouTube.

Councillor Desna Allen

Leader of Chippenham Town Council



Human Resources Committee

The Human Resources (HR) Committee meets four times a year to discuss matters relating to the Council's greatest asset, our team of staff and volunteers. The HR Committee is responsible for ensuring the Council complies with statutory requirements around employment legislation and safety, and it also oversees the performance of the Chief Executive. The Performance Review Panel is appointed to deliver the Chief Executive's annual appraisal, which starts the appraisal process for the rest of the workforce. A Grievance and Complaints Panel and a Disciplinary Panel are also appointed; however they do not need to meet unless there is a case to hear, which thankfully has not happened this year.

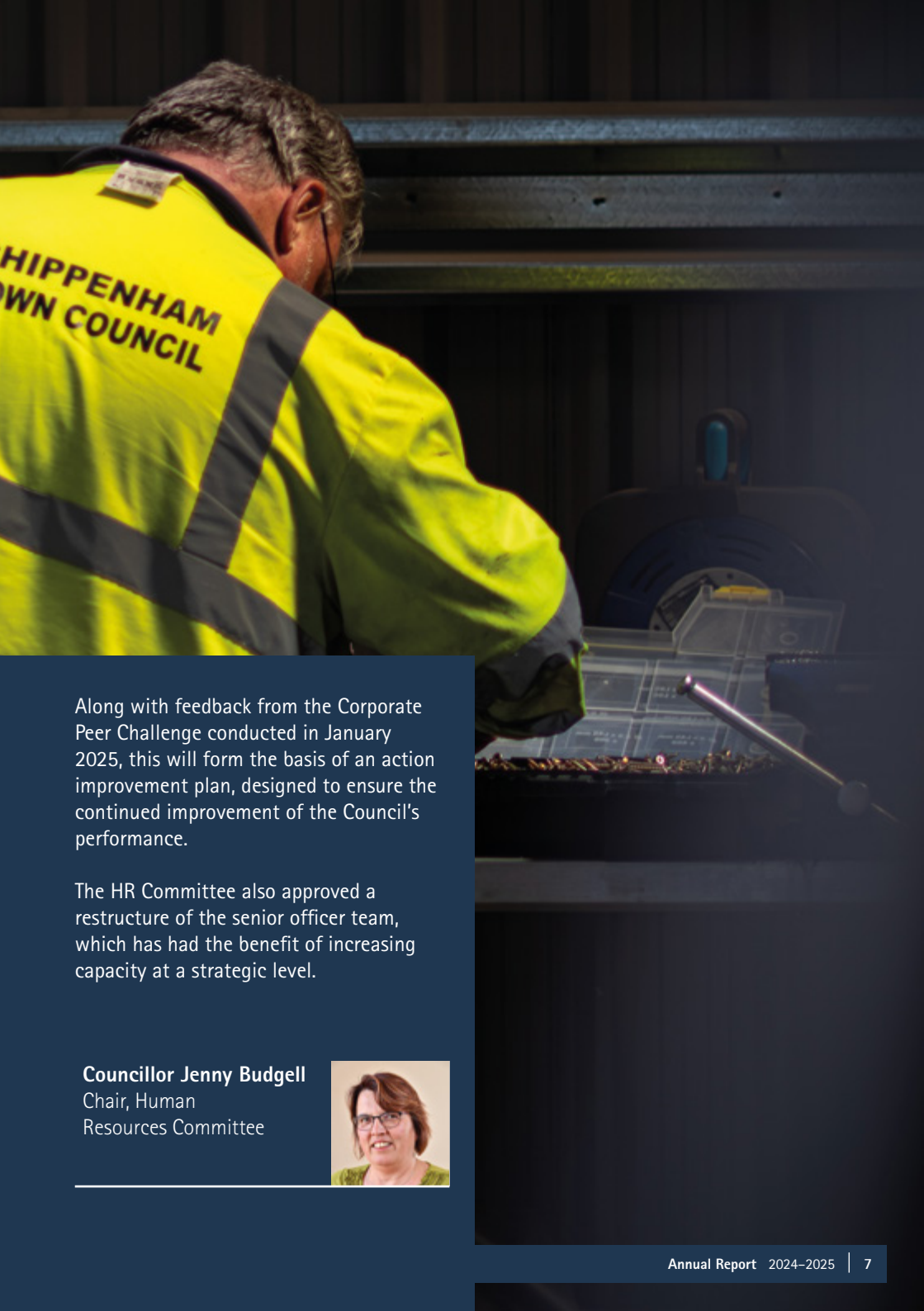
Councillors and officers can request training to support their development whenever they wish to, and the Committee receives regular reports on any training undertaken, as well as reports on new starters and leavers and sickness absence. Our sickness absence levels remain lower than the national average.

One of the most important functions of the Committee is the adoption of

our suite of HR policies, which were reviewed and refreshed in February 2025. This also presented an opportunity for the HR Committee to ensure the Council is fully prepared for changes in legislation which are due to be enacted in 2026.

The Committee adopted a new policy this year, introducing volunteering days to allow employees time to volunteer in the community, and the 'out of hours' process was reviewed to ensure that we have a robust system in place to manage emergency calls when the main Customer Services line is closed.

In December 2024 a new staff survey was circulated. Overall results showed an improvement since the last survey in 2021 and a significant improvement from our first survey in 2017. The highest scoring areas indicate that staff feel well trained and safe at work, feel proud to work for the Council and find meaning in their roles, they also have a clear understanding of expectations. The survey highlighted some areas for improvement, including communication and collaboration between departments.



Along with feedback from the Corporate Peer Challenge conducted in January 2025, this will form the basis of an action improvement plan, designed to ensure the continued improvement of the Council's performance.

The HR Committee also approved a restructure of the senior officer team, which has had the benefit of increasing capacity at a strategic level.

Councillor Jenny Budgell

Chair, Human
Resources Committee





Strategy and Resources Committee

The Strategy & Resources Committee (S&R Committee) is delegated the authority to be responsible for the council's corporate governance ensuring that the Town Council has adequate systems, structures and processes in place to monitor and control the council's governance and financial framework.

The framework enables a system of internal control, risk management and ensures that the standards of conduct are adhered to and service delivery for the local community is guaranteed. The S&R Committee has four sub-committees which report to it, Civic Matters, Finance, Council Donations and the Complaints Panel.

The committee is responsible for setting and reviewing policies in line with the council's Corporate Strategic Plan, and it reviews the financial position of the council at each of its meetings as it receives a variety of financial information throughout the year. It recommends the budget to Full Council after many months of considering the needs of the council versus the burden on the taxpayers' council tax charges via the precept.

In support and delivery of the Corporate Strategic Plan, the committee has discussed many topics this year; it oversees financial management, performance management, as well as considering CCTV, ICT matters and

insurance provision. During the past year the S&R Committee has taken decisions on, utility contracts, new electric vehicles, the new 3G All Weather Pitch at Stanley Park, and enhancements to open spaces.

Chippenham Town Council does not receive money directly from central government or from the Non-Domestic Business Rates, therefore the council continues to work hard at generating as much revenue as possible through fees & charges and prudent investments. Income is achieved through venue hire of the facilities at Stanley Park, John Coles Park, Chippenham Museum, the Town Hall and Neeld events. Income is also generated through cemetery

charges, rent of buildings, the supply of allotments, and initiatives such as hanging baskets, sponsorship of the Christmas tree which bring in a regular income to the council.

The Town Council continues to maintain a healthy level of financial reserves with Capital Ear Marked Funds to support the Council to sustain its infrastructure and facilities for the future and, a general reserve enabling the Council to respond to the impact of unforeseen events.

Councillor Desna Allen

Chair, Strategy and
Resources Committee





The Planning, Environment and Transport Committee

The Planning, Environment and Transport (PET) Committee, which meets every three weeks, continues to review and comment on all planning and tree applications in Chippenham in its role as a statutory consultee, with helpful technical advice from our qualified Planning and Tree Officers. The major difference being that this year the Committee have benefitted from being able to frame their comments around the suite of new planning policies available in the Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan.

The making of the Neighbourhood Plan, endorsed through the public referendum in May 2024, marks a milestone in the community being able to have a greater influence on the future development of our town. The making of the Plan is not the end of the journey though and I am pleased that we have swiftly progressed on to the equally important next phase: Plan monitoring and implementation, which is being adeptly overseen by my fellow councillors on the Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring Sub-Committee. Evaluation will inform any future review of the Plan.

The Committee has been supportive of the development of brownfield land, with some important town centre schemes progressing. A planning application

for mixed-use redevelopment of Emery Gate Shopping Centre was submitted, which the PET Committee provided a comprehensive response to. The Chippenham Avon Project also progresses, made more important after the significant river flooding of November 2024.

Outside of the town centre, major housing schemes at Rowden Park, Saltersford Lane and Rawlings Green are also progressing, with the Committee using Neighbourhood Plan policies to push for the provision of ecological enhancements, cycle infrastructure and low carbon technologies to be incorporated in these residential schemes.

The PET Committee has responded to some important consultations this year, including the Wiltshire & Swindon Local Nature Recovery Strategy, the Wiltshire Local Transport Plan 4 and the Wiltshire Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure project. The Committee has received over 30 highway improvement requests this year. These are submitted by Chippenham residents, considered by the Committee, and forwarded to Wiltshire Council's Local Highway and Footway Improvement Group (LHFIG) for determination. In 2024/25, the Committee committed a total of £18,615 in financial contributions towards various highways improvement schemes, including

a change to 20mph speed limit, cycle paths, dropped kerbs, road markings, and signage. There is still a backlog of highway improvement requests awaiting action, so the Council has created an online progress tracker to assist in keeping applicants informed of their request's status.

In December, the Committee endorsed updated Procedural Guidance, which sets out clear and easy to understand guidance for Councillors, members of the public and developers on the procedures and protocols of the varying facets that the PET Committee deals with, from street naming to licensing consultations and from footpath diversion consultations to pre-application planning advice.

I would like to thank all of the members of the public who have attended or addressed PET Committee meetings this year – your in-depth research and contributions have been particularly valued and welcomed. I would also like to extend my thanks to the officers who support the Committee and my fellow councillors on the Committee for their helpful input.

Councillor Clare
Cape Chair, Planning,
Environment and
Transport Committee



The Amenities, Culture and Leisure Committee

The Amenities, Culture and Leisure (ACL) Committee continues to oversee and deliver a diverse range of services across Chippenham, improving the quality of town life for present and future generations. The Committee held its first meeting of the municipal year on 24th July 2024. This year's highlights include:

- The delivery of a new 3G pitch at Stanley Park representing a £250,000 investment by the Town Council and a £550,000 grant from the Football Foundation. Stanley Park is now the only double 3G Pitch site in Wiltshire.
- The adoption of a new Green Spaces Management Strategy – the new strategy clearly sets out how the Councils Environmental Services Team approach the management of all our green spaces and how we communicate this information to our community.
- A strategic review of how the new Neeld Foyer operates and a decision to use the space in a holistic and flexible manner for community hire and programmed events.
- The investment of the Future High Street Fund allocation towards refurbishment of street furniture and additional place shaping infrastructure, High Street Trees and Cross Street Motifs.
- The adoption of a strategic plan for the Councils Patterdown site – to install further allotments and community spaces.
- The decision to invest in improving the Multi-Use Dog Facility within John Coles Park in 2026/27.
- The provision of Active Travel capital funding towards cycle path improvements at Stainers Way/Cepen Park North in partnership with the Chippenham Cycle Network Development Group.

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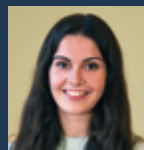
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- Approval for new tree planting on selected Green Amenity Areas and other green spaces across the town via Trees for Climate grant funding.
- The decision to transition the Council's fleet to the use of Biofuel (HVO), ceasing the use of diesel and gas-oil.
- The implementation of a Council Policy for the Adoption of Public Open Space in new residential developments as an alternative to the creation of separate management companies.

I am proud of what we have achieved this year and pleased to see a range of new projects in progress. I would like to thank members of the committee for their valuable input, as well as the Council's officers for their professionalism and flexibility in delivering such excellent services for the Chippenham community.

**Councillor Kathryn
MacDermid**

Chair, Amenities, Culture
and Leisure Committee



Financial Report

CHIPPENHAM INFORMATION POINT

Chippenham Town Council is always mindful of how it protects and spends the income that it receives from the taxpayers, to deliver the services and facilities to the local community. The budget setting process takes several months and is thorough, comprehensive and open to public scrutiny.

The budget that was set for the year 2024/25 was £4.8 million with £4.1 million coming from local residents via the parish precept (this is collected by Wiltshire Council through the Council Tax collection process). The additional income of £0.7 million was generated from hiring our sports facilities, conference and community spaces, town centre initiatives and through local projects through our community information service. In addition, income was received for the charges at London Road Cemetery and from partnership agreements where service delivery is via a joint scheme.

Sports pitches at Stanley Park, educational visits at the Museum, maintenance of the beautiful lawned cemetery at London Road and the provision of the Party in the Park in Monkton Park are all facilities and services provided by the town council.

The Neeld is flourishing with shows, additional funds have been invested in the Museum with the opening of a new gallery and the council continues to provide services to keep the town safe and clean. New services provided by the council in the year include a



new 3G All Weather Pitch at Stanley Park, improved play areas, new signage around the town, updated CCTV, and projects to support the councils commitment to be a net zero organisation by 2030. Expenditure in the year 2024/25 year was within the budget at year end, resulting in the delivery of a balanced budget.

Each year the council strives to improve its services, whilst at the same time offering value for money and seeking efficiency opportunities. When new contracts are renegotiated a thorough review is undertaken to ensure necessity

and alternative methods. As with all public bodies the council is subject to internal and external audit and Chippenham Town Council continues to excel in this area, having been given a glowing recent review by both the council's Internal and External Auditors.

Gillian Ballinger,
Director of Finance,
Responsible Finance Officer





01249 446699
enquiries@chippenham.gov.uk
chippenham.gov.uk