

Annual Report

2025–2026



**CHIPPENHAM
TOWN COUNCIL**
Improving the quality of town life



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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 Chippenham Town Council during 2025/2026.

It has been another busy and productive year and, I would like to share some of the key moments. One of our main priorities has been preparing for the conclusion of the current Corporate Strategic Plan 2022-2026 and developing the next plan which will guide the Town Council from 2026-2030.

It was important that the new plan reflected the needs of our local community. In the summer of 2025, we conducted a Community Survey to receive feedback on a wide range of services within Chippenham, helping us to understand what was going well and where improvements could be made. Following the survey, a small group of residents, selected at random from the respondents attended a workshop where the survey results were prioritised and scored.

You will find the outcomes of both the survey and the workshop in the independent report written by Local Government Resource Centre (LGRC), available on our website. This feedback was invaluable in helping develop the priorities for the Town Council over coming four years. On Wednesday 25 March 2026, the new plan was adopted by Councillors and is now available to read on our website.

In November, I had the honour of joining the Mayor of Chippenham, Councillor Kathryn Macdermid who delivered a poppy wreath to the Poppies to Paddington train as it stopped in Chippenham. This year, we also had the special honour to welcome Her Majesty the Queen and the Lord-Lieutenant to the town as they boarded the Poppies to Paddington train en-route to the Remembrance Ceremony at Paddington. It was a proud and memorable moment for our community.

In November 2025, the Local Government Association's Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) team returned to review the Town Council's progress in responding to their recommendations. In their positive feedback, the team noted; **'The council is committed to continuous improvement and is a credit to the Parish and Town Council sector.'** The full report is available to read on our website.

I remain immensely proud of the officer team that I lead, we consistently invest in the training and development of our staff, recognising them as our greatest asset. We work with a strong one-team ethos, alongside our hardworking and committed councillors and in partnership with organisations and stakeholders across the town.

Mayor's Report

Throughout the year, I have had the privilege of serving as Mayor of Chippenham, I attended a wide range of engagements and I continue to be impressed by the dedication of volunteers and staff across all sectors who work tirelessly for the benefit of our residents. Balancing public service with parenthood has strengthened my appreciation for the support and resilience within our community.

A notable highlight of my mayoral year was representing Chippenham at Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day. This included laying a wreath on a train travelling to Paddington to be laid at the Great Western Railway War Memorial, during which I had the honour of meeting Her Majesty The Queen. These profound moments of reflection generated great pride for our town. Commonwealth Day was another key civic event, marked by strong engagement from 9 Regiment RLC and local schools, their participation brought energy and enthusiasm to the celebrations.

In support of my chosen charity, Springboard, I hosted several coffee and cake mornings throughout the year and ran the Corsham 10k. I extend my sincere thanks to all who contributed to these fundraising efforts.

Serving as Mayor of Chippenham has been an honour. As my term concludes, I wish to express gratitude to my fellow Councillors and to the Town Council staff for their continued commitment, professionalism and support in delivering for our community.

Councillor Kathryn Macdermid

Mayor of Chippenham



Leader's Report

The Annual Report offers us an opportunity to reflect on how the past year has been, to consider our lessons learned, areas in which we can celebrate successes, identify improvements and develop ideas for progression.

This year sees the launch of the Council's next Corporate Strategic Plan for 2026–2030. To enable us to consider suggestions from residents and our local community, we launched our community survey in the summer to ask people what they think of Chippenham, what they believe is going well and where changes could be made. This information was fundamental in the development of the plan.

The Plan contains commitments to continue delivering services and facilities that our community can rely on, alongside ambitious objectives.

If you would like to read the plan, it is available on the Town Council's website, it has been shared on social media, and paper copies are available to collect from Customer Services at the Town Hall.

Councillor Desna Allen

Leader of Chippenham Town Council

We continue to work in partnership with many local organisations, charities and community groups. Both the Chippenham Community Safety Forum and the Chippenham Community Environmental Forum work diligently to share information effectively to inspire and encourage best practice.

I take this opportunity to encourage you to stay engaged with the work your local Councillors and the Town Council are doing. If you would like to know how decisions are made, you can come along to one of our public meetings, or watch them on YouTube. You can follow the Town Council on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. You can pick up a copy of our bi-annual newsletter, Talk, which is published in the spring and autumn, alternatively, it is available on the website.

Thank you for taking the time to read the Annual Report, I hope you have found it informative.



Strategy & Resources Committee

At the heart of sound governance within Chippenham Town Council is the Strategy & Resources (S&R) Committee. This committee plays a pivotal role in ensuring that the Council operates with strong corporate oversight, financial discipline and clear strategic direction. The S&R Committee is responsible for maintaining a robust governance framework, ensuring that effective systems and controls are in place to safeguard public funds and uphold transparency and accountability. Through regular monitoring and review, the Committee oversees internal controls, risk management arrangements and standards of conduct, helping to ensure that services are delivered efficiently and in the best interests of the local community.

A key aspect of its work is policy development and review. The Committee ensures that Council policies remain aligned with the Corporate Strategic Plan and responsive to emerging priorities. Supporting this work are four sub committees Civic Matters, Finance, Grants and the Complaints Panel, each providing focused oversight while reporting directly to the S&R Committee to ensure joined up governance.



Financial stewardship is central to the Committee's remit. At every meeting, Councillors receive detailed financial information, enabling careful monitoring of income, expenditure and overall performance. Budget setting is a thorough and considered process, undertaken over several months. The Committee carefully balances investment in services and infrastructure with the impact on residents through the council tax precept, before recommending a budget to Full Council for approval.

Over the past year, the Committee has overseen a wide range of strategic and operational matters. These have included financial performance monitoring, risk management, CCTV provision, ICT infrastructure and insurance arrangements. Decisions have also been taken on utility contracts, the procurement of electric vehicles and enhancements to open spaces, reflecting the Council's commitment to sustainability, asset management and continuous improvement.

The Town Council does not receive direct funding from central government or a share of Non-Domestic Business Rates.

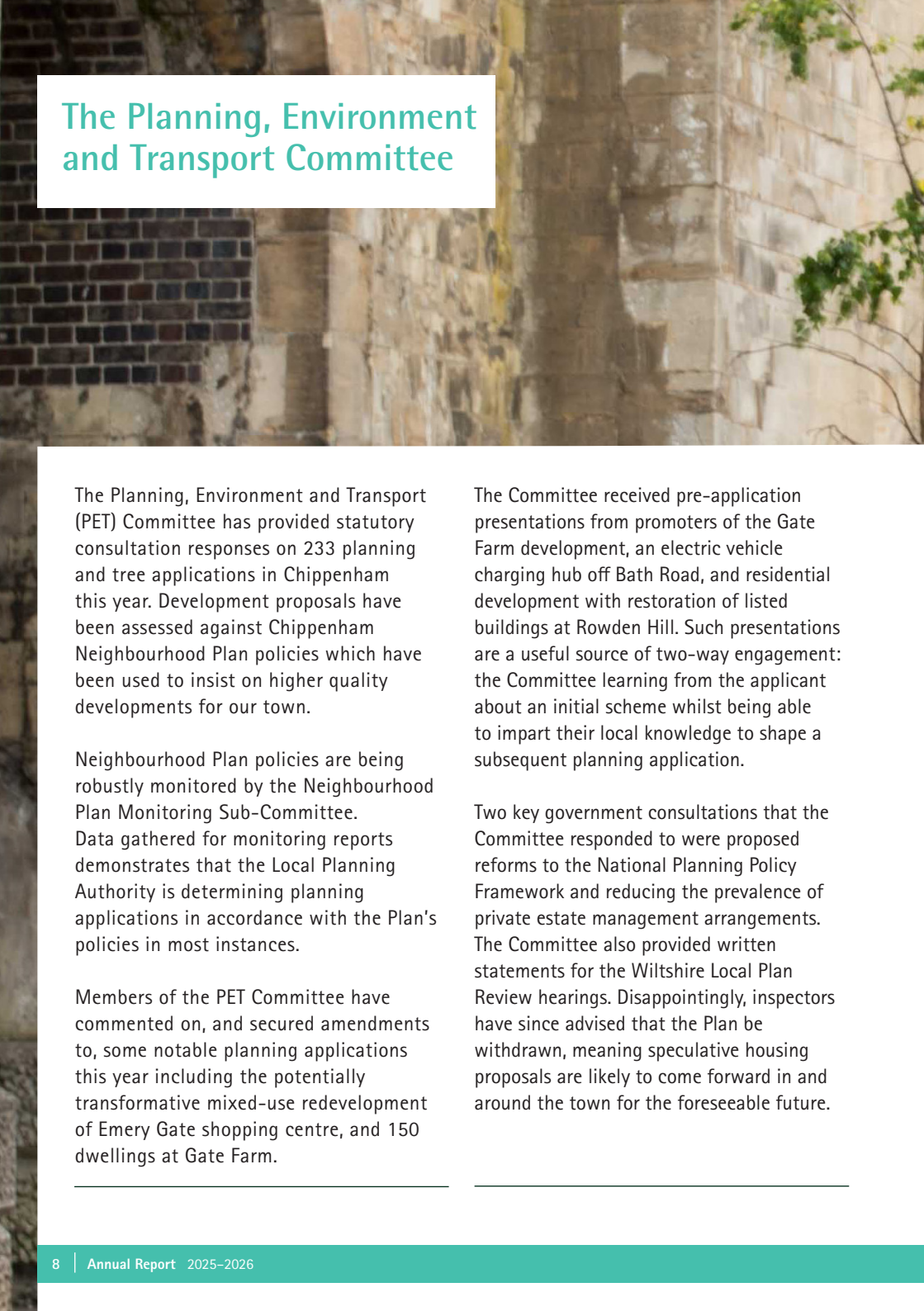
This makes prudent financial management and income generation especially important. Revenue is generated through venue hire, cemetery services, property rentals, allotments and community initiatives such as hanging baskets and Christmas tree sponsorship. These income streams help support local services while reducing pressure on the precept.

The Council also maintains healthy financial reserves, including Capital Earmarked Reserves to safeguard long-term infrastructure investment and a General Reserve to provide resilience in the face of unforeseen events.

Through careful governance, strategic planning and responsible financial management, the Strategy & Resources Committee ensures that the Council remains financially sustainable, well-managed and focused on delivering for the community it serves.

Councillor Desna Allen
Chair, Strategy and
Resources Committee





The Planning, Environment and Transport Committee

The Planning, Environment and Transport (PET) Committee has provided statutory consultation responses on 233 planning and tree applications in Chippenham this year. Development proposals have been assessed against Chippenham Neighbourhood Plan policies which have been used to insist on higher quality developments for our town.

Neighbourhood Plan policies are being robustly monitored by the Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring Sub-Committee. Data gathered for monitoring reports demonstrates that the Local Planning Authority is determining planning applications in accordance with the Plan's policies in most instances.

Members of the PET Committee have commented on, and secured amendments to, some notable planning applications this year including the potentially transformative mixed-use redevelopment of Emery Gate shopping centre, and 150 dwellings at Gate Farm.

The Committee received pre-application presentations from promoters of the Gate Farm development, an electric vehicle charging hub off Bath Road, and residential development with restoration of listed buildings at Rowden Hill. Such presentations are a useful source of two-way engagement: the Committee learning from the applicant about an initial scheme whilst being able to impart their local knowledge to shape a subsequent planning application.

Two key government consultations that the Committee responded to were proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and reducing the prevalence of private estate management arrangements. The Committee also provided written statements for the Wiltshire Local Plan Review hearings. Disappointingly, inspectors have since advised that the Plan be withdrawn, meaning speculative housing proposals are likely to come forward in and around the town for the foreseeable future.



In 2025/26 the Committee has provided consultation responses to licensing applications, street naming requests, submitted an Asset of Community Value nomination and processed highway improvement requests. The Committee sought contributions from the Youth Council regarding potential future street names and regularly updated them on topics such as improving cycle routes.

Regarding the highway improvement requests, these are submitted by residents, who are encouraged to discuss them with their local councillor in the first instance; then considered by the Committee, and if supported, they are forwarded to Wiltshire Council's Local Highway and Footway Improvement Group (LHFIG) for determination. £20,453 of funding for implementing requests was committed. Newly funded schemes include road markings, signage, street lighting, and pedestrian crossings. A progress tracker is available on the Town Council's website to keep applicants informed of the status of

their request. The Committee has responded to a survey from Wiltshire Council regarding improving the LHFIG process and continuous engagement between Committee Members and LHFIG has assisted with coordination and delivery of outcomes for residents.

My sincere thanks go out to the members of the public who attended or addressed PET Committee meetings, providing thoughtful and valuable input on the issues they care about. We have received notable contributions relating to nature and green spaces and from the Chippenham Cycle Network. Thanks are also due to the councillors for their commitment to the frequent meetings of this Committee and to the officers who have supported it so professionally.

Councillor Clare Cape

Chair, Planning,
Environment and
Transport Committee



The 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.

We started the year with the new Councillor induction, which included an introduction to the Council and training sessions on HR, finance, planning and chairing meetings. Councillors and officers can request additional training to support their development whenever they wish to and the Committee receives reports on any training

undertaken. The Committee also receives regular reports on sickness absence and new starters and leavers.

One of the most important functions of the Committee is the adoption of our suite of HR policies. This year we have refreshed some of our policies including recruitment and maternity, in preparation for upcoming changes in legislation and introduced a new preventing sexual harassment at work policy.

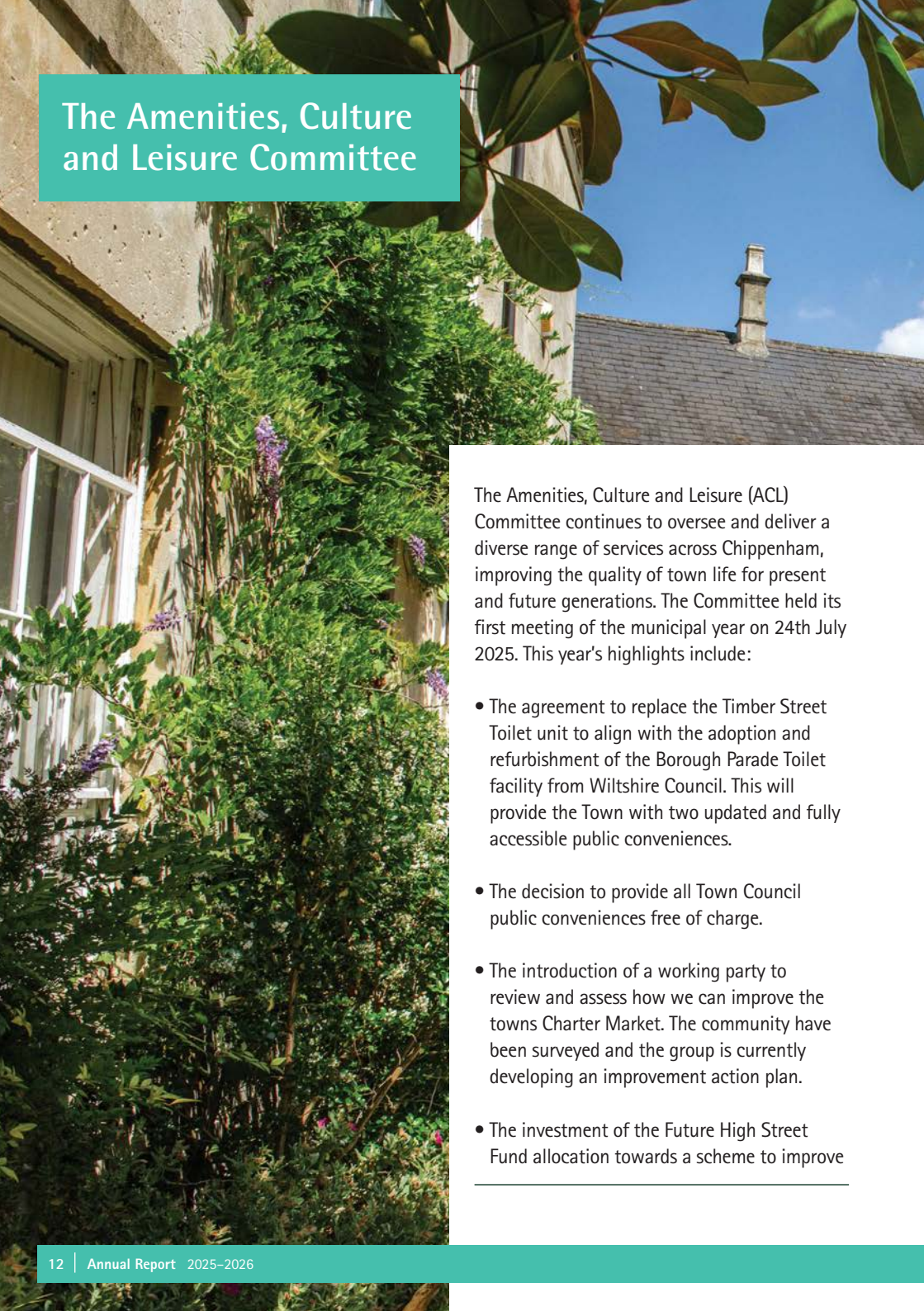
Throughout the year the officer team have been working on areas for improvement highlighted in the latest staff survey, including developing internal communication and collaboration between departments.

The Committee also approved two new part time posts this year, a technician for the Neeld to provide sound and lighting for events and a CCTV supervisor to oversee the service and support the volunteer team.

Councillor Matthew Bragg
Chair, Human Resources
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 2025. This year's highlights include:

- The agreement to replace the Timber Street Toilet unit to align with the adoption and refurbishment of the Borough Parade Toilet facility from Wiltshire Council. This will provide the Town with two updated and fully accessible public conveniences.
- The decision to provide all Town Council public conveniences free of charge.
- The introduction of a working party to review and assess how we can improve the towns Charter Market. The community have been surveyed and the group is currently developing an improvement action plan.
- The investment of the Future High Street Fund allocation towards a scheme to improve



the area outside of the historic Yelde Hall. Plans are currently being developed and will be submitted for approval shortly.

- The decision to support the refurbishment and redecoration of the Town Hall to ensure the space remains attractive and functional for community use.
- The extension of the Town Councils Firework Policy – to include the prohibition of Sky Lanterns and Helium Ballons from Council owned land and buildings, protecting our environment.
- The agreement of a Bus Shelter Management Policy, ensuring our existing bus shelters are well managed and maintained whilst ensuring future provision is well considered.
- Approval of a second phase of new tree planting on selected Green Amenity Areas and other green spaces across the town via Trees for Climate grant funding.

- The adoption of management plans for both John Coles and Monkton Park. These 4 years plans support our ongoing successful green flag accreditations and were developed in partnership with Wiltshire Wildlife Trust.
- The decision to support improvements within our parks, such as additional sun shades around the John Coles Park Splash Pad and the installation of a bottle refill station within Monkton Park.

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 Fiona McIntosh
Chair, Amenities, Culture
and Leisure Committee



Financial Report

Every year, Chippenham Town Council carefully plans how it will spend the money it receives from local taxpayers to ensure it continues to deliver the services and facilities that matter most to our community. Setting the budget is a detailed and transparent process that takes place over several months, with careful financial planning and regular monitoring to make sure resources are used wisely and responsibly.

For the financial year 2025/26, the Council has approved a total budget of £5.1 million. Of this amount, £4.4 million will be raised through the Parish Precept, which forms part of local Council Tax and is collected on the Town Council's behalf. The remaining £0.7 million will be generated through income earned from sports facility hire, events and performances at The Neeld, activities and educational visits at the Museum, services at London Road Cemetery, town centre initiatives, and partnership projects. By generating its own income in this way, the Council helps to reduce pressure on the local precept while continuing to invest in important services.

The Council provides and maintains a wide range of facilities that contribute to the vibrancy, safety and wellbeing of Chippenham. These include sports pitches and the popular 3G All-Weather Pitch at Stanley Park, the maintenance of Monkton

Park and other valued green spaces, exhibitions and learning opportunities at the Museum, and a varied cultural programme at The Neeld. The upkeep of London Road Cemetery, community events such as The Civil War re-enactment and The Christmas lights events, and investment in signage, street furniture and CCTV also form part of the Council's commitment to keeping the town welcoming and safe.

Looking ahead, the Council will continue to invest in improvements across the town during 2025/26. This includes enhancing play areas and recreational facilities, strengthening town centre safety measures, delivering environmental and biodiversity projects, and making further progress towards becoming a net zero organisation by 2030. Work will also continue to improve accessibility and the quality of public spaces so that Chippenham remains a town residents can be proud of.

Throughout the year, spending is carefully monitored to ensure it remains within budget and delivers value for money. Contracts are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain necessary, efficient and cost-effective. As with all public bodies, the Council is subject to independent internal and external audit, providing assurance that public funds are managed responsibly and transparently.

Welcome to Stanley Park Sports Ground

Chippenham Town Council remains focused on balancing ambition with responsibility, protecting essential services today while continuing to invest in the town's future.

Gillian Ballinger

Director of Finance,
Responsible Finance Officer





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