



Wokingham Town Council

Town Hall, Market Place, Wokingham, Berkshire RG40 1AS
Tel: 0118 978 3185 www.wokingham-tc.gov.uk
Town Clerk: K. Hughes

**This Council Meeting is open to the Public and Press
Please notify the Officer or Chair if you wish to record the meeting**

3rd June 2024

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend the meeting of the **Civic Committee** to be held in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Wokingham** at **7.30pm** on **Monday 17th June 2024** for the purpose of considering and resolving upon the subjects and matters set out in the agenda below.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'K Hughes'.

K Hughes
Town Clerk

Contact Officer Nikki Payler, Civic Officer
Direct line: 0118 974 0882 Email: civic@wokingham-tc.gov.uk

AGENDA

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

To receive any declaration of interests from Members on the business about to be transacted.

3 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OR PUBLIC

The Chair to answer questions raised by members of the Council or public.

This is an opportunity for the people of Wokingham to ask questions of, and make comments to, the Town Council. Members of the public are requested to restrict their questions and comments to three minutes. Questions which are not answered at this meeting will be answered in writing to the person asking the question. To ensure an informed response, please send your questions to the Town Clerk at least three working days prior to the meeting.

4 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

To receive and resolve the Minutes of the proceedings at the meeting of this Committee held on 18th March 2024 (pages 16933 to 16941), copy attached, as a true and correct record.

5 MONITORING REPORT

To receive the Monitoring Report dated 3rd June 2024 (copy attached), for information.

6 COMMITTEE'S BUDGET

To receive an update on the Committee's budget as of 30th April 2024 (copy attached).

7 CONSIDER OPPORTUNITIES TO WIDEN WREATH LAYING CEREMONY

- a) To receive notes from the Wreath laying working party held on 16 April 2024.
- b) To receive, consider and resolve the Civic Officer's report 01/2024-25, dated 3rd June 2024.

8 CIVIC SERVICE

To receive a response from the Chair of Churches Together in Wokingham, following the decision to separate the civic service from the ceremony.

9 MAYOR'S INAUGURATION CEREMONY FEEDBACK

- a) To receive, for information, a copy of a thank you letter from the Deputy Lieutenant who attended on the day, expressing his thanks and appreciation.
- b) To discuss and share any other feedback about the day so it can be considered in future planning.

10 LOCATION OF MAYOR'S INAUGURATION CEREMONY

To receive, consider and resolve the Civic Officer's report 02/2024-25, dated 3rd June 2024.

11 CIVIC AWARD SELECTION MEETING

- The meeting will be held on Wednesday 11th December, usually held at 10am but this can be held at midday if it is easier for people to attend.
- Members of this meeting are the Chair and Vice-Chair of civic and one other, plus the Mayor and the following external members.
 - High Steward Lucy Zeal
 - Police Superintendent
 - Former district Scout Chairman
 - Chairman of Churches Together in Wokingham
 - Wokingham Today Editor (although Wednesdays are proving difficult as it is their print deadline, so they have been unable to attend recently)
 - Chief Exec of Citizens Advice Wokingham (although since Jake Morrison left, it has not been possible to establish if there is anyone wishing to replace Jake)
- To agree on the following:
 - a. which other civic member will attend
 - b. the best time for the meeting
 - c. if any alternative people should be invited, should representatives from Wokingham Today and Citizens Advice be unable to continue.

12 INFORMATION ITEMS

- a) It is confirmed that a student intern will work with the Civic Officer and Arts & Culture Officer from 8 July for 140 hours through the summer to offer support and ideas for the community engagement part of the Museum Accreditation work. They will work on Mondays and Tuesdays.
- b) See attached update from the Wokingham Lions about the Beating the Bounds event on 8 September. Please note, the request for some Councillors to support this by helping at designated points on the walk. The Civic Officer will send further information to all Councillors in due course. A copy of the original report taken to civic about this is attached, for information.

13 COMMITTEE INFORMATION

- a) To receive information items raised by members, which have notified to the Civic Officer in advance.

- b) Identify any specific items for marketing purposes.
- c) The date of the next meeting is Monday 23rd September.

Civic Committee: Cllrs Adrian Betteridge, Rachel Bishop-Firth, Phil Cunnington, Warren Dixon, Sally Gurney, Alwyn Jones (Vice-Chair), Keith Malvern (Chair), Adrian Mather and Tony Lack.

In order to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998, all persons attending this meeting are hereby notified that this meeting will be recorded. The purpose of recording proceedings is that it acts as an aide-memoir in assisting the clerk of the meeting in the compilation of minutes. The recordings are held in a secure location and deleted once it has been resolved that the minutes are a true and correct record.

In accordance with The Openness of Local Government Bodies regulations 2014, persons attending this meeting may make their own recordings of the proceedings subject to the Council's Policy on Filming, Recording & Reporting on Council and Committee Meetings (copy available on request).

18th March 2024 - draft

Minutes of the proceedings of the **CIVIC COMMITTEE** meeting held on this day in the **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Wokingham** from 19:25 to 21:20pm.

PRESENT

Chair: Cllr A Mather (Chair)

Councillors: A Betteridge, R Bishop-Firth, W Dixon, M Gee, A Jones (Vice-Chair) and K Malvern.

IN ATTENDANCE

Civic Officer

Mayor's Attendant David Dunham

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from Cllr P Cunnington.

MEMBERS' INTERESTS (Agenda Item 2)

Cllr A Jones asked for it to be noted that he is a member of the Wokingham Lions Club, in relation to agenda items 5c, 10 and 14a.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OR PUBLIC (Agenda Item 3)

No questions were received.

CIVIC COMMITTEE MINUTES (Agenda Item 4)

It was proposed by Cllr A Mather and seconded by Cllr A Jones and it was

**RESOLVED
30795**

that the Minutes of the Civic Committee meeting held on 20th November 2023 (pages 16867 to 16871), be received as a true and correct record and that they be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

MONITORING REPORT (Agenda Item 5)

The Monitoring Report dated 29th February 2024 was received and noted.

a) Purchase new badge and ribbon for Mini-Mayor

This has now been received and will be removed from the monitoring report next time.

b) To consider the purchase of a new mayoral badge and chain of office at some point in the near future.

A request was made to the Finance and Personnel Committee to put aside £2,000 per year, over the next 5 years for the provision of purchasing a new mayoral chain and badge of office.

A decision was made at the Finance and Personnel meeting on 21st November 2023 to move £8000 from general reserves into an earmarked reserves so that this doesn't have to be considered again in this term of the council.

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____

Civic Committee 18/03/2024

16933



To consider options in due course.

Beating the Bounds walk

A request was made to the Finance and Personnel Committee for £4,000, to offer to the Wokingham Lions Club to manage and co-ordinate this.

A decision was made at Finance and Personnel meeting on 21st November 2023 to support this financial request and for it to be taken from general reserves.

See information item 14a.

c) Wokingham Remembers Website

A request was made to the Finance and Personnel Committee for £1,500 as a one-off cost to take on the ownership and hosting of the website, to preserve its history.

A decision was made at the Finance and Personnel Committee on 21st November 2023 to support this one-off cost and for WTC to take on the ownership of this website. Discussions will now begin to take place about this transition and this will be removed from the monitoring report.

d) Consider opportunities at Remembrance to make the wreath laying ceremony more visible to a wider audience

See agenda item 8.

e) Consider other opportunities for Councillors to wear their robes and be more visible in public.

See agenda item 11.

f) To consider an update to the Civic Award criteria, following last year's Civic Award selection process

See agenda item 13.

COMMITTEE'S BUDGET (Agenda Item 6)

A report on the Committee's budget expenditure to 29th February 2024 was received and noted.

A significant underspend was identified in the budget and the Civic Officer shared that the main reason for this is that the Council has not yet completed any work to apply UV to its windows to protect its historic items.

The Civic Officer explained that officers are challenged due to a lack of response from Wokingham Borough Council's Conservation Officer, and it is keen to receive their steer and approval before this work is done to ensure it is not breaching any rules around the look and the feel of the building given its grade II* listed status.

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____

Civic Committee 18/03/2024

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Councillors advised that officers should escalate this to George Framalocco at WBC, who is the Director responsible for that portfolio, and copy in Cllr Ian Shenton, the Executive Member for this area too, to try and move this forward.

ACTION: Civic Officer

CHRISTMAS MUSIC EVENT (Agenda item 7)

The committee received the Civic Officer's report for information which outlined details of how Morearts co-ordinated and delivered a successful event for the Council, including a breakdown of their costs.

It was agreed that the Civic Officer would continue working with Morearts to determine what the model would look like for this year including exploring the idea of holding it at All Saints Church. However, with less money available to spend, it was suggested that Morearts should be a little more financially astute about how the budget is allocated and consideration should be given to what is necessary.

Suggestions were also made to consider having advertising space on the flyers for this event to help mitigate the costs, and to share the details of the event with Radio Berkshire to ask them to share details about the event.

ACTION: Civic Officer

CONSIDER OPPORTUNITIES TO WIDEN WREATH LAYING CEREMONY (Agenda Item 8)

The committee received the Civic Officer's report, following conversations at the previous meeting and a request to discuss this further.

Councillors have suggested the idea of taking the wreath laying ceremony outside to widen its audience. The Civic Officer noted, in their report, that this presents the following challenges:

- a) There is no war memorial outside for wreaths to be laid at.
- b) If it is to be taken outside, where would this take place? The most practical place to take it may be in the Market Place itself but where would wreaths be laid?
- c) A temporary structure has been suggested to lay wreaths at. However, would a temporary structure be well received? What might it look like? What might it cost? Where would it be placed? How long might it stay out for? Where would it be stored? Whilst this would resolve the issue of limited access to the existing memorial, the crucial element here could be community consultation as the creation of war memorials seems to have traditionally been organised locally with its people. Seeking the views, from residents, for a temporary one feels no less important.
- d) Would it be right if wreaths are not laid at a place where the names of the fallen are engraved? Is it appropriate, how would this be perceived?
- e) WTC does not want to attract any undue criticism. War memorials and Remembrance are extremely emotive subjects, and any significant change can be controversial and needs to be handled sensitively.

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



An alternative proposal was suggested by the Civic Officer to trial in November 2024 as an interim step; this was at the Act of Remembrance at 11.00am on Remembrance Sunday when a two-minute silence is observed, for the Mayor to announce they are laying a wreath at the inside memorial and if people wished to follow they would be more than welcome. The Mayor would then lay the same wreath in the afternoon at the more formal ceremony. Whilst this would not widen its audience as much as if the wreath laying was outside, this would give more people the opportunity to pay their respects at the memorial and it could start to give the Council an indication whether our residents have an appetite or not for wanting to be more involved, albeit on this scale or larger.

Councillors discussed all the details in the report including this proposal, and views were mixed. Comments included:

- As a matter of principle, it should be a public event to make it more appropriate for the town rather than the ceremony to only include invited guests, and we can make this happen for November if we want to.
- A question was asked 'what demand is there for this from the public?' However, the public may not know this takes place.
- There are too many organisations that lay wreaths already; the numbers have increased over the years.
- There is a reason why the war memorial is there and that's because it was agreed by the people of Wokingham hundred years ago and that is the place that we should be laying our wreaths at.
- The laying of wreaths on the ground could be perceived as disrespectful and not the way forward.
- There is a sensitivity issue. All the elements of Remembrance are because people died and because of the sacrifice they made. If it was outside, we wouldn't have the names of people on any structure.
- There is already a poppy mosaic on the Market Place where the Act of Remembrance currently takes place.
- Although the Council has taken on the co-ordination of Remembrance events in Wokingham because there is no longer a local branch of the Royal British Legion, it is the Royal British Legion who have traditionally led Remembrance activities more widely.

It was agreed that further views should be sought from others outside of the meeting, primarily including those from the Royal British Legion. The Council shouldn't proceed in any direction that the public wouldn't be happy with.

It was agreed that Cllr Betteridge and Cllr Jones, together with David Dunham, with his connections with the Royal British Legion, should make contact with the RBL to get their views on the Council's idea of taking the wreath laying ceremony outside to see if this could be achieved. It was agreed that the Parade Marshal should also be involved in these discussions.

In response to the above proposal suggested by the Civic Officer, the Chair advised that this was a good attempt by the Civic Officer, but it doesn't answer the basic question and it is too comprised. However, if the Council is unable to

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



achieve taking the wreath laying ceremony outside, this may be useful to consider as a plan B.

ACTION: Cllr Betteridge, Cllr Jones & D Dunham

RAISING AWARENESS OF TOWN HALL MEMORIAL/CONSIDERATION OF NEW OUTSIDE WAR MEMORIAL (Agenda Item 9)

The Committee received the Civic Officer's report, recognising the advantages of having a war memorial inside the Town Hall as it is protected from the elements and vandalism.

However, it is also acknowledged that there remains a lack of awareness of where it is.

Over the years, the Civic Committee has discussed suggestions of having a new outdoor war memorial on numerous occasions.

Whilst related conversations have been taking place, it felt prudent to determine whether there really is an appetite for this amongst Councillors and residents and whether or not it is achievable.

The Civic Officer researched this and included information in their report for Councillors to consider including the following:

- a) Guidance notes from the War Memorials Trust about new war memorials
- b) A note that the funding, erection and maintenance of war memorials is not usually met from public funds. Rather, it is met from private donations or public subscription.
- c) Some information gathered from Woodley Town Council following the installation of their war memorial in 2014 which included a note that Woodley's resident community group raised £20,000 for the war memorial itself, and Woodley Town Council funded additional costs totalling £68,000.

It was proposed by Cllr Dixon and seconded by Cllr Bishop-Firth and it was

**RESOLVED
30796**

that the Civic Committee do not wish to explore this further at the moment, until it has made some decisions about what the wreath laying ceremony looks like.

REQUEST FOR A PLAQUE (Agenda Item 10)

The Committee received the Civic Officer's report, noting a request from the Wokingham Lions Club as one of their initiatives to mark their 50th anniversary this year.

Wokingham Lions Club proposed a new plaque to be laid in the pavement where wreaths could be laid, which could include the Wokingham Lions emblem, the Town Council Coat of Arms, and maybe the Royal British Legion emblem if they wanted it included. The President is keen to gain a view from the Council to establish if the idea is supported in principle. If it is supported, they are keen to pursue a donation of this to the town and to seek advice on how to take this forward.

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



Councillors discussed all of this, and views were mixed. Comments included:

- The idea was a good one.
- A preference for a plaque would still be on a wall but it was recognised this is not easily achievable.
- It would offer an external focus.
- There is already a Poppy Mosaic, already in the Market Place, where the Act of Remembrance currently takes place
- Would it be disrespectful if it is on the floor?
- Whatever is done needs to fit in with the plan that is made for agenda item 8.
- It could be possible to engage further with Wokingham Lions in due course, to include them in our discussions as well as talking to them about the idea of helping to support a war memorial, either temporary or permanent.

The Civic Officer was asked to respond positively to the Wokingham Lions Club, thanking them for their proposal, advising them that the Council is currently considering how it can manage the wreath laying ceremony differently and they would be kept updated of any plans that are made.

ACTION: Civic Officer

CONSIDER OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR COUNCILLORS TO WEAR THEIR ROBES AND BE MORE VISIBLE AT EVENTS (Agenda Item 11)

The Committee received the Civic Officer's report. At previous civic meetings, Councillors indicated they would like to look for opportunities to wear their robes more and be more visible at its own Council events and those which it offers financial funding to via its grant process. The Chair suggested that this discussion is revisited again to further discuss which events would be practical to attend.

Councillors reviewed the list of events that they could be more visible at and recognised that the robes were not appropriate attire for all occasions.

As the Beating of the Bounds event is being co-ordinated this September, Councillors agreed that this occasion would lend itself very well to Councillors wearing robes, being present outside the Town Hall to welcome people taking part and it would be a great opportunity to see how well this is received.

MAYOR'S SUNDAY LOCATION (Agenda Item 12)

The Committee received the Civic Officer's report, following a request that was made to explore using the Wokingham Leisure Centre as a new location for the Mayor's Sunday ceremony with a view to making it more of a public event.

Councillors all agreed that upon looking more closely at this, Wokingham Leisure Centre does not seem like a suitable venue.

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____



However, Councillors discussed the idea of holding it in All Saints Church as this would feel a more dignified venue. There would be no religious element, and it would be led by our outgoing Mayor and then incoming Mayor as it is done in the Town Hall. This could also lead to a possibility of re-incorporating a parade again.

The Civic Officer was asked to:

- a) Seek the view of all the Councillors to gain a wider view because even though the service was secular, the ceremony would be taking place in a religious venue.
- b) Contact All Saints Church to determine if they would be open to the Council holding this ceremony as a secular event and to find out any further required information.

ACTION: Civic Officer

CIVIC AWARDS (Agenda Item 13)

The Committee received the Civic Officer's report with a suggestion from the Civic Awards Selection Committee about it should make a change to its criteria to allow individuals to receive an award more than once.

**RESOLVED
30797**

It was proposed by Cllr Gee and seconded by Cllr Bishop-Firth and it was

that the criteria for the Civic Award process should be updated to allow a previous recipient of an award to be re-considered after a five-year period, provided their latest nomination is for a substantially different reason than for the original award.

ACTION: Civic Officer

INFORMATION ITEMS (Agenda Item 14)

The following was noted:

- a) The Beating the Bounds event will be organised for WTC, by Wokingham Lions Club, on Sunday 8 September 2024, to mark the 50th anniversary of both the Town Council and Wokingham Lions. This also falls within the timeframe for Heritage Open Days of 6-15 September.
- b) The national theme for Heritage Open Days 2024 is Routes - Networks - Connections
- c) The Town Council's annual newsletter is starting to be prepared. This will be delivered to all Wokingham's town residents from 13 May 2024.
- d) Interviews were planned and took place on Monday 18 March with students who have applied to join WTC for a summer internship to support the engagement element associated with the Museum Accreditation work.

COMMITTEE INFORMATION (Agenda Item 15)

There were no information items.

- a) No information was raised by members.

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____

Civic Committee 18/03/2024

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- b) No information was identified for marketing purposes. However, it was hoped that in due course there may be opportunities for the Council to share further details about how some of its civic occasions will be made more open to the public.

**RESOLVED
30798**

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC (Agenda Item 16)

It was proposed by Cllr Mather and seconded by Cllr Mrs Bishop-Firth and it was

that in view of the confidential nature of the business about to be transacted, i.e. awards, it was advisable in the public interest that the press and public be temporarily excluded and instructed to withdraw.

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____

Civic Committee 18/03/2024

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PART II

HONORARY CONSTABLE ROLES (Agenda Item 17)

- a) The committee members received notice of resignation from David Ashley-Down as Honorary Constable, after almost 29 years of service. The Civic Officer advised that David will be thanked at Mayor's Sunday by the outgoing Mayor and presented with a gift from the Council.
- b) The Civic Officer advised that the Council has been approached by a gentleman, who has expressed an interest in becoming an Honorary Constable. A meeting has been held with him, together with the Town Clerk and it has been agreed that he will be elected as a new Constable at Mayor's Sunday for the forthcoming year.

The Committee expressed a view that if there are any vacant honorary roles, they should be made more publicly available to offer the opportunity more widely.

The Civic Officer was asked that David Ashley-Down is thanked on behalf of the civic committee.

CHAIR'S SIGNATURE _____

CHAIR'S INITIALS _____

Civic Committee 18/03/2024

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WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Monitoring Report: Civic

Date: 03 June 2024

Date Action Agreed	Item for Action (to include any resolution number)	Person Actioning	Proposed Completion Date	Progress
20.3.23	To consider the purchase of a new mayoral badge and chain of office at some point in the near future	F&P	Not set	Request made to F&P to put aside £2,000 per year, over the next 5 years for the provision of purchasing a new mayoral chain and badge of office. <i>Decision was made at F&P 21/11/23 to move £8K from general reserves into an earmarked reserves so that this doesn't have to be considered again in this term of the council.</i> <i>To consider options in due course.</i>
18.09.23	Beating the Bounds walk - an historic event essentially carried out in the past to ensure the knowledge of the parish boundaries was maintained and passed from generation to generation. It was suggested that this could be undertaken in 2024 as a trial, and Councillors should fully support in their own wards.	F&P	Not set	Request made to F&P for £4,000, to offer to Wokingham Lions Club to manage and co-ordinate this. Decision was made at F&P 21/11/23 to support this financial request and for it to be taken from general reserves. <i>The event will be taking place on Sunday 8 September 2024.</i> <i>See agenda item 12b.</i> <i>Further information will be shared with Councillors, once known.</i>
20.09.23	Consider opportunities at Remembrance to make the wreath laying ceremony more visible to a wider audience.	Civic	Nov 2024	To bring forward ideas to next meeting with regards to involving more people in the wreath laying ceremony. <i>See agenda item 7</i>

WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Monitoring Report: Civic

Date: 03 June 2024

		Civic Officer	June meeting	See agenda item 10
18.03.24	Consider All Saints Church for Mayor's Sunday from 2025. Civic Officer to seek views from all Councillors and feed back to the civic committee.			
18.03.24	Consider request for a plaque from Wokingham Lions Club.			The Civic Officer thanked the Wokingham Lions Club for their proposal and advised them that the Council is currently considering how it can manage the wreath laying ceremony differently and they would be kept updated of any plans that are made. <i>To re-visit in due course.</i>
18.03.24	To update the Civic Award criteria to allow a previous recipient of an award to be re-considered after a five-year period, provided their latest nomination is for a substantially different reason than for the original award.	Civic Officer	ASAP	This has been updated.

WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Monitoring Report: Civic

Date: 03 June 2024

Wokingham Town Council Principles

Enriching Community

Creating and supporting opportunities to bring our community together and help it to thrive.

Fostering Town Pride

Protecting, enhancing and celebrating what's good about our council, our community, our town and our heritage. We will learn from our past, acknowledge where there's room for improvement, and prepare for the future.

Being Sustainable

Working to reduce our negative impact on our local environment and use our financial resources and physical assets as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Involving everyone

Striving to ensure the council's events, activities and democratic processes are open, accessible and welcoming to everyone in our community.

The Council's principles are noted here as a useful reference for members in discussions at Council meetings as they should always be considered.

09/05/2024

Wokingham Town Council

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 30/04/2024

Month No: 1

Cost Centre Report

	Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	Transfer to/from EMR
<u>302 Civic</u>							
4333 Newsletter	5,211	0	5,500	5,500	5,034	466	
4362 Civic Receptions	1,198	0	900	900		900	
4365 Heritage Day	3,205	63	3,850	3,787	198	3,589	
4369 Remembrance Day	2,911	0	3,200	3,200		3,200	
4370 Christmas Music	0	0	1,250	1,250		1,250	
4371 Honoraria	1,400	0	1,500	1,500		1,500	
4372 Chair's Allowance	1,750	0	3,500	3,500		3,500	
4373 Civic Transport	0	0	100	100		100	
4374 Official Gifts	229	0	500	500		500	
4375 Christmas Cards	278	0	300	300		300	
4376 Insignia & Dress	3,800	45	3,000	2,955	45	2,910	
4377 Civic Awards	1,279	0	2,000	2,000		2,000	
4378 Silver Talks	71	0	150	150		150	
4399 Mayor's Sunday	2,975	815	5,000	4,185	1,042	3,143	
4400 Mayors Chaplain	0	0	175	175		175	
4401 Beating the Bounds	0	0	4,000	4,000		4,000	
4523 Museum Accreditation	287	0	12,500	12,500		12,500	
Civic :- Indirect Expenditure	24,593	923	47,425	46,502	6,319	40,184	0
Net Expenditure	(24,593)	(923)	(47,425)	(46,502)			
Grand Totals:- Income	0	0	0	0			
Expenditure	24,593	923	47,425	46,502	6,319	40,184	
Net Income over Expenditure	(24,593)	(923)	(47,425)	(46,502)			
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(24,593)	(923)					



WOKINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL
Town Hall, Market Place,
Wokingham
Berkshire
RG40 1AS

WREATH LAYING WORKING PARTY
NOTES OF THE MEETING
Tuesday 16th April 2024 in Council Chamber, Town Hall

WP Members present: Cllrs: A Betteridge (Chair), A Jones
David Dunham (Macebearer)

Apologies: N/A

In attendance: Cllr A Croy, Major James Chappell (WTC Parade Marshal)
Civic Officer, Town Clerk

1. Apologies for absence

No apologies, but Major James Chappell arrived later during the discussion.

2. Background:

- Cllr Betteridge confirmed he was happy to chair the meeting(s).
- Cllr Betteridge shared that he and a number of other Councillors attended the Remembrance events in 2023 for the first time since becoming Councillors last year.
- He shared that the wreath laying ceremony was a closed event which the wider public may be unaware of. It was noted that this is because of the limited capacity inside the Town Hall where the war memorial is located.
- At the last civic meeting, there was an appetite to make the laying of the wreaths more visible to a wider audience.

3. Consider options for increasing public accessibility to wreath laying

- The idea of offering a ballot to attend the wreath laying ceremony to residents in its current format was discussed. However, due to the number of people who already attend and the Councillors etc present on the day, only an additional 15-20 spaces could be offered to people to attend. It was felt that this would not achieve a wide enough audience and may create more dissatisfaction than satisfaction.

Agenda item 7

- Outdoor locations were considered:
 - Peach Place – managed by WBC
 - Market Place – managed by WTC
 - Elms Field – managed by WTC
 - At any outdoor location, it's possible the weather could be inclement in November, but it was noted that others take place outside and this is not a reason not to do it but simply something to take into account.
 - Whilst the Market Place and Elms Field are both managed by WTC, and they both have good capacity, there are challenges with where wreaths could be laid, the sound of surrounding noise both in the Market Place and at Elms Field (including the play park there), and also the ground at Elms could be sodden in November.

 - A new idea was proposed by David Dunham for the wreaths to be laid inside the Church within the service already taking place
 - People laying wreaths could carry them in the parade, being visible to people watching
 - The wreath laying would not be impacted by the weather.
 - The wreath laying would be visible to up to 400 people in the Church.
 - The wreaths could possibly remain in the Church for residents to see for a few days following.

 - After discussion the church was considered to be the easiest and best proposal and the other options were not discussed further, though could be developed in future if needed.

 - It was noted that the church capacity (420) is not greatly more than the number that already attended the service in 2023 (370). However, it still meets the requirement to improve public accessibility. It was thought best not to publicise the change any more than for the normal parade and service so that we do not go over capacity in year one. It may be possible to live stream the wreath laying and service.
- 4 Consider options for how an outdoor fully accessible wreath laying could fit within the overall timetable for the day**
- The proposed church option would be as a part of the activity on arrival at the church. Details to be confirmed once this has been discussed with the church.
- 5. Preferred option to be taken forwards and potential timescales (2024 or later)**
- Everyone agreed that the idea of laying wreaths inside the Church within the service seemed like the best and most achievable option to widen the number of people seeing this.

 - All Saints Church should be contacted to understand if they support this idea in principle.

- If it is supported, this should be trialled this year is possible, and further planning will be required to understand how this will work. The working party could meet with the church to enable this.
- It was noted that, if supported by the Church, this could be achievable in 2024.
- To seek feedback following the event to understand how it is received.

6 Annual Town Meeting

It was agreed that no questions would be asked at the Annual Town Meeting this year, on this topic as the proposed option was unlikely to be contentious.

Depending on feedback from Remembrance in 2024, this could be revisited next year if required.

6 AOB

Cllr Andy Croy enquired about other conflicts not appearing on the war memorial inside the Town Hall.

It was noted that to WTC’s knowledge, no individuals from Wokingham have been impacted.

7 Dates of Next meetings

Not required at present.

The meeting closed at 8:15pm

Actions:

Agenda item	Action	By whom
5	To contact All Saints Church to ask if the idea of laying the wreaths at the Church is supported by them.	Civic Officer



Wokingham Town Council

Civic Officer's Report 01/2024-25

To: Civic Committee

Date: 03 June 2024

Subject: Consider Opportunities to widen Wreath laying ceremony

1 REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 The Civic Committee is keen to make the wreath laying on Remembrance Sunday more visible to a wider audience.
- 1.2 To consider the next steps for the wreath laying, following the discussion at the wreath laying working party.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The preferred option at the working party was to consider including the wreath laying part of the Remembrance activities into the service at All Saints Church.
- 2.2 The Civic Officer has contacted Rev Hannah Higginson at All Saints Church and she advised they could incorporate this.

3 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 Including the wreath laying in the Church service could extend the time of the service but it would be more visible to a wider audience.
- 3.2 If the civic committee supports to trial incorporating the wreath laying into the Church service, it is not clear how this would be done or what this would look like at this stage, but it was important to get a view from the Church in principle before any further decisions or plans are developed.
- 3.3 This change feels achievable and manageable, in the current year.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There would be no costs associated with this change, if it were to proceed, other than some additional resource time for the Civic Officer to plan the changes.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 To discuss the proposal made by the wreath laying party to incorporate the wreath laying into the Remembrance service at All Saints Church and resolve if it wishes to trial this for 2024.
- 5.2 If civic wishes to trial this in November 2024, the Civic Officer will meet with Rev Hannah Higginson to discuss and plan further.
- 5.3 If civic does not wish to trial this, the current format should remain for this year to allow for further discussion and consideration to take place.

Town Council

Catherine Bowstead <minister@wokinghammethodist.org.uk>

Wed 22/05/2024 2:44 PM

To:Nikki Payler <npayler@wokingham-tc.gov.uk>

Dear Nikki

Thank you for your message and your time, explaining the decision of the Town Council to end practice of holding a Civic Service to mark the Making of the Mayor. We are sad about this, but we respect the Council's decision and recognise that it has been not a right but a privilege for us as churches down the years to play our part in this important annual civic event.

We recognise and indeed celebrate that our town is a more diverse community than it has been in the past, and that one element of that diversity is that more people in the town practice faiths other than the Christian faith, or indeed no faith. We are quite comfortable with that development but wonder if a way could not be found to make the Mayor Making reflect that diversity while still retaining a faith element.

We are also sad about the loss of a faith perspective on the Mayor Making at the start of the Council's year. That occasion has through our history been an opportunity to ask the blessing of God, or however you understand that Higher Power, on the Council's work and on the people elected to do it. It is a healthy thing that all people in authority recognise that they need the help and inspiration of, and indeed accountability to, a power beyond themselves. There is nothing old-fashioned in asking God's blessing on the Mayor, the Council, and the Town as a whole.

This being said, please be assured that our prayers and good efforts to support the Council and its work will continue in other ways. We will also continue our own work of serving the Town and its people in ways that are sometimes visible and sometimes unseen.

Yours

Revd Catherine Bowstead

On behalf of Churches Together in Wokingham.



12 May 2024

Dear Rob,

I am writing to express my sincere thanks for the warm hospitality extended to us both at your installation as Mayor of Wokingham Town Council earlier today. It was an absolute pleasure to attend such a well-organised and memorable occasion for the second year in succession. Having visited the Town Council a few times during my first year in office, I can now say with confidence that I feel very much at home!

Of course, Wokingham has been our home for the past 26 years, and it is wonderful to hear stories about all the good works that quietly go on in the town and the multitude of unsung heroes that live among us. I wish you the very best for your time as Town Mayor and am certain that you will thoroughly enjoy every moment of it.

With very best wishes for the coming year.

Yours sincerely,

Stefan

Dr Stefan Fafinski JP DL FBCS FRSA
Deputy Lieutenant of the Royal County of Berkshire

Cllr Rob Comber



Wokingham Town Council

Civic Officer's Report 02/2024-25

To: Civic Committee
Date: 03 June 2024
Subject: Location of Mayor's Inauguration Ceremony

1 REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 At the March civic meeting, the committee members discussed using Wokingham Leisure Centre as an alternative venue for the Mayor's inauguration ceremony (also the first Annual Council meeting of the Town Council's municipal year), with a view to making it more of a public event. However, after discussion, the committee agreed that this would not be a suitable venue.
- 1.2 The idea of using All Saints Church as a venue for the ceremony, was then discussed at the same meeting, which was felt might be a more dignified setting. The Civic Officer was asked to:
 - 1.2.1 Seek the view of all the Councillors to get a wider view
 - 1.2.2 Contact All Saints Church to find out further information

2 FOR CONSIDERATION

- 2.1 The flexible space at All Saints Church is considerably larger than the main hall of the Town Hall, and seating could accommodate approx. 400 people.
 - 2.1.1 For information, there were approx. 370 people present in the Church at Remembrance Sunday.
 - 2.1.2 For information, there were 92 people present in the Town Hall for the Mayor's Inauguration ceremony in 2024.
- 2.2 The space at All Saints Church would offer a very different atmosphere to Wokingham's Town Hall. The Town Hall is home to the Town Council and its annual ceremony has always traditionally been held there.
 - 2.2.1 There is a risk that if the ceremony was not well attended at the Church, with no additional or only a few extra people, the occasion could feel less impactful.
- 2.3 If the ceremony was held at the Church, WTC would need to think carefully about how this would be managed in terms of people attending:
 - 2.3.1 The best option might be to ticket the event, albeit free, so it is aware of the numbers that would be attending. Ticketing would involve marketing and administrating this beforehand, which would require more officer time to oversee and manage.
 - 2.3.2 If it were not to be ticketed, and people were invited on a first come, first served basis, WTC would not have any indication of numbers attending.
- 2.4 The ceremony at the Town Hall is usually followed by canapes and drinks.
 - 2.4.1 If this were to be mirrored at All Saints Church, this would significantly increase the costs if there were more people, unless it was followed by a drinks reception only perhaps and no food, or no refreshments at all.

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- 2.4.2 If WTC was to cater for people at the Church, it would need to know how many it was catering for so managing the event on a first come, first serve basis would not allow WTC to have this information.
- 2.4.3 An option could be for invited guests only to come back to the Town Hall for refreshments which would keep these costs manageable.
- 2.5 Although there is a servery area at All Saints Church, it should be noted that there is not a fully equipped kitchen, unlike the one at the Town Hall, so options would be limited in terms of catering.
- 2.6 If the ceremony was to be held at All Saints Church, there would be an opportunity to re-instate a parade on this occasion; the outgoing Mayor could be dressed in the mayoral robe and chain of office going to Church and the incoming Mayor could be dressed in the mayoral robe and chain of office on the way back.
- 2.7 The Civic Officer was asked to seek the wider views of all Councillors about using All Saints Church as a possible venue, to feed into the discussion at the meeting. Comments received at the time the agenda has been sent are below but please note that further comments may follow which will be brought to the meeting:
 - 2.7.1 I am ok with this. However, I think the views of non-Christian Councillors should be carefully considered. We don't want to be divisive.
 - 2.7.2 I am not in favour of this proposal. While I understand that the service will still be secular, it will nevertheless occur in a religious (Christian) venue, potentially excluding residents and interested parties.
 - 2.7.3 I'm against the change. Not because of the nature of the building but because of the loss of tradition at the Town Hall.
 - 2.7.4 I am not comfortable with the Mayor-Making taking place in All Saints, but not for reasons of religiosity.

3 PRACTICALITIES

- 3.1 The Church has confirmed that due to existing services that regularly take place on a Sunday, WTC could hire the Church on the day, between 11am to 5pm. This has been provisionally booked for Sunday 11 May 2025, should WTC make a decision to trial holding the ceremony in the Church.
- 3.2 To allow for the set-up of everything, if the ceremony was to be held in the Church, the timing may have to shift to later in the day to allow time for everything to be ready, including all the chairs to be set up, making sure all the regalia is there ready, any gifts are there, any reserved seating is positioned, the PA system is in place, any refreshments are taken down.
- 3.3 A walkthrough of the ceremony usually takes place with the incoming and outgoing Mayor and key people involved prior to the day. Some thought would need to be given to how this would happen if WTC is keen to explore the Church further as an alternative venue.
- 3.4 Currently, a string quartet performs at the ceremony in the Town Hall very well. If the location was moved to the Church, consideration would need to be given as to whether this would be sufficient in the larger space or if alternative musical accompaniment might be required.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There would be a cost to hire the Church on the day; details of this will follow, it is hoped this will be available at the meeting.
 - 4.1.1 It is possible that WTC may also need to hire the Church on an earlier day too, depending on what the plans might be for a walk through beforehand, which is likely to incur further costs.
- 4.2 Depending on what decisions are made, there could be additional costs associated with catering and musical accompaniment.

- 4.3 There would also be additional resource time for the Civic Officer to plan and deliver the changes.

5 RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 The Civic Committee should consider all of the above and resolve if they wish to consider trialing using All Saints Church for the ceremony in 2025.
- 5.2 If this is supported, further planning will be required by the Civic Officer to scope out what the event could look like, and to identify if any additional budget will need to be requested.

Beating the Bounds 2024 – update

The information below is the latest update received from Wokingham Lions:

Much of the Town Council's boundary is on private land and so the walks have been designed to intercept the boundary where it is accessible with beating posts where the walk crosses the boundary.

There are now three routes:

- The main route is 7 miles with approx. 8 beating posts. These should be manned, ideally by councillors, but the Lions Club will man with their members if necessary.
- The short route is 3 miles which incorporates two of the above beating posts
- The full perimeter route of approx. 16 miles with an additional two unmanned posts. The Lions will not sign post or steward the full route as they anticipate very few people will do it but they will have a downloadable map if people wish to do this version.

Other info

- Morris dancers are booked for one hour to add a bit of "jollity" to the start.
- The Lions would like the Mayor to be present at the start in regalia to welcome arrivals
- The beating posts will be fencing posts (a bit like large pencils) that can be driven in to the ground. A portion of each post will be wrapped in green and gold nylon rope which will be the "beating area". This will reduce the risk of splinters. The Beating sticks are seasoned Hazel and about the length of a rounders bat. This is the form of wood used by Morris Men and not prone to breakage or splintering.
- Beyond First Aid have been booked as the First Aid presence on the day.

More information including the route details etc will follow.



Wokingham Town Council

Civic Officer's Report 07/2023-24

To: Civic Committee
Date: 12 September 2023
Subject: Budget request for Beating the Bounds 2024

1 REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To consider a suggestion received from a WTC Councillor, to revive an ancient practice, known as Beating the Bounds, which was carried out to ensure the knowledge of parish boundaries was maintained and passed from generation to generation. This involved swatting local landmarks with branches to maintain a shared mental map of parish boundaries.
- 1.2 For reference, see [wikipedia.org/wiki/Beating_the_bounds](https://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beating_the_bounds) and www.wokinghamsociety.org.uk/Boxsoft_Wokingham_in_the_News_1771_to_1999/mobile/index.html

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 For reference, attached is a map of Wokingham's town boundary.
- 2.2 Newspaper articles from the Reading Mercury note that a form of this was done here in Wokingham in 1929, 1930, 1954 and 1973 (when it took the form of more of a sponsored walk).
- 2.3 From reading some of the history, it seems it was traditional to do this around the Whitsun (the late Spring May Bank Holiday)
- 2.4 If WTC is keen to revive this tradition, it would be a new event that the Council has not co-ordinated before and would therefore require additional officer time to plan, manage and deliver. At this point in time, it is not felt that it could be absorbed into the calendar of events due to limited officer capacity.
- 2.5 As WTC does not have any experience with managed walks, the Civic Officer has sought the advice of the Wokingham Lions Club as they already deliver annual Spring and Autumn walks.
 - 2.5.1 They have very kindly undertaken a walk/cycle of Wokingham's town boundary and have fed back their findings.
- 2.6 If a decision is taken to take this idea forward, whoever it is managed by, this is an opportunity for as many Councillors as possible to be present on the day in their actual wards. The Wokingham Lions Club have indicated they would be keen to see Councillors in their regalia, if managed by them.

3 FEEDBACK FROM WOKINGHAM LIONS CLUB

- 3.1 Parts of the boundary are not accessible due to the railway and private land in some areas; in particular at the bottom of Wescott West, therefore the exact boundary cannot be followed.

- 3.2 The trail that was followed was 16 miles.
- 3.3 Parts of the walks are of little interest.
- 3.4 Would this route be too far for many of Wokingham's residents? (The Lions advised that they have approx. 500-600 people taking part in each of their Spring and Autumn walks. At these walks, people can choose to walk, 5, 10 or 15 miles but only 20% of people walk the full 15 miles).
- 3.5 Changes would need to be made in the Wescott West area as full access is not possible. This could reduce the walk to approx. 14 miles but then it would not be walking the full boundary.
- 3.6 Public liability insurance (PLI) would need to be in place.
- 3.7 The event would need to be marshalled on the day. Before and after the event, directional and information signs along with cones would need to be put in place and taken down.
- 3.8 Signs/cones would need to be made and sourced for the day.
- 3.9 High viz jackets would be required for marshals.
- 3.10 For a walk of this length, agreed toilet stops would need to be agreed in advance at every 5 miles
- 3.11 First aid provision would need to be in place.
- 3.12 Drinking water should be made available/accessible.
- 3.13 The event organiser would need to manage entries and correspond with entrants, taking payments if it is a chargeable event. If chargeable, would payments be taken as fundraising profits? If so, for who?
- 3.14 Would any medals be required for winners or for everyone taking part?
- 3.15 The act of 'beating the bounds' whereby local landmarks were swatted with branches to maintain a shared mental map of parish boundaries would need to be considered. This could be done at key points around the boundary where Councillors and Honoraries are present to greet people along the route.
- 3.16 The advantages of the Wokingham Lions Club managing this would include:
 - Their PLI is already in place and would cover this (approx. £500)
 - They are experienced in managing such events
 - There would be very minimal officer capacity required to support this
 - They would fully plan and organise including planning the whole route, sourcing and putting in place directional signs, planning toilet stops, sourcing marshals, high viz jackets, drinking water, sourcing sticks for beating the boundaries, first aid provision, management of entries and money, publicity, purchase of any medals etc
 - They already have a database of a few thousand people who take part in their walks and events who they could market this to
- 3.17 The disadvantages for the Wokingham Lions Club could be:
 - It is possible that this could detract from their other Spring and Autumn walks which could mean less money raised at those.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Wokingham Lions Club has advised that with financial support from WTC, they would consider trialing this event, within their calendar of events.
- 4.2 The Wokingham Lions have estimated that they would be seeking approximately between £3000-£4000 to manage this for the Town Council, if WTC asks them to take this on which

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would cover all their costs. In addition, they would hope to have a surplus to firstly cover any shortfalls from the other walks and if any profits are remaining, they would like to add these to their fundraising totals to distribute to the community.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 To consider if this request is one that the Civic Committee supports as a concept.
- 5.2 This could be carried out in 2024 as a trial to gauge interest, and interestingly there is an opportunity to market this in 2024 aligned to the following anniversaries:
 - 5.2.1 130-year anniversary of when the parish councils were first established as a number of its responsibilities were separated from the Church (as a result of the Local Government Act 1894, also known as the Parish Councils Act).
 - 5.2.2 50- year anniversary of when local government was reformed in England and Wales on 1 April 1974, as a result of the Local Government Act 1972. Much of the administration of the town was taken over by Wokingham District Council, now Wokingham Borough Council. Wokingham remained a Parish Council which, in view of its historic past, was given the title of Town Council and retained its Mayor, its coat of arms, its ceremonies and base in the Town Hall.
- 5.3 If the idea is supported, WTC should:
 - 5.3.1 Ensure it has the commitment of Councillors for as many as possible to attend the event on the day, representing their ward.
 - 5.3.2 Request funds from F&P for £4000 to ask the Wokingham Lions Club to manage this event for the Council.
 - 5.3.3 Consider the timing of the event, so that it wouldn't clash or compete with any other key WTC or Wokingham Lions events.