



Wallingford Town Council

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Full Council,
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Item 7

TOWN CLERK'S REPORT - AUGUST 2024

Grants

Everyone Active Grant 2024

Wallingford Town Council has been awarded £1k from this grant for Wallingford Eco-Heritage Spaces, specifically for the recruitment and development of eco-heritage volunteers who will be trained to recover our green spaces that are specifically in our heritage areas, for example the Saxon Banks in the Kincroft and Bull Croft parks. The aim of the project is to encourage our community to get out, meet people and get active, whilst benefiting our green spaces and learning about our heritage. It fits in to Wallingford's draft Biodiversity Action Plan which incorporates our heritage green spaces. The project will be co-ordinated to work alongside the work of 'Wild About Wallingford' and the parks department.

Tourist Economy Grant

The Town Council has been invited to submit a further application for £4,950 from the Economic Development Officer Lead Vale and South Towns South Oxfordshire and Vale of White Horse District Councils. The fund must be used to improve the tourist economy. We intend to apply for funds to produce an interactive map on the new Visit Wallingford website and to produce a tour app in multi-languages. This will be done in partnership with Oxford students and the museum.

Events (non civic)

This year's Pancake Race was run on Shrove Tuesday itself, 13 February 2024. There was a very good turnout and a lot of fun and enjoyment. This event has been run for over thirty years, with a short break during the COVID pandemic, and hopefully will continue to be run for the next thirty! It has always been run by a local organisation with the support of the Town Council. This year, as usual, it was run in partnership with John Houston.

Prizes were given to the winners, sponsored by Rowes Honey.

The Easter Egg trail sadly could not happen due to poor weather.

There have been three band concerts in the Castle Gardens this year, each attended by 250-300 people. Refreshments could not be provided due to the lack of an electricity supply.

The Curfew Bell event returned for a second year on 6 July 2024. This new annual event has been established to remind Wallingford of our history and allow us a council to acknowledge this honour.

This year's event was disrupted by the Euros football semi-final and the previous years by heavy rain. On the first occasion we (roughly) counted participants at around a thousand. This year despite the football we estimated there were almost two thousand enjoying the pageantry and history of our town.

Additions this year included a living craft fair which complemented the excellent exhibition of Wallingford's history which is staged in the town hall so increasing the public's engagement with this building.

We once again invited a great Ceilidh band who kept everyone well entertained and of course we had Brightwell cum Sotwell Mummer's re-enactment of the events when the Normans passed through, this was hugely enjoyed by all. Finally, Councillors processed, and a re-presentation of the Curfew document was made to the mayor. The evening concluded at just after 9pm with Wallingford Church Choir singing a specially composed hymn immediately after the curfew sounded.

Looking forward, the focus is currently on the Agatha Christie Mystery Weekend on 6-8. Ticket sales for the boat trip are currently lower than expected.

The 2024 Christmas Fayre will include the Santa Run, followed by a day of entertainment involving a dancing troop, a dog demonstration (featuring agility and scent detection), a ukele band, the Military Wives Choir, Christmas lights and carols

The Regal – feasibility review of options

ADP Carter Jonas were appointed to undertake this review following detailed evaluation of tenders by a working group led by Councillor Margarido.

This key piece of work, which should unlock this long-running project, is currently underway.

Arthur Hodsdon, Head of Parks and Estates, is the main point of contact for ADP Carter Jonas and he has been supplying further documentation.

Craig Cullimore, the ADP Carter Jonas team leader has provided this interim summary report:

"The ADP Carter Jonas team have made a good start on the study. We now have a good understanding of the ownership matters, adjoining ownerships, leases and rights of way. We have produced a clear plan that summarises the finds on one plan for review and discussion. We have consulted with the Town Clerk and Head of Parks and Estates to get a fuller understanding of the project requirements and information on record. We have visited site and was joined by the

Mayor, Town Clerk and Head of Parks and Estate. We have started to test a number of architectural footprints to establish what will fit on the site, and what mixed uses can be accommodated, including the consideration of how 9/10 St Martin's Street engages with the site. We are developing a simple matrix to list all the options and pros and cons with each. We have made contact with Beechcroft Homes to request a meeting in late August. We await a reply. It will be very useful to meet with the Mayor and key Councillors during August to get an fuller understanding of their aspirations

We do not foresee any delays to the issuing of the report at the end of September 2024. However, it would be beneficial to the summary if the Beechcroft meeting had taken place and any other key stakeholders before the issuing of the document."

Luke Whitcomb,
Meetings Officer
with contributions from stakeholders
12 August 2024