BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL

MEETING
OF
BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Ref: BTC3/2021

Monday 22nd June 2020
at
7.00pm

BY ZOOM
(PLEASE SEE AGENDA FOR LOGIN DETAILS)

Circulation:
Town Mayor: Councillor Jason Slaymaker

Members

Cllr Nick Cotter
Cllr Dan Hallett
Cllr Harry Knight
Cllr Nick Mawer
Cllr Zoe McLernon
Cllr James Metcalf
Cllr Richard Mould
Cllr Robert Nixon
Cllr Lynn Pratt
Cllr Dan Sames
Cllr Les Sibley
Cllr Jason Slaymaker
Cllr Alex Thrupp
Cllr Fraser Webster

Other Circulation

Cllr Lawrie Stratford – OCC
Cllr Michael Waine – OCC
Cllr Tom Wallis – CDC
Cllr Lucinda Wing – CDC

Bicester Advertiser
Bicester Review
Oxford Mail
Bicester Library
BTC Copy

Council Offices,
The Garth,
Launton Road,
Bicester
Oxon, OX26 6PS

Telephone: 01869 252915
Email: enquiries@bicester.gov.uk

Tuesday 16th June 2020

Sir/Madam

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Planning Committee on **Zoom** on **Monday 22nd June 2020** to commence at **7.00pm** for the transaction of the following business.

In line with the Coronavirus Act 2020 and subsequent regulations governing local authorities' meetings, the Council will be holding this meeting via the online video conference facility, Zoom.

To join the Zoom meeting follow this link: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83423622391

Meeting ID: 834 2362 2391
Password: (to ensure online security it is recommended that meeting passwords are not publicised and are given directly to those intending to attend the meeting. Please therefore email enquiries@bicester.gov.uk for the password at least 24 hours before the scheduled meeting date)
Telephone number to join by audio only: 0203 051 2874 (you will be prompted to enter the meeting ID and password before joining the meeting)

Samantha Shippen
Chief Officer

Members of the public and press are welcome to attend in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960

Copy Attached	Agenda item No	**AGENDA**
	1	**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** a) To approve any apologies for absence submitted for the meeting b) It is recommended that, under section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, the council formally approves the reasons for the failure of any member of Bicester Town Council to attend meetings of the authority, and that the matter be reviewed before the end of November 2020.
	2	**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** Councillors are reminded to declare any interests on any item on this agenda in accordance with Bicester Town Council's Code of Conduct.

Copy Attached	Agenda item No	AGENDA
	3	**PUBLIC SESSION** In accordance with Standing Orders 1 d-f, members of the public may make representations, ask questions and give evidence in respect of any item of business included in the agenda. Time allocated shall not exceed 10 minutes. No member of the public shall speak for more than 2 minutes.
✓		**MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING** To confirm the minutes and **RESOLUTIONS** contained in the minutes of the following Town Council meeting: **BTC07/1920 – 9th March 2020**
✓	5	**MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING** To confirm the minutes and **RESOLUTIONS** contained in the minutes of the following Planning Committee meeting: **PL11/1920 – 16th March 2020**
	6	**REPORT OF THE TOWN MAYOR** Friday 12th June – Bicester Village, Pre-Opening Private Tour.
✓	7	**EMERGENCY DELEGATION – COVID-19** Council is requested to consider the attached report.
✓	8	**MEETINGS & COMMITTEES** Council is requested to consider the attached report.
✓	9	**ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR)** Council is requested to consider the attached report.
✓	10	**FINANCE** Council is requested to consider the attached report.
✓	11	**COUNCILLORS ALLOWANCES 2020/21** Council is requested to consider the attached report.
✓	12	**CONSULTATION ON EXPANDING PRIMARY SCHOOL CAPACITY WITHIN THE KINGSMERE DEVELOPMENT, SW BICESTER** Council is requested to consider the attached report.

Copy Attached	Agenda item No	AGENDA
✓	**13**	**BICESTER TOWN STATION TOTEM SIGN** Council is requested to consider the attached report.
	14	**DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Tuesday 1st September 2020 - 7pm** **CLOSE OF MEETING:**

Minutes of the Council held on **Monday 9th March 2020 at The Garth, Launton Road, Bicester OX26 6PS.**

Present:

Cllr Jason Slaymaker – Chairman
Cllr Nick Cotter
Cllr Dan Hallett
Cllr Harry Knight
Cllr Nick Mawer
Cllr Zoe McLernon
Cllr Robert Nixon
Cllr Lynn Pratt
Cllr Dan Sames
Cllr Les Sibley
Cllr Alex Thrupp
Cllr Fraser Webster

In Attendance:

Samantha Shippen – Chief Officer
Julie Trinder – Administration

Minute Number	Agenda item No	
413/1920	**1**	**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** **RESOLVED** that apologies were received from Cllr Richard Mould. *Cllr Jason Slaymaker reported that Cllr Sean Gaul had resigned as a Councillor for the East Ward and thanked Cllr Gaul for his service. Cllr Slaymaker will personally send a thank you letter on behalf of Bicester Town Council.*
414/1920	**2**	**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** **RESOLVED** that no declarations of interest were received. *Cllr Sames entered the meeting at 7.05pm.*
415/1920	**3**	**PUBLIC SESSION** Two members of the public were present and asked if Bicester Town Council would be happy to support them in setting up a Mini Model United Nations Debating Group with regular discussions and meetings taking place in the Chambers for young people. *Members of the Council were highly supportive of this request.* Concerns were also raised with the amount of litter under the Railway Tunnel and asked what plans Bicester Town Council have to rectify this.

Signed ....

Minute Number	Agenda item No	
		It was reported that following discussions between Oxfordshire County Council and Network Rail, Network Rail have agreed they have responsibility for this. The Chief Officer advised that the young people were present at a presentation to the 6th Form at Cooper School, followed by a question and answer session. The Chief Officer to bring issues to relevant Committees in due course.
416/1920	**4**	**MINUTES OF THE TOWN COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETINGS:** **RESOLVED** that Council confirmed the following minutes of the Town Council meeting: **BTC06/1920 - 21st January 2020**
417/1920	**5**	**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING:** **RESOLVED** that Council confirmed the following minutes of the Environment Committee meeting: **ENV05/1920 - 4 February 2020**
418/1920	**6**	**MINUTES OF THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING:** **RESOLVED** that Council confirmed the following minutes of the Finance Committee meeting: **FIN05/1920 - 10th February 2020**
419/1920	**7**	**MINUTES OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETINGS:** **RESOLVED** that Council confirmed the following minutes of the Planning Committee meetings: **PL09/1920 - 13th January 2020** **PL010/1920 - 17th February 2020**
420/1920	**8**	**MINUTES OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING:** **RESOLVED** that Council confirmed the following minutes of Policy Committee meeting: **POL05/1920 - 27th January 2020**
421/1920	**9**	**QUESTIONS ON WORKING PARTIES & OTHER GROUPS** No questions were raised.

Signed ....

Minute Number	Agenda item No	
422/1920	**10**	**REPORT FROPM OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY/CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCILLORS** **10.1 OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL** Nothing to report. **10.2 CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL** Cllr Nick Mawer on behalf of Cherwell District Council reported: • CDC have adopted a resolution for planting trees, double cover by 2025. • Budgets now been set and agreed. Band D Council Tax has a 5% increase. • Retail pub release policy. • Draft for North Oxford Golf Course motion passed. Cllr Dan Sames reported: • A Climate Change workshop took place in February.
423/1920	**11**	**REPORT OF THE TOWN MAYOR** **RESOLVED** that the Mayor's report be **NOTED.**
424/1920	**12**	**REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL CONTROL** **RESOLVED** that Council **AGREED** the effectiveness of Internal Control for 2019/20.
425/1920	**13**	**RISK MANAGEMENT SCHEDULE 2020** **RESOLVED** that Council **AGREED** to **APPROVE** the Risk Management Schedule.
426/1920	**14**	**REAL LIVING WAGE EMPLOYER** Cllr Robert Nixon discussed his Motion for Bicester Town Council to become a Real Living Wage Employer. It was **RESOLVED** that Council **AGREED** to instruct the Chief Officer to investigate Bicester Town Council becoming a Living Wage Employer and the implications of such to bring back a report to a future meeting.
427/1920	**15**	**DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Monday 11th May 2020** **CLOSE OF MEETING: 7.45pm**

Signed ....

Minutes of the Bicester Town Council Planning Committee on **Monday 16th March 2020** at **The Garth, Launton Road Bicester OX26 6PS**.

Present

Cllr Nick Mawer – Chairman
Cllr Dan Hallett
Cllr Robert Nixon
Cllr Lynn Pratt
Cllr Jason Slaymaker
Cllr Fraser Webster

In Attendance:

Samantha Shippen - Chief Officer

Minute Number	Agenda item No	
428/1920	**1**	**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** **RESOLVED** that apologies were received from Cllr Harry Knight, Cllr Zoe McLernon, Cllr Richard Mould and Cllr Les Sibley.
429/1920		**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST** **2.1** No declarations of interest were made. **2.2 Declarations of Interest for District & County Councillors** **RESOLVED** that Cllr Nick Mawer, Cllr Lynn Pratt, Cllr Jason Slaymaker and Cllr Fraser Webster as District Councillors on this Planning Committee and will make their comments and decision based upon information available at the time of the Meeting. It is accepted that District Councillors may come to different decision in the light of more information being made available at District Planning Meetings.
430/1920	**3**	**MINUTES** **RESOLVED** that **COMMITTEE** confirmed the approval of minutes, **PL10/1920 - 17th February 2020.**
431/1920	**4**	**PUBLIC SESSION** There were no public comments.

Minute Number	Agenda item No	
432/1920	5	**UPDATES ON LARGE DEVELOPMENTS AND ASSOCIATED ISSUES** **5.1 NORTH WEST BICESTER** No update. **5.2 GRAVEN HILL** No update. **5.3 GARDEN TOWN** No update. **5.4 OTHER BICESTER STATEGIC SITES** It was reported that Cherwell District Council had refused permission for the Wolf Resorts application at Chesterton.
433/1920	6	**CONSULTATIONS** **6.1. INNOVATION COMMUNITY – BICESTER GATEWAY** A presentation was given on behalf of Bloombridge in respect of the Bicester Gateway application. They outlined the proposal for a flexible working hub which is designed to combine residential and working space in a community type new to Bicester. The development would provide 243 residential flats with predominantly 1 to 2 bedrooms but with flexibility for 3 bedroom affordable shared accommodation for the site. The properties would be targeted as starter homes and would have undercroft parking and a strong emphasis on active travel with 317 cycling spaces and provision for electric vehicle forecourt. Vehicle ownership is predicted to be low but include a car club **6.2. OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (BICESTER AREA) (SPEED LIMITS) ORDER 20.** **RESOLVED** that **COMMITTEE WELCOMED** the proposals.
434/1920	7	**PLANNING APPLICATIONS FROM CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL** **RESOLVED** that the following comments be made: **19/02225/REM** – No comment; **19/02854/F** – No objection; **20/00054/F** – OBJECT due to potential compromise of fire route; **20/00138/F** – OBJECT due to effect on the street scene, access/exit directly on to Howes Lane which is considered dangerous in the local area, concerns over effect on traffic locally. **20/00182/F** – No objection; **20/00187/F** - No objection;

Minute Number	Agenda item No	
		20/00229/F - No objection; **20/00245/F** – OBJECT due to history of schools locally using "temporary" accommodation for long periods of time rather than building proper extensions. This Council would wish to see a permanent extension constructed if the school requires additional accommodation. If Cherwell District Council is minded to approve, BTC would request a condition that the temporary accommodation is restricted in time and required to be removed once the new Kingsmere primary school is opened. **20/0245/F** – Support the application. **20/00246/ADV** – although this application is submitted in the name of Bicester Town Council, the signage was not approved by the Council before submission. BTC does not support this application. **20/00293/OUT** – Welcome the application including the philosophy of the development and the employment types including knowledge based economy. Concerns about the impact on the road network particularly the effect on Vendee Drive and the pedestrian crossing. BTC requests that the impact on the road layout is looked at more carefully. The concept is fully supported but not the proposals for access. **20/00324/F** – No objection; **20/00342/REM** – Welcome; **20/00347/F** – No objection; **20/0362/TCA** – Leave to Arboriculture Officer; **20/00367/F** – STRONG OBJECTION a former ACV site which should not be developed, contrary to NPPF, was intended as amenity space, concerns about overdevelopment of the site, effects on the street scene as not in keeping with the area, should be retained as open amenity space. **20/00368/F** – No objection; **20/00378/F** – Welcome application but have concerns about limited car parking. **20/00398/ADV** - No objection; **20/0400/F** – No objection; **20/00401/ADV** – Concern regarding sign B facing houses, should be non-illuminated. **20/00436/F** - No objection; **20/00461/F** - No objection; **20/00472/TPO** - Leave to Arboriculture Officer; **20/00475/F** – Welcome application; **20/00518/ADV** - No objection; **20/00571/F** - No objection; **20/00572/F** - No objection; **20/00590/F** – Welcome application.
435/1920	**8**	**AMENDED PLANS** No amended plans to note.
436/1920	**9**	**WITHDRAWN PLANS** **RESOLVED** that withdrawal of application 15/01636/F be **NOTED**.
437/1920	**10**	**APPEAL** No amended plans to note.

Minute Number	Agenda item No	
438/1920	**11**	**NOTIFICATION OF PLANNING DECISIONS FROM CHERWELL DISTRICT COUNCIL** **RESOLVED** that Committee **NOTED** the planning decisions from Cherwell District Council **PD11/1920.**
439/1920	**12**	**FORWARD PLAN** **RESOLVED** that the Committee **NOTED** the forward plan:
440/1920	**13**	**DATE OF NEXT MEETING: Monday 20th April 2020 - 7pm not 7.30pm** **CLOSE OF MEETING: 9.00pm**

BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Monday 22 June 2020

Emergency Delegation – COVID-19

Mayor: Councillor Jason Slaymaker
07512 902386 Jason.slaymaker@bicester.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Samantha Shippen – Chief Officer
01869 252915 samantha.shippen@bicester.gov.uk

Ward Affected: All

1. Background

1.1 A report was written on 17 March 2020 and based on current information and guidance from the UK Government and World Health Organisation to be considered by Council at a Special Meeting scheduled for Monday 23rd March 2020. However in the intervening days between the report and the scheduled meeting, matters escalated with councillors advising that they were not comfortable in attending a "mass gathering" and eventually the Prime Minister announcing a "lockdown" which became effective on the day the Council was due to meet.

1.2 At that time, the Chief Officer had no option than to cancel the meeting following consultation with councillors. At the same time councillors indicated that they considered the Chief Officer to have powers under existing delegation and in addition indicated agreement with the proposal for emergency delegation as outlined in Appendix 2 of the report published in advance of the meeting, subject to the inclusion of Councillor Robert Nixon in the consultation group.

1.3 Clearly there was an acceptance of unique circumstances and advice from NALC was that councils should act to continue business as much as possible, with the realisation that any challenge would be via judicial review.

1.4 The three main priorities for the Council were:

- Ensuring the health and safety of staff, Councillors, volunteers, contractors and members of the public participating in Council activities
- Maintaining effective and lawful decision-making processes
- The continuing operation of essential services and contractual obligations.

1.5 The Chief Officer acted in accordance with the Council priorities throughout, consulting with the Chairman & Vice Chairman of Policy Committee, the "consultation group" as defined in Appendix 2 of report to Council for 23 March or with all councillors as she deemed appropriate throughout.

1.6 Council is now invited to endorse the actions of the Chief Officer as detailed in the attached Appendix 1.

2. Recommendation

The Council is recommended to **ENDORSE** the decisions of the Chief Officer under delegated authority during the period of restricted activity declared by the Government in respect of the Covid-19 virus as detailed in Appendix 1 of this report.

Agenda Item 7.

APPENDIX 1

Decisions taken by the Chief Officer during COVID-19

Date	**Details**
13/03/2020	Purchase of 3 laptops to enable staff to work from home. Cost £2,285 including set up, endpoint encryption and set up
19/03/2020	Instruction to office based staff to work from home
23/03/2020	Cancellation of Town Council meeting for 23/3/20
23/03/2020	Suspension of all council meetings until further notice
23/03/2020	Request to councillors to consider the details in the report circulated with the agenda for the meeting scheduled for 23/3/20 to confirm if they agree with the principles so the protocols could be implemented under Chief Officer's existing delegation
24/03/2020	Closure of play areas & Garth Park
24/03/2020	Instruction to Outdoor Team to go home until further notice. Casual retained on existing hours but not required to attend work.
25/03/2020	Diversion of office telephone to a single mobile number
25/03/2020	cancellation of all planned events to end of June 2020
25/03/2020	Establish a COVID-19 Emergency Grant Fund of up to £20,000 in grants of £500 with funding from general reserve
02/04/2020	Closure of cemetery, introduction of a new burial procedure
06/04/2020	Recall of Outdoor Team to work in closed areas
08/04/2020	Deferral of rental invoices for tenants
08/04/2020	Approval of COVID Grants round 1 £1,950
09/04/2020	Cancellation of May 2020 Garth Gazette with half payment as retainer to avoid affecting supplier income
09/04/2020	VE Day celebrations to be done virtually, promoting stay at home in line with govt guidance
09/04/2020	Approval of COVID Grants round 2 £1,150
19/04/2020	Planning decisions (presented to Planning Committee 16/6/20 for endorsement)
20/04/2020	Re-opening of Cemetery other than working hours on Friday
22/04/2020	Councillor allowances to be paid at 2019/20 rates
27/04/2020	Approval of COVID Grants round 3 £2,170
05/05/2020	allotment inspections to be carried out by Outdoor Team Leader only, contrary to Policy GP20. (*It should be noted that two complaints were received from allotment representatives)*
07/05/2020	Approval of COVID Grants round 4 £1,165.18
13/05/2020	Ridge and Partners PO placed for Garth House PPM year 1 to progress contract for urgent works value up to £10,000. Also refocussed agreed Stables study to become a site Masterplan within costs already approved by Policy Committee.
14/05/2020	Agreed reopening of Tennis club with appropriate RA
20/05/2020	set up virtual meetings tests for councillor & officers and set schedule to start meetings with Planning on 16 June
23/05/2020	Agreed reopening of Bowls Club with appropriate RA
27/05/2020	Upgraded councillor Office 365 accounts to include Teams
27/05/2020	Agreed reopening of Bicester Green
03/06/2020	Proposal for "low key" Armed Forces Flag Raising virtually

Agenda Item 8

BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Monday 22 June 2020

Meetings & Committees

Mayor: Councillor Jason Slaymaker
07512 902386 Jason.slaymaker@bicester.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Samantha Shippen – Chief Officer
01869 252915 samantha.shippen@bicester.gov.uk

Ward Affected: All

1. Background

1.1 Ordinarily, the Council would at its Annual Meeting in May, set the calendar of meetings for the forthcoming year, elect a Mayor and Deputy Mayor, appoint committees and their respective chairmen & vice chairmen.

1.2 As all meetings were suspended from 23 March due to COVID-19 restrictions and under The Coronavirus Act 2020 s78 and the associated The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ("the 2020 Regulations") authority has been given to cancel annual meetings until May 2021 or such time as the Council may determine, the annual meeting has not taken place as it usually would.

1.3 From 4 April 2020 until 7 May 2021 (or until such other time as the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government determines, parish and town councils have also been given provision under The Coronavirus Act 2020 s78 and the associated The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ("the *2020 Regulations")* to hold legal virtual meetings in order that council business can be maintained.

1.4 The purpose of this report is to enable the Council to determine its position in relation to the Annual Meeting and therefore the position of Mayor & Deputy Mayor; to adopt a Virtual Meeting Procedure; to approve the calendar of meetings; and to formally appoint a Chairman & Vice-Chairman of Finance Committee.

2. Virtual Meeting Procedure

2.1 Given that at present, the provision to hold meetings virtually is time limited and in order to provide context, procedure and guidance without changing Standing Orders, the Chief Officer has drafted a Virtual Meeting Procedure upon which councillors have been consulted informally.

2.2 The draft procedure is attached at Appendix 1 for adoption.

3. Annual Meeting and Election of Mayor & Deputy Mayor

3.1 The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 allows for the Annual Meeting to not have taken place in May, which of course it did not in this council.

3.2 The Council is requested to confirm that an annual meeting of the council will not take place in 2020/21 or to set a date at a later time for such a meeting.

3.3 S4(2) allows that "where an appointment would otherwise be made or require to be made at an annual meeting of a local authority, such appointment continues until the next annual meeting of the authority or until such time as that authority may determine". Therefore dependent upon the outcome of the request at 3.2, Councillor Jason Slaymaker will remain as Mayor and Councillor Nick Mawer as Deputy Mayor until the same date.

4. Calendar of Meetings

4.1 Council is requested to approve the calendar of meetings attached at Appendix 2.

4.2 As is usually the case, the Chief Officer may cancel meetings or arrange additional meetings should business require.

5. Chairman & Vice Chairman of Finance Committee

5.1 As Members are aware, Sean Gaul resigned as a councillor in February which left a vacancy as Chairman of Finance Committee. As per usual protocol, where the Chairman is not present, the Vice Chairman takes the Chair which was the intention to the Annual Meeting of Council.

5.2 In the absence of the Annual Meeting in 2020, Council is invited to formally appoint Councillor Alex Thrupp, the current Vice Chairman as Chairman of Finance Committee and elect another member as Vice Chairman.

6. Recommendation

The Council is recommended to

1. **Approve the Virtual Meeting Procedure (GP19) for review in May 2021;**
2. **Confirm the next Annual Meeting of Council will take place in May 2021;**
3. **Subject to the outcome of 2, to note that Councillor Jason Slaymaker will remain as Mayor and Councillor Nick Mawer as Deputy Mayor until May 2021;**
4. **Approve the calendar of meetings for 2020/21;**
5. **Appoint Councillor Alex Thrupp as Chairman of Finance Committee;**
6. **To elect a Vice Chairman of Finance Committee**.

Agenda Item 8
Appendix 1

BICESTER
TOWN COUNCIL

BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Virtual Meeting Procedure
GP19

From 4 April 2020 until 7 May 2021 (or until such other time as the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government determines, parish and town councils have been given provision under The Coronavirus Act 2020 and the associated *The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 ("the 2020 Regulations")* to hold legal virtual meetings in order that council business can be maintained.

A variety of different platforms including Microsoft Teams, Google Hangouts or Zoom are available.

Following assessment by the Chief Officer, Bicester Town Council will use the Zoom platform in order that the meeting can be made publicly available without the need for a specific subscription e.g Google account or Microsoft Office account. The Chief Officer will host the meeting using the town council's subscription to Zoom Pro which is being subscribed to for a year to June 2021. The Chief Officer may appoint co-hosts as deemed appropriate, these will usually be the chairman & Vice-chairman of the meeting and other staff members.

The meetings will be formal Town Council or committee meetings and will be held using the agenda and summons which the Chief Officer has published. It will be governed by the usual Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and associated policies.

A code and link to the virtual meeting will be published on the agenda which will be published on the Town Council website (publication on the noticeboard will NOT be undertaken while Garth House is closed as the public would not be able to see it), in order that the public are able to attend, just as they would be able to attend a meeting in the Council Chamber. Members of the public will need to contact the council for the password.

Attendees will also have the ability to dial in to the meeting via telephone.

Attendees will collect in the Zoom 'waiting room' prior to the meeting. As the 'Host', the Chief Officer, or any co-host, will have the ability to mute or remove anyone deemed a nuisance at the Chairman's request.

All attendees will be set to 'mute' on entry to the meeting and only the Mayor (Committee Chairman) will remain unmuted. All other participants, if they wish to speak will be invited to unmute. The Chief Officer will have the ability to mute anyone who forgets.

All attendees will display their name in order for the public to be able to identify them, just as they would at an in-person meeting. Councillors will use the prefix "Councillor" so they may be easily identified. Staff will display their job title.

If a councillor has declared an interest in an item on the agenda, they will be placed in the waiting room for the duration of the agenda item. Once the item has been concluded, they will be re-admitted.

In order to better protect participants from malware, the 'chat', file sharing and screen sharing function may be disabled during the meeting. If necessary, the Chief Officer can display any documents required using the 'share screen' function.

As with meetings in the Council Chamber, members of the public will be given the opportunity to speak during public participation, but will not be permitted, unless invited to do so by the Mayor/Chairman, to speak at other times.

Anyone wanting to speak should "raise their hand" by waving in the Reactions section so that the Mayor (Committee Chairman) can see. Both the Deputy Mayor (or Vice Chairman) and Chief Officer will assist the Mayor/Chairman.

Members of the public must introduce themselves if they wish to speak.

Meeting participants may wish to protect their personal environment by choosing a virtual background in the Zoom Settings 'Virtual Background' or alternatively should consider what can be seen behind them while on camera.

Meeting participants shall be visibly clothed during the meeting.

Alcohol should not be consumed during the meeting in line with legal requirements for council meetings.

Approved: *date*
Review: May 2021

Agenda Item 8
Appendix 2

BICESTER
TOWN COUNCIL

CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2020/21

	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3	Cycle 4	Cycle 5	Cycle 6
Council	Annual Meeting 11 May 18 May	22 June (incl Annual Governance & Accounts)	1 Sept (T)	23 Nov	18 Jan (incl budget)	8 March
Environment Committee	26 May (T)	21 July (T)	28 Sept	30 Nov **(Budget)**	25 Jan	22 March
Finance Committee	8 June (Year End)	27 July	6 Oct (T)	9 Dec (W) **(Budget)**	16 Feb (T)	29 March (Incl Grant Aid)
Planning	12 May (T) 16 June (T)	13 July 10 August	14 Sept 12 Oct 9 Nov	15 Dec (T) 11 Jan	8 Feb	15 March 19 April 7.30pm
Policy Committee	2 June (T)	24 August	3 Nov (T) **(Budget)**	21 Dec	2 March (T)	26 April 7.30
Traffic Advisory @ 2.00pm THURSDAY	28 May	30 July	1 Oct	26 Nov	28 Jan	1 April
Personnel Sub-Committee	27 May (W)	3 August	26 Oct	1 Dec (T)**(Budget)**		23 Feb (T)
Events Working Group WEDNESDAY	13 May	8 July	16 Sept 18 Nov **(Budget)**	13 January		10 March

1. All meetings commence at 7.00pm unless otherwise stated
2. Other than the Annual Meeting of the Council, meetings will take place in the Council Chamber at The Garth, Launton Road, Bicester
2. In 2021 the Annual Town Meeting will take place on Tuesday 30th March
3. In 2021 the Annual Meeting of the Council will take place on Monday 10th May at a venue to be advised
4. Changes to meeting dates, times and venue may occasionally occur, the Chief Officer has the authority to cancel or rearrange meeting dates and venue if required.
5. Working Party, Task and Finish Groups and Sub-committee meetings will be convened as required

Agenda Item 9

BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Monday 22nd June 2020

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) 2019/20

Mayor: Councillor Jason Slaymaker
Jason.slaymaker@bicester.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Samantha Shippen – Chief Officer
01869 252915 samantha.shippen@bicester.gov.uk

Ward Affected: All

1. Background

1.1 The Council is required by Regulations to complete an AGAR at the end of each financial year in accordance with proper practices.

1.2 For this Council, having an income or expenditure greater than £25,000 requires a Part 3 return.

2. Annual Governance and Accountability Return

The Annual Return comes in three parts. The annual internal audit report, the annual governance statement (Section 1), accounting statement (Section 2) and External Auditor report and certificate (section 3). The whole document is attached at Appendix 1.

3. Annual Internal Audit Report

The Internal Auditor has concluded his review for the year and attached at Appendix 2 is his full report and at page 3 of Appendix 1 his Annual Return Report. Council should consider his full report noting that there are no recommendations therein which should be responded to.

4. Annual Governance Statement.

4.1 Regulations require that Section 1 – the annual governance statement is considered and approved by Council, this involves responding to each of the nine questions, having considered what the council has done throughout the year. The relevant section is at Page 4 of Appendix 1 to this report.

4.2 The Chief Officer can advise that the answers to 1-8 can be yes, to 9 is N/A. The report of the Internal Auditor verifies these responses. Councillors should be aware that it is the responsibility of Council to answer these questions and they should have sufficient information to be able to verify, the Chief Officer will answer any queries in this respect should councillors have any.

5. Accounting Statement

5.1 Section 2 the accounting statements may only be approved after section 1. Attached at page 5 of Appendix 1 is the Accounting Statement for 2019/20 and Appendix 3 is the background paper detailing the accounts.

5.2 These would normally be examined and recommended by the Finance Committee. However, as the Finance Committee has not met, it falls to Council to scrutinise and approve the accounting statements. The Chief Officer can be approached ahead of the meeting should there be any information required for the meeting.

6. External Auditor Report and Certificate

Section 3 is included at page 6 of Appendix 2 for information only. This will be completed in due course and upon receipt will be reported to Council.

7. Exercise of Public Rights

7.1 Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, additional time of two months has been allowed for both the approval and inspection of accounts in 2020.

7.2 As accounts are already prepared, it is the intention of the Chief Officer as RFO to stick with the usual timescales.

7.3 The Chief Officer intends to advertise public rights for inspection to run from Wednesday 1 July to Tuesday 11 August. As any person wishing to inspect will need an appointment, the Chief Officer will manage this in line with social distancing and risk management principles.

8. Signatures

Normally, the documents would be signed at the meeting. Given that the meeting is being held virtually, the Chief Officer will arrange for “wet signatures” which are still required, from the Mayor after the meeting but in order to comply with publication and submission.

9. Recommendation

The Council is recommended to

1. **Receive the report of the Internal Auditor for 2019/20;**
2. **Confirm its responses to the Annual Governance Statement for 2019/20;**
3. **Approve the Accounting Statement for 2019/20;**
4. **Note the dates for the exercise of public rights.**

Agenda Item 9 Appendix 1

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/20 Part 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities*:

- **where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or**
- **where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:**
  - **are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or**
  - **have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)**

Guidance notes on completing Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/20

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
   - The **Annual Internal Audit Report** is completed by the authority's internal auditor.
   - **Sections 1 and 2** are to be completed and approved by the authority.
   - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published **before 1 July 2020.**
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2020.** Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
   - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
   - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2020
   - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
   - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
   - Annual Internal Audit Report 2019/20

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability **Section1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate** will be returned to the authority by email or post.

Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on a publicly accessible website:

Before 1 July 2020 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2019/20**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2019/20**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2020 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review.

It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

**for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.*

Guidance notes on completing Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/20

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this Annual Governance and Accountability Return. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty), and is properly signed and dated. Where amendments are made by the authority to the AGAR after it has been approved by the authority and before it has been reviewed by the external auditor, the Chairman and RFO should initial the amendments and if necessary republish the amended AGAR and recommence the period for the exercise of public rights. If the AGAR contains unapproved or unexplained amendments, it may be returned and additional costs will be incurred.
- The authority **should** receive and note the annual internal audit report if possible before approving the annual governance statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2020.
- Do not send the external auditor any information not specifically requested. However, **you must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chairman, and provide relevant email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the Annual Governance and Accountability Return covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements **(Section 2, page 5)**. An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the external auditor has to review unsolicited information, or receives an incomplete bank reconciliation, or variances are not fully explained, additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2019) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2020).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the period for the exercise of public rights. From the commencement date for a single period of 30 consecutive working days, the approved accounts and accounting records can be inspected. Whatever period the RFO sets it **must** include a common inspection period – during which the accounts and accounting records of all smaller authorities must be available for public inspection – of the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2020.**

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?		
	Has all additional information requested, including **the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights**, been provided for the external auditor?		
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?		
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?		
Section 2	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chairman of the approval meeting?		
	Has an explanation of significant variations from last year to this year been published?		
	Has the bank reconciliation as at **31 March 2020** been reconciled to Box 8?		
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?		
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? **NB:** do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.		

***Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices*, can be downloaded from www.nalc.gov.uk or from www.ada.org.uk**

Annual Internal Audit Report 2019/20

Bicester Town Council

This authority's internal auditor, acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with relevant procedures and controls to be in operation **during** the financial year ended 31 March 2020.

The internal audit for 2019/20 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Agreed? Please choose one of the following		
	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. IF the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2018/19, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. *(If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2018/19 AGAR tick "not covered")*			✓
L. The authority has demonstrated that during summer 2019 it correctly provided for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		

	Yes	No	Not applicable
M. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken: 11/10/2019 19/05/2020

Name of person who carried out the internal audit: Mark Mulberry BA (Hons) FCCA CTA

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit: M Mulberry

Date: 19/05/2020

*If the response is 'no' you must include a note to state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned, or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2019/20

We acknowledge as the members of:

Bicester Town Council

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2020, that:

	Agreed			
	Yes	No*		'Yes' means that this authority:
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.				*prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.*
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.				*made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.*
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.				*has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.*
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.				*during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.*
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.				*considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.*
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.				*arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.*
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.				*responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.*
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.				*disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.*
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A	*has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.*

*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

and recorded as minute reference:

Signed by the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chairman

Clerk

Other information required by the Transparency Codes (not part of Annual Governance Statement)
Authority web address

www.bicester.gov.uk

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2019/20 for

Bicester Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2019 £	31 March 2020 £	*Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.*
1. Balances brought forward	**2,914,442**	**3,024,147**	*Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.*
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	**1,399,420**	**1,468,070**	*Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.*
3. (+) Total other receipts	**282,378**	**269,693**	*Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.*
4. (-) Staff costs	**407,880**	**372,355**	*Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.*
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	**25,726**	**11,226**	*Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).*
6. (-) All other payments	**1,138,487**	**991,269**	*Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).*
7. (=) Balances carried forward	**3,024,147**	**3,387,060**	*Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).*
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	**3,052,538**	**3,437,619**	*The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March –* ***To agree with bank reconciliation.***
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	**3,687,572**	**3,646,393**	*The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.*
10. Total borrowings	**165,750**	**160,875**	*The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).*

	Yes	No	
11. (For Local Councils Only) Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			*The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.*
		✓	*N.B. The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.*

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2020 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

Date 19|6|2020.

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

as recorded in minute reference:

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2019/20

In respect of Bicester Town Council

1 Respective responsibilities of the body and the auditor

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2020; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

Our responsibility is to review Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with guidance issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General (see note below). Our work **does not** constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would do.

2 External auditor report 2019/20

(Except for the matters reported below)* on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. (*delete as appropriate).

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

3 External auditor certificate 2019/20

We certify/do not certify* that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2020.

*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name

ENTER NAME OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

External Auditor Signature SIGNATURE REQUIRED Date DD/MM/YY

*Note: the NAO issued guidance applicable to external auditors' work on limited assurance reviews in Auditor Guidance Note AGN/02. The AGN is available from the NAO website (www.nao.org.uk)

Agenda Item 9
Appendix 2

MULBERRY & CO
Chartered Certified Accountants
Registered Auditors
& Chartered Tax Advisors

9 Pound Lane
Godalming
Surrey, GU7 1BX

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w www.mulberryandco.co.uk

Our Ref: MARK/BIC001

Mrs S Shippen
Bicester Town Council
The Garth
Launton Road
Bicester
Oxfordshire
OX26 6PS

19th May 2020

Dear Sam

Re: Bicester Town Council
Internal Audit Year Ended 31st March 2020

Following completion of our interim internal audit on the 11th October and our final audit on the 19th May we enclose our report for your kind attention and presentation to the Council. The audit was conducted in accordance with current practices and guidelines and testing was risk based. Whilst we have not tested all transactions, our samples have where appropriate covered the entire year to date. Where appropriate **recommendations for future action are shown in bold text and summarised in the tables at the end of the report. The recommendations from the interim visit have been answered in the table at the end of the report.**

The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 require smaller authorities, each financial year, to conduct a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control and prepare an annual governance statement in accordance with proper practices in relation to accounts. The internal audit reports should therefore be made available to all members to support and inform them when they considering the authority's approval of the annual governance statement.

Interim Audit – Summary Findings
At the interim visit we reviewed and performed tests on the following areas:

- Review of the Financial Regulations & Standing Orders
- Review of the Risk Assessments
- Review of the Budgeting Process
- Proper Bookkeeping – review of the use of the accounts package.
- Review of salaries
- Review of fixed asset register

It is our opinion that the systems and internal procedures at Bicester Town Council are well established, and followed. The clerk is very experienced and it is clear the council takes governance, policies and procedures very seriously and I am pleased to report that overall the systems and procedures you have in place are fit for purpose.

I would like to thank Sam team for their assistance and whilst my report may contain recommendations to change these are not indicative of any significant failings, but rather are pointers to improving upon an already well ordered system.

Final Audit – Summary Finding
At the final visit we reviewed and performed tests on the following areas:

- Review of annual accounts & AGAR
- Review of bank reconciliation
- Review of income
- Review of information for external auditor

I am of the opinion that the annual accounts and AGAR are ready to be signed off by council and the external auditor and that the AGAR is a true and fair reflection of the financial transaction of that of the council for the year ended 31st March 2020. Accordingly, I have signed off the AGAR.

A. BOOKS OF ACCOUNT (INTERIM AUDIT)
Internal audit requirement
Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.

The Council continues to uses RBS as a day to day accounting package, this is a tried and tested industry specific package, there are plans for the system to be upgraded to the new version, therefore I make no recommendation to change.

The system is used daily to report on and record the financial transactions of that of the Council. There are three users with their own individual logons.

- The administration officer (finance) is responsible for the purchase & sales ledger, cashbook and bank reconciliations.
- Chief Officer
- Consultant Accountant

All users have to change their passwords circa 90 days to access the local machine. Each user then required to logon to hosted Citrix environment, after which login for the finance package. This provides sufficient levels of access security. There is a process to remove leavers from the system so that their remote access is disabled at the point of leaving.

Every month, a month end hard close down is performed by an outside contractor, various reports are printed and filed in hard copy, these include but are not limited to; Income and expenditure against budget, cashbooks, bank reconciliations and other reports as fit. The month end reporting is then reported to the Chief Officer and in turn a report is taken to finance committee.

A review of the cashbook shows that all data fields are being entered, the hard copy reports are easy to read and logically filed. My audit testing showed that supporting documentation could be easily located from records. I make no recommendation to change in this system.

I tested opening balances as at 1/4/19 and confirmed they could be agreed back to the audited accounts for 2018/19.

The Council is VAT registered and the last VAT return was for the quarter ended 30th September 2019, which shows a refund position which will be received in October 2019. This also indicates that the council is up to date with its postings on the financial package.

Overall, I have the impression that the accounting systems are well ordered and routinely maintained and as such I make no recommendation to change.

I am of the opinion that the control assertion of "Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year" has been met.

B. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS, GOVERNANCE & PAYMENTS (INTERIM & FINAL AUDIT)

Internal audit requirement

This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.

Interim Audit

Check the publication & minuting of the prior year audited AGAR and notice of conclusion of audit.

External auditors report was not qualified in 2018/19. This was reported to finance committee in October 2019 and will be taken to council in November 2019. Evidence was also noted in the minutes of the internal auditor's report being reviewed and accepted in the June 2019 meeting.

The notice of conclusion of audit and audited AGAR have been posted to the council website in accordance with proper practices.

Confirm by sample testing that councillors sign statutory office forms

I confirmed by sample testing that Councillors sign "Acceptance of Office" forms, register of members interests and acceptance to receive information by electronic means, all in line with regulations.

Confirm that the Council is compliant with the relevant transparency code.

The Council is required by law to follow the 2015 Transparency Code, and a review of the website shows the code is being followed in full.

Confirm that the Council is compliant with the GDPR.

The council has a privacy statement and policies compliant with GDPR. Data subjects are made aware of the use of data and their rights and have to tick a box to accept they have seen and read the relevant notices.

Confirm that the Council meets regularly throughout the year

The council has the following committees:

- Full Council; meets circa bi monthly
- Environment; meets bi monthly
- Policy – bi monthly
- Planning; meets 4 weekly
- Finance meets bi monthly
- Personnel (Subcommittee) quarterly

There are also a number of working parties and groups which meets as and when necessary to cover specific tasks each committee has spending powers.

Check that agendas for meetings are published giving 3 clear days' notice.

The Chief Officer was able to demonstrate that at least 3 clear days' notice is given on both web site and hard copy agendas. Whilst we have not tested every single committee and council meeting there was no evidence of non-compliance.

Final Audit: I reviewed the agenda for the March 2020 Full council meeting and can conform the proper notice was given.

Check the draft minutes of the last meeting(s) are on the council's website

A review of the web site shows that minutes are generally posted – however at the audit date it was clear this needed updating for the meetings held over the summer. It was also noted the annual meeting minutes were also missing from the hard copy folder.

Final Audit: I reviewed the agenda for the March 2020 Full council meeting and can conform the proper notice was given. I also reviewed the Finance committee minutes for December 2019 which we approved in February. These show consideration and approval of payments and bank reconciliations.

Confirm that the Parish Council's Standing Orders have been reviewed within the last 12 months.

Standing Orders were last reviewed in May 2018. These will be reviewed prior to the year end.

Final Audit: These will be updated in 2020/21 year.

Confirm that the Parish Council has adopted and recently reviewed Financial Regulations.

Financial regulations are based on the NALC model and were last reviewed in May 2017. These are currently in the process of being updated.

Final audit. These were updated and reapproved in 18 November 2019

Check that the council's Financial Regulations are being routinely followed.

The de-minimis limit recorded in the Financial Regulations for the competitive purchase of items and services is as listed below.

- £60,000 + Tender Process
- £12,500 - £60,000 3 quotations are required.
- £2,500 - £12,500 – strive to get 3 estimates
- 0 - £2,500 – power to spend

Financial regulation 2.2 deals with bank reconciliations, the council is performing a monthly bank reconciliation for all accounts.

Financial regulation 4 deals with budgetary control and authority to spend. The council has thresholds in place at which authorisations to spend must be obtained.

The council uses a manual Purchase Order (PO) system for the majority of expenditure items and has a strong procedure in place to ensure that all expenditure is authorised in line with financial regulations

1. Expenditure requirement is identified and notified to appropriate manager/administration officer

2. The administration officer completes PO which is copied in triplicate and is passed to either the Chief Officer or Operations Manager for signature approval. PO is sometimes annotated with notes re budget etc.

3. Administration Offer places order for goods or services.

4. Supplier Invoices are received and passed to Administration Officer for processing
    - A pink slip is attached to each and every supplier invoice.

- Pink copy PO– attached to supplier invoice

5. Supplier Invoice passed to Chief officer or operations manager for approval.

6. Invoice then posted to finance package.

7. Report run on finance package to detail invoices due for payment. Invoices cross checked against report

8. Payment set up by Administration Officer on the on-line banking system and batch listing printed in hard copy and sent digitally for councillors to review. The hard copy is signed by councillors at a later date.

9. Chief officer cross checks batch payment list per bank with payment list from the finance package and authorises payments and signs the hard copy batch report.

The Chief Officer was able to demonstrate that budget monitoring reporting to members is completed on a monthly basis. Reporting is comprehensive, and is minuted appropriately

Financial Regulation 5 deals with authorisation of payments. The minutes show authorisation of payments lists in accordance with regulations.

Financial regulation 6 deals with making payments. The council makes payments by cheque and direct debit, credit card and on-line banking:

- Cheques must be signed by three individuals, two councillors and an officer. Audit testing showed cheque stubs to be initialled twice.

- interbank transfers can be made by the chief officer and finance officer

- Internet payments are made via the bank website, the bank is set such that the originator cannot authorise the same transaction, so there is a natural segregation of duties and control in place. Admin changes must be authorised by an officer.

- Credit Card, the chief officer has a credit card – transactions are reported monthly in the usual manner. Pin number not known to anyone other than Chief Officer.

Confirm all section 137 expenditure meets the guidelines & does not exceed the annual per elector limit of £8.12 per elector.
The council has no S.137 expenditure, because they have the power GPC. I confirmed that the council was still eligible to claim this.

Confirm that checks of the accounts are made by a councillor.
Throughout the tests completed above – I have noted councillor approval at all stages. I am of the opinion that sufficient internal reviews are made.

I am of the opinion the council is following its own regulations and that any changes to financial regulations are to be considered minor and no indicative of errors in the system. I am therefore of the opinion that the control assertion "This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for", has been met.

Final Audit

I have reviewed the expenditure list which is broadly similar to the prior year after accounting for one of expenditure items. I also reviewed the nominal ledger for evidence of netting off and significant journal entries, the individual entries were in accordance with the heading under which they were posted and corrections/transfers where evident were bonafide. We found no evidence of breaches of financial regulations in the sample testing completed.

At the year end creditors were £152,021, (2019: £205,318). The creditors are further broken down into:

- Creditors £17,535 2019: £68,794
- Retentions Due £9,523 2019: £9,523
- Mayors contra account £nil 2019: £2,945
- Accruals £117,440 2019: £113,398
- PAYE Etc £5,772 2019: £6,255
- Receipts in advance £1,750 2019: £4,356
- Suspense £nil 2019: £48.43

I am of the opinion that the control assertion "This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for", has been met.

C. RISK MANAGEMENT & INSURANCE (INTERIM AUDIT)

Internal audit requirement

This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.

Interim Audit

The Council undertakes a full risk assessment that covers operational and financial risks, this was taken to council in March 2019. The tabular format is easy to read and understand.

I have confirmed that the Council has a valid insurance certificate. The Council reviews its insurance requirements as part of the renewal process. Money and asset cover appear adequate.

In respect of motor insurance, drivers are checked annually.

We discussed assertion 8 of the AGAR and whether or not this had any impact on the council.

"We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements."

I am of the opinion that the control objective of "This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.", has been met.

D. BUDGET, PRECEPT & RESERVES (INTERIM & FINAL AUDIT)

Internal audit requirement

The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.

Interim Audit

I confirmed that the 2019-20 budget and precept setting process will be fully started in the next few weeks. The council has a three year forecast and uses this as a basis for its budget preparations.

At month 6 the council's reportable financial position was as follows:

Income	£1,635,586	(Budgeted £1,682,541)
Expenditure	£670,632	(Budgeted £1,682,541)

This is a balanced budget; however, within this, amounts have been set aside for reserves and future projects. It is therefore highly unlikely that the council will overspend its budgets this year.

The council has £2.3m of reserves and scope to invest in the community.

I am of the opinion that the control objective of "The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.", has been met.

Final Audit
The council has £3,387,060 of total reserves of which £2,658,005 are earmarked reserves and £729,055 are general reserves. In respect of general reserves, rule of thumb calculations would suggest that 50% of precept as adjusted for local conditions would be reasonable being circa £734k. I was pleased to see the detailed working and council verification of the reserves working. I am of the opinion that general reserves are reasonable and properly reported on.

The earmarked reserves are considerable; however, these are appropriate for the projects the council wants to progress and will enable them to commence without need for PWLB loans, saving the council and tax payer the future interest cost.

I reviewed the December 2019 Finance Committee minutes and can confirm actual versus budget was reported in detail along with detailed reserves explanations and precept requirements. I am under no doubt the council has followed proper practices in preparing and reviewing the 2020/21 budget.

I am of the opinion that the control objective of "The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.", has been met.

E. INCOME (INTERIM & FINAL AUDIT)
Internal audit requirement
Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.

Annual charges were last reviewed in January & March 2019.

The precept has been received in full and correctly posted to the accounts – this agreed to the precept application.

The Local Tax Support grant was agreed to bank statements and the budget.

I sampled VAT transactions for Zero, Standard and Exempted rated items. VAT has been properly calculated on invoices. I have one observation. I was noted that all Mayoral items are classed as zero rated with the input tax collected – which enables more to be given to charity each year. I would like the council to consider the amounts of VAT reclaimed each year to ensure that this does not become excessive because if VAT is not charged there is an argument that the input tax should not be reclaimed.

Final Audit
The precept income was tested to remittance advice notes and application for payment. The local tax support grant has been correctly shown in box 3 of the AGAR. There are no errors to report.

I have reviewed the income list which is broadly similar to the prior year after accounting for one off items. I also reviewed the nominal ledger for evidence of netting off and significant journal entries, the individual entries were in accordance with the heading under which they were posted and corrections/transfers where evident were bonafide. We found no evidence of breaches of financial regulations in the sample testing completed.

At the year-end date he council has £101,462 (2019: £176,928) of debtors. The debtors are further broken down into:

- Misc. debtors £13,733 2019: £1,667
- Accrued income £nil 2019: £14,550
- Sales Ledger £25,729 2019: £79,415
- VAT £27,177 2019: £42,785
- Prepayments £30,025 2019: £38,510
- Mayors Contra acc. £4,798 2019: £nil

I am of the opinion that the control objective of "Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.", has been met.

F. PETTY CASH (INTERIM AUDIT)
Internal audit requirement
The council has a float of £250. This was reviewed at the audit date, it is clear this is used for small sundries and is not significant or material.

The council has a small float of c. £200. This was reviewed at the interim audit date, it is clear this is used for small sundries and is not significant or material.

Petty cash expenditure is presented monthly to the finance committee for approval.

I reviewed the petty cash spreadsheets for February and March 2020 – these were for small office sundries and the closing balance of petty cash is £211.87 which agrees to the cash and investment reconciliation.

I am of the opinion the control objective of "Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.", has been met.

G. PAYROLL (INTERIM & FINAL AUDIT)
Internal audit requirement
Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.

Interim Audit
The council uses an external firm who uses the Iris payroll package to calculate the tax and national insurance. The council has fulfilled its obligations in respect of auto-enrolment and uses LGPS.

All Council employees are paid through the payroll for all Council work undertaken. No employees are paid separately for any other Council work undertaken. Casual labour payments are correctly recorded with a temp agency used. Councillors were paid allowances in June via the payroll.

PAYE liabilities have been paid on time via the Payroll Bureau.

I am of the opinion that salaries are correctly stated on the AGAR and that the control object of "Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.", has been met.

Final Audit
The amounts shown on the AGAR, were reconcilable to the payroll records, there were no errors.

I am of the opinion that salaries are correctly stated on the AGAR and that the control object of "Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.", has been met.

H. ASSETS AND INVESTMENTS (INTERIM & FINAL AUDIT)

Internal audit requirement
Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.

Interim Audit
The council has detailed fixed asset registered maintained on excel. These are working documents and clearly show the movement of assets.

I was pleased to note that fixed assets stock takes will be commenced before the year end.

I am of the opinion that the control objective of "Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.", has been met.

Final Audit
The loan interest and capital repayments were agreed to PWLB debt management letters and the closing balance to the end of year statement letter. There were no errors.

The Council does not hold any long term investments i.e. over 1 year. Any addition to the asset register is normally with a cost value greater than £1,000.

The fixed asset register has been maintained in an Excel spreadsheet and agreed to the AGAR. The asset register was up to date with all relevant assets as at the current financial year end.

I am of the opinion that the control objective of "Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.", has been met.

I. BANK & CASH (INTERIM & FINAL AUDIT)

Internal audit requirement
Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.

At the interim audit date the council had a reconciled bank position which has been signed in accordance with financial regulations and will be reported to finance committee in October 2019.

The council has eight bank accounts, together with petty cash. None of the accounts are long term investments and as such do not need to be disclosed in box 9 of the AGAR. Reconciliations for all bank accounts are carried out regularly.

I am of the opinion that bank and cash balances are properly shown on the AGAR and that the control objective of "Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.", has been met.

Final Audit
At the year-end date the council had a reconciled bank position. I have reviewed the reconciliation there were no errors.

The council has eight active bank accounts, together with petty cash. None of the accounts are long term investments and as such do not need to be disclosed in box 9 of the AGAR.

I am of the opinion that bank and cash balances are properly shown on the AGAR and that the control objective of "Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.", has been met.

J. YEAR END ACCOUNTS (FINAL AUDIT)

Internal audit requirement

Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.

The council, at its meeting to sign off the year-end accounts, must discuss the Annual Governance Statement and record this activity in the minutes of the meeting. Based on the internal audit finding, I recommend using the table below as the basis for that discussion. THIS MUST BE A SEPARATE AGENDA ITEM TO THE SIGNING OF THE ANNUAL ACCOUNTS.

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement

	Annual Governance Statement	*'Yes' means that this authority*	Suggested response based on evidence
1	We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	*prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.*	**YES** – income & expenditure accounts follow latest Accounts and Audit Regulations and practitioners guide recommendations.
2	We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	*made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.*	**YES** – there is regular reporting of financial transactions and accounting summaries, offering the opportunity for scrutiny.
3	We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	*has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.*	**YES** – the Clerk is experienced and advises the council in respect of its legal powers.
4	We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	*during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.*	**YES** – the requirements and timescales for 2018/19 year-end were followed.
5	We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	*considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.*	**YES** – the council has a risk management scheme and appropriate external insurance.
6	We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	*arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.*	**YES** – the council has appointed an independent and competent internal auditor has completed two audits during the year.
7	We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external	*responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.*	**YES** – where matters are raised, action taken by council

	audit.		is recorded in the minutes.
8	We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and. Where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	*disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.*	**YES** – no matters were raised during the internal audit visits.
9	Trust funds including charitable – In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/asset(s), including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	*has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.*	**N/A** – the council has no trusts.

Section 2 – Accounting Statements

Agar Box Number		2018/19	2019/20	Auditor Notes
1	Balances brought forward	2,914,442	3,024,147	Agrees to 2019 cfwd
2	Precept or Rates and Levies	1,399,420	1,468,070	Agrees to third party evidence provided to auditor
3	Total other receipts	282,378	269,693	Agrees to underlying records
4	Staff costs	407,880	372,355	Agrees to underlying records
5	Loan interest/capital repayments	25,726	11,226	Agrees to PWLB statements
6	All other Payments	1,138,487	991,269	Agrees to underlying records with £1 rounding
7	Balances carried forward	3,024,147	3,387,060	Casts correctly agrees to balance sheet
8	Total value of cash and short term investments	3,052,538	3,437,619	Agrees to reconciliation
9	Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	3,687,572	3,646,393	Agrees to register
10	Total borrowings	165,750	160,875	Agrees to third party evidence provided to auditor – maturity date 17/12/52
11	For Local Councils Only) Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	YES	NO ✓	No trusts

The year-end accounts have been correctly prepared on the income & expenditure basis with the box 7 & 8 reconciliation properly completed.

The AGAR correctly casts and cross casts and the comparatives have been correctly copied over from the 2018-19 AGAR.

The variance analysis is required because there are variances greater than 15% and £500. This has been prepared on a summary table basis, which in itself is not incorrect; however, **I would recommend a little more explanatory detail is given to pre-empt further questions from the external auditor.**

I am of the opinion the AGAR will be ready for submission to the external auditor within statutory time scales and that the control objective of "Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.", has been met.

K. LIMITED ASSURANCE REVIEW (FINAL AUDIT)

Internal audit requirement

IF the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2018/19, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2018/19 AGAR tick "not covered")

Not applicable.

L: EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS - INSPECTION OF ACCOUNTS (FINAL AUDIT)

Internal audit requirement

The authority has demonstrated that during summer 2019 it correctly provided for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

Due to the Covid 19 outbreak, the statutory deadlines have been changed as follows:

The publication date for final, audited, accounts will move from the 30 September to 30 November 2020 for all local authority bodies. To give local authorities more flexibility, the requirement for the public inspection period to include the first 10 working days of July has been removed. Instead, local authorities must commence the public inspection period on or before the first working day of September 2020.

This means that draft accounts must be approved by 31 August 2020 at the latest. However, they may be approved earlier, and we would encourage councils to do so wherever possible, to help manage overall pressure on audit firms towards the end of the year.

Authorities must publish the dates of their public inspection period, and given the removal of the common inspection period and extension of the overall deadlines for this year, it is recommended that all authorities provide public notice on their websites when the public inspection period would usually commence, explaining why they are departing from normal practice for 2019/20 accounts.

The regulations implementing these measures were laid on 7 April and are due to come into force on 30 April 2020.

The relevant dates as set by Bicester Town Council Parish Council are set out in the table below.

Inspection - Key date	2018/19 Actual	2019-20 Proposed
Accounts approved at full council	24/06/19	June
Date Inspection Notice Issued and how published	28/06/19	29/06/20
Inspection period begins	01/07/19	01/07
Inspection period ends	09/08/19	11/08
Correct length	Yes	yes
Common period included?	Yes	yes
Summary of rights document on website?	**Attached to inspection announcement**	**Attached to inspection announcement**

I am satisfied the requirements of this control objective were met for 2019/20, and assertion 4 on the annual governance statement can therefore be signed off by the Council.

M. TRUSTEESHIP (INTERIM AUDIT)

Internal audit requirement

Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.

No trusts.

Should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me, attention.

Kind regards
Yours sincerely

Mark Mulberry

Agenda Item 9 Appendix 3.

Bicester Town Council

Working details for ANNUAL RETURN - Year ended 31 March 2020

		Last Year £	This Year £	Code	Centre	Code Description
1		605,098	701,421	310	0	General Fund
1		0	2,312,727	325	0	Earmarked Reserves
1		2,124,772	10,000	326	0	Restricted Reserves
1		184,572	0	400	0	PWLB Loan
1	Balances brought forward	**2,914,442**	**3,024,147**	Total balances & reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the Financial Records		
2		1,399,420	1,468,070	1076	108	Inc-Precept
2	Annual Precept	**1,399,420**	**1,468,070**	Total amount of Precept income received in the year		
3		4,250	4,250	1002	106	Inc-CAB Rent
3		5,967	6,300	1003	401	Inc-Garth Stables
3		0	12,960	1004	401	Inc-Garth Garage & Yard
3		1,750	0	1005	401	Inc-Garth Depot Upper Room
3		3,900	8,387	1006	107	Inc-Garth Lodge
3		4,185	2,627	1007	106	Inc-Registrars
3		1,400	1,727	1008	401	Inc-Bowls Club
3		1,200	0	1009	401	Inc-Tennis Club
3		6,069	3,307	1010	106	Inc-Garth Rooms Lettings
3		6,695	8,875	1011	404	Inc-Allotments
3		0	24,154	1014	105	Inc-Miscellaneous
3		105	0	1014	300	Inc-Miscellaneous
3		517	2,111	1014	301	Inc-Miscellaneous
3		0	2	1014	305	Inc-Miscellaneous
3		3,127	857	1014	401	Inc-Miscellaneous
3		8	1	1014	404	Inc-Miscellaneous
3		0	1,027	1014	801	Inc-Miscellaneous
3		21,711	18,609	1015	401	Inc Garth Park Cafe
3		7,609	4,948	1018	501	Inc-Carnival
3		64,150	30,000	1019	110	Inc-Grants Received
3		25,883	19,374	1020	601	Inc-Cemetery
3		365	0	1028	301	Inc-Pavilions/Piitches
3		3,762	4,720	1028	305	Inc-Pavilions/Piitches
3		4,286	2,068	1028	306	Inc-Pavilions/Piitches
3		1,657	825	1028	307	Inc-Pavilions/Piitches
3		0	3,163	1030	501	INC - EVENT 1
3		7,882	12,073	1032	501	Inc- EVENT 3
3		4,300	5,180	1034	501	Inc-Childrens Entertainment
3		2,210	0	1035	501	Special Events
3		2,230	2,938	1037	301	Inc-Keta Field Pitches
3		297	17	1038	301	Inc-Bure Park Pitches
3		989	1,100	1040	301	Inc-Keble Rd Pitches
3		1,004	0	1041	301	Inc-Open Spaces
3		9,170	6,285	1045	501	Inc-Christmas Lights
3		10	0	1048	501	Inc-Fees
3		3,703	0	1049	501	Inc-EVENT 2
3		61,716	61,716	1077	108	Inc-Precept Support Grant

Continued over page

Working details for ANNUAL RETURN - Year ended 31 March 2020

		Last Year £	This Year £	Code	Centre	Code Description
3		16,271	15,896	1096	108	Inc-Interest Received
3		0	4,200	1211	300	Inc-Sale of Assets
3		4,003	0	1225	108	Inc-New Homes Bonus
3	Total other receipts	**282,378**	**269,693**	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook minus the Precept		
4		130,778	112,400	4000	105	Salaries
4		173,392	177,735	4000	300	Salaries
4		210	0	4000	501	Salaries
4		11,108	11,051	4001	105	Ers National Insurance
4		15,970	14,348	4001	300	Ers National Insurance
4		37,526	24,170	4002	105	Ers Pension
4		38,895	32,652	4002	300	Ers Pension
4	Staff costs	**407,880**	**372,355**	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include salaries and wages, PAYE and NI (employees and employers), pension contributions and expenses		
5		25,726	11,226	4306	108	Loan Repayments
5	Loan interest/Capital repayments	**25,726**	**11,226**	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on borrowings		
6		0	16,283	4003	105	Temporary Staff
6		0	25,296	4003	300	Temporary Staff
6		3,525	3,539	4004	106	Cleaning Contract
6		24	466	4009	105	Staff Travel
6		7,080	7,242	4011	106	Rates
6		1,485	0	4011	107	Rates
6		3,648	3,730	4011	401	Rates
6		861	969	4011	601	Rates
6		96	302	4012	106	Water Charges
6		-5	0	4012	107	Water Charges
6		91	0	4012	301	Water Charges
6		590	726	4012	305	Water Charges
6		390	850	4012	306	Water Charges
6		910	525	4012	307	Water Charges
6		161	441	4012	401	Water Charges
6		63	1,796	4012	404	Water Charges
6		360	304	4012	601	Water Charges
6		1,585	528	4013	106	Gas
6		264	115	4013	107	Gas
6		52	0	4013	301	Gas
6		693	574	4013	306	Gas
6		34	466	4013	401	Gas
6		1,486	2,171	4014	106	Electric
6		77	33	4014	107	Electric
6		2,545	2,639	4014	305	Electric
6		389	621	4014	306	Electric
6		3,605	2,045	4014	307	Electric

Continued over page

Working details for ANNUAL RETURN - Year ended 31 March 2020

	Last Year £	This Year £	Code	Centre	Code Description
6	1,871	3,545	4014	401	Electric
6	246	333	4014	601	Electric
6	1,607	595	4015	105	Health and Safety
6	582	578	4016	300	Uniforms
6	12	88	4017	106	Cleaning Materials
6	99	108	4017	305	Cleaning Materials
6	5	96	4017	306	Cleaning Materials
6	833	623	4020	105	Mobile Phones
6	2,831	1,730	4020	300	Mobile Phones
6	75	0	4020	501	Mobile Phones
6	2,581	2,738	4021	105	Office Phones
6	2,202	2,619	4022	105	Post
6	1,169	1,460	4023	105	Stationery
6	24	0	4023	501	Stationery
6	4,061	4,357	4024	105	Subscriptions
6	18,562	19,241	4025	105	Insurance
6	220	0	4026	105	Printing
6	109	60	4027	105	Ref. Booksand Publications
6	78	53	4028	102	Meetings and Hospitality
6	129	697	4029	801	Street Furniture
6	680	35	4030	105	Advertising & Promotions
6	565	0	4032	105	Recruitment Advertising
6	1,124	1,042	4033	105	Office Expenses
6	16,536	18,887	4034	105	Computer Support
6	18	20	4035	105	Maintenance-Office Equipment
6	2,532	6,792	4036	106	Grounds & Buildings Mtce
6	76	0	4036	301	Grounds & Buildings Mtce
6	1,311	1,693	4036	305	Grounds & Buildings Mtce
6	1,666	1,911	4036	306	Grounds & Buildings Mtce
6	1,085	1,640	4036	307	Grounds & Buildings Mtce
6	5,118	7,331	4036	401	Grounds & Buildings Mtce
6	63	32	4036	601	Grounds & Buildings Mtce
6	6,296	4,803	4039	401	Waste Removal
6	1,982	2,026	4039	601	Waste Removal
6	2,755	471	4040	105	Website
6	3,510	3,509	4041	105	Lease of Photocopier
6	5,153	6,102	4042	300	Maintenance Machinery
6	5,365	5,260	4044	300	Petrol,Oil & Gas
6	1,115	3,196	4046	401	Horticultural Supplies
6	164	195	4050	401	Maintenance Bowls Club
6	273	255	4051	501	Car Show
6	7,013	3,908	4052	107	Garth Lodge Costs
6	115	149	4054	404	Allotments Costs
6	1,800	2,025	4055	105	Press & PR
6	7,489	10,511	4056	105	Legal and Professional Fees
6	3,460	2,613	4057	105	Audit Fees

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Bicester Town Council

Working details for ANNUAL RETURN - Year ended 31 March 2020

	Last Year £	This Year £	Code	Centre	Code Description
6	6,274	5,354	4058	105	Accountancy
6	2,107	2,076	4059	108	Bank Charges
6	8,250	8,250	4060	109	CAB
6	18,273	18,069	4061	109	Grants to Voluntary Org.
6	0	12,000	4064	109	OYAP
6	3,600	3,600	4065	109	TVP Crime Partnership
6	-218	0	4066	109	SEE Bags
6	5,090	2,730	4068	300	Contract Hire Vehicle
6	52,400	55,091	4069	308	SW Sports Village
6	1,605	2,040	4070	105	Training & Conferences
6	260	5,544	4071	501	EVENT 1
6	13,000	0	4083	801	Pedestrianisation Scheme
6	5,170	5,460	4088	501	EVENT 3
6	5,101	7,491	4092	501	Teddy Bears Picnic/Superheroes
6	113	0	4093	501	Paypal Fees
6	1,485	9,904	4097	105	HR
6	3,584	1,751	4100	110	Purchase New Machinery
6	310	0	4103	106	Maintenance CAB Building
6	425	300	4112	801	Repairs & Maint. Clocks
6	3,474	0	4115	501	Special Events
6	9,822	9,571	4120	501	Carnival
6	3,355	1,183	4123	402	Maintenance Play Areas
6	10,000	10,000	4129	401	Garth Park Toilets
6	895	2,500	4130	106	Building Security
6	250	2,200	4130	305	Building Security
6	278	1,900	4130	306	Building Security
6	194	1,750	4130	307	Building Security
6	0	1,450	4130	401	Building Security
6	5,004	5,000	4131	109	Bicester Vision Manager
6	7,767	496	4133	109	Partnership
6	4,292	0	4134	501	EVENT 2
6	1,750	1,750	4150	102	Mayor's Expenses
6	1,832	623	4151	801	Litter Bin Provosiom
6	8,692	45,246	4154	301	Tree Maintenance
6	0	20	4155	301	Rent
6	1,258	831	4155	404	Rent
6	10,351	12,277	4157	501	Christmas Lights Switch On
6	2,638	0	4159	102	Elections
6	14,905	8,491	4160	102	Civic Expenses
6	14,000	14,666	4169	105	Newsletter
6	5,150	5,150	4170	109	CCTV
6	3,737	4,282	4175	301	Maintenance of Open Spaces
6	0	212	4176	401	Maintenance Skate Park
6	60	0	4177	401	Maintenance Bandstand & Well
6	1,868	1,583	4178	300	Vehicle Maintenance
6	4,265	3,520	4180	402	ROSPA Inspections

Continued over page

Working details for ANNUAL RETURN - Year ended 31 March 2020

		Last Year £	This Year £	Code	Centre	Code Description
6		397,257	327,837	4190	301	Parks and Garden Contract
6		13,673	12,755	4200	801	Christmas Lights Maint/Storage
6		498	332	4203	106	Window Cleaning
6		11,760	12,264	4209	102	Member's Allowances
6		8,088	13,082	4216	801	Litter/Dog Bin Emptying
6		0	5,904	4300	110	New Computer Equipment
6		1,250	5,000	4301	110	Garth House Redevelopment
6		1,725	400	4305	110	New Cemetery
6		0	1,514	4313	110	Play Area/Open Space Inv.
6		0	4,014	4314	110	Town Centre
6		0	12,799	9007	901	Elections
6		127,913	28,101	9011	901	Play Areas
6		2,105	85,932	9013	901	Equipment Mtce Replacement
6		40,730	9,965	9020	901	BTC Premises
6		0	2,025	9039	901	Burial Ground Provision
6		146,250	0	9043	901	Skate Park
6	Total other payments	**1,138,487**	**991,270**	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook minus employment costs (Line 4) and loan / interest expenditure / payments (Line 5)		
7	Balances carried forwrd	**3,024,147**	**3,387,060**	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. [Must equal (1+2+3)-(4+5+6)]		
8		107,818	419,780	201	0	Current Bank A/c
8		32,635	90,151	202	0	Wages Account
8		244	197	203	0	Carnival Account
8		34	34	204	0	Lloyds Business Instant
8		269,888	270,956	205	0	Barclays Treasury Deposit
8		237,636	238,932	206	0	Santander Capital Account
8		1,854,961	1,868,216	207	0	Santander Deposit
8		549,141	549,141	208	0	Lloyds Treasury Account
8		3	0	210	0	Barclays Base Rate Tracker
8		178	212	215	0	Petty Cash
8	Total Cash & Investments	**3,052,538**	**3,437,619**	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and investments held as at 31 March		
9		3,687,572	3,646,393	9	0	Total Fixed Assets
9	Total Fixed Assets	**3,687,572**	**3,646,393**	The recorded current book value at 31 March of all tangible fixed assets as recorded in the asset register		
10		165,750	160,875	10	0	Total Borrowings
10	Total Borrowings	**165,750**	**160,875**	The outstanding capital balances as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (usually PWLB)		

BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Monday 22 June 2020

FINANCE

Mayor: Councillor Jason Slaymaker
07512 902386 Jason.slaymaker@bicester.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Samantha Shippen – Chief Officer
01869 252915 samantha.shippen@bicester.gov.uk

Ward Affected: All

1. Background

1.1 Ordinarily, the Finance Committee would oversee financial reporting and where applicable make recommendations to Council.

1.2 As all meetings were suspended from 23 March due to COVID-19 restrictions a Finance Committee meeting has not taken place as it usually would since 10 February.

1.3 The purpose of this report is to place before Council those matters requiring consideration before the next Finance Committee planned for 27 July 2020.

2. Payments for Approval

2.1 In accordance with Financial Regulations, invoice payments proposed by BACS are circulated to councillors before payment is made. Attached at Appendix 1 are the payment schedules for BACS and COVID 19 Grant plus additional payments made under existing authority for formal approval.

2.2 Members should be aware that two councillor physical sign off has not taken place during office closedown, however the Chairman & Vice Chairman of Policy Committee and Vice Chairman of Finance Committee have been kept appraised and have been provided with electronic copies of payment schedules for COVID-19 grant payments.

3. Bank Balances

3.1 The Finance Committee usually receives this report and appoints a councillor to sign bank statements.

3.2 The Council is requested to approve the balances at Appendix 2 of this report.

4. Earmarked Reserves

4.1 The Finance Committee would normally consider the year end position and make a recommendation to Council on Year End Reserves Movement to account for movement of project and other underspends.

4.2 The consultant and Chief Officer have reviewed these and make a recommendation at Appendix 3 which Council is requested to approve.

5. Grants 2020

5.1 Grants are normally considered by the Finance Committee and awarded by the incoming Mayor at the Annual Meeting of Council. As neither meeting took place, The Chairman & Vice Chairman of Policy Committee and the Chairman of Finance Committee with the Chief Officer have assessed the grant applications and make a recommendation in Appendix 4 of those grants and amounts to be approved at this time.

5.2 Requests to fund events have been placed on hold and are highlighted yellow. Where required information is outstanding, it is highlighted in red, the grants will not be paid until information is received.

6. Recommendation

The Council is recommended to

1. **Approve the payments made since Finance Committee on 10th February 2020;**
2. **Receive the report of bank balances;**
3. **Approve the allocation of Earmarked Reserves for the year ended 31/3/20;**
4. **Approve the grants for 2020/21.**

Agenda Item 10
Appendix 1

Payments since Finance Committee 10 February 2020

BACS

Date	Pg ended	Amount	Officer	Councillor	Councillor
05/02/2020	238	19,619.19	S Shippen	L Pratt	R Mould
27/02/2020	241	129,231.08	S Shippen	L Pratt	L Sibley
30/03/2020	250	37,978.68	S Shippen	*requires signature*	
09/04/2020	254	39,634.19	S Shippen		
27/04/2020	260	34,206.01	S Shippen		
19/05/2020	265	105,036.65	S Shippen		
02/06/2020	270	11,598.66	S Shippen		
15/06/2020	274	8,094.35	S Shippen		

Single Payments

Date	Payee		Amount	Officer	Officer	Cllr	Cllr
06/03/2020	Bicester Hotel	£	2,232.00	S Shippen		*requires signature*	
08/04/2020	COVID 19 round 1	£	1,950.00	S Shippen			
15/04/2020	COVID 19 round 2	£	1,150.00	S Shippen			
27/04/2020	COVID 19 round 3	£	2,170.00	S Shippen			
07/05/2020	COVID 19 round 4	£	1,165.18	S Shippen			
12/06/2020	COVID 19 round 5	£	1,455.00	S Shippen			

Cheques

Date	Cheque No	Payee		Amount	Officer	Councillor	Councillor
18/02/2020	705394	CDC Chairman's Charity	£	50.00	S Shippen	L Pratt	L Sibley
09/03/2020	705395	Petty Cash		200.00	S Shippen	L Pratt	L Sibley

Direct Debits

Date	Payee	Amount
18/05/2020	SSE Gas	35.35

Agenda Item 10
Appendix 2

Bicester Town Council
Financial Statement at 31 May 2020

Cash and Bank Balances		
Current Bank Account	2,207,961	
Wages Account	94,624	
Carnival Account	185	
Lloyds Business Instant	0	
Barclays Treasury Deposit	1,771,089	
Barclays Base Rate Tracker	0	
Santander Capital	0	
Santander Deposit	240,489	
Lloyds Treasury Account	549,175	
Petty Cash	200	
Cash Floats	0	
		4,863,723
Monies Owed to Council		
Vat Refund Due	24,164	
Owed by Customers	19,162	
Prepayments and Other Debtors	4,798	48,124
		4,911,847
Less: Monies Owed by Council		
Owed to suppliers	20,353	
Paye Due/ Pension Due	8,655	
Retentions Due	9,523	
Accruals	8,170	
		46,701
Total Current Assets		4,865,146

Represented by		
General Reserve		
Current Year Surplus		1,478,086
General Fund Balance from 2019/2020		729,055
General Reserve Balance		2,207,141
Earmarked Reserves		
Balance at 1st April 2020	2,658,005	
Less: Used to Date	0	
	2,658,005	
Plus: Added in Year	0	2,658,005
Total Reserves		4,865,146

Earmarked Reserves
Year End 31 March 2020

Agenda Item 10
Appendix 3

	1st April 2019	Added in Year	Used to Fund Expenditure	31st March 2020
Play Areas and Open Spaces	204,703	57,300	28,101	233,902
BTC Premises	965,729	185,000	9,965	1,140,764
Equipment Replacement	136,595	84,200	85,932	134,863
Skate Park	3,000		-3,750	6,750
	1,310,027	**326,500**	**120,248**	**1,516,279**
Burial Ground Provision	496,521	49,600	2,025	544,096
Green Infrastructure	300,057	7,000		307,057
	796,578	**56,600**	**2,025**	**851,153**
Community and Elections	36,355	3,000	12,799	26,556
Partnership	18,600	5,500		24,100
Shopmobility		4,750		4,750
Town Centre		21,000		21,000
Pedestrianisation Scheme	15,000	13,000		28,000
	69,955	**47,250**	**12,799**	**104,406**
Sports Village Contribution	136,167	30,000		166,167
Sports Village Sinking Fund	10,000	10,000		20,000
	146,167	**40,000**	**0**	**186,167**
Total Earmarked Reserves	**2,322,727**	**470,350**	**135,072**	**2,658,005**

2020 Grant Applications Draft Proposal

Organisation	Amount Requested	Grant Suggested	Funding Applied For	Awarded 2019/2020	2019/20 Report Received	Accounts Received	Constitution Received	Privacy Notice Received	Amount Awarded 2020/21	Report Received	Comments
1st Bicester Intrepid Scout Group	750.00	500.00	Replacement of vehicle driveway - total cost £10,669.20 (incl VAT)	500.00	✓	✓		✓			
1st Bure Park Scout Group	400.00	0.00	Trip to Go Ape in Wendover Woods - total cost £1,000	750.00	no	no		✓			
2507 (Bicester) Squadron RAF Air Cadets	1000.00	500.00	Replacement minibus - total cost £17,000	330.00	no	✓	✓	✓			
3rd Bicester Scouts	500.00	500.00	Replacement communal tent for camp plus second communal tent - total cost £770	-	n/a	✓	✓	✓			
Alchester Running Club	1000.00	0.00	Contribution to running festival in September 2020	-	n/a	✓ to Dec 2018	✓	✓			
Arch	1300.00	1000.00	Sponsorship of 26 book boxes of over 30 books & games - total cost £7,800	750.00	✓	no	✓				ARCH data protection received. Grant requested in excess of policy
BCOS	500.00	0.00	purchase of lighting deck - total cost £1,440	600.00	no	✓ to Dec 2018	✓	✓			
Bicester and District Twinning Association	500.00	0.00	To facilitate a youth exchange in May 2020 - total cost £900	-	n/a	✓ handwritten note	✓				
Bicester and North Oxford Cricket Club	650.00	0.00	Improve storage facilities at Tudor-Jones Building, Chesterton - total cost £650	-	n/a	✓	✓	✓			Building not in Bicester
Bicester Baby Bank	500.00	400.00	purchase of laptop and printer total cost £483.74	500.00	no	not completed a year of operation	✓	✓			Grant requested exceeds cost of goods
Bicester Bowls Club	1000.00	500.00	Leaflets for open day on 3rd May, club history leaflets, information leaflets, newsletters, preparation of pictures & videos	-	n/a	✓	✓				
Bicester Craft Club	400.00	0.00	transport to Country Living Fair at Alexandra Palace in April and Simply Christmas Creative Craft Show at NEC in November. Cost of specialists for demonstrations.	-	n/a	✓	✓	✓			
Bicester East Community	750.00	500.00	update &upgrade community centre, painting, new flooring purchase of additional furniture	-	n/a	✓	✓				unable to provide quotations due to time restrictions
Bicester Food Bank	1000.00	1000.00	running costs of van - total £1,199	1000.00	no	no		✓			
Bicester Good Neighbour Scheme	1000.00	750.00	10 year Celebration Tea Party for volunteers in September 2020 and new website & training for volunteers	750.00	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Bicester Spiritualist Church (The Clifton Centre)	250.00	0.00	Painting of interior of building	declined	n/a	no	✓	✓			Declined in 2019 as a CHURCH BUILDING
Bicester Town Womens Guild	450.00	0.00	Coach trip to NT property Basildon Park near Reading	500.00	✓	no		✓			

Bubbles Pre-School	500.00	500.00	2 laptops for staff & administrator - total cost £900	400.00	✓	✓	✓	✓			
CAB	450.00	450.00	publicity campaign for use of Volunteer Driver scheme leaflets, digital marketing and Facebook adverts - total cost £500	-	n/a	✓	✓	✓			
Claypits Community Allotment Association	500.00	500.00	Making allotment site Eco-friendlyremove none organic pest control, weed killers etc. Add hedgehog houses, bat houses, bird boxes	-	n/a	no	✓	✓			SUBJECT TO BTC ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE APPROVAL
DEMS Training Regiment	550.00	0.00	Provision of a family welfare suite - total cost £1,200	800.00	no	screen shot of account code with 0 balance		✓			
Friends of Langford Village School	1000.00	500.00	replacement of a climbing frame at the school - total cost £12,465	-	n/a		✓				
Friends of Stoke Wood	400.00	0.00	to repair the damage caused by the dog waste vehicle used to empty bins	-	n/a	no		✓			Not in Bicester
Hanover Gardens Residents Social Club	485.00	0.00	Coach trip to the Cotswolds for residents in summer	350.00	no	✓	✓	✓			
Home Start Banbury, Bicester & Chipping Norton	1000.00	500.00	Funding of volunteer preparation course commencing 28/4/20 - total cost £2,945	500.00	no	no	✓	✓			need to use in Bicester
Hummingbird Cancer Support & Therapy Centre	500.00	500.00	funding for an electric therapeutic couch for new Holistic Building - cost $478.80 plus delivery (not itemised)	500.00	no	✓	✓	✓			
Kabin Over 50's Club	500.00	0.00	provide food and entertainment in summer and a christmas meal	350.00	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Kingsmere Community Ministry	500.00	0.00	to run a spring and winter event for residents - total cost £655	350.00	no	✓ to Dec 2018	✓	✓			
Langford Village Community Association	1000.00	0.00	provision of a bus shelter near doctors surgery - total cost £4,874.84	750.00	✓	✓	✓	✓			would require a licence from OCC which is normally only granted to statutory bodies
OneBicester CIC	1000.00	0.00	provision of Bicester Big Lunch 7th June 2020	1000.00	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Orchard Baptist Church -	500.00	0.00	7th Bicester East Funday on a Sunday in September - total cost £1710	300.00	no	no	✓				
Orchard Baptist Church - Graven Hill Community	500.00	0.00	support for large & small community events on Graven Hill Inc Easter Egg Hunt, Summer BBQ, Carols on the green, toddler group and gardening group	350.00	no	✓	✓	✓			
Oxford Sexual Abuse and Rape Crisis Centre	913.00	500.00	publicity costs to raise awareness in Bicester of the services provided - total cost £913	-	n/a	✓	✓	✓			
South Central Amburlance Charity	709.65	500.00	funding 3 pulse oximeters for Community First Responders	-	n/a	✓	✓	✓			
Trinity Camerata Orchestra	500.00	0.00	Family concert at St Edburg's in Autumn 2020	350.00	✓	no	✓	✓			
	23457.65	**9600.00**									

BUDGET **£22,000**

Agenda Item 11

BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Monday 22nd June 2020

Councillor Allowances 2020/21

Chairman: Councillor Jason Slaymaker
Jason.slaymaker@bicester.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Samantha Shippen – Chief Officer
☎ 01869 252915 samantha.shippen@bicester.gov.uk

Ward Affected: East

1. Background

1.1 The Report of the Independent and Parish Remuneration Panel on the Review of Parish Members' Allowances for 2020/21 Financial Year for Parish Councils in the Cherwell District was timetabled to be considered by the Finance Committee on 29 March 2020. The meeting did not take place.

1.2 The councillor allowance for 2019/20 at £876 was paid to councillors through payroll at the end of May 2020 in the absence of consideration of a revised rate.

1.3 Council is now requested to consider the report attached at Appendix 1 and decide whether to accept the recommended increase to £900 as detailed in the report.

1.3 If the increase is accepted, Council should decide whether to pay a "top up" of £24 in the next payroll or add this to the allowance to be paid in 2021.

2. Recommendation

The Council is recommended to AGREE the level of councillor allowances for 2019/20 be set at £900 and determine arrangements for payment.

Report of the Independent and Parish Remuneration Panel on the Review of Parish Members' Allowances for the 2020/2021 Financial Year

For

Parish Councils in the Cherwell District

December 2019

REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT AND PARISH REMUNERATION PANEL

REVIEW OF PARISH MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES FOR THE 2020/2021 FINANCIAL YEAR

1 Introduction

1.1 The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended) provide all parish councils with the discretion to introduce allowances schemes whereby a parish basic allowance plus travelling and subsistence allowances can be paid to their elected members whether or not that election was contested. Further, a travelling allowance and a subsistence allowance, but not a parish basic allowance, can be paid to co-opted members of parish councils.

1.2 The setting of the levels of the allowances is open to parish councils to determine after first considering the recommendations of the Parish Remuneration Panel. This is in line with the Government's view that the allowances system provides for clear and transparent local accountability as parish councils, like other local authorities, will be both accountable and answerable to their local communities in terms of the allowance payments made to their members.

1.3 The Panel has completed its work on the review of allowance matters which fall to it under the 2003 Regulations. This report sets out the recommendations of the Panel which must be considered by parish councils when they determine whether to continue to pay allowances or introduce allowance schemes for the first time and, where appropriate, the levels of the allowances to be paid.

2 The Parish Remuneration Panel

2.1 The Parish Remuneration Panel was appointed by Cherwell District Council on 21 July 2003 pursuant to Regulation 27 of the 2003 Regulations.

2.2 The current membership of the Panel is:

Ms Jeanette Baker
Mr Ray Everitt
Mr David Shelmerdine
Mr Christopher White
Mr Andrew Hodges

2.3 Mr Stefan Robinson and Mrs Charlotte Green had resigned from the panel during the summer of 2019. The Panel thanked them for contribution to the panel and wished them well for the future.

2.4 The Panel met on 3 December 2019 to consider its recommendations for the 2020/2021 municipal year.

2.5 Mr Christopher White was appointed as Chairman for the meeting.

2.6 Natasha Clark (Governance and Elections Manager) and Lesley Farrell (Democratic and Elections Officer) provided the Panel with administrative advice and support.

2.7 The Panel's findings are set out in this report, together with recommendations for consideration by Parish Councils.

3.0 Terms of Reference of the Panel

3.1 The Terms of Reference of the Panel remain as originally agreed when it was first constituted in 2003.

3.2 These Terms of Reference accord with the provisions of Regulation 28 which provide that the Panel must produce a report and recommendations on:

(a) the amount of parish basic allowance payable to the elected members of parish councils;

(b) the amount of travel and subsistence allowance payable to members of parish councils;

(c) whether the parish basic allowance should be payable only to the chairman of the parish council or to all of its elected members;

(d) whether, if a parish basic allowance is to be made to both the chairman and other elected members, the allowance payable to the chairman should be set at a higher level than that of the other elected members and if so, the higher amount which should be payable;

(e) the responsibilities and duties in respect of which members of parish councils should receive travel and subsistence allowances.

4.0 Basic Allowance

4.1 The 2003 Guidance allows for the Panel to recommend the same levels of parish basic allowance for all parish councils or different levels for different councils.

4.2 In considering allowances for parish councils, the approach previously adopted by the Panel has been to express the Parish Basic Allowance as a percentage of the Basic Allowance paid by Cherwell District Council to its Members.

4.3 In undertaking the review of allowances for Cherwell District Council (CDC) elected Members, the Panel acknowledged that the CDC members' allowances were low in comparison to other similar councils and the elected members represented good value for money.

4.4 The Panel noted that in 2019/2020 the recommended 2.4% cost of living increase had been agreed by Council.

4.5 When considering its recommendations, the Panel uses the staff pay settlement to inform its proposals for Cherwell District Council Members. The negotiations for a cost of living increase for Cherwell District Council staff in 2020/2021 financial year had not yet started but the Panel agreed that the same level increase in the pay settlement for staff should be applied to the Members Basic Allowance and rounded either up or down, whichever is closest, to produce 12 equal payments. Payment of the increase should be backdated to the beginning of the 2020/2021 financial year, 1 April 2020, should the staff pay settlement not be agreed prior to that date.

4.6 The Panel had previously agreed an electorate-based banding criterion for calculating the levels of the parish basic allowances whereby the parishes were divided into Band 1, Band 2 and Band 3 (from the largest to the smallest).

4.7 The Panel believed that the banding approach was the most appropriate and logical method and provided a link in terms of assessing payment levels for future reviews by the Panel. The Panel reaffirmed that the banding of parish councils according to electorate remained appropriate and believed that there remained a strong and identifiable correlation between electorate, financial resources and levels of member activity and responsibility.

4.8 The agreed electorate bands remain:

Band 1 – electorate above 5001

Band 2 – electorate between 901 and 5000

Band 3 – electorate below 900

4.9 The agreed bandings are:

- Band 1- Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington
- Band 2 - Adderbury, Ambrosden, Bloxham, Bodicote, Caversfield, Deddington, Gosford and Water Eaton, Heyford Park, Hook Norton, Launton, and Yarnton.
- Band 3 - All remaining parishes

4.10 By this criterion, the Parish Basic Allowance expressed as a percentage of the Basic Allowance of Cherwell District Council would be 20% for Band 1 Parish Councils, 10% for Band 2 Parish Councils and 5% for Band 3 Parish Councils.

4.11 Whilst acknowledging parish populations are increasing; the Panel agreed that the banding levels were still appropriate. The Panel agreed that due to population changes some parishes may change band in 2020/2021 and it was therefore necessary to review population levels annually to ensure parishes were banded correctly.

5.0 Enhanced Payment to the Parish Chairman and Town Mayors

5.1 The Panel re-affirmed its previous position that as Parish Chairs and Town Mayors often have significant additional responsibilities above their duties as an ordinary Town/Parish councillor, this responsibility should continue to be reflected in an enhanced allowance.

5.2 The Panel reaffirmed that enhanced payments to Parish Chairmen and Town Mayors should be based on a 50% increase to the parish basic allowance.

6.0 Travel and Subsistence Allowances

6.1 The Panel noted that under the 2003 Regulations, the categories of duty that qualify for the payment of a travel and subsistence allowance are:

(a) for attending a meeting of the parish council or any of its committees or sub-committees or meeting of a body to which appointments or nominations are made (including committees or sub-committees of those bodies);

(b) for attending meetings of any association of authorities of which the parish council is a member;

(c) for performing any duty under the parish councils Standing Orders made under Section 135 of the Local Government Act 1972 requiring a member or members to be present when tender documents are opened;

(d) for the performance of any duty in connection with the discharge of any function of the Council conferred by or under any enactment and empowering or requiring the Council to inspect or authorise the inspection of premises; and

(e) for carrying out any other approved duty by the Council, or any other duty of a class so approved for the purpose, or in connection with, the discharge of the functions of the Council or any of its committees or sub-committees.

6.2 The Panel noted that the setting of travel and subsistence allowances was a matter for each parish council to determine. However, the Panel reaffirmed that the levels recommended to parishes should mirror those agreed by the District Council.

6.3 The Panel reaffirmed its view that parish councils were best placed to determine which of the duties in Point 6.1 should be included in their allowances scheme.

6.4 The Panel also noted that under previous arrangements various other matters relating to the payment of travel allowances were specified by the Secretary of State to cover those occasions when members were required to travel on official Council business by means other than their own vehicles, specifically:

(a) travel by public transport (the rate payable not to exceed the amount of any ordinary or other cheap fare (if available) and where there is more than one class of fare travel should be by second class fare unless it is decided that first class fare should be substituted);

(b) supplementary allowances (the rates/fares referred to above to be increased by any supplementary allowances but not exceeding the expenditure incurred);

(c) travel by taxi (and public transport) (in cases of urgency, and where no other public transport is available, the reimbursement of the actual taxi fare and, in any other case, where travel is by public transport, the payment not to exceed the amount of the fare);

(d) travel by hired vehicle (the usual allowance rates applicable to the cc of the hired vehicle in accordance with the allowance rates specified by the relevant council excluding the hire costs).

6.5 The Panel reaffirmed its view that it would be appropriate to make additional payments to cover tolls and other miscellaneous type parking charges.

6.6 The Panel also reaffirmed its view that the various matters outlined in Point 6.4 above should continue to be included in parish allowances schemes.

7.0 Dependent Carers' and Childcare Allowance

7.1 The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) is currently continuing to seek an amendment to the Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 to allow the provisions of paragraph 7 to apply equally to local councils (parish/town) as well as principal authorities (district/county/unitary). This would give councillors on local councils the same right as councillors on principal authorities to be able to claim the dependant carers and childcare allowance. Currently this is unavailable to Parish Councils in England.

7.2 The Panel noted with disappointment that there was no change to the current position with regards dependent carers' and childcare allowance and agreed that they would continue to monitor the work of NALC with a view to reviewing these allowances in the parish scheme. The Panel agreed that it would support payment of Dependent Carers' and Childcare Allowances if and when such payment was permitted.

8.0 Recommendations to Parish Councils

8.1 Based on the information provided to the Panel, it recommended:

(a) Parish allowance rates should continue to be based on a proportion of the District Councillor basic allowance rates.

(b) That the Parish Basic Allowance be increased in line with the staff cost of living increase rounded either up or down, whichever is closest, to give 12 equal payments, and payment backdated to the beginning of the financial year 2020/2021, 1 April 2020, should a settlement not be agreed before that date.

(Whilst the Panel's recommendation is for an increase in line with the staff cost of living allowance, to give an indicative idea of cost and change, a 2% increase has been applied to the figures below for information):

Possible increases of 2% for 2020/2021:

Band 1 Basic Allowance (20% of District Basic Allowance)	*£900 PA*
Band 2 Basic Allowance (10% of District Basic Allowance)	*£456 PA*
Band 3 Basic Allowance (5% of District Basic Allowance)	*£228 PA*

(c) Parish Chairmen/Town Mayors Allowance should be increased proportionately in line with District Council rates and continue to be based on a 50% increase to the parish council basic allowance for corresponding band.

Band 1 Parish Chairmen/Town Mayors Allowance	*£1,344 PA*

Band 2 Parish Chairmen/Town Mayors Allowance	*£672 PA*
Band 3 Parish Chairmen/Town Mayors Allowance	*£336 PA*

(e) Travel and subsistence allowances should remain the same:

Bicycles	20p per mile
Motorcycles	24p per mile
Motor Vehicles	45p per mile
Electric or Similar Specialised Vehicles	45p per mile
Breakfast Allowance	£6.02 per meal
Lunch Allowance	£8.31 per meal
Evening Meal Allowance	£10.29 per meal
Absence overnight	£91.14
Absence overnight in London or at the National Association of Local Council's National Conference	£103.96

(e) it would be appropriate for the payment of tolls and other parking charges to continue to be included in parish allowance schemes;

(f) it would be appropriate for the occasions when parish members can travel by means other than by their own vehicle to continue to be defined in parish allowance schemes; and

(g) it be noted that each parish council can determine the 'approved duties' for which it is legitimate to claim travel and subsistence allowances within the five categorises specified in the 2003 Regulations.

The Committee thanked Democratic Services for their contribution in providing information to assist the Panels work.

Mr Christopher White
Chairman
Parish Remuneration Panel
December 2019

BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Monday 22 June 2020

CONSULTATION ON EXPANDING PRIMARY SCHOOL CAPACITY WITHIN THE KINGSMERE DEVELOPMENT, SW BICESTER

Mayor: Councillor Jason Slaymaker
07512 902386 Jason.slaymaker@bicester.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Samantha Shippen – Chief Officer
01869 252915 samantha.shippen@bicester.gov.uk

Ward Affected: South

1. Background

1.1 Oxfordshire County Council has commenced a consultation on expanding primary school capacity within the Kingsmere Development at SW Bicester on Monday 15 June 2020. The consultation runs to 13 July 2020 and is attached at Appendix 1 of this report.

1.2 Council is invited to give consideration to the options in order for a response to be made by 13 July 2020.

2. Recommendation

The Council is recommended to consider the options available and respond to Oxfordshire County Council accordingly within the consultation period.

Agenda Item 12
Appendix 1

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Consultation on expanding primary school capacity within the Kingsmere development in SW Bicester

15 June – 13 July 2020

School capacity planning in Bicester

Bicester is one of the biggest growth areas within Oxfordshire. The Cherwell Local Plan includes over 10,000 new homes to be built in the town by 2031. This scale of growth requires significant investment in additional school capacity. This will include new primary schools within the Kingsmere, Graven Hill, SE Bicester and NW Bicester developments, and new secondary schools within the Kingsmere and NW Bicester.

The first phases of this additional capacity are already complete or underway. Firstly, St Edburg's CE Primary School relocated to Kingsmere and expanded in 2016, and Longfields Primary School expanded in 2017. The first new school – Gagle Brook Primary School in NW Bicester - opened in 2018, and a new secondary school opens in Kingsmere in 2020. A new primary school is due to open in Graven Hill in 2021. In addition, new or expanded capacity at schools surrounding Bicester provide more options for families in the area.

The next step in ensuring sufficient school places in Bicester is to complete the planned school provision for the Kingsmere development in SW Bicester. This development includes sites for two primary schools – the first now occupied by St Edburg's CE Primary School - and a secondary school – Whitelands Academy, opening this year. How the remaining additional primary school capacity should be provided is the subject of this consultation.

Options for Kingsmere's primary school capacity

The county council has secured the site and funding to build more primary school capacity within the Kingsmere development, as shown on this map:

The original intention was that a separate new primary school would be built on the second primary school site. This would be an academy, and the county council would run a competition to identify an academy trust to run the new school, as it has for the other new schools in Bicester.

The county council is now considering an alternative way of providing the additional capacity. Instead of opening a separate new school, another option would be to expand St Edburg's CE (VA) Primary School onto a second site. The school would then divide its pupils and staff across the two sites, for example with Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1 on the new site and Key Stage 2 on the existing site.

The county council is seeking your views on these options.

Option 1: a separate new primary school

If a new school is opened, it would be an academy, and the county council would run a competition to identify the academy sponsor. The target opening date would be 2023.

The final decision on which academy trust would run the school would be taken by the Regional Schools Commissioner, acting on behalf of the Secretary for State for Education, who would also need to give approval for the school to open.

The latest forecasts for pupil numbers indicate that the school would open as a 1 form entry primary school – 30 children per year group and 210 primary pupils in total. It would also have a nursery for up to thirty 2- and 3-year-olds at a time. It would be designed to be easily expanded should the local population grow further but there would be no guarantee nor timescale for such an expansion.

This option would provide more choice and competition between schools for parents living in SW Bicester. They could apply to either this school or St Edburg's (or other schools outside the Kingsmere development).

Any new school has to be approved to open by the Department for Education (i.e. central government, not local government). The Department for Education (DfE) expects new schools to be at least 2 forms of entry, to ensure their long-term financial viability. There is, therefore, a risk that the DfE would refuse permission to open a school of this size.

Oxfordshire has many schools which are smaller than 2 forms of entry, but recent experience has shown that it is more challenging for a new 1 form entry school to open and grow quickly enough to be viable. Because of this, we are trying to move away from opening new 1 form entry schools, except where we expect them to grow quickly, or where this is the only feasible solution. We are also trying to ensure that our existing schools can benefit from growth whenever possible.

Although primary pupil numbers are still growing in SW Bicester, growth in pupil numbers has slowed down, and there is now a risk that two separate schools in such close proximity competing for pupils would result in one or both schools having too few pupils to be financially viable in the longer term.

Option 2: expanding St Edburg's CE (VA) Primary School

An alternative to a new school would be to expand the existing St Edburg's CE (VA) Primary School onto a second site. The two sites would be about 0.5 miles apart. The target opening date would be no later than 2023, and it may be possible to expand the school more quickly, by 2022. At the same time, the school could extend its age range to include 2-year-olds, providing more early years provision in south west Bicester.

This option is supported by the governing body of St. Edburg's CE (VA) Primary School and the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education. As this option would involve the expansion of an existing school, rather than creating a new school, the decision-maker would be the Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet Member for Education & Cultural Services.

St Edburg's CE (VA) Primary School relocated to the Kingsmere development from central Bicester in 2016, to be better located to meet the needs of Bicester's growing population; at the same time it expanded from 1 form of entry to 2 forms of entry. The school currently has a Published Admission Number (PAN) of 60 (i.e. the school admits up to 60 children each year, organised into 2 classes per year group. The school's admission criteria prioritise applicants by distance and do not give any preferential ranking for faith or church attendance.

The school was last inspected by Ofsted in November 2016 and is graded as Good.

The school has proved increasingly popular since its move, and is now regularly oversubscribed. Expanding St Edburg's onto a second site would enable it to meet the demand for additional school places, without overcrowding their current school site.

The admission number of the school would increase from 60 to 90 primary children per year group. In addition, the school would increase its nursery by up to 30 full time equivalent places.

Expanding an existing school does not create the same challenges to financial viability as opening a brand new school. The school is already established and operates with a substantial budget; it would receive additional funding to cover the costs of growth.

Under option 2, the extra accommodation built on the new site would be broadly similar in scale to a 1 form entry primary school, but would be tailored more specifically to the age range it will cater for – for example, the new accommodation could be for Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1 children only. Both sites would have playgrounds, halls and all the other accommodation expected in primary schools.

The cost of building the accommodation is expected to be in line with building a new 1 form entry primary school and would be covered by the funding secured from the housing developer by Oxfordshire County Council to provide more primary school capacity within Kingsmere. Further feasibility work would be needed to identify the exact accommodation required. This work would be carried out by the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education, working in partnership with the county council.

How would a split site school work?

When a school operates across two sites, it is still legally one school. For example, it counts as one school for Ofsted inspections and admissions purposes. If your children are in the Key Stage 1 part of the school, you do not need to apply for them to move up to the Key Stage 2 part of the school.

Although children would spend most of their time on one of the sites, sometimes they would use the other site – for example sometimes the whole school would come together for events and celebrations.

The total capacity of the expanded school would be 3 forms of entry – there are already some Oxfordshire primary schools of this size operating on a single site. One advantage of a split site 3 form entry primary school is that each site retains the feel of a smaller school whilst benefiting from the efficiencies of being part of a larger school. Another advantage would be that each site would be bespoke to the age group that it supports.

As schools are primarily funded on the basis of the number of pupils on the school roll, any savings achieved through the greater economies of scale are available to the governing body to be utilised for the benefit of the school.

The school management and governing body of the school would control both sites. There would be senior staff on both sites so that accountability and responsibility is clear. Most staff would spend nearly all of their time on one of the sites but could be deployed across either site as required.

Important points to remember

- This consultation is about options for expanding primary school capacity in SW Bicester. It is **not** about any decisions to allocate housing development to the area made by Cherwell District Council. Comments on housing development proposals need to be made direct to Cherwell District Council when they are submitted for planning decision.
- Issues around traffic, parking and the design of the school accommodation will be addressed through the planning process when the planning application is submitted.
- This consultation is taking place until **13 July 2020**. You have until midnight on that date to give us your views. All responses received will then be considered before a decision is made.

How you can respond to this consultation

This information is available online at the county council's website in the consultations section: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/kingsmereprimary . We would like to hear from you if you support this proposal as well as if you have any concerns. To submit your views:

- respond online at the above web address using the online form for this consultation, on the Oxfordshire County Council current consultations webpage; *or*
- email your response to: school.planning@oxfordshire.gov.uk (please quote 'Kingsmere Primary' in the subject line);

You must respond by 13 July 2020.

What happens next?

The county council will consider the responses to this consultation, and decide whether to proceed with a new school, or an expansion of St Edburg's.

- If it is decided to proceed with a new school, a competition will be run by the county council to find an academy sponsor for that school. This would be publicised on the county council website.
- If it is decided to proceed with expanding St Edburg's, a statutory notice would be published on the county council website setting out more details; there would then be a formal consultation (representation) period, before the county council's Cabinet is asked for their approval for the proposal.

BICESTER TOWN COUNCIL

Monday 22 June 2020

BICESTER TOWN STATION TOTEM SIGN

Mayor: Councillor Jason Slaymaker
07512 902386 Jason.slaymaker@bicester.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Samantha Shippen – Chief Officer
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Ward Affected: South

1. Background

1.1 Bicester Museum and Heritage Trust approached the Chief Officer earlier this year in respect of the totem sign from the former Bicester Town Train Station, before it was re-named Bicester Village Station.

1.2 A report was due to go to the Policy Committee on 23rd March 2020 which was cancelled, the representative has storage issues and therefore the matter is brought to Council to expediate a response.

1.3 The group members took the opportunity to buy the sign when they saw it advertised on a social media site. Having approached the vendor and explained the group's aims, that the group was a registered charity and they wished to preserve the sign for potential public display in a suitable place the vendor agreed to sell it to the group for the price that he paid originally and explained that he would rather it go to the group rather than another private bidder.

1.4 The Bicester Museum and Heritage Trust now ask if Bicester Town Council would like to hold the sign in trust and display it somewhere suitable for the people of the town to see rather like the telephone kiosk and signs from our twinned towns that are next to Garth House and on the wall of the building in the grounds.

1.5 They have indicated that they could potentially find a suitable means to properly secure the sign itself (without the pole) to a wall if there was some wall space available and the Council agreed. They also would be happy to pay for any bracketry should it be required.

1.6 They think that it may in the long term help raise the profile of their group and at the same time preserve something that would otherwise be lost. They are aware of the sensitivities for those who objected to the name change when Bicester Village station reopened and hold no public view on this and simply wish to offer it for display.

1.7 Council is invited to give consideration to the offer subject to a suitable trust agreement being agreed with the Bicester Museum and Heritage Trust.

2. Recommendation

The Council is recommended to accept the offer to hold the sign in trust to be displayed in Garth Park subject to a suitable trust agreement being agreed with the Bicester Museum and Heritage Trust.