

GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Meeting of the General Services Committee held at **6.30pm on Tuesday 03 June 2025** at the Town Hall, Banbury.

Present: Councillor Cherry (Chair), Councillor Biegel (Vice Chair)
Councillors: Elugwu, Strangwood.

Alternate Members: Cllr Beere for Cllr Okeke

Other Members: Councillor Mallon

Officers: Mark Hassall (Town Clerk & RFO)
Paul Almond (Environment Director)
Helen Durkin (Executive Officer)

Members of Public: 3

GS.11/25 Apologies for Absence
Councillor Okeke

GS.12/25 Declarations of Interest
None.

GS.13/25 Minutes of the Last Meeting
IT WAS RECOMMENDED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 March 2025 be referred to the Full Council meeting on the 17 June 2025 for signing.

GS.14/25 Income & Expenditure Report
The Committee considered a report prepared by the Town Clerk & RFO comparing year-to-date income and expenditure with the projected annual budget for the financial year. The report showed all expenditure incurred up to 23 May 2025.
Officers responded to a range of questions from Members relating to various budget codes and financial procedures. Members' attention was drawn to the fact that overall the Committee's expenditure was within forecast versus the projected budget.

General Services variances were principally

- ◆ Staffing costs remain within budget, subject to central government annual salary increases agreed with trade unions.
- ◆ Timing of invoicing for grounds maintenance works impacted by timing of May invoice across Parks, including the first weed spray application to street edging. Building M&R includes funding of lampposts at PDP which has successfully attracted funding from CDC, and progress will now move to Chandos Park.
- ◆ Tree works orders have largely been completed and with the final few days currently being undertaken, balancing available resources with recommendations from scheduled independent arboriculture inspections over an ongoing three-year timeframe.
- ◆ Park Ranger team is now fully staffed following a retirement and successful recruitment.
- ◆ Sports facilities works to get facilities reviewed ahead of the football season in September is currently being scheduled.

- ◆ Additional expenditure will be incurred to secure and upgrade the lighting of the Banbury Cross and Fine Lady statues, which will be secured within budget parameters following successful grant applications via CDC from central government UK SPF fund (Capital – Park Refurb).
- ◆ Improvements to bus shelters providing Green Roofs (in partnership with Bauer Media Outdoor (nee Clear Channel), and Real Time Info (in partnership with OCC).

Underspends on Resources Committee, principally

- ◆ Corporate, Central Administration and Civic continue to be well controlled.
- ◆ Town Council Events are currently within acceptable budget parameters, including successful and well attended VE Day events, attracting partnership sponsorship resulting in no additional burden to taxpayers.
- ◆ Town Hall – includes utility costs to be recharged to OCC under the lease of first floor.
- ◆ Other services to the Public include timing of small grants (including Warm Welcome grant scheme).
- ◆ Other Costs & Income are in line with projected budget, with reserves being invested to achieve interest income target.

IT WAS RESOLVED to receive and note the Income and Expenditure report.

GS.15/25

Parks and Cemeteries Service

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Environment providing an update for Members on:

Parks & Cemeteries Team.
4th Corner Landscape Contract.
Ranger Service / Play Areas.
Sports Surface
Cleansing Service.
Parks Lighting.
PlayZone Schemes.
Hardstanding Refurbishment.

Parks & Cemeteries Team

- ◆ The team are up to date with all scheduled work.
- ◆ Following the end of the football season, the grounds team have transferred their efforts to the preparation and maintenance of the cricket and bowls facilities.
- ◆ The spring bedding has been removed and the ground prepared, from People's Park and the two Cemeteries, in preparation for the bedding delivery and the planting day in the park with the schools on the 18th of June 2025.
- ◆ The Team have been busy undertaking burial duties in our cemeteries and have delivered the service in line with funeral bookings.
- ◆ The start of the mowing season has gone well, the new mowers have helped the team stay on top of the grass growth.

4th Corner Landscape Contract

- ◆ The start of the contract extension with 4th Corner has started well.
- ◆ Graeme Makin's role has changed and has been introduced as a permanent manager based on the Banbury Contract, to help support the team on a full time basis.
- ◆ 4th Corner have also started the mowing season well, maintaining standards in line with the contract specification.
- ◆ Following the end of the football fixtures post season renovations are underway.
- ◆ The street weed control treatment of roadside kerbs has been undertaken and was complete by the end of May.

Park Ranger Service / Play Area Update

- ◆ The new Senior Park Ranger, Simon Millward, has joined the team and started work for the Council on the 06th May 2025. He is settling into the role well.
- ◆ The Rangers continue to carry out weekly visual Health & Safety inspections formally recording utilising the new mobile PSS Live software package.
- ◆ The team continue to undertake repair work on the findings made as a result of the inspection reports.
- ◆ Unfortunately, the trim trail unit at People's Park had to be removed due to structural failures in the timbers. Three quotations were obtained for a replacement unit. Following evaluation a the replacement equipment has been ordered and will be installed before the School Summer Holidays.
- ◆ A picnic bench will be installed next to Merton Street MUGA, following a request from users last summer after the Rangers removed some domestic sofas that were brought onto site by the teenagers. To be installed by the Rangers before the Summer Holidays.

Cleansing Service Update

- ◆ Cleaning of public toilets is ongoing, no problems to report.
- ◆ The monthly cleaning of all sports pavilions continues, with the exception of the weekly cleaning at the Cricket Pavilion at Hanwell Fields following fixtures.
- ◆ Parks & Open Spaces Cleansing – The service provided by Cherwell District Council continues to be delivered in line with the Service Level agreement, no issues to report.
- ◆ The Big Litter Pick took place on the 17th May 2025. The event was a great success with 40 volunteers taking part who cleaned four routes in and around the Town. The assistance of Cherwell District Council to help with staff and equipment on the day was much appreciated.

Parks Lighting Update

- ◆ The replacement of the lighting columns in Princess Diana Park and the new run of lights to serve the PlayZone is now all complete.
- ◆ The new lighting for Banbury Cross and the Fine Lady Statue has been delivered, however, the installation has been delayed due to the requirement for additional infrastructure. This was identified as a result of electrical safety testing at a pre-contract meeting with the engineers.

PlayZone Scheme Update

- ◆ Contracts for the installation of Chandos Close Play Zone have been agreed and signed work is to commence on the 02 June 2025 and be completed by the 22nd August 2025. Affected local residents have been informed of the project by means of letter drop.
- ◆ Planning permission has been granted by Cherwell District Council for the Princess Diana Park subject to the clearance of a condition, which requires a Biodiversity Net Gain Plan to be submitted and approved before work can start on site.
- ◆ The Football Foundations Consultants have submitted a proposal and are awaiting the response from Cherwell District Council Planning Officers. Once the condition clearance is achieved a start date can be set.

Recommendations

IT WAS RESOLVED to receive and;

To note the Parks and Cemeteries Service Update.
To note the 4th Corner Landscape Contract Update.
To note the Ranger Service / Play Area Update.
To note the Cleansing Service Update.
To note the Lighting Update.
To note the PlayZone Scheme Update

GS.16/25 Sports Facilities

Tennis - People's Park

- ◆ Following refurbishment of courts in 2024, delivered through the grant received from the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) - Parks Investment Programme, there was an obligation to work with the LTA towards the delivery of "Free Park Tennis" sessions at the venue on Saturday mornings.
- ◆ To run these sessions it was necessary to attract volunteer Tennis Activators who would receive training through the LTA Activator Programme. As a possible route to recruit the activators the LTA suggested contacting other established tennis clubs, your District Council's sports development team and local colleges. Unfortunately, this did not result in anyone showing an interest, so we carried out some direct marketing to existing users and advertising at the venue which

resulted in four people coming forward interested in undergoing the training to become activators at People's Park.

- ◆ I am pleased to inform members following the completion of the training and receipt of the equipment form the LTA to run the sessions, we held our first "Free Tennis" session on Saturday 24th May 2025.
- ◆ The first session was well attended with 25 participants of mixed ages ranging from young children to adults.

Tennis – Horton View

- ◆ Background

2003 - Banbury Town Council took over a 99 year Lease for Horton View Sports Ground from Oxfordshire County Council, previously held by Cherwell District Council.

2008 - Banbury Town Council agreed the signing of a Sub-Lease for 21 years with Banbury Tennis Club.

2010 - Banbury Town Council made a grant to the club of £4,000, towards the installation of new flood lighting.

2011 - Banbury Town Council made a financial contribution of £1,000 (1 sixth of the total cost) to refurbish the public court only.

2024 – Banbury Town Council, following a meeting with Banbury Tennis Club, received representations on a number of issues:

1. The Club would like to explore some security of tenure as the current lease expires on 1st March 2029. This short term period hinders the options for the club to assess funding options for development.
 2. In the Clubs opinion the courts at Horton View were in poor condition, confirming that the club does not have sufficient funds to refurbish them and in their view this was the landlords responsibility to resurface them.
 3. The club would like to replace the flood lighting heads to LED's from the current halogen lighting.
The fencing surrounding the courts needed refurbishment or replacement.
- ◆ To assess the condition of the courts Officers commissioned an independent assessment of the court surfaces from a professional sports surfacing contractor.

The recommendations of the report and cost associated are:

1. Courts 1-4
These courts are nearing the end of their usable life, however, the Council may want to consider localised resin and grit repairs and binding and colour spray would extend their safe and playable life for 2-3 more years.

Budget cost repair £9,940 or Budget Cost to resurface & paint £60,000

2. Court 5

The surface of this court has reached the end of its life cycle, binding and painting will not work on this court, therefore, a fully resurface and paint is required.

Budget cost to resurface and paint £16,420

3. Court 6

The surface of this court has reached the end of its life cycle, binding and painting will not work on this court, therefore, a fully resurface and paint is required, however, the edging also need replacing. In addition there is a major problem with roots under the court and would need to be addressed by others before undertaking refurbishment works.

Budget Cost to install new edges, resurface and paint £19,650

◆ Officers recommendations to the committee are:

1. Courts 1-4

The recommendation for the repairs to extend the playing surface for 2-3 years be accepted, which would allow options for full resurfacing to be reviewed and negotiated alongside a new lease proposal.

2. Court 5 & 6

The Council go out for formal tender as per the recommendation.

3. Court 6

Banbury Town Council work with Sanctuary Housing to ensure they fell the tree which is causing damage to the court surface so there is no issues when resurfacing works are undertaken.

4. Tenders obtained to undertake necessary repairs to the court fencing where needed.

5. New lease be drawn up with longer term and costs identified for further discussions with Banbury Lawn Tennis Club.

Tennis Fees and Charges Proposal

- ◆ Following the refurbishment of Peoples' Park tennis courts the Council has experienced an increase in appropriate use of the facility by tennis players, however, we have received complaints from genuine bookers that there is still an element of inappropriate use of the courts.
- ◆ The Rangers have also had to challenge youths in the court playing ball games who have admitted they gain access by booking the court to get a code to enter the court to play football.
- ◆ The Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) recommended that there should be a charge for all tennis, not only to stop anti-social behaviour, but more importantly to ensure the sustainability of maintenance and upkeep of the court and gate entry system.
- ◆ The recommendation is to introduce a modest hourly booking fee for Banbury Town Council Courts in line with the fees charged on the leased courts at Banbury Lawn Tennis Club of £4.00 per hour.

PlayZone Fees and Charges Proposal

- ◆ In preparation for the completion of the PlayZones construction, agreeing slots for targeted community, youth and sports groups as well as general casual users and prior to going live with the online booking system a pricing structure is required to be approved.
- ◆ Officers have worked in partnership with the Football Foundation and Cherwell District Council to compare charges made by other Local Authority run PlayZones in areas of deprivation across the country.

The recommendation for charges are:

1. Formal Adult Group Hire (Sports Clubs etc) - £20.00 per hour.
2. Targeted Partner Community Group/Under 18 years of age - £10.00 per hour.
3. General Public Pay & Play - £2.50 per hour.

MUGA Refurbishment Costs

- ◆ Following the independent assessment of the hard surfaces within the Councils MUGA facilities the identified work requirements are:
 1. Chandos Sports Ground – Power Wash/Repaint, – Budget Estimate £1,500
 2. Easington Recreation Ground - Power Wash/Repaint Budget Estimate £2,000
 3. Hanwell View – No Work Required
 4. Hastings Park – Power Wash/Repaint Budget - Estimate £1,500
 5. Hill View Park – Power Wash/Repaint Budget - Estimate £2,000
 6. Ironstones Park - Power Wash/Repaint Budget - Estimate £2,000
 7. People's Park - Power Wash/Repaint - Budget Estimate £2,000
 8. Merton Street - Power Wash/Repaint - Budget Estimate £2,000
 9. Princess Diana Park - Power Wash/Repaint - Budget Estimate £2,000
 10. Ruscote Park - Power Wash/Repaint - Budget Estimate £2,000
 11. Standbridge Park - Power Wash/Repaint - Budget Estimate £2,000
 12. Trinity Park - Power Wash/Repaint - Budget Estimate £1,500

Due to extensive tree root damage the following facilities require more substantial works:

13. Bankside Park
Remove existing surface/Resurfacing/Repainting - Budget Estimate £15,000
 14. Moorfields Recreation Ground
Remove existing surface/Resurfacing/Repainting - Budget Estimate £15,000
- ◆ Total Project Budget Estimate to undertake all refurbishments is £50,500.

- ◆ The recommendation to the committee is that:
 1. The tree works are ordered to remove the offending trees causing the surface damage.
 2. Tenders are sort for works as identified by the independent professional sports surfacing contractor.

IT WAS RESOLVED to receive and to note the Sports Facilities report and;

IT WAS RESOLVED to receive and to note the update report on Tennis – People's Park

IT WAS RESOLVED that the General Services Committee **RECOMMEND**;

To recommend to Resources committee the Recommendations to 6.3 Tennis – Horton View

To recommend to Resources committee the Recommendations in 7.3 Tennis – Fees and Charges

To recommend to Resources committee the Recommendations in 8.3 PlayZone – Fees and Charges

To recommend to Resources committee the Recommendations in 9.3 MUGA – Refurbishment Costs.

The meeting ended at 7:34pm