

## **GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE**

Minutes of a Meeting of the General Services Committee held at **6.30pm on Tuesday 17 March 2026** at the Town Hall, Banbury.

Present: Councillor Cherry (Chair), Councillor Biegel (Vice Chair)  
Councillors: Richards

Alternate: Councillor Hussain for Councillor Elugwu  
Councillor Harwood for Councillor Strangwood

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

Members of the public: 1

**BTC.6/26 Apologies for Absence**  
Cllr Elugwu & Cllr Strangwood

**BTC.7/26 Declarations of Interest**  
None.

**BTC.8/26 Minutes of the Last Meeting**  
**IT WAS RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 27 January 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Biegel.

**BTC.9/26 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.  
Arboricultural Works.  
Park Ranger Service / Play Areas.  
Cleansing Service.  
Bus Shelters.  
CCTV.  
Sports Facility – Hard Surfaces.  
People's Park Café.  
Hardwick Hill – Cemetery Extension..

### **Parks & Cemeteries Team**

- ◆ All machinery and power tools have been serviced in readiness for the summer maintenance season.
- ◆ The winter works programme, hedge/shrub pruning and grass edging, is now all complete.
- ◆ Grass cutting operations have started.
- ◆ The cemetery team are busy undertaking burial duties in our cemeteries and continue to deliver the service in line with funeral bookings.
- ◆ The preparation of football pitches continues weekly in-line with fixtures. Unfortunately, due to extreme wet weather conditions play on pitches has had to be cancelled to avoid damage to playing surface over the last two months.

- ◆ Work on the preparation of fine turf facilities, bowls and cricket, for the coming season have been undertaken, works completed include aeration, herbicide and fertiliser applications, verticutting and overseeding.
- ◆ Work has started on the preparation of the allotment plots at the new site on the Bloxham Vale estate. This work includes:
  - Rotavating and levelling
  - Levelling and compacting footpaths
  - Installing concrete plot dividers
  - Installing green waste compost bins and bases
- ◆ Following these works, allotments will be offered plot holders who have registered an interest, in time for the new growing season.
- ◆ Following a resignation received at the end of February, we have a vacancy for a Parks & Cemeteries Operative, we have advertised to recruit a replacement.

#### **4th Corner Landscape Contract**

- ◆ The contractor performance against the works schedule is all on track.
- ◆ The winter pruning works is now complete.
- ◆ Grass cutting operations have started.
- ◆ The Landscape & Arboricultural Manager is working with 4th Corner to deliver a pond re-lining and habitat enhancement scheme in Spiceball Park, following a successful grant application being made to Cherwell District Council.
- ◆ Finally with the break in wet weather, 4th Corner have been able to undertake specialist aeration operations on the football pitches, works include: spiking, brushing, light rolling and Vertidrainage is planned before the end of March.

#### **Arboricultural Works and Tree Survey**

- ◆ Tenders have been received from Arboricultural Consultants to undertake the surveying of the Councils Tree Stock. Following the evaluation a contract an award will be made for the survey to start in April.
- ◆ Further tree works packages have been issued for health and safety works to be completed by the end of March.
- ◆ The replacement tree planting programme for this year is taking place at People's Park, Easington Recreation Ground, Hardwick Park and Horton View.

#### **Park Ranger Service / Play Area Update**

- ◆ The Park Rangers continue to carry out weekly visual Health & Safety inspections formally recording utilising the new mobile PSS Live software package.
- ◆ The annual inspection of all play facilities has been ordered and is currently being undertaken by an independent Registered Play Inspector International (RPII) consultant.
- ◆ The team continue to undertake repair work on the findings made as a result of the inspection reports.
- ◆ The PlayZone maintenance, this work includes debris removal and carpet brushing is being undertaken by the ranger team weekly at both sites.
- ◆ A number of anti-social behaviour/vandalism issues have required the rangers attention:
  - Damage to the PlayZone gates.
  - Damage to boundary gate and fencing at Thornbury Rise Open Space.
  - Attempted break in to buildings at People's Park.

- ◆ The Contract for the installation of the new “Space for Girls” play equipment at Princess Diana Park has been completed, ready for wetpour safety surfacing to be installed. Works should be complete by the end of March 2026.

### **Cleansing Service Update**

- ◆ Cleaning of public toilets is ongoing, no problems to report.
- ◆ The weekly cleaning of all sports pavilions is now underway in-line with fixtures.
- ◆ Toolbox refresher training for cleaners is planned for end of March.
- ◆ 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.

### **Bus Shelters Update**

- ◆ Officers have received a number of requests for the installation of new bus shelters in locations that currently only have a bus stop post and sign.
- ◆ Banbury Town Council has responsibility for 66 bus shelters across Banbury. We manage; 42 of them through a long-term agreement with them Bauer Media and the remaining 24 of them in-house.
- ◆ As members are aware The Town Council has a budget of £6000 for new shelters, which is sufficient funding for purchase and installation of one unit.
- ◆ The budget agreed by members was set up originally to fund a “replacement” of one of our existing 24 shelters when it comes unviable to repair due to its poor condition.
- ◆ This budget was not intended to fund installation of new shelters where currently there is not one or to change the decision of Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) who have installed a bus stop post and sign.
- ◆ Bus stops and/or shelters are installed on the highway normally by Oxfordshire County Council, or by the developer as an obligation requested by OCC in the Section 106 agreement.
- ◆ The bus routes and stops are agreed, located and provided by OCC and they decide whether it requires just a stop sign or it is appropriate to install a covered shelter. If they decide to install a shelter, the Town or Parish then take on the responsibility for its maintenance, repair and its eventual replacement.
- ◆ Below is a link to the full Bus Service Improvement Plan:  
<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/roads-and-transport/OxfordshireBSIP.pdf>  
Please see APPENDIX 1 attached, Clause 3.2.4 details information about improvement proposals for bus stops and shelters.
- ◆ The budget description of “New Shelters” may have led to some confusion, that it is there for brand new provision in locations that don’t currently have a covered shelter.
- ◆ This financial year alone the Town Council has four requests for new bus shelters to replace the bus stop and sign provision provided by OCC. If these requests were to be actioned in addition to the replacement of one of our existing units this would result in £25,000 expenditure against an approved budget of £6000.
- ◆ There is a risk, that by actioning these requests, the general public and/or elected members may believe that the statutory function of providing public transport infrastructure sits with the Town Council, instead of Oxfordshire County Council. This could lead to many more requests being made to Banbury Town Council for new bus shelters with expectation that the Town Council is the provider.

- ◆ Without revisiting the approved budget and making a change to procedural policy in terms of public transport infrastructure provision, Officer's recommend that the existing arrangements and responsibilities of both Oxfordshire County Council as provider/decision maker on bus stops v shelters, and the Town Council continuing to work in partnership by taking on the ongoing maintenance, repairs and replacement of shelters should remain the position.

#### **CCTV Update**

- ◆ We have been informed that the repair to the CCTV camera is still not working in centre of People's Park. The latest update received ids that Cherwell District Council are still pursuing the repair by their engineer to change the faulty RCD breaker and installed an isolator unit.

#### **Sports Facility - Hard Surfaces Update**

- ◆ The contract for the refurbishment of sports surfaces by Sovereign Sports Ltd is well underway.
- ◆ The Contractor started on site 19th January 2026, works completed so far are:
- ◆ Construction, resurfacing and cleaning of Tennis Courts at Horton View.
- ◆ Construction, resurfacing and cleaning of the MUGA facilities at Moorfields and Bankside Parks.
- ◆ February - The Cleaning of all the other MUGA facilities within the other parks across Banbury.
- ◆ The only work outstanding is the final painting of all facilities when weather conditions allow, this is anticipated to be completed at the end of March/April.

#### **People's Park Café Update**

- ◆ Following the evaluations of submissions shortlisting and interviews a lease agreement was signed by the successful company on the 1st March 2026.
- ◆ The successful operator was "The Café Banbury Limited" and has taken the keys to the premises and plans to be open for business by the Easter Bank holiday.

#### **Hardwick Hill Cemetery Extension Update**

- ◆ The planning application was submitted to Cherwell District Council on the 28th January 2026.

The Committee is invited to **RESOLVE**

To note the Parks and Cemeteries Service Update.

To note the 4th Corner Landscape Contract Update.

To note the Arboricultural Works Update.

To note the Ranger Service / Play Area Update.

To note the Cleansing Service Update.

To note the CCTV Update.

To note the Sports Facility – Hard Surfaces Update.

To note the People's Park Café Update.

To note the Cemetery Extension Update.

To **Approve** the recommendation regarding the bus shelter policy.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** to receive and note the parks and cemeteries report and all updates.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** to approve the bus shelter policy recommendation.

**BTC.10/26 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 10 March 2026. 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. The main causes are addressed as follows:

**General Services variances were principally:**

- ◆ Cleaning contract costs with CDC will be invoiced in April for the previous year, therefore accrued at year end.
- ◆ Staffing costs across the committee remains within budget.
- ◆ Earmarked reserves to purchase a new digger and tractor is anticipated to be released in April/May 2026 upon receipt of machinery.
- ◆ Credits received for adjustments to Water meter readings year-to-date.
- ◆ Timing of invoicing for grounds maintenance works impacted by timing of February invoice across Parks.
- ◆ Quotes for works to boundary walls (incl' People's Park and Longlandes Way) and fencing (incl' Bankside, Meadowsweet Way and Grimsbury Square) have been received, earmark reserves are held to enable funding of works following contractual agreement and completion, this protects revenue budgets to fund ongoing operational costs.
- ◆ Tree works address the appointment of an independent arboriculture inspections to undertake accelerated inspections of the entire estate,
- ◆ Funds to adopt software to improve Grounds Maintenance management and mapping will be placed in earmark reserves.
- ◆ Earmark reserves to complete improvements to Woodgreen Allotment access road will be retained to 2026/27.
- ◆ Commuted sums have now been received to reflect the adoption of Thenford Way play area and Bloxham Vale allotments, which will be recognised as revenue over the next 15 years on a straight line basis to offset operational costs associated with maintenance obligations of the sites contained in the S106 agreements with developers.
- ◆ Earmarked reserves to purchase a sports mower will be recognised in 2026/27 when delivery is anticipated.
- ◆ Earmark reserves are anticipated to be released 50% in March 26 and 50% in April 26 relating to Bankside and Moorfields MUGA resurfacing and resurfacing of sports hardstanding, whilst funding of Hillview play area refurbishment and Sports will be released in 26/27 upon contract completion.
- ◆ Release of Hardwick Hill cemetery extension funding relating to completion of planning requirements is anticipated in this financial year.

The Committee is invited to **receive and note** the Income & Expenditure report. The Committee is invited to **note** that underspends to current budgets be utilised and transferred to earmarked projects to reflect increased inflationary pressures, thereby supporting delivery of planned Council objectives.

The Committee is invited to;

**Authorise** the creation of an earmark reserve to reflect legal support costs £15k.

**Authorise** the creation of an earmark reserve to reflect improvements to CCTV provision £5k.

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

**IT WAS RESOLVED** to note that underspends to current budgets be utilised and transferred to earmarked projects to reflect increased inflationary pressures, thereby supporting delivery of planned Council objectives.

**IT WAS RESOLVED** to **authorise** the creation of an earmark reserve to reflect legal support costs £15k and to authorise the creation of an earmark reserve to reflect improvements to CCTV provision £5k.

Date of next meeting – **Tuesday 02 June 2026 at 18:30pm**

The meeting ended at 7:03pm