

GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Meeting of the General Services Committee held at **6.30pm on Tuesday 26 August 2025** at the Town Hall, Banbury.

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

Alternate Members: Councillor Mallon for Councillor Strangwood
Councillor Mears for Councillor Tohill-Martin
Councillor Hussain for Councillor Okeke

Officers: Mark Hassall (Town Clerk & RFO)
Paul Almond (Environment Director)
Helen Durkin (Executive Officer)
Nicky Halford (Parks & Cemeteries Manager)

GS.22/25 Apologies for Absence
Councillor Strangwood

GS.23/25 Declarations of Interest
None.

GS.24/25 Minutes of the Last Meeting
IT WAS RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 13 May 2025 and the 03 June 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

GS.25/25 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.
Cleansing Service.
Parks Lighting / CCTV.
PlayZone Schemes.
Sports Facility – Hard Surfaces.
People's Park Café.
Hanwell Fields Cricket Facility.

Parks & Cemeteries Team

- ◆ The team are up to date with all scheduled work.
- ◆ The grounds team have delivered a high standard of maintenance on the cricket and bowls facilities, Banbury Lions Cricket team even hosted an international match at Hanwell Fields against Pakistan.
- ◆ The planting day in the park was a great success with all the school children in attendance and participating in the planting with this year's theme "My Favourite Story". The parks team has had a constant battle this year, due to the hot weather, to keep the summer bedding plants looking good at People's Park and the two Cemeteries.

- ◆ The cemetery team have been very busy for this time year undertaking burial duties in our cemeteries and have delivered the service in line with funeral bookings.
- ◆ The team made sure the park was presented at its best for planting day, Town Mayors Funday, Playday and VJ commemoration event.
- ◆ The Council had an inspection of its Pesticide Procedures by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). I am pleased to report that the Council had a clean bill of health with regard to its safe use and storage of pesticides. Two minor recommendations were identified by the HSE, both items have been actioned.

4th Corner Landscape Contract

- ◆ The contractor performance against the works schedule is good.
- ◆ They are currently fully staffed in line with those that were identified within the terms of the contract extension agreement.
- ◆ The wild flower meadows that were added to the contract were a great success, the yellow rattle germinated and provided good colour in early summer. The contracted cuts, thrashing and bailing were undertaken at the optimum time, to ensure seed was dropped for next year's regrowth.
- ◆ Due to the hot weather it has been difficult to undertake the post season renovations of the football pitches, despite best efforts germination of the reseeded worn areas has not been as effective as it should be at this point prior to the start of the new playing season. Working with 4th Corner the plan next year, if weather conditions allow, will be to start renovations early before the end of the playing season.
- ◆ The second street weed control treatment of roadside kerbs was completed in July as scheduled.

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 team continue to undertake repair work on the findings made as a result of the inspection reports.
- ◆ The new trim trail unit at People's Park was installed and opened in time for the School Summer Holidays.
- ◆ The refurbishment of the skate ramp facility was undertaken at Spiceball Park in time for the School Summer Holidays. The work included complete replacement of the riding surface on the beginners ramp, replacement of all damaged sections on the advanced ramp and repainting of all metal work on both units.
- ◆ The Rangers have provided support and assistance in the delivery of the Council's Event programme over the summer.

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.

Lighting / CCTV Update

- ◆ The run of lighting columns at Chandos Sports Ground to serve the PlayZone have now been installed.
- ◆ The new lighting for Banbury Cross and the Fine Lady Statue have now been installed.
- ◆ The problem with the CCTV camera that was not working in centre of People's Park has been investigated and Cherwell District Council have ordered the repair.

PlayZone Scheme Update

- ◆ The construction of the Chandos Close Play Zone is almost complete, there is only the flood lighting and some remedial works to be completed. It will be ready for the being officially opened on the 5th of September as planned.
- ◆ The construction of the Princess Diana Park PlayZone is under way and should be completed in October. Affected local residents were informed of the project by means of letter drop.

Sports Facility - Hard Surfaces Update

- ◆ The trees affecting the Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGA) at Moorfields Park and Bankside Park have now been removed and the stumps treated to kill the roots.
- ◆ The tree in the Sanctuary Housing property affecting the Tennis Courts at Hornton View Sports Ground has now been removed.
- ◆ As approved at The General Services Committee on 03/06/2025 and the Resources Committee on the 10/06/2025, quotations can now be invited for:
- ◆ The resurfacing and painting of the MUGA facilities at Moorfields and Bankside Parks.
- ◆ The cleaning and repainting of all the other MUGA facilities within the other parks across Banbury.
- ◆ The resurfacing and painting of courts 5 and 6 at Horton View Sports Ground.

- ◆ The cleaning, surface repairs and repainting of courts 1-4 at Horton View Sports Ground.

People's Park Café Update

- ◆ Unfortunately, the lease to operate the Café in People's Park with the current operator was ended on the 15th August due to breaches of the lease agreement.
- ◆ Once the café is cleared and prepared for reletting the Council will need to advertise for a new Café Operator.

Hanwell Fields Cricket Facility Update

- ◆ The current Licence to operate a cricket academy during the summer season at Hanwell Fields ends on the 31st August 2025. The Licence holder Al Medina 313 have over the last two years have made Hanwell Fields Sports Ground the home for their team Banbury Lions. The team has had great success and they have approached the Council to sign a new licence on a longer term.
- ◆ To enable them to continue to progress into the higher cricket leagues and to attract funding to develop the academy they need to demonstrate that they have security of a home ground into the future.
- ◆ The recommendation to members is that Officers prepare a longer licence for signing by Al Medina 313 to continue to develop and operate their Cricket Academy based at Hanwell Fields, ensuring good use of the Sports Facility during each summer cricket season.

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 Parks Lighting Update.

To note the PlayZone Scheme Update

To note the Sports Facility – Hard Surfaces.

To note the People's Park Café.

To recommend to Resources Committee - 13.3 The Preparation of a Licence for a Cricket Academy to operate at Hanwell Fields Sports Ground.

GS.26/25 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 26 August 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, and have now incorporated central government annual salary increases agreed with trade unions of 3.2% effective from 1st April 2025.
- ◆ Timing of invoicing for grounds maintenance works impacted by timing of August invoice across Parks.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Sports facilities works to get facilities reviewed ahead of the football season, whilst the dry and hard ground conditions have hampered goal mouth restoration, other remedial works have been completed. NNDR council tax adjustment backdated to reflect increased income at Hanwell Fields relating to increased sports use.
- ◆ Additional expenditure is being incurred to secure and upgrade the lighting of the Banbury Cross and Fine Lady statues, which is within budget parameters following successful grant applications via CDC from central government UK SPF fund (Capital – Park Refurb), this project is 70% complete ahead of the darker evenings.
- ◆ Completion of Chandos PlayZone is followed by the installation of a PlayZone at Princess Diana park, with grant funding for the full costs incurred due to be received from CDC (25%) and Football Foundation (75%).
- ◆ Improvements to bus shelters providing Green Roofs (in partnership with Bauer Media Outdoor (nee Clear Channel), and Real Time Info (in partnership with OCC).

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

The meeting ended at 7:32pm