

GENERAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a Meeting of the General Services Committee held at **6.30pm on Tuesday 02 June 2026** at the Town Hall, Banbury.

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

Alternate: Councillor Hussain for Councillor Richards

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

BTC.16/26 Apologies for Absence
Cllr Richards

BTC.17/26 Declarations of Interest
None.

BTC.18/26 Minutes of the Last Meeting
IT WAS RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on the 12 May 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Biegel.

BTC.19/26 Parks and Cemeteries Service
The Committee considered a report of the Director of Environment providing an update for Members on:

Parks & Cemeteries Team.
Park Ranger Service / Play Areas.
4th Corner Landscape Contract.
Tree Survey / Arboricultural Works.
Allotments – Bloxham Vale.
Pond Refurbishment Project – Spiceball Park.
Cleansing Service.
Bus Shelters.
CCTV – People's Park.
Hard Surface Contract - Sports Facilities.
People's Park Café.
Hardwick Hill – Cemetery Extension.
Walled Garden Hard Landscaping Contract – People's Park.

Parks & Cemeteries Team

- ◆ The team are busy with grass cutting.
- ◆ The floral bedding in People's Park and the Cemeteries is being stripped out, the beds will be prepared in readiness for the Summer Bedding delivery in June. The plant giveaway was well received again by members of the public.
- ◆ The cemetery team continue to undertake burial duties in our cemeteries delivering a high standard of service in line with funeral bookings.
- ◆ Work continues on the maintenance of the fine turf facilities, bowls and cricket, ensuring they are in good condition for club fixtures.
- ◆ Following the advertisement and interviews of the vacant position, the Council has successfully recruited a new Parks & Cemeteries Operative to join the team.

Park Ranger Service / Play Area Update

- ◆ They 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 was completed 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 inspections and maintenance continues weekly to be undertaken by the ranger team at both sites.
- ◆ The anti-social behaviour issue of motorbikes riding around the Park and Play Area, appears to have stopped, following the installation of rigid fencing replacing the gated cut through from Thornbury Rise and the permitted right of way next to the new development.
- ◆ The Contract for the installation of the new “Space for Girls” play equipment at Princess Diana Park was completed and opened 2nd April 2026, in time for the Easter Bank Holiday.
- ◆ The skate ramp at Spiceball Park requires some repairs to the riding surface which has been actioned to ensure it is undertaken before the summer holidays.

4th Corner Landscape Contract

- ◆ The team are also busy with grass cutting.
- ◆ The first weed treatment of roadside kerbs was completed by the end of May.
- ◆ Following the end of the football season, the sports pitch post season renovation works of spiking, top dressing, seeding and fertiliser application was all completed.
- ◆ The contractors performance against the works schedule is all on track.
- ◆ Early discussions have started with 4th Corner Landscaping Ltd regarding the available 3 year contract extension option.

Tree Survey / Arboricultural Works

- ◆ Following the evaluation of tenders received, a contract was awarded to Keystone Environmental Ltd for the surveying of all the Council’s tree stock. They have started the inspections and have completed 50% so far, with completion of the survey due by mid-June.
- ◆ Tree works have been issued for health and safety works at St Louis Meadow, Bankside Park, Spiceball Park and Parklands.
- ◆ Young tree maintenance including watering of the newly planted trees has been organised and is being undertaken.

Allotments – Bloxham Vale

- ◆ Following the installation of the plot dividers, the Parks and Cemeteries Team did some great work on the preparation of the allotment plots at the new site on the Bloxham Vale estate.
- ◆ The staff removed the weeds and stones, rotovated and levelled the plots, making sure they were ready for the Mayor to officially open them on 9th April 2026, in time for the main growing season.
- ◆ The Park Rangers assisted in the preparation of the Allotments at Bloxham Vale by undertaking the installation of plot markers, hard standing bases for the green waste compost bins which again was completed in in time for the official opening.
- ◆ I am pleased to inform the committee that all plots are now let to local residents of the estate, they have all been signed up and issued with new tenancy agreements.

Pond Refurbishment – Spiceball Park

- ◆ The pond re-lining and habitat enhancement scheme in Spiceball Park has now been successfully completed.
- ◆ The Landscape & Arboricultural Manager delivered the project, working collaboratively, with 4th Corner Landscapes Ltd, the Park Rangers and Wild Banbury (community volunteers).
- ◆ The funding for the project came from a grant from Cherwell District Council.
- ◆ The project not only revitalises an important habitat for local wildlife but also demonstrates how working with partners and careful environmental management can significantly improve green spaces for people and nature alike.

Cleansing Service Update

- ◆ Cleaning of public toilets is ongoing, no problems to report.
- ◆ The weekly cleaning of all sports pavilions continues in-line with fixtures.
- ◆ We currently have a vacancy for a Cleansing Operative (part-time), following the resignation of one of the team, we will be undergoing a recruitment process to find a replacement.
- ◆ 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

- ◆ Unfortunately, the Bus Shelter on Highlands, by Hereford Way was crashed into by an out of control vehicle on 6th February 2026, resulting in a total destruction of the shelter. Following receipt of a Police report giving the drivers details, the shelter was removed and an insurance claim was made.
- ◆ The claim has now been approved, officers have placed an order for a new shelter, we are now awaiting manufacture and installation date from the supplier.

CCTV Update – People's Park

- ◆ Cherwell District Council have reported that the camera in People's Park has now had the RCD isolator unit changed. This has given power back to the camera as well as the light that is attached to it, however, the control room have said that the camera is still not working.
- ◆ The new CCTV agreement, which came into effect on the 1st April 2026, means that Thames Valley Police are now responsible the maintenance and hardware. They have been informed they need to look at the camera issue to resolve.
- ◆ The Chairman of this Committee has been made aware by Cherwell District Council and will follow up with Thames Valley Police.

Sports Facility - Hard Surfaces Update

- ◆ The contract for the refurbishment of sports surfaces by Sovereign Sports Ltd is nearly complete.
- ◆ There are only a couple of Multi-Use Games Areas to receive the final acrylic painting which is due to be finished by the 12th June 2026.
- ◆ The improvements to the Tennis Courts and MUGA's look great and users will benefit from the refurbished facilities in time for the summer when usage is at its highest.

People's Park Café Update

- ◆ The Café was officially opened on the 31st March 2026 attended by the Mayor and the Leader of the Council, in time for the Easter Bank Holiday weekend.
- ◆ The new operator fitted out the café with new equipment and has installed an outside covered seating area.
- ◆ The Café is providing a comprehensive range of food and drinks for visitors to the park to enjoy.
- ◆ Following inspection by Cherwell District Council's Environmental Health inspector, I am pleased to inform members that the Café received a 5 star Food Hygiene Certificate.
- ◆ "The Café" has been well promoted with a strong social media following with customers benefiting from introductory promotions, a loyalty scheme, new weekly specials, and are now operating an ordering and delivery service.
- ◆ The new operation is a great success, the operator is offering a professional service, which is being well received by the customers.
- ◆ The Café is busy and now an valuable asset, which is attracting additional visitors to the Park.

Hardwick Hill Cemetery Extension Update

- ◆ Following submission of planning application there has been some additional information requested by Cherwell District Council consultees.
- ◆ The additional information was in connection with the Landscape and Ecology Maintenance Plan, Tree Planting Proposals and Cycle Parking. This information has now been sent back to the Planning Authority and we are awaiting a response.

Walled Garden Hard Landscaping Contract – People's Park

- ◆ The hard landscape contract tender has now been advertised, the intended programme is:
 - Tender return date of 30th June 2026.
 - Tender Evaluation 1st July – 7th July 2026.
 - Award of Contract 8th July 2026.
 - Contract Start Mid-End of July 2026.
 - Contract Completion 30th September 2026
- ◆ The Committee is invited to approve that, following the evaluation of tender returns and subject to costs being within the agreed budget, Officers in conjunction with the Chairman of General Services Committee award the contract and proceed with the project as detailed above.

The Committee is invited to **RECEIVE AND TO NOTE;**

The Parks and Cemeteries Service Update.

The Ranger Service / Play Area Update.

The 4th Corner Landscape Contract Update.

The Tree Survey / Arboricultural Works Update.

The Allotments – Bloxham Vale Update.

The Cleansing Service Update.

The Pond Refurbishment Project Update.

The Bus Shelter Update.

The CCTV – People's Park Update.

The Hard Surface Contract – Sports Facilities Update.

The Café – People's Park Update.

The Cemetery Extension – Hardwick Hill Update.

The committee is invited **TO APPROVE** that Officers proceed with the tendering and award of the Hard Landscaping Contract for the Walled Garden at People's Park, as detailed in the last item of this report.

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

IT WAS RESOLVED to approve the walled garden landscaping contract.

IT WAS RESOLVED that the Town Clerk will write a letter, on behalf of Banbury Town Council, to Cherwell District Council for an update in respect of the CCTV issues in People's Park.

BTC.20/26 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 21 May 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:

- ◆ Staffing costs remain within budget, and are subject to central government annual salary increases agreed with trade unions which will be backdated to 1st April. This underspend is compounded by a vacancy in Parks, with recruitment underway.
- ◆ Expenditure on ClearSkies software license to manage burial space records will be accommodated within the annual budget process.
- ◆ Timing of invoicing for grounds maintenance works impacted by timing of May invoice.
- ◆ Landscaping costs include new extended seating area hardstanding outside the café in People's 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.
- ◆ The first of three weed spraying sessions is currently programmed to be completed in May following the colder weather.
- ◆ Insurance for fleet vehicles has been completed, with wider insurance cover being renewed in July.
- ◆ The lease for cricket at Hanwell Fields has been completed, with a minimum term of five years with potential to extend. Hire of PlayZones continues to increase, and provision of tennis camps aim to further support engagement in healthy activities across parks.
- ◆ Replacement of the boiler at Horton View pavilion is planned to be completed before the football season commences.
- ◆ The final invoice for Space for Girls at Princess Diana Park is anticipated following completion of snagging issues raised with the contractor

The Committee is invited to **receive and note** the Income & Expenditure report.

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

Date of next meeting – **Tuesday 25 August 2026 at 18:30pm**

The meeting ended at 7:30pm