



ALCESTER TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23



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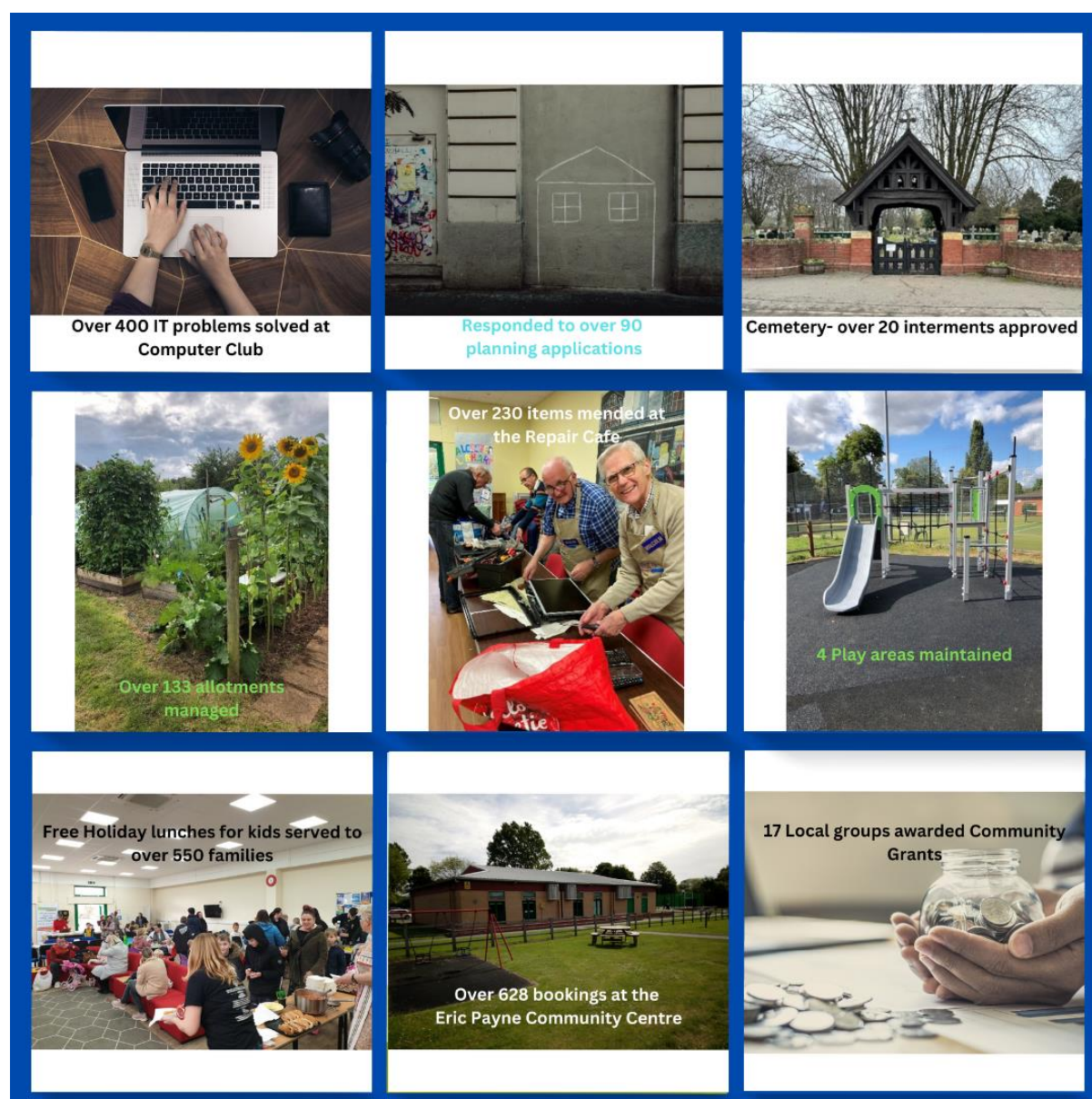
Welcome to Alcester Town Council's 2022-23 Annual Report

This is the report of the Town Council and covers the activities and services it has delivered from May 2022 to April 2023.

The Council consists of sixteen councillors, all elected every four years. The next election is on 4th May 2023.

The parish is currently divided into three wards, Alcester West, Alcester Oversley and Oversley Green (see back page for representation).

The Town Council Year in Numbers



FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

The Finance & General Purposes Committee (F & GP) is comprised of the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, and three other members elected from the Town Council.

Councillor membership:

- Cllr Kathryn Cargill, Mayor (Chair)
- Cllr Vaughan Blake
- Cllr Mike Bowe
- Cllr Gill Forman
- Professor Cllr Clive Neal-Sturgess



Committee Clerk: Vanessa Lowe, Town Clerk

Meetings and purpose: Finance and General Purposes Committee (F&GP) meets on the last Tuesday of each month.

F&GP has delegated authority for management of the Council's financial and legal affairs. All budgets are monitored on an ongoing basis.

The Town Council received an unqualified report from its external Auditors with no matters reported which required attention for the year ended Apr 2022.

The main propositions to Full Council during the year were:

- To authorise the Town Clerk to purchase £1000 of supermarket vouchers from the ATC Hardship Fund to help acute hardship cases amongst residents
- To authorise the Mayor to sign the Financial Contribution Agreement for Section 106 monies from the Allimore Lane Development to be used for the renovation of the Greig Hall
- To agree the use of CIL funds received for the installation of new doors at the Greig Hall
- To adopt the new Publications Policy
- To authorise increases in hire fees at the Eric Payne Community Centre
- To authorise the Town Clerk to use funds from General Reserves, if required, to cover Greig Hall expenditure pending receipt of expected monies from Section 106 Agreements and the WCC Green Shoots Fund
- To adopt the new Dignity at Work Policy
- To adopt amendments to the Health and Safety Policy and the CCTV Policy
- To adopt the new Working Groups Protocol
- To adopt the budget for 2023-24 with a precept of £329,813
- To approve the Annual Risk Assessment

Royal events

- The Town Council organised a Street Party on 5th June for Her Late Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee in June 2022
- The Mayor read the proclamation of His Majesty The King's Accession on Church Green on 16th September 2022

Cllr Kathryn Cargill, Mayor

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Councillor membership:

- Cllr Mike Bowe (Chair)
- Cllr Mark Cargill (Vice-Chair)
- Cllr Clive Neal-Sturgess
- Cllr Vaughan Blake
- Cllr Gill Forman
- Cllr Wendy Mills



Committee Clerk: Sarah Duran, Deputy Town Clerk

Meetings: Planning Committee meetings are mostly held using Zoom video conferencing, which enables the public to attend without any restriction on the number of attendees. The Planning Committee were pleased to welcome 8 members of the public during the year. Once a year a planning meeting

is conducted in person and held at Globe House Priory Road Alcester.

In the last year, the committee received 84 applications Supporting 9, Objecting to 27, and responded with No Objection on 44 occasions. A further 4 applications where Alcester Town Council was the applicant were not considered and the committee offered No Representation on each occasion.

There were 7 occasions where members of the committee declared an interest in a specific application under consideration by the committee. On each occasion the committee member left the meeting and took no part in the committee's consideration of those applications.

More information on the factors considered in each of the 84 cases, and the reasons for the responses determined, can be found in the minutes of all planning meetings held throughout the year available on the Alcester Town Council website www.alcester-tc.gov.uk



I would like to take this opportunity to mention the Alcester Housing Needs Survey conducted in association with Warwickshire Rural Community Council and which concluded at the end of March 2023.

A lack of suitable and affordable housing in rural communities has been a serious problem for many years, with house prices outstripping average incomes by large margins. This can often lead to local people having to move away. Alcester Town Council hope that the results from

this survey will shine a light on the scale of the problem in the local area and provide valuable information enabling a greater focus on finding solutions. Whilst recognising that the Town Council does not have the financial muscle to build affordable homes or social housing, we can work with others to get the attention this matter urgently needs.

Cllr Mike Bowe, Chair

NALC Star Council Awards – Council of the Year

In October 2022, Alcester Town Council was named as Council of the Year. The Council was particularly recognised for going above and beyond the traditional role of a parish council in its efforts to promote health and wellbeing for its residents. There are 10,000 parish and town councils in England and finalists were chosen by leading experts within the local government sector.



The Greig Hall

We reopened the Greig Hall! This journey started many years ago almost immediately following the closure of the hall in 2011. Many efforts over that period were made to reopen it but failed. Due to the perseverance and dedication of many people, the entire site including the Leisure Centre was taken over by Stratford District Council in late 2020, with a long-term lease for the Memorial Hall being granted to Alcester Town Council in April 2021.

The restoration of the Hall was quite a journey, but the whole community came together with the common goal of restoring and reopening the Hall for the benefit of the wider community.

The official opening was on 17th February 2023 with a welcome concert on the 18th February. All of this happened within two years from signing the lease.

We wish the new charity, The Greig Hall CIO, every success in running the Hall.



Lead Councillor Reports

Community Resilience

- Conducted an audit of the emergency equipment stored at the Fire Station and found that a number of items are out of date. Replacements in hand
- The Community Emergency Plan has been updated and submitted to Warwickshire County Council

Business & Tourism

- Production and distribution of a full Town events guide for 2023
- Working on the production of a new Town guide and directory of Town organisations
- Facilitated the refurbishment of the Globe roundabout and Globe sculpture
- Continuing to work on the improvement of disabled access to shops
- Working with Warwickshire Towns Networking group to share experiences and identify opportunities particularly in respect to the High Street

Road Safety & Speed Watch

- Undertaken 7 Speed Watch sessions

Health & Wellbeing

- Successful funding application for supermarket vouchers to help families in need at Christmas
- Awards for our Well-Connected Computer Group, the Repair Café and the Crafty Lunch Club. All these groups continue to grow in popularity
- Menopause Awareness event held, which was very well attended
- Development and support of the Community Fridge
- Spin-off workshops from the Repair Café for sewing assistance and bike repairs
- Holiday Lunch Clubs continue and are very popular, and are now offering cost of living advice and free fruit and vegetable bags



Youth Engagement

- Youth competition held for Clean Air Day 16th June 2022 to engage youngsters with council work and climate change – The Mayor presented the prizes to the two winners
- Pop up survey completed by 272 respondents which identified that young people's priorities were their mental health and environmental issues, including their 'outdoor space'
- Engagement to encourage participation in the annual Window Wanderland. Two community workshops were held to aid participation. A successful event this year with 36 households making amazing window displays
- Councillor Mark Cargill developed a lesson plan, aimed at Year 10 students for three secondary schools in Alcester linking with Warwick University and Stratford-on-Avon District Council

Cemetery

- The number of interments this Council year were 20, comprising 7 burials and 13 interments of ashes
- In August 2021 a report was completed on the condition of the trees in the cemetery. All the work that was identified has now been completed
- The Town Council is a member of the ICCM (The Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management) and this year we are planning to join BRAMM (The British register of Accredited Memorial Masons)
- Many thanks to Town Council employees Paul and Jack Hands for all their hard work in maintaining the cemetery to a very high standard

Open Spaces

- Attended a meeting with a representative from "The Trees Call to Action Project" (TCAP), a new project that will enable communities to learn how to care for trees or to access funds for tree and hedgerow planting. Outlined the various areas within Alcester and indicated that we would like to discuss the maintenance of existing as well as the planting of new trees
- Devising a programme to reduce/remove invasive Himalayan Balsam along our riverbanks
- Met with the resident behind the Positivity Rocks installation in the Weir Field, which has deteriorated significantly. Programme to restore the feature and to ensure they are protected and maintained for the future
- Three yearly inspection of all trees owned by ATC completed

Climate Change Working Group

- Climate Emergency declared by Alcester Town Council in June 2022
- Working group established including councillors, residents, community groups and businesses
- Clean Air Day competition held for young people in June 2022 (annual event)
- Climate Engagement event for the community planned for 24th June 2023

ALCESTER TOWN COUNCIL COUNCILLORS

Alcester West Ward	Alcester Oversley Ward (continued)
 <p>Mark Cargill Lead Councillor: The Greig Hall</p>	 <p>Kathrin Foster Joint Lead Councillor: Youth Engagement</p>
 <p>Gavin Smithers Lead Councillor: Play Areas</p>	 <p>Andrew Foster Lead Councillor: Road Safety and Speedwatch</p>
 <p>Emma Randle Lead Councillor: Community Engagement</p>	 <p>Keith Greenaway Lead Councillor: Allotments</p>
 <p>Clive Neal-Sturgess Lead Councillor: Community Resilience</p>	 <p>David Henderson Lead Councillor: Public Footpaths</p>
 <p>Erick Wilson Lead Councillor: Open Spaces</p>	 <p>Alison Leask Joint Lead Councillor: Youth Engagement</p>
Alcester Oversley Ward	 <p>Wendy Mills Lead Councillor: Communication</p>
 <p>Vaughan Blake Lead Councillor: Business & Tourism</p>	Oversley Green Ward
 <p>Mike Bowe Lead Councillor: Planning</p>	 <p>Kathryn Cargill Lead Councillor: Health and Wellbeing</p>
 <p>Gill Forman Lead Councillor: Cemetery</p>	

