



ALCESTER TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT 2025-26



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Introduction

This is the report of Alcester Town Council and covers the activities and services it has delivered from May 2025 to April 2026.

The Council has sixteen councillors, all elected for a four-year term. The next election is scheduled for May 2027.

Cllr David Henderson was elected as Mayor in May 2025 with Cllr Gill Forman elected as Deputy Mayor.

The parish of Alcester is divided into two Wards – Alcester West and Alcester East. Councillors are elected to represent each Ward as identified on the back page.

Finance

The Town Council sets the precept each year in January. The precept is the primary source of income for the Town Council and is a small part of the Council Tax which residents pay to Stratford-on-Avon District Council.

At the Full Council meeting on 6th January 2026, the Town Council agreed to request a precept of £429,177 from Stratford-on-Avon District Council for the year 2026-27.

The Town Council uses the precept to run council business and to provide a wide range of services to residents. These include four allotment sites, four playgrounds, the cemetery on Birmingham Road, civic and community events such as Remembrance Sunday, grants to voluntary organisations, Health and Wellbeing projects, maintenance and upkeep of the Eric Payne Community Centre, maintenance of the Alcester Community Shed, maintenance of Priory Meadow, Centenary Field and other open spaces and miscellaneous street furniture such as signs, benches and bins.

Planning

The Planning Committee meets once a month to consider all planning applications in Alcester. The Council are a consultee in the Stratford-on-Avon District Council planning process and during the year considered 52 applications. The Committee supported 3, objected to 8, and responded with no objection to 28 applications. For tree works there is a standard response of No Representation and there were 13 such applications. One application was withdrawn before the Planning Committee had considered the application. The minutes of the Planning Committee are published on the Town Council website.

Thank You and Goodbye

Since the last annual report, we said goodbye to Cllr Corin Elliott and Cllr Andrew Foster who resigned as Town Councillors. Cllr Ray Howells served briefly as a Town Councillor during the year.

Welcome

We were pleased to welcome Cllrs Jo Andrews, Vicki Holyland, Sharon Bardha and Lucinda Boyd as Town Councillors during the year.

Neurodivergent Friendly Alcester



A major ground-breaking project this year has been the Neurodivergent Friendly Alcester project. Thanks to a grant from Church Street Property Trust, the Town Council made a film called

"A Town for All" aiming to make Alcester more welcoming for neurodivergent residents and visitors. The film has now been viewed over 1000 times on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FOrMgpSv4IQ&t=4s>

38 businesses in the town have now signed up to the pledge to increase awareness and adopt simple adjustments which improve accessibility, inclusion and understanding.



Kevin the Kiosk



Over the last couple of months our old telephone box on Henley Street, Kevin the Kiosk, has been transformed from an old shabby looking telephone box into a refurbished defibrillator home. The defibrillator is a welcome addition to the town which now has access to over 20 defibrillators around the town and this one gives peace of mind that there is a 24/7 accessible defibrillator at each end of the High Street.



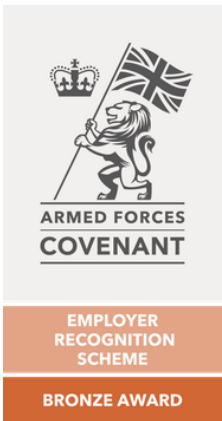
Remembrance Sunday



The Town Council organised the annual Remembrance Sunday parade on 9th November 2025, to remember all those who lost their lives in conflict.

The parade was very well supported - led by Alcester Royal British Legion accompanied by Alcester Victoria Silver Band, followed by serving members of HM forces and veterans, Lord Hertford, Deputy Lord Lieutenant, Alcester Army Cadet Force, Alcester Town Council, other Council representatives, Emergency Services, Alcester Court Leet, Alcester Churches Together, town organisations, youth organisations, schools and junior sports clubs. A short outdoor service was led by Reverend Katie Cross on Church Green where wreaths were laid, standards presented, and lives remembered.

Armed Forces Covenant



At the Full Council meeting in November 2025, the Mayor, Cllr David Henderson, signed the Armed Forces Covenant on behalf of the Town Council.

The Armed Forces Covenant, which was launched in 2015, is a nationwide promise to ensure that members of the armed forces community – serving personnel, veterans and their families – are not disadvantaged by their service. By signing the Covenant, the Town Council pledged to ensure that those who serve or have served are treated fairly and with respect in the community they defend.

Alcester Connected for Climate and Nature



Having secured a significant grant from Stratford-on-Avon District Community Climate and Nature Fund, this project has brought residents, groups and partners together to support local action for climate and nature. Activities have focused on raising awareness, encouraging practical steps that benefit biodiversity, and strengthening community collaboration around sustainability in and around Alcester.



Bloor Homes Street Naming

In November 2025 seven late members of our community had new roads named after them on Bloor Homes' Alcester Park development, off Birmingham Road.

The Mayor, Cllr David Henderson, officially unveiled the names and was joined by friends and family of those selected for the tribute.

The seven, chosen for the honour from 65 nominations were:



John Watts (Watts Close); Norman Barker (Barker Close); Peter Calvert (Calvert Close); Edwina Norris (Norris Close); Derrick Ward (Ward Avenue); Stuart Davis (Stuart Place); and Sylvia Palmer (Palmer Gardens).

In recognition of the contribution made by these local residents, Cllr Henderson said: "Each of these names represents not just a person, but a story, a legacy of kindness, courage, creativity and care for others. By naming these streets in their honour, we ensure that their contributions will be remembered and appreciated by future generations. It is both a moment of remembrance and one of gratitude."

This was the second part of a project to honour local people in this way; in 2023 we held a similar ceremony on the northern phase of the development, naming the new roads after late mayors of the town.

Grand Days Out



Grand Days Out has helped over 150 local residents, particularly older people and those at risk of isolation, enjoy organised trips and shared experiences. The project has continued to create opportunities for people to connect, explore local places and build friendships through accessible and enjoyable outings.

The trips out during this council year have visited :

- Batsford Arboretum
- RAF Museum at Cosford
- Birmingham Botanical Gardens
- Black Country Living Museum

South Warwickshire Local Plan

The South Warwickshire Local Plan (SWLP) is being developed jointly by Stratford-on Avon and Warwick District Councils. The SWLP aims to establish a long-term strategy for housing, jobs, infrastructure and climate change, with ongoing consultations to shape its development.

There have been several consultation stages which gathered input from the community and identified potential development sites. A number of sites have been identified in and around Alcester as locations where development could be suitable. There are seven small sites and one larger area, to the west of the A435 (and mainly situated in the parish of Arrow) which has been identified as an option for 'Spatial Growth' (SG21) with the potential for up to 3,163 new dwellings.

The latest consultation phase, Preferred Options (Regulation 18), ran from January to March 2025. This stage allowed residents and stakeholders to provide feedback on proposed draft policies and the emerging spatial growth strategy. Alcester Town Council submitted its Response on 5 March 2025. In summary, the Town Council submitted the strongest objection possible to SG21 for many reasons including that the extent of infrastructure required to accommodate such a large settlement would be cost and scale prohibitive. Alcester would need new highways – particularly a bridge with two lane access to a new development of over 3,000 homes. The town would require a new doctor's surgery, primary and secondary schools, a community centre, cemetery, shops, car parks, play areas, dedicated green spaces and new footpath routes. The Town Council is firmly of the opinion that the development of SG21 would be inappropriate development of the Green Belt and submitted that this site should be removed from consideration in the SWLP.

A huge number of responses were submitted by stakeholders across South Warwickshire, which has led to a delay in the next stage of the Consultation, Regulation 19, which will now be launched in June 2026.

Holiday Lunch Club

Holiday Lunches for Kids has continued to provide free meals and activities for local children during school holidays. The project has supported families during the cost-of-living challenges while ensuring children have access to nutritious food and a welcoming space to socialise.



Repair Cafe



The Repair Cafe has continued to offer residents the chance of bringing broken household items for repair by skilled volunteers. With over 300 visitors and a 61% repair success rate, the sessions help reduce waste, save money and share practical skills, while creating a friendly community space where people can meet and learn together.

Alcester Community Shed



Alcester Community Shed is now in its second full year and running very well. Membership is over 40 and the well-equipped workshop is now open for a second weekly session. The Shed brings like-minded people together not only to make things but also to pass on their skills and knowledge to others – and of course to have a cup of tea or coffee!

Shedders are engaging in community projects and they support local charities. Recently the Shedders have started building hedgehog and bat boxes for community use.

Renting out the general-purpose room has proved to be very popular making the Shed a real community asset.

Window Wanderland



Alcester Town Council organised Alcester Window Wanderland 2026 which ran from Saturday 28th Feb – Saturday 7th March 2026. Alcester's residents, businesses, community groups and schools transformed their windows into vibrant works of art, illuminating neighbourhood streets with imagination, colour, and creativity - all with the theme of 'Hope.'

Families, friends, and neighbours joined together to explore the displays, guided by a free trail map that highlighted the route.

There were no particular categories for the entrants, so the Mayor and his Consort decided on a number of winners as follows:

- Winner of Best Window by a Domestic/Private Residence:
1 Alcocks Road, Alcester
- Winner of the Best Window by a Business:
Printech Alcester, 35 High Street Alcester, in conjunction with The Depot Youth Club, Alcester.
- Winner of the Best Window by a Community Organisation:
The Crafty Lunch Club
- Overall Winner:
Barchester Cherry Trees Care Home



Mayor's Civic Awards

Alcester Town Council was delighted to host the Mayor's Civic Awards at the Greig Hall on Thursday 5 February 2026. The evening celebrated the best of Alcester in 2025.

Councillor David Henderson, Mayor of Alcester, commented, "What a night, now known as the Alcester Oscars, and truly worthy of that accolade! It was a night when we celebrated the contributions of many businesses, organisations and individuals from within our community who make Alcester such a special place to live. Everyone was a worthy winner, regardless of whether they went home with an award."

The public had been asked for nominations for each award. There was a very strong field of nominees in each category with the winners being chosen by the Mayor.

The winners were:

- Business Organisation of the Year - Camilla Jones, Jewellers
- Community Organisation of the Year - Alcester Town Walking Football Club
- Initiative of the Year (new award category for 2025) – River Arrow & Alne Revival (RAAR)
- Volunteer of the Year (new award category for 2025) – Phil Hodges
- Young Person of the Year – joint winners Harriet Busby, Luke Poole & Dylan Davis
- Citizen of the Year – Ali Buchanan
- Lifetime Achievement Award – Sue Adams



VE Day Beacon Event

On 8 May 2025, Alcester marked the 80th anniversary of VE Day, as our nation joined together to celebrate 80 years since the end of World War II in Europe.

In conjunction with the Alcester Branch of the Royal British Legion, Alcester Town Council marked this special day with a number of local events including "VE Day Proclamation" by the Town Crier and flag raising and wreaths of remembrance on the Church Green by the Mayor of Alcester, Cllr David Henderson, and Chair of the Alcester Branch of the Royal British Legion, Cllr Mark Cargill.

The pinnacle of the programme of events was a short service at Centenary Field in the evening taken by the Reverend Katie Cross, Rector of Alcester Minster, followed by the lighting of a beacon.

Residents enjoyed light refreshments, dancing from Alcester's White Hart Morris Men and music from the era.



Banking Hub

Following the closure of the Alcester branch of Lloyds Bank in June 2025 Alcester Town Council was delighted to announce that a temporary Banking Hub opened on 19th June, at The Greig Hall in Alcester.

Banking Hubs are shared banking spaces where there is a counter service, operated by the Post Office, and where customers of all major banks & building societies can carry out cash transactions from Monday to Friday.



The Hub also has a private space where you can speak to a community banker from your own bank about more complicated banking issues. The community bankers work on rotation with a different bank available on each day of the week and for Alcester these are:

Monday	BARCLAYS	
Tuesday	NATIONWIDE	Royal Bank of Scotland
Wednesday	LLOYDS BANK	HALIFAX
Thursday	HSBC UK	
Friday	HALIFAX	LLOYDS BANK

Flood Watchers

Alcester Town Council's Community Resilience Flood Panel (CRFP) is currently setting up a group of local residents who have volunteered to be Flood Watchers for our town. The Flood Watchers are the council's 'eyes and ears' on the ground, and their role is to observe the road drains around Alcester; any unusual flow activity along the River Arrow and Alne; and any issues or surges near Gunnings Bridge and Oversley Bridge. The data is compiled and assessed by the Lead Councillors for the CRFP who report any blocked drains or other concerns to Warwickshire County Council or the Environment Agency, as appropriate. There are a number of volunteers already signed up and out there actively helping. There is a new Facebook Group called 'Alcester Flood Watchers' so for anyone interested in finding out more about the role and what's involved, we would encourage you to take a look. The CRFP has also been working with the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust to understand their work on natural flood measures around Alcester to slow the flow of flood water, and is currently engaging with Severn Trent and the Environment Agency to understand more about their assets in the town and to assist with the planned survey of Alcester's flood defences.

Maintenance Work



During 2025 the Town Council completed the tarmac resurfacing of the footpaths in Jubilee Fields/Weir Fields from the Black Bridge to Kingfisher Way. This project was funded by s106 funds from the Bloor Homes development, which were allocated to improve local public open space.

This new surfacing will mean that the paths are more accessible all year round.

Another major project has been the refurbishment of the lych gate roof at Alcester

Cemetery on Birmingham Road. A new cedar shingle roof has been installed by a specialist company, along with replacement wooden crosses at either end. Further work will be undertaken in 2026, and replacement gates will be fitted.



After renewing the play equipment in Bleachfield Street play area the Town Council has replaced two benches with new

recycled plastic benches so that visitors to the park can now relax and keep an eye on their children at play and footpath users have somewhere to rest on the journey into or out of the Town.

Alcester Town Council Councillors

Alcester West Ward



David Henderson
Mayor
Lead Councillor: Footpaths



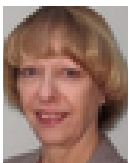
Jo Andrews



Sharon Bardha



Mike Bowe
Lead Councillor:
Community Resilience



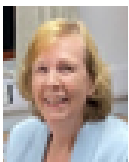
Kathryn Cargill
Lead Councillor:
Health and Wellbeing



Colleen Chester
Lead Councillor:
Community Resilience



Vicki Holyland



Wendy Mills
Lead Councillor:
Communications, Engagement and
Corporate Strategy



Clive Neal - Sturgess
Lead Councillor:
Community Resilience

Alcester East Ward



Ruth Ashfield
Lead Councillor:
Business & Tourism



Lucinda Boyd



Mark Cargill
Lead Councillor:
Planning / Eric Payne
Community Centre



Gill Forman
Deputy Mayor
Lead Councillor:
Cemetery & Play areas



Dougie Gordon
Lead Councillor:
Open Spaces



Keith Greenaway
Lead Councillor:
Allotments



Alison Leask
Lead Councillor:
Health & Wellbeing

