

Assistant to the Town Clerk’s Report November/December 2023

For Council Meeting 19th December 2023

1. Key Dates for all Councillors’ diaries;

Tuesday 6 th February 2024	Strategic Plan Meeting (tbc)
Monday 15 th April 2024	Mayor’s End of Term Event
Friday 26 th April 2024	Civic Ball 2024
Thursday 9 th May 2024 (please note change of date)	Grants Presentation Evening (Grants Panel members only)

2. Civic Service

As Members will be aware, the annual Civic Service took place on Sunday 19th November 2023, in St Eustachius’ Church.

In the absence of the Mayor, the Deputy Mayor hosted the event, with over 100 invited guests, Councillors and Officers being in attendance.

The Service was followed by a Reception in the Town Hall.

We are waiting to hear how much was raised for the Mayor’s Charity (The Memory Café), as part of the retiring collection in the Church which is shared each year between the Mayor’s Charity and Church funds. A further update will be brought forward when available.

3. Council Office Christmas and New Year opening hours

Please be aware that the Office will close at 4.30pm on Friday 22nd December 2023, and will re-open on Tuesday 2nd January 2024 at 9.00am.

The Works Dept. will, as always, provide an out of hours service for emergencies which may occur on Town Council-owned property and land during this period, on 07714 222345.

4. Attendance at Civic Events

As Councillors should be aware, attendance at the Council’s Civic Events forms part of the role of being a Town Councillor.

So far this Civic Year, there have been 3 Events, with attendances as follows;

Councillor	Goose Fair Lunch	Remembrance Sunday	Civic Service	Total individual attendances
Cllr Ms M Ewings	1	1	1	3
Cllr S Hipsey	0	0	1	1
Cllr A Hutton	1	1	0	2
Cllr J Irvine	0	0	0	0
Cllr Mrs A Johnson	1	1	1	3
Cllr A Lewis	1	0	0	1
Cllr U Mann	0	1	0	1
Cllr N Martin	0	0	0	0

Cllr Mrs B Moody	0	1	1	2
Cllr J Moody	0	1	1	2
Cllr T Munro	0	0	1	1
Cllr B Smith	1	1	1	3
Cllr P Squire	0	1	1	2
Cllr A Venning	0	0	0	0
Cllr P Ward	1	1	1	3
Total attendance	6	9	9	

As you will see from the first item on my Report to each Council Meeting, the list of events is available for the whole Civic Year and is updated on each one. I would be grateful if you could make the necessary arrangements to be able to attend these events, wherever possible.

5. Activity Log

CONFERENCE & TRAINING ACTIVITY LOG

CIVIC YEAR 2023-2024

COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE between 31st October – 18th December 2023;

DATE OF MEETING or TRAINING SESSION	SUBJECT	LOCATION	ORGANISER	COUNCILLORS BOOKED TO ATTEND <i>N.B. Councillors' names in italics indicate that these were a 'no show'</i>
Booked 5 th June 2023	Cyber Awareness Training	Virtual	SW Councils via DALC	Outstanding – Cllr Ms M Ewings N.B. To be completed within 3 months of booking
Booked 5 th June 2023	Personal Safety Essentials	Virtual	SW Councils via DALC	Outstanding - Cllr Ms M Ewings N.B. To be completed within 3 months of booking
31 st October 2023 6.00pm – 8.45pm This was mandatory training	Being a Good Councillor	Council Chamber	DALC	In attendance – Cllrs Ms M Ewings, S Hipsey, A Hutton*, Mrs A Johnson, U Mann, Mrs B Moody, J Moody, T Munro, B Smith *left early Apologies received from Cllrs J Irvine, P Ward Absent – Cllrs A Lewis, N Martin, P Squire and A Venning

21 st November 2023 1pm – 2pm	Being a Good Councillor Part 2 – Powers, Duties and the Precept	Virtual	DALC	Cllr J Irvine
22 nd November 2023	Making the Planning System work for Local Councils	Virtual	NALC (via Eventbrite)	Cllr P Ward
5 th December 2023 1pm – 2pm	Being a Good Councillor Part 3 – Local Council Meetings	Virtual	DALC	Cllr J Irvine
12 th December 2023 1pm – 2pm	Being a Good Councillor Part 4 – The Council in the Community	Virtual	DALC	Cllr J Irvine

6. Council Chamber Bookings

Chamber bookings (not including Council Meetings), from 7th November – 18th December 2023:

- 11 non-chargeable meetings (internal meetings, or a TTC representative attending on behalf of TTC, partner organisations or Mayoral events)
- 0 chargeable meeting/training session
- 0 training session (non-chargeable)

7. Property Units Update

Residential – there is currently only one vacant residential property:

- 1 Market Road – as previously reported, this property is currently being used as a welfare facility during the Town Hall works period. It is anticipated that this will extend into the New Year, in view of the additional works being undertaken on the Town Hall.

Commercial - there are currently no vacant commercial properties, however the Break Clause on one of the shops has been invoked, with the property becoming available at the end of January 2024. Active marketing of the unit will commence shortly, although an initial expression of interest has been received.

8. General including ongoing activities in the Admin Office

The Office continues to support the organisation across the range of Civic, administrative, financial and corporate activities.

Pay Award 2023/2024 – following on from previous updates, I can confirm that the offer originally made by the Employer side earlier this year was finally accepted on 1st November 2023. This amounted to an award of £1,925 (pro rata as appropriate) to those posts on SCPs 2-43, and an increase of 3.88% to those posts on SCPs 44 and above. The pay award was backdated to 1st April 2023, with all staff receiving their increased monthly pay, and back pay, with their November salary payment on 24th November 2023.

9. Website & Accessibility update

Booking forms/schedules of charges for various Council activities are assessed on an ongoing basis and will be updated, where necessary, to ensure compliance with the regulations. Overall site compliance is reviewed annually.

The Council has been advised that the current host platform service for our website is being upgraded in January, 2025. Therefore, we have transferred our service to JISC Domain Services in anticipation of this change and will be actively tendering website replacement prior to then.

10. Legal Services

In the early part of 2024 arrangements will need to be made to either re-tender or renegotiate legal services for the Council, in view of the timeframe for current arrangements. A review of present arrangements, including with our provider, will be undertaken in the New Year to help inform next steps.

11. Lettable Properties and Energy Performance

Energy Performance Certificates (EPC's) and Display Performance Certificates (DPC's) are in certain circumstances a requirement for the letting of properties. However, the position lacks clarity regarding certain classes of Listed premises and further information is being sought prior to upcoming changes in minimum thresholds for eligible premises in light of recent Government announcements.

Report prepared by
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