



Atherstone **Town Council**

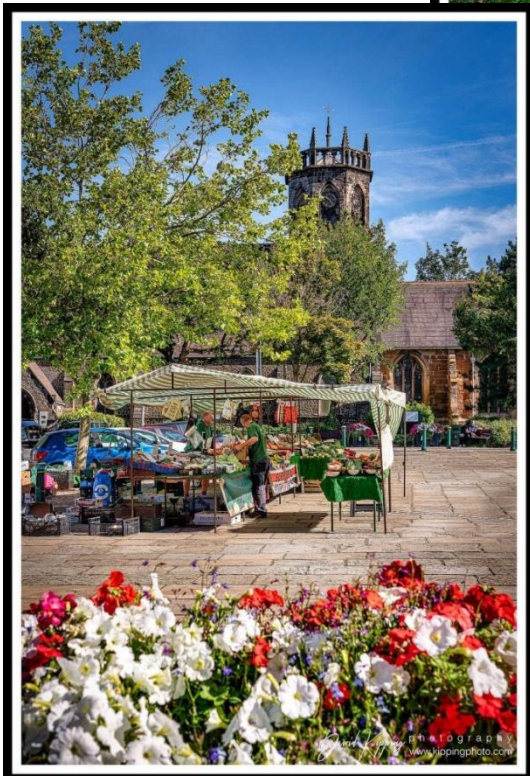
Serving the people of Atherstone.

Action Plan 2024-26

Adopted on 17/04/2024.

Revisions approved on: N/A

Next review date: October 2024.



Introduction

Atherstone Town Council exists to serve local people, to represent their interests and to provide (along with other organisations) services which make our town a better place to live, work, visit and play.

This action plan describes what Atherstone Town Council intends to achieve over the next two years.

The aims and objectives are designed to be measurable so we can monitor our progress and be held accountable to you.

The Town Council hope to achieve a wider basis for consultation on the issues faced by our community and invest in new methods of working to enable the Council to achieve more.

This is a working document which will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis.

Our aim is to become a truly local council which works in the social and economic interests of the whole town. Promoting a better quality of life for its residents, businesses, and visitors.

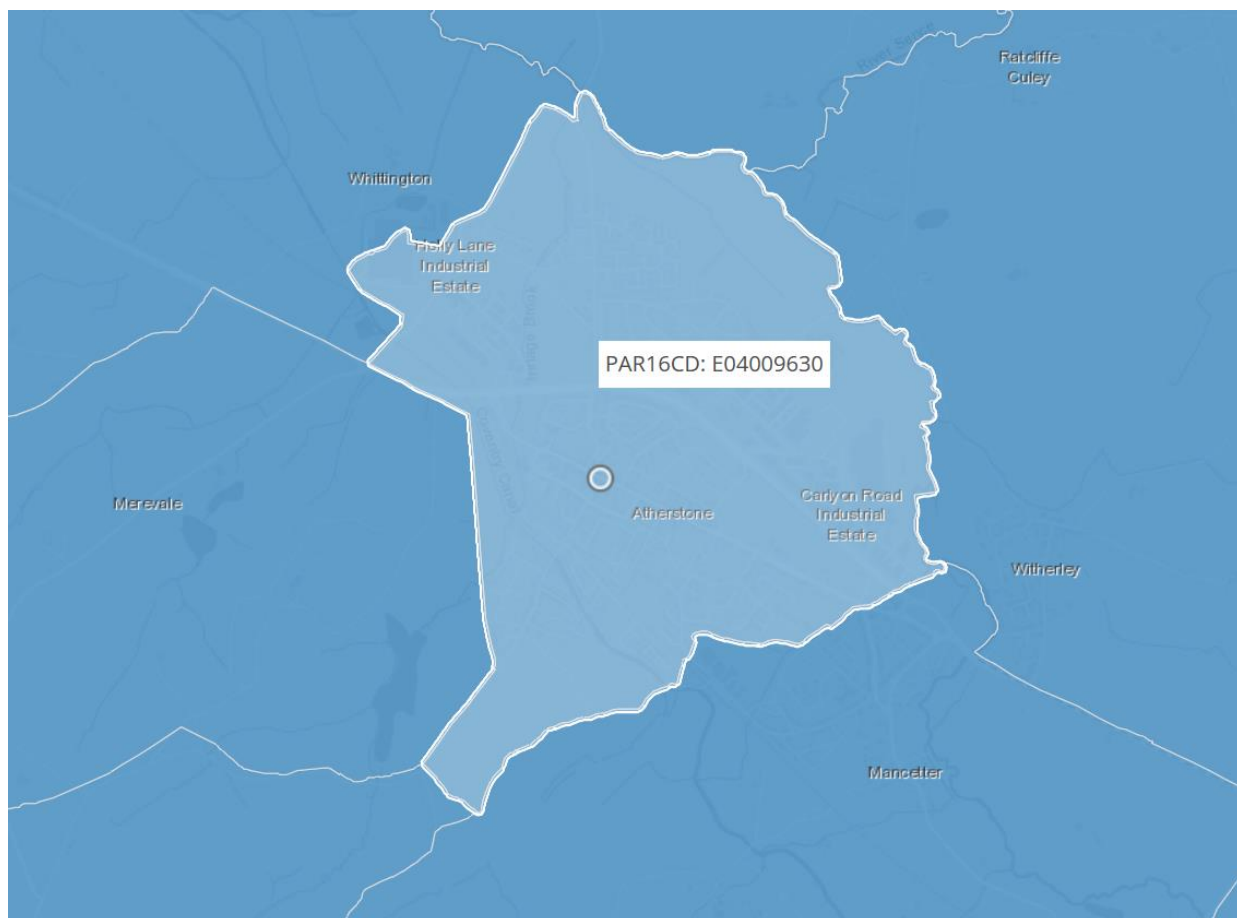


Figure 1 Map of Atherstone Town (Parish Boundary) Source: Office for National Statistics licensed under the Open Government Licence v.3.0 Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right 2016.



What is a Town Council?

A Town Council is the first tier of local government and represents the parish of Atherstone. We represent a population of 9,200 residents across 4,200 households (census 2021)

Our council consists of 15 Town Councillors and elections are held for these seats every four years. Town Councillors do not receive any allowance and volunteer their time to the Council.

The Town Council employ three part-time members of staff to run the Town Councils facilities and services. Our resource is equivalent to 2.04 full-time members of staff.

Town Councils have a wide range of powers and a handful of duties which are set out in legislation. The Town Council cannot do anything that is not permitted by law.

What do we do?

Assets that the Town Council manage & maintain include:

- Atherstone Cemetery (including the war memorial) as the Burial Authority
- Westwood Road and St Mary's Road parks and play areas.
- Town Centre CCTV System (in conjunction with NWBC)
- The Shopping Arcade, Long Street
- Market Square
- OSCA Community Building (long lease)
- Allotment sites (Gypsy Lane & Merevale)

Services the Town Council provide include:

- Cemetery Services (Burials, Scatterings & Memorials)
- Crime prevention services including:
 - Active Monitoring of the Town Centre CCTV System (with UKSPF funding)
 - Subsidising membership of the Townwatch Radio Scheme
- Town Centre Christmas Lights
- Town Centre Floral Displays
- Community Grant Scheme (for local voluntary and not-for-profit organisations)
- Hire of the Market Square for individual stallholders and events

In addition to this the Town Council also:

- Hold full council and committee meetings in public and publish information in line with our publication scheme to ensure transparency.
- Represent the communities' views on planning applications in the Town as a consultee.
- Liaise with other local authorities and organisations on community issues.

You can find out more about us via our website [Atherstone Town Council](#)



The 5 key priorities of our Action Plan are:

Priority 1 – Finance

Priority 2 – Engagement

Priority 3 – Assets

Priority 4 – Governance

Priority 5 – Marketing



Action Plan – priorities, actions, outcomes and indicators, key stakeholders, partners, and milestones

• Priority 1: Finance		
Actions	Outcomes and indicators	Key stakeholders and partners
1.1-Ensure sound financial management	1.1.1-Conduct quarterly financial reviews	Council (immediate)
	1.1.2- Ensure all grant applications are received and reviewed in line with current policies and standing orders	
1.2-To have a strategic oversight of the town councils' finances	1.2.1.- Consult with residents on priorities for next year's budget and changes to precept	Council (within 6-12 months)
	1.2.2- Engage with local people and build up an understanding of community priorities and promote understanding of role of Town Council	
	1.2.2-To set out a medium-term financial strategy which takes account of need for future investment in major items	
1.3-Apply for relevant funding	1.2.3- To present the budget in a simple format which can be easily understood	Council (ongoing)
	1.3.1- Develop list of items required for future funding and submit applications for grant applications /additional funding	
	1.3.2-To compile a list of relevant sources of funding and streamline the councils application and approval process	



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priority 2: ENGAGEMENT 		
Actions	Outcomes and indicators	Key stakeholders and partners
2.1-Improve public accessibility	2.1.1- Refresh the Atherstone Town Council website to make it more interactive and informative	Council (within 12 months)
	2.1.3-Promote and ensure public sessions of council meetings are welcoming	
2.2-Create a communication plan	2.2.1-Create a social media calendar	Council (within 6 months)
	2.2.2-Ensure regular content from Atherstone Town Council and other organisations is posted and shared via social media	
	2.2.3- Promote information on how residents can connect with their town councillors	
2.3-Engage in wider consultations with residents and local businesses	2.3.1-Create opportunities for community engagement with residents, get input and feedback on issues	Councillors (ongoing)
	2.3.2-Utilise online tools and surveys to systematically gather community views	Council (within 6 months)
	2.3.3-Attend events and meetings held by other organisations	Councillors (ongoing)
	2.3.4-Ensure clear and regular communications around decisions made by Atherstone Town Council	Council (ongoing)
2.4-Promote and celebrate Atherstone	2.4.1-Promote the town, celebrate success, and communicate positively	Council (ongoing) Warwickshire County Council / North Warwickshire Borough Council / Atherstone Partnership / Brand Atherstone /
	2.4.2-Represent and promote Atherstone Town Council at local community and wider civic events	



- **Priority 2: ENGAGEMENT**

Actions	Outcomes and indicators	Key stakeholders and partners
		Warwickshire Towns Network



• Priority 3: ASSETS		
Actions	Outcomes and indicators	Key stakeholders and partners
3.1-Create an asset plan	3.1.1-Create an asset list that contains value, replacement cost and lifespan	Clerk / Council (within 12 months)
	3.1.2-Conduct assets review	
	3.1.3-Create an asset risk register and replacement plan	
3.2-Cemetery Management	3.2.1- Begin planning for cemetery extension and future developments	Deputy Clerk / Council (ongoing)
	3.2.2-Develop costed plan and clear timetable for cemetery extension	
	3.2.3-Maintain cemetery and war memorial to a high standard	
3.3-Manage outdoor assets	3.3.1-Plan improvements and where appropriate replacement of council owned play areas	Council (within 12 months)
	3.3.2-Consult allotment holders on how to improve sites	
	3.3.3-Prepare costed plans to maintain/improve the allotments based on tenant feedback	
3.4-Arcade Management	3.4.1-Continue to explore interest, feasibility, and funding sources for potential use of the upstairs space in the arcade building	Council (within 18 months)
	3.4.2 - Consult with existing arcade tenants when appropriate around rental changes/developments	Council (ongoing)
	3.4.3-Endeavour that any vacant units are filled within 2 months	Clerks (ongoing)
3.5-Improve open public spaces.	3.5.1-Take forward River Anker footpath feasibility study (UKSPF grant)	Council (ongoing)



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priority 4: GOVERNANCE 		
Actions	Outcomes and indicators	Key stakeholders and partners
4.1 Use the action plan as a management and planning tool	4.1.1-Adapt the council structure subcommittees and working groups to take forward the Action plan	Council (within 1 month for annual meeting & ongoing)
	4.1.2-Assess need for delegated powers and adapt standing orders	
	4.1.3-Review policies and document processing	
	4.1.4-Develop an action register and produce risk assessment	
	4.1.5-Ensure the council has contingency plans	
4.2-Develop the capacity of the council to meet governance standards	4.2.1-Conduct internal audit to review quality standards	Council (ongoing – within 12 months)
	4.2.2-Develop a training plan for councillors and staff	
	4.2.3-Ensure clerks are empowered to guide the council on protocol, training, and obligations	
4.3-Work towards Local Council Award scheme (Quality Award level)	4.3.1-Audit councils’ position in relation to the LCAS award standards	Council (within 2 years)
	4.3.2-Assess feasibility and steps needed to achieve the Quality Award	



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Priority 5: MARKETING 		
Actions	Outcomes and indicators	Key stakeholders and partners
5.1-Utilise local resources to promote town	5.1.1-Utilise local content tools such as Grapevine to raise council/town awareness	Council / Clerks (ongoing)
	5.1.2-Develop partnerships and promote local assets such as Market Square, canal, footpaths and play areas & town heritage	
	5.1.3-Utilise advertising and social media to promote town and information about town council (e.g. web site; FB page and notice board)	
5.2-Connect with local organisations and communities	5.2.1-Work with Atherstone Partnership and others to develop relationships with local business organisations	Council / Atherstone Partnership / Brand Atherstone / Warwickshire Town & Parish Councils, NWBC, WCC. (ongoing)
	5.2.2- Develop relationships with other civic leaders	
	5.2.3-Improve Atherstone Town Council's understanding of use of social media and how to use it to promote connections, gather feedback and engagement with activities	
5.3- Consider alternative spaces	5.3.1- Consider use of other public spaces for events or activities	Council (ongoing)



Looking Back – What we achieved from the previous action plan (2023-2024)

Finance

- Reviewed the Town Council’s current financial position and appointed a new Internal Auditor
- Improved the level of the Town Council’s reserves through the sale of the Old Mortuary (previous Town Council Offices)
- Secured grant funding for various projects:
 - UKSPF¹ grant of £59,055 towards CCTV active monitoring for 2023-2025.
 - UKSPF grant of £18,500 for a feasibility study on an open spaces project regarding footpaths at the River Anker.
 - OPCC grant funding of £4,232 towards the Townwatch Radio Scheme for 2024/25

Community Engagement & Events

- Considered 65 planning applications and consulted on the proposed Public Space Protection Order – Alcohol, Atherstone Town.
- Event Management for the Remembrance Day Parade & War Memorial Service (previously ran by Royal British Legion – Atherstone Branch), World AIDs Day Service, Honorary Citizen & Ruby Chambers Award 2023.
- Town Mayor attended 23 official events throughout Warwickshire and the surrounding areas, raising the profile of Atherstone and the Town Council.

Cemetery

- Engaged with Community Payback team, who now provide additional help maintaining Atherstone Cemetery.
- As a Burial Authority we arranged and attended 53 interments, 1 scattering and authorised 70+ memorials, deed transfers and other administrative duties.

Administration / Governance

- Recruited & trained a new Town Clerk enabling the Council to continue to operate effectively and in line with legislative requirements and recommended best practice.
- Provided training for new Town Councillors elected in May 2023, and refresher training for existing members.
- Adopted new & revised existing policies: Financial regulations, Complaints Policy, Risk management, Reserves Policy, Council Structure & Working Parties Terms of Reference
- Refreshed and updated the Council website www.atherstone-tc.gov.uk
- Improved transparency by amending the Town Council Meeting page to ensure that the public can now access all public meeting papers alongside the agendas and minutes.

¹ The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is a central pillar of the UK government’s Levelling Up agenda and provides £2.6 billion of funding for local investment by March 2025. The Fund aims to improve pride in place and increase life chances across the UK investing in communities and place, supporting local business, and people and skills.