

Atherstone Town Council



Annual Report 2023 / 2024



Town Council Office

Opening Hours: Monday to Friday: 9:30am - 2.30pm*

Visit (by prior appointment): Atherstone Town Council

The Council House

South Street

Atherstone

CV9 1DE

Telephone: 01827 720829

Email: clerk@atherstone-tc.gov.uk

Website: www.atherstone-tc.gov.uk

Write to: Atherstone Town Council,

P.O. Box 2000,

Atherstone,

CV9 1YN.

**Subject to availability due to the nature of our small team and prior engagements.*

Town Council meetings are held monthly in the Committee Room, North Warwickshire Borough Council, Civic Suite, The Council House, South Street, Atherstone, CV9 IDE.

The calendar of meetings is published on the website and the noticeboard in Market Square.

Members of the public and press are welcome to attend Town Council meetings. A public participation session is held at each meeting where the public can comment on agenda items.

For 2023-24, the Chair of the Town Council was Cllr Keith Barnett and the vice-chair was Cllr Derek Pickard until February 2024, and Cllr Jake Braithwaite from, February 2024 onwards.

During 2023-24 the Town Mayor was Cllr Ashley Wickham-Young, and the Deputy Mayor was Cllr Chris Jones.

Town Councillors

Central Ward



Councillor Keith Barnett

Tel: 01827 230703

Email: keithbarnett@atherstone-tc.gov.uk

Address: 28 Mancetter Road Mancetter CV9 1NZ



Councillor Jake Braithwaite

Tel: 07850 266022

Email: jakebraithwaite@atherstone-tc.gov.uk

Address: 41 Ambien Road, Atherstone, CV9 2AT



Councillor Jacky Chambers

Tel: 07966 425052

Email: jackychambers@atherstone-tc.gov.uk

Address: Green Farm Main Rd, Baxterley, CV9 2LW



Councillor Richard Collins

Email: richardcollins@atherstone-tc.gov.uk



Councillor Anne Forwood

Email: anneforwood@atherstone-tc.gov.uk



Councillor Gwyn Short

Email: gwynshort@atherstone-tc.gov.uk

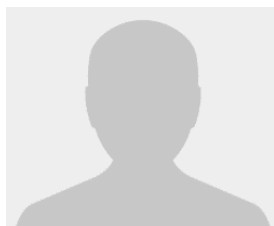
North Ward



Councillor Chris Jones

Tel: 07984 160667

Email: chrisjones@atherstone-tc.gov.uk



Casual Vacancy



Councillor Martin Short

Email: martinshort@atherstone-tc.gov.uk



Councillor Joshua Smith

Email: joshuasmith@atherstone-tc.gov.uk



Councillor Dawn Wilkinson

Email: dawnwilkinson@atherstone-tc.gov.uk



Councillor David A Wright

Tel: 01827 714885

Email: davidwright@atherstone-tc.gov.uk

Address: 3 Simmonds Way, Atherstone, Warwickshire, CV9 3AX

South Ward



Councillor Sara Bishop

Tel: 07885 420129

Email: sarabishop@atherstone-tc.gov.uk



Councillor Carol Evans

Email: carolevans@atherstone-tc.gov.uk



Councillor Ashley Wickham-Young

Email: ashleywickham-young@atherstone-tc.gov.uk

FAREWELLS AND WELCOMES

Elections were held in May 2023, the council said farewell to retiring members: Sara Bishop, Denise Clews, Tony Clews, Pauline Gurney, Ray Jarvis, Mark Jordan, Mejar Singh, Angie Spencer & Stacey Wightman.

The Council welcomed new Town Councillors: Jake Braithwaite, Richard Collins, Carol Evans, Anne Forwood, Gwyn Short, Martin Short, Joshua Smith, Ashley Wickham-Young & Dawn Wilkinson.

In June 2023 we welcomed back Councillor Sara Bishop who was co-opted to a vacancy in the South Ward.

In February 2024 after many years of service we said goodbye to Derek Pickard, the casual vacancy will be filled via co-option.

This year, the Council also said goodbye to the Town Clerk Odette Ghent and welcomed Kate Clover to this role from September 2023.

Finance

In 2023-24 the Town Council have appointed a new internal auditor and carried out a review of its financial position.

The level of reserves has improved through the sale of the Old Mortuary (previous Town Council Offices) £96,196.40 and UK Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF) of £59,055 towards CCTV active monitoring for 2023-2025.

In addition to this the council have secured funding towards two projects for 2024-25

- UKSPF grant of £18,500 for a feasibility study on an open spaces project regarding footpaths at the River Anker. (payment due in 2024-25)
- Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC) grant funding of £4,232 via North Warwickshire Borough Council (NWBC) towards the Townwatch Radio Scheme project (received 2023/24)

*Please note the financial information below are from accounts which have not yet been audited.

Balance Sheet 2023-24

Current Assets

Debtors	£	38,642.36	
Deposits and Cash	£	1,388.50	
Bank Account	£	244,404.34	
VAT Liability	£	3,236.25	
			£ 287,671.45

Current Liabilities

Creditors : Short Term	£	63,733.70	
Payroll Taxation	£	5,889.63	
			£ 69,623.33

Current Assets less Current Liabilities: £ 218,048.12

Total Assets less Current Liabilities: £ 218,048.12

Capital & Reserves

Reserves (Balance Brought Forward)	£	68,995.60	
Current Year Surplus / (Loss)	£	149,052.52	
			£ 218,048.12

Income & Expenditure 2023-24

	<u>Actual</u>		<u>Budget</u>		<u>Variance</u>
Income					
Precept	£	175,298.00	£	175,298.00	£ -
Arcade Rent	£	44,178.00	£	47,020.00	-£ 2,842.00
Cemetery	£	53,740.00	£	44,850.00	£ 8,890.00
Allotments	£	4,102.50	£	4,428.00	-£ 325.50
Allotment Lease Gypsy Lane	£	1,317.22	£	1,200.00	£ 117.22
Market Traders	£	6,138.00	£	4,740.00	£ 1,398.00
Donations	£	64,222.18	£	-	£ 64,222.18
Misc Income	£	836.72	£	-	£ 836.72
Common Rights	£	263.00	£	250.00	£ 13.00
OSCA Lease	£	100.00	£	100.00	£ -
Bank Interest	£	4,380.62	£	600.00	£ 3,780.62
Sale of Assets	£	96,196.40	£	-	£ 96,196.40
	£	450,772.64	£	278,486.00	£ 172,286.64
Expenditure					
Salaries	£	85,568.48	£	85,023.00	-£ 545.48
Associated Expenditure	£	14,356.21	£	12,925.00	-£ 1,431.21
Office Expenditure	£	20,894.01	£	16,959.00	-£ 3,935.01
Open Spaces & Play Areas	£	9,344.39	£	10,450.00	£ 1,105.61
Tree Maintenance	£	9,437.45	£	2,900.00	-£ 6,537.45
Cemetery & Old allotments	£	36,760.04	£	39,280.00	£ 2,519.96
CCTV Costs	£	79,067.61	£	59,074.00	-£ 19,993.61
Allotments	£	3,117.17	£	3,600.00	£ 482.83
Arcade	£	10,487.13	£	14,300.00	£ 3,812.87
Misc Expenditure	£	29,321.63	£	23,975.00	-£ 5,346.63
Grants & Donations	£	3,366.00	£	10,000.00	£ 6,634.00
Bad Debt	£	-	£	-	£ -
	£	301,720.12	£	278,486.00	-£ 23,234.12
Net Profit (Loss) Before Tax:	£	149,052.52	£	0.00	£ 149,052.52

Precept 2024/25

To meet its budget requirements the Town Council have increased their precept from £175,298 in 2023/24 to £193,707 in 2024/25. The increase has affected your annual council tax as follows:

Council Tax Band	2023-24	2024-25	Increase (per annum)
Band: A/AR	£ 42.25	£ 46.47	£ 4.22
Band: B	£ 49.30	£ 54.22	£ 4.92
Band: C	£ 56.34	£ 61.96	£ 5.62
Band: D	£ 63.38	£ 69.71	£ 6.33
Band: E	£ 77.46	£ 85.20	£ 7.74
Band: F	£ 91.55	£ 100.69	£ 9.14
Band: G	£ 105.63	£ 116.18	£ 10.55
Band: H	£ 126.76	£ 139.42	£ 12.66

Budget 2024/25

Income

Arcade	£ 52,099
Precept	£ 193,707
Cemetery	£ 47,385
Allotments	£ 5,405
Allotment assoc lease	£ 1,200
Market Traders	£ 8,500
Grants & Donations	£ 33,183
Misc	£ -
Common Rights	£ 250
OSCA Lease	£ 100
Bank interest	£ 2,000
Sale of assets	£ -
Taken from Reserves	£ -

Budget

£ 52,099
£ 193,707
£ 47,385
£ 5,405
£ 1,200
£ 8,500
£ 33,183
£ -
£ 250
£ 100
£ 2,000
£ -
£ -

£ 343,829

Expenditure

Staffing	£ 96,659
Associated	£ 13,330
Office	£ 12,410
Open spaces & Play Areas	£ 16,900
Allotments	£ 4,900
Cemetery Extension	£ -
Cemetery	£ 41,915
CCTV (including Active Monitoring)	£ 85,320
Arcade	£ 16,514
Floral Displays	£ 6,600
Xmas Lights	£ 13,000
Annual Assembly / Honorary Citizen	£ 500
Market Square	£ 500
Community Grant Scheme (& other donations)	£ 12,656
Misc Civic duties	£ 150
Old Mortuary Refurb	£ -
Bank charges	£ 450
Community events	£ 2,025
Pop-Up Storage Container	£ -
Transfers to earmarked reserves	£ 20,000

£ 323,829

Transfers to earmarked reserves

Cemetery Extension (Capital Expenditure Only)	£ 10,000
Asset Replacement Fund (Capital Expenditure only)	£ 10,000
Elections	£ -

£ 20,000

Total Expenditure (Including transfers to earmarked reserves)

£ 343,829

What has the Town Council achieved in 2023/24

Town Council Administration and Governance

The Town Council recruited & trained a new Town Clerk enabling the Council to continue to operate effectively and in line with legislative requirements and recommended best practice.

The Town Council provided training for new Town Councillors elected in May 2023, and refresher training for existing members.

The Town Council adopted new and revised existing policies: Financial regulations, Complaints Policy, Risk Management, Reserves Policy, Council Structure & Working Parties Terms of Reference.

Allotments

The Town Council provides allotments for rent. There are two sites, Merevale and Gypsy Lane.

Both sites are almost fully occupied, anyone requiring a plot should register at the Town Council offices.

The Town Council also owns the neighbouring Atherstone Allotment Association site, in Gypsy Lane.

The Town Council works with the Associations, and tenants, at the sites for their general improvement.

There was allotment judging and awards given out in the summer of 2023 at both sites.

Cemetery

The Town Council maintains the cemetery at Sheepy Road and is also responsible for the maintenance of burial and memorial records for the cemetery.

The Town Council continue to engage with the Community Payback team, who now provide additional help maintaining Atherstone Cemetery.

As a Burial Authority the Town Council arranged and attended 53 interments, 1 scattering and authorised 70+ memorials, deed transfers and other administrative duties.

Atherstone Town Council now have responsibility for the event management for the Remembrance Day Parade & War Memorial Service (previously run by Royal British Legion – Atherstone Branch) which takes place at St Mary's Church and the War Memorial in Atherstone Cemetery.

Old Allotment Gardens

The land between the Cemetery and the A5, which runs from Sheepy Road through to the brook at Abeles Way, now known as The Old Allotment Gardens.

In early 2021 work began here on the future extension of the cemetery with investigation and survey works carried out working alongside a consultant. This work continues.

CCTV

The CCTV cameras and ducting in the town centre are owned and maintained by the Town Council who are also responsible for the staffing costs for monitoring the screens by dedicated CCTV operatives.

The live monitoring of the CCTV provides a proactive approach and active monitoring staff work closely with the local Police Safer Neighbourhood Team.

The Town Council works in partnership with North Warwickshire Borough Council and Warwickshire Police.

The CCTV system includes a direct link to Police Headquarters at Leek Wootton.

An upgrade to the CCTV camera system was completed in 2022 with new modern panoramic cameras and monitoring equipment.

From 2023-24 the Town Council are solely responsible for meeting the costs of the active monitoring service. The Town Council secured UKSPF grant funding of £59,055 to cover approximately 50% of the staffing costs from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2025.

The Town Council will be consulting with our residents and key stakeholders regarding the future funding of the active monitoring service.

The Town Council supports the retail radio system, for the town, known as Town watch. Subsidies are given towards the cost of the radios, for those taking part. £2404.19 was contributed to the Townwatch Radio scheme in 2023-24.

Play Areas

There are two Play Areas managed and maintained by the Town Council: St Mary's Road, which is owned outright, and Westwood Road, which is leased.

Because there have been several instances of damage, vandalism, and anti-social behaviour at both play areas they are now covered by CCTV.

Planning

The Town Council is a Statutory Planning Consultee, and comments on planning applications in Atherstone, and those which would affect Atherstone.

Planning applications to be considered can be found on the monthly Town Council agenda and responses on the website.

The Town Council considered 65 planning applications and consulted on the proposed Public Space Protection Order – Alcohol for Atherstone Town.

Christmas Lights

The Town Council owns the Christmas lights in the Long Street, Church Street and Market Street areas and outside St Mary's Church, and is totally responsible for the purchase, testing, maintenance, erection and dismantling of the lights.

Also, there are some pole mounted displays installed in Station Street.

Support for Local Community Events held in the Market Square

The Car Show 2023, Beer Festival (August 2023) and Dickens 2023 and Christmas Market went ahead as usual, plus the special King's Coronation Celebrations in May 2023.

In September 2023 the market square was used for a special Graham Beale Celebration Event and the popular Sheepy Tractor Run visited in December 2023.

There were also a few smaller events such as Outwoods Primary School Summer Carnival (June 2023) plus visits from the First-Class Stamp Dancers (June 2023)

A World AIDs Day Service and vigil was held in December 2023 attended by civic heads from around Warwickshire in conjunction with St Mary's Church.

Support for Local Community Groups

The Town Council can make small grants to assist local community groups. Details of these can be found on the website.

During 2023/24 the Town Council awarded community grants to:

- Atherstone Beer Festival £1,000
- Atherstone Motor Show £500
- Atherstone Ball Game (road closures) £1,841

In addition to this, the Council continue to support the social supermarket in Unit 7, The Arcade (Ediblelinks) by providing this Unit free of charge and meeting their service charges. (This equates to approximately £5,500)

The Town Council supported four local volunteers to attend LANTRA road closure training in September 2023 at a cost of £368.33.

The Council also purchase a Poppy Wreath for Remembrance Day for a donation of £25 to the Royal British Legion.

Civic Role

The Town Mayor attended 23 official events throughout Warwickshire and the surrounding areas, raising the profile of Atherstone and the Town Council.

Honorary Citizen and Ruby Chambers Award

Each year the Town Council debates the choice of Honorary Citizen, an award made to a person(s) who, in the opinion of the Town Council, has made an outstanding contribution to the life of the town.

For 2024, the title of Honorary Citizen has been awarded to Jayne Collins in recognition of her commendable contributions and many years of service to the community of Atherstone.

The Ruby Chambers Sports Award 2023 was awarded to Ruadhan (Rory) Taylor of Atherstone Adders Hockey Club.

Both of these awards will be presented at the Annual Parish Assembly in May 2024.

Floral Displays

The Town Council maintains the floral displays in the town centre during the year with summer and winter plantings.

Website

The Town Council has its own website which is maintained by the clerks and gives up to date information of Council activities, local news, and documentation.

The Town Council refreshed and updated the Council website www.atherstone-tc.gov.uk in 2023.

The Town Council 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.

The Town Council intend to continue to improve communications throughout the coming year and further improvements to the website and social media channels is anticipated.

Local Council Award Scheme (formerly Quality Council)

The Town Council currently holds the Foundation Level, as part of the Town Council Action Plan 2024-26 the Council are working towards the next level of the Local Council Award Scheme.

Market Square

The Town Council has an agreement with North Warwickshire Borough Council, to manage events on the Market Square. The Town Council continued to manage the twice weekly markets.

The Town Council owns pop-up stalls, tables and a canopy which cover most of the Square. These are available for the use of community groups, and events.

Details and costs can be obtained from the Town Council office.

During the Summer months the local publicans serve drinks outside on the Market Square in a Café Culture style.

A monthly Farmers Market that began in February 2022 has been well received and continues to expand.

Arcade Shops

The Town Council owns and operates the Arcade Shops, in Long Street. This complex provides a mixture of retail, commercial and community use.

The Town Council have been in consultation with community groups and commercial organisations to assess the demand for the upstairs space.

During 2023/24 there has been some movement within the Arcade, with businesses expanding onto the High Street and into larger units, we have also welcomed a new business into Unit 5 Fieldview Plastics.

Unit 1	Brown Bear Design
Unit 2	Becca Kim Aesthetics and Skin Clinic
Unit 3	Currently Vacant
Unit 4	BFH Bargains
Unit 5	Fieldview Plastics
Unit 6	Currently Vacant
Unit 7	Edible Links – social supermarket
Unit 8	Make and Made in Style
Unit 9	Arcade Carpets
Upstairs front	Nail Bar

You can apply for a vacant unit or join our waiting list by contacting the Town Council Office.

Owen Street Community Arts Centre

The Town Council owns The Arts Centre, Owen Street, Atherstone, CV9 1DG.

This was purchased to retain and protect this important community asset for the people of Atherstone and the surrounding area.

All covenants restricting the future use of the building as a community resource remain in place.

The building has been leased back to the Owen Street Community Arts Centre whose Board of Directors are fully responsible for running the facility, including bookings and items such as maintenance, insurance and running costs. The Board are keen to promote wider community use of the building.