



Brackley Town Council

Annual Town Meeting

Thursday 22 May 2025 6.30pm

Brackley Town Hall, Market Place NN13 7AB

This meeting is an Annual Statutory Meeting of the Town electors and is NOT a Council Meeting. This meeting is called in accordance with Schedule 12(14) of the Local Government Act 1972.

Agenda

1. The Mayor's Welcome and Opening Remarks
2. Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 11 April 2024
3. Open Forum

This is an opportunity for those present to put questions to the Mayor and the Council.

4. Close of Meeting

***Only people who are registered as local government electors for the Town of Brackley will be entitled to speak and/or vote at the meeting.
Before speaking it will be necessary to give your name and address.***



Brackley Town Annual Meeting

Thursday 11 April 2024 – 6.30pm

1. Welcome by the Town Mayor

The Mayor Councillor Sue Sharps Welcomed residents and thanked them for taking time to come out.

2. Minutes of 13 April 2023

Comments for previous minutes – none
Minutes taken as accepted.

3. The Mayors Annual Report for 2023/24

Dear Residents of Brackley and fellow Councillors,

I am pleased to present to you the Mayor's Annual Report for the year of 2023/2024, highlighting the progress and achievements of our town over the past year.

Throughout the last year Brackley Town Council remained dedicated to serving the needs of our residents and enhancing the quality of life in our town.

Key Highlights from the last year include:

- **Bleed kits** – these have been purchased and installed at Egerton Hall, the Old Fire Station and the Public Toilets in the town centre.
- **Land Transfers** – BTC has taken on land from the developers to ensure the protection of the open spaces and the management of various play areas.
- **Egerton Hall extension** – using S106 funding, the project to extend Egerton Hall onto the first floor. This has been a long-term project for the council.
- **Quinquennial report on the Town Hall** – the first quinquennial report has been carried out on the Town Hall to ensure the buildings condition for future years.
- **Southfield School** – after the shock news of the school closing, Brackley Town Council came together with residents by holding a meeting for residents to put their questions to

members involved with the decision to close. Decisions are made at higher levels and it's important for us to know why.

- **Community Grants** – The Town Council is proud to support local groups and organisations who work tirelessly to enrich the community of Brackley and support residents.

Organisation	Amount
Brackley Youth Theatre	£2,000.00
Brackley Jubilee Choir	£250.00
South Northants Volunteer Bureau (SNVB)	£2,000.00
South Northants Youth Engagement (SNYE)	£2,000.00
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Brackley Swimming Club	£700.00
Brackley European Association (BEA)	£800.00
St. Peters Church	£425.00
Chatty Café Scheme	£ 1,000.00
Do it for Defib	£ 1,225.00
Total grant funded	£12,400.00

- **Community Banking** – with the sad news of the last bank of the town closing, Brackley Town Council are committed in working with the Town Centre Manager in applying to have a community banking hub in Brackley. In the interim, BTC and the TCM have been working with banks to have pop up services available to residents in the Town Hall. We can all use the post office for our transactions and we must all support that.
- **Town Centre Manager** – during this year, we welcome Sam to Brackley as the Town Centre Manager, Sam will be available for residents to talk to later, but her role, is to support the Town Centres of Brackley and Towcester. This is funded by S106 developer funding
- **New Town Signs** – we have installed new town signs at all entrances of the town which was funding by S106 developer funds.
- **Biodiversity of BTC areas** – We have planted 100s of young trees and hedge plants including establishing a community orchard in Roman Way. 200m of additional new hedges have been established at St James lake. We have created wildlife corridors allowing wildlife to move around this longer grass and wider areas. Some play areas have been resurfaced using an eco-surface. We have reduced the amount of chemicals used for weed control to a bare minimum. We have installed wood piles to encourage bugs and fungi.

- **No Mow May** – this was the first year that Brackley has taken part in the national scheme of “No Mow May”. This is a scheme that enhances Brackley’s commitment to improving the biodiversity of the town. Wish people to do this in their own gardens
- **Task & Finish groups** – Brackley Town Council runs several small select groups of councillors for specific tasks. These include the following:
 - Town Centre
 - Events & events Policy
 - IT Upgrade
 - Budget Setting 24/25
 - Biodiversity
 - Cemetery
 - Policies
 - Community Grants
 - Bus Shelters
 - Egerton Hall Extension
 - Skate park
 - Review of Charges
- **Events** – We pride ourselves on putting on a full programme of events for residents to enjoy, in 2023 these included -
 - Community Showcase – April
 - Easter Film – April
 - Mayor Making – May
 - Coronation – May
 - Classic Cars in the Park – August
 - Happy Circus – August
 - Pop up Forest School – August
 - Fireworks – November
 - Remembrance – November
 - Lantern Workshops – November
 - Christmas Market + Light switch on – November
 - Christmas Tractor Run - December
 - Community Carols - December
 - Classic Cars on the Piazza – December
- **Brackley Mayor** – over the year I have represented Brackley across the county at many events and I have been proud to host a fully calendar of events here in Brackley for residents to enjoy including:
 - Coffee mornings
 - Pottery painting
 - Etc

Town Centre Manager – Update Report

The role of Brackley Town Centre Manager (TCM) is to support the revitalisation of the Town Centre and to rebuild footfall. Ensuring that our local businesses thrive and the town adapts to the changing needs of its community. Employed by WNC, member of the Economic Growth team, working alongside Brackley Town Council.

Brackley mirrors the National situation with High Streets

- A move from very large national retail chains, back to smaller independent retail businesses
 - Market Town High Streets cannot compete with out-of-town retail centres or online shopping for choice
- Instead, focus is on high quality, bespoke and artisan businesses
- Also a focus on leisure, rather than purely retail – leisure shopping, activities, hospitality, community hubs
- Preferred days and times for using High Streets have also changed and a survey is being launched soon to help businesses understand these changes.

Reasons for Town Centre Support

- Pre-Covid pressures on Market Towns e.g., online shopping, larger out-of-town retail centres
- Effect of Covid lockdowns
- Cost of living crisis and higher costs for businesses

I'm providing support through

- Encouraging businesses and communities to collaborate to devise, own and action any improvement plans with support from WNC and Town Councils
- Sharing best practice advice from experts and other successful revitalisation projects
- Support with advice and funding

I have been working towards building **positive working relationships** between WNC colleagues, Brackley Town Council, landlords, commercial agents, local businesses and community organisations. Brackley now has a High Street Business group which is meeting regularly to discuss the needs of businesses and ideas for raising awareness of what the town has to offer, and to encourage increased footfall. I have also been working with local organisations to understand how High Streets can best be adapted to support them and community needs.

High Street Survey – I need to also hear from you! I'm carrying out a survey to find out in more detail how residents and visitors would like to use the Town Centre, and for example what days/times they would like to shop/eat/visit the town centre, what they like about the town, what barriers there are for visiting the centre. This survey will launch very soon.

I have started to **identify potential projects** which are currently being considered for financial viability and to make sure these projects could deliver the desired outcomes. Ultimately this work will inform an overall strategy for town centre improvements.

Potential projects may include:

- Marketing strategy to raise awareness of the town and what is on offer here
- Improvement to public realm
- Increase events and activities e.g. heritage trails, specialist markets, music events
- Vacant properties and shop frontage improvement schemes
- Community ownership projects
- Improved access to banking and cash on the High Street
- Town Gift Card/Loyalty Schemes

4. Open Forum

Q1. We haven't seen much happening in the town and why is Barclays bank looking so terrible, is Lloyds going to look the same. The shops are in disrepair and it really needs this sorting.

A1. We have worked on the getting business in to vacant shops, Barclays is a bit more difficult but we are working on this. We agree that the buildings are in a state of disrepair, and the town centre manager is working on this.

Q2. I would like to know why you have allowed Mercedes to rip the heart out of that corner of the town, not only have they removed trees out they didn't know that there was a cattle shed in the middle, I have lived in that house for nearly 15 years and I have seen bats coming out of that shed. In the town map it says it's a foot path. We are no longer allowed to walk down that path, and they have also told us that we can no longer walk across the dual carriage way. I have heard no owls, see no foxes or deer, this is because of the huge fence, it now has a black mess around it.

A2. This has never been a foot path, we would not encourage people to cross the road as it is dangerous. I am concerned about this issues with the wild life

Q3. Why on market days and when the fun fair is in town the disable bays that are closed. An easy solution would be move the disable bay to the other side of the road.

A3. Agreed we will be follow this up with highways.

Q4. Womble sang happy birthday as it is 1 years old on the 19 April from 19 April 2023 1 Feb 2024 – 820 bags have been filled by the wombles. We need more wombles

A4. Road side collections are extremely dangerous please do not do these without the appropriate closures. Congratulations to the wombles.

Q5. Why do we have to put up with the pot holes on Banbury Road.

A5. We will follow this up with highways.

Q6. It is getting more and more dangerous coming out of Fox Lane. Twice in the last month something has nearly hit me, they are travelling too fast, maybe mirrors would help.

A6. The volume of traffic on that road is a concern, this is not a Brackley Twon Council responsibility, we will follow this up with highways.

Q7. The Unicorn Hotel, it has been rumoured that there are 200 immigrants going to be moved into it, is this true?

A7. We have not heard anything about this, it would need to go through planning as there is a very strict procedure which would need to be followed.

Q8. Updates on the skatepark please.

A8. We are on their books and now waiting for them to provide a start date.

Q9. Is there any plans for the council to help restart the carnival? What's the councils view on this?

A9. There was a post asking for volunteers to join the committee but sadly no one stood up.

Q10. Cars are going far too fast the last 200m before the carpark 30mph is not being enforced.

A10. The police will put an officer there and do some enforcement.

Q11. Why was the speed limit raised to 70pm on the bypass?

A11. Brackley Town Council has no control over this please raise your concern to the police to the police here this evening.

Q12. It has been rumoured there will be charge for parking in the town centre is this correct?

A12. We have not been made aware of any plans to charge for parking.

Q13. I am a womble and you say don't do it on the highways – who is going to do it?

A13. There are scheduled clear ups and even though it's not as often as we want, this is organised by West Northamptonshire Council

Police update – Chief Inspector, Brackley resources up back to 2010 levels, 5 PCs at Brackley and 3 PCSOs. Brackley station is not an open station. Accessibility through online etc. expect to see you will see us out and about more, LIPS all information about speeding to feed into this system which helps us plan moving forward.

Concerns - Anti-Social Behaviour, shop lifting & drugs- there are plans afoot, government funding for Anti-Social Behaviour.

Response time - It has been an issue, there is a double crewed dedicated for Brackley now and is based in South Northants area but between 8am and midnight Brackley is covered by the neighbourhood team.

• **Meeting Close**