



ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025

This report aims to update you on some of the work we have been doing on your behalf over the past twelve months, future projects and useful information.



WHAT WE DO



Horsforth Town Council is the first tier of local government. The role of Horsforth Town Council is to represent the whole of the Horsforth community. It holds full council meetings every two months where it discusses local concerns and planned events, listens to any issues raised by residents and presentations on the work of community groups and ratifies spending decisions. All decisions are agreed and made by the whole Council, via democratic vote; no individual councillor can make decisions. Full council also oversees and ratifies decisions made by committees that were formed to focus on specific areas of council business.

Horsforth Town Council wants to ensure that all residents of Horsforth are represented by the council. It has elected representatives who attend community initiatives such as Dementia Friendly Horsforth and Horsforth Fair Trade, and has a Young People's Champion. The Town Council strives towards ever closer ties and works with the people of Horsforth and encourages interested residents to get involved.

The Town Council raises money for Horsforth through the Precept, collected with the council tax, which is invested back into Horsforth through local services and projects to the area such as events, Christmas lights, street furniture and floral displays.

Information about the Town Council can be found at www.horsforthtowncouncil.gov.uk. On the website you can find the dates of Town Council meetings including the agendas and minutes, latest issues news and information relevant to Horsforth and the Town Council.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Report by Cllr Dowling



As I approach the conclusion of my third year serving as Chairman of Horsforth Town Council, I find myself reflecting on the progress we have made together and the many contributions that have brought us to this point. It is with sincere gratitude that I extend heartfelt thanks to all my fellow Town Councillors for their tireless work and commitment to serving the residents of Horsforth over the past twelve months, since the last Annual Meeting of the Town Council.

This past year has brought with it a number of notable changes within the council, and it would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the transitions we have experienced. We have seen a number of councillors step down from their roles, and in their place, welcomed new individuals through the process of co-option. I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank those councillors who have moved on, for the time, energy, and passion they gave to Horsforth Town Council during their tenure. Their voluntary service has left a lasting impact on the council and the community at large.

Equally, I wish to warmly welcome and express my appreciation to the new councillors who have joined us throughout the year. Each has brought with them fresh enthusiasm, new perspectives, and a shared commitment to improving our town. Their contributions, even in a short time, have already enriched our work and helped to shape our priorities moving forward.

I must also give special recognition to our Town Clerk, Becky Crabtree, whose continued professionalism, diligence, and commitment to the smooth running of council operations has been invaluable. Becky has once again proven herself to be more than capable in the role, and her hard work over the last year has not gone unnoticed. Supporting her throughout has been our Administration Assistant, Steph White, who completes our dedicated office team. Together, Becky and Steph have worked tirelessly behind the scenes to support the council in achieving its goals and serving our community.

Their efforts have played a key role in enabling the council to secure the prestigious Silver Award as part of the Local Council Award Scheme – a testament to the quality of governance, community engagement, and service we strive to uphold. Additionally, under their administrative stewardship, Horsforth Town Council proudly continues to be an accredited Living Wage Employer, recognising our commitment to fair pay and social responsibility.

Over the past year, the council has continued to invest its time, resources, and efforts across a broad range of areas, all with the shared aim of enhancing the wellbeing and quality of life for the people of Horsforth. Whether through planning, community support, environmental initiatives, or civic engagement, our work is always guided by the needs and aspirations of our residents.

Perhaps one of the most significant developments in the past year has been the long-anticipated progress regarding the future of 3 The Green. I am pleased to report that the plans for transforming the building into a vibrant community space have now been finalised. In April, we officially handed over the keys to the developers, marking the beginning of the renovation work required to bring this vision to life. This project represents a major milestone for Horsforth, and once complete, will provide a lasting resource that serves people of all ages and backgrounds – a space for the entire community to enjoy and benefit from for generations to come.



Looking ahead, the council already has several initiatives and projects in the pipeline for the coming twelve months, all aimed at continuing to build on the progress we've made. We remain committed to transparency, community involvement, and working collaboratively to ensure Horsforth remains a thriving, inclusive, and forward-thinking town.

- Refurbishment of 3 The Green for community use
- VE Day celebrations
- Our annual Christmas lights switch on and market
- Remembrance Day events
- Farmers' Market Stall



COUNCILLORS

The Town Council has 22 councillors who are elected to represent one of the five wards in the town. Councillors are elected to serve a period of four years. The councillors serving from May 2023 until May 2027 are:



Councillors are elected by the Horsforth community to carry out three main roles. The first is to make decisions about things such as spending, community events and services. Secondly, councillors monitor all decisions taken, to ensure that they were effective. Thirdly, councillors commit themselves to staying informed about local issues and to listening to the range of opinions on those issues within Horsforth.

The Town Council holds regular advice surgeries to provide an opportunity for residents to discuss items of concern and/or interest with a town councillor. Two or more councillors attend each surgery. Surgeries are held before every full council meeting at 6.30pm. No booking is required.

COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Report by Cllr Cousins



I would like to begin by thanking everybody involved for enabling me the opportunity to Chair the Community and Environment Committee. I would also like to thank previous Chairs, in recent years for their hard work and dedication.

I was elected for Chair on the Community and Environment Committee and chaired my first meeting in September last year and I am pleased to report that we have had a productive year within this committee. Since last year's annual report we have met six times to discuss and administer grants to our local community organisations; we have looked at reports from councillors who organise events in our community such as our Christmas event and the Remembrance Service; we have managed the award scheme celebrating the outstanding community contribution made by individuals and groups across our community; we have contributed to our floral displays in the public spaces around Horsforth; and worked with councillors on the Editorial Group who produce the council's newsletter keeping the public up to date with the work of the Council. Which in all I have really enjoyed being a part of.

Organising community events

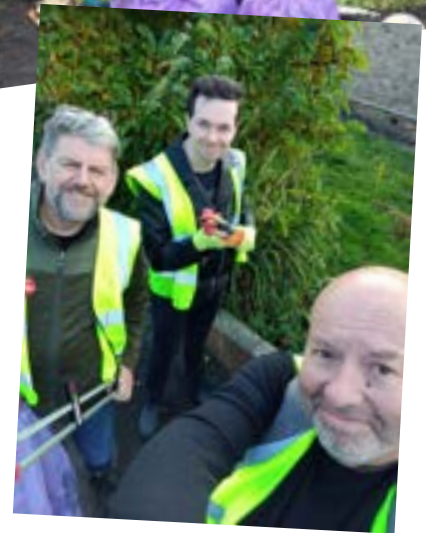
I believe these occasions have enabled everybody within our community of all ages to come together. By collaborating with working groups, our councillors organise events throughout the year, such as the Christmas Event, Remembrance Service, and the Annual Event.

This year's Christmas and Annual Event was hosted in collaboration with Horsforth Town Team whose aim is to represent our local businesses and enable a vibrant and busy commercial environment in our town centre, maintaining the local shopping experience we all value. Unfortunately, due to weather conditions, things changed but as a team we all made sure our community still got the best Christmas experience within our town centre. A massive well done to everybody involved in making the magic come to Christmas for our community.

Floral Displays and Public Spaces

Across Horsforth we purchase and maintain the hanging baskets and planters. We work with, and are helped by, the dedicated Horsforth in Bloom volunteers. Our floral displays will need to be reviewed for next year to ensure they align with the Biodiversity Policy and help lower expenses to maintain them. We aim to resolve this through working alongside Horsforth in Bloom, Horsforth Climate Action, Horsforth Town Team, and Leeds City Council (LCC).

We conducted litter picks in each of the five wards of Horsforth in October with a group of volunteers from Horsforth Litter Pickers. During the litter picks, participating councillors used this time to also check on the condition of footpaths around Horsforth, and reported any issues and problems to LCC. Our aim is to do ward-based litter picks again this October and use this time to check on the various assets of the Town Council in each ward. We aim to carry on working with businesses and local schools to raise awareness and reduce the problem of litter across Horsforth going forward.



Recently Cllr Gains and Cllr Goulden helped to repair the public footpath going up from Outwood Drive to Outwood Lane.

The poor state of this footpath was reported to the Town Council at our stall at the Farmers' Market. Cragg Hill and Woodside Residents Association liaised with LCC Parks and Countryside to plan the repairs and local residents carried out the work. The path is well used and it is nice to see it made safer. Well done to everyone involved!

The Heart of Horsforth Awards

It really has been amazing hearing all the amazing candidate's nominations for our 'The Heart of Horsforth Award Scheme' enabling us all to see their contributions to the community. At our Christmas Event 2025 we will distribute awards to recognise and celebrate the incredible hard work and dedication of members of our community.

This year the deadline for nominations will be 1 September 2025.

Grants

The Town Council offers grants and sponsorship of up to £500 to community organisations based in Horsforth in need of funding. This year, the Town Council awarded £2000 to:

- £500 to Horsforth Hawks Women's Rounders Team towards expenses for a national tournament
- £500 to Horsforth Cricket Club to repair the all weather practice facility
- £500 to 7th Airedale Scout Group to the external area of the scout hut
- £500 to Horsforth Churches Together towards the community Walk of Witness on Good Friday

Further information is available on the Town Council website which sets out the criteria for applications.

Looking ahead

As the new council year begins, I would like to end this year again with heartfelt thanks to councillors on this committee and its working groups for all their efforts to support the community and environment of Horsforth. We will be continuing to discuss litter, provision for young people, supporting the local visual and commercial environment and the work of the many excellent volunteers and community champion in our community.



FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Report by Cllr Dowling



The Finance and General Purposes Committee deals with the general business and procedural issues of the Town Council. It makes recommendations to the Full Council on any actions the full council may need to make.

The committee is also responsible for agreeing larger grants recommended to it by the Community and Environment Committee and authorising smaller items of expenditure.

The committee monitors the council's income and expenditure. From the budget proposals of each committee, the Finance and General Purposes Committee reviews the total budget for the following year. It then advises the council on the figure that the council will need to pay for projects and items that will be part of the services that the council will provide for Horsforth. Once agreed, this amount then becomes the Precept for the following year.

The committee also considers recommendations from the Community Infrastructure Levy Advisory Group (CILAG). The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is money that the Town Council receives from Leeds City Council from a levy charged on larger developments in the Horsforth area. The council set up CILAG to look at how money from the CIL should be spent. Over the next year or so we hope to see some of the recommendations from the advisory group be agreed by council for works to be carried out in the community.

This past year the committee agreed to spend a large amount of CIL money on the following project and items:

- A waste bin at Newlaithes play area
- A waste bin on Featherbank Lane
- New paths around the bandstand in Hall Park
- Benches and picnic tables in Hall Park
- Goal posts on woodside recreation ground
- Benches at the old ball roundabout



A major part of the Finance and General Purposes Committee's work in the coming year will be ensuring the smooth development of 3 & 5 The Green. The committee will also be working to ensure that Horsforth Town Council can continue to run all services and still deliver all it does with value for money.

PLANNING, LICENCING & TRAFFIC COMMITTEE

Report by Cllr Hardcastle



My report on the activities of the Planning, Licencing and Traffic committee covers the period from April 2024 until March 2025.

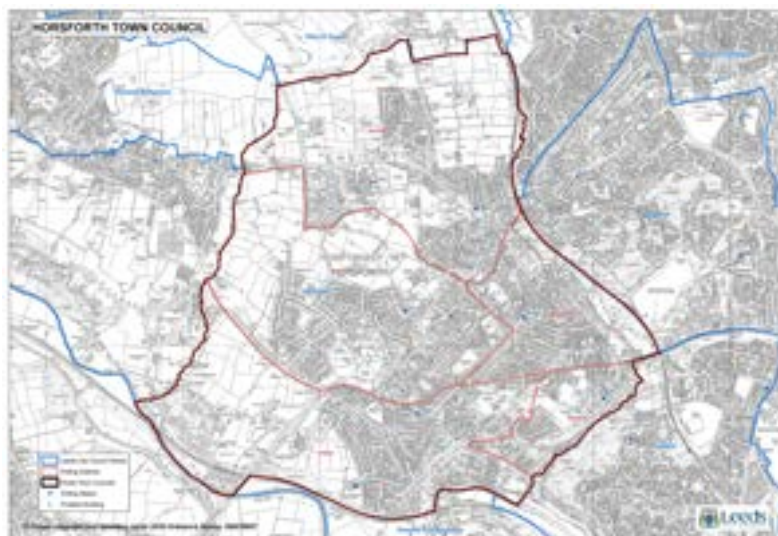
Below is a brief description of the activities of the committee. The committee's major duties are to examine and comment on planning applications including planning appeals, to note any licencing applications and note and comment on any traffic management proposals.

During the reporting period the committee has examined and commented on around 140 planning applications and commented on seven applications and objected to one appeal. We have also considered complaints from members of the public on planning and traffic issues and received presentations from major developers and others.

We have representation on the Leeds Bradford Airport Consultative Committee and maintain a close watch on airport developments.

We have responsibility for the maintenance of the Horsforth Neighbourhood Plan. There is currently an active subcommittee reviewing the plan to consider what changes are required for the revised plan for 2028.

Finally, I must thank my Vice Chairman, Cllr David Brosnan and all the committee members for their help and support during the last year, not forgetting our clerk, Becky Crabtree and our administration assistant, Steph White who have done so much to ensure the committee's smooth operation.



STAFFING & EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE

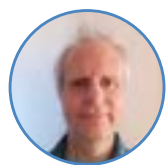
Report by Cllr J Garvani



There is little to report as both Becky and Steph have been working well, supporting the Councillors on the various committees and working groups with their tasks and had had glowing appraisals for the year.

That was until late 2024 when Steph had to step back from her duties for health reasons. As well as continuing with her own duties, Becky picked up Steph's committee work and working groups became more self-managing. Thankfully Steph is now on the road to recovery and back at work albeit on reduced hours at the moment.

Many thanks to both Becky and Steph for all their hard work.



COUNCIL OF SANCTUARY

Report by Cllr Fletcher

Horsforth Town Council is pursuing the process of being recognised as a Council of Sanctuary. This award is given by City of Sanctuary UK, a national charity that aims to foster greater understanding between the public, refugees and people seeking asylum.

When HTC joined City of Sanctuary UK's network of local authorities in May 2024 – which was publicised with an event in Horsforth Matters – we became part of a nationwide movement of councils who share a commitment to welcoming people seeking sanctuary. Horsforth Town Council aims to create a culture of inclusivity and welcome in Horsforth for refugees and people seeking asylum in the town and surrounding area, and we have been working closely with the local Horsforth Town of Sanctuary (HToS) support group to achieve this. The group primarily supports men seeking asylum who are temporarily accommodated in north Leeds as well as asking the men themselves to sit on the steering group, ensuring they play an active part in the running of the group.

Horsforth Town Council is pursuing the process of being recognised as a Council of Sanctuary. This award is given by City of Sanctuary UK, a national charity that aims to foster greater understanding between the public, refugees and people seeking asylum.



At the time we joined the network we had already established regular contact with HToS, with Cllr Fletcher becoming a regular attendee at steering group meetings. Councillors have also attended many events run by HToS, for example the regular socials at St Margaret's (including the Great Get Together event in February 2025) and monthly football matches in which both people seeking asylum and local residents take part. Cllr Tumalan has also been instrumental in getting some of the men seeking asylum involved in local football clubs. HToS also provides help with the everyday needs of asylum seekers, and to this end Cllr Fletcher has helped with monthly distribution of clothing to new arrivals which is organised by HToS.



The council itself has set out to involve people seeking asylum in council-run events. Sadly the planned participation of asylum seekers in the Christmas lights switch-on did not happen due to that event being scaled down, but a number of men who are either involved with HToS or being helped by the group did attend the VE Day event in May this year.

Additionally Cllr Gillinder, who volunteers regularly in the Community Garden in Hall Park, is hoping to welcome any men who are interested to start volunteering in the garden on a regular basis. The council also has a role to play in

spreading awareness of events such as last October's information session on hosting refugees at home, which was jointly hosted by Leeds City of Sanctuary and HToS and which was advertised on the HTC website. We also aim to work with Horsforth Town Team in identifying training and employment opportunities wherever possible.

Another aspect of achieving Council of Sanctuary status is to publicise the experiences of people seeking asylum and educating both ourselves and the public about the challenges they face. On latter point, Cllrs Gillinder and Fletcher recently attended a free course run by the charity Solace, on the subject of factors impacting the mental well-being of refugees and asylum seekers. It was an interesting and informative course, and hopefully similar sessions will be available in the future. On the point of publicising the experiences of asylum seekers and refugees, HToS is asking some of the men they work with to write down their experiences (if they are happy to do so and anonymously if they wish) which we will then look at publishing on HTC's website and/or social media.

An Action Plan has been drawn up as a way of monitoring our progress towards the Council of Sanctuary status. At the time of writing we are about to review the Action Plan to see what progress we have made so far, whether the plan needs updating and what our next steps should be. We will continue updating the Communities and Environment group as to our progress.

EVENTS IN HORSFORTH



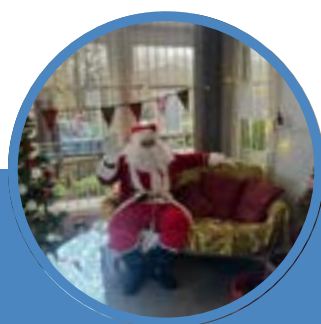
Christmas and Annual Event

Report by Cllr Brosnan

The Christmas lights switch-on was planned to follow the same collaboration as the last few years with the Horsforth Town Team's seasonal market and road closure. This was unfortunately hampered by the weather but it certainly did not dampen our enthusiasm to put on a show despite the conditions.

We loved how the community came together to help with local businesses opening their doors to host our fabulous musicians and local traders.

The biggest thank you though has to be to the people of Horsforth who made it a such a great day.



Horsforth Town Council were honoured to work with the national celebration of the 80th anniversary of the D-Day Landings.

We worked alongside the Royal British Legion, RAF Air Cadets and Deputy Lieutenant for West Yorkshire, Stephen Boardman. The event started with wreath laying at the Stanhope stone and the cenotaph. We then marched to the band stand where we were entertained by Stoke of genius big band and Natalie Bernadette who sang many of the classics from the day.

The day ended with a reading of the proclamation and the commemorative beacon lighting by the leader of Horsforth Town Council and Stephen Boardman.





Remembrance Service

Report by Cllr Wishart

Horsforth Town Council worked collaboratively with Horsforth Royal British Legion to plan and deliver the Remembrance March and Cenotaph Service.

The Royal British Legion and a representative of Horsforth Churches Together lead the service at the Cenotaph. Stephen Boardman - Deputy Lieutenant for West Yorkshire, RAF Air Cadets, the Scouts and Guide groups, local MP Katie White, Horsforth Town Council and City Councillors were in attendance.

The service started with a parade to the cenotaph where the Remembrance Service was held and we paid our respects to our fallen heroes from Horsforth. Guests from the service were then invited to the Willows for tea, coffee and biscuits.



Horsforth Matters

Report by Cllr G Garvani

The Town Council has continued to publish Horsforth Matters four times a year to keep residents up-to-date with events and initiatives within our community. Three editions have been predominantly online publications with paper copies available in key locations such as the library and cafes across Horsforth. The Council arranged paid delivery for the fourth edition to each home in Horsforth but unfortunately was let down. In light of this let-down, and in an effort to save money, the Editorial Working Group recommended to the Community and Environment Committee that all four editions of Horsforth Matters should be predominantly online with a slightly increased number of paper copies. These paper copies will be available in the library and cafes as usual but will also be taken to other locations, such as care homes, across the community.

Horsforth Town Council reviewed the awards scheme and launched a new scheme called "The Heart of Horsforth Award Scheme" in 2024 to recognise and celebrate individuals and community groups who have made their mark on Horsforth.



The winners are as follows:

- The Volunteering Award (Under 21s) was awarded to Victória Martinho Vieira Da Cunha for her achievement of making the final 12 of the Children's Young Mayor election process. She also presented in front of the Town Council and Leeds City Council Outer North West Committee which takes huge courage. These presentations have been an overview of her manifesto all about kids becoming more active.
- The Volunteering Award (Over 21s) was awarded to Horsforth Community Garden for Janet and the team's achievement in launching the Horsforth Community Garden, going above and beyond to create a wonderful garden that the whole community can benefit from. Whether they want to get involved in the growing fruit and vegetables in the garden, talking and educating people about growing, harvesting the produce or enjoying sitting peacefully in the space.
- The Business Award was awarded to Right at Home Leeds North, Otley and Horsforth for their amazing work and helping so many people within the community, delivering excellent services to others.
- The Community Award was awarded to Horsforth Churches Together for their hard work in bringing our great community of Horsforth together by running events and activities that are free and accessible for people of all ages.
- The Environmental Award was awarded to Horsforth Climate Action for their amazing work in helping to make Horsforth greener, more sustainable and equitable.

The 2024 Heart of Horsforth Award winners have truly made a remarkable impact on the community. From inspiring young volunteers to creating a thriving community garden and promoting sustainability, these individuals and groups are truly deserving of recognition. Congratulations to all the winners and nominees, and a big thank you for all the hard work that contributes to making Horsforth such a vibrant and caring place to live.





Neighbourhood Plan

Report by Cllr Goulden

It's been my pleasure to lead the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group this year, where progress on the review (and subsequent update) has exploded into life. Firstly, I must thank the Working Group for their support and effort in kicking off this vital review. Without their support, it is unlikely that we would have made the leaps and bounds that we have in improving our monitoring processes as a Town Council, nor would we have achieved the awareness among our Councillors of the awareness of the Neighbourhood Plan.

This vital document allows residents to have their say in steering future development across Horsforth, and allows the Town Council access to additional Community Infrastructure Levy money from construction projects across Horsforth. This money is spent on projects that benefit local residents.

The Town Council have, this year, received training on the application and review of the Plan. They have also carried out the first of several consultation surveys, which received a good response. The Town Council gained some valuable insight from this survey and will be working to raise awareness of the existence, and the benefits of, the Plan.

The Town Council have also agreed the likely milestones for the review of the plan, and will be looking to carry out an initial review of the individual policies and their effectiveness in the coming months. We will be looking to consult local residents and community groups on the future direction over the next year.

The Neighbourhood Plan review is certainly gathering pace, and you can expect to hear a lot more on this important topic in the next year!



PREMISES

Report by Councillor J Garvani



After many holdups, I am pleased to announce that work started on the first phase of the refurbishment of 3 The Green on the 14th April.



This will provide a Community Room, kitchen, toilets including a "Changing Places" toilet and a lift to the first floor that will also be available for visitors to the museum. We are hoping that the work will be completed in 3 months - watch this space for details about the opening.

The next task for the Working Group will be to ensure the room is ready for hire and is of benefit to the community.

FINANCE

Report by the Town Clerk, Becky Crabtree

The Town Council's income currently comes from a Precept which is added to the Council Tax levy set by the Principal Authority, Leeds City Council. In 2024-2025, the Precept was £144,900 and the Town Council received a Local Council Tax Support grant of £5174.

The precept for a Band D house was £19.33 for 2024-2025. This is substantially below that of surrounding areas and the average Band D Council Tax level set by Parish and Town Councils in England.

The Town Council sets a budget every year and maintains adequate financial reserves to meet the needs of the organisation.

Below is a summary of the income and expenditure for the year ending 31st March 2025.

Income

Precept	£144,900
Council Tax Support Grant	£5174
Bank Interest	£4489
Other including grants and refunds.	£10,773
TOTAL	£165,336

Expenditure

Community and Environment Committee	£37,364
Planning, Licensing and Traffic Committee	£0
Salaries	£68,835
Office (General Admin and Running Costs)	£12,031
Training:	£1029
Election:	£0
Premises:	£19,306
Designated Funds	£7137
Restricted Funds:	£24,793
TOTAL	£170,496

Full details about the Town Council accounts can be viewed at www.horsforthtowncouncil.gov.uk

Horsforth Town Council receives the Silver Award under the Local Council Award Scheme



We are delighted to announce that Horsforth Town Council has been awarded the Silver Award under the Local Council Award Scheme, administered by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC).

This achievement follows our attainment of the Bronze Award in February 2024, marking significant progress in our ongoing commitment to excellence.

The Silver Award recognises that the Town Council excels in strong governance, active community engagement, and a clear commitment to continuous improvement—demonstrating a standard that goes above and beyond statutory obligations.

To achieve this award, the Town Council not only maintained all the standards required for the Bronze level, but also provided additional evidence demonstrating:

- how the Council represents and engages with the community,
- effective and transparent governance in the management of Council business and finances, and
- a commitment to continuous improvement through the development and support of staff and councillors.

The Local Council Award Scheme is a peer assessed programme that has been designed to both provide the tools and encouragement to those councils at the beginning of their improvement journeys, as well as promoting and recognising councils that are at the cutting edge of the sector. It is through the sector working together to share best practice, drive up standards and supporting those who are committed to improving their offer to their communities that individual councils and the sector as a whole will reach its full potential.



LOCAL COUNCIL
AWARD SCHEME
SILVER

MEETING DATES

Town Council meetings are usually held on a Thursday evening at 7pm on the following dates:

Full Council

17 July 2025, 25 September 2025, 20 November 2025, 22 January 2026 and 26 March 2026

Planning, Licensing and Traffic Committee

12 June 2025, 10 July 2025, 14 August 2025, 18 September 2025, 16 October 2025, 13 November 2025, 15 January 2026, 12 February 2026, 19 March 2026 and 16 April 2026

Finance and General Purposes Committee

3 July 2025, 11 September 2025, 6 November 2025, 8 January 2026 and 12 March 2026

Community and Environment Committee

5 June 2025, 4 September 2025, 4 December 2025 and 5 March 2026

The agenda for each meeting is available three clear working days before the meeting and can be viewed on the Town Council website.

Members of the press and public are welcome to attend.

Where confidential matters are to be discussed, members of the press and public may be excluded.

The meeting venue can be found on the notice or agenda.

