



# ANNUAL PARISH REPORT 2022

MARLOW TOWN COUNCIL

# MAYOR'S

# REPORT 2021/22



## Good news! - many town events are now back in the calendar

I am honoured to have been your Town Mayor for the past three years, though it has been somewhat challenging.

The period of uncertainty caused by the Covid pandemic affected every resident in some way and whilst the worst of it seems to be over, it is still necessary to exercise caution. We again owe a great debt of gratitude, not only to our NHS and their support staff, but to many more in the community who have worked selflessly over the last two years to keep our lives as normal as possible. Many of our town organisations have supported (and continue to do) our more vulnerable residents, not only with food and meals, but with moral support where there has been loneliness or other personal issues. Post-Covid, we are moving into more difficult economic times and I am aware of several organisations within the town that are helping residents with these issues.

During the latter part of last year, relaxation of Covid restrictions allowed some of our civic and town events to take place. The annual Remembrance service attracted excellent support; the outstanding Christmas lights were switched on by Chris Evans; Carols on the Causeway took place in Christmas week; and the Chamber of Trade late night shopping and the Rotary Santa's Fun Run also took place in December.

The good news is that many town events are now back in the calendar. The Council held a civic celebration service in March with a revised format to include a community choir and two town organisations promoting their activities. In recent weeks, I have attended Age Concern's annual general meeting; Marlow District Scouts' St Georges Day service; and

excellent concerts by the Town Band and Marlow Orchestra. The Marlow Town Regatta and Festival is back in May. I have also welcomed several new businesses to the town and note that currently empty shops appear to have plans for occupancy. For information, details of the events I have attended on your behalf are always reported to the full town council meetings.

The weekend of 7/8th May was the 50th anniversary of town twinning with Marly le Roi, France and I travelled to Marly together with several councillors and the Marlow Town twinning association to commemorate this historic occasion.

Talking of anniversaries, the Council would be delighted to see you in Higginson Park on Friday 3rd June, where it is hosting a "Party like the Queen" event to celebrate the Queen's Jubilee. It is a real family day out, themed in the 1950s and includes music, entertainment, food, drink and much more – full details on the Town Council website.

Marlow remains a very community-orientated town and I'd like to offer a big thank you to all residents for your support. My thanks also go to all Town Councillors and to my Deputy, Cllr Jocelyn Towns, who has supported me and stood in for me on several occasions. Finally, we would not function as a Council without the support of our officers, led by Town Clerk, Hilary Martin. Many thanks to them for running everything in the background.

I have very much enjoyed representing our town again and I wish you and your families well for the coming months.

*Cllr Richard Scott*

Town Mayor

➔ **Marlow remains a very community-orientated town**



## Leader, Cllr Chris Funnell

**Change has been our theme this year - the most substantial in the last 15 years.**

We listened to our residents during last May's elections and as a result decided to build and strengthen Marlow Town Council, our interaction with residents and our resilience for the future.

I am delighted as part of that change to welcome five new councillor volunteers into position, elected by you to serve you. The team has been working hard to learn the ropes pre- and post-pandemic, helping to build a council fit for the future. Fresh minds bring new ideas for growth, transformation and importantly provide a succession of individuals who are committed to serving our residents. Please welcome our new members below, challenge them, test them, and get to know them. They are here to serve you and are part of our important team of twelve.

I am equally honoured to have taken the job as Leader of the Council, a role that supports the entire organisation and is responsible for directing, overseeing and interacting with our 15,000-plus residents. The Leader also drives our vision and strategy and keeps us focused.

### **Our mission is to provide:**

- A caring environment for all
- A fantastic place to live



- A great place to work
- An exciting place to visit
- A wonderful place to bring up children

Looking back on this year, the community of Marlow has been no less than exemplary in rising to the challenges we faced and so many of you brushed aside your own concerns and supported others selflessly during the ups and downs of the pandemic. Covid has had a devastating effect on everyone's lives and what we accepted as "a normal way of life" has changed forever. Your Council is often the "fourth emergency service" - when no one else answers we are often in action with organisations, clubs, voluntary organisations and individuals across our town to keep the wheels in motion.

I would also like to acknowledge our support team of officers - under the leadership of Hilary Martin, our Town Clerk - who diligently go about their work to ensure the back office of the Council functions 365 days of the year. They play a huge part in running the town effectively.

As we continue our work in our new council year I look forward, along with the team, to continuing to serve you and driving the organisation that makes Marlow a wonderful place to live.

Please stay in touch by visiting our website, [www.marlow-tc.gov.uk](http://www.marlow-tc.gov.uk), which explains what your Council does and provides contact information for any questions.

We would also welcome any feedback by email via: [office@marlow-tc.gov.uk](mailto:office@marlow-tc.gov.uk)

Cllr David Brown



Cllr Carol Heap



Cllr Chris Hoyle



Cllr Natalia Mityaeva



Cllr Colleen Stapley



## Chairman, Cllr Natalia Mityaeva

### Resources

The Council continues to strengthen its commitment to Marlow and its residents through high-quality services and events. Below we outline some of the key areas of expenditure.

### Grounds maintenance

Although most of the public land in Marlow is owned by Buckinghamshire Council, we manage the ground maintenance of all the Marlow town land in order to maintain a consistent appearance at a high standard. A new ground maintenance contract has now been tendered. During our selection process for a contractor, we took into consideration other environmental and sustainability criteria like the use of electric tools and vehicles instead of polluting, fuel-driven alternatives. The grass cutting service for six cuttings a year comes at a projected cost of £75,000/year.



### Public spaces

We maintain our public spaces by working with the Community Payback programme. This programme provides us with minor offenders who are supervised, tasked with maintenance requests. This partnership enables us to have better maintenance response and coverage while giving back to our local community. The service costs £6,000/year.

### Security services

Our Police Community Support Officers provide another level of support for our community in addition to the police. For many years the Council has supported the security of our town by sharing the cost of an additional Police Community Support Officer, 50% of whose time is dedicated to Marlow. We know that residents are pleased to see this additional resource patrolling on a regular basis throughout the town. We will continue to support this role, the cost for which is £19,125/year.

Additionally, for the past two years the Council has hired and paid for a private security firm to help keep our town safe. These patrols visit our parks and green spaces on a regular basis, dealing with anti-social behaviour and minor crime and working closely with the Police. This has been successful with residents that we are now adding it as a permanent service for the town. The cost of this service is £27,372/year, which was previously funded from reserves.

### Transportation services

Marlow town bus operates on weekdays in and around the town centre and to and from Maidenhead and High Wycombe. The service is managed by Buckinghamshire Council and we contribute £6,300/year.

### Community services

The much-loved Marlovian magazine is published by the Council to keep residents informed as to what is happening within the town and the Council. The Marlovian publishing costs £6,400/year.

We continue to offer grants each year, totalling £8,000/year to our town's groups and associations to help them achieve their ambitions and make Marlow a better place for us all.

We continue to make Marlow a great place to be over the Christmas period, with our enhanced Christmas lights, decorations and Carols on the Causeway. To maintain these to a high standard, we budget a cost of £11,600.

The Council's finances are in good shape and we hold earmarked reserves for future projects to improve the town, some of which are already under way. If you would like any further information on the Council's finances, please contact the Town Council office.







## Chairman, Cllr Neil Marshall

### Planning

Marlow Town Council is a statutory consultee to the local planning Buckinghamshire Authority. The Planning and Transport (PT) Committee meets every three weeks to review planning applications within the Marlow town boundary. We review all applications carefully and make appropriate comment or objections.

The bulk of applications reviewed each year are for minor extensions or changes of use and we have a strong correlation with the Planning Authority findings.

The Wycombe Local Plan was approved without any major changes that affect Marlow. It maintained our Green Belt protection areas against developer threats. A new Local Plan for Bucks will be developed in the near future to supersede the Wycombe Plan in due course, but is still some time away and is unlikely to have major impact on Marlow.



Developments soon to be under consideration include the Marlow Studio project, for which a planning application is expected in the very near future, and a proposal for the new schools boathouse which was strongly supported by the committee.

### Transport

We are always mindful of the challenge of parking availability in the town, largely brought about by the vibrancy of the town itself, but solutions that satisfy residents, shoppers and inward commuters (all of whom are essential to the viability of the town) prove to be very challenging. We are working with the new Buckinghamshire Council towards a post-Covid travel plan and supported the new quietway on Trinity Road.

We were also involved in the installation of the inductive electric vehicle charging point in Liston Road car park. The electric car hire facility trial has proven to be very popular and extends to the end of July. We will also be considering options on the town bus service when the current contract comes to an end.

The Committee is looking forward to another busy and productive year for Marlow.

# ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

# REPORT 2021/22

## Chairman, Cllr Jocelyn Towns

This committee was set up as an official Town Council Committee at the Annual Meeting in May 2021.

This was decided upon following the success of the Sustainable Marlow working group, who focused on some local projects in 2019 to make a difference:

- The first Eco Schools conference took place virtually during lockdown. A further meeting has taken place in person.
- 'Refill' launched before the pandemic hit to discourage single-use plastic water bottles. We introduced two water stations, one on the Causeway and one in association with The United Reform Church. Many shops displayed water refill signs in their windows. The pandemic changed things, but we hope to re-invigorate the initiative soon.
- Releaf, in conjunction with TTM, saw the planting of many trees, with plans for many more.



The TC has a long history of engagement with the environment. For example, flower baskets were introduced into the town centre back in 2012. More recently we have introduced wild-flower areas into some of our verges and parks. We are also focused on keeping pavements and footpaths clear to enable more walking in and around the town.

We introduced our new Environmental Policy in 2019, whereby we committed to improving our own environmental performance to raise awareness among residents. We also undertook to work with other organisations to drive greater sustainability. We introduced our climate change statement in March 2020.

In 2021 we took on our Environmental Sustainability consultant to help us move projects forward. We held our first public meeting online in March 2021 and will be following up with the launch of our Sustainability Challenge soon. This will help raise further environmental awareness among residents as we work together with other organisations to drive greater learning about sustainability in our town.

MTC has looked at its own climate impacts and how it can reduce them. The second edition of Marlow's Environmental Performance Index (EPI) has just launched. This is a detailed carbon audit to help identify the Council's own emissions and make practical changes. These include the introduction of lower energy Christmas lights, encouraging contractors to use electric tools, and the purchase of an electric staff bicycle.

The TC has also greened its policies, adopting a clean air plan and aiming to eliminate excess NO2 by 2025.

Recently, we conducted a survey of residents on sustainability, the results of which were shared in the Spring Marlovian magazine. You can keep up to date with all Sustainable Marlow's actions and projects via updates included in the magazine.

Please help us as we continue to work with residents on initiatives that will lead to a more sustainable future for Marlow.



→ The Town Council has a long history of engagement with the environment



## Chairman, Cllr Richard Scott

The new Community committee was established in November 2021 to lead on events; manage how your Council communicates with residents and other stakeholders; deliver projects and services to enrich and improve the Marlow community in areas such as economic development and tourism; community safety, community engagement and community cohesion. The committee consists of five members and is chaired by the incumbent mayor.

Since its formation, the committee has been very active, both formally and informally, and not withstanding some Covid restrictions, has continued to provide residents with Christmas lights Switch On, traditional Carols on The Causeway and a Civic Celebration service. This celebration event, held in March, reached out all residents and endorsed the community spirit which prevails in our town. The event included presentations by two town organisations, Dementia Action Marlow and the Sea Cadets and several songs were provided by the Harmony Belles choir. We are likely to repeat this style of civic



celebration in 2023. Unfortunately, the Mayor's charity golf day had to be cancelled.

2022 sees the 50th anniversary of town twinning with Marly le Roi, France. This very successful arrangement was recognised in France on 7th May with councillors and members of Marlow Marly town twinning association attending. To commemorate this historic event, your Council will be planting a tree in Marly le Roi and presenting a commemorative plaque to their town council. Marly council has given us a superb painting which will be displayed in our offices in Court Garden house.

We have organised an informal event in Higginson Park on 3rd June to celebrate the platinum anniversary of HM The Queen. "Party like the Queen" will have a 1950's theme and include entertainment for the whole family and vintage food and drink stalls; and please bring your own picnics if you wish. The planning of civic events is carried out well in advance and preparations for our Christmas events for this year are now in hand.

Looking forward, the committee is also looking at a number of future capital projects to enhance the town and full details will be shared with residents when the information is available. We will also be reviewing our communications to make full use of traditional and social media channels to promote the council's activities.



➔ We are looking at several future capital projects to enhance the town

# YOUR COUNCILLORS

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