



GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

The Town Hall, School Road, Gillingham, Dorset SP8 4QR

FULL COUNCIL MINUTES

Minutes of the Full Council meeting held on **Monday 26th June 2023** at The Town Hall, Gillingham, commencing at 7.30pm.

Present:

Cllr Barry von Clemens, Mayor
Cllr Roger Weeks, Deputy Mayor
Cllr Graham Bashford
Cllr Fiona Cullen
Cllr Sharon Cullingford
Cllr Rupert Evill
Cllr Alan Frith
Cllr Paul Harris

Cllr Mick Hill
Cllr Val Potheary
Cllr Sarah Snook
Cllr Donna Toye
Cllr Alison von Clemens
Cllr Mark Walden
Cllr David Walsh

In attendance:

Town Clerk, Julie Hawkins
Projects and HR Officer, Serena Burgess
RFO, Tina Wright

The following joined the meeting via MS Teams:

Michael Streeter, Gillingham and Shaftesbury News
Chairman of Gillingham Community Leisure Trust

Absent: Cllr John Kilcourse

1061. Public Participation. Please note: a period up to a maximum of fifteen minutes will be allowed for public comments and questions restricted to items listed on the following agenda.

There was no public participation.

1062. To receive apologies for absence

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to accept the apologies for absence from Cllr Poulter who was unable to join the meeting for personal reasons.

1063. Declarations of Interest: Members are required to comply with the requirements of Section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 disclosable pecuniary interests

Cllr Walden declared a personal interest in Agenda item no 22, as a Trustee of GCLT.

Cllr Walsh declared an interest in Agenda item no 22 - as Dorset Council Planning Portfolio holder he would be involved in signing off the application.

1064. To receive questions pertaining to the previous minutes

There were no questions.

1065. To approve the minutes as a true and accurate record of the Annual Council held on 22nd May 2023

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to approve the minutes of the meeting of Annual Council held on 22nd May 2023 as a true and accurate record. The Chairman signed the minutes.

1066. To approve payments of £10,000 and over.

There were no payments of £10,000 and over.

1067. To receive and approve the internal auditor's no. 3 of 3 2022/23 report dated 7th June 2023

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix A](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the internal auditor's report no.3 of 3 2022/23 is approved.

1068. To review and consider the effectiveness of the systems of internal audit

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix B](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the systems of internal audit for Gillingham Town Council are independent, effective and in accordance with the Town Council's Financial Regulations.

1069. To formally receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report (AIAR) for FY 2022/23

A copy of the Annual Internal Audit Report (AIAR) for FY 2022/23 had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix C](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the Annual Internal Audit Report (AIAR) for FY 2022/23 is received and noted.

1070. To formally receive, consider and approve the Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement FY 2022/23

A copy of Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement FY 2022/23 was circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix D](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that Gillingham Town Council has put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year and for the preparation of the accounting statements.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that Gillingham Town Council maintain an adequate system of internal control, including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that Gillingham Town Council took all reasonable steps to assure themselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that Gillingham Town Council provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that Gillingham Town Council carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that Gillingham Town Council maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that Gillingham Town Council took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audits.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that Gillingham Town Council considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that Para 9; Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement was not applicable.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that Section 1, Annual Governance Statement 2022/2023 should be approved and signed by the Chairman and the Town Clerk.

The document was signed by the Chairman, Cllr Barry von Clemens and by the Town Clerk, Julie Hawkins.

1071. To formally receive consider and approve Section 2 – Accounting Statements FY 2022/23 of the audited accounts

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix E](#)
It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that Gillingham Town Council confirm and approve the accounting statements at Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return FY 2022/23 and that Section 2 is signed by the Chairman.

The document was signed by the Chairman, Cllr Barry von Clemens.

1072. To confirm that there is no conflict of interest with regards to the external audit being undertaken by BDO LLP. Please refer to page 12 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that there are no conflicts of interest with regards to the external audit being undertaken by BDO LLP.

The document was signed by the Chairman, Cllr Barry von Clemens and by the Town Clerk, Julie Hawkins.

1073. To agree the period for the exercise of Electors Rights according to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Recommended dates: 29th June 2023 to 9th August 2023 inclusive

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the period for the exercise of Electors Rights, according to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 should be 29th June 2023 to 9th August 2023 inclusive.

1074. To note that Cllr Toye has completed a bank reconciliation and signed the appropriate documents as evidence of verification for the period January to March 2023, in accordance with Para. 2.2 of the Financial Regulations

This action was noted.

1075. To receive and consider a Health and Safety Report

A report was received prior to the meeting.

The report was noted.

1076. To receive, consider and adopt the draft minutes of the following standing committees:

a) General Purposes Committee meeting held on Monday 5th June 2023

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the General Purposes meeting held on Monday 5th June 2023 are approved and adopted.

b) Planning Committee meetings held on Monday 22nd May 2023 and Monday 12th June 2023

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Planning Committee meetings held on Monday 22nd May 2022 and Monday 12th June 2023 are approved and adopted.

c) HR Committee meeting held on Monday 19th June 2023

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the HR Committee meeting held on Monday 19th June 2023 are approved and adopted.

d) Finance and Policy Committee meeting held on Monday 19th June 2023

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Finance and Policy Committee meeting held on Monday 19th June 2023 are approved and adopted.

1077. To receive, consider and approve the Terms of Reference for the following Standing Committees:

a) General Purposes Committee

Draft Terms of Reference had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix F](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the Terms of Reference for the General Purposes Committee, as presented, are approved and adopted.

b) Planning Committee

Draft Terms of Reference had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix G](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the Terms of Reference for the Planning Committee, as presented, are approved and adopted.

c) HR Committee

Draft Terms of Reference had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix H](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the Terms of Reference for the HR Committee, as presented, are approved and adopted.

d) Finance and Policy Committee

Draft Terms of Reference had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix I](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the Terms of Reference for the Finance and Policy Committee, as presented, are approved and adopted.

1078. To receive and consider reports from sub-committees and task and finish groups, as follows:

a) Five Year Action Plan Sub-committee

There has been no meeting.

b) Sports and Leisure Panel

There has been no meeting.

1079. To receive, consider and approve the Terms of Reference for the following sub-committees and task and finish groups:

a) Five Year Action Plan Sub-committee

Draft Terms of Reference had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix J](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the Terms of Reference for the Five-Year Action Plan Sub-committee, as presented, are approved and adopted.

b) Sports and Leisure Sub-committee

Draft Terms of Reference had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix K](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the Terms of Reference for the Sports and Leisure Sub-committee, as presented, are approved and adopted.

c) S106 Funding Sub-committee

Draft Terms of Reference had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix L](#)

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the Terms of Reference for the S106 Funding Sub-committee, is approved and adopted.

1080. To consider and agree membership of Sub-committees and Task and Finish Groups:

a) Five Year Action Plan Sub-committee

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the following Councillors should form the Five-Year Action Plan Sub-committee - Cllr Harris, Cllr Kilcourse, Cllr B von Clemens.

b) Sports and Leisure Task and Finish Group

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the following Councillors should form the Sports and Leisure Sub-committee - Cllr Frith, Cllr Harris, Cllr Kilcourse, Cllr Poulter and Cllr Barry von Clemens.

c) The S106 Funding Sub-committee

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the following Councillors should form the S106 Funding Sub-committee – the Chairman of the Finance and Policy Committee, the Lead members of the Allotments and Burials, Estate Management, Five Year Action Plan and Sports and Leisure sub-committees.

1081. To receive and consider reports from outside bodies, if available:

a) Town Meadow Group (Cllr Toye)

There was no report.

b) Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Cllr B von Clemens)

There was no report.

c) Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils (DAPTC) Larger Town meetings (Cllr B von Clemens)

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix M](#).

Cllr B von Clemens stated that there was concern about the lack of candidates for next year's elections.

The report was noted.

d) Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils (DAPTC) Northern Area meetings (Cllr Cullingford)

There was no report. Cllr Cullingford stated that the next meeting is being hosted at the Town Hall, Gillingham on Thursday 29 June 2023.

e) Gillingham Transport Forum (Cllr B von Clemens)

There was no report.

f) Gillingham Youth Centre Management Committee (Cllr B von Clemens)

There has been no meeting.

g) Blackmore Vale Community Rail Partnership (Cllr Walden)

Cllr Walden informed the meeting that the recent photograph competition entries will be judged next week and the winners will have their work displayed at Gillingham Station.

The Stations in Bloom competition is being affected by strike action and options are being considered.

Cllr Walden and Cllr Walsh left the meeting at 8.05 pm.

1082. To consider granting support for an application from Gillingham Community Leisure Trust (GCLT) to Dorset Council to draw down Section 106 funding. Please refer to the S106 agreement

A copy of the application and the Section 106 legal agreement between Dorset Council and Magna Housing Limited had been circulated to members prior to the meeting.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to defer this item to the next Full Council meeting to enable GCLT to provide further information. Cllr Frith abstained from voting.

Cllr Walden and Cllr Walsh returned to the meeting at 8.34 pm.

1083. To consider and agree the placement of the Coronation link on the mayoral chain

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix N](#).

Councillors expressed concern that it is not possible to satisfactorily secure the link to the mayoral chain. Disappointment was also expressed about the quality of the link.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to return the Coronation link for a refund.

1084. To receive and consider a report regarding the John Constable Interpretation Panel

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to the [Appendix O](#).

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that the interpretation panel is approved for production.

Cllr Potheary expressed thanks for the work on this project.

1085. To receive and consider combined and motor insurance renewal

quotations

The Town Clerk confirmed that the quotations were not received in time to write a report.

Cllr Walden expressed disappointment that the insurers did not provide the quotes earlier.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** that an Extra-ordinary Full Council meeting will take place on Monday 3 July to discuss this item.

1086. To consider and approve a draft quarterly newsletter (Summer edition) prior to circulation

Councillors congratulated the Town Clerk on an excellent and informative Newsletter and commented that residents always give positive feedback on the Newsletters.

It was agreed and **RESOLVED** to approve the draft quarterly newsletter.

The summer edition can be viewed on the Town Council's website [here](#)

1087. To receive a report on the Mayor and Deputy Mayor's civic activities

A report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix P](#)

The report was noted.

1088. To receive and note reports from Dorset Councillors, if available

A report from Cllr Belinda Ridout was circulated prior to the meeting. Please refer to [Appendix Q](#).

Cllr Walsh reported that on the 20 June he had met with Government officials from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and the Prime Minister's office to discuss the impact of Nutrient Neutrality in Dorset.

There are 5 catchment areas in Dorset, which make it difficult for developers to build without mitigation, therefore developers will look outside those areas to develop, such as North or East Dorset. Cllr Walsh reported to Government that Gillingham had seen enough speculative development and that he was lobbying Government to put pressure on Wessex Water to upgrade 6 Waste Water Treatment Works, which would negate the phosphate issue and allow development within the catchment areas as previously planned and protect the areas outside of the catchment areas from speculative development.

Cllr Pothecary informed the meeting that she had attended the official opening of the Spetisbury solar array. Theresa Leavy, Dorset Council Executive Director for Children's Services, has been named as Corporate Director of the Year at the Municipal Journal's Achievement Awards. Two Dorset Council Customer Services Officers have recently been recognised with awards.

Cllr Pothecary referred to the FareShare Community Larder [FareShare | Fighting hunger, tackling food waste in the UK](#) which is operating at Gillingham Primary School on Fridays (9.15-10.30 am) and is providing much needed support for the community. Details are available from the school - 01747 823245 office@gillinghamprimary.dorset.sch.uk

1089. To receive matters pertinent to this meeting. Note: Members are advised that inclusion of any item is at the Chairman's discretion and that a Council cannot lawfully decide upon any matter which is not specified in the summons (agenda)

- a) Cllr B von Clemens stated that there are currently not enough Councillors to man the stand at the Gillingham and Shaftesbury Show and asked for more volunteers.
- b) Cllr B von Clemens mentioned that, following a Health and Safety Audit, a 'signing in' sheet will be reinstated at Reception and that Cllrs and visitors are requested to sign in and out when visiting the Town Hall. Councillors are also requested to ring the bell when there is no-one at Reception.

The meeting closed at 9.09 pm

GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Internal audit report 2022/23 (Visit 3 of 3)

Date: 6th June 2023

Report author: R Darkin-Miller

Introduction

This report contains a note of the audit recommendations made to Gillingham Town Council following the carrying out of internal audit testing on site on 6th June 2023.

The audit work has been carried out in accordance with Appendix 9 of the 2014 'Governance and Accountability for Local Councils: A Practitioners' Guide', as amended to include additional tests required by the AIAR section of the 2018/19 and 2020/21 AGAR.

An internal audit covers the review of the operation of the Council's internal control environment. It is not designed to review and give full assurance over every transaction carried out by the Council. Instead it enables the auditor, following the sample testing of a number of different types of transaction, to give an opinion as to whether or not the control objectives are being achieved across a range of financial and governance systems.

Audit Opinion

The internal audit for 2022/23 has now been completed in accordance with the provisions of the Practitioners' Guide and the CIPFA code of internal audit practice.

Based on the sample testing carried out at this final audit visit and during the year, all of the Council's current financial controls appear to be operating effectively.

Audit Recommendations

Recommendations made during the audit are shown in appendix one to this report.

Recommendations are graded as follows:

Rating	Significance
High	Either a critical business risk is not being adequately addressed or there is substantial non-conformity with regulations and accepted standards.
Medium	Either a key business risk is not being adequately addressed or there is a degree of non-conformity with regulations and accepted standards.
Low	Either minor non-conformity with procedure or opportunity to improve working practices further.

The number of recommendations made at this audit visit and their priority are summarised in the following table:

Rating	Number
High	1
Medium	0
Low	1
Information	0
TOTAL	2

The number of recommendations made at all of the audit visits in 2022/23 and their priorities are summarised in the following table:

Rating	Number			
	Visit 1	Visit 2	Visit 3	TOTAL
High	1	0	1	2
Medium	1	1	0	2
Low	2	0	1	3
Information	1	0	0	1
TOTAL	5	1	2	8

I would like to thank Julie Hawkins, Town Clerk; and Tina Wright, Responsible Financial Officer for their assistance during this audit.

Appendix 1 – Recommendations and Action Plan

Recommendation number	Detail	Priority (Low/Medium/High)	Management Response	Responsible Officer	Due Date
3.2 – Remove duplicate minutes and ensure all minutes on website	<p>I reviewed the minutes to confirm that there was no unusual financial activity. I noted no such activity but did note that there were two copies of the minutes of the HR Committee meeting of 16/01/23 on file, and that the minutes of the HR Committee of 06/03/23 and 20/03/23 were not shown on the Council's website.</p> <p>I recommend that the second set of minutes are removed from the file, and that the approved minutes of the HR Committee are added to the Council's website in order to ensure that an approved record is held of Council business and decisions, and that residents can view the minutes of all Council and Committee meetings online.</p>	L	The second set of HR minutes will be removed from the file.	Town Clerk	07.06.23
			The approved minutes of the HR Committee will be added to the Council's website	Assistant Town Clerk	07.06.23
10.1 – Reduce risk of loss in event of bank failure	<p>I checked to see that investments at the year-end were verified by statements or passbooks. I found that all bank accounts were verified by statements (with the NS&I account verified to 01/01/23 as they only issue statements once a year when interest is added). I noted that the amount of money held with the Council's bank is around £900k. The current FSCS threshold is £85k, which means that there is a risk that the Council could lose money in the event of a bank failure. The Town Clerk noted that the Council is</p>	H	The Council will consider, approve and implement an investment strategy in order to reduce the risk of loss in the event of a bank failure.	Town Clerk	31.07.23

	<p>due to consider an investment strategy in order to reduce the amount of money held with one financial institution.</p> <p>I recommend that the Council considers, approves and implements an investment strategy as planned in order to reduce the risk of loss in the event of a bank failure.</p>				
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**GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL
REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS OF AUDIT**

	Expected Standard	Evidence of Achievement	Areas of Development for FY 2022/23
1	Scope of Internal Audit	<p>Prior to the start of FY 2019/20 five audit companies were invited to tender for the provision of internal audit. Tender documentation was prepared with a set criterion of what was required.</p> <p>An internal auditor was appointed by the Policy and Resources Committee held on 18th March 2019, minute no. 478 for a period of five years from FY 2019/20 through to FY 2023/24.</p> <p>The internal auditor will follow the CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government and the detailed provisions of the SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks) / NALC (National Association of Local Councils) Practitioner's Guide, plus any new guidelines that are required, or the Town Council would like to include. Current controls include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proper book-keeping • Payment controls • Risk management arrangements • Budgetary controls • Income controls • Petty cash controls • Payroll controls • Asset Controls • Bank Reconciliation • Year-end procedures • Exemption criteria • Proper exercise of public rights 	<p>This internal audit procedure was scrutinised and reviewed fully in FY 2018/19.</p> <p>The current contract to supply internal audit provision runs to the end of FY 2023/24.</p>

2	Independence	The Internal Auditor is independent of Gillingham Town Council with no operational or governance responsibilities. The Internal Auditor has direct access to the Town Clerk and the Responsible Financial Officer. The Internal Auditor provides written reports, which are made available to the Full Council.	No further action required.
3	Competence	<p>The Internal Auditor is a fellow of ICAEW, member no. 9003137, with several years of internal and external auditing plus experience of working with the Audit Commission.</p> <p>Both the Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk are members of the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and the Town Clerk has obtained a CiLCA (Certificate in Local Council Administration). Regular training courses are attended to maintain Continuous Professional Development (CPD).</p> <p>The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) is a member of the AAT and is qualified to in AAT Advanced Diploma Accounts Level 4.</p> <p>The Assistant Town Clerk has qualified in AAT Advanced Diploma Accounts Level 3.</p> <p>The Council is a member of the Dorset Association of Parish and Town Councils (DAPTC), South West Councils (SWC) and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) who ensure the Council is informed of changes in legislation so that they are aware of any potential changes that will affect the town council and its business.</p>	No further action required.

4	Relationships	The relationships between the internal auditor, the Town Clerk and other staff and members are clearly defined in the Financial Regulations.	No further action required at this time.
5	Audit Planning and Reporting	All matters relating to audit and finance are reported to members as per the requirements of the Financial Regulations, which are reviewed annually. The Internal Auditor checks minutes to see that procedures have been followed correctly.	No further action required.
6	Access	Access to all records is permitted as per the Terms and Conditions of the Internal Auditor.	No further action required.
7	Planning	The Internal Auditor's visits are scheduled in advance and to coincide with the requirements of the Financial Regulations.	No further action required.
8	Understanding	The Internal Auditor interviews the Town Clerk and the Responsible Financial Officer to determine procedures and then tests the procedures to see whether they provide adequate control. Minutes are checked to ascertain the Council's strategic priorities and its current and future operations and potential risks. The Town Council's Financial Regulations and Standing Orders are reviewed annually. In addition, several policy documents have been drafted and approved.	On-going.
9	Catalyst for Change	<p>The internal auditor reports actions to be carried out and anticipated changes that may affect the organisation in the short to medium term.</p> <p>The Town Clerk and staff regularly attend seminars and training so that they are aware of any potential changes that will affect the Town Council and its business.</p>	The are no outstanding actions. All actions are dealt with swiftly.
10	Value for Money	The internal auditor recommends if any improvements can be made to improve value for money and advises on accounts and financial matters that may arise, which will improve competence and efficiency.	On-going.

11	Forward Looking	The Internal Auditor allocates time for CPD each year by attending courses organised by Southern Branch of Chartered Accountants, South Eastern Branch of Chartered Accountant, liaison groups with external auditors. Review Practitioner’s Guide annually for changes that would impact on the AGAR. All council staff and members are encouraged to attending training and seminars.	On-going.
12	Challenging	The Internal Auditor will challenge the status quo of the organisation if it is not performing as it should. The Internal Auditor is a ‘critical friend’ to help bring improvements to financial controls and overall value for money.	On-going.
13	Resources	The Internal Auditor has professional indemnity. In the event of failure to provide a service due to physical or mental incapacity, details of an alternative auditor have been provided.	No further action required.

Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

Gillingham Town Council

www.gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk AVAILABLE WEBSITE/WEBPAGE ADDRESS

During the financial year ended 31 March 2023, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.


The internal audit for 2022/23 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored, and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked, and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2021/22, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2021/22 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2022-23 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2021-22 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2021/22 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	✓		✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken: **02/12/2022 23/01/2023 06/06/2023**

Name of person who carried out the internal audit: **Mrs R Darkin-Miller LLB(Hons) BFP FCA**

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit:  Date: **06/06/2023**

***If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).**

****Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).**

Full Council – 26 June 2023

Minute no. 1070

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

Gillingham Town Council

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2023, that:

	Agreed		Yes' means that this authority:
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year and if relevant.
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable, in our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A
			✓

*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

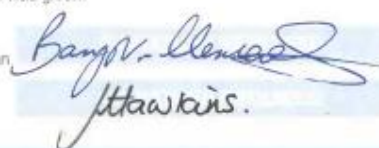
26/06/2023

and recorded as minute reference:

1070

Signed by the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chairman



Clerk



www.gillinghamdorset-tc.gov.uk

Full Council – 26 June 2023

Minute no. 1071

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

Gillingham Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	
1. Balances brought forward	557,146	696,461	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	943,000	969,242	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	42,944	276,681	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	449,133	497,561	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	29,178	29,178	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	368,318	386,839	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	696,461	1,028,806	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	728,790	1,075,389	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	2,585,575	2,648,038	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	412,582	393,031	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)		✓		The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)			✓	The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2023 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

[Signature]

Date

07/06/2023

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date.

26/06/23

as recorded in minute reference:

1071

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

[Signature]

GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL**General Purposes Committee****Terms of Reference****1. Open Spaces**

The General Purposes Committee (The Committee) will be responsible for the following areas of open spaces:

- Allotment Gardens
- Closed Churchyard
- Garden of Remembrance
- Gardens and planted areas
- Play areas and green gyms
- Public Open Spaces
- Recreational areas
- Town Cemetery
- Wesley Gardens

2. Property

The Committee will be responsible for the following property as listed in the Assets Register:

- Bus Shelters
- Cemetery Chapel
- Community Office at 1 Chantry Fields
- Old Mortuary Building
- Public Convenience and Town Bridge Office
- Town Hall
- Town Council Workshops, Roman Court

3. Miscellaneous Assets

The Committee will be responsible for the following assets, as listed in the Assets Register:

- CCTV surveillance cameras and monitoring equipment (in partnership with Dorset Police)
- Dedication Stone, High Street

- Horticultural equipment and small tools
- Motor vehicles
- Public Realm: seating, notice boards, flag poles, litter bins, grit bins, flood boxes, town centre finger posts
- Speed Indicator Device
- Utility vehicles including tractors, trailers etc
- War Memorial, High Street
- War Memorial, Milton-on-Stour

4. Duties and Responsibilities

The Committee has the following duties and responsibilities:

- To draft tender documentation for approval by the Finance and Policy Committee and oversee contracts for projects.
- To work in partnership with Dorset Wildlife Trust to provide biodiversity action plans and monitoring for all larger public open spaces.
- To work in partnership with Gillingham Action for Nature Group to support volunteering on open spaces and planted areas.
- To work in partnership with the local authority and other organisations to deliver specific projects that will be of benefit to the town.
- To work in partnership with the local authorities and other organisations to deal with traffic management issues and improvements to transport links and infrastructure in the town.
- To work in partnership with Dorset Police to provide adequate CCTV surveillance equipment in the town to promote community safety and wellbeing.
- To oversee the production of written management plans for larger areas of public open spaces prior to the agreement and adoption by Full Council.
- To oversee the Tree Condition Survey and Risk Management Plan to ensure that the necessary tree work is carried out in accordance with best practice and the recommendations contained within the report.
- To ensure the Town Council is fully aware of its environmental responsibilities and actively promotes good practice.
- To promote civic pride – Gillingham Love Where You Live - by participating in national and regional awards.
- To proactively improve the appearance of the town with creative flower planting, clean signage and well-designed seating.

- To provide Christmas lighting and associated decorations.
- To work with other local authorities and organisations where partnership working will be beneficial and cost effective to do so.
- To provide detailed reports; identifying costs involved and approve sources of funding for projects up to the value of £9,999. Projects valued at £10,000 or more will be referred for approval by Full Council.
- To review policy documents pertaining to the committee, prior to adoption by the Finance and Policy Committee.
- To set up sub-committees and task and finish groups to deal with specific projects.
- To receive reports and recommendations from the meetings of sub-committee and task and finish groups, as necessary.
- To provide detailed reports of all its meetings to the Full Council for ratification.

Reviewed and Adopted by Full Council: 26/06/23, minute no. 1077a

GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Planning Committee

Terms of Reference

1. To receive and consider planning applications and make recommendations to the relevant Local Planning Authority.
2. To receive decision notices from the Local Planning Authority.
3. To receive notification of Planning Appeals.
4. To receive details regarding planning enforcement matters.
5. To receive and consider reports regarding Rights of Way issues in Gillingham.
6. To receive and consider applications for the diversion to public rights of way.
7. To consider and respond to requests for street naming.
8. To respond to consultations regarding Planning Policy.
9. To respond to consultations regarding Mineral and Waste Plans for Dorset and neighbouring counties.
10. To contribute towards the development and revision of the Local Plan.
11. To monitor, review and ensure the aims of the Gillingham Neighbourhood Plan are met.
12. To review policy documents pertaining to the committee, prior to adoption by the Finance and Policy Committee.
13. To set up sub-committees and task and finish groups to deal with specific projects.
14. To receive reports and recommendations from the meetings of sub-committee and task and finish groups, as necessary.
15. To provide detailed reports of all its meetings to the Full Council for ratification.

Reviewed and Adopted by Full Council on 26/06/23, minute no. 1077b

**Gillingham Town Council
Human Resources Committee
Terms of Reference**

The HR Committee is appointed to make decisions about staffing matters, subject to budget and expenditure limits and has responsibility for the following:

1. Reviewing the staffing structure as and when required.
2. Keeping up-to-date with employment legislation and implementing the required changes.
3. Drafting new employment policies as determined by legislation or the needs of the Council, prior to consideration and approval by the Finance and Policy Committee.
4. Reviewing employment policies annually (or earlier if there is a change in legislation) and drafting changes, prior to consideration and approval by the Finance and Policy Committee.
5. Implementing any new or revised employment policies or changes to terms and conditions.
6. Establishing and reviewing salary pay-scales for all categories of staff and being responsible for their administration and review.
7. Overseeing the recruitment and appointment of staff.
8. Ensuring contracts are issued for new staff members and overseeing any changes to existing contracts.
9. Establishing and reviewing performance management and staff training programmes.
10. Dealing with the dismissal process for staff (including redundancy).
11. Keeping under review staff working conditions and health and safety matters.
12. Monitoring and addressing regular or sustained staff absence.
13. Making recommendations on staffing-related expenditure to the Finance and Policy Committee.
14. Considering any appeal against a decision in respect of pay.
15. Dealing with grievances and disciplinary matters.

Reviewed and Adopted by Full Council on 26/06/23, minute no. 1077c

**Gillingham Town Council
Finance and Policy Committee
Terms of Reference**

1. Accounts

- 1.1 To ensure that the RFO completes the annual statement of accounts, annual report and any related documents of the Council contained in the Annual Return (as specified in proper practices) as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year, prior to certification by Full Council.
- 1.2 To oversee the arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts and in accordance with the requirements of the Audit Commission Act 1998 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 1.3 To receive quarterly financial statements.
- 1.4 To appoint a member of the Town Council to verify bank reconciliations produced by the RFO.
- 1.5 To receive and note verification of bank reconciliations on a regular basis.

2. Administration

- 2.1 To set up and oversee sub-committees and task and finish groups to deal with specific projects, as necessary.
- 2.2 To receive reports and recommendations from the meetings of sub-committee and task and finish groups, as necessary.
- 2.3 To provide detailed reports identifying costs involved and approve sources of funding for projects up to the value of £9,999. Projects valued at £10,000 or more will be referred for approval by Full Council.
- 2.4 To provide detailed reports for all its meetings to Full Council for ratification.

3. Borrowing and Investments

- 3.1 To review the Town Council's investments in consultation with the RFO and consider the need for an investment strategy and policy prior to any recommendation to Full Council.
- 3.2 To consider any requests for borrowing, including hire purchase and leasing arrangements in respect of value for money, prior to providing a written report to Full Council.

4. Budgeting

- 4.1 To draft an annual budget and make recommendations to Full Council before a precept is agreed by Full Council.
- 4.2 To receive a schedule of payments in line with Financial Regulations, section 4: budgetary control and authority to spend.
- 4.3 To note the schedule of payments and authorise payments, as necessary.

5. Contracts and Tendering

- 5.1 To oversee the tendering process of the appointment of an internal auditor.
- 5.2 To evaluate tender documentation and make recommendations to Full Council.
- 5.3 To review all fees and charges annually.
- 5.4 To oversee Agreements with outside organisations, town and parish councils and the unitary authority.
- 5.5 To review utilities contracts to ensure best value.

6. Grants

- 6.1 To consider applications for grant funding.
- 6.2 To annually review the criteria for grant applications.

7. Insurance

To review the Town Council's insurance portfolio annually to ensure adequate insurance provision, to include asset and revenue protection, legal liabilities and to make recommendations to Full Council.

8. Monitoring and Review

- 8.1 To monitor any bad debts.
- 8.2 To ensure the RFO promptly completes any VAT return that is required.
- 8.3 To receive any repayment claims due and in accordance with the VAT Act 1994.
- 8.4 To review the Council's three year forecast of revenue and capital receipt and payments.
- 8.5 To recommend the reallocation of unspent and available amounts to other budgets or to an earmarked reserve, as appropriate (virement).
- 8.6 To annually review earmarked reserves and monies held in the general reserve following adoption of the annual accounts by Full Council.
- 8.7 To receive section 106 project monitoring reports from Dorset Council for projects relevant to Gillingham and to make recommendations to Full Council, as necessary.

- 8.8 To receive project monitoring reports from the General Purposes Committee and to make recommendations to Full Council, as necessary.
- 8.9 To monitor the spend of external grant funding, commuted sums and section 106 monies and make recommendations to Full Council, as necessary.
- 8.10 To monitor the Town Council's five-year action plan and prioritise projects as funding becomes available and to make recommendations to Full Council, as necessary.

9. Policies and Procedures

To review all policies and procedures prior to adoption by Full Council.

Reviewed and Adopted by Full Council: 26/06/23, minute no. 1077d

Gillingham Town Council
Five Year Action Plan Sub-committee
Terms of Reference

1. All members of the sub-committee must abide by Gillingham Town Council's Code of Conduct.
2. The sub-committee does not have any delegated powers.
3. Membership of the sub-committee will be reviewed by Full Council.
4. Any member of the Town Council, a member of the public or member of staff can be co-opted on to the sub-committee.
5. The sub-committee must consist of a minimum of three Councillors and a maximum of five Councillors.
6. Members of the sub-committee must elect a lead member, who is a serving Councillor.
7. The sub-committee will meet at least annually, prior to the budget setting process, or as deemed necessary by the lead Member.
8. Meetings may only take place when a minimum of three members are present.
9. Members of the sub-committee should elect a lead member.
10. The lead member of the sub-committee will produce and submit regular written reports to Full Council with recommendations, including budgetary and financial implications, when necessary.
11. The sub-committee will work to produce a Five Year Action Plan which prioritises the work of the Town Council and includes the aims, objectives and the actions indicating how the objectives are to be achieved.
12. The sub-committee will liaise with all officers and the standing committees of the Town Council to set out what projects the Town Council intends to deliver in addition to its ongoing service delivery, in order to assist with annual budget setting and enable long term financial planning.

Reviewed and Adopted by Full Council on 26/06/23, minute no. 1079a)

GILLINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL
Sports and Leisure Sub-committee
Terms of Reference

1. All members of the Sports and Leisure Sub-committee must abide by Gillingham Town Council's Code of Conduct.
2. The Sports and Leisure Sub-committee does not have any delegated powers and cannot make decisions on proposed sports and leisure facilities at pre-application stage on behalf of Gillingham Town Council.
3. Members of the Sports and Leisure Sub-committee must make it clear to developers and other parties that any views expressed are personal views and are not the views of the Town Council.
4. Members of the Sports and Leisure Sub-committee should make it clear to developers and other parties that Sub-committee members are not professional planning officers and cannot offer professional advice.
5. Membership of the Sports and Leisure Sub-committee will be reviewed by Full Council.
6. Any member of the Town Council, a member of the public or member of staff can be co-opted onto the Sub-committee.
7. The sub-committee must consist of a minimum of three Councillors and a maximum of five Councillors.
8. Members of the Sub-committee must elect a lead member, who is a serving Councillor.
9. The Sub-committee will meet quarterly or as deemed necessary by the lead Member.
10. Meetings may only take place when a minimum of three members are present.
11. In the first instance, requests to attend a meeting to discuss future sports and leisure proposals should be submitted to the Town Clerk who will advise the lead member accordingly.
12. A Town Council Officer must be present at all meetings with developers. Councillors must not meet developers alone.
13. The lead member of the Sub-committee will produce and submit regular written reports to the Planning Committee.

Reviewed and Adopted by Full Council on 26/06/23, minute no. 1079b)

Gillingham Town Council

S106 Funding Sub-Committee Terms of Reference

1. All members of the sub-committee must abide by Gillingham Town Council's Code of Conduct.
2. The sub-committee does not have any delegated powers.
3. Membership of the sub-committee will be reviewed by the Finance and Policy Committee.
4. Any member of the Town Council, a member of the public or member of staff can be co-opted on to the sub-committee.
5. The sub-committee must consist of a minimum of three members and a maximum of five members.
6. Members of the sub-committee must elect a lead member, who is a serving Councillor.
7. The sub-committee will meet every 6 months or more frequently when deemed necessary by the lead Member.
8. The sub-committee will monitor the S106 funding allocated to Gillingham and provide details to other Town Council sub-committees and Task & Finish groups on request.
9. The lead member of the sub-committee will produce and submit a written monitoring report to the Finance and Policy Committee every 6 months.

Reviewed and Adopted by Full Council on 26/06/23, minute no. 1079c)

**DAPTC Larger Towns and Parishes Committee Report
June 2023
Author Cllr Barry von Clemens**

There was an update from DAPTC Chief Executive, this included:

(i) Elections 2024 – Dorset Council Area. A brief discussion was had on how to promote the elections next year and to encourage new Cllrs to stand. DAPTC is putting together some promotional material for members.

(ii) Training News: It was discussed as to whether E training sessions worked or should DAPTC look to return to face-to-face training. It was felt the E training worked well and meant that more people could attend these sessions. It was felt that more in-depth training may need to be face to face.

Outgoing Mayors ‘wash up’ session – members considered the following suggestion from Cllr Juliet Pentolfe of Sherborne Town Council:

- “Yesterday, on the Mayors Civic Day in Weymouth I had conversations with Mayors who felt it would be a good opportunity to gather us all together and have a “wash up” of our year and if we had some interesting points that perhaps you could then bring up or help the Town Clerks for their next years as officers. I am not sure if you have this already in your DAPTC calendar or whether we could arrange this?”

It was felt that it would be better if current Mayors meet up with each other and their clerks. It was also felt that in some areas this could be a difficult situation with the current Mayors not feeling comfortable with such meetings.

It was noted that there had been a Dorset Council Cabinet reshuffle – members were asked to simply note the changes in portfolio holders and lead members.

Full Council – 26 June 2023

Minute no. 1083

Gillingham Town Council

The Placement of the Coronation Link on the Mayoral Chain

Cllr Barry von Clemens

At the Full Council meeting on 22nd May 2023, it was agreed that the town council purchase a Coronation link to be placed next to, or in place of, the Diamond Jubilee link at the rear Mayor's Chain.

As you will see in the image below, the new King's medallion has only 4 linking points whilst the Queens medallion has 8 linking points. Allum and Sidaway suggested that the removal of the Queens medallion will unbalance the chain and the only option is to incorporate the new link is shown below on the safety chain.



Recommendation:

Members need to consider the two options:

- a) **Fit the link to the safety chain, or**
- b) **Return the Coronation link to Fattorini**

Gillingham Town Council

John Constable Interpretation Panel Author: Serena Burgess, Projects & HR Admin Officer

Background

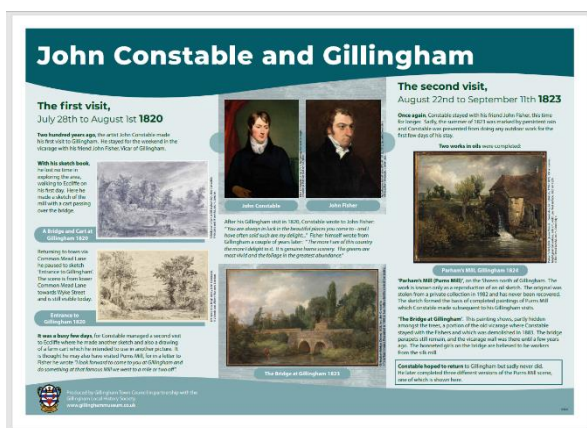
- 2023 is the 200th anniversary of John Constable visiting Gillingham and painting ‘The Bridge at Gillingham’ which is housed in the Tate Gallery.
- The production of a commemorative interpretation panel and its location was approved by the General Purposes Committee on 3 October 2022 and Full Council on 24 October 2022.

Status

- The panel has been professionally designed using the information provided by the Gillingham Local History Society.
- The Gillingham Local History Society have approved the final draft – see Appendix A.
- The budget amount approved has been allocated in full – any further amendments would incur an additional cost.
- The unveiling of the panel is scheduled for 2.00 pm on Friday 8 September, prior to the Walkers are Welcome ‘Constable Walk’.

RECOMMENDATION

- That the interpretation panel, as presented, is approved for production.



Full Council – 26 June 2023

Minute no. 1087

Gillingham Town Council

Mayor's Report 24th May – 17th June 2023

Author: Cllr Barry von Clemens

Date	Event	Comments
24 th May	St Martins Topping-Out Ceremony	It was great to have been invited by Magna Housing to the topping-out ceremony which had both the Deputy Mayor and I on the roof. I was asked to lay the last tile on the roof before attending a small tea and cake Reception at the Vicarage School Rooms.
24 th May	Gillingham Mayor Making Ceremony	It was a great honour to have been asked by fellow Cllrs to serve for a fourth time as Mayor. I hope that I will be able to serve the Council and the town as well as I possibly can.
27 th May	Plant Sale on the Town meadow	It was great to pop along to the plant sale on the Town Meadow and chat to all the charities who were there raising funds for their groups. It was well attended and everyone said that they had a great morning and sold most of their plants.
28 th May	Twinning Association Dinner	As always, I was happy to have been asked to welcome our friends from Le Neubourg on their visit to our fabulous town.
1 st June	Shaftesbury Mayor Making	A lovely evening as Shaftesbury Town Council elected their new Mayor Virginia Edwin Jones for the civic year 2023-24. I look forward to working with Virginia over the coming year.
3 rd June	3 Rivers Market	Another fabulous market organised by Judy and Gaynor. The day was well attended and I had a chance to chat to all the stall holders as well. Everyone said how good the day was and how much they are looking forward to the next market.
6 th June	Carer's Week (attended by Deputy Mayor, Cllr Roger Weeks)	This was a very worthy event and very well organised, with approximately 30-40 people attending and a number of activities taking place. I was not aware of the significance that pets can make to those suffering from dementia and the relief they can provide to their carers. There was a companion pet dog at the event and an elderly gentleman who had been unable to speak for a considerable time, spent the afternoon calmly nursing this pet - it was wonderful to see. I hope that we were able to lend value to this event - I certainly came away much richer for the experience.

10 th June	Ukrainian Refugee Group AGM	I was happy to go to the AGM to hear about all that the group has achieved over the past year in helping our Ukrainian guests both here in Gillingham and also in Shaftesbury. These include help with driving lessons, reading and language and working with other agencies to help them become more independent and to deal with the massive trauma that they have faced due to the war in their homeland.
10 th June	Gillingham in Gear	One of our great annual events and, as always, well attended on a beautiful summer's day. A wonderful selection of cars and bikes to see. Well done to all who worked so hard to put on the event.
10 th June	Great Big Green Week - Repair Café visit	I popped in to see everyone at the Repair Café and catch up on how everything was going on the first day of the Great Big Green Week here in Gillingham. It was great to see the refills back on sale.
10 th June	RBL Club Beer Festival	The Beer festival is another one of our town's great annual events and this year, as always, was well supported on a wonderful summer's day and evening. The club's roof is in desperate need of repair and I hope they raised a healthy amount to go towards the cost of the repairs. It was great to chat to our own Cllr Donna Toye and her husband Greg Vann who will soon be embarking on the Charity Banger Rally - driving 5 days in Europe in Greg's mini to raise funds for St Mary's Scouts and the Air Ambulance. Please, if you have not already made a pledge, get in touch with them and make a donation. I would like to wish them a great Rally and hope they raise mega bucks!
17 th June	Great Big Green Week events	This was the last few days of the Big Green Week where GTC organised a number of great events throughout the week. On Saturday I popped along to the Town Meadow to have a chat with DWP and DWT along with GANG, Walkers are Welcome and the History Society. It was then my turn to give a talk on herbs, their use and history along the herbetum trail around the town. I finished off a great day by popping into Cllr Weeks' talk on energy efficiency in the home. Many people commented on what a great week of events there was. Thanks to everyone who worked so hard organising and running the events.

**Gillingham Ward Monthly Report
Dorset Cllr Belinda Ridout – June 2023**

A bit late now but for information **the 1st June marked Dorset Day**, which is an opportunity to celebrate Dorset's rich heritage and beautiful scenery and also marks the Feast Day of St. Wite (Wheat-a), a local saint who lends her name to the yellow, red and white flag of Dorset, the County Civic Flag. Many people believe St Wite to have been a local woman who worked tirelessly for the community.

Household Support Fund (HSF) – Round 4 of the HSF re-opened on 6th June 2023 for low-income households in the Dorset Council area. Support is in the form of supermarket vouchers. Citizens Advice will be allocating this fund on behalf of Dorset Council and vouchers will be issued to those who meet the eligibility criteria within 6-8 weeks. Residents should apply online or, if residents need help completing the form, they can telephone Customer Services on 01305 221000 or visit a customer access point, our closest being Nordon Lodge (Blandford), 58 Salisbury Road, Blandford Forum, Dorset DT11 7LN - open Monday, Wednesday and Friday 10am to 4pm.

Parking Permits – although Gillingham car parks were not included in the recent rise in car parking charges (mostly in car parks in busy tourist areas), parking permits can offer residents and workers big savings. I am frequently approached by Gillingham employees finding weekly parking fees very expensive. The cost of permits has been frozen this year, with Short Stay and Flexi car park permits offering good savings:

- **Short stay permit** – offers two hours parking every day in most council run car parks. Costing £78.00 a year. If used for 2 hours a week = £1.50 a time. If used for 2 hours daily = just over 21p a time.
- **Flexi permit** – for residents, businesses and workers. Unlimited parking (or up to 2 hours in car parks where there is a maximum stay) in the majority of the council's car parks 7 days a week. Cost: £25 if purchased for a month, or £260 for 12 months, the equivalent of £5 a week for all-day, year-round parking. The Flexi permit can be used in Chantry Fields, Gas Lane and High Street car parks.

Note: parking permits have recently changed to virtual permits. Old permits will be valid until it expires. To use the virtual permit you would need to download and register with the MiPermit app and use the app along with a 6 digit code every time you park.

Support for people caring for others – people who regularly look after a family member or friend can now explore resources to support them online. Bridgit is an online tool that allows people to explore free wellbeing, employment, finance and care advice and events, local and national support services and training opportunities. People can also build their own ‘self-care plan’. For those who prefer not to go online, call Carer Support Dorset on 0800 368 8349 to find out what free support and help is available.

Principal Street, Gillingham Southern Extension – this new 1.3km road linking the B3092 New Road and B3081 Shaftesbury Road is now complete, incorporating services for utilities, water and drainage. The surrounding land will be used for new homes, a primary school, health facilities, sports pitches, play areas, shops and open leisure spaces. I was fortunate enough, along with Cllr Pothecary, to visit the various construction phases of this road and have reported on the sustainability of construction in the past.

A successful bid by Dorset Council to the government’s Housing Infrastructure Fund secured £6.31 million to fund the design and construction of the road. As part of the agreement, the council will now recover the money from the housing developers for reinvestment in other housing projects across Dorset. The road will be adopted by Dorset Council, with the council taking responsibility for its maintenance. However, there will be no through-access along the new road until Redrow Homes has completed its first phase of housing development, which includes building a junction at the eastern end of the Principal Street onto Shaftesbury Road. The road will have a 30mph speed limit, with shared-use-off-road cycleway/footway along each side of the carriageway.

Railway timetable posters – SERUG, (Salisbury to Exeter Rail Users Group) has reported that South Western Railway are re-instating timetable posters at most West of England Line stations. Apparently this is a trial until December and may be extended to other SWR lines but will be dependent on customer feedback from West of England line users. SERUG’s next ‘ask’ is for the return of pocket timetables at stations. As onward travel information, Shaftesbury & Gillingham Transport Forum is looking at replacing what we call the ‘A to Z’, large print poster informing people how to reach local and further away destinations by bus.

Springwatch at RSPB Arne nature reserve, nr Poole Harbour – it has been great to watch the live broadcast from Arne nature reserve these past few weeks, famous for its wide-open heathlands, home to six of the UK’s native species of reptiles, exploring rare breeding birds and specialised heathland insects. They have also explored Purbeck Heath’s National Nature Reserve and the Isle of Purbeck, Poole Harbour’s new Ospreys and White-tailed Eagles and Dorset Council owned Durlston Country Park’s wildflower meadows, home to incredibly rare and beautiful orchids and butterflies (well worth a visit, a very beautiful part of the Dorset Coastline). They recently broadcast from Swanage Bay, looking at hidden marine life, particularly that of the seahorse and their protected underwater environment. This whole area is very special but the very nature of the heathland makes it very susceptible to wild-fires.

This warm and dry spell is very welcome and enjoyable (although I am fed up with watering pots already!) but please take additional care and be extra vigilant during this dry spell and report anything that looks like a possible fire - don't wait and think someone else will report it, especially if you happen to be out and about on Dorset's beautiful heathland sites, where there have already been multiple heath fires this year.

For the last couple of weeks I have had a Covid-like bug followed by a D&V bug so I have nothing to report on Dorset Council meetings. Coming up Tuesday, 13th is the Northern Planning Meeting with one Gillingham application for the stationing of a holiday cabin on land at Kine Bush Lane.

Belinda Ridout, Councillor for the Gillingham Ward
Cllrbelinda.ridout@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk Tel: **07496413114**