

WELLINGBOROUGH TOWN COUNCIL

CORPORATE PLAN 2021/25

Mission Statement:-

**‘Championing Our Community’
‘Aim to make life more enjoyable for the residents of Wellingborough’**

The Council

Wellingborough Town Council is a new council, formed at the local government reform of 2021 when Northamptonshire County Council was divided into North and West Northamptonshire councils and the districts and boroughs of Corby, Kettering, East Northants and Wellingborough were absorbed into the new North Northamptonshire council, to form the new unitary council.

The council is made up of twenty-three councillors, elected every four years in nine town wards. It holds its annual general meeting and annual town meeting in May of each year. The town is in the Wellingborough parliamentary constituency.

It has a Mayor and Deputy Mayor as its civic heads as well as leaders of its elected political groups.

The council is currently based at Swanspool House, the former borough council offices.

The town has approximately 46,000 residents in 15,255 properties currently, though this is expanding rapidly with new sustainable urban extensions at Stanton Cross and Glenvale Park as well as other developments locally.

It lies to the north of the River Nene at the confluence with the River Ise and is served by East Midlands Trains on the Midland mainline.

Wellingborough has diverse industries particularly the logistics sector and major employers are Weatherby’s and Five Wells prison, due to open soon.

Much of the town is based on a mediaeval layout surrounding the Hind Hotel, a former coaching inn, reputed to have been visited by Oliver Cromwell.

Underlying this document will be an Annual Plan and Annual Budget, reflecting the growing and changing nature of our resources and abilities.

Budget and Finance

As a town council, Wellingborough is a precepting authority. For the municipal year 21/22, it set a precept of £11.81 at band D. This gave it a scheduled income of £180,235.

The bankers are Unity Bank Limited.

The Council is obliged to publish its Annual Report and Accounts, including balances. This will be uploaded to the website and available as a hard copy upon request.

The council is obliged to set a balanced budget each year. Within this, it will look to increase the number and level of services and events and also seek to build an increasing fund of reserves, including for contingencies. Accordingly, the precept is likely to change every year as part of the process.

The Council will actively seek other grant funding from NNC and the various funding bodies, including central government and charitable bodies.

Whilst we aim to work in partnership with other local organisations, particularly North Northamptonshire Council and neighbouring town councils, we do not seek to duplicate their services, nor do we seek to take on services that they should be providing, unless it is to enhance their offering.

The Town Council has an ambition to be able to support various community groups and charities within the town and will look to include Community Grants within its annual budget, when possible.

Assets

Wellingborough Town Council currently has few assets other than office equipment, however, past Borough Council and Urban District Council regalia, including Mayoral Chains and robes, is in the process of being transferred to us.

The town council has an ambition to take over some local assets and will be seeking to investigate this before making any commitment based upon affordability and sustainability. Most items will come from North Northamptonshire Council. The primary guidelines would be that the items should be of local interest and community benefit. The ownership status could be freehold, long-term rental or leasehold, depending upon the circumstances. There would also likely be a clause to return to NNC, should that be appropriate at the time. Any decision would be according to the Constitution,

usually entailing a decision by full council, with a full report including costings and risk analysis.

These could include any of the following:-

- Swanspool House
- Swanspool Pavilion
- Swanspool Gardens
- Croyland Gardens
- Town Allotments
- The Market
- Town Cemetery
- Tithe Barn
- Bassetts Close and Bandstand
- Castlefields and Bandstand
- Broad Green and War Memorial
- Other assets needing public protection or of interest.

Events

One of the most important ways the town council can enhance the health and well-being of residents and assist in the town centre economy is to run events.

Every effort should be made to make these events self-financing, but, they should always be within budget. Many events will need to be run in partnership with or led by North Northamptonshire council, often with partnership funding as well as other local organisations, such as the museum, Royal British Legion, Made with Many and Town Centre Partnership. There should also be an attempt to spread events around the town to enable access by all residents in their various communities. We should also seek to run a diverse scheme of events.

Events would need to be sustainable and have confirmed support of volunteers to run them. The Welcome Back Fund is a useful source of funding. There would need to be a gradual build-up of these commitments to accommodate this. Input from residents over which events should be run is welcomed, as would their help in running them.

Some of the events run by, or in part by, the Town Council could include:-

- Waendel Walk
- Band concerts – Bassetts Close & Castlefields
- Talent show – Wellingborough’s Got Talent
- Christmas light switch on
- The Beach
- Armed Forces Day
- Party in the Park and Carnival
- Farmers’ markets

- Park Run
- Soapbox Derby
- Town centre events and entertainments
- Remembrance Day
- Diwali parade
- Holocaust Memorial Day
- Town Carol Concert
- Easter events
- Crufts of Wellingborough – Bark in the Market
- Charter Fair
- Heritage Open Days
- Well dressing days

Town centre improvements

The success of the town centre is vital to the economy of the town and, whilst the Town Council will not initially own any properties, we should aim to support North Northamptonshire and Town Centre business initiatives. It is important to increase footfall, using outside funding, if available. Again, the Welcome Back Fund could be used for funding when appropriate and available.

Some examples of initiatives could be:-

- Additional flower displays around the town
- Additional Benches
- Information boards – WTC Notice Board
- Retailer events
- Treasure hunt
- Pancake Race
- Bake-Off
- Halloween Trail
- Additional Cleaning
- Christmas themed stalls – Gluhwein, Wurst.
- Ice Rink
- Knit Bombing
- Citizen of the Month
- Town in Bloom
- Community Fair and Market

We may also contribute to projects being undertaken by North Northamptonshire Council, where this is appropriate to enhance any scheme beyond what our partners are able to achieve.

One area to note is that WTC has been awarded a capital sum to invest in a new water feature in the area of the Tithe Barn. This will be thoroughly investigated and a recommendation placed before Council.

Town Twinning

Wellingborough has historically been twinned with Niort in France and Wittlich in Germany through the former Borough Council. The Town Council aims to continue these alliances with mutual visits and exchanges.

Residents are encouraged to visit our twin towns. The town council continues the offer of a grant of £25 to all visitors aged under 18 to the twin towns, subject to the budget limit

There is the possibility of extending this to new towns, subject to agreement and interest.

Tourist information is the remit of the Unitary Council, but, we should be mindful of supporting the hospitality trade as we sit in the middle of the Nene Valley with several attractions nearby.

Social Media and Communication

The Town Council will have a separate Communications Policy.

We will operate a website that includes up-to-date information about events, meetings, policies, councillor and staff contact and other information of interest to residents and visitors.

We will seek to be paper free as far as possible and will, therefore, also communicate through modern social media methods, such as Newsletters, Facebook and Twitter, as well as broadcasting meetings as and when possible. All meetings of the Council and committees are open to public view and access as well as speaking.

We will aim to create suitable town noticeboards and a mobile phone app for information to residents.

We seek active community engagement and participation with residents, voluntary sector and other organisations, whether constituted or not.

Councillors will be encouraged to communicate with their residents for better governance. Information and materials to do so may be provided by the officers, including such information as is received from our various partners such as North Northamptonshire Council.

Climate Change and the Environment

Wellingborough Town Council recognises the current concerns over the climate and our environment, including air quality, carbon use, the ecological profile and many other issues that may affect our residents.

We will aim to be a net-zero producer of carbon, though initiatives such as using technology for non-public meetings, where allowed, and for meeting papers, rather than printing. We will look to ensure that suppliers and other associated parties are similarly aligned.

We note the resolutions passed by the former Borough Council of Wellingborough and North Northamptonshire Council. BCW set up a working party, who produced a report that can form the basis of discussion. NNC Shadow Authority produced a climate report that was adopted by the eventual council and led to an agreement to declare a climate emergency. All reports are available to view on the respective websites.

We recognise that the primary responsibility and resource for this lies with North Northamptonshire Council, whose work in this area we welcome and we will work in partnership with them to achieve such goals, including reducing CO2 emissions, as we are able.

Crime and Policing

Whilst we recognise that crime prevention and policing is the responsibility of the Office of the Police and Fire Crime Commissioner and Northamptonshire Police Force, we will actively participate with those and other bodies to ensure that residents are able to enjoy a safe and comfortable existence.

We will attend, if invited, such community safety, and crime prevention fora as are available, including IAGs and work with the police, statutory bodies, residents, voluntary sector, Streetwatch, Neighbourhood Watch and others to achieve a low crime rate and a safe environment.

We will listen to concerns regarding anti-social behaviour and seek to represent residents as appropriate and support partner initiatives as well as investigating our own, where it does not conflict or duplicate the work of others.

Voluntary Sector and Community

Wellingborough has a proud and cohesive, diverse community, with many partners working together to achieve their aims. They are increasingly important to enhancing community life and well-being and improving people enjoyment of life in the town.

The voluntary sector is very wide ranging with many differing services for all sectors and performs a vital role in many ways in our community. Wellingborough Town Council will seek to positively and practically support and work in partnership in all community initiatives and voluntary organisations as best it is able to ensure that they are sustainable and meet their objectives to enhance the well-being of residents.

We will seek to create and evolve a suitable policy to provide this support. This should also include a listing of all these organisations and their services to better signpost residents to them.

We have limited funding, but, will seek to allocate a small budget to this support. Councillors, as Community Champions will expect to take a lead role in this.

The Local Economy

Wellingborough has a wealth of skill, experience and knowledge amongst many long standing and successful wide range of businesses of all sizes.

Wellingborough Town Council has no direct remit for the local economy and business, but, will aim to work for the economic success of the town, particularly in running town centre events and initiatives that increase footfall. We welcome partners like the Town Centre Partnership and Chamber of Commerce.

We will actively seek to support local businesses when seeking suppliers and purchasing items.

Policies

WTC will maintain a Constitution and a full schedule of policies and regularly review them according to legislation.

These may include:-

- Bullying and Harassment
- Civic Responsibilities
- Communications
- Compliments and Complaints
- Constitution and Standing Orders
- Data Protection
- Employment
- Equality & Diversity
- Events
- Financial Regulations
- Freedom of Information
- Honorary Freeman and Freewomen
- Information Technology
- Mayor's Handbook
- Member and Officer Protocol and Code of Conduct
- Pensions Discretionary
- Privacy
- Recording and Filming
- Risk Management
- Safeguarding
- Wreath Protocol
- Any Other Policy deemed necessary

Council Meetings

The Council will run by meetings of the full number of council members, meeting in person. All meetings are open to members of the public.

The Council has agreed to set up Committees with delegated powers from the Full Council. These are currently:-

- Finance and Governance
- Staffing
- Events
- Planning

Both the Council and the Committees are entitled to set up working groups for time-limited projects. They may invite members of the public to contribute if they have experience to add value. Council can also set up additional committees, should it see fit.

Councillors

All councillors are members of Full Council, which is chaired by the annually elected Mayor, or their deputy. Councillors will be expected to wear 'business attire' for these meetings.

Councillors are expected to attend meetings of the committees and outside bodies which they are sitting on.

Committees are generally made up of seven councillors, politically balanced. They will be expected to attend training relevant to their committee before sitting.

Council may set up time limited working parties to investigate matters or run certain projects. These will not necessarily be politically balanced and may invite outside contributions. They will not be public meetings.

All will be supported by staff, where required.

Staffing

We currently employ a full time Town Clerk with the necessary SLCC and other qualifications.

We are employing a part time deputy, with proper qualifications.

In addition, we are employing a part time Projects and Events Officer to co-ordinate any improvement schemes and any events.

We will offer good terms of employment, including membership of the LGPS and opportunities to receive training as appropriate. We will aim to be a good employer.