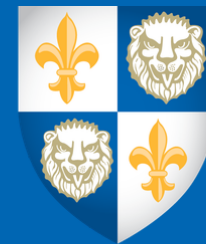




Annual Town Report

2025-26



SHAFTESBURY
TOWN
COUNCIL

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**SHAFTESBURY
TOWN
COUNCIL**

Your Councillors

Shaftesbury East Ward



Piers Brown



Mollie Budd



Jenny Daultrey



Lester Dibben



Jade Salkeld



Conor Smith



Greg Williams



Peter Yeo



Elaine Barratt



Virginia Edwyn-Jones



Andy Hollingshead



Jeanne Loader



Justine Elmendorff

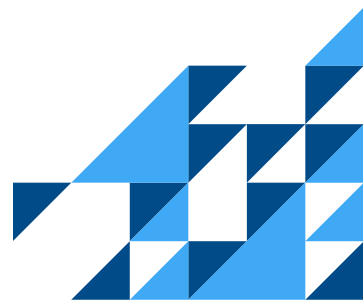


Annie Philpott

Shaftesbury West Ward



Nigel Heritage



Mayor's message

Cllr Virginia Edwyn-Jones

It has been a busy and rewarding year for Shaftesbury Town Council, and as my mayoral year draws to a close, I would like to reflect on some of the many achievements, events and partnerships that have helped our town continue to flourish. While there have certainly been challenges along the way, I am proud of how councillors, staff, volunteers and residents have worked together with resilience, enthusiasm and community spirit throughout the year.

One of the Council's most significant projects, the Mampitts Community Hub, has continued to make encouraging progress. With the ongoing support of Dorset Council, important amendments agreed and continued success in reducing the funding gap, the project has moved forward positively. The tender process for the construction phase has also progressed well, supported by the dedication and hard work of staff, councillors and members of the Mampitts Advisory Committee.

Our core, day to day business has been fulfilled and this is evidenced by a clean bill of health from both our internal and external auditors, for which our fantastic staff deserve full praise. Alongside this, our other advisory committees continue to be well attended and show that there is a strong cohort of enthused residents keen to promote and drive forward their ambitions and aims.

This year also saw the Council undertake a staffing review during the period without a permanent Town Clerk. I would like to give my thanks to the Deputy Town Clerk, who stepped up as Interim Town Clerk, and to all staff who continued to deliver the Council's day-to-day services with professionalism and commitment throughout this period. The review has helped identify opportunities for improvement and supported a fresh approach to the Town Clerk recruitment, and we look forward to welcoming our new Town Clerk at the end of June.

Alongside these larger projects, the Council has supported a wide range of community initiatives. We were pleased to support the Great British Spring Clean through a community litter pick alongside the Hilltop Litter Pickers. Our support for Shaftesbury Wellness has continued through grant funding and promotional support for wellness sessions on Castle Hill, helping residents enjoy opportunities to improve health and wellbeing in a beautiful outdoor setting. We have also welcomed two new councillors, Cllr Jenny Daultrey and Cllr Mollie Budd, to represent the East Ward.



As Mayor, it has been a privilege to represent Shaftesbury at so many community and civic events over the past year. One of the highlights was attending the Shaftesbury Lido Ice Championship Extravaganza (SLICE), where swimmers travelled from across the country to take part in what was a truly uplifting and memorable event. The atmosphere created by the organisers, volunteers and supporters demonstrated just how valued our Lido is within the wider community.

I have also greatly enjoyed taking part in many of the traditions and celebrations that make Shaftesbury so special. From the Byzant ceremony and the opening of Shaftesbury Abbey, to the Christmas Carol Service at St Peter's Church, each event reflected the warmth, heritage and strong sense of community spirit that exists within our town. It was also a pleasure to attend the Shaftesbury in Bloom Awards, which celebrated the dedication and hard work of volunteers, and the Shaftesbury Business Awards, spotlighting the creativity and excellence of local businesses.

Remembrance Sunday was, as always, one of the most moving and important occasions of the year. It was an honour to lead the procession and represent the town during a service that brought together residents, veterans, young people and community groups in remembrance of those who gave their lives in service to the country. The observed silence remains one of the most powerful moments in the civic calendar.

This year also brought lighter moments and opportunities to celebrate the town in wider settings. Our newly appointed Town Crier, Phil Elsworth, represented Shaftesbury admirably at the Dorset Town Crier Competition in Blandford Forum, where he achieved joint third place in his first competition. We also had great fun taking part in ITV West Country's 70th anniversary broadcasts from Gold Hill, proudly showcasing Shaftesbury to viewers across the region. Events such as Shaftesbury Oktoberfest once again demonstrated the town's ability to come together in celebration and good humour.

Throughout the year, I have been continually reminded of the extraordinary contribution made by volunteers, community organisations, local businesses and residents. Their dedication and willingness to support one another are what make Shaftesbury such a vibrant and caring town.

It has been a genuine honour to serve as Mayor of Shaftesbury. My thanks to my Deputy, Cllr Greg Williams and fellow councillors and to our wonderful office team for their support this year and my very best wishes to the incoming Chair for a successful and enjoyable year.



Mayor's Charity Shaftesbury Youth Club

During her Mayoral year, Cllr Virginia Edwyn-Jones selected Shaftesbury Youth Club as the Mayor's chosen charity. Run by volunteers, it provides activities and support for young people aged 10 to 16, offering a safe and welcoming place to meet friends, learn new skills and access advice when needed. The Youth Club also supports young people with additional needs through its Little Giants sessions. The Mayor chose to support the charity in recognition of the important role it plays in providing opportunities and activities for young people in the town, particularly given the limited facilities available locally for children and teenagers.

“

I'm thrilled that my Mayor's Quiz and Mayor's Wing Walk have generated nearly £5,000 for Shaftesbury Youth Club and I'm really looking forward to seeing the great improvements they're going to make for the children to enjoy. There are only three trustees at the Youth Club and they are still getting used to the duties and responsibilities that come with running such an important organisation in the town, so I felt they were a very worthy cause and I am very happy to have been able to support them in this way.

”

Mayor of Shaftesbury 2025/26, Cllr Virginia Edwyn-Jones

Funds raised during the year will help support the Youth Club's activities and future improvements, including opportunities for young people to take part in trips, social activities and creative projects. The fundraising will also contribute towards plans to improve facilities within the club, including the development of a juice bar for young people. These events demonstrate the strong support within the community for local young people and highlight the value of partnership working between the council, volunteers, local organisations and residents. The Mayor would like to thank everyone who attended events, donated, volunteered or supported the Mayor's charity fundraising throughout the year.

Mayor's Charity Quiz Night

One of the two main fundraising events organised in support of the charity was the Mayor's Charity Quiz Night, held at Shaftesbury Town Hall in March 2026. Hosted by Quiz Master Simon Hoare MP, the evening brought together residents and visitors for a community event featuring a quiz, raffle and auction. Tickets included pizza from The Grosvenor Arms and support from local businesses donating prizes helped maximise the funds. The evening raised £2560.83 for Shaftesbury Youth Club.



Mayoral Wing Walk

The second fundraising event is the Mayoral Wing Walk challenge. Originally scheduled to take place at Compton Abbas Airfield on 2nd May, the flight was postponed due to weather conditions. Cllr Virginia Edwyn-Jones has been able to secure a new date at Henstridge Airfield and will now complete her wing walk on Friday 29th May. Public support for the appeal has exceeded expectations ahead of the event with donations surpassing the original fundraising target of £1,000, reaching over £2,000.



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Projects

Highlights and initiatives delivered this year

This year's projects

Shaftesbury Photography Exhibition

The Shaftesbury Photography Competition was launched in 2025 as part of a wider North Dorset initiative to celebrate local communities, encourage creativity, and promote the area's tourism appeal through photography. Working in partnership with Visit Dorset and neighbouring towns including Blandford Forum, Gillingham, Sherborne and Sturminster Newton, the competition invited residents and visitors to capture images that reflected what makes Shaftesbury unique.

The competition opened for entries in February 2025 and attracted strong participation across all age groups. After entries closed in March, local judges shortlisted photographs in three categories: Under 18s, 18 and Over, and Professional Photographers. The shortlisted entries were displayed at Gold Hill Museum in May, where members of the public were invited to vote both in person and online.

The photographs receiving the highest number of public votes went on to represent Shaftesbury at the North Dorset Tourism Photography Awards and Exhibition, held in June 2025 at The Exchange in Sturminster Newton. The regional event showcased photography from across North Dorset and highlighted the area's cultural and tourism attractions.

Shaftesbury celebrated particular success in the Under 18 category, where local teenager Olly Phillips won the Best Photograph Award for his image Blue Point. He was the only entrant in the Under 18 category across all participating towns to receive a Best Photograph Award. The Mayor of Shaftesbury, Cllr Virginia Edwyn-Jones, attended the awards ceremony and congratulated Olly on his achievement.

The project provided an opportunity to support local talent, encourage community participation, and promote pride in the town. The Council would like to thank everyone who entered the competition, visited the exhibition, or took part in the public vote.



Blue Point by Olly Phillips



This year's projects

New Town Crier recruitment

Over the Summer 2025, Shaftesbury Town Council undertook an open recruitment process to appoint a new Town Crier, continuing an important civic tradition that plays a visible role in community events and public life. The project aimed to preserve a historic role while ensuring it remains relevant, welcoming, and engaging for residents and visitors today.

Town Criers have long been associated with British civic life, traditionally announcing important news and proclamations in public spaces. In modern times, the role has evolved into a ceremonial and ambassadorial position, helping to support civic occasions, promote local initiatives, and celebrate the town's heritage. In Shaftesbury, the Town Crier attends events including ceremonies, parades, commemorations, and community gatherings, helping to create a sense of occasion and continuity, as well as performing cries in the town centre.

The Council invited applications for the honorary position and encouraged members of the community to apply. Information about the role was shared publicly, outlining the responsibilities involved, including attending civic events, making public announcements, and representing the town in traditional livery. The Council also confirmed its ongoing support for the role through the provision of ceremonial equipment, administrative assistance, and membership of the Ancient and Honourable Guild of Town Criers.

Following public auditions in August, the Council appointed Mr Phil Elsworth as Shaftesbury's new Town Crier. Mr Elsworth was selected after interviews and auditions demonstrated his strong public speaking ability, enthusiasm for local traditions, and commitment to representing the town. His appointment ensures that the role will continue to support civic and community events across Shaftesbury in the years ahead.



“ We felt very confident that Phil would be able to think on his feet in public and react appropriately in all situations. Added to which his excellent audition ‘cry’, which could be heard in both the Abbey and Gold Hill Museum, all delivered in rhyme with great zeal and flourish convinced us that he was the best person for the role. ”

Mayor of Shaftesbury 2025/26, Cllr Virginia Edwyn-Jones



The Town Crier has already become a visible presence at local occasions such as the Royal British Legion Remembrance Parade and the Shaftesbury Food Festival organised by Shaftesbury & District Chamber of Commerce, adding ceremony and character to important events. His cries at the Thursday Charter Market help promote local events and community activities to residents and visitors.

The project reflects the Council's commitment to celebrating Shaftesbury's heritage while supporting activities that strengthen community identity and civic pride.

This year's projects

Lido new filtration system and pool liner



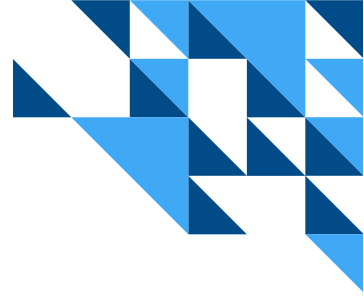
A successful crowdfunding campaign led by the Friends of Shaftesbury Swimming (FOSS) raised £15,000 in community donations through Crowdfunder, which helped secure match funding from Sport England.

Renovations Included:

- New filtration system and pipework: Enhancing water quality and sustainability.
- New pool lining installation: Boosting durability and water retention.
- General maintenance: Improving poolside drainage and replacing tiles to ensure the facility remains in excellent shape for future use.



SLICE 2026



SLICE (Shaftesbury Lido Ice Championship Extravaganza) is our very own cold water swimming competition designed to celebrate the thrill of cold water swimming, bring together our growing community, and raise essential funds for the Lido.

Now in our second year, the 2026 programme included:

- A fast-and-furious one-length dash—complete with bobble hats
- Two-, four-, and eight length races in a variety of strokes
- Hardy 16-length endurance challenges
- Exciting relay races, including one with a playful twist

There may have been rain and grey skies, but there was sunshine and fun poolside on the day. The cold water community came together once again, bringing camaraderie, laughter, support, encouragement, friendship and cake. Thank you to our incredible cold water community.

This year's projects

Shaftesbury Wellness



Shaftesbury Wellness offers free outdoor exercise sessions at Castle Hill throughout May, June and July, giving people of all ages the chance to try something new in the open air.

Made possible by a town council grant from a previous year and supported by The Blackmore Vale Partnership, the programme is organised by Kirsty Elliot of The Yoga Within. Each month brings a new class - Fun Fitness, Qi Gong, Yoga and Jazzercise - with special launch and finale events featuring all four.

Each class is led by an experienced instructor with real passion for their craft, sharing techniques and a 'real life approach' to wellbeing. Last year, 1,800 spaces were booked across the three months.

War memorial cleaning

The War Memorial in Park Walk, first unveiled in 1921, underwent specialist cleaning in November following a resolution at September's Full Council meeting.

Albion Stone, conservation specialists in historic stonework, carried out the work using a specialist DOFF steam cleaner, guided throughout by advice from the War Memorials Trust.

The cleaning was completed ahead of the 2025 Remembrance Parade, ensuring the memorial was respectfully presented for this important annual event.



Christmas Lights



Each year the council installs Christmas lights on the Town Hall and throughout the town centre. Huge thanks to NDM Electrical, who once again installed them on the Council's behalf and helped make the town feel so festive throughout the season.

This year's projects



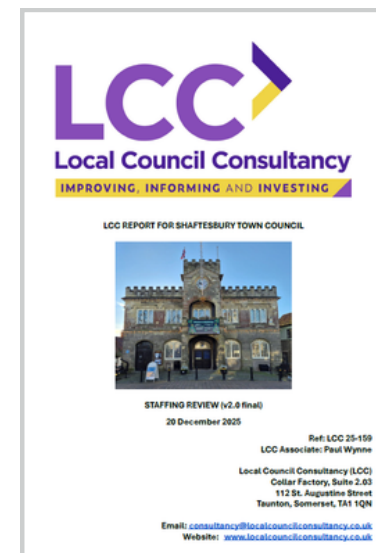
27 new signs installed across all seven play parks



VE Day celebrations



Bin replacement completed



Staffing Review



Mampitts Community Hub progressing on schedule



Neighbourhood Plan First Review progressed to legal compliance consultation in March/April 2026



Brand new electric van ordered to replace our diesel pickup (delivery due in the summer)

Looking Ahead

Projects on the agenda for 2026–27 and beyond



High Street
'managed traffic'



Youth Club
renovation



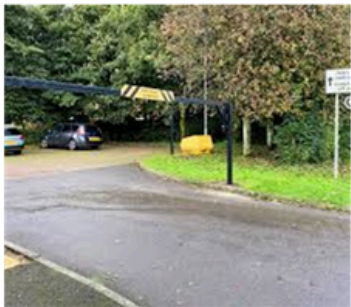
Mampitts Community Hub



Town Hall internal
renovations



Street furniture/public
realm improvements



Barton Hill car park



Sustainable
Shaftesbury



War
Memorial



Wincombe Play
upgrade



Barton Hill Hut



Lido feasibility study

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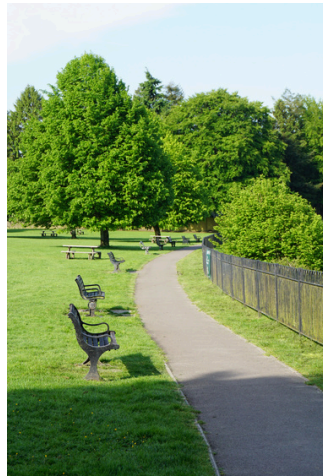
Everyday Council Services

Looking after the places and spaces our
community uses every day.

Caretakers

Our caretakers maintain our facilities, open spaces and play parks.

- Look after **96** pieces of play equipment across seven play areas
- Look after **122** benches across town
- Empty **59** of the public litter bins across the town each day
- Clean the Bell Street toilets daily
- Maintain two bus stops
- Clean the historic town hall building and set up for events and weddings
- Keep the town centre looking clean and tidy, and respond to issues that come up every day



Grounds Team

The grounds work, covering some 48 acres, is contracted out and overseen by the Town Clerk. The team has been able to make great progress with improvements across the open spaces. Here is a selection of highlights from the last few months.



Tesco Roundabout



Park Walk/Rose Garden



Bury Litton



Queen Mother Garden



Brionne Gardens

Allotments

The Town Council owns and manages **133** allotment plots across four sites:

- A30
- St James
- Bray
- Mampitts



Cemeteries

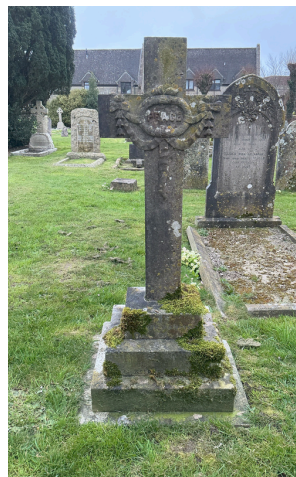
The Town Council owns and manages an active cemetery in Mampitts Lane, known as the Mampitts Cemetery.

It is also responsible for two closed cemeteries:

- Trinity Centre
- Bury Litton

In all, approximately **1,600** graves are managed across the three sites.

As well as helping the bereaved with acquiring plots, this involves grass cutting by the grounds team, testing to ensure stone monuments are stable, and making them safe where necessary.

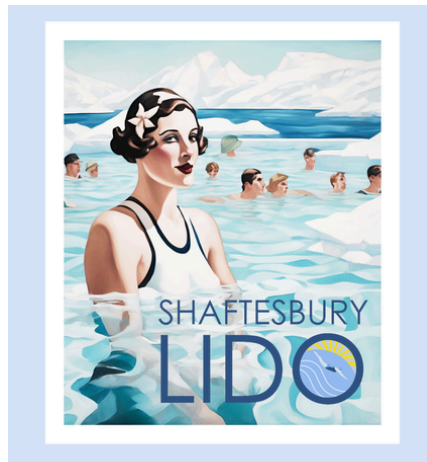


Shaftesbury Lido

Shaftesbury Lido is now open throughout the year, providing a cherished community resource for every season. Cold Water Swimming has gained popularity. Special events such as the monthly moon swims, pop-up saunas, and the annual SLICE event have brought people from all over the country to Dorset's only lido.

The office manages the online booking system which processed the sale of more than 12,000 tickets over the year.

The Lido has a permanent part-time manager. In addition there are four duty supervisors, and up to six lifeguards in the summer, reducing to one duty supervisor and two lifeguards in the winter.



Everyday Council Services

Earlier this year, Shaftesbury Town Council approved changes to the pricing structure at Shaftesbury Lido to help make swimming more affordable for local families. The decision reflects the Council's commitment to supporting accessible community facilities and encouraging greater use of the town's outdoor pool.

At the Full Council meeting in January 2026, councillors considered recommendations from the Shaftesbury Swimming Advisory Committee regarding admission prices for the main Lido season. Following discussion, councillors unanimously agreed to reduce the children's admission price by extending the lower-priced category to include all children under the age of 11.

Under the revised pricing structure, children under 11 will pay £2.50 per visit. Previously, this lower rate applied only to children under three, with children aged four to 17 charged a higher admission fee. The change was introduced to support families and encourage more children and young people to make regular use of the facility.

Councillors recognised that the revised pricing may reduce income per visit, but noted that increased attendance from families could help offset this while strengthening the Lido's role as a well-used community facility. During the discussion, members also highlighted the support of Friends of Shaftesbury Swimming (FOSS) in promoting family-focused access to the pool.

The decision demonstrates the Council's ongoing focus on maintaining inclusive and affordable local services for residents of all ages. Families using the Lido during the 2026 season will benefit directly from the reduced children's admission price, helping to make outdoor swimming more accessible to the wider community. The updated pricing structure will apply throughout the summer 2026 Lido season, supporting continued community use of this valued local facility.

Thursday Market

Shaftesbury has served as a market hub for centuries. Today we hold the weekly Thursday charter market, drawing in both locals and visitors. This market benefits local producers and traders while also featuring guests such as the Community Energy Bus and showcasing the new Little Reds buses.



Town Hall & Land Hire

The Town Council hires out the Guild Hall and the Council Chamber for events such as weddings, indoor markets and meetings.



We also hire out land at Barton Hill, Castle Hill, Park Walk and St James Park for activities including markets, festivals, fun fairs and fitness.



Our facilities support community and charity events, and the commercial side brings income to the Town Council.



Formal Meetings

Monthly
Full Council
meetings plus
extraordinary
meetings
(17 total)

Chairing and
hosting
**Advisory
Committee**
meetings

Monthly
**Planning &
Highways
Committee**
meetings

65 planning
applications
reviewed

Preparing
agendas and
minutes for
59 meetings



+ Public meetings

- Annual Town Assembly
- Public Budget Meeting
- Cllr Nick Ireland, Leader of Dorset Council
- Public Local Plan Meeting

As well as...



**Attending 45
mayoral
engagements**

**Responding to
around 900
enquiries from
members of the
public**



**Looking
after war
memorials**



**Managing car
parks at
Coppice Street
and Barton Hill**



Finances

Town Council Annual Return (Accounts) 2025/26

Of the balances held at 31st March 2026 (box 7) £230,228 was held as Ear Marked Reserves to carry out projects.

Shaftesbury Town Council precept for 2026/27 is £875,002.

	Year ending	
	31 March 2025 £	31 March 2026 £
1. Balances brought forward	379,794	326,665
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	590,965	764,403
3. (+) Total other receipts	327,145	324,543
4. (-) Staff costs	344,372	317,283
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	16,237	16,237
6. (-) All other payments	610,630	716,123
7. (=) Balances carried forward	326,665	365,968
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	317,646	345,680
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	3,366,661	3,484,831
10. Total borrowings	320,460	311,575

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Advisory Committees

Volunteer voices providing expert guidance
and knowledge

Shaftesbury Swimming (SSAC)

Introduction. The Advisory Committee brings together community representatives from the Friends of Shaftesbury Swimming with Town Councillors, the Lido Manager and other Council staff. 2025-26 has been a busy year with plenty of positive achievements.

Mission Statement. The Committee drew up a mission statement for the Lido which the Town Council endorsed to guide its decision-making.

The mission of Shaftesbury Lido is to support the well-being of our community and provide a welcoming space for individuals, families and visitors to our town. Shaftesbury Lido should maximise its potential as a community asset; it should offer all-year round, water-related recreational opportunities that improve fitness, health, water safety and swimming skills. Shaftesbury Town Council aims to develop a high-quality facility, which is environmentally and financially sustainable, and safe and supportive for both public and employees. It recognises the role of the 'Friends of Shaftesbury Swimming', to help to raise funds, act as a voice for user views and as a guide for decision making.

Essential renovations. The Committee advised the Council and helped fundraise for essential renovations to keep the Lido open. £66k was raised from other sources towards the total cost of c.£120k. The project was successfully completed so the Lido could re-open on 7 June 2025 with a new filtration system and pool liner, and sparkling clear water heated to 29 degrees.

Swim numbers and finances. The Committee advised on and helped with publicity to attract more swimmers and measures to improve financial sustainability. Despite a nine-week delay to the summer season opening while renovations were completed, the total number of swims at 12,376, was 5% up on the previous year. Income was also up and the operating deficit, at £14,718, was £6,266 below that allowed for in the budget and £3,725 (20%) lower than for the previous year. Cold water swimming in the winter made a significant contribution.



Special events. The Committee supported successful Lido events during the year including the Celebration Day on 1 August 2025 thanking everyone who contributed funds for the renovations and the second edition of SLICE (the Shaftesbury Lido Ice Championships Extravaganza) on 25 January. These events, alongside Moon Swims, Naked Swims and Cold Swims, have helped draw people into the town all-year-round.

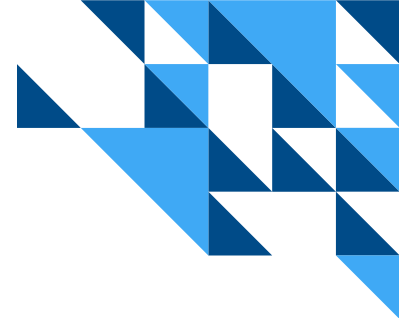
Lifeguard scholarships. Funds have been raised through FOSS to support two lifeguard scholarships for Shaftesbury school pupils who are now trained and qualified.

Preparations for 2026-27. The Committee advised on timetables and pricing for the 2026 summer season. We are pleased that the Council was able to go further than recommended in reducing child swims to £2.50. Promotion will be important to maintain revenue.

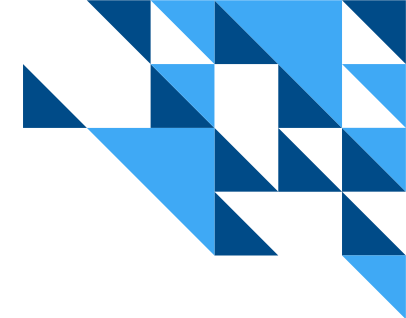
Longer-Term Feasibility Plan. The Committee is supporting the Council to bid for funding to prepare and consult on a professional feasibility plan for longer term developments. If successful, this will enable further fundraising for improvements to the pool surround and changing facilities, and an extension of facilities into the adjoining recreation area.

Our thanks. The Committee would like to express its thanks to the Lido Manager, Lifeguards and other Council staff who have supported its work and enabled the Lido to flourish.

Stuart Edwards
Chair, SSAC 2025-26



Sustainable Shaftesbury (SuSAC)



It's been an eventful year for SuSAC—set up as a formal advisory committee of STC in May 2024 to advise the town council on practical responses to the climate and nature emergency, for emergency it unquestionably is—and we've achieved a lot.

A straw poll of those at the town's annual assembly in April 2026 showed a clear majority were aware of the problems of climate change and nature loss and supported the efforts of STC in trying to deal with them. It's a good start, but it's only a start.

The first thing to say is that what is remarkable about SuSAC is that a majority of its 15 members are not town councillors. All but three are ordinary members of the public with long expertise in environmentalism and ecology; Shaftesbury is exceptionally lucky to have them. We have recently been joined by a third town councillor, Annie Philpott, to add to the two—Lester Dibben and Virginia Edwyn-Jones—who have attended meetings in 2025-26.

Shaftesbury is also lucky to have a town council that is almost unique in Dorset in understanding that it is virtually impossible for a relatively small number of elected members to cover all the bases that need covering in today's complicated and rapidly changing world. Hence this committee.

It was former town clerk, Brie Logan, who suggested the creation of advisory committees for outside advice and expertise on key issues. It is a model that has not only been shown to work, and work well, but is attracting attention from other towns and parishes in Dorset.

The other point of note, and it's an important one, is that advisory committees are open to all. It's not a closed elite but fully open and accountable, not only through the town council but its monthly meetings are also open to the public and it's work and membership are open to everyone too. Anyone interested in SuSAC's work has simply to turn up at meetings advertised on the town council's website. It's the community's involvement that's crucial going forward.

So what is that work? The main function of SuSAC is to monitor, review and promote the work of the town council's Sustainable Shaftesbury Masterplan Vision Statement and Action Plan 2023-31, adopted by the council in February 2024. You can see it on the council's website.

SuSAC's role is to oversee the process of preparing, updating and researching proposals in the plan, initiating or suggesting community consultation and involvement, and providing recommendations to STC to fund and implement.



Under the motto 'Think Global, Act Local', the committee further developed its three 'flagship' projects of both local and countywide significance during 2025-26:

- Shaftesbury Orchard Town
- Nature Friendly Town Shaftesbury
- Shaftesbury's Green Wheel initiative

SuSAC is working closely with Dorset Council, Dorset Wildlife Trust (DWT) and the National Trust in Dorset (and shortly also the Cranborne Chase National Landscape and Dorset CPRE) on all three and in March became a fully participating member of DWT's £1.5m Heritage Lottery-funded 'Nature Connection North Dorset' project running to 2031.

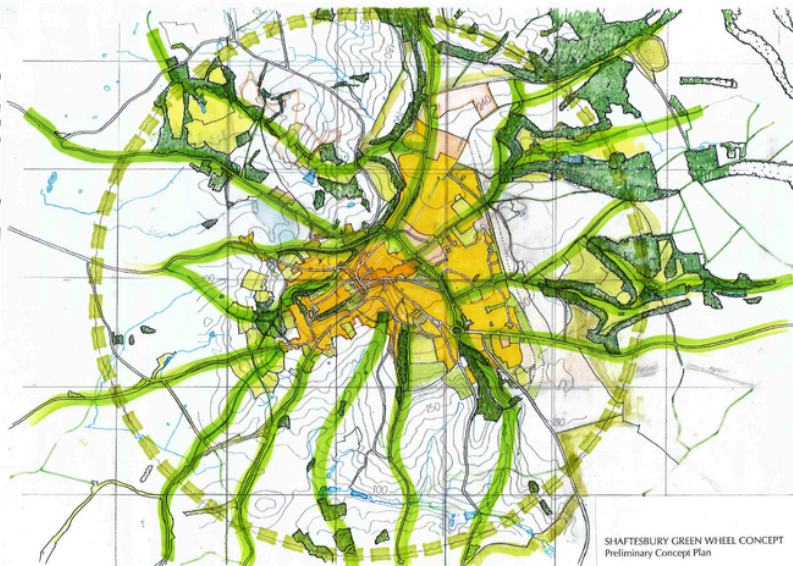


Shaftesbury: A Nature Friendly Town

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Pesticide use
Monitoring and Evaluation
Water Quality & Management
Education and Community Involvement
Sustainable Practices

The Green Wheel



The committee works through 12 working groups with each one looking at specific areas of the town council's Action Plan. They are:

- Biodiversity/Nature Friendly Town/Orchard Town WG that includes the Green Wheel sub-group
- Circular economy (notionally in partnership with Shaftesbury & District Chamber of Commerce)
- Clean air & dark skies
- Food
- Energy & retrofitting
- Health & wellbeing
- Local transport & footpaths
- Planning
- Waste & recycling
- Water (rivers, streams and ponds)
- Worksheds (community worksheds)

All these details and more, including the latest news and who leads the working groups, is on the STC website under 'Sustainable Shaftesbury'.

All working group leads welcome input from anyone in the community with an interest in the subject who would like to help develop ideas and make positive things happen. Currently we have no one taking responsibility for clean air, health and waste, for example.

Our climate and our natural world is in crisis so the more help we can get from everyone in the community the better. It's the most important aim we have in moving forward into 2026-27.

To contact anyone on SuSAC go to the town hall or email the office saying what area you're interested in.

Richard Thomas

Chair, SuSAC 2025-26

Mampitts (MAC)

The Mampitts Advisory Committee (MAC) was created in December 2024 to oversee the development of the Mampitts Community Hub project, building on the community consultation, and providing recommendations for Shaftesbury Town Council to consider. This year MAC has gathered public feedback and developed the design and operating model, as well as issuing a tender for construction and raising funds for the project.

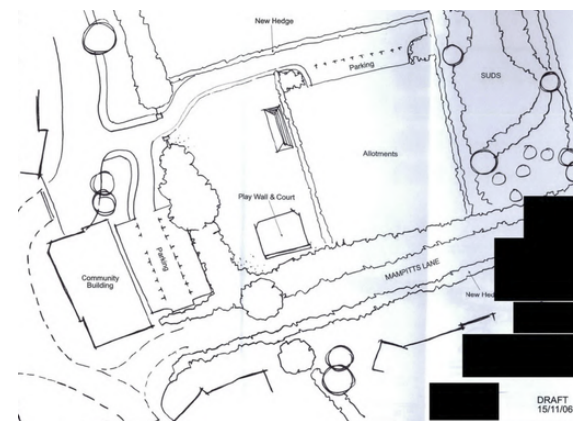
The Hub will provide a centre point for the south east of Shaftesbury, bringing together a cafe, activity hall, and health and family services for the community.

Securing sufficient funding for the project to meet rising construction costs has been a challenge but we have received significant funding boosts from donors.

In the next council year the project will take the final investment decision, and get approval from Dorset Council for release of S106 funds. We will then enter the construction phase to deliver this exciting project for the community.

Cllr Greg Williams
Chair, MAC 2025-26

2007 S106 agreement
'allotment and kickabout area'



2016 Community-Informed Design

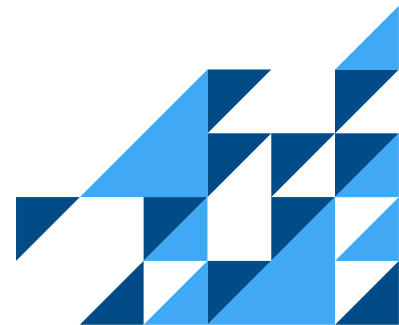


Mampitts Project Status

Criteria	RAG	Comment
Schedule	Green	No slippage from Oct '25 rebased schedule. On track to comply with June conditions.
Resource	Yellow	Stable team of project experts and deputy clerk; PM change in the summer.
Funding & costs	Yellow	Pathways to close the £250-£400k funding gap.
Construction	Yellow	Tenders received. Evaluation commencing. Start dates TBC.
Operating plan	Green	STC to operate. DC family hub engaged. Café operator ITT next.
Land transfer	Yellow	Persimmon —> DC transfer being finalised.

Next milestones:

- May 19th – meeting with DC portfolio holder.
- June 2nd – STC full council to select contractor. **Final Investment Decision.**
- June 9th – deadline to discharge S106 conditions.
- July 9th – construction commencement deadline.



Arts & Culture

The Arts and Culture Advisory Committee has recently been created to support the development and promotion of a vibrant cultural sector within Shaftesbury.

The Committee is primarily composed of members of the Arts Collective, representing a broad range of practitioners and organisations across the arts, literature, and festivals sector. This ensures that the Committee reflects the wider cultural community and remains responsive to its needs and ambitions.

Recent Activity

Enmore Green Water Feature

The Committee considered proposals for a water feature at Enmore Green to mark the site of the historic continual well.

It was resolved to seek and has received support in principle from Shaftesbury Town Council to further explore the funding and viability of this project. The proposal presents an opportunity to enhance the public realm while celebrating the town's heritage and sense of place.

Brown Tourist Signage and Wayfinding

The Committee reviewed current signage and wayfinding provision and identified key issues relating to the town's visibility. It was noted that:

- There is no signage on the A303 indicating Shaftesbury in either direction until the turn onto the A350
- While the A350 is well signposted, it relies on prior knowledge of the town's location and does not actively draw visitors in
- Signage at entry points to the town remains inconsistent

The Committee also noted that funding has been ringfenced for navigational signage; however, this allocation has remained unused for approximately ten years and may be subject to return if not utilised.



Arts & Culture

Accordingly, it was resolved to:

- Investigate the installation of brown tourist signage on the A303 as a priority
- Investigate the need for brown tourist signs along the A30 and A350
- Consider the need, safety and best place to make Shaftesbury visible to visitors
- Seek support in principle from Shaftesbury Town Council which has been received
- Progress feasibility work using available ringfenced funding

This initiative is intended to improve visibility, accessibility, and visitor engagement, supporting the town's position as a cultural destination.

Strategic Development

The Committee continues to prioritise collaboration, visibility, and sustainability within the cultural sector, working closely with the Arts Collective and wider stakeholders.

Town of Culture 2028 Bid

The Committee is actively involved in the development of a bid for Town of Culture 2028. This has been put together through the Arts Collective with the support of the Town Council and the Arts Centre.

This represents a significant opportunity to:

- Showcase the town's cultural strengths and diversity
- Attract external investment and funding
- Strengthen partnerships across sectors
- Deliver long-term cultural and economic benefits

The bid will be developed collaboratively and will aim to create both an impactful programme and a lasting legacy for the town.

Conclusion

Through a combination of practical initiatives and strategic ambition, the Arts and Culture Advisory Committee is well placed to support the growth and recognition of Shaftesbury's cultural identity.

Fran Hill

Chair, A&C 2025-26



The role of the Town Council is to ensure Shaftesbury is a thriving community and a healthy, vibrant and attractive place in which to live, work and visit.

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Join our email list for the latest updates on consultations, events, and more.

<https://www.shaftesbury-tc.gov.uk/newsletter-signup/>



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All information is correct at
time of publication



**SHAFTESBURY
TOWN
COUNCIL**