



SHAFTESBURY
TOWN COUNCIL

Annual Report
2022-2023

April 2023





Mayor's Welcome

When I was asked last year to be Mayor, I had a very clear goal; to get back to delivering projects that make the town an even better place to live and work after the strains of COVID. I hope you will see from this report that we have had quite a successful year.

Some projects that really stand out are the new St James' Park play equipment, which is looking amazing and has been given the seal of approval by a group of children from Abbey Primary School! Another highlight has to be the popular Shaftesbury Wellness Events, which saw over 1,500 people take part in free outdoor yoga, Qi-Gong and circuit training. These classes have helped people to maintain a healthy lifestyle and have been supported by the Blackmore Vale Partnership. Plus, they have taken place in one of the most fantastic locations in the country - Castle Hill!

We were delighted to establish the first ever 'Shaftesbury Business Awards' celebrating the achievements of our local businesses who drive economic development in the town. The Council has also invested over £50k into renovations of the Shaftesbury Lido ahead of the new season, including moving away from a chlorinated filtering system to a salt-based one.

We also have a great deal planned for the coming year, including the improvements of Wincombe Recreation Ground play area, the development of the Mampitts Green community asset, as well as the development of a new car park in the town centre. This is alongside some of the longer-term goals, such as supporting Dorset Council with the pedestrianisation of the High Street.

In 2022, we saw the passing of her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, and soon we will see the Coronation of the King. The Town Council will be putting on a community festival at Wincombe Recreation Ground and a Crown Hunt in St James' Park to mark the event. I hope you'll be able to join us for these celebrations.

I would like to say a huge thank you to all of the councillors who have worked to ensure the town continues to thrive, as well as our fantastic council staff who ultimately do all the hard work to deliver the projects. And finally, to our residents who have worked with and supported the Council over the past year, thank you.

Councillor Piers Brown

Our Town

Shaftesbury is a town which looks for and tries out new ideas and ways of doing things. It is a community that is not only proudly independent and puts local solutions first, but is also outward looking, seeking to build and maintain connections across Dorset.

From these foundations, we want to build:

- a positive and inclusive town where nobody gets left behind
- a thriving and resilient community and local economy
- a clean, healthy and happy town
- a town that actively encourages residents to participate in and feel ownership over ideas, spaces and assets
- a town that embraces innovation, celebrates its successes and learns from its experiences.



Our Highlights

Projects we delivered in 2022/23



- **Shaftesbury Wellness** – Increasing the range of Wellness activities in collaboration with the Blackmore Vale Surgery
- **Playground Strategy** – A Masterplan for play parks has been commissioned and the council is embarking on the development of a Wincombe Play plan and improvements across all parks
- **Development of Management Plans for Open Spaces** - Each park and Open Space will have a management plan detailing how this land is to be managed with a key objective of focussing on Ecology and Biodiversity
- **Vehicle/equipment replacement** - A new lower carbon emission grounds vehicle has replaced the old vehicle
- **St James' Park play facility** - The project is a landscape led scheme with the focus on natural play using sustainable materials
- **Lido refurbishment** – Improved accessibility, introduction of electro-chlorination, three new energy efficient boilers and new showers
- **Christmas lighting scheme** - The Town Council delivered the 2022 Christmas Lighting scheme. The lights have now been purchased which was the most economical solution
- **New branded picnic benches at Castle Hill** - 5 new disabled friendly picnic tables have been designed with emphasis on durability and comfort and are entirely made from sustainably sourced British timber
- **Queen's Jubilee** - We celebrated the Platinum Jubilee with a well – attended community event on Castle Hill.
- **Establishment of Working Groups** – With committees abolished in 2022 the council is now driving a collaborative approach and encouraging residents to get involved in shaping the town
- **Caretaker** - Recruitment of this new role to improve town standards.



The Council - by numbers

25

The number of public meetings we facilitated in 2022/23

48

The acres of land we look after, including cemeteries, pathways, open spaces and gardens

231

The number of trees/hedges planted by the Shaftesbury Tree Group in 2022/23

£20,000

The amount we awarded in grants in 2022/23 to support community organisations

19

The number of weddings we managed and took place in the Town Hall in 2022/23

7

The number of play areas we maintain across the town

The Council - by numbers

79

The amount of
planning applications
we made comments
on last year in our role
as statutory consultee

268

The number of
enquiries we
responded to in
2022/23

120

The number of
allotments we
provide and
manage

4

The number of times
a year we meet with
the Shaftesbury
School Youth
Council

1,568

The number of people
taking part in
Shaftesbury Wellness
events last year

2030

The date by which
we are committed to
Shaftesbury
becoming carbon
neutral

Community Grants

Below is a summary of all of our grant recipients for the year 2022/23.

Home-Start Blackmore Vale

Grant received: £500

The grant has contributed to our home visiting service and directly supported ten vulnerable families in and around Shaftesbury. This has involved providing a volunteer to support each individual family within their home with parenting skills, emotional support, activities with children and access to other services.

Shaftesbury Town Band

Grant received: £1,000

It was lovely to be back out in the summer of 2022, and to support the carnivals (Mere, Shaftesbury and Gillingham) along with the Remembrance Day Parade. In our return to full banding, we have been lucky to have the support of our ever-growing members, ranging in age from 12 – 73 years old. This expansion in numbers means that we are running out of space in our current hall, so our main aim this year is to raise funds for the new hall project.

Shaftesbury Scout Group

Grant received: £200

Helped to provide a diverse range of opportunities and activities for young people aged 6-14. The group supports Shaftesbury at local events, either in the town or at the showground, as well as local charities. The young people are really pleased to be involved in this, and have a strong sense of pride.

Shaftesbury Car Link

Grant received: £2,000

We are now the proud owner of a seven-seater, wheelchair-accessible vehicle, which has enabled us to take over 50 people to their Covid booster appointments, as well as groups of people with Alzheimer's to various events.

We provide an average of 25 trips per day to help local people attend their medical and non-medical appointments. With the NHS still catching up following the pandemic, we are now finding that we are having to take people much further afield for their consultations, so have been known to travel to Taunton and Oxford!

Shaftesbury Community Choir

Grant received: free hall hire

The Community Choir provides a social as well as a musical function, welcoming people with mental health needs, learning difficulties and those coping with loneliness, bereavement or stress. For all of these and those who just come to enjoy the many recognised benefits of singing together, the choir offers friendship and support together with musical inspiration.

We are hugely indebted to the town council for enabling us to use the venue so the community choir can celebrate at the centre of the community for 50 weeks of the year.

Community Grants

Shaftesbury Town Twinning

Grant received: £1,000

The grant has helped us to deliver joint activities involving Shaftesbury, Brionne and Lindlar, such as hosting events and organising anniversary trips overseas.

Rolt Millennium Green

Grant received: £500

The Green is one of Shaftesbury's most tranquil spaces on St James. It is a community asset with space for quiet contemplation, playing with families, as a venue for the Shaftesbury Fringe or enjoying the views across the Blackmore Vale. Our volunteers were very grateful for the STC grant that allowed them to purchase a new lawnmower, making it easier to keep the space looking beautiful.

Shaftesbury Bowling Club

Grant received: £500

The Club is run and maintained by its members and is proud to have one of the best full-size, six-rink outdoor bowling greens in the area, set within the 'Shaftesbury in Bloom' award-winning garden. We had some great successes in 2022 with Will and Ryan Scammell becoming the Dorset County Under 35 Pairs Champions and our Ladies team winning the North Dorset Triples League.

Shaftesbury Football Club

Grant received: £2,900

The services we can provide have grown considerably over the last 18 months and the 3G pitch has enabled the club to offer a wider range of football to Shaftesbury residents. We have formed walking football sessions and have run numerous holiday soccer schools, which have attracted over 100 children from the town and further afield.

All our teams are thriving. Last season, the Men's First Team came third in their league and won the Wessex League Cup. Our Ladies' Team made it to the semi-final of the County Cup and are currently sitting second in the league. The Youth Teams have benefited hugely from the consistent access to training that the 3G pitch has provided. Our Under 16s Team is sitting top of their league and the youth set up are looking to establish new younger teams for next season.

Read Easy Blackmore Vale North

Grant received: £337.50

There are six people in Shaftesbury currently being coached to improve their reading and there are several coaches in waiting to be paired with potential readers. Typically, residents graduate from the scheme with an enhanced sense of self-worth and a delight at being able to read at last.

We are very grateful to Shaftesbury Town Council for their continued support. Being unable to read properly means that a person is unable to live their own life fully and also unable to contribute to the community around them. Our work literally changes people's lives.

Community Grants

Gold Hill Fair (Shaftesbury Rotary)

Grant received: £500

In July we held our Gold Hill Festival. Good crowds enjoyed music, much of it from local musicians. There were stalls, refreshments and activities to interest people of all ages. We are grateful to the Town Council for the Community Grant we received to help support this event and for allowing us to use the Barton Hill playing field.

North Dorset Rugby Football Club

Grant received: £500

The Brave and Determined

Grant received: £750

Shaftesbury Cricket Club

Grant received: £1,000

Shaftesbury Youth Club/Little Giants

Grant received: £1,000

Blackmore Vale Tourism and Development Co. Ltd

Grant received: £500

Friends of Westminster Memorial

Grant received: £1,300

BOOBS' Shaftesbury Breast Cancer Awareness

Grant received: £1,000

Open House Shaftesbury

Grant received: £1,500

Rendezvous - Youth Resource Services

Grant received: £1,361

Rural Health Matters Ltd

Grant received: £250

Community Organisations

Shining a light on the local organisations that make a BIG difference

Shaftesbury HomeGrown

Thanks in part to the generous grant from the Town Council in 2021, we were able to purchase a new polytunnel, which resulted in us having some very successful vegetable crops (mainly tomatoes, cucumbers and salad greens). We were able to take some of the surplus crop to the 'Open Fridge' at Father's House. Last year, we saw an increase in volunteers and thanks to Town Clerk, Brie Logan (via Planet Shaftesbury) students from Shaftesbury School have registered their interest in the project!

HomeGrown offers many benefits: working outdoors with like-minded people, rather than on one's own in an allotment, in a sociable environment, all good for our physical and mental wellbeing.

Friends of Shaftesbury Swimming (FOSS)

FOSS promotes swimming opportunities in the Shaftesbury area. Our primary focus is to advise and support Shaftesbury Town Council from a community perspective on the sustainable development of Shaftesbury Lido. The FOSS committee meets informally with the council on a monthly basis and have been active in influencing many aspects of the marketing and development of the Lido.

Shaftesbury Fringe Festival

Shaftesbury Fringe Festival is a well-established event on the UK fringe and arts scene. The town was full of visitors over the Fringe weekend last year, all ready to enjoy the fringe feeling. With 94 performers registering 144 performances in 27 venues, there was a great choice of entertainment to enjoy. It's no wonder that it's been described as the UK's 'friendliest fringe' by seasoned performers.

Royal British Legion

The policy of all branch members responsible for welfare is working well. The branch is one of only three Touchpoints in Dorset, providing a first point of contact and advice for beneficiaries requiring help of any kind. Fundraising has again been supported by so many individual volunteers, shops, businesses and organisations.

We continue to perform well within the County for the Poppy Appeal total, with many functions planned for 2023. Last October, we issued 190 poppy boxes and 40 wreaths for this year's appeal and at the time of writing, we have raised £18,657.

Shaftesbury Fairtrade

Shaftesbury has been a Fairtrade Town since 2008 and it is one of over 300 communities across the UK to have fulfilled the required objectives to gain this award.

During the past year, we have been working on a Fairtrade Directory, visiting local shops and cafés to find out which Fairtrade lines they stock. We are now distributing paper copies to key locations in the town and will be uploading a digital version to our website shortly. As a result of a former member bequeathing us some money, we have been able to purchase two Fairtrade Town signs, which have been erected on/near the Royal Chase and Ivy Cross roundabouts.

We are extremely grateful to Shaftesbury Town Council for the advisory, administrative and financial support they have given us over the course of many years.

Community Organisations

Shining a light on the local organisations that make a BIG difference

Shaftesbury Abbey

2022 was an exceptionally good year for the Abbey. We welcomed over 33,000 visitors and received visitor income of over £44,000. This was a record for us, and hopefully of great benefit to others in our local economy.

This year we are extending our visitor offer using the newly renovated Abbey Lodge, made possible in part by a generous grant from Shaftesbury Town Council. We now have: additional exhibition space; a well apportioned room for visits from schools (now completely free of charge) and community groups, lectures, meetings and family activity days; a dedicated library/archive room for research and casual browsing of our 650 plus books; and much-needed additional archaeological storage. The renovations included the installation of a wheelchair accessible toilet, and a ramp and decking area at the Lodge's entrance from the gardens to ensure that the new facility is completely accessible to all.

Shaftesbury Book Festival

In March 2022, Shaftesbury finally welcomed people to the first book festival focused on nature writing after delays caused by the pandemic. Called 'Reading the Land', the festival brought together ten acclaimed authors to talk to audiences over a busy weekend. Most events took place in the Grosvenor Arms, while children's activities with music, tales, and singing took place at Shaftesbury Library with popular local author, Tim Laycock. The festival volunteers are grateful for the support and contributions of the community and local organisations, including the Shaftesbury Town Council.

The Vale Pantry

In 2022, we supported 19 Shaftesbury households back to complete independence and we are currently working with 34 households in Shaftesbury and a further 307 households in the North Dorset area. For those families struggling with fuel poverty, we run a 'Pantry on Tour' service – taking the Pantry out to the community to reach those families who are unable to reach us.

Pantry members are provided with a host of support, such as children's cookery workshops, recipe bags and cookery education for parents, budget coaching, distributing second-hand clothing and running a Warm Winter Coats for children. We also access funding streams for much-needed white goods when required, we mentor and so much more. We are grateful to Shaftesbury Town Council for their donation, which has enabled us to continue to help those families and individuals in need in the Shaftesbury area.

Shaftesbury & District Dementia Friendly Community (SDDFC)

The Shaftesbury & District Dementia Friendly Community (SDDFC) was established in 2019 by former-Mayor John Lewer to provide information and support for people living with dementia, including their families, friends and carers. They set up a singing group in 2021 as this is recognised as being one of the most effective and enjoyable ways of stimulating memory.

Community Organisations

Shining a light on the local organisations that make a BIG difference

Planet Shaftesbury

We are a group of local people who share a concern about climate breakdown and the ecological emergency. We all feel driven to respond in our own way. Coming together we make up a network of diverse individuals willing to share skills and experience. Planet Shaftesbury stands with anyone who cares about our planet. We seek changes that will contribute to nature's recovery and enable us to adopt more sustainable lifestyles for ourselves and across the Shaftesbury area.

The Donkey Field Community Orchard

The Donkey Field goes from strength-to-strength. We held a cheerful and busy Apple Day last October with mulled cider and apple juice, apple pressing, music around the fire, the longest Peel Competition and White Horse Morris. In January we held Wassailing to bless the orchard for the coming year. Donations collected at each event now pay for the next.

We have a new noticeboard made by Gillingham Men's shed and paid for with a Community Grant from the Town Council. The trees have been pruned and given new labels showing their varieties. A plum has been planted near the seating area and thanks to the Town Groundsmen, the grass is cut seasonally to allow access to the trees, seating and right of way.

Shaftesbury in Bloom

Shaftesbury in Bloom are a small group of volunteers who maintain the flowerbeds, roundabouts and gardens in and around the town.

Last October they won GOLD in the National Britain in Bloom Competition – a first for Shaftesbury! This is testament to the hard work of the volunteers who go above and beyond to make the town attractive, bright and welcoming.

Shaftesbury Tree Group

Every year we learn more and more about the importance of trees in town and country, especially the value of old trees for wildlife and carbon sequestration.

This is the third year of Shaftesbury Tree Group's collaboration with the Town Council to prepare and implement a 5 year Town Tree Plan. In January 30 native trees and many metres of hedging (250 saplings) were planted by volunteers throughout the town. In time, these trees and hedges will become attractive local features, provide shade and shelter, habitats and food for wildlife, buffer noise and capture pollutants from vehicles, as well as sequestering carbon.

We have had a variety of activities this year which include; the Hedge School promoting the value of hedges, launched with a Hedge Walk in November, Tree Walk facilitated by a local arboricultural consultant, Tree Talks and monitoring and commenting on planning applications relating to trees.



Budget breakdown 2022/23

Summary of key information

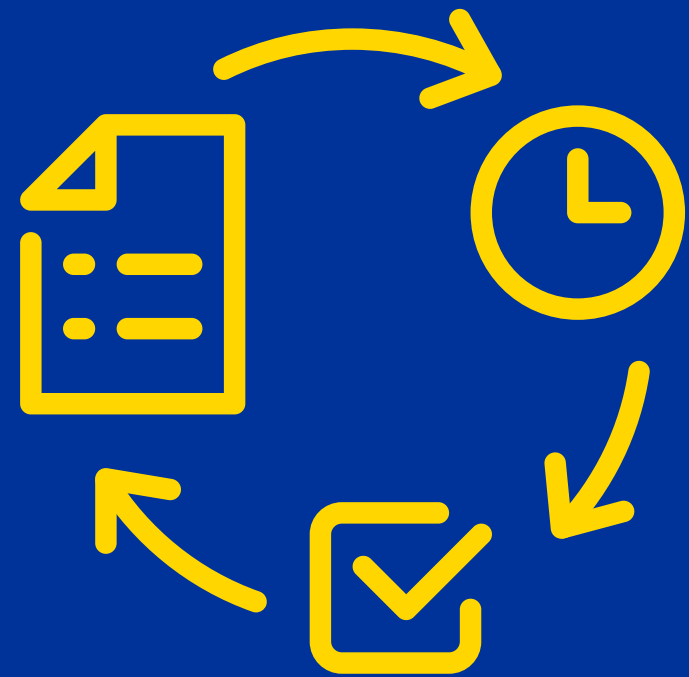
BUDGET AREA	INCOME	EXPENDITURE
ALLOTMENTS	£2,345	£743
CEMETERY	£6,119	£863
GENERAL GROUNDS	£10,333	£103,695
LOCAL DELIVERY SERVICES	£9,348	£9,972
TOWN HALL	£52,472	£26,388
CIVIC	-	£8,963

Budget breakdown 2022/23

Summary of key information

BUDGET AREA	INCOME	EXPENDITURE
LEGAL & PROFESSIONAL	£231	£71,880
GRANTS & SLA	-	£27,559
FINANCE	£525,186	£951
SWIMMING POOL	£50,617	£74,082
GENERAL RUNNING COSTS	-	£16,782
STAFFING	£11,500	£285,703

Future projects



- **Shaftesbury Wellness** – Increasing the range of wellness activities including Jazzercise and bespoke Aqua sessions in collaboration with the Blackmore Vale Surgery
- **Neighbourhood Plan** - Review of policies to strengthen the plan
- **Climate change** - The development of the Sustainable Shaftesbury Action Plan
- **Refurbishment of Town Hall** - Working with a local Architect, with specialism in historic buildings, to undertake the repairs and essential maintenance that is needed
- **Jubilee steps** - Improve the railings on the slopes/ steps down to St James Park
- **Park Run** - Investigate the feasibility of a Park Run in Shaftesbury
- **Management Plans for Open Spaces** - Each Open Space has its own plan with biodiversity at the heart of what the council wants to achieve. Starting the process of working towards Green Flag status across our parks
- **Shaftesbury Market** - Market trial on 3 Saturdays and 3 Sundays during the summer of 2023
- **Mampitts Community** - Development of a Mampitts Community Facility
- **Playground Strategy** - A Masterplan for play parks has been commissioned and the council is embarking on the development of a Wincombe Play plan and improvements across all parks
- **Lido Phase 2** - Investigate the feasibility of a new filtration system at the Lido
- **Christmas Light infrastructure** - To further enhance the 2023 lighting scheme with new stars and improved electrical infrastructure
- **King's Coronation celebrations** - Community Festival, Crown Hunt and Byzant ceremony.

Team Structure



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

Town Hall, High Street, Shaftesbury, Dorset, SP7 8LY
All information is correct at time of publication

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