



# **Wimborne Minster Town Council Strategic Plan 2024 to 2029**

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## Foreword

A strategic plan is one of the most important documents any organisation can produce. It sets out an organisations values and priorities and gives direction to everyone involved in delivering in its work.

This is our first corporate strategy built on previous and current priorities. We have identified seven priorities to take forward and deliver over the next five years.

Our Plan has been built on community consultation which took place between January and March 2024. The consultation aimed at helping us understand what the priorities of the community were so we can ensure that delivering on those priorities forms the core of our work. Our Plan was adopted on 30 April 2024.

These seven priorities are what we will work towards in the long term and each priority is supported by a series of objectives setting out how we will aim to make them a reality. Each year we will review the Plan and detail what we will be doing to meet our priorities. We will hold ourselves accountable to their delivery and working together we will continue to make Wimborne Minster a better place for all.



*Cllr Diann March  
Town Mayor 2023/24*

*Diann March*

# Wimborne Minster

## A history of the town

Nestled in the heart of East Dorset on the banks of the rivers Allen and Stour, the town was founded in the Saxon period and is believed to have developed along an historic route between Christchurch harbour and Badbury Rings. The town is home to some of the best collections of historic buildings from the 16th to 18th centuries in Dorset, including the town's centrepiece, the Minster Church of St. Cuthburga (the Minster), Deans Court (formerly a Saxon monastery and an example of an ancient house from the Tudor period with a Georgian facade) and the Priest's House Museum (Museum of East Dorset).

## The town today

Full of independent shops, old inns, and cafes, the town today boasts independent venues including the Tivoli Theatre, the Museum of East Dorset, Allendale Community Centre and Wimborne Model Town Gardens. The town also hosts an amazing range of events throughout the year, from music, arts and food festivals to open gardens, farmers' markets, vehicle displays, guided walks, and a winter carnival.



*Image courtesy of Chris Downer*

With a rich culture and heritage, the town is currently undergoing its greatest expansion in 50 years. While the demographic profile of Wimborne Minster is typical of Dorset, property prices are higher than the national average. With Grade I listed bridges and Grade II listed buildings, the town faces challenges in terms of accessibility and increasing pressure on the existing infrastructure. We also recognise the challenges and risks associated with climate change, particularly the rise in the frequency and severity of extreme weather events.

# Wimborne Minster Town Council



*The Town Council in May 2023 with the Town Mayor's Serjant Chris Brown*

The Town Council was established in 1974 as a successor to Wimborne Urban District Council and is the first tier of government at local level, followed by Dorset Council and Parliament. As a statutory body, our legal powers come from various government acts and regulations. Our role is to serve and represent our electorate by improving community well-being and delivering services and facilities that meet local needs.

We provide the following services and facilities in Wimborne Minster:

- allotments
- Redcotts Recreation Ground, including a play area, skate park, toilets, football pitches, pétanque court and leased buildings
- Leigh Park open spaces, toddler and older children's play areas, and leased buildings
- The Town Hall (including our offices), room hire and wedding/civil ceremony venue
- Wimborne Cemetery
- support for local services, including the Community Bus 88 Service, Citizens Advice and other local organizations via our Community Grant Scheme
- street furniture (including bus shelters, bins and noticeboards)
- CCTV at various locations throughout the town centre

We work in partnership with local organisations and partners, including Dorset Council, Wimborne Business Improvement District, and our neighbouring town and parish councils, to make Wimborne Minster a better place to live, visit and work. Our partnership approach supports projects and delivers community events, including the annual Christmas Lights switch-on and New Year's Eve event.

Services delivered by Dorset Council include healthcare, highways, parking, education, household waste collections, planning and licensing, environmental health, libraries, open spaces, and council tax/business rate collection.

The Town Council seeks to work with Dorset Council and other regional and national organisations to influence service delivery and act as a consultee (especially on planning applications in Wimborne Minster) by providing recommendations that benefit the town.

Our budget from 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 is £683,183 with an income of £98,590 and the balance funded through the precept (an annual amount that we instruct Dorset Council to collect as part of the overall Council Tax and is often expressed in terms of the amount Band D households will pay annually).

*Cllr Carol Butter (Town Mayor 2022/23) with Michael Tomlinson (MP for Mid Dorset and North Poole) with representative from Waitrose and the Town Council planting a tree on the Queen's Trail*



Recent Town Council projects include the completion of the Queen's Tree Trail, in commemoration of Queen Elizabeth II (for more information please visit <https://www.wimbornehistorytrail.uk/treetrail.html>).

The Town Council meets once a month (excluding August) and has five standing committees and several working groups.

Our meetings are open to members of the public where the public can ask questions on any items relevant to the agenda for that meeting.

The Town Council has 16 elected councillors. During May each year councillors elect a Chairman who also has the civic role of Town Mayor. As the First Citizen of Wimborne Minster the Town Mayor acts as our ambassador at public and civic events and undertakes their own charitable fundraising.

The Town Council's unique relationship with Wimborne Militia is cemented every year in May when the Town Mayor commissions the Militia to protect the Town Mayor and town from disorder and rebellion.

The Town Council has 10 members of staff led by the Town Clerk who work out of the offices at the Town Hall and Redcotts Recreations Ground and are responsible for the administration of the Town Council and the delivery of Town Council services as set by the Town Council.

For further information on the Town Council please visit our website [www.wimborne.gov.uk](http://www.wimborne.gov.uk)

**Our vision is to work to support a connected, diverse and inclusive community through collaboration and transparent decision-making processes that respect the natural environment and heritage of the town, improves the quality of life for our residents and the resilience of our community.**

## **Our priorities for 2024 to 2029**

### **Priority 1 — to support a thriving and independent town for residents and visitors by implementing the following objectives**

**TC/01/01** Advocate for suitable and affordable housing stock that provides opportunities for our residents, including younger and older families, to live in the town, across a mix of incomes.

**TC/01/02** Work with residents, local groups and neighbouring authorities to support sustainable development in and around the town in line with the National Planning Policy Framework, Dorset Council's draft Local Plan, while minimising impact on the existing Green Belt.

**TC/01/03** Work partners to develop a town centre plan that addresses accessibility, pedestrian movement, parking and incorporates more sustainable transport options to ensure the town remains an attractive place for residents to access, independent businesses to operate and encourages footfall.

**TC/01/04** Work with residents, local groups and neighbouring authorities to address concerns around pressure on the existing infrastructure as the size of the town and surrounding area population increases and lobby Dorset Council to tackle these issues with practical and proactive solutions.

**TC/01/05** Replace the Town Council's notice boards, work with partners to improve pedestrian safety and accessibility, and improve street furniture maintenance and cleanliness in line with the town's heritage design and conservation status.

**TC/01/06** Encourage and promote volunteer involvement to bring the community of Wimborne Minster together and enhance the attractiveness of the town.

**TC/01/07** Support tourism within the town by installing information boards and collaborative service delivery.

**TC/01/08** Work with partners to manage green space, footpaths, and rights of ways.

## Priority 2 — address and implement actions that mitigate and adapt to climate change and conserve and enhance biodiversity by implementing the following objectives

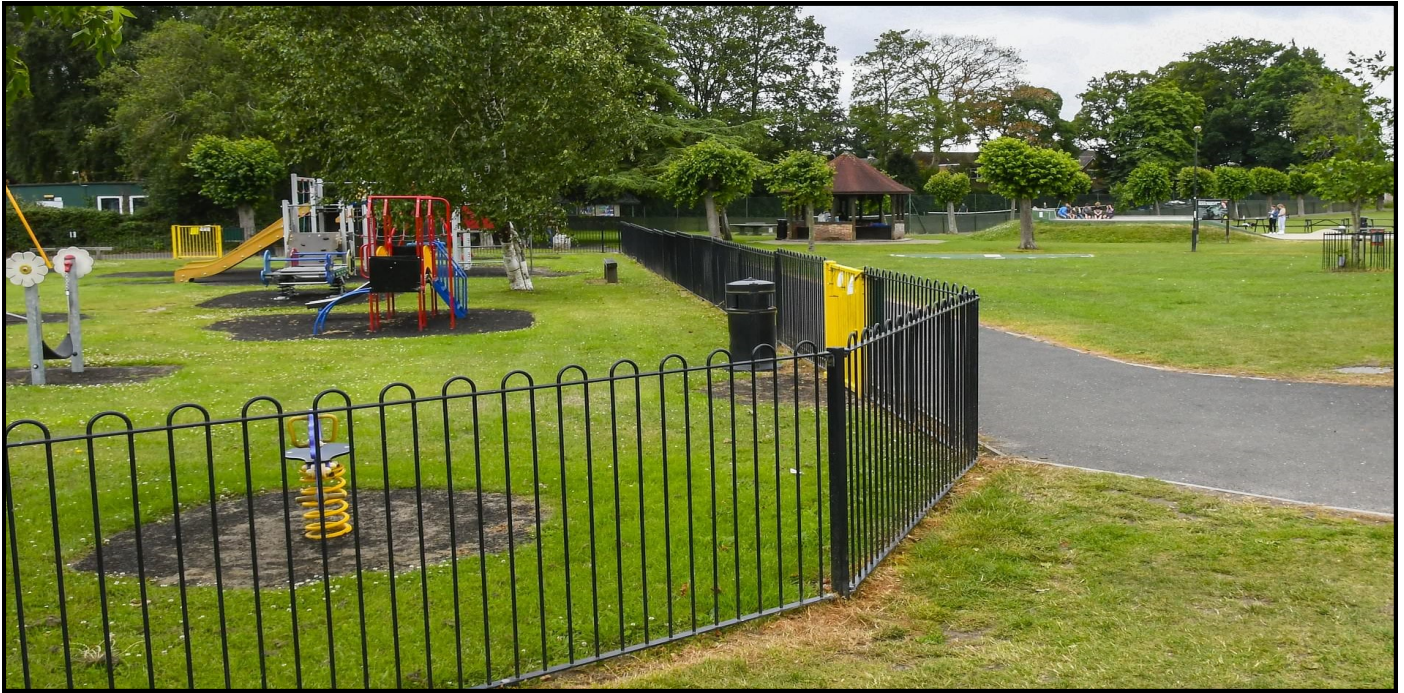
**TC/02/01** Deliver a Climate Action Plan (including recommendations from the Town Council's carbon audit) that is embedded and supported throughout the Town Council's decision-making processes, governance, service delivery and budget.

**TC/02/02** Protect and restore natural habitat by implementing biodiversity management plans in line with the Town Council's Biodiversity Statement and support the recovery of nature through wild flowering projects, tree maintenance and planting, and other community climate initiatives.

**TC/02/03** Work in partnership with key stakeholders to develop and implement risk management and infrastructure plans, enhancing the town's and its residents' resilience to climate-induced extreme weather events.



*Members of local community group Wilding Wimborne receiving the Bee Friendly Town award from the Bee Friendly Trust. Wimborne Minster was one of six towns awarded the Bee Friendly status in 2022.*



*Redcotts Recreation Ground*

**Priority 3 — to deliver inclusive access to services and amenities that enable all our residents to live happy, healthy, and safe lives, and increase resilience within the community by implementing the following objectives**

**TC/03/01** Address antisocial behaviour in line with the Town Council’s Crime and Disorder Statement by supporting the continued provision of CCTV, speed initiatives, advocate for increased police presence and support youth activities.

**TC/03/02** Promote and support the access and use of recreation, sport and leisure facilities, green/open spaces, and allotments for the health and wellbeing of all our residents.

**TC/03/03** Deliver the best use of assets that are inclusive, accessible, and provide value for money.



*On 10th September 2022 the Town Mayor opened Wimborne Community Garden next to Redcotts Recreation Ground.*

*The Town Council subsequently supported a grant to instal an irrigation system at the Garden.*

*On 29 September 2023 the Garden won gold in the “Our Community 2023” category at the regional South and South East In Bloom Competition.*



**Priority 4 — to build strong and inclusive community engagement by supporting events and activities that promote and enhance the heritage of the town by implementing the following objectives**

**TC/04/01** Foster positive relationships with partners to deliver events that are inclusive and diverse, bringing the community of Wimborne Minster together.

**TC/04/02** Produce and distribute a regular newsletter that promotes the Town Council and local groups work, signposting information and news in a variety of formats that meet the diverse needs of the community.

**TC/04/03** Support the work of local organisations that help our community and contribute to the delivery of local services via our Community Grant Scheme.



*Remembrance Day at the Minster Green, 2023*

**Priority 5 — promote local democracy and a sense of community ownership to attract councillors who have a passion for sharing ambitions for the town by implementing the following objectives**



**TC/05/01** Undertake transparent and inclusive activities that encourage, promote and value the role of councillors.

**TC/05/02** Ensure our councillors are visible and able to represent a diverse range of viewpoints within our community by supporting them via inductions, training and mentoring.

## Priority 6 — to have effective and transparent governance procedures in place that enhance our professionalism and provide residents with value for money by implementing the following objectives

**TC/06/01** Implement and review procedures and policies that reflect nationally recognised professional standards and practices in relation to governance, community engagement, transparency, accountability and leadership.

**TC/06/02** Maintain and monitor a budget plan that supports current and planned delivery of services and facilities against operational performance and retain reserves at an appropriate level whilst acknowledging any spending outside of planned budgets reduces a capacity to mitigate risk and build resilience against unknown events.

**TC/06/03** Explore alternative methods of delivering services via service level agreements and sponsorship opportunities.

**TC/06/04** Consult with residents to ensure any new or devolved services, events, or facilities are supported, adequately funded and provide value for money.



*Armed Forces Covenant signing (from left to right): High Sheriff Mr Colin Weston MBE JP, Town Mayor Councillor Diann March, Peter Thrumble Royal British Legion Standard Bearer, Lieutenant Colonel Ben Psaila (Deputy Defence Chief of Staff Defence Signal School Blandford) and His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Dorset Mr Angus Campbell (12 November 2023).*

*The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise from the Town Council to treat fairly those who serve or have served in the armed forces and their families.*

## Priority 7 — to prioritise and deliver projects within agreed budgets and timescales by implementing the following objectives

**TC/07/01** Progress Town Council projects with appropriate consultation, budgets, timescales and in accordance with this Plan including:

- asset transfers with Dorset Council
- use of the Town Council's Community Infrastructure Levy monies (a development tax payable by developers to Dorset Council, of which 15% is allocated to the Town Council and must be spent on infrastructure)
- delivery of a community lottery scheme
- supply town maps and information boards
- review of Redcotts Recreation Ground



Wimborne in Bloom volunteers, pictures courtesy of Anthony Oliver

# How we will deliver our Strategic Plan



Councillors and staff will receive a briefing on the Plan and the Town Council will delegate responsibility for implementation to a relevant committee and appropriate officer via objectives that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound.

We will monitor, review and publish the progress of the Plan on our website, at our Annual Town Council meeting in May and the Annual Parishioners meeting in April.

We will respond to issues and opportunities as they arise, adapting our plan if they contribute to meeting our priorities.

The Town Clerk holds operational responsibility for ensuring the Town Council delivers this plan, while overall accountability rests with the Town Council. All councillors and staff will be aware of this Plan and understand how their work contributes to the Town Council's priorities.

## Contact information

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