

**Chesham Town Hall  
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Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2023

Dear Councillor,

You are hereby summoned to a **Meeting of the CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE** to be held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Chesham, on **MONDAY 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 7.30pm:**

**Agenda**

**1. Apologies for absence**

To receive apologies for absence

**2. Declarations of interests**

To note any declarations of Interest

**3. Minutes of the previous Corporate Services meeting 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

To approve the minutes of the previous meeting and authorise the Chair to sign the same

**4. Action Tracker**

To note the Committee's Action Tracker

**5. Implementation of 2023-24 Staff Pay Award**

To consent to implementation of the 2023-24 national pay award.

**6. Credit Card Policy**

To approve an updated Credit Card Policy.

**7. Clock Tower**

To consider a report on the Clock Tower and to consider whether to include this as a project for inclusion in the 2024/25 budget.

**8. Moor Hard Standing**

To consider a report recommending repairs to the Moor Hard Standing.

## 9. Parks & Premises

To consider a report on the condition of the Rest Room and whether to include this as a project for inclusion in the 2024/25 budget.

## 10. Woodland View Play Area

To provide an update on the current condition of the fence surrounding the play area

## 11. Plans to welcome the new CEO

## 12. Exclusion of the Public and Press

It is recommended that, pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), members of the press and public be excluded during consideration of items below as it was likely that there would be a disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraphs specified in Part 1 of Schedule 12A to that Act.

## 13. Correspondence From Buckinghamshire Council

To note an email from Bucks Council and consider whether a response is required.

## 14. Staffing Matter

To note a verbal report from the Chair in relation to staff grievances



Nina Villa  
Interim CEO/ Town Clerk

Cllr Alan Bacon	Cllr Justine Fulford
Cllr Joseph Baum (Chair)	Cllr Francis Holly
Cllr Simon Booth	Cllr Chasey Hood
Cllr Majid Ditta	Cllr Rachael Matthews
Cllr Mohammad Fayyaz	

**The agenda will be circulated to all members of the Council**  
**THE MEETING IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC**

**CHESHAM TOWN COUNCIL**  
**MINUTES of the meeting of the CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**held on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023**

**Councillors:**

Councillor Alan Bacon  
Councillor Joseph Baum  
Councillor Simon Booth

Councillor Justine Fulford  
Councillor Francis Holly  
Councillor Rachael Matthews

**In attendance:**

Louise Steele  
Nina Villa (remotely)  
Kathryn Graves  
Maria McGwynn

Interim RFO  
Interim CEO/Town Clerk  
Community, Economy & Environment Manager  
Cemetery, Allotments & Open Spaces Manager

**26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were announced – it was noted that some may have been offered but that these may have been sent to the Democratic Services Officer.

**27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**28. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

The minutes of the Corporate Services Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2023 were noted and approved by members.

**29. ACTION TRACKER**

This was noted and approved by members.

**30. AUDIT RECOMMENDATIONS UPDATE**

The Interim RFO presented an update against internal audit recommendations made on the audit visits dated 25 April 2022, 23 January 2023 and 27 June 2023.

Members noted the contents of the report and tracker.

**31. INTERNAL AUDITOR**

Members reviewed the independence and competence of the Council's internal auditor

**RESOLVED that:**

- i. the agenda for the Annual Meeting of Council includes the appointment of the Internal Auditor as a standing item;**
- ii. in advance of each Annual Meeting of Council the Corporate Services Committee considers the independence and competence of the putative internal auditor; and**

- iii. **that this Committee makes a recommendation to Full Council that the ongoing appointment of IAC Internal Audit & Consultancy Ltd as the Council's internal auditor for the financial year 2023/24 be confirmed**

### **32. CEO RECRUITMENT – VERBAL UPDATE**

Members noted the contents of an oral update on CEO Recruitment from the Interim CEO/Town Clerk.

### **33. CHESHAM CEMETERY UPDATE 2023**

The Chair elected to receive this item before the items minuted at Minutes 30-32. Maria McGwynn was welcomed to the meeting and thanked for her report.

Members considered a report on capacity at the Cemetery and on plans to extend the amount of consecrated space available.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- i. **That the works for extending F Consecrated be considered as part of the budget process for 2024/25 and the necessary funding allocated in that budget**
- ii. **That Ms McGwynn update the Committee at a later date.**

### **34. LIVING WALL**

Members considered whether or not to take any action in respect of a living wall at the Town Hall. Buckinghamshire Council has informed the Town Council that it will no longer be responsible for maintaining the living wall and that if the Town Council chooses to take no action then Buckinghamshire Council will arrange for the living wall to be removed.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- i. **That officers should write to Buckinghamshire Council sharing this council's concern that Buckinghamshire Council should be seeking to remove a feature intended to address air pollution.**
- ii. **That the response from Buckinghamshire Council be shared once received.**

The meeting closed at 8.30pm.

## **AGENDA ITEM: 4**

### **Corporate Services Committee**

#### **ACTION TRACKER FROM MEETINGS OF THIS COMMITTEE**

Key to colour is status column

BLUE = ACTION COMPLETE

GREEN = ACTION ON TRACK

AMBER = ACTION DELAYED

RED = ACTION SEVERELY DELAYED

<b>Minute No.</b>	<b>Resolution</b>	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Update</b>
<b>Monday 20 March 2023</b>				
57i)	Head of Corporate Services to confirm the fuel and credit card limits	Head of Corporate Services	GREEN	Credit card and fuel card limits received are being added to the policy for adoption at Council.
60	The Head of Corporate Services to contact Paradigm to ascertain contract responsibilities and detail	Head of Corporate Services	GREEN	It has been difficult to get Paradigm to respond to our queries but this is starting to move forward now.
<b>Monday 12<sup>th</sup> June 2023</b>				
10i	Elgiva installation of solar panels	Head of Operational Services /CEEM	GREEN	Solar panels on hold.
<b>Monday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2023</b>				
21ii	Bank mandates to be included as a recurring item at first Corporate Services Committee of each new calendar year	DSO	GREEN	
23v	Confirmation of Chesham Museums Insurance Cover in The Lowndes Room	Interim CEO	BLUE	Museum only require cover for their contents which they've confirmed they have
24iv	Annual Donations Scheme: Revision of scheme to provide feedback on donations received	CEEM	BLUE	
24v	To communicate Town Partner feedback via external comms	DSO	GREEN	On going
24vi	Report of Town Partners donations and how they have been utilised to be included on agenda of Annual Town Meeting	DSO/CEEM	GREEN	
25i	CEO Recruitment: sub group to agree job description, method of advertisement and selection and report to Council	Interim CEO	BLUE	
<b>Monday 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2023</b>				
31i	The agenda for the Annual Meeting of Council to include the appointment of the Internal Auditor as a standing item	DSO	GREEN	
33i	Cemetery: To update the Committee on consecrated space at the cemetery at a later date	Cemeteries, Allotments & Open Spaces Manager	GREEN	

34	Living Wall: Officers to write to Buckinghamshire Council sharing this council's concern that Buckinghamshire Council should be seeking to remove a feature intended to address air pollution.	CEEM		Awaiting response to letter
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# Report of the Officers to a meeting of the Corporate Services Committee on 13 November 2023

## **AGENDA ITEM NO 5: – Implementation of 2023-24 Pay Award**

### **Reporting Officer:**

Louise Steele

Interim Responsible Finance Officer

01494 774 842 ext. 116

[louise.steele@chesham.gov.uk](mailto:louise.steele@chesham.gov.uk)

### **Purpose of Report**

1. To seek consent of the Committee to implement the 2023-24 NJC pay award for all staff. Further to ensure that no adult employee of Chesham Town Council is paid at a rate below SCP2 (unless employed as an apprentice).

### **Background Information**

2. Financial Regulation 7.3 says “No changes shall be made to any employee’s pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the Corporate Services Committee”.
3. All Council Staff are employed at rates of pay determined by the National Joint Committee for Local Government Services. The NJC and employee organisations have recently agreed an annual pay award covering the period 1 April 2023 to 31 October 2024. Details of the pay award are appended to this report.
4. The 2023-24 staffing budget included an allowance of 3% for cost of living increases

### **Findings**

4. The pay award is £1,925 per year for all full-time members of staff on Spinal Column Points (SCPs) up to 43 and 3.88% for those on SCP 44 and above. An increase of 3.88% will be applied to the London fringe allowance paid to all staff (the NALC document attached is silent on this point but other NJC documentation indicates that allowances should be increased by 3.88%). The award is payable from 1 April 2023 and should be backdated to that date.
5. The payment of the national pay award is a contractual commitment to staff. As stated above the 2023-24 budget included a 3% allowance for this pay award – the actual percentage increase ranges from 9.41% to 3.88% depending upon the grade of staff (with the lowest paid staff receiving the highest percentage increase). However, the staffing budget also included a 40% allowance for on costs (being employer’s national insurance contributions and employers pension contributions) and the actual level of these costs combined is 37.5%. Recalculation of the current year’s staffing budget using the new pay award figure and a more accurate on cost demonstrates that the pay award (and other recommendations in this report) can be accommodated within the current budget.
6. The previous year’s (2022-23) pay settlement abolished SCP1 with effect from 1 April 2023. In an oversight this part of last year’s pay award was not implemented at CTC and it is proposed that it should be implemented now – with staff employed on SCP1 being moved to SCP2 and

paid the difference between SCP1 and SCP2 (being 11p an hour) also backdated to 1 April 2023.

7. Members attention is also drawn to the penultimate paragraph on the first page of the appended NALC document. Chesham Town Council experiences the confusion referred to in this paragraph in that some members of staff (mostly casual staff) are employed at the rate calculated by NALC and some at the rate calculated by the NJC. This calculation only impacts on part-time or casual staff paid at an hourly rate rather than an annual salary. At the old SCP1 this difference amounted to 3p an hour – with those employed at the principal council rate being paid £10.50 an hour and those at the town/parish council rate being paid £10.53 per hour (both sets of employees also receive a London fringe allowance of 33p an hour). It had been the intention of the Interim RFO to recommend harmonisation of these two scales and moving all employees on to the NALC scale – but in the light of NALC’s observation that it is likely to move to the NJC calculation in 2024/25 it no longer seems sensible to move staff across to the NALC calculation when they will likely need to be moved back next year.
8. Members also to note the NALC advice that former members of staff who left after 1 April 2023 and request the relevant back dated element of the pay award should be paid it.
9. It is planned that, with the Committee’s consent, the pay award should be implemented in the December payroll run and the back dated element paid as a lump sum at that time.

**Recommendation:**

10. It is recommended that the Committee:
  - consents to the implementation of the 2023-24 pay award for all staff back dated to 1 April 2023;
  - consents to staff currently employed on SCP1 being moved to SCP2 back dated to 1 April 2023; and
  - agrees that former members of staff who request the back dated element of pay should receive it.



6 NOVEMBER 2023

## **E01-23 | 2022/23 LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES PAY AGREEMENT 2023**

We have been informed by the Local Government Association that the National Joint Council for Local Government Services has reached agreement on rates of pay applicable from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

The new pay rates for local councils are attached and have been agreed with SLCC and ALCC.

Employers are encouraged to implement this pay award as swiftly as possible.

For all spinal points to 43 the agreed award was a flat rate payment of £1,925. For scale points above that the award was 3.88%.

The Joint Council notes on backpay for employees who have left employment: "If requested by an ex-employee to do so, we recommend that employers should pay any monies due to that employee from 1 April 2023 to the employee's last day of employment. When salary arrears are paid to ex-employees who were in the LGPS, the employer must inform its local LGPS fund. Employers will need to amend the CARE and final pay figures (if the ex-employee has pre-April 2014 LGPS membership) accordingly. Further detail is provided in section 15 of the HR guide and the Backdated Pay Award FAQs, which are available on the employer resources section of [www.lgpsregs.org](http://www.lgpsregs.org).

Historically the calculation of hourly pay for local councils has been reached by dividing the annual salary by 52 weeks and then by 37 hours. This is different from the recommendation of the Joint Council which calculates hourly rates by dividing annual salary by 52.143 weeks (which is 365 days divided by 7) and then divided by 37 hours (the standard working week). This marginal difference causes some confusion, and it is intended that next year we shall move to the approach recommended by the National Joint Council.

NALC continues to be disappointed that the annual settlement has been delayed for reasons outside the Association's control.

	1 April 2023		Scale Ranges
SCP	£ per annum	* £ per hour	Based on SCP
2	£22,366	£11.62	Below LC Scale (for staff other than clerks)
3	£22,737	£11.82	
4	£23,114	£12.01	
5	£23,500	£12.21	
5	£23,500	£12.21	LC1 (5-6) (below substantive range)
6	£23,893	£12.42	LC1 (7-12) (substantive benchmark range)
7	£24,294	£12.63	
8	£24,702	£12.84	
9	£25,119	£13.06	
10	£25,545	£13.28	
11	£25,979	£13.50	
12	£26,421	£13.73	LC1 (13-17) (above substantive range)
13	£26,873	£13.97	
14	£27,334	£14.21	
15	£27,803	£14.45	
16	£28,282	£14.70	LC2 (18-23) (below substantive range)
17	£28,770	£14.95	
18	£29,269	£15.21	
19	£29,777	£15.48	
20	£30,296	£15.75	
21	£30,825	£16.02	
22	£31,364	£16.30	LC2 (24-28) (substantive benchmark range)
23	£32,076	£16.67	
24	£33,024	£17.16	
25	£33,945	£17.64	
26	£34,834	£18.10	
27	£35,745	£18.58	
28	£36,648	£19.05	

SCP	1 April 2023		Scale Ranges
	£ per annum	* £ per hour	Based on SCP
29	£37,336	£19.41	LC2 (29-32) (above substantive benchmark range)
30	£38,223	£19.87	
31	£39,186	£20.37	
32	£40,221	£20.90	
33	£41,418	£21.53	LC3 (33-36) (below substantive range)
34	£42,403	£22.04	
35	£43,421	£22.57	
36	£44,428	£23.09	
37	£45,441	£23.62	LC3 (37-41) (substantive benchmark range)
38	£46,464	£24.15	
39	£47,420	£24.65	
40	£48,474	£25.19	
41	£49,498	£25.73	
42	£50,512	£26.25	LC3 (42-45) (above substantive benchmark range)
43	£51,515	£26.77	
44	£52,752	£27.42	
45	£54,017	£28.08	
46	£55,325	£28.76	LC4 (46-49) (below substantive range)
47	£56,648	£29.44	
48	£57,854	£30.07	
49	£59,418	£30.88	
50	£60,856	£31.63	LC4 (50-54) (substantive benchmark range)
51	£62,323	£32.39	
52	£64,335	£33.44	
53	£66,341	£34.48	
54	£68,356	£35.53	

	<b>1 April 2023</b>		<b>Scale Ranges</b>
<b>SCP</b>	<b>£ per annum</b>	<b>* £ per hour</b>	<b>Based on SCP</b>
55	£70,385	£36.58	LC4 (55-62) (above substantive benchmark range)
56	£72,388	£37.62	
57	£74,417	£38.68	
58	£76,405	£39.71	
59	£78,290	£40.69	
60	£80,216	£41.69	
61	£82,188	£42.72	
62	£84,214	£43.77	

\* Hourly Rates

As per the national agreement, hourly rates are calculated by dividing annual salary by 52 weeks and then by 37 hours. Please note that these hourly rates differ from those published by NJC for Principal Authorities as the calculation basis differs.

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**AGENDA ITEM NO 6: Credit and Fuel Card Policy**

**Reporting Officer:**

Ashley Myers

Head of Corporate Services

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**Purpose of Report:**

1. To review the Credit and Fuel Card Policy.

**Background Information:**

2. The Credit and Fuel Card Policy was adopted on the 5 October 2021. The policy should be reviewed annually.

**Findings:**

3. The Credit and Fuel Card Policy has been reviewed, and amended, and is presented as **Appendix 1**.

**Implications:**

4. Financial: there are no financial implications of this report.
5. Strategic: the report accords with the following strategic aims;
  - SA6 - To ensure that the money entrusted to us by the residents of Chesham is properly managed and spent efficiently and effectively on achieving the strategic aims of the Council.
6. Environmental: there are no implications in this report.
7. Equality Act: there are no implications in this report.

**Recommendations:**

8. **The following recommendation is made:**
  - i) **Head of Corporate Services to confirm the fuel and credit card limits**
  - ii) **That the revised Credit and Fuel Card Policy is recommended to Council for adoption.**

**Appendix**

9. The following is appended to this report:
  - a) Appendix 1, Credit and Fuel Card Policy

## **CREDIT AND FUEL CARD POLICY**

Updated on the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Next review by 13<sup>th</sup> November 2027

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this policy is to set a framework for the rigorous financial control of payments increasingly having to be made by credit card and to accord with the Council's Financial Regulations.

### **2. POLICY COVERAGE**

This policy applies to all employees and volunteers working on behalf of Chesham Town Council and Members of Chesham Town Council. This policy is to be used in conjunction with the Council's Risk Management Policy and Strategy.

### **3. CREDIT SPENDING LIMITS**

The organisation's credit card limit is set at £7500 per month. There are 6 x fuel cards with an accumulative set limit of £700 per week.

### **4. GENERAL USAGE**

The organisation credit card should be held by the Head of Corporate Services and they must comply with the following:

- The card is their responsibility and must be kept securely to ensure that other persons are unable to have access to the card.
- PIN numbers must be kept separately to the card and be managed securely.
- PIN numbers and cards must not be given to any other person.
- When using the credit card officers will try and use local businesses where possible in line with its environmental policy and to support local employment and retail.
- Personal credit or debit cards of Members or staff shall not be used unless under exceptional circumstances and agreed in advance by the CEO or Head of Corporate Services.

The organisation fuel cards are issued by the Head of Corporate Services to the Parks & Premises Manager and they are responsible for, and must comply with the following:

- Once cards are issued to the Parks and Premises Manager, they become their responsibility and must be kept securely to ensure that other persons are unable to have access to the card, other than when required to refuel a Council vehicle.
- Cards must not be given to any other person, other than the members of staff who have been authorised by the Parks & Premises Manager to use the card.
- When cards are passed to nominated staff members, the card must immediately be returned to the Parks & Premises Manager after use.

### **5. LOST & STOLEN CARDS & PIN NUMBERS**

Card holding members of staff are responsible for immediately reporting any suspicions of misuse and loss or theft of any credit card, fuel card or PIN number. Such reports must be made immediately and directly to the Head of Corporate Services (or if absent the CEO).

The Head of Corporate Services (or if absent the CEO) must report lost and stolen credit cards or fuel cards immediately to the card provider. They will need to provide the name as it appears on the card together with the full card number on the front of the card together with the sort code and account number where applicable.

If the Head of Corporate Services believes the credit card PIN number has been compromised but the card is still secure, they will be responsible for immediately changing the PIN at a cash point and reporting the matter to the CEO as soon as possible.

If the Head of Corporate Services suspects on-line fraud being perpetrated during use of the credit card, this be reported immediately to CEO for further investigation.

## **6. REPORTING EXPENDITURES/ WEEKLY RETURNS**

With credit card purchases the Head of Corporate Services must retain and pass all receipts onto the Finance Assistant, and ensure the appropriate member of staff has completed a purchase order for the purchase. The Finance Assistant will then reconcile this against the credit card statement.

With fuel cards the Parks & Premises Manager must check all receipts against the monthly invoices, which is obtainable online to ensure all purchases are approved. The Parks & Premises Manager should raise any issues from the check with the Head of Corporate Services.

## **7. FAILURE TO COMPLY**

Failure to comply with the above conditions, will lead to disciplinary proceedings being taken and the staff member may be held accountable to cover the cost of any loss due to misuse and/or non-compliance.

## **AGENDA ITEM 7 : Market Square clock update**

### **Reporting Officer:**

Name Danny Essex

Title Head of Operational Services

Contact No: 01494 774842

Email: [danny.essex@chesham.gov.uk](mailto:danny.essex@chesham.gov.uk)

### **Purpose of Report**

1. To provide members of the committee with an update on the Market Square clock.

### **Background Information**

2. The clock tower stands in Market Square on the site of Chesham's 18<sup>th</sup> Century Town Hall, which was demolished in 1965. The original two faces, the clock mechanism and bell were all saved. The clock tower was constructed in 1992 using locally produced bricks and features the original glass-dialled clock. The clock mechanism, dating back to the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, was restored by the Town Council in a partnership project with Chesham Museum. The Town bell was reunited with the clock, when it was hung in the clocktower in 2014. The Town Bell was renamed The Stirling Bell in memory of Stirling Maguire who was instrumental in getting the bell returned to, and chiming in, the town centre.

### **Findings**

3. The clock has on numerous occasions this year, ceased working. After investigations by both myself and an electrician, I made the conscious decision to fast track a conditions survey by Stephen Crawley. Conditions surveys have already been instructed on all assets as part of the Property and Assets Working Group request. The survey has highlighted several causes of damp ingress which in turn has compromised both the electrics and the mechanical workings. See Appendix 1.





4. Option 1. (*preferred*) A scaffold tower will be required (pending permission from Bucks CC) to allow for a safe, thorough external inspection. It is inevitable that works will be required in order to stop further ingress of water Appendix 2. It would also be wise and financially beneficial to utilise this same scaffold tower for the repair and maintenance required to restore the Clocktower back to a working condition. The cost to undertake this will be unknown until the inspection takes place but repair costs can be capped in advance, with findings going to the CEO if costs are predicted to exceed the agreed amount.
5. Option 2. (*potentially cheaper option but final costs are unknown and the issue of rain penetrating the structure will still be there potentially causing more long term damage*) It has been suggested by the electrician that a bespoke plastic box be constructed to encapsulate the electrical workings currently being affected by the ingress of water. However, progressing this has been difficult and will not solve the issue of rain being allowed to penetrate the structure and attention should be focused towards this as a matter of urgency to prevent further damage. There is also the added cost to consider for a further unknown amount of electrical work should the box idea be adopted.
6. It is worth noting that whichever option is decided on, there will be a cost of approximately £600 for [REDACTED] to attend site and reset the mechanisms.
7. It is worth noting that the Clocktower hasn't been cleaned or inspected for structural integrity since it's build completion 31 years ago.

### **Implications**

8. Financial: Scaffold Tower                     £9000.00 excl VAT  
Costs to repair, clean and remedy any areas seen to allow water to penetrate the structure are unknown at this stage but Councillors may wish to instruct Officers to authorise repairs up to the amount of   £20,000.00  
[REDACTED]   £600.00 (may be subject to increase)
9. Strategic: To enable residents to enjoy high-quality social, recreational and cultural facilities within the Town and to seek the continuing improvement and development of these facilities in accordance with the desires expressed by the residents.
10. Environmental: None pertaining to this report.
11. Equality Act: none pertaining to this report.

### **Recommendation:**

12. **The following recommendations are made:**

**The Committee note the report and consider this project for inclusion in the 2024/25 budget.**

Danny

You have asked me to inspect the clock tower to advise regarding the damp problem. I inspected the building on Wednesday 19 July and have set out my findings below:

1. Construction - the clock tower was built in 1992 and details of the construction are given on the CDC drawing 946/28B which is dated June 1990.
2. Contractor – it is understood from details within the lower chamber that the construction was by Phillips Construction Limited of Kings Langley.
3. Directions - the clock tower faces north towards the High Street.
4. Design – it is based on a traditional clock tower, with the upper section being as the original one in Chesham dating from 1856 when the 18th century building was enlarged. It formed a part of the buildings which were demolished in 1965 because they were in a poor condition. The original two faces, the clock mechanism and the bell were all saved.
5. Bell – this was cast in 1748 and was reinstated into the cupola in 2014.
6. Form – there is a raised open podium at the bottom. From this, a trap door leads up to the lower chamber. Above this there is the clock chamber. Finally, the open cupola is at the top but there is no internal access.
7. Ladder – there is a heavy-duty pull-down aluminium ladder which gives access into the lower chamber. This ladder continues up into the clock chamber. There are concrete floors serving both chambers.
8. Safety – the sliding section of the ladder sticks and hence moves suddenly when the user's weight is applied – this should be sorted out as it is dangerous. There is a notice displayed in the lower chamber saying that the hatch should be closed to stop someone falling all the way from top to bottom however, there is nothing to put across the opening. There is a similar notice in the clock chamber and a rather flimsy timber cover which has become detached so requires attention if not replacement. It is of great importance to have this hatch in place because engineers working on the clock will not be paying attention to where they stand and there is also the low clock face drive shaft to hit your head on and hence move suddenly.
9. Materials - the walls are formed with local red bricks from Matthews together with large flint infill panels.
10. Walls - for the height of the structure given the narrow width, the walls are not all that thick however, it is to be hoped that the design was slenderness ratio was checked and approved by a structural engineer. For strength and stability, the walls were built in solid, rather than cavity, construction however the latter form of building is better able to cope with water penetration which occurs due to the height and exposure. In addition, the projecting string course is attractive, but this feature will also encourage water penetration.
11. Mortar - as a modern building, the brick & flint wall construction was built supposedly using the specified 1:1:5 cement lime mortar which is not as quick drying and strong as a cement mortar however it does allow the walls to breathe a little.
12. Lime mortar - in many ways the use of a lime only mortar for the construction would have been preferable, but it would have taken very much longer to build as it is a slow process and needs to be left to harden before returning to build the next lift of 600 or so - it could have added months to the contract hence far more costly.

13. Pointing – this looks reasonably sound and should not have deteriorated unduly in the past thirty years. The joints to the stone cornice do look open and therefore require careful regrouting to keep out the water. Whilst some water may penetrate these eight joints, it will not be much and hence is not the main problem here.
14. Damp courses - there do not appear to be any damp courses or cavity trays associated with the roof, floor slabs, projecting string course and the four lower projecting arches. Such damp course features would probably help to reduce the amount of water held in the walls by directing it back to the exterior where some drainage weep holes could have been formed.
15. Roof – the flat roof over the tower cannot be seen and there is no reference to the type of cladding on the drawing. The water staining evident at high level in the clock chamber could be an indication that the roof is leaking.
16. Capping - there is a substantial ornate stone cornice cap to the top of the tower and water from the cupola above should drip clear of the building beneath however the wind will tend push it back so that it runs down the face of the wall. The efficiency of the drip edge to the cornice, which may not be sharp enough, may be evident by observing through binoculars during heavy rainfall. It may be possible to improve the detail or to fit a gutter, but the latter would look poor and be impossible to maintain let alone service with a downpipe.
17. Water penetration – it is evident that water is penetrating through the walls of the clock chamber. This is occurring on all elevations but is much worse on the west and north sides. From what I have seen, it is my belief that the water which penetrates is probably coming down off the cornice, hence from the roof, rather than the rain hitting the walls. Whilst the flint is impervious, water can easily penetrate the bricks and the mortar and so tends to become trapped. A brick wall can accept water and it penetrates up to about 100 but then dries out in the sun and wind. This normal drying process cannot take place where there is flint. I am not saying here that, without a cavity, the clock chamber would be completely dry, but it would be significantly better that it is now with the flint.
18. Glazing – the old glazing has been reused. This leaks at the joints and where the ornate glazing bars are missing.
19. Condensation - this is no doubt occurring to some extent due to the design and nature of the unheated/unvented building however it is difficult to predict how much of an issue this is. The inside face of the clock face glazing was noted to be damp, but this is to be expected. There are some small vent openings in the perimeter of each clock face but only provided to 5 out of the total of 60 graduations for the minutes however this is not sufficient ventilation to condition the building.
20. Silicone - the amount of water penetration through the walls could possibly be reduced by applying a clear silicone spray to the exterior however this would have to be done at least once a year hence costly.
21. Electrical installation - it is understood that the electrical supply cuts out at times due to the amount of water. Improvements will be desirable including isolating the equipment by moving it forward off the damp walls. The clock controls are located on the west wall which is the dampest side.
22. Ventilation - it will certainly help to improve the situation by making considerable improvements to the amount of ventilation. This will not be easy as any vents in the walls will be unsightly, and it will be difficult to core-drill through the flint parts of the walls because the material shatters easily. It may prove necessary to install ductwork and a fan system to pull the air down through the building and take it out through the concrete floor of the lower

- chamber. There are already crude vent holes in the wooden access trap, but any proper vents will need to be diamond drill cut through the concrete slab.
23. Clock - the two supporting steel beams are rusting and need to be wire brushed and repainted. The damp environment cannot be too good for the clock mechanism but is probably even worse for the electronic controls and switch gear. I will speak with Smith of Derby to ascertain their advice in the matter.
  24. Monitoring – can you please advise whether the clock tower always been damp or is it getting worse over time? When was the problem first noted?
  25. Photographs - these have already been sent over under a separate cover together with a simple sketch showing the worst areas of dampness.
  26. Conclusion - the water penetration issue certainly requires further monitoring and investigation however my initial view is that we are dealing with some fundamental inherent defects here and hence it will not be easy or cheap to remedy them even if such is possible. The question arises as to whether you have any redress against CDC, now being Buckinghamshire Council, but after 30 years it will be difficult to interest them, and any normal legal liability would have expired years ago.
  27. Recommendations – in the light of the above comments, it will be desirable to gain safe access, possibly using a cherry picker, to check the brick & flintwork + ascertain the nature/condition of the roof + check the structure above + examine the cornice.

I trust that these preliminary observations and comments will be of assistance + I am happy to discuss the matter further.

Stephen

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[Stephen Crawley FRICS](#)

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**AGENDA ITEM NO 8: Moor Hardstanding**

**Reporting Officer:**

Danny Essex

Head of Operational Services

Email: [danny.essex@chesham.gov.uk](mailto:danny.essex@chesham.gov.uk)

**Purpose of Report**

1. To review the current condition of the Moor Hardstanding area.

**Background Information**

2. The Hardstanding is currently used for parking and is maintained by Chesham Town Council.

**Findings**

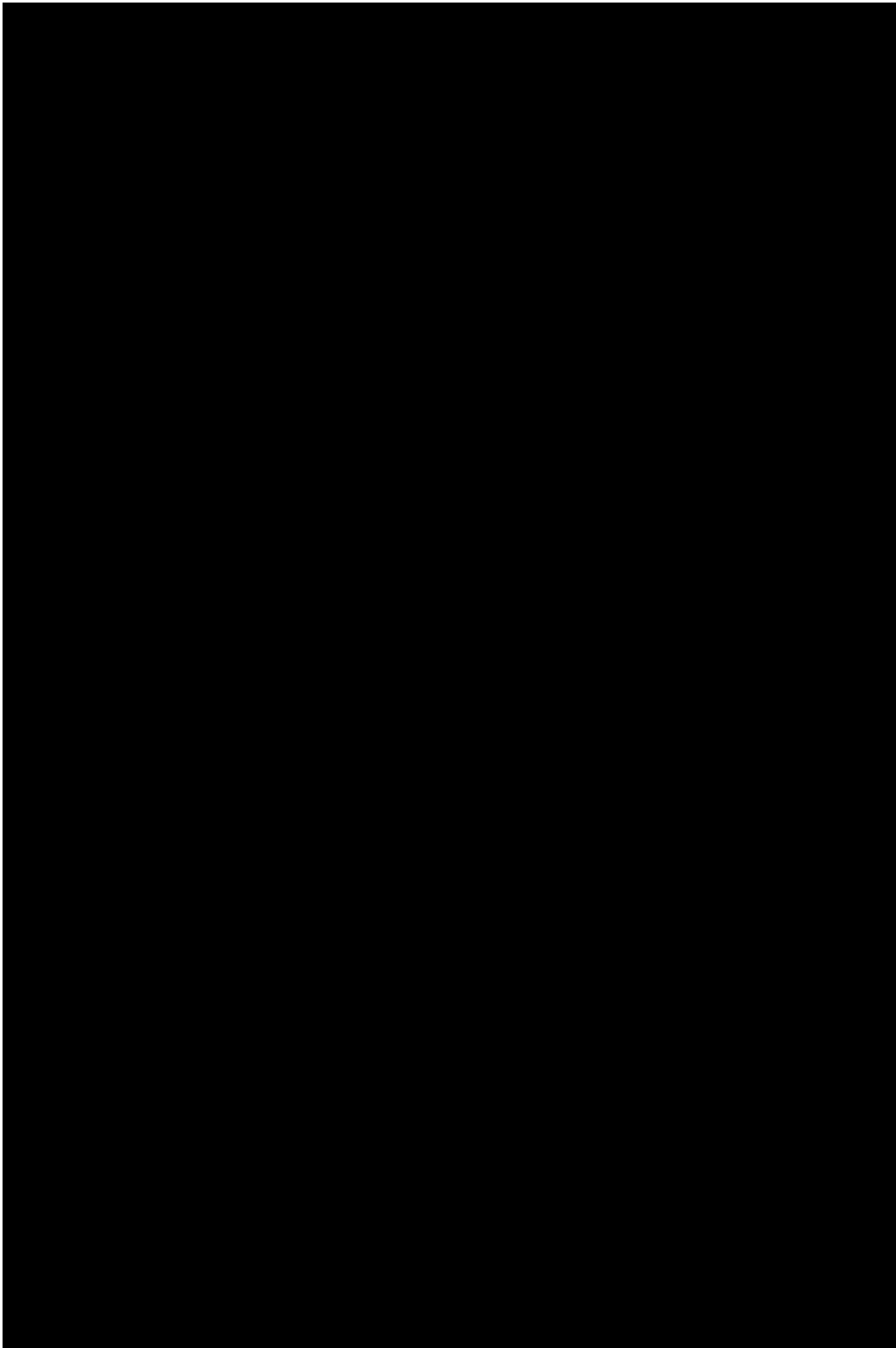
3. The parking area requires annual maintenance in order to maintain a suitable surface. This requires a contractor to rake and reduce the top surface and top up with crushed material. Currently, the condition is very poor and has attracted several complaints from both pedestrians and motorists who have experienced their vehicles coming into contact with the ground due to large potholes.  
Quote presented as Appendix 1.

**Implications**

4. Financial: Quotation received £4500 excl VAT
5. Strategic: the report accords with the following strategic aims;
  - **Non-applicable for this report**
6. Environmental: there are no implications in this report.
7. Equality Act: none pertaining to this report.

**Recommendation:**

8. **The following recommendations are made:**
  - i) **That the Council approve the attached quotation and authorise Officers to proceed with the work as described.**



**AGENDA ITEM NO 9: Parks and Premises staff rest room area**

**Reporting Officer:**

Danny Essex

Head of Operational Services

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Email: [danny.essex@chesham.gov.uk](mailto:danny.essex@chesham.gov.uk)

**Purpose of Report**

1. To provide an update on the current condition of the staff rest room area.

**Background Information**

2. The rest room is integrated into the main building housing the office areas to both the Parks and Cemeteries and Allotments Manager. It currently houses seating for 6 members of staff and a small number of base and wall kitchen units.

**Findings**

3. This area has been in need of renovation for some time now. The floor is partially covered with ceramic tiles, kitchen units are rotten (previously recycled), there is no hot water, heating is insufficient and the external wall is need of damp treatment and as a result, the internal stud walls are also in need of replacement along with improved insulation.

Appendix 4 – Extract page from Health and Safety Policy Chesham Town Council

**Implications**

4. Financial: Quotations have been requested in order to gauge the approximate cost of improving the facilities. It is anticipated that a budget of c£15,000 will be required (allowing for contingencies and possible price increases)
5. Strategic: the report accords with the following strategic aims;
  - **SA6 – To ensure that the money entrusted to us by the residents of Chesham is properly managed and spent efficiently and effectively on achieving the strategic aims of the Council**
6. Environmental: there are no implications in this report.
7. Equality Act: none pertaining to this report.

**Recommendation:**

8. **The following recommendations are made:**
  - i) **That the Council note the report and consider this project for inclusion in the 2024/25 budget.**

**AGENDA ITEM NO 10: Woodland View Play Area fencing**

**Reporting Officer:**

Danny Essex

Head of Operational Services

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Email: [danny.essex@chesham.gov.uk](mailto:danny.essex@chesham.gov.uk)

**Purpose of Report**

1. To provide an update on the current condition of the fence surrounding the play area.


**Background Information**

2. From a safety point of view, play areas are 'fenced' to prevent children from straying but to also prevent animals such as dogs from fowling the area.  
It is worth noting that Nashleigh Play Area is only fenced at the footpath access point and therefore not separated from dogs being walked/off the lead.

**Findings**

3. Recently, a replacement front section of fence was installed at the Woodland View Play area as the existing fencing was rotten and therefore removed. Residents and Councillors were of the opinion that a physical barrier was required here in order to prevent children from running onto the road. The remaining three sides of fencing are rotten at ground level and have subsequently been removed.  
If it is required to replace these fence sections, quotations are listed below.

**Implications**

4. Financial: Quotations have been received (like for like)  
 £11760.00 not VAT registered  
£12950.00 excl VAT  
£13349.00 excl VAT
5. Strategic: the report accords with the following strategic aims;
  - **SA6 – To ensure that the money entrusted to us by the residents of Chesham is properly managed and spent efficiently and effectively on achieving the strategic aims of the Council**
6. Environmental: there are no implications in this report.
7. Equality Act: none pertaining to this report.

**Recommendation:**

8. The following recommendations are made:
  - i) That the Council acknowledge this report and advise Officers how best to proceed.



