

**Haines Watts**

**ROYSTON TOWN COUNCIL INTERNAL  
FINAL AUDIT REPORT FOR THE  
PERIOD ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**  
*Conducted 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024*

ROYSTON TOWN COUNCIL INTERNAL  
AUDIT REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
31 MARCH 2024

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**ROYSTON TOWN COUNCIL INTERNAL  
AUDIT REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
31 MARCH 2024**

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**Introduction**

The internal audit was carried out on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2024.

**Summary of Work Completed**

The work completed is identified in the following table below:

AREA OF WORK	WORK COMPLETED
Bank and Cash Reconciliations	<p>a) Bank reconciliations were reviewed and agreed each month to ensure that controls were working effectively throughout the period.</p> <p>b) The reconciliation for the period to 31/03/2024 was verified to the accounting data as entered to SAGE software.</p> <p>c) Cash reconciliations were reviewed to the period up to 31/03/2024.</p>
VAT Returns	<p>a) VAT returns for the year were reviewed and the debtor as at 31/03/2024 was verified to the trial balance as at that date.</p>
Risk Assessments	<p>a) The council's risk assessments were reviewed to ensure that due consideration has been given to identify the key and significant risks.</p> <p>a) To ensure that sufficient safeguards and controls are in place to mitigate identified risks.</p>
Fixed Asset Register	<p>a) The fixed asset register was reviewed to ensure that assets owned by the council are correctly recorded.</p>
Minutes of Meetings	<p>a) The minutes of meetings since the last internal audit were reviewed and any relevant information was noted.</p>
Review of Trial Balance	<p>a) The trial balance was reviewed for reasonableness</p> <p>b) The trial balance was confirmed to the accounts and annual return respectively to ensure financial results agree to source material.</p>

**ROYSTON TOWN COUNCIL INTERNAL  
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Insurance	a) A review of insurance policies was conducted to ensure that sufficient cover is in place and is reasonable.
Payroll	a) Payroll was verified to the annual return and calculations for PAYE, National Insurance and Pension contributions were checked.
Substantive Income and Expenditure Testing	a) A sample of income and expenditure was selected and verified to supporting documentation and systems.
Borrowings	a) The PWLB lending facility was agreed to the annual return and supporting loan statement.

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**Results**

The work completed is identified in the following table below:

AREA OF WORK	OBSERVATIONS/POINTS
Bank and cash Reconciliations	Bank and reconciliations were reviewed and confirmed to be done on a monthly basis with due care and attention. Bank balances were confirmed to statements as at 31 March 2024.
VAT Returns	The balance as at 31/03/2024 was reconciled to the financial statements. No further observations were made.
Risk Assessments	The Council's risk assessments were confirmed to be reasonable and safeguards are considered to be appropriate and reasonably implemented.
Fixed Asset Register	The fixed asset register looks to be maintained with assets owned by the Parish Council.
Minutes of Meetings	Minutes were reviewed and no pertinent issues were identified for the period under review.
Insurance	Documentation was reviewed and is expected to be sufficient to cover the requirements of the Council.
Substantive Income and Expenditure Testing	No issues were identified with income and expenditure testing.  The sample selected for testing were reviewed and agreed to supporting documentation.
Other Observations	No additional comments.

ROYSTON TOWN COUNCIL INTERNAL  
AUDIT REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED  
31 MARCH 2024

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**Conclusion**

In our opinion the Council is keeping their books and records in order and is following internal control procedures that have been established.



A Di Lorenzo FCA  
Director

HW Bedford Limited  
First Floor, Woburn Court  
2 Raiton Road  
Woburn Road Industrial Estate  
Kempston  
Bedfordshire  
MK42 7PN

## Agenda Item 9 – Year End Accounts and Supporting Statement

Royston Town Council		
Income and Expenditure Account - Year End Accounts 31 March 2024		
31-Mar-23	INCOME	31-Mar-24
345,132.55	Precept	386,863.00
11,133.45	CTRS Grant	11,292.09
18,858.00	Agency	23,998.32
3,241.00	Interest received	12,921.96
20,733.84	Town Hall lettings	17,682.26
12,439.30	Market Hill Rooms lettings	13,871.31
1,965.00	Priory Rooms lettings	2,979.51
- 268.30	Discounts Allowed (Lettings)	- 356.21
36.90	Museum sales, Exhibition Commission & Friends shop sales	-
7,764.02	Allotments rents & electric/water reimbursements	6,456.68
4,152.50	30 Kneesworth Street	34,229.16
15,748.79	Royston Cave	25,459.42
14,753.96	Miscellaneous income (grants/donations etc.)	22,843.36
3,865.00	Royston May Fayre	7,363.00
500.00	War memorial account	500.00
21,251.58	Royston First/Cinema	18,556.00
67,381.24	Market Place	73,051.55
548,688.83		657,711.41
- 138.46	Increase / Decrease in Stock	-
<b>548,550.37</b>	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>657,711.41</b>
31-Mar-23	EXPENDITURE	31-Mar-24
210,975.43	General Administration	212,470.08
21,757.39	Agency	27,663.77
41,462.38	Town Hall	49,164.90
18,247.14	Market Hill Rooms	37,040.73
7,206.00	Priory Rooms/Annexe	8,399.25
127,151.93	Museum	100,737.00
2,572.00	Public Toilets	2,400.00
3,129.01	Allotments	1,689.45
15,683.01	Royston Cave	19,785.73
5,613.00	30 Kneesworth Street	3,826.50
1,013.00	War Memorial	1,052.00
3,104.36	Civic	3,905.22
10,141.57	Plantations	2,997.62
5,250.80	May Fayre	6,671.71
2,000.00	Donations	3,425.00
21,937.24	Christmas Lights	19,759.48
2,807.28	Royston First/Cinema	2,282.25
57,123.07	Market Place	72,177.71
18,705.94	Miscellaneous expenditure & Mispostings	16,393.54
0.00	Other bank accounts (War Memorial)	0.00
<b>575,880.55</b>	<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>591,841.94</b>
GENERAL FUND (Inc. Capital - Cemetery land and earmarked reserves)		
616,400.12	Balance at 1 April 2023	588,569.55
548,550.37	Plus Total Income	657,711.41
575,880.55	Less Total Expenditure	591,841.94
589,069.94		654,439.02
- 500.39	Transfers to/from other accounts/ reserves	15,092.83
<b>588,569.55</b>	<b>Balance at 31 March 2023</b>	<b>669,531.85</b>

		<b>Royston Town Council</b>	
<b>BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2024</b>			
<b>31-Mar-23</b>		<b>LONG TERM ASSETS</b>	<b>31-Mar-24</b>
0.00	Investments		0.00
0.00	Long Term Debtors		0.00
<b>0.00</b>			<b>0.00</b>
		<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>	
0.01	Museum Shop Stock		0.01
3,211.07	Debtors		3,839.19
4,417.09	VAT Recoverable		5,313.98
43,069.55	Current Account		51,984.85
9,717.67	Business Premium Account		9,834.66
-	Treasury Account		-
479,572.00	RTC Treasurers Deposit Account		544,667.00
100,000.00	Public Sector Deposit Fund		100,000.00
219.21	Cash in Hand - Petty Cash		203.49
65,722.00	Stamford Yard balance		50,127.00
4,886.39	War Memorial accounts		5,388.56
<b>710,814.99</b>	<b>Total current assets</b>		<b>771,358.74</b>
		<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>	
16,499.63	Creditors		10,624.78
498.25	Receipts received in advance		1,047.38
<b>16,997.88</b>	<b>Total current liabilities</b>		<b>11,672.16</b>
<b>693,817.11</b>	<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>759,686.58</b>
		<b>REPRESENTED BY:</b>	
4,886.39	War Memorial accounts		5,388.56
65,722.00	Stamford Yard Balance - capital reserve		50,127.00
588,569.55	General Fund Balance (inc. Capital - cemetery land and earmarked reserves as per supporting statement)		669,531.85
34,639.17	Capital Fund Balance		34,639.17
<b>693,817.11</b>			<b>759,686.58</b>
<b>The above statement represents fairly the financial position of the authority as at 31 March 2024 and reflects its income and expenditure during the year.</b>			
<b>Chairman</b>	<b>Signed.....</b>		
<b>Date:.....</b>			
<b>RFO</b>	<b>Signed.....</b>		
<b>Date:.....</b>			



**SUPPORTING STATEMENT  
ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31<sup>st</sup> MARCH 2024**

**ASSETS**

Assets purchased:

	<u>Item</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Value</u>
1)	PA System	Town Hall	£172.04
2)	Hearing Loop	Town Hall	£1580.00
3)	Gazebo Canopy x 2	Market	£218.00
4)	Bench	Twigdens Estate	£793.38
5)	Gazebo Canopy x 1	Market	£114.00
6)	Black out blind	Market Hill Rooms	£137.50
7)	Gazebo Canopy x 1	Market	£114.00
8)	New Kitchen Equipment	Market Hill Rooms	£499.00
9)	Acer Aspire 3 A315-58 15.6 inch laptop	Cave Manager	£346.41
10)	Acer Projector X1128i	Cave	£253.33
11)	2 x Office Chairs @ £150.35 ea	Admin	£300.70
12)	Trestle tables	Market	£237.29
			<b>£4,765.65</b>

Assets disposed of:

	<u>Item</u>		
1)	Hearing loop	Town Hall	£1,000.00
2)	Boiler	Market Hill Rooms	(no value recorded)
3)	Various Gazebo equipment	Market	£322.28
4)	Kitchen cupboards/worktop	Market Hill Rooms	(no value recorded)
5)	Christmas lights	Other	£13,975.00
6)	Air conditioning unit	Admin	£100.00
7)	Museum Emergency Pack	Town Hall	£150.00
8)	Computer Chairs	Admin	£180.00
9)	1 x walkie talkie	Admin	£31.00
10)	Typist chair	Admin	£89.99
11)	Wide screen monitor	Admin	£100.00
12)	Hoover	Market Hill Rooms	£105.00
13)	Computer	Market Office	£469.00
14)	Office chair	Admin	£131.76
			<b>£16,654.03</b>

**At the 31 March 2024 the following assets were held:**

<b><u>COMMUNITY ASSETS</u></b>	<b><u>VALUE</u></b>	
Stile Plantation – Community Land	£1.00	
Green Walk Plantation – Community Land	£1.00	
Green Street Allotments – Community Land	£1.00	
Royston Cave – Community Land	£1.00	
War Memorial	£168,233	
Town Hall	£1,914,458	
Market Hill Rooms	£465,804	
30 Kneesworth Street	£434,928	
Market Place	£300,000	<b>£3,283,427</b>

**OTHER FIXED ASSETS – Furniture & Equipment at:**

Town Hall	£186,704	
Market Hill Rooms	£9,322	
Museum	£0	
Priory/Complex/Office Rooms	£21,195	
Market stalls & equipment	£21,630	
Museum Collection	£0	
Civic Regalia	£5,664	
Civic name boards	£1,250	
Christmas lights	£0	
External notice boards	£5,047	
Salt bin	£205	
External benches and information boards	£5,158	
Bus shelter - Icknield Walk	£10,941	
Cycle shelter and racks	£3,078	
Bus shelter - Melbourn Street	£9,972	
Bird boxes/nest boxes	£692	
Bench – Twigdens estate	£793	
		<b>£281,651</b>

The basis of valuation of these assets is purchase value, with the exception of the Community Land, which are each valued at £1.

**Total of all above Assets: £3,565,078**

**Borrowings:**

Royston Town Council borrowed £300,000 from The Public Works Loan Board on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2015. The loan was taken over a 25 year term with a fixed interest rate of 4.01% and half yearly repayments are £9,557. The outstanding capital balance as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024 is £219,060.67.

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**Leases:**

At 31 March 2024 the following leases were in operation:

**Royston Town Council as Landlord**

<b>Tenant</b>	<b>Property</b>	<b>Rent p.a.</b>	<b>Year of Expiry</b>
Mr Milijic	30 Kneesworth St	£18,750.00	Aug 2034

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**Debts Outstanding:**

At 31 March 2024 debts of £3,839.19 were outstanding and due to Royston Town Council.

The age of the debts were:	<b>No.</b>	<b>Value</b>
Less than 3 months old	30	£3,839.19
Between 3 months and 12 months	0	
Over 12 months	0	

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**Movements on the Capital Reserves:**

Opening balance: £127,047

Balance at year-end £111,452

£50,127 of the above is proceeds from the sale of Stamford Yard and £26,686 is proceeds from the sale of Wicker Hall, the remaining £34,639 is a general capital reserve.

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**Earmarked Funds included in General Fund Balance:**

Election costs	£11,443	Town Hall maintenance (2013-24)	£42,239
Allotments	£11,426.45	Markets contract	£39,906
Market Place cash machine collection	£2,250	Cave maintenance	£888
Kneesworth Street repairs/decoration	£1,382	May Fayre account	£9,196.11
Town Council properties refurbishment	£3,000	Youth Council	£4,000

**Total Earmarked Funds: £125,730.56**

**General Power of Competence** Adopted 16<sup>th</sup> May 2022

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**Agency Work:**

During the year the Royston Town Council undertook the following work on behalf of another authority.

<b>Commission Authority</b>	<b>Nature of Work</b>	<b>Value</b>
North Herts District Council	Repairs, utilities, admin	£23,998.32

A final claim for reimbursement has been agreed.

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**Pensions:**

For the year ended 31 March 2024 the council's contributions equalled 21.15% of employees' pensionable pay which equalled to £29,250.56

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Signed ..... Chairman

Signed ..... Responsible Financial Officer

Date .....

## Annual Internal Audit Report 2023/24

ROYSTON TOWN COUNCIL

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During the financial year ended 31 March 2024, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2023/24 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2022/23, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2022/23 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2023-24 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2022-23 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2022/23 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	✓		

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

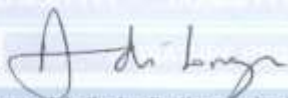
Date(s) internal audit undertaken

23/05/2024

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

Mr Alberto Di Lorenzo

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit



Date

04/06/2024

\*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

\*\*Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

## Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

We acknowledge as the members of:

ROYSTON TOWN COUNCIL

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024, that:

	Agreed		Yes	No	Yes means that this authority:
	Yes	No			
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.					prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.					made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.					has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.					during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.					considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.					arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.					responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.					disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A		has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.

\*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

COMMITTEE

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

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## Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

ROYSTON TOWN COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2023 £	31 March 2024 £	
1. Balances brought forward	721148	693817	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	345133	386863	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	203417	270848	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	226972	255424	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	19114	19114	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	329795	317304	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	693817	759686	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	703187	762206	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	3576966	3565078	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	229088	219061	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The figures in the accounting statements above exclude any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2024 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YYYY

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

DD/MM/YYYY

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

**Royston Town Council**  
**Annual Report 2023/2024**  
**15<sup>th</sup> May 2023 – 20<sup>th</sup> May 2024**



Town Hall, Melbourn Road, Royston, Herts. SG8 7DA

Tel: 01763 245484 Email: [town.clerk@roystontowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:town.clerk@roystontowncouncil.gov.uk)

[www.roystontowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.roystontowncouncil.gov.uk)

Published June 2024

Royston Town Council's Annual Report gives a review of the activities of the Town Council during the Civic year and the financial report for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.



## **Statement from the Town Mayor 2024-2025**

### **A message from our new Town Mayor, Councillor John Rees**



I feel honoured and humbled as I begin my term as Mayor and I am very much looking forward to the next 12 months, continuing to work with the Town Council for the people of Royston.

My wife and I moved to Royston from a West London suburb 9 years ago when I retired from a stressful job with Transport for London. We chose Royston because of its quiet rural location, yet within easy reach of larger towns and with good rail links to London. Soon after we moved here we found ourselves in a very friendly and easy going environment and I actually got to know my neighbours. It wasn't long before I became aware of the strength of the local community and how precious the town is to its residents. Over the last nine years I have become more and more involved with the local community and was lucky to be elected to the Town Council in 2022.

As your Mayor I look forward to working on your behalf and intend to do my utmost to be even more involved with the community and businesses of Royston. I will have a relevant presence on social media, and I will host a show on Royston Radio 'The Mayor's Notebook' to highlight my Mayoral activity, upcoming events, as well as keeping you updated on the Town Council's activities and decisions.

My chosen charities for this civic year will be:

The Mayor's Community Trust Fund and Home Start – Royston, Buntingford & South Cambs.

I am very excited to begin serving the community of Royston as Mayor.

Councillor John Rees  
Mayor of Royston  
May 2024

## Royston Town Council

There are three tiers of local government in Royston; Town, District and County.

The Town Council's website is updated regularly providing a useful resource on Royston Town Council's activities, and offering access to information regarding the committees, meetings, minutes, Town Council news and other areas of interest. Some council meetings are now being live streamed via YouTube and the link can be found on the website. Information and links are also available for other Royston organisations and community associations.

[www.roystontowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.roystontowncouncil.gov.uk)

All Town Councillors serve in a voluntary capacity and are elected for a four year term of office. Councillors are not paid and do not receive any allowances for attending meetings. The Mayor is elected annually in May at the Annual Meeting of the Council. Ten Members serve on each principal committee: Finance, Planning and General Purpose & Highways.

The Councillors that held office during the year 2023/2024 were:

**Mayor:** Councillor Lisa Adams

**Deputy Mayor:** Councillor John Rees

**Chairman Finance Committee:** Councillor Adam Compton

**Chairman Planning Committee:** Councillor Elizabeth Beardwell

**Chairman General Purpose & Highways Committee:** Councillor Mike Harrison

### **Royston Town West**

Cllr Ruth Brown (Liberal Democrats)

Cllr Elizabeth Beardwell (Liberal Democrats)

Cllr Emma Squire-Smith (Liberal Democrats)

### **Royston Town South**

Cllr Mary Antony (Royston Town Party)

Cllr Elizabeth Freeman (Liberal Democrats)

### **Royston Palace**

Cllr Lisa Adams (Royston Town Party)

Cllr Robert Inwood (Royston Town Party)

Cllr Bind Jani (Royston Town Party)

Cllr Lynsey Langdon (Royston Town Party)

Cllr John Rees (Labour till 18<sup>th</sup> March, then Independent)

### **Royston Meridian**

Cllr Elizabeth Beardwell (Liberal Democrats)

Cllr James Birch (Royston Town Party)

Cllr Adam Compton (Conservative)

Cllr Mike Harrison (Conservative)

Cllr Luke Haugh (Royston Town Party)

Cllr Stephen Lockett (Labour)

Full Council meetings and principal committee meetings are open to all members of the public and the press. At the beginning of each meeting time is set aside to allow members of the public to make representation to the various committees about items on the agenda. Copies of the agendas are posted on the Town Hall noticeboard and Town Council website. A calendar detailing the meetings for the coming year is also available on the website. Full Council meetings are now being live-streamed on YouTube and the link is both on the website and our social media platforms.

The Town Council's Planning Committee is asked to respond as a consultee and makes recommendations on the planning applications for Royston. The Committee commented on over 130 applications throughout the year. Final decisions on all applications are made by North Herts Council (NHC).

### **School Visits**

Royston Town Council organised another successful round of visits to local schools during the autumn term of 2023. The schools visited this year were Icknield Walk First School, Roman Way First School, St Mary's Primary School, Tannery Drift First School, Studlands Rise First School and King James Academy. Town, District and County Councillors all took part and the children were well engaged and put forward several ideas which have been taken on board.

### **Green Street Allotments**

The allotment site in Royston is owned and managed by the Town Council. There are no vacant plots at the moment, if you are interested in obtaining a plot contact the Town Council by email [enquiries@roystontowncouncil.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@roystontowncouncil.gov.uk) or call 01763 245484 to be added to the waiting list, it is approximately 4 to 5 years wait for a plot. You must be a Royston resident to rent an allotment.

### **Royston War Memorial**

Royston War Memorial in Melbourn Street was erected in 1922 in memory of the Servicemen of the town killed in the First World War. Later it was extended to include those who were killed during the Second World War. It is now a listed monument and was extensively repaired and refurbished by the Town Council in 2018. It is scheduled to be deep cleaned before November 2024.

On 12<sup>th</sup> November 2023 hundreds of people joined the parade from the British Legion to the War Memorial for the Remembrance Day Service.

### **Royston Town Market**

Despite traders being anxious about the economic climate as we entered 2023, it was good to see full markets being the norm in terms of trader numbers.

The vast majority of traders appear to be once again making a commitment to support the market as we move into 2024, although evidence does suggest that footfall may have decreased slightly. This is not surprising and is something that has been evident nationally as indicated by feedback from the National Association of British Market Authorities. We therefore remain optimistic that the market should once again enjoy a successful year.

## **Royston Museum**

Since April 2022 Royston Museum has been owned and managed by the Royston Museum Trust CIO. Royston Town Council continues to provide core funding to the museum.

All information can be found on their website [www.roystonmuseum.org.uk](http://www.roystonmuseum.org.uk)

## **Royston Annual May Fayre**

In partnership with other organisations and volunteers, the Town Council runs this yearly event in the Priory Memorial Gardens which takes place on the first Bank Holiday in May. It gives local charities and voluntary organisations a chance to fund raise for themselves. Admission to the event is free.

The event was attended by large numbers of people who enjoyed mostly sunny weather and the wide variety of food offered. There was fun for all the family with the Town Band keeping the crowds entertained with their music and regulars such as the miniature railway, the Punch and Judy show and the Novelty Dog Show.

Free attractions, Professor Crump, Topper's Circus skills and Rebels and Rascals' face painting were provided thanks to funding from Royston Town Council. The 2,000 reusable cups, purchased by the council to reduce single use plastic waste, were successfully reused. These cups are available for other Royston organisations to use for their own events and information can be found on the website.

Running alongside the May Fayre was the Historical Car Show which was organised by the Rotary Club and judged by the Town Mayor.



## **Community Halls**

The Town Council provides halls and rooms that can be hired out to the public. Our two community halls, the Town Hall and Market Hill Rooms are regularly hired out to local organisations, community groups and privately to members of the public for children's parties, fitness classes and social events such as Quiz Nights.

The kitchen at Market Hill Rooms was completely refurbished with a new oven and flooring, as well as some new crockery and utensils. WIFI was also recently installed for the benefit of hirers. A new hearing loop was installed in the Heritage Hall and a new PA system is now available.

## **The Leete Charity Trust**

The Town Council is the sole Trustee of this charity. The charity provides grants towards further education for students who live, or attend a school, in Royston. The grants are made from the interest earned on the Trust's investments. During the last year, a total of £1,400 was awarded to 5 young people going on to further education. Details and an application form can be downloaded from the Town Council's website.

### **Mayor's Community Trust Fund**

During her term as Royston Town Mayor, Councillor Lisa Adams carried out over 100 engagements. In this time she also hosted a Civic Service, and a Charity Christmas Fayre to raise funds for the Mayor's Community Trust Fund. Along with donations made throughout the year, the total amount raised for 2023-2024 was £1,094.24 split equally between the Trust Fund and her other nominated charity, Pathways to Learning. This year five grants between £250 and £310 were awarded from the Mayor's Community Trust Fund to local charities and organisations.

### **Community Grants**

The Council wishes to encourage, support and promote volunteer organisations, clubs, groups and charities within Royston for the benefit of the Town and therefore set up the Community Grant Scheme. The Grant Scheme is for grants of a value up to £500 and details can be found on the website. The grants awarded in this civic year are listed below:

Organisation	Amount received
Make Lunch	£500.00
NCT - Royston Villages Branch	£395.00
Royston Indian Society	£450.00
Royston Girlguiding	£500.00
R & D Community Transport	£340.00
Royston Swimming Club	£200.00

### **Green Walk Plantation & Stile Plantation**

Two small plantations link the town centre to open countryside and footpaths. These plantations are much-loved nature havens and are used for walking and wildlife spotting.

This year, new hedging was planted to give a more enclosed feeling to part of Stile Plantation and provide more habitat for wildlife. A comprehensive tree survey was carried out and work will be scheduled in outside of the bird nesting season. Clearing cow parsley and planting shade loving wildflowers by a team of enthusiastic volunteers from Johnson Matthey has continued. A nesting bird survey was conducted in spring and a bat survey was also carried out in May.



### **Climate and Biodiversity Action**

The Council declared a Climate and Biodiversity Emergency in June 2022 and since then have been investigating ways to reduce their carbon emissions and increase biodiversity in Royston. 'Reuse or Return' cups continue to be used at the May Fayre in order to reduce the use of single-use plastics at the event. The cups are available for other local organisations on application.

## **Royston Cave**

The total number of visitors to Royston Cave in 2023 rose to 3955, our highest number yet. Most public tours were sold out, and a total of 46 private tours more than doubled the amount taken in the previous year. There was also an increase in the number of overseas visitors, including the USA, Canada, and Australia.

A special Summer Solstice event was held, which included a sunrise session, and these entailed quiet, meditation time within the cave on blankets and cushions and were well received.

In October, Storytime tours focussing on children took place as part of the Royston Arts Festival. These were well attended and enjoyed by all.

Then in December the annual, and ever popular, Cave by Candlelight tours finished a very productive year for the cave.

In August, the official Royston Cave Guidebook was published, and is available to buy from the Royston Museum, Town Hall, and Library for £5.

Reports and articles were also published on the cave website and our social media coverage has been maintained and follower levels are rising.

After a long wait the results for the radiocarbon dating were finally issued at the end of the year. All five of the samples were dated to be post discovery (after 1742) which was a little disappointing. We hope for more archaeological techniques to be employed in the cave as part of the National Lottery Heritage Bid, the process of which was started in January 2024. Other considerations for the bid are to replace the internal infrastructure of the cave and focus on conservation of the cave's heritage.

Newsletter subscribers have increased to nearly 600, which has meant that a new platform was needed to continue providing this service free of charge, which has ultimately delayed some newsletter issues.

In preparation for the new public tour season the cave floor was repaired after it became apparent that the wooden frame beneath the decking was starting to rot.

The new season has started well with most tours sold out, showing that the slight increase in admission fees does not seem to have deterred visitor numbers.



## **Senior Committee Working Party**

During the year 2023-24, the Senior Committee Working Party oversaw the annual Silver Sunday event at Royston Town Hall. Older members of the community were invited to a Tea Dance, with cheese and wine served to around 40 attendees.

The Senior Committee also organised the "Memory Lane" event at Royston Town Hall last summer, which saw 67 people come along for a free cream tea, a good natter, plus music and memories from years gone by courtesy of Royston Radio.

The Senior Committee trialled a Warm Hub Coffee Morning for over 65's at the Town Hall in January 2024 with support from Royston Radio and Tesco Extra. Unfortunately, this event was not so well attended with only 11 people dropping in throughout the morning.

### **Shared Prosperity Fund**

The council received funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund to improve the town centre. Much of the street furniture in the town centre, including benches, bollards, railings and hanging basket posts, was painted using this grant.

### **Annual Town Meeting 2024**

The Annual Town meeting was held in the Heritage Hall on 14th March 2024 and was attended by 25 members of the public. Guest speakers included Hertfordshire Police and Royston First BID.

Community Trust Fund Grants were awarded to:

<b>ORGANISATION</b>	<b>PURPOSE OF GRANT</b>	<b>SUM REQUESTED</b>
Royston Arts Society	Towards the cost of hiring the Heritage Hall for the Royston Arts Festival	£310.00
Royston Speak Out Club	Towards the cost of the Royston Speak Out Club's Summer Outing 2024	£250.00
Priory Quilters	Towards the cost of hiring the Market Hill Rooms for the Royston Arts Festival	£250.00
Home Start Royston, Buntingford & South Cambs	For the Home Start Christmas Party at Royston Methodist Church	£210.50
Royston Photographic Society	Towards the cost of hiring the Hardwicke Hall for the Royston Arts Festival	£275.00

Community Service Awards were awarded to:

**Blake Close Christmas Lights Team** - In recognition of their work from September to December each year creating a Christmas lights display for their switch on event that raises hundreds of pounds for local charities.

**Caroll Young** - In recognition of her long standing commitment to the Royston May Fayre where she has organised the Novelty Dog Show for the last 8 years, raising money for local animal charities.

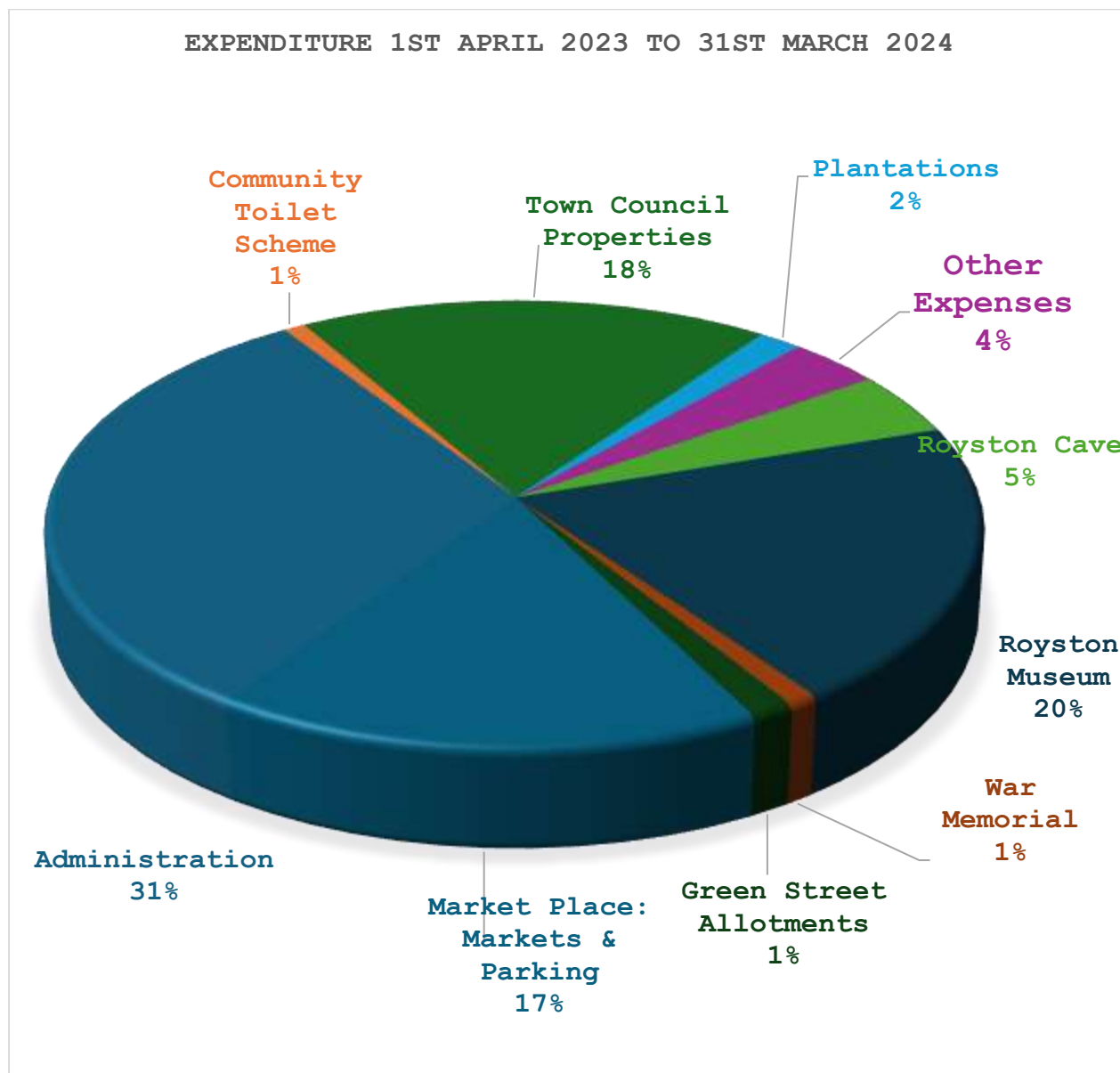
**Ray Munden** - In recognition of his continuing work for the people of Royston, and in particular the hard work that Ray has provided in organising the Historical Car Show on behalf of the Rotary Club for the May Fayre since 2010.



## Royston Town Council Finances 2023-2024

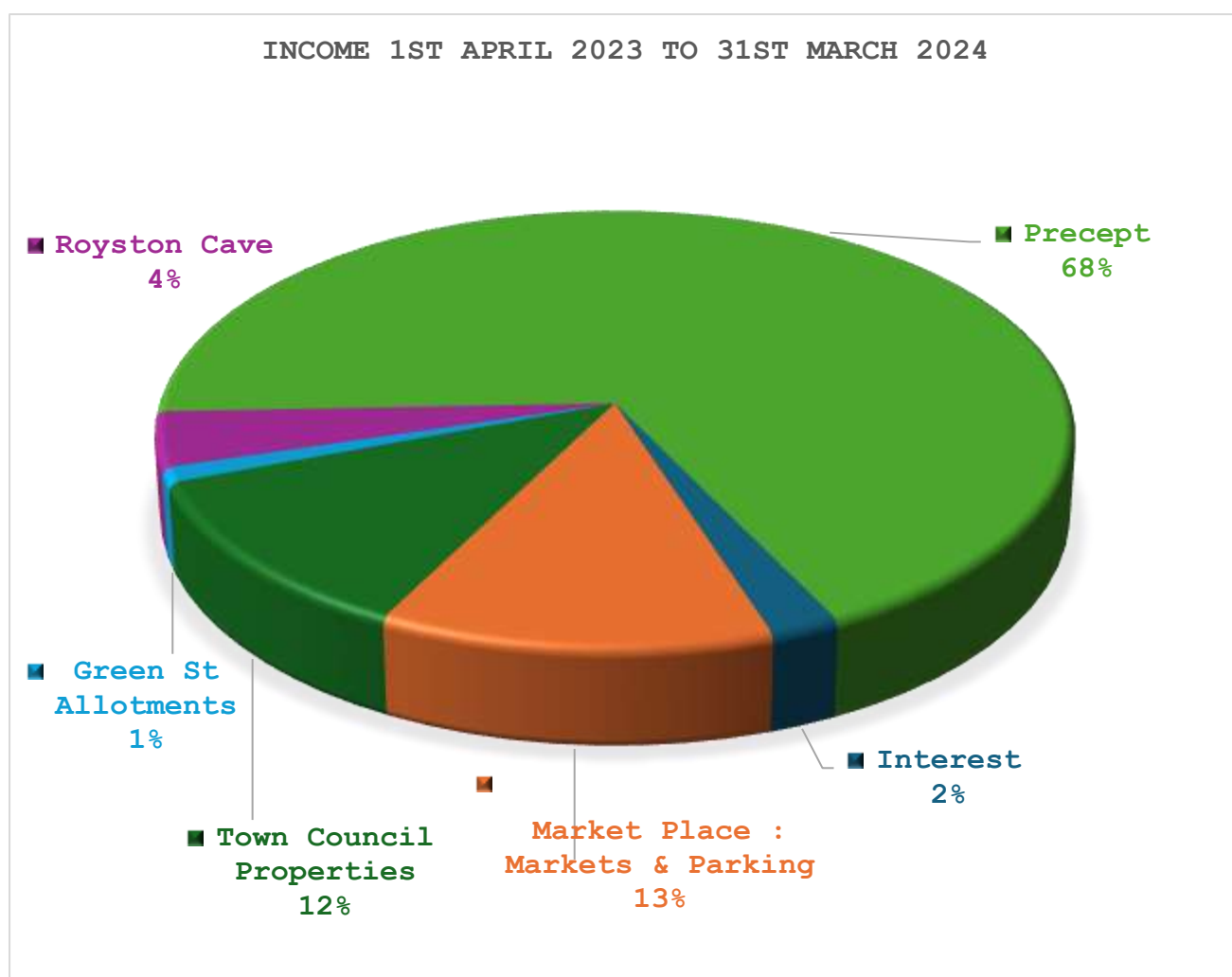
<b><u>EXPENDITURE 2023-2024</u></b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Administration/Democracy	151,339	155,722
Royston Museum & Art Gallery	100,000	100,737
Town Council Properties	133,797	90,933
Green Walk & Stile Plantation	21,329	8,377
Other Expenses (Civic, May Fayre, Christmas Lights etc.)	23,083	18,217
Royston Cave	22,568	22,723
Green St Allotments	7,205	6,842
Melbourn St War Memorial	4,405	4,640
Community Toilet scheme	4,089	4,192
Market Place - Markets and Parking	85,339	84,734
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>553,154</b>	<b>497,117</b>

N.B. This does not include expenditure from reserves or earmarked funds





<b><u>INCOME</u></b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Actual</b>
Interest	2,500	12,921
Market Place - markets/parking	60,000	73,053
Town Council Properties	52,599	68,321
Green St Allotments	5,900	6,210
Royston Cave	14,000	23,685
Precept	398,155	398,155
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>533,154</b>	<b>582,345</b>



## **Royston Town Council Finances 2024-2025**

The Royston Town Council part of the Council Tax for 2024-2025 is £59.22 per Band D household.

### **Royston Town Council Budget & Precept 2024-2025**

#### **Expenditure**

Admin/Democracy	167,822
Royston & District Museum & Art Gallery	104,665
Royston Town Hall	55,886
Priory Centre Rooms	29,784
Market Hill Rooms	31,986
Green Walk and Stile Plantations	21,985
Other Expenses	27,171
Royston Cave	23,697
Green St Allotments	7,851
Royston War Memorial	4,878
30 Kneesworth St	1,343
Public conveniences	4,299
Markets and Parking ( Market Hill/Angel Pavement)	88,487
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>569,854</b>

#### **Income**

Interest	7,500
Royston Town Hall	18,000
Priory Centre Rooms	2,000
Market Hill Rooms	13,000
Green St Allotments	6,235
30 Kneesworth St	20,269
Royston Cave	20,000
Markets and Parking ( Market Hill/Angel Pavement)	67,000
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>154,004</b>
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>415,850</b>

Precept	404,099
CTRS Grant	11,751
	<b>415,850</b>

## **Agenda Item 14 – Non-Smoking and Non-Vaping Policy**

### **ROYSTON TOWN COUNCIL**

#### **NON-SMOKING AND NON-VAPING POLICY**

Adopted by Full Council 17<sup>th</sup> June 2024 Minute number: XX/25

#### **Introduction**

1.1 Exposure to second-hand smoke increases the risk of lung cancer, heart disease and other serious illnesses. The Town Council is committed to protecting all employees, Members, residents, contractors and visitors from exposure to second-hand smoke.

1.2 The British Medical Association (BMA) has said that more research is needed to establish the safety of electronic cigarettes. For this reason, the Town Council feels it is prudent to protect employees, Members, residents, contractors and visitors from potential risks associated with vapours produced by these devices.

#### **Policy statement**

2.1 It is the policy of the Town Council that all our workplace buildings are smokefree, and all employees have the right to work in a smoke-free environment. Smoking is prohibited in all enclosed and substantially enclosed premises in the workplace. The same prohibition applies to vaping (the use of electronic cigarettes).

2.2 Appropriate 'no smoking' signs will be clearly displayed at the entrances to and within the premises.

#### **Legislation and sanction**

3.1 The Health Act 2006 was implemented in England on 1 July 2007. It is now a criminal offence to smoke in virtually all enclosed public spaces and workplaces.

3.2 Managers of smoke-free premises have legal responsibilities to prevent smoking and to ensure that 'no smoking' signs are displayed as required by this law. However, all staff are obliged to adhere to and support the implementation of the policy. If staff do not adhere to this policy they will be subject to disciplinary action.

3.3 In the event someone does smoke in a smoke-free environment, the below procedure will be followed:

- The person's attention will be drawn to the no-smoking signs and they will be requested to stop smoking or go outside.
- It will be pointed out that the person is committing a criminal offence by smoking in a smoke-free premises and the police may be called as a result.

3.4 As vaping is not covered by the Health Act 2006, a different procedure should be followed if a person

is found to be using an electronic cigarette in a Town Council premises:

- The person will be informed that vaping is prohibited by this policy and they will be requested to stop using their electronic cigarette or go outside.

#### **Smoking by staff members**

- 4.1 Staff members who smoke whilst at work must do so only during designated smoking breaks, which are unpaid time. This includes the use of electronic cigarettes.

- 4.2 Staff members must agree with their line managers how to best manage any unpaid smoking breaks, taking into account the nature of the job role and any specific working arrangements which may apply.
- 4.3 Agreed smoking breaks must not detract from a staff members work or efficiency and must not cause disruption to colleagues.

Policy Review: **June 2029, or earlier** if legislation dictates.

## **Agenda Item 15 – Statement of Intent as to Community Engagement**

### **Royston Town Council**

#### **Statement of Intent as to Community Engagement**

Adopted: 20<sup>th</sup> June 2022 Minute number: 76/23

Reviewed: 17<sup>th</sup> June 2024 Minute number: XX/XX



#### **Introduction**

Royston Town Council is committed to high standards of engagement with its community. Our council is part of a tier of local government which belongs to, is part of and is directly accountable to its local community. Councillors play an important role as they are elected to make decisions on matters affecting our town.

#### **Our Community**

We believe our community is everyone within the boundaries of our town and includes all ages, any organisations, groups and individuals and the business community within it. We also recognise that residents pay for the activities of the town council and that visitors to our community form an important part of the vibrancy of community life. We understand that there are certain bodies that are crucial to local quality of life and we will strive to achieve excellent working relationships with these bodies which include local organisations, the Police, neighbouring councils and other tiers of local government.

#### **Aims**

Royston Town Council aims to make a measurable difference to the quality of life of the community we serve and to be responsive to the needs of our community. Our aim is to engage with our community and encourage participation in decision making, securing better services, being engaged with local democratic process and to create a more active and informed community.

The council strives to enable an informed, involved, empowered community by undertaking the following:

#### **To communicate information to our community clearly and factually through:**

- a. Maintaining an up to date, user friendly website detailing all council services and activities, agendas, minutes, annual reports, policies and other relevant information. The website can be found at [www.roystontowncouncil.gov.uk](http://www.roystontowncouncil.gov.uk)
- b. Producing a quarterly newsletter which is sent out to every household, published online and available to collect from the council offices.
- c. Publishing of agendas and other council news on the Town Council notice boards.
- d. Publicising events and meetings through local media channels.

#### **To provide opportunities for our community to be actively involved with the council through:**

- a. Inviting residents to take part in our Council meetings via the public participation forum.

- b. Inviting residents to attend the Annual Town Meeting which takes place between 1<sup>st</sup> March and 1<sup>st</sup> June each year. The meeting will be widely publicised.
- c. To encourage residents to both stand for and vote for the Town Council in local elections.
- d. Inviting residents to regular councillor surgeries held in the town centre.
- e. Live streaming meetings of the Full Council via YouTube.
- f. Inviting residents/community groups to provide information for the Council website.
- g. Issuing press releases covering the activities of the Council.
- h. Encouraging the Mayor to actively represent the community.
- i. Consultation with the community.

**To communicate with our partners and co-ordinate our community engagement efforts:**

- a. Maintain working relationships with other tiers of local government and other local bodies and institutions. To support the role and functions of strategic partners.
- b. The council has representation on many local organisations:
  - Royston Community Transport
  - Royston Day Centre
  - Royston Army Cadet Force
  - Royston Girl Guiding
  - Royston & District Scouts Council
  - Royston and District Town Twinning Association
  - Conservators of Therfield Heath
  - Creative Royston
  - Home-Start
  - Royston Museum Trust CIO
  - Sustainable Travel Town
  - Plastic Free Royston
  - Royston First Bid

The council intends to maintain and foster these relationships. The council will also seek opportunities to provide representation on other organisations in Royston.

**To enable Councillors to maximise their potential to serve their community as elected representatives:**

- a. Councillors will be provided with a new members pack and are encouraged to undertake training for their roles.
- b. Councillors are encouraged to attend meetings regularly; council meetings and those of organisations and residents' associations in their respective wards.
- c. Councillors' details are published on the website and at the Council offices for members of the public to contact them to discuss relevant issues.
- d. Councillors are encouraged to take up places on community groups and organisations.

**Specific Areas for Community Involvement**

There will be occasions where specific community involvement will be required. Matters may arise where Royston Town Council will provide additional information sheets, call additional public meetings or ask for opinion by way of surveys, questionnaires or website response forms. Members of the community may also be asked to join working party groups.

Any action plans created by the council will consider the ways that the council will work to enhance the quality of life for residents.

Review date: June 2026, or earlier if legislation dictates.

## **Agenda item: 17 - Purchase of replacement lawnmower for Green Street Allotments.**

### **Background:**

RAGA have requested a new lawnmower to maintain the large paths on site as the current one is broken. The old lawnmower has been repaired many times but is now beyond economical repair. They have suggested the replacement below and given an explanation as to why this make and model has been chosen:

A petrol mower is most suitable for a large space, the heavy-duty option due to the uneven terrain, 53cm blade to be compatible with the smaller paths (e.g. the 74cm versions would be too wide) and also the Toro brand as this is the same as the previous mower, which could potentially be used for spare parts.



There are a number of online purchasing options available:

Garden Machines Ltd

[Toro Heavy-Duty Proline 53cm Professional Self-Propelled Lawnmower 22285 \(gardenmachinesltd.co.uk\)](http://gardenmachinesltd.co.uk)

Cost: £1,207.50 + VAT

Groundserv

<https://www.groundserv.co.uk/product/toro-22293-proline-heavy-duty/>

Toro 22285 Proline heavy duty

Cost: £1,207.50 + VAT

### **Officer recommendation:**

To purchase the Toro Heavy Duty Proline 22285 mower for a maximum of £1,500 including VAT. Officers will purchase according to the best price online and delivery availability, but prices do vary from week to week. Expenditure will be taken from reserves earmarked for the allotments.

### **Members are to resolve to:**

- a) Agree a maximum budget of £1,500 for the purchase of a new lawnmower for the allotments and deduct the expenditure from earmarked allotments reserves.
- b) Authorise the use of the debit card to make the purchase online.