

Royston Town Council Finance Committee meeting – Monday 27th January 2025

Agenda item 5i – Bank reconciliation

<u>Royston Town Council 2024-2025</u>			
<u>Bank Reconciliation December 2024</u>			
<u>Receipts</u>		<u>Payments</u>	
B/F	1,338,483.37	B/F	426,979.89
December income	13,896.89	December payments	35,160.63
	1,352,380.26		462,140.52
Receipts to date	1,352,380.26		
Less payments to date	462,140.52		
	890,239.74		
Represented by			
RTC Current Account -		79,194.89	
Less un-cleared Chqs			
		79,194.89	
Business Premium account		9,945.40	
War Memorial account		5,890.61	
Treasury Deposit (Stamford Yard)		50,127.00	
Treasury Deposit		645,081.84	
Public Sector Deposit Fund		100,000.00	
Takings Account (unbanked cash)		-	
		890,239.74	
Petty Cash for floats	01/12/2024	31/12/2024	
Office	109.80	227.14	
Cave	104.82	104.82	
Totals	£ 214.62	£ 331.96	

Royston Town Council 2024-2025			
Charity Accounts - December 2024			
<u>Cave Account</u>			
<u>Receipts</u>		<u>Payments</u>	
B/F	30,836.04	B/F	0.00
December receipts		December payments	-
	30,836.04		-
Receipts to date	30,836.04		
Less payments to date	0.00		
	30,836.04		
Represented by			
RTC - Cave Account	30,836.04		
Less un-cleared Chqs	-		
		£ 30,836.04	
<u>Leete Account</u>			
<u>Receipts</u>		<u>Payments</u>	
B/F	22,022.60	B/F	1,367.50
December receipts	333.23	December payments	8.50
	22,355.83		1,376.00
Receipts to date	22,355.83		
Less payments to date	1,376.00		
	20,979.83		
Represented by			
RTC - Leete Account	20,979.83		
Less un-cleared Chqs			
		£ 20,979.83	
<u>Town Mayor's Community Trust Fund</u>			
<u>Receipts</u>		<u>Payments</u>	
B/F	19,358.46	B/F	995.51
December Receipts	821.92	December payments	11.27
	20,180.38		1,006.78
Receipts to date	20,180.38		
Less payments to date	1,006.78		
	19,173.60		
Represented by			
Mayor's Charity monies	1,690.05		
Community Fund	17,483.55		
Less un-cleared Chqs			
		£ 19,173.60	

Agenda item 5ii – Income and Expenditure

ROYSTON TOWN COUNCIL

Summary of Royston Town Council Income & Expenditure for 2024-2025 to-date against allocated budget

<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	<u>April</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sept</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>March</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>	<u>Agreed Budget</u>	<u>YTD Budget variance</u>
Administration/Democracy	13,489	12,246	13,248	10,930	12,128	13,330	10,959	16,047	11,818	-	-	-	114,195	167,822	90.50%
Museum	52,333	-	-	-	-	52,332	-	-	-	-	-	-	104,665	104,665	133.00%
Town Hall	4,310	3,179	3,027	4,462	3,107	2,982	4,319	3,430	3,699	-	-	-	32,515	55,886	77.38%
Priory Rooms	443	443	504	443	443	443	443	565	422	-	-	-	4,149	29,784	18.53%
Market Hill Rooms	1,221	1,777	1,882	1,609	1,609	1,768	4,060	2,038	1,944	-	-	-	17,908	31,986	74.46%
Other Expenses	2,515	348	5,797	2,000	-	42	1,286	1,304	-	-	-	-	13,292	27,171	65.06%
Royston Cave	2,038	1,594	1,614	1,979	1,874	2,034	1,658	1,648	2,269	-	-	-	16,708	23,697	93.77%
Allotments	927	443	624	490	443	443	602	565	422	-	-	-	4,959	7,851	84.01%
War Memorial	853	295	836	295	295	295	295	377	281	-	-	-	3,822	4,878	104.21%
30 Kneesworth Street	468	74	84	74	74	74	74	94	70	-	-	-	1,086	1,343	107.55%
Plantations	817	443	504	443	1,961	443	443	6,065	422	-	-	-	11,541	21,985	69.82%
Public Conveniences	148	148	168	748	148	748	148	188	141	-	-	-	2,585	4,299	79.97%
Markets and Parking	5,459	5,793	5,342	14,999	5,216	5,124	6,741	6,289	5,459	-	-	-	60,422	88,487	90.82%
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	85,021	26,783	33,630	38,472	27,298	80,058	31,028	38,610	26,947	-	-	-	387,847	569,854	90.52%
<u>INCOME</u>	<u>April</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>Aug</u>	<u>Sept</u>	<u>Oct</u>	<u>Nov</u>	<u>Dec</u>	<u>Jan</u>	<u>Feb</u>	<u>March</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>	<u>Agreed Budget</u>	
Interest	445	429	2,842	731	4,413	863	411	3,936	1,347				15,417	7,500	308.34%
Town Hall	1,591	1,879	2,034	1,731	1,081	3,318	2,682	2,318	1,129	-	-	-	17,763	18,000	148.03%
Priory Centre	297	278	222	184	39	158	359	151	92	-	-	-	1,780	2,000	133.50%
Market Hill Rooms	1,020	993	850	928	428	1,265	1,352	982	926	-	-	-	8,744	13,000	100.89%
Cave	2,739	3,867	4,325	3,247	3,848	4,113	1,350	252	1,339	-	-	-	25,080	20,000	188.10%
Allotments	361	54	119	201	14	135	170	119	2,250	-	-	-	3,423	6,235	82.34%
30 Kneesworth Street	394	-	4,688	-	-	-	5,063	-	-	-	-	-	10,145	20,269	75.08%
Markets and Parking	5,841	6,389	6,171	2,329	6,109	9,645	6,444	1,945	4,792	-	-	-	49,665	67,000	111.19%
TOTAL INCOME	12,688	13,889	21,251	9,351	15,932	19,497	17,831	9,703	11,875	-	-	-	132,017	154,004	128.58%
PRECEPT	202,050					202,049							404,099	404,099	
CTRS grants	5,875					5,876							11,751	11,751	
Balance													£ 160,020	£ -	



ROYSTON TOWN COUNCIL

Town Clerk: Miss Caroline Mills

Working Arrangement

Royston Town Council (RTC)

and

Royston Allotments and Gardens Association (RAGA)

- 1) RTC own the allotment site in Coombes Hole Royston and are responsible for the letting and termination of tenancies. RTC insures the site, portacabins, eco-toilet and garden machinery.
- 2) RAGA is an unincorporated body with membership open to all plot holders and others who wish to be garden members. Membership of RAGA is not compulsory. RAGA insure the contents of the portacabins.
- 3) It has become the custom for RAGA to carry out many of the practical tasks necessary to maintain the allotment site as a safe and tidy environment whilst ensuring day-to-day running costs are minimised. These tasks are as listed in Appendix 1 to this Working Arrangement. These tasks have been done with the knowledge and approval of RTC.
- 4) The parties to this Working Arrangement agree that whilst RAGA carries out these tasks with a view to ensuring the most cost-effective running of the allotment site, RAGA's participation is entirely reliant upon the availability of volunteers to provide these services. To the extent that RAGA should be unable to provide any of the tasks set out in Appendix 1 to this Working Arrangement, RTC and RAGA shall meet and agree in good faith alternative proposals to ensure the continued smooth running of the allotment site.
- 5) RAGA agree that they are content to continue to carry out these tasks so far as they are able and within any guidelines set by RTC. RTC, in recognition of the work done by RAGA on its behalf to maintain the site will:
 - 5.1) Allow use of hall/room at either the Town Hall or Market Hill Rooms free of charge for the purpose of RAGA's AGMs.
 - 5.2) Provide a petrol mower for cutting the pathways and pay for servicing of the mower as required.
 - 5.3) Supply a skip when required
 - 5.4) Provide fire extinguishers for club house and storage cabin including annual servicing
 - 5.5) Provide replacement padlocks as required
 - 5.6) Provide replacement taps as required

Dated:

Appendix1

Tasks generally carried out by RAGA

- 1) Cutting the grass on the two main paths; paying for petrol for the mower and arranging servicing periodically in conjunction with RTC.
- 2) Strimming grass which cannot be mown.
- 3) Cutting overgrown areas inside of the Green Street entrance and along the railway fences outside of notified bird nesting season, where possible, using the RTC provided skip for the removal and disposal of all waste.
- 4) Cutting inside of hedge along Coombes Hole outside of the notified bird nesting season for those plot holders who are unable to maintain the hedge abutting onto their plot, disposing of all prunings and accumulated rubbish from hedge using the RTC provided skip where possible.
- 5) Basic day-to-day maintenance of gates, which may include oiling hinges, applying anti-climb paint, and minor repairs, but which does not require re-hanging or other material maintenance to the gate and/or the fence surrounding the allotment site.
- 6) Maintain padlocks for the three gates, request new padlocks from RTC when damaged, changing the number annually and notifying all tenants of the new number. Keeping Town Clerk and the Police advised of the current number.
- 7) Provide notice boards to display RTC and RAGA notices.
- 8) Inspect plots on a regular basis, writing to plot holders whose plots appear to be falling into neglect. Informing RTC if the situation is not resolved. Carrying out follow up checks to see if position is corrected.
- 9) Notify RTC of any lots left in poor condition upon a plot holder vacating the site and agree actions to clear. Removal of any rubbish etc from plot to council skip where RAGA is reasonably able to do so as a part of a working party.
- 10) Informing RTC of requirement of a skip as required, removing rubbish to skip, providing access to skip operators on entry and departure.
- 11) Read the water meter on a regular basis and update RTC on the results.
- 12) Repairing taps where possible and requesting replacement taps from RTC as required.
- 13) When requested by RTC, make appointments and show potential new tenants around plots.
- 14) To send a representative from the committee to the Allotments Advisory sub-committee meetings in accordance with its terms of reference.
- 15) Carry out regular security checks of site and inform RTC of any problems and liaise with Police when criminal activity has occurred.
- 16) Enquiries made by the public regarding allotments passed on to RTC



Royston Town Council

Allotment Strategy



2025 - 2030

Adopted XX XXX minute XXXX

ALLOTMENT STRATEGY 2025-2030

1)

2) Contents

1	PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY
2	INTRODUCTION
3	CURRENT PROVISION
3.1	The Site
3.2	Management
3.3	Liaison with tenants
3.4	Self-management
3.5	Allotment Association
3.6	Site Maintenance
4	DEMAND FOR ALLOTMENTS
4.1	Allocation of Plots
5	TARGET AREAS OF THE STRATEGY
5.1	Ensuring Sufficient Allotments
5.2	Promoting Allotment Gardening
5.3	Encouraging Sustainability
5.4	Providing Good Administration
5.5	Maintaining Adequate Resources
6	EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

3) 1 PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

1.1 This allotment strategy has been developed for allotment sites provided by Royston Town Council (either directly or through devolved management), not for privately owned sites.

1.2 The overall objective of this strategy is to increase the ability and opportunity for people to cultivate allotment plots in Royston. The strategy seeks through its targets and initiatives to optimise the use of allotments for existing and potential plot holders, identify needs and meet demand.

1.3 This document provides a framework for the next five years to develop and manage allotments in partnership with the users, and provides a focus on five main target areas.

1. Ensuring sufficient allotments
2. Promoting allotment gardening
3. Encouraging sustainability
4. Providing good administration
5. Maintaining adequate resources

4) 2 INTRODUCTION

The provision of allotments by local authorities is a statutory duty. Royston Town Council will continue to provide and promote allotments not only because of this statutory requirement but because allotment gardening can make a valuable contribution to the town's sustainability by providing health, social, economic and environmental benefits. These can be summarised as

- Low cost fresh food production for the family
- Promotion of healthy affordable diets
- Healthy recreational activity
- The opportunity to maintain and develop skills
- Social contact and as a contribution to community spirit
- Better partnership working
- Reduction in food miles

Allotments are a valuable green sustainable open space within the urban environment. They contribute to the retention of traditional skills and wisdom as well as being highly beneficial to the wildlife of the area.

Current house building trends are towards smaller gardens, as pressure increases to optimise building land, and some householders have no individual garden. These circumstances disproportionately disadvantage those on lower incomes. Allotments provide an opportunity to adjust this imbalance.

5) 3 CURRENT PROVISIONS

1.5) 3.1 The Site

Royston Town Council operates one allotment site at Coombes Hole Royston

The site is currently divided into 127 x 5 rod plots (125 sq m). The site is accessed by three lockable gates and has secure fencing along the railway boundary and the boundary with Coombes Hole.

There are currently 7 water stand pipes; the use of water is included within the rent. There is a porta-cabin which is used as a club house and a shop, and a storage cabin. There is an electricity supply to the club house.

2.5) 3.2 Management

The Allotment site is currently managed on behalf of the Town Council by the Town Clerk and Administration Assistant. The Town Clerk and Administration Assistant deal with day to day administration of the Allotments, including:

- Enquiries from prospective tenants
- Waiting list
- Letting of plots and arranging new tenancy agreements
- Collecting and administering rents
- Administering tenancies
- Inspecting individual plots as request by the Allotment Association
- Regular health and safety inspections and general site inspections
- Resolving disputes and dealing with complaints
- Managing alterations and improvement works
- Servicing meetings between RAGA and the Town Council

3.5) 3.3 Liaison with tenants

Members of the Town Council are invited to attend RAGA's AGM which is held in September each year. This gives tenants and councillors the opportunity to discuss matters of common interest.

4.5) 3.4 Self-management

It is the policy of the Town Council to encourage allotment holders to participate in the running of the site.

5.5) 3.5 Allotment Association

Plot-holders have formed an association known as Royston Allotment and Gardens Association

(RAGA). The Association is affiliated to the National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners. The Town Council is also a member of this Society. Currently over 80% of plotholders are members of RAGA. The Association acts in the interests of all plot-holders. The Town Council supports RAGA. The Association works closely with the Council and officers and meets with town council members quarterly. The main objectives of RAGA are:

- To promote the interests of plot holders
- Organise bulk purchase of compost, manure and seeds
- Manage a shop on site
- Organise an open day
- To provide an independent forum for discussion and dissemination of information
- Offer tips on cultivation and promote good practice
- Encourage initiatives to protect members from theft, damage and trespass
- Access sources of funding for improvements to the site e.g. compost toilet

6.5) 3.6 Site Maintenance

With the agreement of the Town Council the Allotment Association carries out much of the day to day maintenance of the site

- Maintaining pathways and hedges
- Inspecting plots on behalf of the council
- Showing prospective tenants plots
- Providing the council with water meter readings
- Maintaining gates and padlocks
- Removing rubbish from vacant plots
- Repairing taps

6) 4 DEMAND FOR ALLOTMENTS

Royston has lost several allotment sites over the years and now has just the one site. At the same time the number of dwellings in the town has dramatically increased and the average size of garden per dwelling has significantly reduced.

In December 2024, 100% of allotment plots were let, with a waiting list of 134 people. Potential tenants are added to the waiting list on a first come, first served basis. The size of the waiting list varies from time to time but is currently increasing.

1.6) 4.1 Allocation of Plots

Applicants for plots must reside in Royston to be eligible to join the waiting list. (Act 1908 s.23 (1)). Initially applicants are given one plot of approximately 5 poles. Plot holders who can show that they have maintained their existing allocation to a reasonable standard may apply for a further plot(s) (up to a maximum of 20 poles); such application will be treated in the same way as new applicants so far as the waiting list is concerned.

7) 5 TARGET AREAS OF THE STRATEGY

- Ensuring sufficient allotments
- Promoting allotment gardening
- Encouraging sustainability
- Providing good administration
- Maintaining adequate resources

1.7) 5.1 Ensuring Sufficient Allotments

The Town Council will endeavour to meet its legal obligation to provide allotments in Royston for the residents of Royston. They will continue to search for suitable available land.

2.7) 5.2 Promoting Allotment Gardening

It is the Town Council policy to promote allotment gardening. Details of the Allotment site appear on the Town Council Web site. Articles about the allotments are included in the Town Council newsletter from time to time.

3.7) 5.3 Encouraging Sustainability

The Town Council encourages, and where possible supports, good environmental practice including use of organic alternatives to fertilizers and pesticides.

It supports plans to minimise water usage by monitoring water meter readings frequently to allow exceptional use/leaks to be detected, and encourages use of organic mulches to conserve soil moisture. The use of rainwater captured by individual plot holders is to be encouraged where practicable and it will help promote recycling on the site.

4.7) 5.4 Providing Good Administration

The Town Council will ensure that all allotment rents and fees continue to be collected in a timely manner and administered with this strategy.

The Town Council will continue to investigate the possibility of the Allotment Association taking over day to day management of the Allotment site on behalf of the Council.

5.7) 5.5 Maintaining Adequate Resources

The rental income from the site covers running costs with major capital costs having to be met from Town Council General Reserves. A Percentage of the salary costs of the Town Clerk, Deputy Town Clerk, Finance Assistant and Administration Assistant's time spent on allotment administration, are met from the rental income. The Town Council needs to balance the benefits of the allotments provision against the cost to the residents of Royston via the Council tax precept. It is the aim of the Town Council to make the allotment site self- financing. The level of rents and any concessionary schemes are considered annually bearing in mind the terms of the tenancy contract and the expenditure on the site. Twelve months' notice is to be given of any increase which then takes place on the 1st January.

The Town Council policy is to make each vacated plot sufficiently attractive for letting. It can include an offer of a rent free period to compensate the new tenants for having to clear the plot.

In addition to the above there may be opportunities to obtain some external funding through Government, EU and Lottery Grants.

The Town Council aims to make its allotment sites self-financing and to review rents and control expenditure to this end.

8) 6 Equality & Diversity

The Council has a policy on Equality and Diversity which can be accessed via this link: [Equality and Diversity Policy](#)

Agenda item: 8 – Festival of Colours

The Events Advisory Sub-committee has proposed to hold a Festival of Colours (Holi festival) on 15th March 2025.

Holi festival is a popular festival celebrated not only in India but also in the UK.

Previously people from Royston have been to other nearby places to celebrate this festival and it is good to know that Royston Town Council has shown an interest to organise this festival in Royston.

This event will be a community event and everyone will be welcome to attend this festival.

The expected number of people to attend this event is 200.

The venue: A part of Priory Gardens.

Timings: 12.00 to 4.00 pm

The cost for the event.

DJ: £450

Organic colours: 100 packets of 100 gm each £109 x 3 = £327.00

Tens licence: £21

2 first aiders: £124

Total: £922

The food for the event would be Indian street food where the caterers would sell their food. The caterers would give £90 per pitch as donations.

The event would need some volunteers, at least 15 of them.

Members are to approve a budget of up to £1,000 for the Festival of Colours event to be held on 15th March 2025.

Councillor Mary Antony 13th January 2025