

Clerk/RFO Annual Report

2023/2024

Introduction

Looking through the suite of Annual Reports compiled by Girton Parish Councillors and also from external groups it struck me just how much work and how much the distinct perspective of each councillor and group lead is included in the content of the report and also in the work they do. At the Annual Parish meeting this was also highlighted by the very different presentations. Bringing these different perspectives together as a team/different working teams I believe gives Girton Parish Council the potential to effectively increase use of Girton Parish Council Assets and the support they are providing to Girton organisations and residents.

The Reports cover the following:

1. Chair – List of different projects completed and underway.
2. Finance Committee – How your money has been utilised this year, some insight into the journey to reach this point and plans for the future.
3. HR Committee – How the people of the council have achieved the above
4. Other Committee Reports – More detail about the projects and the people involved.

A balance of governance, informed decision making, and action is required. All three need to be aligned so that the resulting actions are done well. The pace to make sure that these three remain aligned also needs to consider the Council's responsibility to get wider community buy-in through better understanding of the projects.

Themes for Girton Parish Council 24/25

I am including in my report the Themes highlighted by Girton Parish Council as they considered the precept in December 2023. More detail has been given on the precept setting process than before and many Thanks to the 95 Girton Residents who completed GPC's Budget and Precept survey in December 2023 and the many other people we have spoken with regarding Council spend.

Many of these themes have progressed since December 2023 as below.

Governance/Stepping up.

- CILCA training underway so that Girton has a qualified clerk and can potentially acquire General Power of Competency and aim for Local Council Award Scheme – Quality and Gold Award.
- GPC has attended a course on Asset Management Platform to begin to prepare a much more comprehensive Asset Register which will further our budget setting.

Community Engagement

- GPC has been pleased to attend an increasing number of community events over the last months including Girton WI AGM, Tennis Club AGM, Bowls Club AGM, Club 55 Events and Girton Glebe Assembly. We were also pleased to be able to invite all ages to our Annual Parish Meeting this may, hold the Coronation Event and to contribute to the Christmas Fayre with Lexi Green and Tom Lee of William Collyn Community Centre.

Asset Management

- Many of the tasks and new projects completed in the last year are mentioned in the Chair's report including the status of the Parish Ranger for which we will be recruiting in the next month.
- Our Finance Committee report shows an estimated 67% of our budget is now being spent on regular Operations work with Asset Management at 14% and New Projects at 19%. Putting in

place the resources including the Parish Ranger position is now assisting us in some of the work that has been outstanding for some time.

- Our Master planner is also looking at the immediate maintenance work required as well as longer term projects. From June Full Council, we will be reviewing the surveyor report provided to make sure that identified important maintenance is addressed as soon as possible.

What's the balance?

Our focus this year will be to progress and complete the items confirmed under our Workload Themes and to continue the work, that Council has done to increasingly look forward and develop three-year plans for longer term work for Girton.

Some of the information coming out of the Neighbourhood Plan SWOT Survey and the 2024 Girton Parish Survey also gives information on what you would like to see change now. This information will be brought to Council and added to our short-term and longer-term plans.

With available tools at our disposal including the specification of the Local Council Award Scheme, the Cilca training, increased community engagement and new governance finance and workload tools and third-party support to increase understanding and drive continuous improvement to support Councillors, Staff, External Organisations and Girton Residents.

We will also be looking to increase our collaboration with other levels of local government and fellow Parish Councils to increase information available to work consistently across parishes. There are blind spots on Highway maintenance, Trees and open space maintenance that can be improved with greater communication.

On the Finance side we will continue to develop and increase our reporting for us to identify areas of further efficiency and to increase the clarity of Council decision-making and requirements. Our workload tool in Jira will also allow us to report almost immediately on the actions of the council and to give a much better overview of progress.

And Finally, Thank you!

Thank you to the many people who have been working with us on this journey to increase the relevance of the Parish Council and who inform everything that the staff team does every day.

I hope that this report and also the other Annual Reports have highlighted the scope of Girton Parish Council and look forward to working with you to prioritise finance spend, operational tasks and exciting new projects for the parish.

Yvonne Murray
Clerk/RFO