



PRESS RELEASE

7 November 2024

Marlborough: A Friendly, Historic, Beautiful Market Town

Dear Editor

This release provides an update on actions the Town Council has taken in response to a town centre survey conducted in 2022.

Background

During September and October 2022, we asked residents for their thoughts about Marlborough town centre – what they liked about it, what would make it even better, and how they'd like to see it develop. We also asked them how they would describe the town to a friend.

We published the [results](#) in November 2022. Press releases were issued at the time (attached).

We used the results of the survey to help shape long term plans for Marlborough, and to identify priorities for residents when we applied for funding available to help make short term improvements from Wiltshire Council's [Wiltshire Towns Programme](#). (This important potential funding source will see £1m invested each year between 2021-2025 into a range of different projects to attract customers and investment to Wiltshire's high streets, to help support town centres as they continue to recover from the effects of the pandemic and rise to the challenge of online shopping.)

We've provided a detailed update below. If you prefer graphics to text skip to the last 3 pages for a summary in pictures!

What we've delivered

The words that residents used most frequently to describe their town were “*friendly, beautiful, historic*” and “*market*”. This was duly emblazoned across the front cover of a new [Town Guide](#) that we launched in July 2023, and comments from the survey directly shaped the introductory pages.

Street scene

There were a lot of comments about the **street scene** – shabby, missing or downright incorrect finger posts; lack of signposting; not enough seating and generally asking for a spruce-up. Last year we used Wiltshire Towns Programme funding to help us improve the street scene at no cost to our rates-paying residents, with [new planters and seating](#) already added to the town centre and with more to come. We've ordered **new signs**:

- “**Welcome to Marlborough**” signs at all the major approach roads to the town
- **Finger posts** throughout the town centre guiding visitors to car parks, tourist information, visitor attractions, the river, toilets, gardens and more
- A **visitor map and information board** next to the coach park in the George Lane long stay car park (sample mock-up shown below in ‘notes to editors’)

The multiple award-winning Marlborough in Bloom voluntary group came to an end because of the pandemic. Residents have noticed and asked us to bring back the floral displays around the town. See “*What's Next*” below.

River Kennet

Residents recognise that the **River Kennet** is a rare and special chalk stream and asked for more access to it. First, our new finger posts will point to it, making sure visitors to the High Street know that it exists! And, while we can't provide continuous paths due to some of the riverbank being on private land, we have created [nature trails](#) that follow the town-centre parts of the river as much as possible. We continue to add more riverside **seating** at Coopers Meadow, and there will be **picnic tables** coming to Stonebridge Wild River Reserve in the new year too.

Marlborough market

It is very clear both from the survey and from comments received more recently that our residents cherish their twice-weekly markets – after all, what would a market town be without a market? However, since the pandemic we've seen a decline in the number and range of stalls and therefore customers for those stallholders who remain faithful to the town. While the Town Council doesn't run the markets (operated by Wiltshire Council) we have formed a working party to look at ways that we might be able to work together to ensure our markets thrive, and we started by asking customers and stallholders for their thoughts. You can [read the survey results here](#).

Tourism

Survey feedback asked for more visible and accessible tourist information. As well as the town guide, new signage, finger posts, maps and generally making the town centre more appealing by improving the street scene, we've also created new trails, put Marlborough back on the [Great West Way](#) and continue to add Marlborough updates to the [Explore Wiltshire](#) app. Significantly we've also recently taken on an apprentice Information Officer who will be with us for 18 months, providing an extra pair of hands and helping us improve our information offering for both residents and our visitors while learning lots of new skills. See "*you asked we delivered*" (attached) for more information and links.

Environment

Residents asked us to do more in the context of the worldwide climate emergency and threats to nature. We've reduced our own **carbon footprint** by insulating the roof of the Town Hall and swapping out nearly 30-year old gas boilers for a new, efficient heating system. Our Grounds Team has replaced diesel hand-held tools with **electric**. We're extending our workshop at Salisbury Road Recreation Ground with the ultimate ambition that it will have **solar panels** and **EV charger points** for future vehicle upgrades, allowing us to switch to electric as soon as future funding allows. We also provide the power for the EV charger points at George Lane car park.

A **biodiversity audit** has recently concluded and we're working through the recommended options. Among other things, this will see more than 10 areas around the town sown with **wildflowers** to support pollinators, and we've identified several places where we will install **bat** and **hedgehog boxes**.

We continue to support the [Community Fridge](#) with the aim to reduce food waste: we provide a building free of charge for this great community initiative along with space, next to a pick-your-own produce garden and compost bins. We're told that just in the past 6 months it has prevented food waste going to landfill to the equivalent weight of a white rhino!

Public transport

Linked to both environmental concerns and ease of access, people highlighted the need for more **sustainable** public transport and routes to make it easier for people to use buses to get to the town centre and nearby destinations. We had already joined a study group looking at how public transport could be improved, where we voiced residents' long-desired direct bus links to nearby towns, especially Devizes. This has been delivered thanks to the very successful [Wiltshire Connect](#) service which now links towns and villages to Marlborough including specific market-day services, as well as places that tourists based in the town might like to visit such as Avebury, the Pewsey Vale and Honeystreet.

Traffic

Outside of the Wiltshire Towns Programme funding, the survey feedback also fed into a number of ongoing Council priorities and projects. Some, inevitably, related to traffic, congestion, parking and generally "**all things road**". While none of this is directly under the control of the Town Council, we continue to work with partners to look at what can be done. The main deliverable

here was a deep study into Marlborough traffic. [The report](#) was published recently predicting traffic volumes to the year 2041, shows the results of modelling potential changes to road layouts and the expected outcomes. The conclusion? The town will be gridlocked by 2041 by the sheer weight of increased volumes of traffic and the current road layout is the best option. So if there's no option to change the road layout, we need to focus on the wider road network and look at ways to reduce the volume (and/or weights) of traffic coming through our ancient streets.

We have made other improvements in this area. For example, introducing a pilot **residents parking** scheme, working on **safety** measures on a number of roads, taking steps to reduce traffic speeds and more.

[Please see the attached interactive PDF \("you asked we delivered"\) for a concise and graphic update on the outcomes of the 2022 survey](#)

What's next

Some projects take longer than others to reach completion, and there's a limit to the amount of Wiltshire Towns Programme funding, and resource (our own workforce), available in any given year. The Town Council will always prioritise its business-as-usual services to residents first, but we want to emphasise that there is more to come.

In October we submitted an **application** for the remaining 2024 and 2025 funding (£20,000 per year) aiming to use it to continue to deliver improvements to the town centre. The Town Centre Working party continues to meet and is working towards a long-term vision of how more improvements to the town centre could create a better experience and environment for pedestrians, people with mobility needs and cyclists.

If successful, the funding will be used to:

Priority 1: create a **vision** document for the town centre in the future

Priority 2: address **weed** issues on town centre pavements and surrounds

Priority 3: run a '**blooming Marlborough**' floral competition

The last page of this release lists some of the things that came out of the 2022 survey that haven't yet been delivered but which we certainly haven't forgotten about. This will involve asking Marlborough people to provide their input once again.

Outside of the grant funding, we're also continuing to push for road safety improvements, protect and improve the natural environment, support the markets and generally look at ways to ensure that Marlborough remains a friendly, beautiful, historic market town for years to come.

In conclusion

We hope, having seen that we not only listened to what people said in 2022, but also incorporated their comments into our projects and everyday priorities, that residents and businesses in the town will see that we are certainly not complacent – listed by residents in the [2022 survey](#) as the greatest risk to anything being done with their feedback.

Richard Spencer-Williams

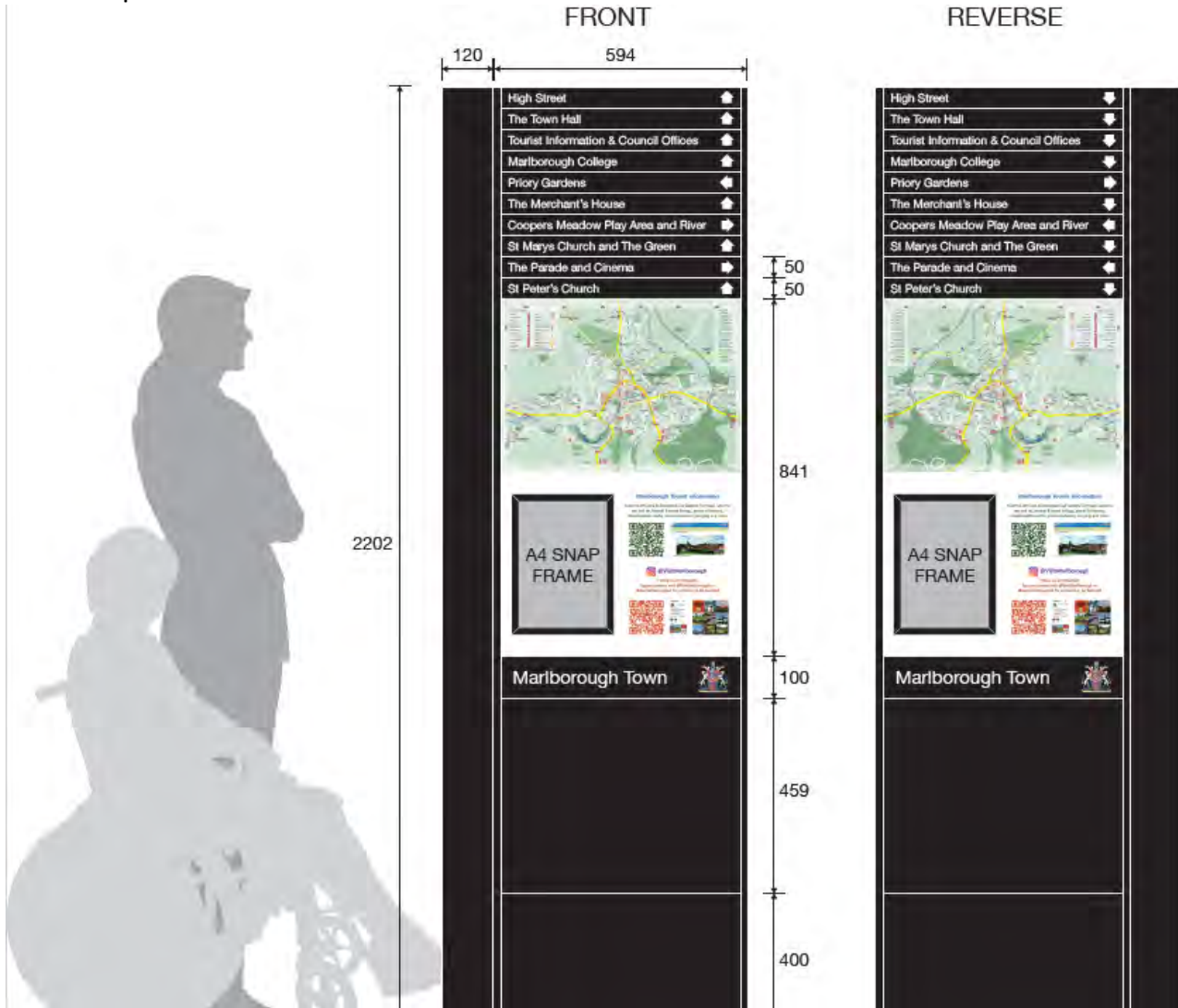
Richard Spencer Williams, PSLCC
Town Clerk

Notes to editors

Our press releases from 2022 are attached for reference and context.

Example Signage

SAMPLE ONLY: this is an early mock-up of the new visitor map that will be installed at George Lane car park





PRESS RELEASE

20 September 2022

Marlborough Town Centre Survey

Purpose

Marlborough Town Council has launched an online survey to discover what matters to people about Marlborough.

The results will be incorporated into short- and long-term plans being developed by the Town Council to protect and enhance the town centre. This will also make sure it is ready to take advantage of funding opportunities.

The Survey

Here follows the text from the website:

Marlborough is your town. Whether you live, work or play here or are a welcome visitor, Marlborough Town Council would like to hear from you. Please tell us what you like about it now, and just as important, we'd like you to share your ideas about what would make you love it more, and how you'd like to see it develop.

Marlborough High Street is consistently ranked among the best in the UK. Our historic, famously wide High Street is the jewel in the crown... and while we know there's so much more to beautiful Marlborough, some people might not.

The Town Council wants to keep Marlborough at the top of the rankings and shout about the whole town centre. It is determined to do everything it can to make sure the town remains vibrant and attractive for everyone.

From time to time, grants and funding opportunities become available. These might be as diverse as providing support to businesses, investing in town centre infrastructure, promoting town centre shopping, improving public transport and more. Whatever they are, the Town Council wants to have a plan in place now, so that it can act quickly to secure funding as it becomes available.

We have every reason to look at ways to protect our unique blend of fabulous retail, hospitality, leisure and visitor attractions and green spaces to be sure that, as trends and needs change, our town centre will always remain appealing and accessible to all, for years to come.

The survey closes on 11 October. We'll publish the results early in November.

On behalf of Marlborough Town Council

Richard Spencer-Williams

Richard Spencer Williams, PSLCC
Town Clerk

Notes to editors

Timescales

The survey is live on the Town Council website at <https://www.marlborough-tc.gov.uk/survey>. It runs until 11 October.

To read the news article written on 20 September please go to <https://www.marlborough-tc.gov.uk/news/news-articles/2690-town-centre-survey>

A hard-copy questionnaire will be available after 28 September and can be collected from the Town Council office at 5 High Street, Marlborough.

Councillors and Officers will be out and about in the town centre later in September and early in October to engage the community and highlight the survey, either at the Town Hall or at a Saturday market (dates to be confirmed).

The results will be published in early November.

Background

At a Planning Committee meeting in June 2022, Councillors discussed opportunities for funding for town centres. They agreed that it was important to identify longer term aspirations which could be delivered in stages as funds become available. They also recognised the need to consult with others, including businesses and residents, before a long-term plan could be agreed. [Click here to read the minutes of the meeting](#) (84/22 on page 3¹).

Town Centre Working Party

A Working Party was formed, tasked with building a progressive, stepped High Street/Town Centre plan. It will engage with businesses and the community to build this plan – and this survey is the first step towards that.

¹ https://marlborough-tc.gov.uk/images/Approved_Planning_Mins_27_June_2022.pdf

Councillor Jane Davies is the Chair, and Caroline Thomas the Vice Chair. Both represent Marlborough at a town and county level – Jane is the Wiltshire Councillor for Marlborough West, and Caroline for Marlborough East. Other members of the group are Councillors Nicholas Fogg, Jo Waltham, Mark Luson and Kelvyn Shantry together with the Town Clerk, Richard Spencer-Williams with support from the Town Council’s officers.

So far the Working Party has met 3 times, and agreed terms of reference, objectives and identified what it believes to be the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in relation to the current economic situation and the future development of the town centre. It will report back to Planning Committee meetings with recommendations.

The working party’s objectives are to:

- maximise the opportunity to engage with the Wiltshire Towns Program
- engage and work with local businesses, the community, and local organisations to develop a vision and long-term plan for ‘Marlborough Town Centre’
- create a progressive stepped ‘High Street/town’ plan with distinct outcomes to each
- include the river as a key feature
- positively support the street markets and their development
- assess and review High Street and resident parking arrangements
- include the High Street, The Parade, New Road, London Road, Hilliers Yard, Hughenden Yard, Kingsbury Street, George Lane, Coopers Meadow and Kennet Place
- encourage resident and visitor footfall and spend
- promote Marlborough as a place people want to visit

Before going further, all agreed it would be important to test the views of the working party by asking the wider community for their input. This survey is the first part of that. Once the results of the survey are known, wider engagement with the community will help to identify what actions might be taken to protect the unique, positive elements of the Town Centre now, and enhance it in future. This will help to create a vision and plan that can be implemented in steps and stages as and when funding becomes available.

The important part is having that plan prepared so that the Town Council will be ready to act as soon as funding opportunities become available.

Read the Terms of Reference



Marlborough Town
Centre Working Par

Wiltshire Towns Programme

Town centres have faced a number of challenges over the previous years, often all at once, including:

- The impact of Covid-19 and related shifts in shopping patterns

- A historic reliance on a shrinking retail offer which is vulnerable to changing consumer habits such as opportunities for online shopping and out of town retail
- Long term empty units/high levels of occupant turnover and a shrinking retail offer driven by the rise in on-line shopping; absentee landlords; mixed quality redevelopment and conversions into living space; and, in some instances, problems of anti-social behaviour

An important potential funding source is [The Wiltshire Towns Programme](#)², which will see £1m each year until 2025 invested into a range of different projects to attract customers and investment to Wiltshire's high streets, to help support town centres as they continue to recover from the effects of the pandemic and rise to the challenge of online shopping.

Further information

For enquiries, please contact us using the methods at the foot of the page.

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[https://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/\(S\(hniswsj4w151yf55bd0kmu55\)\)/documents/s203759/Wiltshire%20Towns%20Programme%20Presentation.pdf](https://cms.wiltshire.gov.uk/(S(hniswsj4w151yf55bd0kmu55))/documents/s203759/Wiltshire%20Towns%20Programme%20Presentation.pdf)



PRESS RELEASE

25 November 2022

Marlborough Town Centre Survey – The Results Are In and It’s Official: Marlborough is a friendly, historic, beautiful market town

The Council have been asking what residents, visitors or business owners think would help Marlborough thrive. In September and October we ran a survey that asked people for their thoughts about Marlborough town centre – what they like about it now, what would make it even better, and how they’d like to see it develop.

480 people took the time to reply and we published the results. Town Councillors will use the results of the survey both to help shape long term plans for Marlborough, and to apply for funding available to help make short term improvements from Wiltshire Council’s Wiltshire Towns Programme. This important potential funding source will see £1m invested each year until 2025 into a range of different projects to attract customers and investment to Wiltshire’s high streets, to help support town centres as they continue to recover from the effects of the pandemic and rise to the challenge of online shopping.

Richard Spencer-Williams

Richard Spencer Williams, PSLCC
Town Clerk

Notes to editors

Of 480 people [surveyed](#) during September and October, we asked how they would describe Marlborough to a friend or family member and the most frequently used words were friendly, beautiful, historic and market.

Councillors have been asking what residents, visitors or business owners think would help Marlborough thrive. In September and October we ran a survey that asked for thoughts about Marlborough town centre – what people like about it now, what would make it even better, and how they would like to see it develop.

480 people took the time to reply and Councillors have already considered all suggestions and identified how they can act on them.

Areas where suggestions are fully in the control of the Town Council – such as adding more public seating to open spaces, improving signage and tourist information – are already being added to our plans.

There are some suggestions where the Town Council doesn't have full control but may have influence – for example, improvements to traffic flows. We are already talking to partners such as Wiltshire Council to try to find a medium to long-term answer. The increasing amount of graffiti in the town also raised comments. While the Town Council only has direct control over graffiti on its own assets, we have committed to working with partners early in the New Year to raise awareness and seek a joint approach to tackle graffiti right across the town.

We have to recognise there are some suggestions from the survey that cannot be addressed by the Town Council. For example, the survey generated calls for a low-cost retailer and/or clothing shops catering for children and men. The Town Council has no control over what shops come to Marlborough, or the mix of retail types on the High Street.

Councillors continue to meet approximately every 3 weeks, and they would like to broaden the scope of the working party so that interested parties - e.g. businesses, environmental groups, residents, architects – can join the discussions about drawing up a Town Centre plan. This plan could be ambitious for the long term and we really welcome involvement. Anyone who would like to get involved is invited to email enquiries@marlborough-tc.gov.uk to let us know.

Read the latest news article on our website here: <https://www.marlborough-tc.gov.uk/news/news-articles/2730-its-official-marlborough-is-a-friendly-historic-beautiful-market-town>

[For the background to the survey, a summary of the survey results and/or to read the full survey reports please click here](#)



you asked...

“address traffic congestion”

“smoother traffic flows”

“address air quality”

“make it safer for pedestrians and cyclists”

“improved access for people with disabilities”



“more parking for visitors and residents”



“more prominent signposting”



“visible & accessible visitor information”



“improve the street scene”

we delivered...

- A Traffic Study to understand traffic flow options
- More 20MPH zones on the way
- No Idling campaign – switch it off!
- Trees in the town centre
- Speedwatch (volunteers needed)
- Safety measures at Frees Avenue
- Repainted zebra crossings with brighter, flashing lights



- Kennet Place residents parking
- Five more 30-min free parking bays coming to the High Street
- Finger posts, a visitor map at George Lane car park and “Welcome to Marlborough” signs are on the way
- A New Town Guide with content taken from survey feedback
- We’re on the Explore Wiltshire App and the Great West Way
- Recruited an apprentice Information Officer
- Cleaned existing road signs
- Repainted street furniture and new benches & trees to High Street

you asked...

we delivered...

“be greener”



- Free use of a building for the Community Fridge and PYO herb garden
- A biodiversity audit and plan
- New walking & cycling links in progress with Wiltshire Council
- Electric tools for our Grounds Team
- Insulated the roof of the Town Hall and updated the heating system

“larger, more diverse market”



We set up a market working party and conducted surveys

“improve access to the Kennet”



- Nature trails which follow the river
- More benches at Coopers Meadow
- Picnic pods are coming to Stonebridge Meadow

“EV charger points”

“sustainable tourism”

Working in partnership with Wiltshire Council we provide the power for the charger points in George Lane car park

“easier access by public transport”



Attended lobby group Option 24/7; ran a bus survey. All were input to Wiltshire Connect : new bus routes to Devizes, railway stations, Avebury and villages



We haven't forgotten about your other comments. We're working towards:

Making the town centre more accessible for the disabled, pedestrians and cyclists, including working with Wiltshire Council to link the railway path to the Business Park and on to the town centre, providing a traffic-free alternative for walkers and cyclists

Working more closely with Wiltshire Council when planning roadworks

Getting Marlborough blooming again

Creating wildflower areas and adding boxes for bats and hedgehogs

Tidying up weedy gutters and pavements

Pushing for improved road safety, especially at Manton, Frees Avenue, Port Hill/The Common and Poulton Hill

Working with Wiltshire Council to make sure our market thrives

Creating a longer-term vision for what the town centre could look like in the future