

Ware Town Council

Business Plan

2024 to 2028



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1. Environment initiatives and Biodiversity – Getting to Carbon Zero by 2030
2. Maintaining and developing Ware Town Centre
3. Maintaining and maximising our assets
4. Communication and Engagement, including events.
5. High quality governance

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What is Ware Town Council Business Plan?

This Plan sets out the Council's vision, objectives and key priorities that it will deliver either directly or by trying to increase its influence on the relevant third party, such as East Herts District Council and Hertfordshire County Council.

This Business Plan is the Town Council's blueprint for what it will focus on over the next 4 years. It aims to give a clear picture to residents, stakeholders and partners as to what the Council is trying to achieve and how it intends to go about it.

Having an agreed strategy will provide a framework for the Town Council to work within, enabling it to operate efficiently in a consistent and co-ordinated way.

The Business Plan aims to help the local community to have a better understanding of what the Town Council does and doesn't do.

At the heart of the Business Plan is a focus on working in collaboration with local people to make Ware an even better place to live, work or visit.

The Plan will help drive and determine the direction and content of all other internal strategies and resources of the Council and will be used to plan activities and set the budget for each year.

The Council will ensure that sufficient resources (financial, staffing, equipment etc.) are made available to achieve the objectives detailed in this Plan. It will also ensure that both Councillors and officers receive the appropriate training to carry out their roles efficiently and effectively and within the agreed legal framework.

It is intended to become a 'live' document which the Town Council will update regularly, enabling it to track and monitor its progress against the key priorities. It will be publicly available, and progress will be reported and monitored.

In 2022 the council achieved gold standard in the local council award and plan to renew in 2026.

The Ware Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in 2023.

Ware: The Local Picture

Ware is a town of around 19,600 people in Hertfordshire, England close to the county town of Hertford, and lies on the River Lea. It is also a commuting town for London, with regular rail services between Ware railway station and London Liverpool Street

The town lies on the north-south A10 road, and the east-west A414 (for Hertford to the west and Harlow the east).

Ware has many listed buildings by Historic England, many timber framed, four grade I, fifteen grade II* and 181 grade II, including the remains of a fourteenth-century friary, now the local council offices and a conference centre called The Priory and Fletcher's Lea.

The town is also famous for its many 18th-century riverside gazebos, several of which have been restored recently.

Today the town's main employer is GlaxoSmithKline which has a large plant in the town. The Town has many local community groups, a Sports and Leisure Centre at Wodson Park and an open-air Lido in the grounds of The Priory.

Management of the Council

Ware Town Council – an overview

There are three tiers of local government locally, each with different responsibilities.

Ware Town Council is the first and most local tier, with an important role to play in promoting the town, representing its interests and supporting the work of different groups in the community. Decisions made by the Council will be made at formal meetings which are open to the public.

The details of the committees and the items delegated to the Town Clerk are detailed in the Scheme of Delegation which is available on the Town Council website.

Ware Priory Charity / Priory Trading

Ware Town Council is the sole managing Trustee for The Priory Charity and runs the charity on its behalf via a ten-year management until March 2033.

Objectives of the charity

The Charity may provide such charitable purposes for the general benefit of the inhabitants of the town and district of Ware, in the county of Hertfordshire, as the Trustee from time to time decides.

East Herts District Council is the second tier and is responsible for services including car parking, waste management, housing, planning applications and street cleaning.

Hertfordshire County Council's responsibilities include highways (relating to both roads and pavements), education, health and social services, public rights of way and libraries.

Councillors:

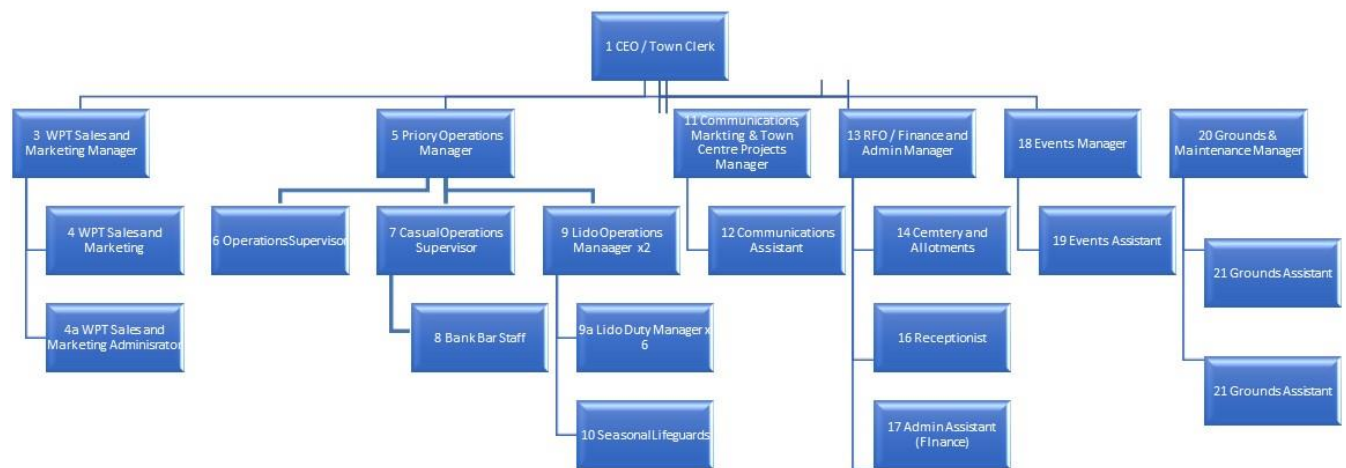
The strategic direction for the Council is provided by its 11 elected Councillors who represent five wards across the Town. Elections are held every four years, the next being in 2027.

Each year, the Council elects from amongst its members the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor.

Councillors are unpaid and receive no allowance for their duties, during the period of the plan this will be reviewed as part of the aspiration for greater diversity and inclusion for councillors. There is, however, a small allowance given to the mayor to meet any expenses involved in fulfilling the Mayoral duties.

Town Council Staff:

The Council currently employs 16 staff. The council’s officers routinely manage on a day-to-day basis, ensuring the delivery of services to residents. A number of seasonal staff are employed to support our catering and Lido operation.



Financial Information Income and Expenditure

The Town Council is mainly funded by the residents of Ware, through the ‘precept’. This is levied by the Town Council and collected on its behalf by East Herts Council as part of the Council Tax bill. £207 per year per band D property of Ware’s residents’ Council Tax funds the Town Council precept (2024/25 financial year). The total budgeted expenditure for the Council is around £1.9M with circa £700K of operating income per year. Project costs average £400Kpa over the period of the plan. Details of the Councils budgets and of previous spending are provided on the Council’s website. Except for a small contingency sum, the budget is fully allocated. Therefore, unless the Town Council can secure new grant funding, which is only available for certain activities/ in certain instances, any new activities or facilities which require additional resources would either have to replace an existing activity, be funded from reserves, or be funded via an increase in the precept. Any un-used contingency or under spend would, however, be able to be allocated to a reserve fund and built up for specific purposes.

Figures quoted in the plan are based on capital expenditure or revenue expenditure over the four years of the plan.

Reserves and balances

Town Council adopts a risk-based approach to its levels of balances which is reviewed annually. Currently the minimum level of balances is set at approximately four months gross operating costs, within the former Audit Commission guidelines of 3-12 months costs. Reserves are held above this for specific, earmarked purposes.

Ware Town Council's Main Areas of Responsibility

- Provision of allotments.
- Management of the cemetery
- Organising various events and activities in Ware inc Ware Festival.
- Provision of various grants.
- Representing the community of Ware
- Supporting the developing of a vibrant town centre.

Working as sole managing trustee for Ware Priory Charity

- Management, maintenance and development of Ware Priory as a conference and events centre
- Management of Ware Lido
- Play areas, MUGA, exercise equipment and skate park.
- Management of Ware Priory Grounds
- Management of Ware Priory toilets and cafe

The Council is also represented on several external organisations.

- Town Twinning
- Southern Maltings
- Ware Drill Hall
- Ware Museum
- Ware Society
- Ware Charities
- Ware Air Training Corps
-

The Council financially supports.

- Ware in Bloom
- Ware Museum
- Dickensian Evening
- Tourist Information Point
- Men's Shed
- Ware Foodbank

Ware Town Council is proud of its tradition of supporting local groups and organisations in the town through its Grant Fund. Each year we award grants to local organisations, clubs and societies who meet the following criteria.

- Promotion of health and wellbeing including reduction of loneliness
- Youth facilities
- Projects that support Environment and biodiversity initiatives for community groups and within the community.
- Community Events
- Activities that contribute to the vibrancy of the town centre and attract visitors to Ware.

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Ware Town Council Values

<p>Adaptable Accept and work with change</p>	<p>Forward thinking We start with the end in mind</p>
<p>Willing to adapt work practices to support team members working together to resolve issues, meet targets, deadlines and challenges.</p> <p>Move out of our comfort zone and question how you do things.</p> <p>Work with others to meet joint challenges and reduce duplication.</p>	<p>Initiative: We are proactive and use our creativity to identify and resolve problems.</p> <p>Strive for excellence: We will seek innovative solutions to reduce costs, identify new ways of working and generate income.</p> <p>Plan ahead – anticipate outcomes ahead of changes.</p> <p>Use new technologies and working practices to make service improvements and reduce costs.</p>
<p>People Orientated We are one team with common goals.</p>	<p>Integrity We are honest and open in all our dealings and deliver on our promises.</p>
<p>Customer focussed: We understand and aim to meet our customers diverse needs, treating them fairly and with respect.</p> <p>Expertise: We recognise and value the differences, skills, knowledge and experience of all in our team.</p> <p>Empowerment: We encourage team members to take initiative.</p> <p>Listen to improve: Engage with residents and staff- be seen, invite feedback and consult with them to inform our improvement plans.</p> <p>Always be approachable, calm and respectful.</p> <p>Clearly communicate our decisions, without using jargon.</p>	<p>Accountable: We are accountable for our actions-admit mistakes, put them right and learn from them.</p> <p>We challenge poor or unfair practice and feedback.</p> <p>Keep personal data confidential and secure.</p> <p>Consistency: We ensure consistency and transparency in all we do</p> <p>Professionalism: We act professionally in challenging situations.</p>

Ware Town Council Vision

To continuously improve the quality of life for the community, whilst conserving our heritage and environment and retaining financial security through the maximisation of our assets. Operating with integrity in a professional way which ensures value for money for the residents.

We will do this in several ways:

Key Priority themes for 2024-2028

The Town Council has identified five key priority themes that will form the focus of our work over the next four years. The themes are:

1. Environment initiatives and Biodiversity – Getting to Carbon Zero by 2023
2. Maintaining and developing Ware Town Centre
3. Maintaining and maximising our assets
4. Communication and Engagement, including events.
5. High quality governance

Environment Initiatives and Biodiversity

Ware Town Council passed a resolution to achieve carbon neutral by 2030 (appendix 1). We will work on the principle of reduce, reuse and recycle.

We will engage and facilitate the community of Ware to achieve reduce levels of carbon emissions, waste minimisation, energy efficiency, renewable energy and sustainable transport.

We will work on projects that support biodiversity and the natural environment.

We will publish our progress in an annual report.

Climate and Biodiversity Manager	Target date	Estimated cost	Project Manager
<p>What will we do?</p> <p>We will appoint a Climate and Biodiversity Manager to support our initiatives and work with the community.</p> <p>Budget 2024/25 - £44K Budget 2025/26 - £45K Budget 2026/27 - £46K Budget 2027/28 - £47K</p>	April 2024	£182K	TJP

Carbon Offsetting	Target date	Estimated cost	Project Manager
<p>What will we do?</p> <p>We will measure our carbon output and offset emissions in excess of our carbon neutral aspirations.</p> <p>We will review options to use the same level of funding required for offsetting for local initiatives which encourage biodiversity and carbon reduction.</p> <p>Budget 2024/25 - £11K Budget 2025/26 - £9K Budget 2026/27 - £7K Budget 2027/28 - £5K</p>	April 2025	£32K	C&B Mgr.

Aim: To measure our carbon output as an organisation and publish the information on an annual basis.

Action: To research software options such as SAGE Earth and implement measurement by April 2024.

Library of things	Target date	Estimated cost	Project Manager
<p>What will we do?</p> <p>We will set up and run a library of things.</p> <p>A membership scheme where you can borrow household equipment for a nominal fee, use it and return it. We will be able to measure how much waste has been saved from landfill by borrowing instead of buying.</p> <p>Budget 2024/25 - £30K Budget 2025/26 - £10K Budget 2026/27 - £10K Budget 2027/28 - £10K</p>	April 2024	£60K	C&B Mgr.

Cycle Bus and Walking to School	Target date	Estimated cost	Project Manager
<p>What will we do?</p> <p>We encourage healthy lifestyles and reduced carbon emissions by the use of cycle bus and walking to school.</p> <p>Budget 2024/25 - £8K Budget 2025/26 - £3K Budget 2026/27 - £8K Budget 2027/28 - £3K</p>	Sept 2024	£22K	C&B Mgr.

Reduce and Recycle Projects	Target date	Estimated cost	Project Manager
<p>What will we do?</p> <p>We will encourage the reduction of non recyclable materials within our community with particular focus on</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodegradable Takeaway packaging • Disposable Vapes • Recycle bins for High St • Teracyle recycling boxes <p>Budget 2024/25 - £10K Budget 2025/26 - £10K Budget 2026/27 - £10K Budget 2027/28 - £10K</p>	Sept 2024	£40K	C&B Mgr.

Increased biodiversity (trees and shrubs)	Target date	Estimated cost	Project Manager
<p>What will we do?</p> <p>We will encourage greater planting of trees and shrubs within our community providing funding for initial set up and maintenance.</p> <p>We will work with other authorities to ensure opportunities for greater biodiversity are realised within areas they manage.</p> <p>Budget 2024/25 - Budget 2025/26 - £20K Budget 2026/27 - £4K Budget 2027/28 - £4K</p>	Sept 2025	£28K	C&B Mgr.

Infrastructure

Aim: To improve the visual aspect of the area, including the gateway areas.

Action: To take steps to provide or encourage the principal authority to provide plants/bulbs in grass verges/areas, including identifying parcels of land which would benefit from such planting.

Action: To identify areas of verges and open spaces that could be left uncut to encourage greater biodiversity.

Action: Work with Ware in Bloom to support our aspirations

Aim: To ensure all significant developments support Environment and Biodiversity

Action: To review and comment on planning applications as required.

Transport

Aim: To enable those without access to private transport to enjoy a better quality of life, to facilitate local solutions to local transport problems.

Action: To promote the improvement of public transport and encourage its increased use by the general public.

Action: To support local transport initiatives' such as the Community Rail Partnership scheme.

Aim: To encourage cycling as a form of transport around Ware and its surrounding area. To encourage the use of cycles to improve the health of the Ware. The reduction of carbon-based emissions.

Action: To facilitate the provision of decent cycle paths.

Action: To facilitate the provision of cycle parks

Action: To investigate the provision of options for short term hire cycle schemes

Environmental Policy Objectives

Energy Usage and Efficiency

We will reduce our energy usage, all energy used will be sustainably sourced.

Waste Reduction and Recycling

We will work on the basis of

Reduce – the amount of waste we send to landfill.

Reuse – items before replacing them.

Recycle – wherever possible.

Biodiversity

We will promote biodiversity in all areas controlled by WTC and those areas that we have influence. We will encourage wild areas.

Carbon Footprint Reduction

We will be carbon neutral by 2030, we will use carbon offsetting to cover any overage based on our targets and will include this in our financial budget.

Carbon Footprint Reduction in Our Communities

We will lead by example by providing information and guidance to our communities to facilitate reduced carbon output.

Pollution

We will encourage modes of transport that are less polluting. We will adhere to rules and guidelines to avoid polluting rivers and water courses.

Water Management

We will introduce water reduction measures at all our facilities and seek options for rainwater harvesting. We will ensure that water is safe for the use that it is intended.

Sustainable Transport

We will be an advocate and work with others to provide access to safe, affordable safe accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, reducing pollution at an affordable cost.

Plastic Usage

We will eliminate the use of single use plastics in all our organisations and reduce the use of other plastics. We will encourage the same practices with contractors and suppliers.

New and Refurbished Buildings

When developing new buildings or adopting ones that we own the freehold we will consider energy efficiency, water waste management and the passive environmental impact of transporting materials as part of the design. Our sites will aim to have the latest environmental standards and will have solar panels, recycled water, top grade insulation and PIR sensors to minimise energy use.

Maintaining and developing Ware Town Centre.

To encourage and promote a vibrant town centre that meets the needs of local people and attracts visitors, striving for a pleasant, clean and safe environment.

Aim: To support and strengthen Wares 'independent' retail offer, but not at the total exclusion of larger multiples that meet the everyday needs of Ware residents. (while at the same time not pursuing such a restrictive policy that the number of empty retail units is increased).

Action: To support the concept of a 'Town Team' or Business Association for Ware to facilitate coordination of town centre initiatives.

Action: Maintain a programme of Town Centre spring cleaning (Budget £38K).

Action: To provide additional equipment, bins, benches etc Town Centre to improve the street scene. (budget £40K)

Action: Working with other authorities to support enhanced wayfinding and signage, along with section 106 funding where appropriate.

Action: To maintain and develop a market under the provision of the Food Act (Budget £33K).

Action: To support the introduction of the Community Bank hub.

Action: To support the work of Ware in Bloom (Budget £5K)

Action: To support the work of Dickensian Evening (Budget £7K)

Safety and Security

Aim: To maintain Ware as a safe environment for residents and visitors, while at the same time encouraging wider economic development which safeguards sustainability.

Action: To maintain an active monitored CCTV system, with a reserve fund of £40K for future upgrades. (Budget £20K)

Action: To work with the police and other authorities to provide focus on areas of concern within Ware.

Action: To attend quarterly and other ad hoc meetings with the police service and facilitate public consultations to gain the view of the community.

Action: To play an active role within the Community Safety Partnership

Tourism

Aim: To support the development of tourism, while at the same time encouraging wider economic development which safeguards the sustainability of Ware as a service centre for its residents and the neighbouring parishes.

Action: We will continue to fund the Tourist Information Point (Budget £9K)

Action: We will actively promote events organised by WTC and others to encourage more visitors to the Town.

Action: We will support initiatives such as Wares the Music and Herts Book week.

Christmas Lights

Aim: To ensure that the Christmas light scheme enhances the visual appearance of the Town during the festive season to encourage more visitors.

Action:

Ware Christmas Lights	Target date	Estimated cost	Project Manager
<p>What will we do?</p> <p>During the life of the plan, we will review the Christmas lights to determine potential enhancements both within the High Street and adjacent areas not currently covered.</p>	November 2020	£100K	SF

Trees in Amwell End	Target date	Estimated cost	Project Manager
<p>What will we do?</p> <p>We will promote the planting of trees in Amwell End to improve the street scene and encourage biodiversity.</p>	April 2026	£100K	SF

Communication, Engagement and Events

The Town Council recognises the role of good communications in building positive relationships with the public and with organisations that provide services in the town and as such will continue to seek to improve established channels of communication.

To promote and represent the community's views and aspirations at local, county, regional and national level.

To engage with voluntary groups in the area with practical support and via grants. To encourage the provision of and use of existing community buildings and facilities.

The council passed a resolution (App2) Representation of our residents in June 2023.

Representation and Communication

AIM: To help ensure that the decision makers are aware of and take note of public opinion. To help increase the awareness of the facilities and business in Ware. To improve and promote economic activity in the Ware. To act as an aid to those people who may be considering moving to the area. To ensure that as many people as possible are aware of the sporting, community facilities, social groups and volunteer organisations.

ACTION: To listen to the views of the local community and make representations on its behalf whenever possible. To promote the work of the Town Council via use of electronic media.

To help to create a socially inclusive and caring community which embraces all its residents, irrespective of age, culture, income, race, sexual orientation or religion, and which seeks to develop their well-being, knowledge, understanding and cooperation.

Aim: To engage with the community in a two-way dialogue to improve understanding

Action:

1. Post regular news of Town Council initiatives on the website and social media channels.
2. Provide an opportunity at each Town Council meeting for public questions and comments.
3. Make the Town Council Business Plan available on the Town Council website.
4. Publish an annual report covering Town Council activities.
5. Produce an annual ESG report
6. Produce an annual Environment report
7. Continue to invite representatives of outside agencies to address the Council on key matters of interest (to Town Council meetings but also to round table discussions with the Council).
8. Work with other statutory and voluntary bodies, businesses, residents and other stakeholders as appropriate, in order to facilitate coordinated effort.
9. Appoint representatives to appropriate external agencies and committees.
10. Attend relevant conferences and meetings.
11. Host monthly meet your councillor events

Neighbourhood Plan

Aim: To ensure that the adopted Neighbourhood Plan is implemented

Action: To work with representatives from the Neighbourhood Plan group to review at least 2pa the adopted plan and its implementation.

Heritage

Aim: To enhance and promote the historic and cultural heritage of Ware and safeguard its unique identity and its natural and built environment.

Action: To support the work of Ware Society with representation at group meetings.

Civic Tradition

Aim: We will seek to maintain the Civic Traditions in Ware

Action: Replace the current mayoral chain and other regalia (Cost £16K)

Action: Re establish Twinning events through invitation and visits (Budget £8K)

2024 Visit to Cormeilles

2025 Wulfrath

2026 Invitation to Cormeilles

2027 Wulfrath

Action: We will maintain the tradition of recognising those that have given outstanding service to the community of Ware through the Freedom of Ware award.

Events	Target date	Estimated cost	Project Manager
<p>What will we do?</p> <p>Aim: To support the provision of good quality, well-managed events and festivals in the town, with its own financial support focused on community celebrations/events</p> <p>We will continue with a significant events programme which we will review annually.</p> <p>Events planned for 2024 include.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easter Activities at The Priory • School Holiday activities programme • Monthly Cinema in Fletchers Lea • Film Festival in October • Ware Festival month • Real Ale Festival • Promoting Health and Wellbeing • Environment and Biodiversity in the Community • 80th Anniversary of D Day event • Food Festival • Summer Concerts 	<p>April 2024 Ong</p>	<p>£220K</p>	<p>RM</p>

Supporting Community Groups

Community Grants	Target date	Estimated cost	Project Manager
<p>What will we do?</p> <p>We will continue with our grant programme to support community groups; we will review annually.</p> <p>Details of the grant applications can be found on the WTC website.</p> <p>Grant budget 2024/25 include.</p> <p>General Grants £38K Loneliness Grants £5K Capital Grants £25K.</p> <p>Community Groups grants</p> <p>Ware Museum £7.5K Dickensian Evening £1.6K Ware in Bloom £1.3K Men’s Shed £2.5K Southern Maltings £50K</p>	<p>April 2024 Ong</p>		<p>SH</p>

Aim: To show appreciation of the work of the volunteer groups in the community

Action: To host a mayor’s reception to recognise and thank Wares volunteers for their contribution to the community.

Action: To introduce a volunteer groups fresher’s fayre as part of the Annual Town meeting

Health

Aim: To encourage access to open spaces and promote health and wellbeing by providing allotments and supporting sports groups and organisations.

Action: Support Wodson with their development plans.

Action: We will provide grant support to organisations promoting health and wellbeing.

Action: We will look at signposting activities that reduce the impact of loneliness in the community. We will encourage grant funding from WTC (budget £20K).

Action: We will actively work with commercial and community groups to provide access to the Lido for swimming lessons.

Action: We will run a series of events promoting health and wellbeing

Aim: To provide healthy and safe play facilities, to encourage young people to spend more time outdoors and engage in physical exercise. To have a well maintained up to date play area.

Action: To pursue the possibility of introducing further play areas, skate parks and bike ramps.

AIM: To encourage walking and cycling as a hobby and as a means of helping people maintain or improve their fitness levels.

Action: To improve and where possible increase the quality and amount of foot paths and cycleways in the parish.

Aim: To improve the visual aspect of the area, including the gateway areas.

Action: To take steps to provide or encourage the principal authority to provide plants/bulbs in grass verges/areas, including identifying parcels of land which would benefit from such planting.

Action: To identify areas of verges and open spaces that could be left uncut to encourage greater biodiversity.

Action: Work with Ware in Bloom to support our aspirations

Youth

Aim: To facilitate engagement and provision of support services for Ware Youth

Action: We will work with other authorities and organisations to review the benefits for our community and will deal with each issue on a case-by-case basis.

Action: We will encourage applications from youth providers to apply for grant funding to support their activities.

Maximising assets

We will be a Town Council that proactively invests and manages its own assets and supports key partners and community groups to invest in their own.

To achieve this, we will carry out the following activities and initiatives:

Aim: We will have a greater focus on commercial activity to further diversify our income streams.

Action:

1. Maximise the usage and income capability of The Priory and Fletchers Lea
2. Be flexible in responding to other commercial opportunities as they arise.

Aim: To maximise Council 'cash' assets

Develop investment strategy, tactics and their execution which optimises return including asset acquisition and disposal whilst fitting with our ethical objectives.

The Priory

Priory Repairs and Maintenance	Target date	Estimated cost	Project Manager
<p>What will we do?</p> <p>During the life of the plan, we will manage the maintenance items highlighted in the condition survey to ensure the building and grounds are kept in a good condition and are fit for purpose for the users. In addition, we will improve sound insulation and refurbish the reception area.</p> <p>Budget: Year 2024/25 £70K Year 2025/26 £35K Year 2026/27 £20K Year 2027/28 £10K</p>	Ong	£135K	MW
<p>We will resurface the service road, car park and tarmac paths.</p> <p>Year 2024/25 £20K Year 2025/26 Year 2026/27 £85K Year 2027/28</p>	March 2027	£105K	MW

Fletchers Lea refurbishment	Target date	Estimated cost	Project Manager
<p>What will we do?</p> <p>Built in 2007 there are areas of Fletchers Lea requiring refurbishment including the toilets. We will work to make the main hall suitable for the variety of bookings undertaken.</p>	April 2026	£80K	KM

Priory Grounds: Café / Public Toilets	Target date	Estimated cost	Project Manager
<p>What will we do?</p> <p>We will develop and extend the existing toilet building to provide a community café and public toilets.</p> <p>*We anticipate receiving £100K of external funding towards the project and circa £15Kpa rental income from the café operator.</p>	March 2025	£285K*	TP

Priory Moorings	Target date	Estimated cost	Project Manager
<p>What will we do?</p> <p>We will explore the development of the area adjacent to The Priory Island for circa 10 moorings.</p> <p>We will seek grant funding for this project and anticipate receiving circa £50Kpa mooring income from April 2027.</p>	March 2025	£200K	SH

Priory Grounds	Target date	Estimated cost	Project Manager
<p>What will we do?</p> <p>We will add additional electric power into the Priory Grounds to support our extended events programme and reduce reliance on generators.</p> <p>We will install a sound system to enable improved communication / audio at our extended events programme.</p>	July 2024	£20K	RM
<p>We will develop the play area to provide additional seating and shaded areas.</p>	July 2025	£10K	LV

Cemetery, Allotments and Closed Churchyard	Target date	Estimated cost	Project Manager
<p>What will we do?</p> <p>We will repair the road surfaces.</p> <p>Cemetery Allotment St Marys Churchyard</p>	April 2025	£50K	MW
<p>We will repair the Cemetery wall at Watton Road</p>	March 2027	£25K	MW

Ware Lido

Improved Customer experience:

Customers are at the forefront of all that we do, we will seek to improve the customer experience by introducing the following initiatives.

Extended swimming season	Target date	Estimated cost	Project Manager
<p>What will we do?</p> <p>We will trial an extended season to include cold water swimming. If the trial is successful, we will consider continuing into future years and opening the Lido all year.</p>	April 2024		KH

Refurbish the Lido building.	Target date	Estimated cost	Project Manager
<p>What will we do?</p> <p>We undertake a feasibility study to understand the best way to improve the Lido building to improve the customer experience and make it more financially sustainable.</p> <p>We will consult with the community during 2024 and potentially borrow funds to enable the work to be completed. Repayment costs are estimated to be £82Kpa.</p> <p>£100K has been allocated for the preliminary works during the 2024/25 year.</p>	Dependant on Feasibility study	<p>£246K</p> <p>£100K</p>	KH

High Quality Governance

Ware Town Council will be professional, open and accountable with sound financial management of Town Council resources.

We will create a sustainable budget which maximises use of council assets and optimises revenue streams to provide long term financial security and optimum spending options.

To achieve this, we will carry out the following activities and initiatives:

Aim: To have sufficient contingency reserves to meet unexpected business requirements.

Action: To create a contingency reserve of £500K

Action: To create a Priory reserve of £200K

Aim: To streamline the administrative function, or to maximise the benefits of operating as separate organisations

Action: To integrate Ware Priory Trading into WTC with effect from April 2024.

Aim: To benchmark WTC against nationally recognised standards

Action: To apply for the Local Council Award Scheme Gold accreditation in 2026.

Aim: To streamline WTC administration activities to aid efficiency

Action: Review the functionality for server vs cloud based electronic filing

Action: Maintain our approach to archiving and file management and a paper lite operation.

Aim: To speed up the delivery of Business Plan and Project objectives

Action: Introduce greater focus on project management across all functions

Aim: To ensure Councillors and staff have the required skills to deliver the business plan

Action: Develop a Councillor training and development programme to ensure that they have the support, knowledge and skills needed for their role

Action: Undertake a review of training and development needs for staff.

Aim: To manage the council's income and expenditure related to 'development funding'

Action: Review the strategy on use of 106 funding.

Action: Develop a process with criteria for deciding on grants & loans.

Aim: To seek a fair share of investment in the town by local, county and regional authorities.

Action: Work collaboratively with other authorities stating the clear business case for Ware.

Aim: To achieve a greater degree of influence over service delivery and development in the town to ensure that the best interests of Ware are considered.

Action: We will work with other authorities to review the benefits for our community and will deal with each issue on a case-by-case basis.

Aim: Where services are provided by others, the Town Council endeavours to ensure that they are dealt with effectively, and in accordance with the wishes of the community.

Action: We will work with other authorities to review the benefits for our community and will deal with each issue on a case-by-case basis.

Aim: Consideration of Devolution of services from other authorities.

Action: We will work with other authorities to review the benefits for our community and will deal with each issue on a case-by-case basis. We will not seek Devolution of services within the term of the plan but will review for the next plan.

Governance Policy Objectives

Governance and Compliance

We will comply with all financial and legal requirements for the operation of WTC and associated organisations. This will be achieved by adherence to rules and policies approved by WTC and associated organisations.

Risk Management

We will meet our requirements for financial and other risk management, including the assessment of risk for those projects with a value greater than £25K. The purpose of which is to anticipate, quantify and manage business risk reporting to Full Council or an appropriate committee those items that are highly likely to occur or will have a high impact.

Ethical Business Practice

We will adhere to the seven principles of business ethics.

- Accountability
- Care and respect
- Honesty
- Healthy competition
- Loyalty
- Transparency
- Respect for the rule of law

Avoiding Conflicts of Interest

We will maintain a register of declarable interests and ensure that members and officers are aware of their obligations through training and information sharing.

Accounting Integrity and Practices

We will ensure that the integrity of our accounting practices meets both the requirements of our Anti-fraud and corruption policy and that any data provided is trustworthy to enable improved business decisions.

Investments

We will seek to achieve the best return on investment vs risk in organisations with an ESG rating higher than 70. We will not invest in organisations that have fossil fuels as part of their portfolio of investments.

Decision Making and Leadership

We will scope the information that is required to inform our decision making, and measure against KPIs issued in a timely manner supported by efficient processes. We will encourage a leadership style that is aligned with our organisational values.

Grant Income and Distribution

We will seek grant income and other income for all projects with a value greater than £50K. We will offer grants to local organisations that support the aspirations of our grant policy.

Partnership Working

We will create partnerships with individuals, organisations and other tiers of government with a shared interest. We will do this to ensure our communities receive high quality joined up outcomes.

Society Policy Objectives

Fair Pay and the Living Wage

All employees will receive pay and benefits based on market forces for the locality, we will become a 'Living Wage' employer.

Training and Development

All new employees will receive induction training including health and safety, GDPR and other specific training relevant to the role. Employees requiring specific training will be supported in line with the training policy to provide individual support and support for the wider organization. All employees will receive an annual appraisal where training needs will be identified. The Town Clerk will achieve 18 CPD pa. Members are expected to complete training commensurate with their role.

Wellbeing

We will promote the emotional and physical wellbeing of employees, ensuring practical support and the management of workload is properly resourced.

Employee Benefits

We will provide a range of employee benefits including local government pension to aid recruitment and retention.

Other benefits include.

- Agile and home working
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Cycle to work scheme.
- Free parking
- Lido usage
- EV charging use.

Workplace Health and Safety

We will ensure that our facilities are safe for employees, visitors, customers, and tenants. Our staff will be provided with appropriate training to meet their job role related to health and safety. Specialist advice will be maintained via a specialist consultant.

Community Engagement in Decision Making

We will engage with the community in decisions that impact on them, to support the building of sustainable cohesive communities with improved outcomes, supported by our community engagement policy. We will recognize excellence in our communities by the Freedom of Ware awards and the annual town council award scheme.

Responsible Supply Chain Partnerships

Where we can source locally and achieve value for money this will guide our procurement.

We will endeavour to procure products and services that meet the following requirements.

- Supply chain traceability and transparency
- Fair labour / work conditions
- Supply chain sustainability initiatives
- Responsible sourcing and procurement
- Sustainability assurances and verification

We recognize for an organisation of our size that the research to achieve the above requirements must be proportionate.

Encourage Diversity

Members and officers fully support diversity and inclusion in the organization, it is against our policy (and the law) to discriminate on the grounds of any protected characteristics. We encourage applications for Councillor vacancies and employment from all suitably qualified people regardless of their background or lifestyle. Anybody that claims to have been discriminated will have their case investigated independently.

Bullying and Harassment

We will create and maintain a safe organisation, free from bullying, intimidation, and harassment. We will actively support the Civility and Respect programme introduced by SLCC and NALC and will encourage those in the organisation to highlight areas where we are not achieving our aims. We will support members and officers where members of the public exhibit unacceptable behaviours.

Data Privacy / Cyber Security

We will ensure the correct use of the data we hold and will be mindful of the information we share. Systems and processes will be used that help us meet our aims including Cyber Security audit authentication.

Youth Engagement

We aim to build meaningful relationships with young people aged 10-21 years old (or up to 25 years if they have physical or learning difficulties). We will do this through youth clubs, multi-sport sessions and in partnership with voluntary, statutory and community groups.

Healthy Living

We will encourage a healthy lifestyle to our residents and colleagues, through a programme of communications and subsidised events.

Monitoring the Business Plan

The list of activities will make up an 'Action Plan' which will be monitored at future Council meetings, reviewing progress against objectives and targets, and an annual report in June / July each year to understand the progress made, where further work is needed and if there are any blockages to progress. The Business Plan will also be available on the Town Council website as a way of telling residents what the Council is doing to meet the needs of the community and for residents to provide feedback. It is our intention to review the Business Plan regularly, publish progress and make any changes considered necessary.

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Ware Town Council

A Resolution on the Climate Crisis

Noting the negative impacts of climate change caused by human activities are beginning to seriously affect the health and wellbeing of the people and environment of Ware, and that these negative impacts will only increase as the climate crisis worsens.

This Council believes that:

1. All governments (national, regional and local) have a duty to do all within their power to limit the negative impacts of Climate Breakdown, and that local governments should not wait for their national governments to change their policies. It is important for the residents of Ware and the UK that towns such as ours commit to carbon neutrality as quickly as possible, and act to protect human health and biodiversity to the maximum extent their powers allow.
2. Towns such as ours have a limited ability to act to reduce carbon emissions, to preserve biodiversity, and to protect the health of their citizens but have an obligation to act to do so, and the actions we can take are generally quicker and simpler than those of large cities, and decarbonisation is easier to achieve;
3. The consequences of global temperature rising above 1.5°C are so severe that preventing this from happening must be humanity's number one priority; and,
4. Bold climate action can deliver economic benefits in terms of new jobs, economic savings and market opportunities (as well as improved well-being for people worldwide).

This Council resolves to:

1. Declare a 'Climate Emergency' which threatens the health and wellbeing of the people of Ware.
2. Make the Council's operations carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions, and to encourage and assist the citizens and businesses of Ware to do the same using the means available to us, including budgetary, ensuring that all Council activities are consistent with the goal of carbon neutrality.
3. Hold dialogue with East Herts Council and Herts County Council on decarbonisation of their operations by 2030, and to request our MP and national government to provide the powers and resources to make the 2030 target possible.
4. Work with other local government bodies to determine and implement best practice methods locally to help limit Global Warming below a 1.5°C rise.
5. Ensure that all Council policies and practices within our control, including commercial operations and investments, are compatible with the goal of carbon neutrality.

6. Provide advice and assistance to residents in Ware so that they understand and can contribute towards the goal of carbon neutrality, providing appropriate options and choices where possible to encourage a modal shift away from carbon producing activities.

8. Report annually to the Town Meeting and to residents on progress towards this goal.

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A Resolution on Representing our Residents.

Ware Town Council resolves that:

As Councillors we were elected to represent residents in our wards in matters that affect their lives.

Believing that the Town Council should be a powerful voice speaking out on behalf of our community, leading and campaigning on issues of vital interest to our town, our residents and future generations.

This Council resolves:

1. That we will use our voice to speak publicly on issues affecting the town and its residents.
2. That in so doing, even where issues concerned are strictly speaking beyond our competence, we will be an advocate for our town.
3. That in order to properly represent our Town we will consult widely¹ and regularly with all of our residents, including those whose views are typically underrepresented.
4. That recognising the role of youth in building our towns future, we will ensure their voices are heard in council chambers, including through the establishment of a Youth Town Council.

¹ For major issues like Ware2 this might include a Citizen's Assembly organised by an external body with experience in such. Other methods would include formal surveys like Ware conducted this year. For smaller issues it might be a simple survey monkey questionnaire.