



Skipton Town Council

ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

Town Mayor

Councillor Sheila Bentley

Chief Officer

Louise Close

Town Hall

High Street

Skipton

BD23 1FD

www.skiptontowncouncil.gov.uk



Skipton Town Council

Your Councillors

Mayor and Council Chairman:

Councillor Sheila Bentley (Mayor)

Councillor Peter Madeley (Deputy Mayor)

Councillor Aidan Higgins

Councillor Lewis Morgan

Councillor David Noland

Councillor Stephen Morton

Councillor Virpi Kettu

Councillor Winston Feather

Councillor Malcolm Courcier

Councillor Annabel Heseltine

Councillor Brian McDaid

Councillor Claire Nash

Councillor Robert Heseltine

Councillor Chris Harbron

Councillor Karen McIntyre

Councillor Richard Judge

Skipton Town Council Mission Statement

“Making Skipton a better place to live, work and visit.”

In March 2024 the Council adopted a Strategic Plan for 2024-2028, this was following consultation to find out what is important to them and what they feel the Council should prioritise. An action plan will be produced each year to show which of the objectives it will be working towards achieving each year.



Councillor Sheila Bentley– Mayor of Skipton and Chairman of the Council

Civic Events



In November 2023 one of the largest Remembrance Sunday Parades for a number of years was held. It was fantastic to see so many people from Skipton come out to pay their respects to members of the armed forces, past and present.

The Council also made Mr Geoff Dunn an Honorary Freeman for his services to the community.

Twin Towns

Children from Skipton's Twin Towns, Erquinghem-Lys & Simbach, came to visit Skipton in July 2023 and March 2024. The Town Council looks forward to working with our Twin Towns in the coming year to further strengthen our relationships with them.



Supporting the Market

During 2023/2024 15 Traders have taken advantage of the Markets Monday Incentive Scheme. The scheme allows traders who haven't tried trading on a market before to borrow a gazebo and weights and trade free of charge for a period on a Monday to see if having a market stall works well for their business before they invest in the equipment.

The Town Council also had a stand at the British Travel and Tourism Show at the NEC in March 2024. The purpose of this was to promote and showcase Skipton, including the Market, as a destination for coach operators and travel groups.



Skipton also held its first Youth Market in June 2023, which was highly successful with several traders reaching the regional and national finals of the Young Trader of the year competition. Some traders who attended the Youth Market, have gone on to trade on the regular market and also participate in Town Council events.



Sustainability Goals

In 2023/24 the Council have continued to work towards achieving their sustainability goals. It has been successful in gaining funding to undertake a sustainability audit, to better understand what it can do to make Skipton more sustainable.

All departments within the Council have continued looking at ways that they can make their practice more sustainable, such as having criteria for applicants who wish to trade at events to adhere to and continuing the cardboard recycling scheme for Market Traders.

The Town Council is also supporting the Youth Council with their Keep Skipton Tidy Campaign.

Community Safety Working Group

The Community Safety Working Group, established in December 2022, has continued to regularly meet over the year. The meetings are attended by Councillors, the Police, Craven College, Ermysteds, Skipton Academy, SELFA, Craven District Council, Skipton BID, the Youth Council and the.

This multiagency group meets every two months to discuss issues affecting the town, and following a consultation carried out by the Youth Council, an event is planned for May 2024 at Sandylands to showcase what is available for people in Skipton to get involved and take part in.

Allotments

Following all plots being measured at all 3 Allotment sites, a new pricing structure was agreed by the Public Services Committee so that allotment tenants are charged per m²

Improvements to our parks

The Council have adopted a strategy for improvements to be made to its parks, with a schedule drawn up of when equipment was installed and when it will require replacement.

Improvements are being planned for Lytham Gardens and Shortbank Recreation Grounds for 2024/25.

In 2023 the Council agreed to a license agreement with Embsay Juniors Football Club to use the pitch at Raikes Road Recreation Ground. The pitch was levelled by the football club, making it a more usable space for the whole community. A 'Friends' Group has now been established for this park.

Wildflowers

The Town Council's Wildflower project continued in 2023/24 with larger areas left unmown in the Councils parks to increase the habitats available for wildlife. The Council also invested in new equipment for the Estates Team, which allows them to cut and collect grass and wildflower cuttings. These can then be composted in purpose built areas on the Middletown Allotment site.

Events– Summer



The Town Council worked in partnership with Skipton BID to hold a Coronation Event at the Canal Basin. In June 2023 Sheep Day took place on the High Street, and the Foodie Festival returned in August 2023. The Council also supported events such as the Car Show, Skipton Gala and Yorkshire Day.



During the school summer holidays, the Town Council ran events in 6 of its parks providing a free day out for families. This was extremely successful, and the Council will be extending this further in 2024.



At Easter 2024 the Council held its first Easter Event at the Canal Basin. This was an event that was free to attend, with activities for families to take part in such as soap making workshops, science experiments, entertainment, and a bouncy castle.

Events– Winter

The Christmas Lights were switched on by Mrs Wild, a veteran of the Santa Fun Run.

The Light Switch On followed the Santa Fun Run, where the Town Council again supported the Rotary Club with their road closure for this fantastic annual event.

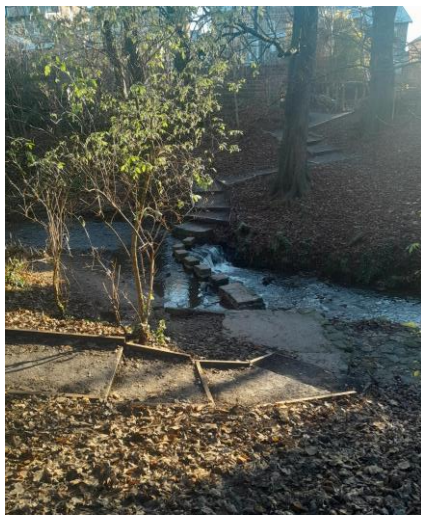
The Christmas Markets took place on the High Street on the first two Sundays in December and were again very popular events.



Working with the Community

The Friends of the Wilderness and the Friends of Raikes Road Burial Ground are supported by the Town Council.

The Friends of the Wilderness have held several volunteer days over the year, with bug hotels built, the deadhedge replenished, plant identification walks completed and thanks to donations from Skipton Rotary and Skipton Craven Rotary repairs to the steps completed. They also launched their new website www.theskiptonwilderness.co.uk



The Friends of Raikes Road Burial Ground also held an open day, which was attended by the Mayor.



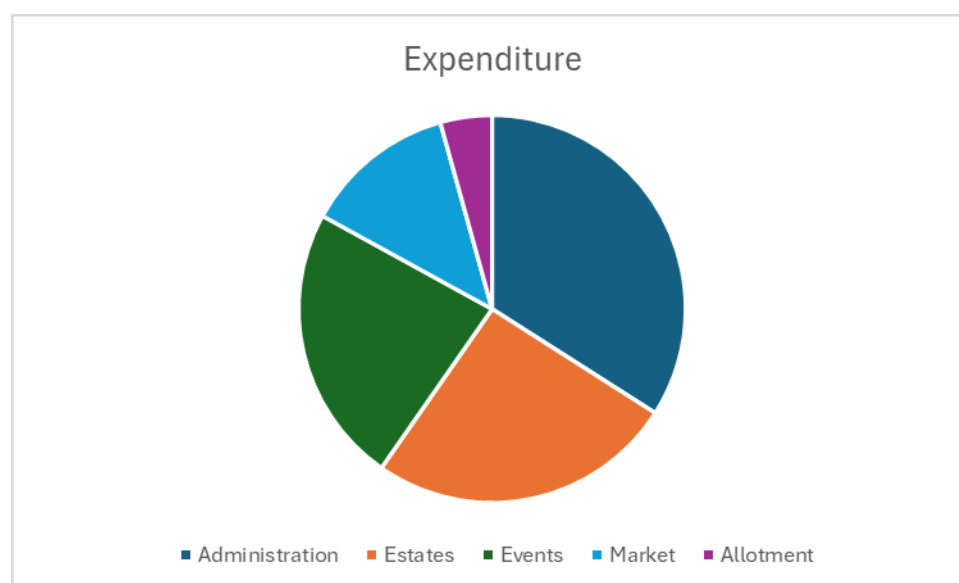
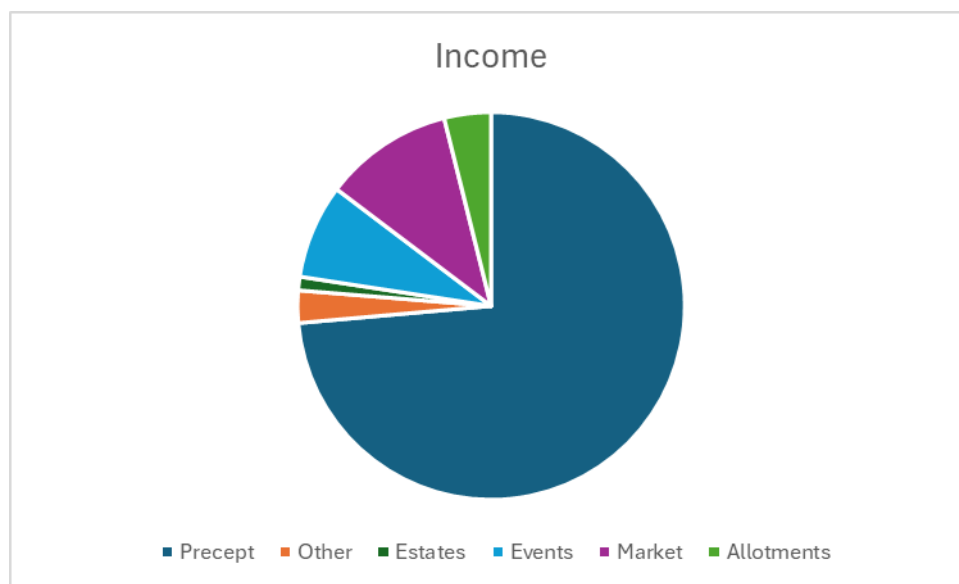
Staffing, Finance and Governance

A program of staff training continues with training needs and opportunities identified at staff appraisals. The Council are currently recruiting for a new Market Officer.

The Council has a student from Craven College who works with the Council's Estate Team two days a week during term time, this was their second year working with the Council. This is to give them work experience for their Outdoor Management course.

The Council also provides work experience for Students from Craven College who undertake the recording and live streaming of Full Council meetings. The first live streaming was carried out in January 2024.

Finance



The Town Councils Annual Governance and Financial Statements can be viewed on the Council website. The Town Council precept for 2023/24 was £519,614. Other income was received from Market Trader Fees, Income from Town Council run events, Section 106 funding and allotment rents. Allotment rents remained unchanged from the previous year.

At the budget meeting in Dec 2023 the Council agreed to request £570,000 precept for the 2024/25 financial year.