



CITY OF ELY COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2019/2020

TO THE

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

27TH MAY 2020

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**CITY OF ELY COUNCIL
SESSIONS HOUSE
LYNN ROAD
ELY
CAMBS CB7 4EG**

Telephone 01353 661016 Fax 01353 667057

E-mail: info@cityofelycouncil.org.uk website: www.cityofelycouncil.org.uk

Clerk to the Council

Tracey Coulson

Deputy Clerk to the Council

Sarah Jay

Open to the public - Monday to Friday 9.30 am to 2.30 pm

COUNCILLORS

WEST WARD

Arnie Arnold	51 Fleetwood, Ely CB6 1BH	Tel: 667640
Sue Austen	5 Mayfield Close, Ely CB6 3AB	Tel: 663928
Rebecca Denness	9 West Fen Road, Ely CB6 1AL	Tel: 07950 604521
Christopher Phillips	7 Columbine Road, Ely CB6 3WL	Tel: 669940
Dian Warman	38 Back Hill, Ely CB7 4BZ	Tel: 666134
Christine Whelan	119 Kings Avenue, Ely CB7 4QW	Tel: 772123

EAST WARD

Matthew Downey	48B Waterside, Ely CB7 4AZ	Tel: 07841472780
Elisabeth Every	80 Barton Road, Ely CB7 4HZ	Tel: 665815
Kevin Wilkins	55A Market Street, Ely CB7 4LP	Tel: 07515 911961

CATHEDRAL

Ian Lindsay	Hickling House, 6B Station Road, Ely CB7 4BS	Tel: 614184
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NORTH WARD

Sarah Bellow	Elm Farm, Ely Road, Prickwillow, Ely CB7 4UJ	Tel: 688250
Edward Carlsson Browne	11 Fitzgerald Close, Ely CB7 4QB	Tel: 07581177572
Richard Morgan	23 Merivale Way, Ely CB7 4GQ	Tel: 667905
Michael Rouse	25 Lynton Close, Ely CB6 1DJ	Tel: 667082
Alison Whelan	119 Kings Avenue, Ely CB7 4QW	Tel: 772123

Chairman of the Council and Mayor of the City of Ely is Councillor Michael Rouse

Deputy Chairman of the Council and Deputy Mayor of the City of Ely is Councillor Sue Austen

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT 2019/2020

The City of Ely Council was formed under the reorganisation of Local Government in 1973, taking over from the Ely Urban District Council, but with parish council status. At this time Queen Elizabeth II granted City status to Ely and the right to have a Mayor as Chairman, with the official title of 'The Right Worshipful Mayor'. The first Mayor was duly elected in 1974.

As a parish council we manage the cemetery, allotments, through the City of Ely Allotments and Gardens Association, play areas, the Maltings, Oliver Cromwell House and a shared equity housing scheme.

In 2015 we purchased the Sessions House for our administrative office and during 2019 we opened the new Council Chamber on the first floor, with a lift to provide disabled access. The City of Ely Council, of course, works in collaboration with the District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and the Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority.

The elections of May 2019 saw all but one of the fifteen council seats contested in new wards and brought seven new faces onto the council. Four times previous Mayor and Chairman, and long serving member, Richard Hobbs, was not returned. The Council has placed on record its appreciation of his services to the City, both as a Parish Councillor and as a District Councillor. Cllr Alison Arnold, the Mayor Elect, also failed to return to the Council and as a consequence I was elected to serve a second consecutive year as Mayor and Chairman.

The fifteen unpaid elected members of the Council meet in Full Council every month. The City of Ely Council now employs over 40 staff members, but still relies heavily on volunteers to manage the allotments, put up the Christmas lights and help at many of the events that make Ely such a vibrant City.

This year sadly, the Ely in Bloom competitions did not happen and given the present circumstances is unlikely to happen next year, but it has not been abandoned.

During the year we continued the review of our staffing and structure to ensure a more business-like way of working. We have appointed a City Centre Ranger, who has already proved invaluable in working with local businesses.

The year brought a change of leadership at Oliver Cromwell House and with Visit Ely, our tourist service, with a new team and Mrs Anna Bennet taking over the management of the service, as the Tourism and Town Centre Manager.

Council Committees are still under consideration, but one effective change has been to relieve the Mayor, from his responsibility to chair Committees, principally the Finance and Governance Committee freeing up more time for civic duties.

The new Council settled in well and took up the challenge of new responsibilities and Ely had a good Christmas and a very successful community supper at the end of February. However, everything changed in March, with the Council going into lockdown because of Covid 19.

The Council has switched to virtual meetings and adapted to working from home, except for the Estates Team, managed by Mr Richard Delahaye, who have maintained our front line services and for whom I have special praise.

My personal thanks this year to the Clerk of the City of Ely Council, Mrs Tracey Coulson; the Deputy Clerk, Mrs Sarah Jay and Mrs Marianne Pickering, for administering the Mayor's diary. Mrs Anna Bennett and staff at Oliver Cromwell House and Lola Howell and the team at the Maltings. All of these staff have worked with the councillors for our City and have continued to do so in these exceptional circumstances.

The year ends with the Council and our society facing many uncertainties. The only way we will rise to the emerging challenges is by everyone working together for the wellbeing of our community and in this respect the City of Ely Council will have a major role to play.

Cllr Mike Rouse
Chairman of the Council

PERSONNEL, FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Committee has six members and meets six times a year, with a main responsibility for managing the Council's finances, personnel and setting the annual budget.

The City of Ely Council has again been successful in gaining part funding for minor highways improvements and distributed over £12,000 to local charitable organisations from the rents of the shared housing scheme established thirty years ago.

Over the last few years, this council has taken on more responsible for the economic well-being of the City and the parish, including the Maltings, Oliver Cromwell House, the tourist information service and the Sessions House.

This enables us to preserve some of the historic buildings for the parish residents and also to promote tourism as a main economic activity.

During the year, we have seen the establishment of new management teams for these venues. The Council also appointed a City Centre Ranger. This appointment has been received very positively by the traders, residents and visitors to the City.

The Council instructed an external firm to assist in the development of a strategic plan for the Council that will help inform the direction of the Council for the coming years. This is being managed by the Strategic Plan Working Group.

As the Council year ended, we had started to see the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and decisions were made to cancel all public events and meetings. The Council immediately set out about reducing costs. The impact in the 2019/20 was minimal, however, it is inevitable that there will be a significant negative impact on the finances of the Council in 2020/21 and future years.

The increase in services and the management of historic buildings Inevitably causes an increase in the costs of operating the Council. The Council targets and monitors the performance of these costs and seeks to maximise the income generation from the properties. However carefully these are managed there are undoubtedly pressures on the finances which will be exacerbated by COVID-19. Inevitably, the Council tax that we levy has had to rise but is still just £1.64 per property per week for a band D property. We always seek to minimise any increase, but we always strive to keep this to the minimum necessary consistent with sound management.

Cllr Alison Whelan
Chairman of Personnel, Finance and Governance Committee

PLANNING COMMITTEES

The City of Ely Council is a statutory consultee on all planning applications received by East Cambridgeshire District Council that relate to the area covered by the Parish of Ely. There are two Planning Committees comprising most of the Council members, but they share one Chairman and they meet every two weeks. Since the start of the Covid 19 pandemic they have met remotely. Initially using e-mail, but more recently via a video platform so that members of the public may also participate.

Applications cover a wide variety of planning matters. On the whole, in accordance with national planning policy, there has been a presumption in favour of planning approval. However, the Committees have recommended that ECDC should refuse planning permission in a number of circumstances related to local issues. Mostly, these centre around applications for development where there appear to be inadequate provision of off-street parking places, less often to danger related to traffic flows, or proposed changes that adversely affect the street scene or amenity of neighbours.

Cllr Ian Lindsay
Chairman Planning Committees

RECREATION AND CEMETERY COMMITTEE

The aim of the Recreation and Cemetery Committee is to “nurture pride in the City of Ely by promoting and developing the recreation and play areas owned by the Council and developing Ely Cemetery in co-operation with the citizens of Ely, local businesses and other organisations”.

Recreation

At the time of writing the Council's nine play and recreation areas are closed because of the Covid-19 pandemic and do not seem likely to reopen until later in the summer. All of these facilities, however, have continued to be maintained to a high standard by the estates team in order to ensure the safety of the equipment and the cleanliness of the environment.

In line with the Council's ongoing policy of upgrading its recreation facilities the Committee proposed a substantial refurbishment of the Willow Walk playground using Section 106 funding. The first phase of this work began in March and was completed just prior to the 23rd March lockdown. The second phase will begin as soon as restrictions are lifted.

Cemetery

The Cemetery along with its chapel, garden areas, roads and pathways has been maintained to a high standard throughout the year. During the year planning permission was given to expand the Cemetery into what was previously a recycling area, adjacent to High Barns and this work is now well under way. Once completed the newly-cleared area will be a significant addition to the land available for burials. Before work could begin it was necessary to have an archaeological review of the site – but nothing of significance was found when this was undertaken.

The Committee has been mindful of the Council's motion regarding climate change. Swift boxes have been installed in the chapel and insect and hedgehog 'houses' in the cemetery grounds. It is hoped that other conservation projects will be carried out later in the year.

The Friends of Ely Cemetery have met throughout the year. In September 2019 there was a successful open day during the national Heritage Weekend. A Friends website is now up and running and carries news of events and in its family history pages, a selection of mini biographies of former Ely residents

who are buried in the cemetery. Work is done by members of the group both in terms of gardening and in caring for a number of graves which require tidying and basic maintenance.

The City Council is fortunate to have a dedicated estates team which, under the leadership of Richard Delahaye, has worked throughout the year to ensure that a high standard of care and maintenance has been achieved.

Cllr Chris Phillips
Chairman of the Recreation and Cemetery Committee

Friends of Ely Cemetery

The Friends of Ely Cemetery are a small recently formed group of volunteers that work in conjunction with the City of Ely Council, who own and maintain the cemetery in Beech lane.

There is a committee that meets every 3 months and we are members of the National Federation of Cemetery Friends.

We help with the upkeep of the cemetery, tending to forgotten graves and researching the generations of people that were laid to rest there. Friends of Ely Cemetery volunteers are currently in the process of digitizing the old burial records held at the City of Ely Council offices. This is nearing completion and we hope to be able to put the results online soon.

Back in 2003, some local enthusiasts transcribed and photographed all the inscriptions on the headstones within the cemetery. At the moment, this material is not very accessible, and is held on separate spreadsheets and CDs. However, we would love to reunite the images and the transcriptions and make the whole database available to search. Our volunteers are working on this and we also hope to have this available soon.

As is usual in such an old cemetery, there are many graves with no living relatives left in Ely to care for them. The Friends of Ely Cemetery are providing volunteers to look after these forgotten graves, conducting light gardening and tending.

We held a very successful open day last year and were looking to hold another one this year to celebrate National Cemetery week. Unfortunately, we were unable to go ahead with this due to the current situation. If all goes well and things get back to some sort of normality, we will look to have another open day on the Heritage Weekend later in the year.

Working with the Recreation and Cemetery committee on the City Council and the estates manager, we are trying to attract and look after the wildlife within the cemetery and have recently taken possession of two Hedgehog boxes and some bug hotels. If these prove popular, we will look to get more. We are also looking at planting some insect friendly plants. There are also swift nesting boxes in the belfry of our wonderful chapel.

Please take a look at our excellent website <https://www.friendsofelycemetery.co.uk/> where you can find information and read the mini biographies of Ely residents past that have been compiled by our Family History Coordinator, Cllr Chris Phillips. We will look to be adding some more in the near future.

Cllr Arnie Arnold
Chair of Friends of Ely Cemetery

ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

The aim of the Environment Committee is to nurture and develop pride in the City of Ely by facilitating a clean, healthy and attractive local environment in co-operation with the citizens of Ely and a myriad of other agencies and organisations.

The Committee has responsibility for the provision and maintenance of street furniture including 52 dog waste bins, 6 notice boards, 2 benches, 13 flower containers, 10 signs, 21 lamp posts and lights, 16 bus shelters, 2 grit bins, solar powered lights on cherry hill and the riverside, a flagpole on the market place and the City and Prickwillow's war memorials. It cares for some trees and green areas within the City, as well as floral displays. It runs the memorial bench scheme.

On behalf of the City of Ely Council, and along with others such as Perspective, the Access group, Speedwatch and Neighbourhood Watch, it monitors litter clearing; street cleaning; removal of graffiti; de-cluttering of streets; maintenance of signs and road markings; provision of cycle ways; changes to street lighting; traffic calming measures; policing; crime reduction, and reduction in anti-social behaviour. Many of these activities are managed on a day to day basis by other agencies such as East Cambridgeshire District Council or Cambridgeshire County Council with whom the City of Ely Council maintains a close working relationship.

The Committee has met 4 times normally, and held one virtual meeting in this Council year. Its day to day activities are governed by a rolling action plan, which details short, medium and long-term objectives, and ensures that all its activities are budgeted for. Cllr Every, who is one of our members, was, for the third year in succession, successful in securing a grant through the Minor Highways initiative scheme. This, together with monies from the City of Ely Council precept and funds from our share of the community infrastructure levy, will enable the provision of a zebra crossing for St John's School. Perhaps more mundanely, but no less importantly, our Estates Team monitor and maintain the condition of our street furniture and buildings on a regular cycle. With a falling number of able volunteers, we regretfully wound up the Ely in Bloom scheme that had functioned so well over the years in maintaining our City floral displays and running an annual Ely in Bloom competition. Coincident with this our long-established contractor, who not only provided our plants, but also watered them over the year, retired. We therefore took the scheme in house, and our Estates Team will now undertake the work. Unfortunately, lockdown has interrupted both the supply of plants, but also delayed the delivery of a vehicle intended to be used for watering.

In a similar vein, well advanced plans to restore the war memorial in Prickwillow, have also been put on hold.

Members of the Committee normally participate in community forums, and join with other groups and members of the public in organized litter picks. Neither of these activities have been possible since the start of Covid-19 restrictions.

In all we have had a successful year and I feel we have met our aims, and have contributed to an improvement in our community's wellbeing. With sound plans and finance in place our Committee will continue to do so whatever the outcome of the forthcoming election.

Cllr I Lindsay
Chair of Environment Committee

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS COMMITTEE

The Christmas Lights were switched on, on the 29th November 2019 and the event was a terrific success with thousands packed into the Market Square. As usual, the lights themselves brought cheer to wintry Ely and helped bring families into the City Centre to shop and enjoy themselves. A huge thank you to all the volunteers and staff who helped make the lights and the switch on event a great success once again.

Regrettably, the covid-19 lockdown has caused the switch on event for November this year to be cancelled, although the lights themselves will go up as usual.

Councillors, staff and volunteers very much hope that something, probably online, can be organised nearer the time to celebrate the switch on.

Cllr Kevin Wilkins
Chairman of Christmas Lights Committee

ASSETS & ACQUISITIONS COMMITTEE

The committee has met 3 times during the past 12 months.

Sessions House has been painted internally and a new sound system has been installed in the Council Chamber. Air conditioning has been introduced into the clerks' office and the Council Chamber. Quotations for soft furnishings are being pursued.

The Maltings has continued to run effectively until Covid-19 struck.

RBK Restaurant, next to The Maltings continued to operate and pay rent until Covid-19 struck.

Maltings Cottage. It was hoped that this might have progressed further. In consultation with ECDC a surveyor's report has established that major work and finance is needed to bring the building up to date.

Cllr Richard Morgan
Chairman of Assets & Acquisitions Committee

TOURISM AND TOWN CENTRE COMMITTEE

Visit Ely has had a yet another very busy year with visitor numbers up significantly at Oliver Cromwell House and the popularity of the Escape Room continues to grow with 193 sessions booked during the year. Murder Mystery evenings were introduced towards the end of the year and we have received a good take up and we are hopeful this will continue to grow in the next financial year.

There have also been a number of changes to the staffing team at Oliver Cromwell House. During the year we employed a new Tourism Manager, Anna Bennett, with the previous manager moving on to a new position. We also had a number of other staff changes and now have a new team, who are continuing to look at the whole business with fresh eyes and have lots of ideas and plans to not only increase the visitor number, but to collaborate with other businesses and tourist attractions within the City.

During the year we welcomed the City Centre Ranger, Kerry Edmondson-Browne to the team. Kerry's role is growing and evolving over time. She provides invaluable liaison between the traders, public and the City of Ely Council. We are engaging with the local traders to ensure that, as much as is possible, we help them with increased footfall in the High Street and promotion of their shops on the Visit Ely Facebook page.

We now have a dedicated member of staff looking after our social media and website. As a result of this, engagement on all social media platforms has grown significantly. The website received over 300,000 page views during the year, with 94,000 new users, an 8% rise on the previous year.

Once again Eel Day with 82 traders and the Food and Drink Festival with 36 traders, were a great success.

As Chair of the Tourism and Town Centre Management Committee I would like to thank Anna Bennett and her team for all their hard work and dedication.

Cllr Dian Warman
Chairman of Tourism and Town Centre Committee

YOUTH FORUM

The Youth Forum was originally a Working Group, but over the last year this has been changed by Standing Orders of the Council, to become a Committee. There are currently 6 members of the Committee with a co-option of a member of the public. We have met 3 times this year.

We have been in constant communication with the Cambs Youth Panel and are pleased that their projects are doing well. They are supporting disadvantaged students with their home learning during the Covid situation by loaning IT equipment.

The Committee had started plans to engage with the Youth of Ely and were making good progress, but plans and engagements have been halted due to the current Covid -19 situation. We hope that in the coming months this will change, and we can start to have more engagement with the young people's groups/clubs and the schools in the City.

Plans for 20/21

Engage with youth organisations/schools

Plan activities that will enable the groups to be more engaged in what the Council is doing in the City.

Encourage older Youth organisations to learn and actively engage with Councillors and the Council.

Continue engagement with the Cambs Youth Panel.

Cllr Christine Whelan
Chairman of Youth Forum

ELY RIBE ASSOCIATION

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR ANNUAL PARISH MEETING ON 27TH MAY 2020

Along with practically all other organisations the Twinning Association has had to “go into hibernation” during the current pandemic. However, many members have been keeping in touch with each other via email, and we are looking forward to meeting up again as soon as possible.

A group of 14 Association members spent a weekend in Ribe at the end of last August, staying in the homes of our Danish hosts. It was lovely to catch up with old friends and make new ones during this visit. It was a very busy couple of days and included a very interesting tour of the new buildings of the Ribe Cathedral School - I think all of us ex-teachers were slightly envious! We also enjoyed a visit to a newly-opened museum devoted to one of Ribe's most famous citizens, Jacob A. Riis. On Sunday we went to a service at Ribe Cathedral preceded by a short concert by a world-famous choir from Copenhagen – what a delight! For several of our group this was their first visit to Ribe and I am sure that they all enjoyed their visit and will hope to take part in another visit soon.

The Twinning Association committee had begun making plans to invite our friends from Ribe to join us in Ely in the summer of 2021 but these plans have now been put on hold. We have also been discussing the future of the Ely-Ribe Tapestry on display in the foyer at the Maltings. We are currently looking at ways of highlighting this remarkable work of art so that it gains the attention we think it deserves. The Association remains committed to its policy of establishing links between similar-interest groups and societies in our two communities. We now have a new category of Corporate Membership enabling local interested groups to become members of the Association.

Before Covid-19 curtailed our activities, we were able to hold a very successful “fun-quiz” evening in the Sessions House and our Annual Dinner at the Golf Club.

Finally, I would like to thank the members of the City of Ely Council for their continued interest and support and say a special thank you to Mayor Mike Rouse who, during his 2 years of office, has been a very active, helpful and supportive President of the Ely Ribe Association.

Howard McMillan
(Chairman, Ely Ribe Association)

REPORT ON THE ALLOTMENT YEAR 2019/2020

GENERAL COMMENTS

This year has, due to the current situation, the strangest and probably the most difficult year I have known in twenty-six years of tending my allotment.

During this period of lock-down the Government said that working on your allotment was a good source of exercise and I would like to thank the City Council for appreciating this and keeping the site open.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank not only the Committee for their continued help but all the members of the Association who have tended their plots and maintained the Government rules regarding Social Distancing.

On the three main sites any plot that is rented by a member of the NHS, front line staff, or by someone who has to self-isolate has been identified and other tenants have volunteered to keep them tidy. This, to me, shows that there is a great camaraderie within our Association and a tremendous willingness to help a fellow member when it is necessary.

Looking on the bright side despite the very wet winter and early spring the recent spell of good weather, apart from a couple of frosty nights, and with tenants having more time the allotments have never looked better.

It is hoped that the current regulations are eased enough to allow the plots to be judged in early July and that we will be allowed to hold our Awards Evening in September.

The demand for an allotment has never been greater, perhaps caused by people having more time or because of the predicted food shortages it has meant that our waiting list has increased from 28 in April 2019 to 68 at the present, with all our sites being full.

NATIONAL ALLOTMENT SOCIETY

The NAS is 90 years old, this year, and asked all current member Associations if they could check to see if any were around then and are still on the same sites.

Our secretary, Linda Adams, decided to take up the challenge and by searching in the County Records Office, fortunately now in Ely, came up with some interesting facts.

In 1918 the Ely Allotment Holders Society was formed, the following year they were pressing for extra land and in 1920 two pieces of land on Stuntney Causeway were purchased, one of which is the current Bridge Fen site, and the same year the Society changed its name to Ely Allotments and Gardens Association. Therefore, by default, we are 100 years old this year.

One other fact came to light, there was a newspaper report that a piece of land adjacent to the cemetery was purchased for allotment use in 1888, unfortunately lock-down started and we have not been able to confirm the article.

BRIDGE FEN: Number of Tenants – 113

Bridge fen, which celebrates its centenary this year, is fully tenanted and looking better than it has in years.

The recent frosts caught out those who tried to take advantage of the unseasonably warm weather and plant too early but there is still time to start again.

Bridge fen's television debut as an aside in a local ITV news programme was put on hold but we hope their footage about the benefits of having an allotment will appear at some point.

The thefts of tools and vegetables from the site that have plagued us from time to time for many years stopped when we locked the gate but the improvements made to the adjacent drove as part of the bypass work lead to the fence at the rear of the site being breached via the farmers field. The committee is now in discussions about getting a stronger fence built.

Following discussions with Alistair Morbey the association supplied and fitted a combination lock to the drove gate.

The access problems caused by the bypass are still ongoing. The decrease in traffic resulting from the corona-virus lock down has temporarily made crossing the road on foot or cycling easier but those accessing the site in cars are still reporting near misses when trying to turn right because of the lack of road marking and signage indicating the entrance.

A proposed scheme involving creating a traffic island opposite the old entrance seems to be mired in planning issues and as the lock down is slowly being lifted and traffic increases accessing the site will become increasingly risky.

NEW BARNS: Number of Tenants - 58

This site is fully tenanted and despite increasing the number of plots available we still have a long list of people waiting who have specified this popular City site.

The communal shed with its store of machinery continues as a great benefit to the site reps, who have been working tirelessly, during the current situation, to keep the site looking very neat and tidy but also in being on hand to rent out the various items when tenants have required to use them.

We are still being troubled by an unwanted visitor, whilst the fox has gone the muntjac deer visits are very much in evidence.

It has been decided to install a wildlife camera, for a few days, at possible deer entry points to try and find out how it gets in and then block off his access.

UPHERDS LANE – Number of Tenants - 49

This City site is also very popular and although fully tenanted it still attracts a large number of people who are prepared to wait for a plot to become available.

Site improvements have continued throughout the year, a section of a hard-surfaced path was extended, some overhanging vegetation and several small trees have been removed and the site drainage problem has been resolved.

The ongoing problem of the solid wood fence, the responsibility of Cambridge Housing Association, has increased with several sections being blown down during the gales this winter. Following a meeting with the CHA they have agreed to replace the whole fence with one of a more suitable design. This was to take place in April but is now on hold, and we have had to borrow some temporary fencing panels in order to make the site secure.

BACK HILL: Total Number of Tenants - 2

Back Hill, our smallest site has only two plots, both of which are well maintained.

It has been a few years since the fence on one side of the site was replaced and this year the one on the other side fell into disrepair and needed repair or replacement.

The fence is the responsibility of Kings School, who agreed to do the work as soon as possible, however, one of the Tenants said that she could do it by recycling surplus items which she had and the purchase of any other items required.

Having completed the work, which is very impressive, a bill was presented to Kings School and they gladly reimbursed the tenant.

CANTERBURY AVENUE: Total Number of Tenants - 9

Canterbury Avenue site is also proving very popular, its plots are small and ideal for first time allotment holders.

It was in the process of being redesigned to create two extra plots, when lockdown started, and this work will be done as soon as possible.

The two new plots will soon be taken as we have four people on the waiting list who specifically want this site.

This means that, theoretically, as with our other sites it is fully tenanted.

TRADING STORES:

With the commencement of lock-down we automatically closed our Stores.

However, following an email from the NAS on how Associations could reopen their Trading Stores, and as several of our members were desperate for gardening items, we decided to open from 10.00 – 12.00 on Saturday 11th April, using a click and collect system.

This proved a huge success and following initial problems, and with huge thanks to John Mitchell an on-line order form was created on our website, with payment for items only being accepted by cheque or bank transfer.

I would like to take this opportunity to give a big thank you to Tony Edmondson for his outstanding contribution in the Stores operation.

St. MARY'S GARDEN:

The highlight for the garden this year would have been the VE day celebrations due, on the rearranged Bank Holiday May 8th.

The Peace Beacon was to be lit for the City Event.

Unfortunately, a combination of Covid-19 and extremely dry weather resulted in a rather drab appearance. On May 8th there was a “parade” of Remembrance Rocks provided by ERE (Ely Rock Eels) led by the parade Commander (temporary) RSM Gnome.

It is hoped to replant the garden soon with Pelargoniums, but without some serious rain this could be a problem.

The new double-sided City of Ely sign has been installed, which enhances the beacon and creaks authentically in any breeze. Once again thanks go to the group looking after the garden, which this year has been boosted by extra volunteers.



VE Day celebrations/parade at St. Mary's Garden.

WEBSITE and EMAIL:

The Association website, www.elyallotmentsandgardens.org provides the public face of the Association and a channel for the public to get in touch with us. In 2019 it received about 100 unique visits per month.

One of the most visited pages is the 'apply for a plot' online form through which all applications for plots are submitted. In March and April 2020 the website has provided an online ordering system for members to obtain goods from the Association Stores.

Email

The Association email address changed on 1 May 2019 to <sitename>@elyallotmentsandgardens.org or other similar identities.

This name reflects the merged allotments and horticultural societies and is hosted on a robust business-standard email system to overcome problems of phishers and fraudsters using the previous free Gmail address.

Cloud-based email is the default method of communication with members and provides continuity when volunteer committee members change.

Special provision is made for Association members without email addresses, and GDPR requirements are observed.

WORKING GROUPS

STRATEGIC PLAN WORKING GROUP

The Working Group consists of the Chairs of the Council Committees together with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Clerk.

The Working Group was set up to consider the strategic review carried out by LGRC on behalf of the Council.

The initial meetings of the Committee were disrupted by the COVID-19 lockdown, although the Working Group has now commenced virtual meetings.

The review included a draft action plan and the Chairs of each Committee are now prioritising these actions and carrying out costing analysis to build the future strategic plan. This will then enable the future budgets to be based on these plans and provide a greater level of certainty and enable well managed development of the Council. This is particularly important as the City grows and new services fall to this Council and with the additional responsibilities for the economic well-being of the City and the parish, including the Maltings, Oliver Cromwell House, the tourist information service and the Sessions House.

Cllr A Whelan
Chairman of Strategic Working Group

GOVERNANCE WORKING GROUP

The Working Group was set up to look at the structure of the Council and whether changes were needed to improve the running of the Council. The Working Group consists only of councillors and reports to the Full Council. It has met 3 times this year.

It has looked at the changes needed to ensure that the Mayor was able to do the increased Civic duties required, without being over-burdened with other Council meetings.

The Mayor is the Chair of the Full Council and the Mayor was also Chair of Personal Finance and Governance. The latter duty has been changed by Standing Order this year.

Covid -19 impacted the ability to meet and these meetings have now resumed this year. Committee structures are being looked at, as well as the role of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor going forward to allow the Council to meet its Strategic Plan and to reflect the significant growth of the City and increase in services.

Plans for 20/21
Continue to look at the structure of committees
A continuous review plan on how the changes are working and the impact on the Council.

Cllr Christine Whelan
Chairman of Governance Working Group

SESSIONS HOUSE WORKING GROUP

The Working Group comprises 4 councillor and 2 officers and is responsible for the ongoing renovation of the Session's House building, and advising Full Council on the future use of its facilities. The Chairman of the East Cambridgeshire Access Group has acted as adviser on these matters as needed.

Over the year we have been able to complete the renovation of the building by redecorating the court room, installing a speaker system in the Council Chamber, and installing air conditioning in the offices and the Chamber. Some soft furnishings and carpets have also been replaced.

Until we closed down in late March, as a consequence of the Covid 19 pandemic, we also played host to some of the staff from Ely Museum during the ongoing redevelopment of the Museum. They were able to utilize a small office in the south wing of the building as well as some storage in the redundant cells.

In the longer term we anticipate that the Session's House will become a significant addition to Ely's tourist offer, as it really is one of most important buildings outside of the Cathedral and its precincts.

In closing, I would wish to remind you all that our rooms are available for public hire, and we will still participate in the annual heritage open day, once this is rearranged.

Cllr Ian Lindsay
Chairman Sessions House Working Group

CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP

The Climate Change Working Group was formed late in the year to reflect the growing concerns about the climate change in the parish. This followed a climate change emergency declared by the Council.

The Working Group agreed to work collaboratively with other organisations covering the City who were advancing environmental causes.

A Mayors Forum was planned which would be focussed on climate change and would be the rallying point for the parish residents to become engaged and inform the council direction on climate change. In view of the COVID-19 emergency, these plans were cancelled.

The Working Group is also considering other ways that the Council can reduce its environmental impact, which will be progressed in the coming months.

Cllr A Whelan
Chairman Climate Change Working Group

CCTV PARTNERSHIP STEERING GROUP

At the moment the CCTV Partnership comprises the City of Ely Council, the Police and East Cambridgeshire District Council.

We are delighted that the team of volunteers continue to remain very loyal and we could not work the system without their teamwork approach, expertise and good will. Not only do they attend sessions over the week, but also run the system in collaboration with our Clerk, dealing with maintenance and efficiency of the equipment.

However, we are currently undergoing a major review of the service with our partners in order to identify the most appropriate requirements for a growing City.

We know the value that our residents and Police place on the service and the deterrent that we believe it provides.

Cllr Lis Every
CCTV Working Group

COMMUNICATIONS AND PR WORKING GROUP

Due to the local elections last year, there were several new Councillors elected onto the City Council. Our first task was to try and introduce all the Councillors to the parish. The Group decided that a good way to do this was to put it in the Elyi Magazine. This proved to be popular and in subsequent issues we have placed articles about individual Committees, their roles and responsibilities, plus further information about volunteering, grant schemes, shared equity housing and other services that are available. Thank you to Cllr Every and all who have contributed in the various issues. The Council's website is being kept up to date and information on all the Councils activity's and services can be found on there.

A City of Ely Council Facebook page has been created, and Councillors are encouraged to populate this with any up to date news and information. Social media is a good tool for getting information out into the parish and the wider population. This has been long overdue and we would like to thank Cllr Christine Whelan for getting this up and running and undertaking the administration of this.

The Mayor's Forum is an issue that has been raised. In the past these have been on general issues and concerns that the public had. We felt that these were too generalised and the number of concerns raised made it difficult for the Council to address each one. Going forward to when things get back to some form of normality, we hope to be doing the Forums again, but in a different format. We would like to concentrate these on one or two specific issues per Forum. This will hopefully make the possibility of dealing with and resolving any issues raised more achievable. We would also like to invite guest speakers that have specialist knowledge on the Forum subjects.

Cllr Arnie Arnold
Chairman Communications and PR Working Group

CILWORKING GROUP

CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) funding was introduced in 2008 to be used for infrastructure to benefit the Community. It has to be new projects and not a replacement and has to fit in with the Business Plan. To date funding has been given to support the No. 9 bus service, Ely cemetery expansion, defibrillators, refurbishment of the Court Room within Sessions House and funding is identified if the Council's Minor Highway Improvement scheme bids are not successful.

Cllr Sue Austen
Chairman of CIL Working Group

REPRESENTATIVES ON OTHER ORGANISATIONS

PRICKWILLOW VILLAGE COUNCIL

This council meets 6 times a year including an Annual Meeting in January.

Speeding is still a problem, particularly in Putney Hill Road and Mile End Road.

'Hooting' trains. National Rail have agreed to stop the Norwich – Ely trains hooting as they cross the Branch & Padnal Bank Bridges alongside the River Lark.

The Environment Agency, carrying out riparian responsibilities, have engaged Drake Towage Ltd, Marine Engineers, of Wisbech, to dredge and repair the banks of the River Lark including removing asbestos and repairing the moorings. Covid-19 guidelines have temporarily halted this operation.

The annual ploughing festival with heavy horses and vintage and classic tractor ploughing took place on the first weekend of October. Live music, static vehicles, stationary engines, traction engines, crafts, trades, beer tent, children's entertainment, etc. The Engine Museum was also open.

Local artists continue to bring pleasure to villagers and travellers alike in their displays on or inside the phone box on Main Street.

The Baptist Chapel closed for the last time in December: there are now no places of worship here.

The village council now has two city council members who both live in the ward.

Cllr Richard Morgan
City of Ely Council Representative

STUNTNEY VILLAGE COUNCIL

Stuntney falls in the recently created Cathedral Ward of the Ely Parish, so as the ward councillor I have been attending their meetings since September 2019.

With the Ely southern by-pass now in use, the focus has shifted towards the provision of a safe junction at the western end of the village bypass, and a dual use path into Ely. A scheme to move the 30 mile an hour signs at the Church end of the village had to be abandoned, based on police advice.

As with other councils, their latest meeting was held on Zoom, so business continues as normally as possible.

Cllr Ian Lindsay
City of Ely Council representative

ELY TRINITY DOLE

Two councillors – Cllr Rebecca Denness and Cllr Chris Phillips – represent the Council on the Ely Trinity Dole and serve as Trustees.

The Dole is a nineteenth century amalgamation of several small charities, with income derived from rents from several pieces of land in the City and from a portfolio of investments. The Trinity Dole's present-day focus is on education and schools in Ely are able to benefit from a yearly grant from the charity. Individual grants may also be given to enable those in full-time education to benefit from participating in particular programmes relating to their studies. Some funds are also placed in the care of the Vicar of Ely to provide assistance to people in emergency situations.

Ely Trinity Dole is a good example of a charity with roots in the middle ages which has remained relevant to the community and quietly goes about its business of doing good.

Cllr Chris Phillips
City of Ely Council Representative

EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE ACCESS GROUP

The Council has one representative on the Access Group, and I have attended whenever possible the Group's fortnightly meetings. The Group acts primarily as advisory consultees to the East Cambridgeshire planning department and building control, and consider accessibility issues for all those planning applications for developments where there will be access for members of the public. They liaise with the Dean and chapter on matters of access to the cathedral, and advise East Cambridgeshire Council on all aspects of parking for the disabled, including the use of blue badges. They have a watching brief on ensuring accessibility to polling booths, and the upkeep and provision of accessible toilets in the local area.

In addition, they consider matters related to access for the disabled on all public transport, and will support individuals who are encountering problems. They continue with their long-standing campaign to mitigate the effects of street clutter and, in particular, A-boards around Ely.

Cllr Ian Lindsay
City of Ely Council representative

PARADISE CENTRE

I am the single City Council representative at the meetings of the Management Board of the Paradise Centre, and attend meetings when possible. I remain an avid sportsman.

Until 23 March 2020 the Centre continued to be extraordinarily well used, and was providing over 40 exercise sessions a week in addition to its other activities such as squash, badminton, roller skating and circuit training. The Paradise field remained as a home for football and cricket. It was open from early in the morning until late in the evening each day of the week, and offered facilities for a huge range of activities involving all age and abilities. It remains to be seen when it may reopen its doors, but many months will elapse before it returns to full and unrestricted activity.

That said, the Paradise Centre remains in a strong financial position and prior to closure had continued with a refurbishment programme over the last 12 months.

In conclusion I am pleased to report that the Centre is particularly well managed, and it has a loyal and stable work force who provide a level of service of which both they and their fellow citizens should feel immensely proud.

Cllr Ian Lindsay
City of Ely Council representative

ELY MUSEUM

I was delighted to become City of Ely Council's representative on the board of Ely Museum trustees, taking over in the winter. It is a particular pleasure to join at such an exciting time as the Museum is redeveloped. I attended most meetings and presentations, and induction training in the team's temporary accommodation in the Sessions House cells.

The Museum closed its doors in the autumn, builders moved in and soon the eventual shape of the outside began to become evident for everyone to see. Designs for the layout of the floors and displays became more honed and work to build the elements got underway.

The Covid lockdown began in March and brought the suspension to building work, disruption to the work of other contractors and to the Museum team working from home. Happily, the team have been redeployed to design educational activities for the lockdown, capture the history of Ely in lockdown and make plans for activities once lockdown ends. Trustee meetings have continued online via Zoom which served the purpose.

Building work recommenced in line with social distancing protocols on 22 April with a satisfactory agreement between sides over no penalties and we were pleased to hear about a grant of £60k from Amey being awarded. Lockdown disruption will affect costs and the timetable for reopening, and these are as yet unknown. Nonetheless, we proudly look forward to the reopening of our Museum.

Cllr Rebecca Denness
City of Ely Council Representative

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 2019/2020

The Annual Return for 2019/2020 forms part of this report, along with pie charts, illustrating the Council's income and expenditure budget headings for 2019/20

The Council's accounts for 2019/20 were approved and signed off at the virtual Full Council meeting on the 5th May 2020 and have now been submitted to the Council's External Auditors.

If there are any concerns regarding the accounts or clarification on any area is needed, then the Clerk should be contacted at tracey.coulson@cityofelycouncil.org.uk. She will be happy to help with any queries.

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2019/20

We acknowledge as the members of:

ELECTRICITY OF EAST HOUNSLOW

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2020, that:

	Agreed		
	Yes	No	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
			<i>has met all of its responsibilities where as a body corporate it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>

*For any statement to which the response is 'no', an explanation must be published

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

05/05/2020

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE 1836 REFERENCE

Signed by the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chairman

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2019/20 for

CITY OF BATH COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2019 £	31 March 2020 £	
1. Balances brought forward	553,799	825,893	Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records. Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	515,547	575,000	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	975,039	865,927	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	576,763	606,556	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	641,729	630,307	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	825,893	1,029,957	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	841,136	1,019,302	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	1,842,883	1,859,495	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).
11. (For Local Councils Only) Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	Yes	No	The Council as a body corporate acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
		N/A.	N.B. The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2020 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority. Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

05/05/2020

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

05/05/2020

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE 836 REFERENCE

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Annual Internal Audit Report 2019/20

CITY OF ELY COUNCIL

This authority's internal auditor, acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with relevant procedures and controls to be in operation **during** the financial year ended 31 March 2020.

The internal audit for 2019/20 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Agreed? Please choose one of the following		
	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2018/19, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2018/19 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority has demonstrated that during summer 2019 it correctly provided for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		
M. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	Yes	No	Not applicable
			✓

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

05/03/2020 23/04/2020

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

H. HEELS (on behalf of Heels & Lodge)

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit



Date

27/04/2020

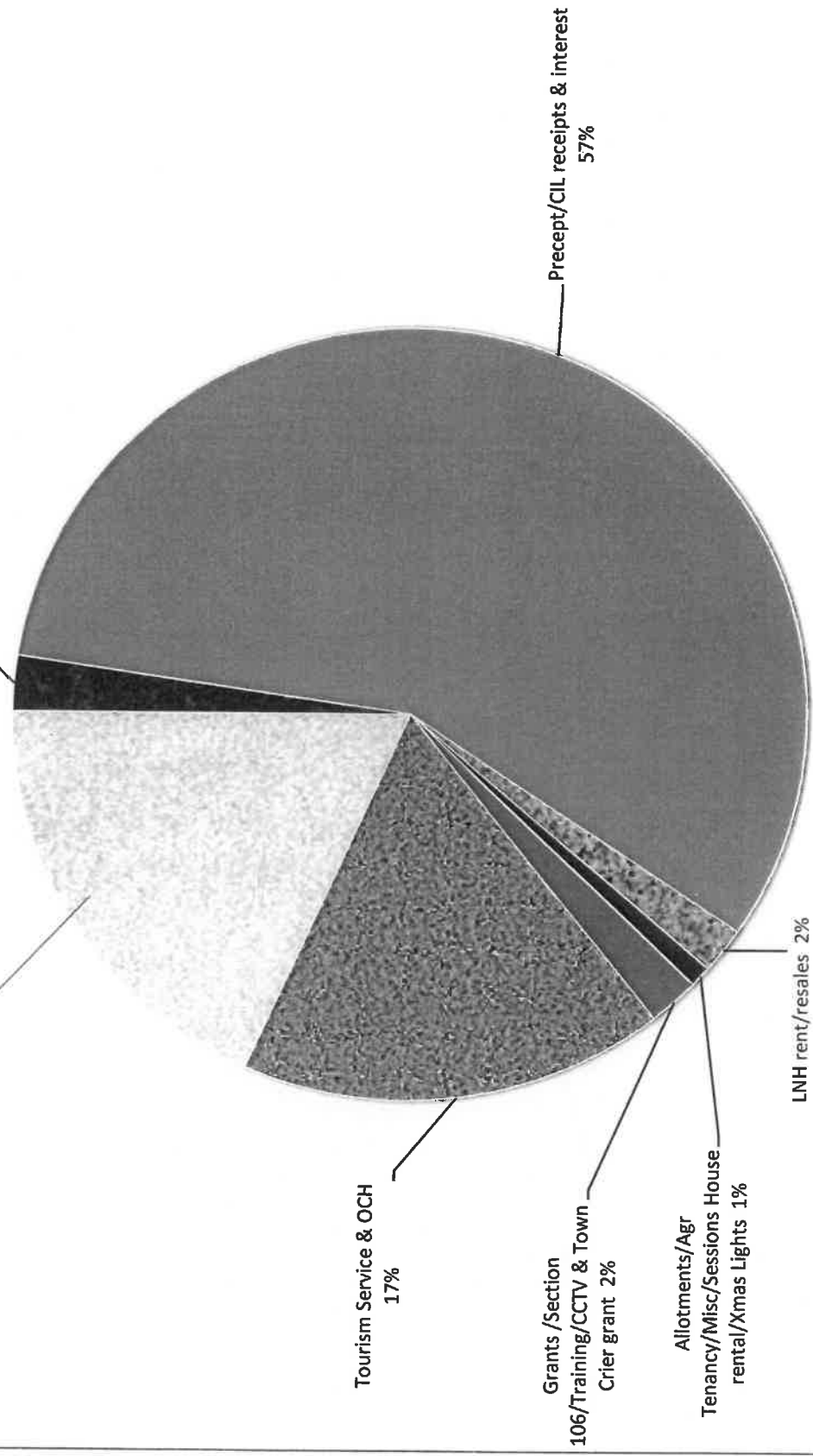
*If the response is 'no' you must include a note to state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

**Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned, or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

INCOME 19/20

Maltings/RBK 19%

Cemetery Fees
2%



Gen Admin/Hospitality EXPENDITURE 2019/2020

