

TOWCESTER TOWN COUNCIL

ELIZABETH COX

Town Clerk



TOWN HALL
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TOWCESTER COMMUNITY CENTRE TRUST

Charity No. 304254

Accounts 01.04.2020 – 31.03.2021

C/Forward on Account Number 00815209 on 31.03.2020	£106,756.48	Bank Statement 599
Includes creditors of £4,190.00 at 31.03.2020 (Northamptonshire County Council rent paid on 17.03.2020 for the period 01.04.2020 to 30.06.2020)		
Less recharge outstanding at 31.03.2020 to Towcester Town Council for the period 01.04.2019 to 31.03.2020 (cleared on 23.07.2020)	- £32,543.05	£74,213.43
Income		
Northamptonshire County Council Rent	+ £12,584.63	
Rent from other users	+ £225.00	
Northamptonshire County Council Recharge for the period 01.04.2020 to 30.03.2021	+ £8,365.52	£95,388.58
Creditors @ 31.03.2021	= £0.00	£95,388.58
Expenditure		
Refund of hire charges (Covid) (Cheque Nos. 101515 & 101516)	- £222.31	
British Gas Utilities (via Direct Debit)	- £616.73	
Recharges due to Towcester Town Council for the period 01.04.2020 to 31.03.2021 in respect of:- Annual Insurance Premium £2,967.06 Caretaker/Cleaner £15,345.22 (including pension contributions of £3,675.58) Maintenance, Repairs and Utilities £6,959.79 (Cheque Nos. 101517, 101518 & 101519)	- £25,272.07	£69,277.47
Balance on Account Number 00815209 at 31.03.2021	= £69,277.47	Bank Statement 612
Debtors @ 31.03.2020	£0.00	

The above statement of accounts fairly represents the financial position of the Towcester Community Centre Trust at 31.03.2020 and reflects its income and expenditure for the year.

Signed by the Responsible Financial Officer:-

Elizabeth Cox

TOWCESTER COMMUNITY CENTRE TRUST

Charity No 304254

Trustees:-

Towcester Town Council is the Sole Trustee of the Charity

Object of the Charity:-

The object of the charity is to improve the conditions of life for the Towcester community and its surrounds by the provision of the community centre, including the use for:-

- (a) Meetings, classes and other forms of recreation and leisure-time occupation.

**Trustees Annual Report
2020/21 Financial Year**

The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic had a significant effect on the operations of the Towcester Youth & Community Centre, which closed in March 2020 as a result. In accordance with the terms of its lease agreement; Northamptonshire County Council continued to meet its obligations to pay rent and a contribution towards other costs to ensure the building was preserved in good order and appropriately insured. The annual rent received from Northamptonshire County Council is currently £16,760 per annum.

As sole Trustees, Towcester Town Council made the decision not put its Caretaker/Cleaner on furlough in order that they could continue to perform important key holder duties, i.e. facilitating appointments for alarm and fire equipment servicing/inspections and to maintain regular security checks on the building.

The self-contained accommodation at the Community Centre continues to provide a suitable space which supports the activities of Towcester Town Football Club. This use is allowed is free of charge, save for a contribution towards utility costs. However, this was also closed for the whole of the 2020/21 Financial Year.

The centre did not re-open until August 2021.

Since the premises re-opened in August 2021, regular bookings have resumed by the following users:-

Towcester Toy Library
Towcester Table Tennis Club
Yoga 4 All Class
The National Childbirth Trust

The Council continues to work closely with the local Safer Communities Policing Team to help alleviate anti-social behaviour in the vicinity of the centre and the Clerk was recently appointed as Police Liaison Representative for the town, a role which intends to improve communications between the Police, the Council, the local Neighbourhood Watch group and the communities they serve.

The Council is currently planning a programme of external and internal works, which include, roof repairs, replacement flooring and external redecoration with the aim of preserving the fabric of the building and increasing its appeal to attract additional hirers.

The trustees consider the Towcester Community Centre Trust has met the objectives of the Charity by helping the people of Towcester develop their physical and mental abilities in a safe and caring environment.

Internal Audit Report

(to be read in conjunction with the Annual Internal Audit Report in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return)

Name of council:	Towcester Town Council		
Name of Internal Auditor:	David Harries	Date of report:	17 June 2021
Year ending:	31 March 2021	Date audit carried out:	5-9 Feb, 17 June 2021

Internal audit is the periodic independent review of a council's internal controls resulting in an assurance report designed to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the activities and operating procedures under the council's control. Managing the council's internal controls should be a day-to-day function of the council through its staff and management and not left for internal audit. It would be incorrect to view internal audit as the detailed inspection of all records and transactions of a council in order to detect error or fraud. This report is based on the evidence made available to me and consequently the report is limited to those matters set out below.

The council is required to take appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit and to respond to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit. Failure to take appropriate action may lead to a qualified audit opinion.

To the Chairman of the Council:

1. Introduction and Background

I carried out an interim internal audit of Towcester Town Council between 5-9 February and 17 June 2021, having examined the information on the council's web site; my thanks to the Town Clerk/RFO, Elizabeth Cox, for her time and assistance in responding to questions and comments as well as providing all additional information requested.

Towcester Town Council has 16 councillors (one vacancy filled by co-option in July), with a quorum of one-third for full council and one-half for committees, serving an electorate of around 7,400.

The Council has several committees: Resources/Planning; Recreation and Leisure; Premises (Town Hall, Community Centre, Sawpits); Personnel (meeting as and when necessary) and Cemetery. Each committee has clear terms of reference and delegated powers.

The Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations, as well as the risk assessment policies, are reviewed and adopted annually, each May. The current documents were reviewed and adopted on 18 May 2020.

The Clerk, Assistant Clerk and Administrative Assistant each have a contract of employment. The Clerk is the Responsible Finance officer (RFO).

In accordance with the usual practice, the Council agreed a precept of £389,965 (an increase of 10% compared with the previous year) on 9 December 2019, after the Resources/Planning Committee had considered the budget details (including additional work and long-term projects), following a review of expenditure requirements undertaken by each committee.

The Council has received a report on the financial effects of the coronavirus pandemic

A Business Plan, originally adopted on 7 December 2015, was last reviewed and updated on 9 September 2019.

The council is the corporate (sole) trustee of Towcester Community Centre. This has a separate bank account and financial records, including insurance. The annual return was submitted to the Charity Commission online, and on time, on 26 January.

During part of the pandemic lockdown period, some 'committee' meetings had been held within remote Town Council meetings, where a committee chairman took over the chair and members not on that committee could stand down during this agenda item. Council meetings were not adjourned to allow these 'committee' meetings. The Regulations allowing remote meetings do not change the requirement for each meeting to have its own agenda published, with a specific start time, even if it is published only on the web site. During Council meetings the Council chairman, if present, must take the chair unless declaring an interest in an item to be considered. In view of this, the practice of holding 'committee' meetings within Council meetings had been discontinued.

In receiving the Annual Return for 2019-20 the Auditors, PKF Littlejohn, had drawn attention to internal payments made on behalf of the youth and community centre which need not be included in the AGAR accounting statements. The figures in box 3 (total other receipts) and box 6 (all other payments) had been amended accordingly. The balance at box 7 was unaffected.

The final accounts, Section 1 and Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2020-21 would be approved on 28 June 2021. An extension until the 16th July has been agreed with PKFLittlejohn to submit all the required documents to them, and the Exercise of Public Rights would be publicised by their deadline.

2. Issues Previously Raised

The adoption of the *General Power of Competence* has been considered but not pursued.

Insurance arrangements are reviewed annually, and cover had been arranged through Aon including Fidelity cover of £750,000. The fidelity figure should cover the maximum sum held at any time during the year, including the significant section 106 money. [This has been reviewed regularly and is considered to be prohibitively expensive.]

3. Issues Raised for Consideration

Section 106 funding involves a significant amount of money (over £100,000) that should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it is used in an appropriate and timely manner.

4. General Conclusion

Through examination of evidence and questioning, I tested the internal controls and I am satisfied that effective systems of control are in place.

Yours sincerely,
David Harries BEM, Internal Auditor to the Council