



HASLEMERE TOWN COUNCIL

Clerk's report to Full Council January 2026

General Updates

HTC paid £25.5k toward the costs of putting on elections in 2023. The Clerk has received an estimate from Guildford and Waverley electoral services estimating that the cost to HTC for the 2027 elections will be £160k. Clerk to report.

The Clerk has been working with the Chamber of Trade to obtain a licence for a twice weekly market to be held in the car park next to the High St toilets whilst Waitrose is closed for refurbishment. It has been agreed, just waiting on the paperwork.

The Charter Fair will be held again on the early May bank holiday. The Clerk and Cllr Arrick are on the organising committee – any further volunteers would be very much welcome.

Events

Local Organisations meeting

A very successful meeting was held on Monday 12th January with over 20 local organisations present. The meeting discussed a range of issues and comment from organisations, mainly grant support and volunteer advertising. Staff from HTC mentioned how we can support promoting organisation's events on our social media channels as well as offer grant support. All stayed after the meeting for an opportunity to network with each other and the event has received positive feedback. The next one is scheduled for 15th June.



Charities Fair

The event was a resounding success with charities reporting making anything from a few hundred to over a thousand pounds. The Town Council contributed £480 to the costs of putting it on this year, and have suggested that the organisers apply for a small grant if necessary next year.

Christmas Carols

The Christmas carol event was a great success with over 550 residents attending and featured performances by the Haslemere Rock Choir, and the Haslemere Town Band who led the crowd in an evening of carol singing, with well-known Christmas favourites. Families also welcomed a visit from Santa, which was a highlight for the children attending.

Refreshments of mulled wine and mince pies were kindly provided by the Haslemere Chamber of Trade and Commerce which raised funds for both the Chamber of Commerce (Christmas Lights) and The Mayor's Charities.



Mayor's Christmas Drinks

This year's Mayor's Christmas Drinks was held in the Council Chamber and was well attended with over 40 guests present. The invitees included Councillors and representatives from key organisations within the town. The event provided an excellent opportunity for Councillors and residents to engage informally, strengthening community links.

Mayor's Gala Ball

Ticket sales are going very well, with 76 tickets already sold for the Mayor's Gala Ball on 21 February. The Mayor and Jo are working hard to put together an evening that promises to be a memorable event.

We are also seeking donations for raffle prizes. If you are able to contribute, please do get in touch — your support would be greatly appreciated.

Land and assets, PAO report

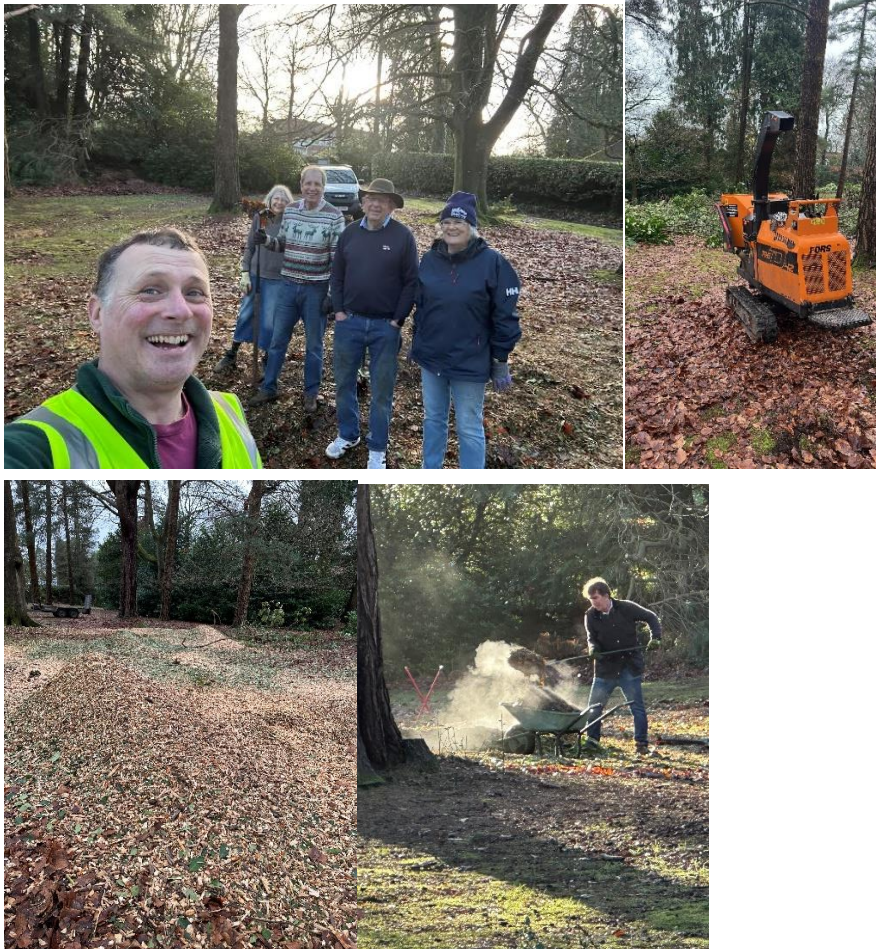
Grover Gardens – Laurel Reduction and Volunteer Activity Update

The site currently contains an overabundance of *Prunus laurocerasus* 'Rotundifolia' (Common/Cherry Laurel). This species has become dominant, suppressing biodiversity and limiting the establishment of native flora.

Following a very successful volunteer session in October, Commercial Grounds Care were instructed to reduce as much laurel as possible within an agreed budget. Once the works were completed, branches were laid on site.

On 8 December, Haslemere Town Council hired a wood chipper, and the green waste was chipped into manageable piles by Christian Ashdown. Volunteers were again invited by the Mayor to attend Grover Gardens with rakes and wheelbarrows to assist with tidying the site. The chippings were distributed around the perimeter of the green space, and a general tidy-up was carried out.

While significant progress has been made, further work is still required. A further volunteer session of approximately two hours is planned for **Saturday 24 January** for our keen band of helpers.



Christmas Market – Officer Involvement and Transition Arrangements

Haslemere Town Council is hoping to assume full responsibility for the delivery of the Town’s Christmas Market in December 2027. December 2026 will act as a transitional year, during which Haslemere Events will continue to lead the event, with Town Council officers working alongside them to gain operational experience and knowledge in advance of the handover.

The Christmas Market is held on the first Sunday of December, with road closures in place on the High Street and West Street. The event attracts a significant number of residents and visitors and includes market stalls located both on the streets and within the Museum. It remains one of the town’s key annual community and economic events.

In December 2025, Council officers began formal liaison with Haslemere Events and took an active role in supporting the organisation and delivery of the market. On Thursday 4 December, Jo Cork and Christian Ashdown accompanied Ian Lynch to mark out the High Street and West Street for individual stallholders and gazebo locations. This exercise was particularly valuable in identifying operational constraints, including the need to maintain clear access to shop entrances, doorways, and gates.

On the morning of the event, Council officers Lisa and Pippa attended from 6.00 am, wearing high-visibility clothing, to assist with directing stallholders to their allocated pitches. Volunteers and the road closure team were briefed prior to set-up, which contributed to an orderly and efficient start to the event. The market was officially opened at 10.00 am by Christian Ashdown, in his capacity as Town Crier.

Weather conditions included intermittent drizzle, light rain throughout the day, and increased wind in the late afternoon. Despite this, attendance was good and, at the close of the event at 4.00 pm, stallholders reported satisfactory levels of trade given the conditions.

Following the close of the market, Council officers assisted with the dismantling of stalls and equipment. This stage of the event provided valuable learning for officers, including understanding equipment storage locations, clear-down procedures, and the roles played by volunteers. The involvement of staff throughout the day contributed positively to the Council's preparation for the planned transfer of responsibility for this event.