



Wilton  
Town Council

# Strategic Plan



to



*Honouring our History, Shaping our Future*

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# 1. Executive Summary

This Strategic Plan brings all of Wilton Town Council’s priorities into a single, sustainability-led framework to 2030. It focuses on resilient public assets, well-kept open spaces, reliable facilities, and careful custodianship of Wilton’s historic artefacts and records. In line with member priorities, the Public WC project — all phases — will be fully delivered in 2026. Also in 2026, Pavilion Car Park Phase 1 will begin to tackle surface condition and introduce lighting, and the Christmas Lights programme will be refreshed to make it more impactful and reliable. From 2027 to 2030 the Council will phase improvements across open spaces and play, signage and streetscape, trees, and heritage conservation/digitisation, with transparent reporting and annual review.

# 2. Introduction: Wilton’s History and Identity

Wilton is a historic market town with over two millennia heritage. Once the ancient capital of Wessex and the town from which Wiltshire takes its name, it is nationally recognised for Wilton Carpets and internationally associated with Wilton House. The town’s distinctive riverside setting at the confluence of the Rivers Nadder and Wylye shape its setting and amenity. The town’s historic churches, civic traditions and strong sense of identity make Wilton both a place of deep history and a living, working market town.

The Council embraces its responsibility as a custodian of local heritage — including artefacts, regalia, charters and civic records — ensuring appropriate conservation, storage and, where suitable, digitisation so that the story of Wilton can be preserved and shared for future generations.

- Key heritage assets include Wilton House and grounds; the Italianate Church; Old St Mary’s Church ruins; historic town charters; The Guild; and established river walks.
- The Council embraces its custodial role for artefacts, regalia, charters and civic records—ensuring appropriate conservation, storage and, where suitable, digitisation.

# 3. Vision

A high-performing, community-centric town council at the heart of Wilton — one that protects the town’s environment and heritage, invests in everyday facilities, and keeps Wilton welcoming, vibrant, and well-looked-after for residents, businesses, and visitors alike.

## 4. Strategic Plan Overview and Four Key Pillars

Wilton Town Council's Strategic Plan sets out how we will support a strong, resilient and sustainable community by bringing people together, working with local groups and partners, and delivering practical improvements. The Plan is closely aligned with the annual Work Programme and Budget. It highlights priority projects while remaining flexible to respond to new opportunities and changing circumstances over the period to 2030.

Wilton's Four Strategic Pillars provides a clear framework for planning, budgeting and reporting:

### Environment & Sustainability

- Protect and enhance Wilton's natural environment, open spaces, and riverside
- Strengthen the town's resilience to climate change and extreme weather
- Deliver projects that prioritise efficiency, sustainability, and long-term value

### Communities & Civic Development

- Support a connected, inclusive, and active community
- Provide clean, reliable public conveniences that the town can be proud of
- Deliver well-run events and seasonal initiatives (including Christmas lights)
- Ensure public spaces are accessible, welcoming, and enjoyable for all

### Resilience, Assets & Infrastructure

- Keep Council-owned assets safe, resilient, and cost-effective to maintain
- Maintain high-quality play areas and recreation spaces
- Provide a well-managed, respectful cemetery
- Ensure Council Offices remain functional and fit for purpose
- Follow a planned maintenance programme for predictable, responsible upkeep
- Deliver proportionate and practical flood-resilience measures

### Property, Heritage & Place

- Protect and celebrate Wilton's historic identity and artefacts
- Deliver a high-quality, heritage-sensitive public realm
- Improve signage and interpretation to enrich the town's sense of place
- Support a welcoming, attractive environment for residents, visitors, and local businesses

The Pillars are complemented by the following inter-related work programmes and values:

## Marketing & Communications

- Provide clear, accessible communication that keeps residents informed and involved
- Promote Wilton positively and consistently across all channels
- Strengthen transparency and encourage genuine public engagement
- Enhance our digital presence through a modern, user-friendly website and active social media

## General Works Programme

- Deliver all statutory duties effectively and on time
- Manage the routine services that keep the town running smoothly
- Respond quickly and professionally to day-to-day issues across council assets and public spaces

## Core Values

- Integrity: acting honestly and in the community's best interests
- Impartiality: fair, balanced and evidence-based decision-making
- Transparency: open communication and clear reporting
- Civility & Respect: positive interactions with residents, partners and each other
- Positive Attitude Culture: a can-do approach that supports teamwork, pride and good service

## 5. The Wider Picture

Wilton's future is shaped by wider forces — from national economic pressures and inflation to the ongoing climate and ecological challenges facing communities across the country. Public services everywhere are under strain, and maintaining local infrastructure in an affordable and resilient way has never been more important. Within this context, Wilton Town Council will act pragmatically and responsibly, focusing on projects that deliver visible local benefits and long-term value for residents.

Crucially, this work will be done in close collaboration with Wiltshire Council, the unitary authority responsible for many of the services, highways, planning functions and strategic decisions that affect daily life in Wilton. By strengthening this partnership, the Town Council can ensure that local priorities are heard, that investment is targeted where it is most needed, and that both councils work together to secure the best outcomes for the community.

## 6. The Local Picture

Wilton's riverside setting is one of its greatest strengths, offering important recreational and wellbeing benefits — but it also brings ongoing flood-risk considerations that require careful, coordinated management. The town's open spaces, play areas and recreation grounds continue to play a vital role in supporting residents' health, activity and quality of life, while Wilton's rich historic fabric demands sensitive stewardship to protect what makes the town distinctive.

The Council also understands the importance of a thriving town centre, accessible parking and good local connections for residents, visitors and businesses. Community events, volunteer groups and local partners all make a significant contribution to civic life, and the Council is committed to working alongside them to achieve shared goals.

Delivering these local priorities depends on strong collaboration with Wiltshire Council, particularly in areas such as highways, planning, flood management and wider service provision. By maintaining an active and constructive relationship with the unitary authority, the Town Council can ensure that Wilton's needs are championed and that local investment and activity delivers the greatest benefit for the community.

## 7. Philosophy and Strategy

Our guiding philosophy is to work proportionately, practically and transparently, ensuring that every decision delivers real value for Wilton. We will embed sustainability and heritage sensitivity into our approach, balancing today's needs with long-term stewardship of the town's character and environment.

Planning over multiple years will help keep projects affordable and achievable, while annual progress reporting will maintain trust and demonstrate how public money is being used. Advisory committees and subject-matter expert volunteers will continue to shape proposals, ensuring decisions are evidence-based, locally informed, and aligned with the priorities of the community we serve.

## 8. Environment

We will care for Wilton's open spaces in a way that promotes inclusive access, supports biodiversity, and strengthens resilience to future challenges. Our priorities include phased upgrades to play areas, improved and more durable surfacing and pathways, modest but meaningful habitat enhancements, and responsible tree management and planting where appropriate and affordable. Across all projects, procurement will favour long-lasting, low-maintenance materials that reduce whole-life costs and ensure good value for residents.

## 9. Resilience, Including Sustainable Wilton

A sustainable Wilton means designing, maintaining, and upgrading Council assets so they remain resilient to changing patterns of use, climate pressures, and long term costs. It involves reducing avoidable waste, lowering and advisory groups — covering Environment & Open Spaces, Biodiversity & Trees, Community Resilience, and Heritage & Collections — may also be established with clear Terms of Reference, ensuring local knowledge, specialist insight, and community voices continue to shape the Council's approach. The town's natural environment. The Wilton Flood & Water Management Advisory Committee will bring together expert volunteers, agencies, and residents to provide informed advice on priorities and emerging risks. Additional running costs, and working closely with partners on flood and water management solutions that protect residents.

## 10. Promoting Transparency



## 11. An Effective Council



Engaging with our Community



Delivering quality services that provide value for money



Monitoring and reviewing this plan



Maintaining Openness and accountability



Implementing improvements throughout the town

## 12. Monitoring and Review

The Town Council is committed to delivering the projects and actions set out in this Plan. We recognise that new or unforeseen demands will inevitably arise over the coming years, and it is important that the Plan remains both ambitious and adaptable. To support this, the project list will be reviewed twice per year, with a full, annual review of the Plan to assess progress, emerging needs, and any required adjustments.

New demands will be weighed carefully against the Council's available resources. In some cases, approving new projects may require deferring or replacing previously agreed actions unless additional capacity or funding becomes available. This balanced approach ensures that the Council remains responsive while continuing to prioritise value for residents and the long-term interests of the town

## 13. Project Overview: 2026/2027

Confirmed for 2026



The Town Centre Public Toilets renovation is one of Wilton Town Council’s key 2026 priorities. The project will modernise and replace ageing facilities to ensure the town centre has reliable, safe, accessible and hygienic public conveniences that meet the needs of residents, visitors and local businesses. This investment supports Wilton’s strategic goals of improving civic infrastructure, enhancing visitor experience, and reinforcing pride in the town centre.



The Pavilion Car Park improvement project forms a key part of Wilton Town Council’s infrastructure and resilience programme for 2026. Phase 1 focuses on essential upgrades to drainage, surfacing and accessibility to ensure the car park remains safe, functional, and suitable for increasing community and event use at Castle Meadow. This phase lays the groundwork for future enhancements while ensuring immediate health-and-safety, usability and durability benefits.



The Town Centre Christmas Lights Programme is a valued seasonal asset for Wilton, drawing residents, visitors and shoppers into the Market Square and contributing significantly to the character and vibrancy of the town during the winter period. To maintain a reliable, safe and visually attractive display, Wilton Town Council will undertake a comprehensive review and upgrade programme in 2026, focusing on safety compliance, asset condition, performance and long-term cost-efficiency.

A key component of this year’s work is determining the most sustainable model for delivering the display in future years—hire or purchase—and ensuring the Council partners with a reputable, specialist lighting supplier with proven capability in high-quality, low-energy, innovative festive lighting installations.



Following the completion of the 20mph feasibility study in April 2025, the Council will now progress the next steps toward delivering a reduced speed limit in and around the town centre, working with Wiltshire Council as the highway authority to secure a formal decision on implementing a wider 20mph zone that covers key pedestrian-focused areas and supports safer movement throughout the town.

This next phase will involve reviewing the feasibility findings in detail, preparing the required supporting information for Wiltshire Council, and ensuring that the proposed 2026/2027 implementation can proceed promptly once approval is granted, helping create a calmer, safer and more accessible environment for residents, businesses and visitors.

### Enabling change (2026/2027)



Improvement works at the cemetery will focus on resurfacing and levelling pathways to improve accessibility and drainage, alongside installing new, sympathetically designed signage to support navigation and uphold the dignity of the site. To strengthen safety and compliance, the Council will introduce in-house memorial stability testing, including trained staff undertaking regular, risk-based inspections, maintaining structured audit logs, communicating with grave deed holders where required, and ensuring any unsafe memorials are made safe promptly and in accordance with national guidance, improving consistency, responsiveness and long-term maintenance efficiency.



The Council will review the long-term feasibility of remaining in the current office location versus relocating to a more central site, ensuring that the Town Council remains visibly at the heart of its community and easily accessible to residents. As part of this assessment, minor energy-efficiency and fabric improvements will be undertaken to reduce operating costs, improve comfort and sustainability, and ensure the existing building remains functional and cost-effective while options for future accommodation are explored.



Flood prevention and river-management works will focus on targeted drainage improvements on Council-owned land, reducing surface-water pooling and strengthening resilience during periods of heavy rainfall, while maintaining close coordination with partner agencies such as the Environment Agency, Wiltshire Council and local flood groups to ensure a joined-up approach to catchment-wide water management. As part of this work, the Council will develop a proportionate Flood Plan that sets out roles, responsibilities and response actions, helping ensure that Wilton is better prepared for seasonal high-water events, supported by clear communication channels, documented site checks and practical mitigation measures that can be actioned quickly when needed.

## 14. Future Projects

### Overview: 2027–2030



The Open Spaces and Play programme (2027–2029) will enrich children’s play experiences by delivering phased renewals of equipment, expanding opportunities for inclusive play, and installing resilient surfacing to improve safety and year-round usability, complemented by new benches to support carers and families. Small habitat features—such as bug hotels, pollinator planting and natural play elements—will help create more stimulating, imaginative spaces that encourage exploration, learning and outdoor activity, ensuring Wilton’s play areas are welcoming, engaging and accessible for children of all ages and abilities.



The Town Centre Streetscape programme (2028–2029) will focus on refreshing street furniture—such as benches, bins, planters and signage—to create a cleaner, more welcoming and better-maintained public realm, while introducing improved wayfinding to help residents and visitors navigate the town more easily.

Updated, high-quality wayfinding features will include clearer directional signs, consistent branding, and more intuitive routes linking key locations such as the Market Square, shops, heritage sites and open spaces. Together, these enhancements will make the town centre more accessible, attractive and coherent, strengthening Wilton’s sense of place and improving the overall visitor experience.



The Trees & Environment programme for 2026–2029 will establish a modest but sustainable tree-replacement scheme to ensure that trees lost through age, disease or safety concerns are sensitively replaced, alongside targeted planting and canopy-health measures to improve biodiversity and long-term resilience. As part of this work, the Council will initiate systematic mapping of all trees within its responsibility to create a clear baseline for monitoring condition, planning replacements and identifying emerging risks, supported by a feasibility review into managing maintenance and risk assessments in-house. This will help improve responsiveness, strengthen asset knowledge, and ensure that tree-care decisions remain proportionate, affordable and aligned with Wilton’s wider environmental aims.



The Heritage & Collections programme will deliver an inventory and condition assessment (2027/28), followed by conservation and improved interpretation (2028/29), and a collections-care policy with digitisation priorities (2029/30), while also setting out long-term, safe preservation methods that balance secure storage with public access—ensuring items are conserved to professional standards yet regularly displayed, loaned or exhibited (physically and online) so that more people can see and appreciate Wilton’s historic artefacts rather than having them locked away and unseen.



The Council will explore the potential devolution of services related to Wilton’s historic Thursday Market by first undertaking a feasibility assessment to understand operational requirements, financial implications and legal responsibilities, ensuring any future arrangements are sustainable and in the town’s best interests. This assessment will consider how a devolved model could strengthen the market’s visibility, improve trader and visitor experience, and enhance the Council’s ability to support local economic activity. Subject to a positive feasibility outcome, the Council would then approach Wiltshire Council to discuss options for the formal devolution of market-related functions, enabling Wilton Town Council to play a more active and locally responsive role in managing and promoting this important weekly event at the heart of the community.



As part of its long-term planning, the Town Council will undertake a future project to assess the feasibility of investment in its Council Offices, drawing on the options and considerations outlined in the HR consultants' report received in July 2024. This work will explore a range of possibilities for ensuring that the Council's operational base is fit for purpose in the years ahead. Options may include targeted renovation, reconfiguration, or—if appropriate—examining alternative locations.

This assessment will be approached carefully and sensitively, recognising the building's current use and the need to avoid any premature assumptions. Findings will help guide future decisions and will be incorporated into subsequent updates of the Strategic Plan.



The Town Council will develop a comprehensive Play Masterplan to enrich children's play experiences through a coordinated, phased approach to equipment upgrades. Rather than continuing with piecemeal improvements, the Masterplan will take a holistic view of all play parks, assessing their condition, accessibility, and opportunities for more inclusive and engaging play. This structured framework will guide long-term investment, establish consistent design principles, and ensure a fair and high-quality play offer across the town. By involving children, families, and local stakeholders, the plan will reflect community needs while delivering imaginative, sustainable play spaces. The result will be a cohesive network of parks that provide a complete, stimulating play experience for all ages.

## 15. Governance and Advisory Committees

Decision-making sits with Full Council. Advisory committees do not make decisions but play an important role in shaping well-informed proposals. Recommendations from all advisory groups are presented to Full Council for consideration and approval.

The Wilton Flood & Water Management Advisory Committee brings together expert volunteers, agencies and residents to provide specialist insight on flood risk, drainage and resilience priorities. Further advisory groups — including Environment & Open Spaces, Biodiversity & Trees, Community Resilience, and Heritage & Collections — may be established where needed. Each will operate under clear Terms of Reference to ensure their work is proportionate, evidence-based and aligned with the Council's priorities.