



In the Chair: Councillor John Ray, Romsey Town Mayor

**ATTENDANCE:**

P Councillor C. Birkett	A Councillor A. Goddard
P Councillor C. Burgess	P Councillor N. Gwynne
P Councillor J. Burnage	A Councillor R. Kohli
P Councillor M. Cooper	P Councillor J. Parker
A Councillor J. Critchley	P Councillor R. Theron
A Councillor I. Culley	P Councillor J. Urquhart
A Councillor S. Gidley	P Councillor S. Wilkinson

Clerk. Judith Giles

Members of Public: 0

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Cllr. J. Critchley, Cllr. I. Culley, Cllr. A. Goddard, Cllr. R. Kohli, Cllr. S. Gidley

**2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

None

**3. MINUTES**

The minutes of the Annual Parish Meeting held on the 19<sup>th</sup> April 2022 were agreed and signed as a true record

**PROPOSED:** Cllr. S. Wilkinson

**SECONDED:** Cllr. N. Gwynne

**CARRIED**

**Matter Arising:-**

None

**4. ANNUAL REPORT**

**The Annual Report was received from the outgoing Mayor, Councillor N. Gwynne and the Chief Officer, Judith Giles**

**Mayor's Annual Report**

After the impact of Covid - which was still being felt at the very start of 2022 in terms of people's caution re large gatherings - I am very fortunate that my mayoral year coincided with a renewed eagerness for events to take place, and for people to attend them. So much so that I could not possibly do justice here to all the events that I was invited to. Only some personal highlights...

The Mayor's Picnic - aided by excellent weather - was one. The Queens Platinum Jubilee street party - rightly recognised (internationally!) as one of the very best - was another. Again with good weather, but also with Romsonians at their best.

I was very pleased with the three main fundraisers for the Mayor's Charity - the Old Time Music Hall at the Plaza, the concert at the Abbey, and the raffle. Massive thanks particularly to Nicqui, Judith and Suzi for all their support.



Romsonians showed themselves at their best too, at more than celebrations. As ever, both Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday were a case in point. As was Romsey's response to the passing of Queen Elizabeth the second.

And the capacity of people in Romsey - both individuals and via organisations - to help one another, continued to impress and (at times) amaze. As well as the work of the voluntary sector, it was great to be part of the launch of no less than five new businesses in and around Romsey.

Which is not to forget the excellent work of the Town Council itself of course. The creation of the new Mayor's Awards is a perfect example. Many issues were carefully thought through - including the historic merger of Romsey and Romsey Extra parishes. To have been the last Mayor of the old Romsey parish and (albeit for only 6 weeks and 3 days!) the first Mayor of the new Romsey parish, was one of many privileges in the last year.

And now we have a new Mayor - appropriately chair of one of the inaugural winners of a Mayor's Award - and six new faces on the council. Plus they now have a substantial sum of money to spend on the Town. Here's to another good year to come.

#### **Chief Officer Annual Report**

This has probably been one of the busiest years ever. RTC welcomed two new members of staff. Nicqui Chatterley – Mayor's Secretary/Planning Clerk and Suzi Shilling – Business, Events & Tourism Officer. In June 2022 to celebrate The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, celebrations were held in Romsey. In particular a Street Party was organised by Romsey Carnival with RTC support which was fantastic. It was with great sadness in September 2022 the death of HRH Queen Elizabeth. A memorial service was held in the Abbey attended by a civic party and the community. The beginning of May 2023 we celebrated the King's Coronation with a street party and many other events over the weekend. Romsey Extra Parish Council was dissolved as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 and merged with Romsey Town Council. The Town Hall continues to be very busy with bookings in particular weddings. With the closure of Barclays Bank in the town, Barclays now have a base in the Town Hall for two days a week and have a consultant available. No cash can change hands. Elections were held on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023 resulting in 7 new Councillors out of 15 on Romsey Town Council.

#### **5. AUDITED STATEMENT**

The Audited statement of accounts for the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 was approved.  
(Appendix 1)

**PROPOSED:** Cllr. S. Wilkinson

**SECONDED:** Cllr. J. Burnage

**CARRIED**

#### **6. FINANCES TO 31<sup>ST</sup> MARCH 2022**

The accounts for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 were approved (See Appendix 2)

**PROPOSED:** Cllr. M. Cooper

**SECONDED:** Cllr. N. Gwynne

**CARRIED**



**7. MAYOR'S CHARITY**

Mayor's Charity Account was received. Total Funds as at 31<sup>st</sup> May 2023 is currently £6,439.28. Council congratulated Cllr. N. Gwynne for a very successful mayoral year.

**8. COUNTY AND BOROUGH COUNCILLORS**

**County Councillor's report - Cllr. M. Cooper to the Romsey Town's Annual Parish Council for the year 2022-2023.**

**1 2022 - 2023** is my 18th year as your County Councillor. Throughout that time I have served on the Regulatory Committee which is the County's planning committee. Additionally, I am my Group's Spokesperson on Regulatory. It meets on a monthly cycle and is concerned with minerals sites, waste recycling and disposal, new highways projects, school planning applications, Rights of Way, footpath issues and planning enforcement. Many of the minerals and waste applications are, by their very nature, large and controversial and involve site visits, often to the far-flung corners of England's third largest county. I also serve on the management committee of the River Hamble Harbour Authority where I can indulge my interest in all matters maritime; an additional interest and concern of mine is in maintaining the delicate balance between the precious estuarine environments of south Hampshire and the seemingly limitless demand for water based recreation. My Ocean Village based sailing boat is long since sold, sadly, so the annual inspection of the Hamble from its tidal limit south of Botley to the entrance on Southampton Water is a small compensation. I am also a member of the Hampshire Pensions Panel and Board. I can assure members that the County's pension pot is very large, sound and secure.

**2 County Council funding.** In 2023 Hampshire County Council receives 73% of the Council Tax. In the past it used to be in receipt of considerable additional government grants. However, the era of 'austerity' since 2010 means that most of those grants are now gone and the County's budget has reduced by 40%, equivalent to an annual spending cut of £685 million. Every year savings have to be found which are well and truly reducing service provision. When I ask for more resources to fix pavements and potholes I and my Councillor colleagues are asked which we would rather fund, Adult and Children's Services, or highway improvements. We have been told that unless there is a radical change in government attitude, Hampshire will have a deficit of £132 million by 2025-26, which effectively means a section 114 notice, the equivalent of a Council going bankrupt.

**3 Market Place Enhancement and Upgrading The Hundred.** It is now four years since the Market Place was refurbished, using mainly developer S106 funding, and I still get very positive feedback from local residents. During the year I took the new County Council Leader, Rob Humby, who is one of my ex-St Mary's College pupils, to see what we achieved and strongly promoted the need to carry the refurbishment on down The Hundred to ensure that the existing town centre is well connected to the 'South of the Town Centre' proposals. In November 2022 the Market Place was the winner of the 'Solent Quality Place Award'. It is a great pleasure to see the Piazza being so well used and to see the evolution of a strong café culture. The one issue that needs watching is that only specifically designated areas can be used for sitting out in order to keep much of the Market Place available for pedestrians and market stalls. Our new Town Centre Manager is aware of the issue and has a good relationship with Test Valley's Licensing Officer, Michael White. The traffic calming seems to be working ; the aim is that pedestrians should 'own the road' forcing vehicles to proceed very cautiously indeed.



**4 The Plaza Roundabout, Winchester Road and 'Operation Resilience'**. For a number of years the need to upgrade the road surface on the Plaza Roundabout and then eastwards along Winchester Road as far as Winchester Hill was very apparent. This is, arguably, the busiest section of road in town connecting as it does the main residential areas with the town centre. Potholes were being constantly created and re-created by the heavy vehicle usage by the complete failure of the road surface and its substrate. Much badgering from me and others has, at long last, got this section of highway into Hampshire's Operation Resilience programme, covered mainly by specific government grants. Having got a scheme agreed and designed and a date set, Southern Water announced they wanted to do a major sub-surface reconstruction of their sewer network - under Winchester Road. Operation Resilience was put on ice. Sometime later Southern Water announced that their sewer plan was too complex and that they were looking for another solution. We managed to get operation Resilience re-started with all the work being done between 8pm and 6am in order to keep this busy route available for use during the day. As I write this report, the work is progressing well and the quality looks very impressive. I have congratulated County Officers and their Contractors for a job well done. I have not received one complaint from residents or townsfolk since the works started.

What solution Southern Water has for their failing sewer network is not yet known but I will be very upset if they dig up our new road.

**5 County Councillor Grants awarded in the financial year 2022-2023.**

Hampshire County Councillors have a devolved grant budget which is currently £8,000 a year. This is designed to seed corn small local charities and organisations and is primarily for funding capital items or 'things' rather than general running costs. Organisations should email me on [cldr.mark.cooper@hants.gov.uk](mailto:cldr.mark.cooper@hants.gov.uk) to gain my support for a grant in principle and then apply on the County Council website. Each application is sent to me electronically before I sign them off. The system has been running since 2012 and I've awarded 131 grants so far. The grants awarded this year are:-

1) Romsey Male Voice Choir Treorchy Concert Project	£500.
2) Citizens' Advice Test Valley Volunteer training	£500.
3) Romsey Town Council Christmas Lights in Romsey	£1,000.
4) Romsey Extra Parish Council Whitenap Lane dropped kerbs	£1,000.
5) Prescription Art Test Valley Art classes,	£750.
6) Hampshire History Trust Heritage Open Days	£500.
7) Romsey Festival Leaflet distribution and publicity	£685.
8) Romsey Opportunity Group Training	£990.
9) S Hampshire Cruse Bereavement Support	£745.65
10) The Family Counselling Trust	£500.
<b>Total</b>	<b>£7,170.65</b>

**MGC 28.05.2023**



**9. Test Valley Borough Councillor for Cupernham Ward Report to RTC's APM for 2022 - 2023.**

Throughout the year, the ward councillors, Baverstock, Burnage and Gwynne have been active in the ward, assisting residents with any issues or concerns within the ward.

As ward councillors we have a sum of money that we can give as grants to support community events that will be of benefit to residents in our ward. To this end we have granted money to both Cupernham Infants and Junior Schools, the to Abbotswood Community Association and also to the Walk&Talk initiative for mental health, that meets regularly at Abbotswood for a gentle walk and chat. Cllrs Burnage and Gwynne joined one of these walks, and it really was an opportunity to chat about anything and everything, away from the pressures that are usually with us most of the time – so highly recommend these walks!

Again, Cllrs Gwynne and Burnage remain active with the Wilder Romsey and have recently been working alongside the TVBC Countryside Officers to improve the run down areas on some of the older housing developments in our ward, starting with the Great Woodley estate, where a community orchard has been planted with the help of the volunteers from Wilder Romsey. The areas that have paving slabs have had the moss removed and some sections planted with wild flowers, enhancing the green areas of the estate. The Wilder Romsey projects are ever evolving so expect to see more activity throughout the older estates in Cupernham and other parts of Romsey over the coming months.

**Report from Cllr. S. Gidley and Cllr. N. Daas – Abbey Ward**

Now that Covid19 restrictions have been fully lifted we have been able to have more personal contact with residents and this increased engagement has highlighted a number of issues which we are working on.

The speed of traffic through the town remains an issue and there is much support for a 20mph speed limit. Whilst this is predominately an issue for the County Council, this remains something we can press for.

The Brewery site remains a constant blight on the town centre and, despite a number of meetings on the subject there is still no tangible progress. In reality a change in the law is needed but this is not something we are able to effect. The Borough Council are still reviewing all options but can only work within the law.

We have taken up a number of issues around the ward including tree issues, anti-social behaviour, parking problems, rodent problems and operation of businesses in antisocial hours.

The entry to the Rapids remains an ongoing problem which we are endeavouring to find a resolution to. The extent of the problem has been exacerbated by the excessive rainfall pattern that we have been experiencing in recent years, but this has also served to make this something more of a priority.

We also continue to take up issues with Aster, the main social housing provider.



**10. Reports from the Floor**

**Romsey Twinning Parish Report 2023**

After a number of years in which Romsey Twinning's activities have been severely curtailed by the Covid pandemic it has been a great relief in the course of the past year to return to a schedule that bears some resemblance to that of previous years. In October 2022 we had our first exchange with a twin town in over four years when a group from Romsey visited Treviso in Italy. Over a long weekend we had a civic welcome from the Mayor of Treviso, visited key sites in the town, and were given a guided tour of the nearby town of Mantova with its Roman origins. At the end of April this year a group of 17 Romsey twinningers visited Paimpol in France, our first visit there for five years. Our Paimpol hosts were as pleased as we were to be renewing our ties of friendship. As well as a civic reception from the new Mayor of Paimpol we spent a very interesting day learning about the Shelburne Network, a secret underground network set up by the War Office in conjunction with resistance groups in Brittany which evacuated and repatriated some 150 Allied airmen who had been shot down over occupied France. This hazardous operation, which took place under the eyes of the Germans, was never detected by them in the six or so months it was active in the period leading up to D-Day. After a special screening of a recent French film about the Network in the local cinema we were shown the actual locations of the Network, including the site of the principal safe house and the local beach where the evacuations took place.

As well as the twinning exchanges we have been able to resume our Romsey activities for our members. In October we once again held our popular quiz night and in March this year we held a members' dinner in a local pub. The activity, however, with the highest profile over the past year was our involvement in the Platinum Jubilee Street Party in June 2022 when we gave away free slices of Battenberg cake from a prime location in the Cornmarket. On a gloriously warm and sunny day this proved to be very good publicity for the association. The cake was made for us specially by a local bakery and we accompanied its distribution with leaflets explaining the origins of the cake (the 1884 wedding of Queen Victoria's granddaughter to the Prince of Battenberg). An important part of our work is encouraging and supporting other local groups to make links with their counterparts in the twin towns, especially young people's groups. We were very pleased to facilitate a concert in Paimpol last August given by Ensemble Renard, an exciting young wind quintet co-founded by an ex-student of Romsey School. Ensemble Renard are appearing in the upcoming Romsey Chamber Music Festival. An ongoing project at Cupernham Junior School has produced letters from 90 Year 6 children to their French counterparts which we took with us on our recent visit for delivery to a primary school in Paimpol. And later this summer Romsey Youth Choir will be giving a concert in Treviso as part of their tour of northern Italy.

Planned twinning activities for this year include a visit to Romsey by a group from Treviso to coincide with the Beggars Fair weekend and the Romsey Festival. The Italian visitors will be accompanied by TAE Teatro, a Treviso theatre group making a return visit to Romsey following their 2017 visit when they entertained the Beggars Fair crowds with some spectacular stilt-walking. And at the end of October we will be welcoming a party from our German twin town Battenberg.

After being told by the Town Hall that they could no longer keep our twinning archives we agreed with Hampshire Record Office that they would be placed on deposit there, once they had been suitably edited and sorted. With over 60 years of records this has been a substantial undertaking, as I have previously reported. We are now finally ready to make the deposit and expect to do so within the next six months, along with a financial donation to HRO (which cannot charge for its services but which asks for, and depends to a large extent on, donations from depositors).

Roland Matthews, Chairman, Romsey Twinning



**Report from Ian Richards - Romsey Town Marshals Report**

The events in Romsey would struggle to go ahead without the support in traffic management of the marshals. It is 14 years since its formation. We now have a wealth of experience through our members. They are all volunteers and turn out in all weathers.

2022 they serviced the needs of the following events.

St George's parade

Mayor's picnic

Beggars fair

Summer Carnival

Food festival

Remembrance Sunday

Christmas Lights switch on and Carnival

Santa rescue

Carols in the Market Place.

Romsey town council has an organisation that they and the people of Romsey should be proud of. However for it to continue the members do need recognition and recruitment. Ian Richards is retiring from the role of supervising marshal. Council thanked him for his support over the years.

**Honorary Archivist's Report – Barbara Burbridge**

It was a pleasure to return to regular sessions caring for RTC's archives during the course of 2022. The first stage of the planned programme of work began to come together, so that Barbara Burbridge and Jennifer Wilsdon have now virtually completed the computerised inventory of artefacts and images. It is expected that a copy with cross-references and thumbnail photographs will be available for RTC. This will enable easy search for items suitable for potential exhibitions.

The highlight of the year has been the rediscovery of the ceremonial flag from the Romsey Branch of the Hampshire Volunteers. It was commissioned by Lady Barker Mills of Mottisfont Abbey and presented in 1860. This high quality flag with double sided embroidery is in a sad condition having been displayed in the past with staples which have torn and split the material. Expert opinion has been given and now funding is being sought for much needed conservation work.

Future work will include amalgamating Romsey Extra historic records into the archives; examining and advising re items stored in the Strong Room; and revising the inventories of displays in the public rooms and corridors of the Town Hall.

**The meeting closed at 8.05p.m.**



**TOWN COUNCILLOR CONTACT INFORMATION  
MEET YOUR COUNCILLORS**

**ABBEY WARD**

Cllr John Critchley



Towards the end of a career as a professional architectural photographer and lecturer, John came to live in Romsey twenty-one years ago. For John, cooking is one of life's real pleasures and is a way of getting people around a table to talk and enjoy life. He also enjoys the garden, reading (especially non-fiction), theatre and foreign travel. A believer that good communication solves many problems in life, John hopes that as a town councillor, he can be effective in trying to make this super town an even better place to live and work.

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07831 870120

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Cllr Ian Culley



Born in Hampshire, Ian has made Romsey his home for over forty years. He is married with a son who is an engineering geologist. Ian studied law at Exeter University and recently retired after practising for many years as a solicitor both in private practice and as a Senior Crown Prosecutor with the Crown Prosecution Service. Ian loves Romsey and now wants to put something back.

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Cllr Simon Wilkinson



Simon grew up in Worcestershire, came to Southampton in 1983 as a student, and moved to Romsey in 2006. He believes in enabling people to be happy and is increasingly concerned/involved with environmental issues. He works in technology and his immediate family comprises his significant other, his son and four cats.

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Cllr Colin Burgess



Colin moved to Romsey from the Glasgow area in 2005. He retired in 2015 after spending most of his IT career working for DFID, the then Government Department responsible for the UK Aid program. Colin feels privileged to have been part of a large team with a moral and worthwhile purpose. His role opened his eyes up for the need to alleviate poverty and fix the Climate Emergency. He believes in showing compassion and equality to others regardless of their background.

Colin's hobbies and interests include running an allotment, cycling, rugby union (strictly spectating), walking and volunteering. He is a volunteer driver for Romsey Good Neighbours, who incidentally are always looking for new drivers!

Contact:

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## **CUPERNHAM WARD**

Cllr Neil Gwynne



Neil has lived in Romsey since 2011, and this is his second term as a Town Councillor. He is also on his second term as a Borough Councillor, currently as Leader of the LibDem group. In his first term Neil established Wilder Romsey and was Romsey's Mayor between 2022 and 2023. He has also spent ten years as Chair at the Plaza Theatre.

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Cllr Janet Burnage



Janet's association with Romsey goes back to the mid-1960s. Educated in Romsey she has always felt a close affinity with the town and it's feeling of community. Her love of Romsey made her feel that she wanted to do more to help maintain and build on that community spirit, so in 2011 she was elected onto Romsey Town Council. Janet was Romsey Town Mayor from May 2019 to May 2021 – having a two-year period due to Covid. She has represented the Cupernham ward on the Planning Committee and is a past chair of the Building and Town Committee. She is a staunch supporter of the independent shops in Romsey and can be seen in the town most Saturday mornings.

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Cllr Christopher Birkett



I live and work in Romsey, I am passionate about serving the community and being an advocate for those whose voice is not always heard. I volunteer for several local charities including the Lions club, Sea Cadets and Plaza theatre. We are very fortunate to live in such beautiful surroundings, I enjoy any opportunity to get out and explore these with the family and our pet dog. I am also a foster carer and would like to get more young people interested in volunteering for their local community.

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Cllr Aidan Goddard



I've lived in Romsey since 2016, along with my wife. We decided to settle here and purchased our home a few years ago. I work full-time as a software engineer, mostly for local companies, but have recently been working from home for a company based further away. As a younger councillor, I hope to be able to bring a different point of view to our debates, and push for changes that benefit the entire population of Romsey. My favourite colour is usually purple.

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Cllr Rohit Kohli



Rohit Kohli, a seven-year resident of Romsey, is a dedicated community member with a rich professional background. After a twenty-five year corporate career, he joined his wife's business and committed himself to local service. He's a trustee and volunteer at Abbotswood Community Centre, founder of a free table tennis club, and former school governor in Southampton. Rohit's passion lies in enhancing community life and unity in Romsey.

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Cllr Russell Theron



Russell is a former pupil of Romsey School and is one of the new faces to join the Town Council. After a successful career in Hospitality Management, Russell moved back to his home town of Romsey where he currently lives with his husband and their Foster Children.

Russell is the Vice Chair and Youth Liaison Officer at the Plaza Theatre and regularly volunteers with local charities including Romsey Young Carers and Romsey Lions.

Russell is passionate about the future generation, and the needs of the town's younger residents.

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## **ROMSEY EXTRA WARD**

Cllr John Ray



John was born in Romsey and has lived and worked here all his life. Married to Rose with three children, he has owned a hair salon in the town for nearly forty years and has been a Councillor for twenty years. He is Chairman of Romsey Carnival Committee and President of Romsey Good Neighbours.

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## **TADBURN WARD**

Cllr Mark Cooper



Mark has been a Romsey Town Councillor since June 1986. He was Romsey Town Mayor in 1991, 2007 and 2012 and has also been a member of Test Valley Borough Council since 1986 and Hampshire County Council, representing the whole of Romsey town, since 2005. He specialises in planning and regulatory matters and is a member of the Hampshire's Regulatory Committee, Hamble River Authority and the Hampshire Pension Board and Panel. He was Mayor of Test Valley 2021 - 2022 and is Chair of the Borough's Southern Planning Committee.

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Cllr John Parker



John has lived in Romsey for nearly fifty years. He and his wife, Tessa, have two children and three grandchildren, all of whom live locally. He is a retired IT consultant. He was first elected to Romsey Town Council in 2015 after twenty-nine years on Romsey Extra Parish Council and Romsey Town Mayor in 2016 – 2017. In 2019 John was also elected as a TVBC councillor for Tadburn ward, a role that continues today.

His primary interest is in planning and has been very involved in the development of several iterations of the TVBC local plan. He has been a member of the Romsey Future team since its inception in 2013.

John is also an active member of Romsey Twinning.

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Cllr Jacqueline Urquhart



Originally from the Midlands, Jacqui settled in Romsey in 2000 to bring up her daughter and wants to make sure that Romsey retains its market town character and remains a welcoming place to live. She is a pharmacist and works in the pharmaceutical industry. She has a particular interest in environmental issues.

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Cllr Sandra Gidley



Sandra describes her life as people, pharmacy and politics. Her main motivation in life is helping people and she became a community pharmacist and also trained as an antenatal teacher. Aware of injustice she decided she had to try and improve the system and thus became politically active. Between 2000 and 2010 she was the MP for Romsey. She then devoted her time to pharmacy politics and chaired the English Pharmacy Board before becoming President of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society. She now spends her time enjoying grandchildren and belonging to a range of local organisations.

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**David Chase**  
**Maintenance Technician**

**Wendy Broom**  
**Housekeeper**