

**Stronger Communities  
Committee Meeting of Witney Town Council**



**Monday, 14th November, 2022 at 6.00 pm**

To members of the Stronger Communities Committee - O Collins, J Aitman, L Ashbourne, L Duncan, H Eaglestone, V Gwatkin, A Prosser and R Smith (and all other Town Councillors for information).

You are hereby summonsed to the above meeting to be held in the **Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney** for the transaction of the business stated in the agenda below.

**Agenda Supplement**

5. **Communications Report** (Pages 3 - 8)  
To receive the report of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer
6. **Community Engagement Report** (Pages 9 - 20)  
To receive the report of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer
8. **In Bloom Competitions 2023** (Pages 21 - 26)  
To receive the report of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'S. J. Prosser', written over a faint circular stamp.

Town Clerk

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## **STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE**

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**Date:** Monday, 14 November 2022

**Title:** Communications Report

**Contact Officer:** Communications & Community Engagement Officer - Polly Inness

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### **Background**

Councillors have asked officers to investigate the costs of outsourcing some elements of the website. This is ongoing.

Rebranding has for the most part been implemented.

### **Current Situation**

Currently the Town Council is experiencing a good deal of negative press coverage generated externally. Although this can be demoralising, there is a lot of positive news to get out and the Town Council will continue to prioritise publishing those stories to offset damage to its reputation. This will also help to protect the trust and good public perception it has built up in the last decade.

Latest communications are included in the Press Coverage spreadsheet, prepared by the Administrative Support Assistant, Stronger Communities & Planning as Appendix A.

### **Website**

The Communications Officer is awaiting quotes from various IT companies with regard to the migration of the website to the gov.uk template and possible outsourcing of some elements of the maintenance of the site.

The site continues to be streamlined. The removal of The Twinning Association and Youth Services Page has gone ahead, with these now featuring as links on the new 'Our Partners' page. This is currently under construction (some linking is still to be done) and Councillors are requested to look at it and advise of any further additions, Sports Clubs and Associations etc that they would like to see added. Partners are listed in alphabetical order – there is no hierarchy.

### **Rebranding- Newsletter**

The new logo has been implemented across most town council stationery, media, clothing and other items. The newsletter is due another issue and rebranding of this has taken place to reflect the new colours and a layout that is in keeping with other stationery items. Example page is attached for information as Appendix B.

Home Start have requested space in the newsletter for a small article and some advertising of their events and this will appear in the next issue along with a new Oxfordshire County Council Flood Warden Scheme.

### **Environmental impact**

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

### **Risk**

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

### **Financial implications**

Costs for the website will follow in budgetary considerations.

### **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. That Councillors check the Our Partners page and make suggestions of any notice are not listed
2. That the new style and colour scheme for the newsletter is adopted

Date	Story	Reported in	Positive	Negative	Neutral	PR Issued	Social Media Post	Enquiry Response
28.09.22	Witney in Pink	<b>Witney Gazette</b> <b>Witney Gazette</b>	Yes					
05.10.22	Speed bumps at The Leys	<b>Witney Gazette</b>		Yes				
05.10.22	Cycle Lanes on Corn Street	<b>Witney Gazette</b>		Yes				
05.10.22	Town Mayor visits Millers Grange	<b>Witney Gazette</b>	Yes					
05.10.22	Alice Batt Plaque Revealed	<b>Witney Gazette</b>	Yes					
12.10.22	Eynsham Park & Ride	<b>Witney Gazette</b>			Yes			
19.10.22	Late Night Economy	<b>Witney Gazette</b>			Yes			
19.10.22	Pitches at The Leys	<b>Witney Gazette</b>			Yes			
19.10.22	Christmas Lights - Energy Crisis	<b>Witney Gazette</b>			Yes			
19.10.22	Christmas Card Competition	<b>Witney Gazette</b>	Yes					
26.10.22	Parking problems on Burwell blamed on The Leys closure	<b>Witney Gazette</b>		Yes				
02.11.22	20mph Signage Confusion	<b>Witney Gazette</b>		Yes				
09.11.22	Remembrance Parade	<b>Witney Gazette</b>			Yes			
09.11.22	20mph Shambolic Signage	<b>Witney Gazette</b>		Yes				

Date	Story	Reported in	Positive	Negative	Neutral	PR Issued	Social Media Post	Enquiry Response



**WITNEY**  
TOWN COUNCIL

# Newsletter

SUMMER 2022



## MEET CLLR LIZ DUNCAN, THE MAYOR OF WITNEY

Liz became Mayor in mid-May, and in the two months since then she has been very busy attending events and meeting community groups and individuals.

She says, "If you look strictly at Mayoral events then it adds up to 40 in the first two months. No complaints though! It's been an absolute privilege and I've really enjoyed meeting so many people and supporting all the events which have been happening this summer."

[Read More about the Mayor now](#)

## Newsletter Highlights

[Meet the Mayor](#)

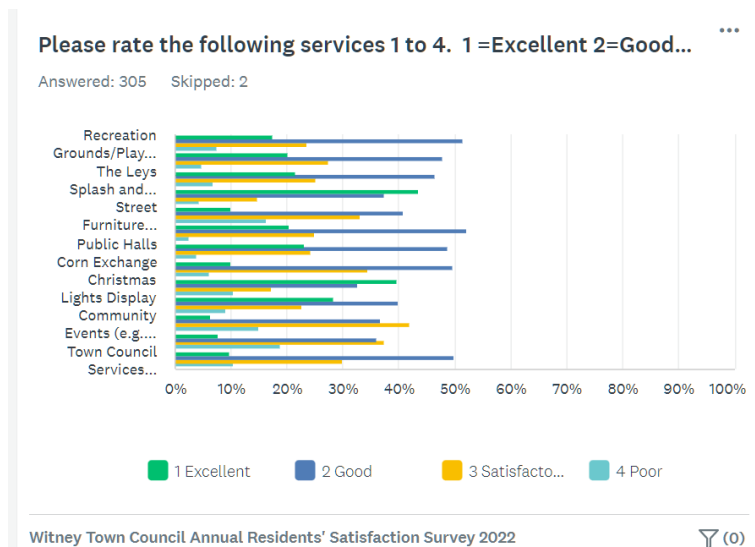
[Creating a Culture Of Innovation](#)

[10 Secrets of Effective Meetings](#)

[Balancing Work and Home Life](#)

[A Year in Review: Our Wins and Milestones](#)

JUNE 1, 2025



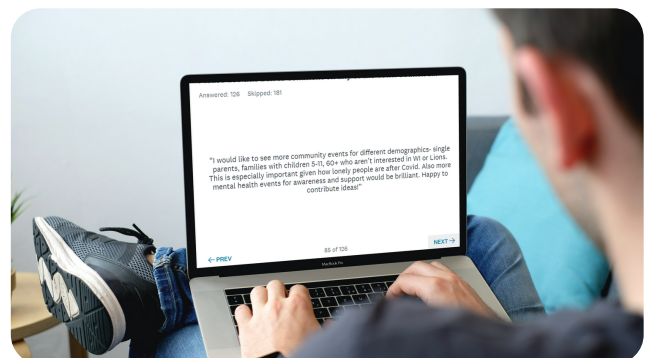
This is a copy of a chart generated by the survey report system which is rating satisfaction levels across our services.

## ANNUAL RESIDENTS' SURVEY

Because all the data in our Annual Satisfaction Survey is anonymised we cannot reply to residents individually, but we do respond to feedback we receive through the survey.

At intervals we publish a "You said, We did" type document to illustrate what steps the Council has taken to address commonly recurring issues and problems. We also let you know in news releases, social media posts or other information we disseminate about the actions we have taken, or where we have made changes or improvements based directly on what you have told us.

We urge as many people as possible to respond to the annual survey and for families to encourage their young people to fill in the survey. The views of future residents of the town are very important when making long term plans.



## YOU SAID, WE DID

The comment in the image here suggests that there could be more community events that might appeal to different age groups and demographics. Another requested more play days and another wanted more things for seniors.

The Town Council has a number of community events that it organises throughout the year but absolutely agrees that there is always room for more community events!



## STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

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**Date:** Monday, 14 November 2022

**Title:** Community Engagement Report

**Contact Officer:** Communications & Community Engagement Officer - Polly Inness

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### Background

At this point we are tying up loose ends from past events and looking forward to a new year of events, which includes ensuring budgets have been allocated to these and checking what has been spent and what remains in this year's unspent sums.

### Current Situation

Witney Town Council has no community events planned for the remainder of this year. There is still some expenditure to be made on prizes for Schools in Bloom and the Christmas Competition winners. There is also the potential spend from this year's events budget for two connected events early in 2023. The Coronation of King Charles next May will require early planning and sufficient budget to cover what needs to be included.

### Jo Cox Great Winter Get Together

The attached appendix will give lots of background information about the intention of the following two proposed events. The Great Winter Get Together (16 – 29 January) is the Jo Cox Foundation's flagship winter campaign. Timed to begin on Blue Monday, the loneliest day of the year, it focuses on loneliness and connecting communities.

The proposal is to work with other organisations who have existing expertise and experience to bring together a coffee and activity morning, along the lines of the very successful and familiar Chatterbox event that runs on the first Thursday of each month. The running time would be from 10am to 2pm so that elderly visitors would be travelling in daylight.

We could offer soup and a roll (perhaps working with the Community Larder and Fridge, which will also help raise awareness of these) and suitable activities.

The idea is that it should not be age focused although the older generation are those more likely to attend. Loneliness affects people of all ages. Working with other agencies may make this more accessible to other age groups and the intention is that it should be as cross generational and inclusive as possible.

Officers are proposing to use the 2k sum remainder of the events budget to stage two of these events – the first during the first week of the Great Winter Get Together campaign on Tuesday

17<sup>th</sup> January and the second on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> February. In this way we hope not tread on the toes of the Chatterbox events while covering the two darkest months following all the events of Christmas.

This event also goes part way to addressing a You Said, We Did response comments made in the Annual Residents' Satisfaction Survey that more events for elderly residents should be considered.

#### The Coronation of King Charles Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> May (6-8 May)

There is likely to be an announcement from Bruno Peake, the Pageant Master at some point in the next couple of months that will indicate the scale and scope of commemorative events such as beacon lightings that will be proposed. Until that happens it is probably prudent to plan and budget for a beacon along with other events. Although King Charles has indicated that he would prefer a lower key celebration and is mindful of the cost-of-living crisis, I think there will be an expectation of the Town Council to rise to the occasion. All events should be free, accessible and inclusive where possible, as this will also offset the cost for families who may be struggling. We won't have four days to fill as we had with the Platinum Jubilee so some things could be grouped together.

Many of the jubilee activities were really popular and could be tweaked to improve them or accommodate larger numbers where they were oversubscribed.

Possible activities:

**Picnic in the Park** for the Coronation – work with Premier Tennis, Coffee Shed and Bowls Club, St Mary's Church, to put on catering and entertainment. Big screen to watch the coronation. Quotes for big screen being sought currently. This could incorporate a Big Sing event with local choirs and groups leading the crowd in singing along. A beacon lighting to finish the day. Recommend a bonfire rather than the Town Council's existing gas beacon. We could work in partnership with other organisations to facilitate this. Voicebox, WOAPA could be the leaders in a Sing Off to close the event.

**A Crafting Session for children** - Along the lines of the Advent Fayre. We could invite other agencies to have a crafting table and share their skills as we previously did with the Advent Fayre. Cogges and the Church have previously organised activities and also RSPB and some other charities. Perhaps one of the Young Persons' groups such as Synolos or Home Start could be approached to see if they would like to attend and offer an activity.

Councillors may have other ideas they would like officers to explore. They may wish to budget for fabric bunting or a new permanent beacon to be sited at the Leys. Both of these would then be able to be reused at future events.

### **Environmental impact**

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

### **Risk**

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

### **Financial implications**

- The Jo Cox Great Winter Get Together can be funded from the remaining events budget in the current year.
- A Budget will need to be allocated that takes into account the potential costs of hiring equipment such as Big Screens or venues for the proposed events, catering supplies and staff costs for the Coronation.

### **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. That the Council holds two separate Jo Cox Great Winter Get Together days in January and February 2023
2. That the Council plans early for The Coronation of King Charles III and allocates a budget to cover their aspirations for marking this day for items such as a permanently sited beacon and fabric bunting or big screen hire, portable toilets etc that might be required for a larger event
3. That the Council consider partnership working with other groups when planning for these events

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**THE GREAT GET  
TOGETHER.**  
INSPIRED BY JO COX

THE GREAT WINTER GET TOGETHER 2023

# Organiser Resource Pack

## Welcome

**While we all experience loneliness at some point, the UK faces an epidemic of loneliness; over 9 million people, and 15% of young people, face chronic loneliness which has a hugely detrimental effect on their mental and physical health.**



As someone who had been lonely as a young person Jo Cox recognised this and was determined to combat it. The Jo Cox Foundation continues this work through the Great Winter Get Together (16 – 29 January), our flagship winter event which brings people together to demonstrate the power of connection to alleviate loneliness.

With the cost of living crisis making it difficult for people to afford to attend their usual social activities, this year the Great Winter Get Together is more important than ever.

**“I will not live in a country where thousands of people are living lonely lives, forgotten by the rest of us.”**

**Jo Cox**

We want there to be places for connection in communities across the UK which people can attend to alleviate loneliness. This may be a special Great Winter Get Together event, a regular community café or coffee morning.

**Thank you for taking part in the Great Winter Get Together.**

## Contents

1. What is the Great Winter Get Together?
2. Who was Jo Cox?
3. What are the aims of this pack?
4. Resources and event support
5. Keys to unlocking connections

# 1

## What is the Great Winter Get Together?

The **Great Winter Get Together (16 – 29 January)** is the Jo Cox Foundation's flagship winter campaign. Timed to begin on Blue Monday, the loneliest day of the year, it focuses on loneliness. It aims to:

- Develop and advertise places to connect in communities across the UK, providing people with local spaces they can make meaningful connections in during the Great Winter Get Together period.
- Encourage people who are feeling lonely to attend places of connection this winter.
- To highlight the scale and impact of loneliness in the UK, in particular youth loneliness, and what can be done to address it at local and national levels.

# 2

## Who was Jo Cox?

Jo Cox was a passionate campaigner, activist and humanitarian; a proud Yorkshire lass and internationalist; and a devoted mum, daughter, sister, wife, friend and MP.



- She lived by the words she expressed in her first speech in Parliament: “We are far more united and have far more in common than that which divides us”.
- On 16th June 2016, on her way to a constituency surgery to meet with local residents of Batley and Spen, Jo Cox MP was murdered because of her beliefs.
- The Jo Cox Foundation was established in 2016 by the friends and family of the late Jo Cox MP, and exists to build a positive legacy for Jo and to create something positive from the tragedy that was her murder.

### 3

## What are the aims of this pack?

Whether it is your first time organising a Great Winter Get Together/Great Get Together or you're an experienced organiser this pack is here to support you.

As well as basic guidance on how to organise your Great Winter Get Together it also contains top tips on reaching out to diverse communities, advice on how to market your event and keys to encourage meaningful connection.

If you have any questions or want further support we're here to help! Feel free to drop us an email at [hello@greatgettogether.org](mailto:hello@greatgettogether.org) or feel free to attend one of our [Great Plan Together webinars](#).





## 4

**Event Support**[Event Planning checklist](#)[Event top tips](#)[Inclusion and reaching out factsheet](#)[Guidance on running online events](#)[Keys for Unlocking Connection](#)[Talking about loneliness toolkit](#)[Spirit of 2012 Guide to Evaluating events](#) and [Evaluation template](#)[Great Winter Get Together M + E guidance](#) and [M + E FAQs](#)[Great Winter Get Together M + E leaflet](#)**Marketing Support**[Marketing factsheet](#)[Template press release](#)[Template invites](#)[#PlacesForConnection badge](#)  
(Can be added to websites, posters, etc)**Template social media posts:**- Event promo post ([Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#)) –**[\\*All customisable materials can be found here\\*](#)****Tips for encouraging young people to connect**

**1** Publicise your event on social media and with local colleges or universities if appropriate.

**2** Encouraging swapping numbers and Instagram handles at the end so young people can stay in touch.

**3** If there is any embarrassment and awkwardness, sometimes the best thing to do is to acknowledge this and own it – almost taking responsibility for that embarrassment – so younger participants are freed from having to worry about it.

**5****Keys to meaningful connection****1. Consider your space**

The right event space is needed to ensure people can feel safe and relaxed. This doesn't mean high end buildings, but it does mean a space selected to be accessible and facilitate connection

**2. Consider your activities**

Including an activity helps people feel more at ease by giving them something to focus on. This creates space for conversations and connections to emerge naturally. Ideas may include walking, preparing food or arts and crafts

**3. Remember we can achieve more together - organisations**

As organisers we benefit from making connections and collaborating with others. Working with other organisations helps to develop constructive feedback, opportunities and new ideas. This can be particularly vital when you're trying to reach new audiences.

**4. Remember we can achieve more together - community**

Involving communities in planning and delivering activities improves outcomes for everyone. It helps communities to feel invested, empowered, heard and involved in an activity and is a great way to create new ideas and solutions.

**5. Pay attention to small things**

Connections aren't automatically created when you bring people together. It requires intention and attention. Paying attention to details can help give people reassurance and the tools they need to navigate new connections or experiences.

## 6. Allow enough time

Building trust, relationships and creating meaningful connections takes time. It requires long term thinking and is built when we are vulnerable with each other and feel valued and safe. Allowing enough time to allow individuals to build trust and relationships will pay off.

## 7. Identify barriers to participation and how you might overcome them

Anyone can benefit from increasing the number and quality of their social connections – but we know that certain groups are at more risk of loneliness and disconnection. Doing what you can to identify and minimise values to those who would benefit most will help increase your positive impact and change lives.



## Contact us

If you have any questions or would like to know anything else about this year's Great Winter Get Together, please visit our website at [greatgettogether.org/winter](http://greatgettogether.org/winter) or get in touch with us at [hello@greatgettogether.org](mailto:hello@greatgettogether.org)

The Great Get Together is funded by [Spirit of 2012](#)



## Get in touch

Email us at [hello@greatgettogether.org](mailto:hello@greatgettogether.org)



@great\_together



@greatgettogether



@greatgettogether

## STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

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<b>Date:</b>	Monday, 14 November 2022
<b>Title:</b>	In Bloom Competitions 2023
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Communications & Community Engagement Officer - Polly Inness

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### **Background**

The In Bloom Competitions have come to a close for this year. Considerations are being made for entry into next year's competition classes. As in previous years the initiative has been well supported by our community gardeners and the Witney Rotary Club.

### **Current Situation**

An email (attached) has been received by the Rotary Club suggesting a change to the way in which the School In Bloom barrows are judged. Prizes have now been purchased and will be delivered to schools in the next few weeks (depending on the availability of the mayor) so that they have them in time to begin the new season of gardening.

A meeting of the In Bloom groups is scheduled for Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> November so more information on the groups themselves possibly entering their individual gardens in the "It's My Neighbourhood" category will be available after this.

### **Schools In Bloom Prizes**

Each of the eleven schools that entered a wheelbarrow will receive a paper pot maker as their prize. This makes biodegradable pots from old newspapers to plant seeds in. These mean less root disturbance for young plants as they do not need to be removed from the pot before planting as the paper will naturally break down in the soil.

The winners of The People's Choice, Judges Choice and the winner of the Mayors award will each receive a Save the Bees gardening kit in addition to the paper pot maker.

### **Impact Project**

The plan to use unspent budget on an impact project is still being decided. The concern about sheep being stolen rules out these being placed anywhere that isn't covered by CCTV or a busy footfall. There is a potential for the budget to be used to plant bright and welcoming planters on the entrances to Witney where the Welcome to Witney signs are located.

## **Rotary Letter**

We understand that the timing of judging in late July means that awards are made later in the year as schools have broken up by then. Rotary were able to arrange their presentation autonomously to try to fit it in before the end of term, but it seems they were not successful.

Unfortunately, we cannot change the judging dates of our In Bloom entries as the earlier part of July is taken up by the Towns and Villages entries which enter as a whole, leaving the smaller entries such as individual parks until later.

We could allow the Rotary Club to select and award their winner at the Carnival, but this poses its own difficulties. There is no guarantee that all the schools would have a representative there on the off chance that they might win and our In Bloom judges would not be around to witness this element of community engagement with the In Bloom initiative as they are when we all judge on the same day. Community engagement is one of the key scoring elements and one that we tend to score lower on. We actually have a lot of community support and involvement, but it is sometimes difficult to evidence this.

## **Environmental impact**

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

## **Risk**

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

## **Financial implications**

None

## **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. Would they like to select planters at the Welcome to Witney signs for this year's impact project?
2. Would they like to accommodate judging of the barrows at the Carnival for Rotary?

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