

Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee Meeting of Witney Town Council



Tuesday, 28th November, 2023 at 6.00 pm

To members of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee - A Bailey, G Meadows, R Smith, J Aitman, O Collins, J Robertshaw, S Simpson and D Temple (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.

Admission to Meetings

All Council meetings are open to the public and press unless otherwise stated.

Any member of the public wishing to attend the meeting and speak on a particular item should contact the Committee Clerk (derek.mackenzie@witney-tc.gov.uk) in advance.

Recording of Meetings

Under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 the council's public meetings may be recorded, which includes filming, audio-recording as well as photography.

As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record any part of the proceedings, please let the Deputy Town Clerk or Committee Clerk know before the start of the meeting.

Agenda

1. Apologies for Absence

To consider apologies and reasons for absence.

Committee Members who are unable to attend the meeting should notify the Committee Clerk derek.mackenzie@witney-tc.gov.uk **prior to the meeting**, stating the reason for absence.

Standing Order 30(d)(v) permits the appointment of substitute Councillors to a Committee whose role is to replace ordinary Councillors at a meeting of a Committee if ordinary Councillors of the Committee have informed the Proper Officer **before** the meeting that they are unable to attend.

2. Declarations of Interest

Members are reminded to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests in any of the items under consideration at this meeting in accordance with the Town Council's code of conduct.

3. Public Participation

The meeting will adjourn for this item.

Members of the public may speak for a maximum of five minutes each during the period of public participation, in line with Standing Order 42. Matters raised shall relate to the following items on the agenda.

4. **Minutes** (Pages 3 - 18)
 - a) To adopt and sign as correct the minutes of the committee held on 26 September, 17 October and 7 November 2023
 - b) Matters arising from the minutes of the above meetings.
5. **Finance Report: Revised Revenue Budget 2023/24 and Draft Base Revenue Budget for 2024/25** (Pages 19 - 25)

To receive the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).
6. **Planning Applications** (Pages 26 - 30)

To receive and consider a schedule of Planning Applications from West Oxfordshire District Council.
7. **Planning Decisions** (Pages 31 - 34)

To receive and consider a schedule of planning decisions from West Oxfordshire District Council.
8. **Witney Traffic Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes - 26 September 2023** (Pages 35 - 41)

To receive and consider the minutes of the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee meeting held on 26 September 2023.
9. **Witney Lake & Country Park - Management Plan Summary** (Pages 42 - 62)

To receive and consider the plan of the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer.



Town Clerk

Agenda Item 4

CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Tuesday, 26 September 2023

At 6.00 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor A Bailey (Chair)

Councillors:	G Meadows R Smith J Aitman	S Simpson D Temple J Treloar (In place of J Robertshaw)
Officers:	Derek Mackenzie Claire Green Sharon Groth Carl Whitehead	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk Administration Support - Planning & Stronger Communities Town Clerk Park Ranger
Others:	None.	

P515 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor O Collins.

An apology for absence was also received from Councillor J Robertshaw, Councillor J Treloar attended as a substitute.

P516 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from members or officers.

P517 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

P518 MINUTES

The minutes of the Climate Biodiversity & Planning Committee meetings held on 25 July, 15 August & 5 September 2023 were received.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of Climate Biodiversity & Planning Committee meetings held on 25 July, 15 August & 5 September 2023 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

P519 **FINANCE REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) which summarised the budgets under its remit, along with associated costs centres and codes.

Members were reminded of the importance of considering items to be included in the 2024/25 budget which would be discussed in the next cycle of meetings.

The Committee provided some items for consideration. They would like to see bike racks installed at West Witney Sports & Social Club (WWS&SC), the continuation of the Forest School grant if it proves successful. They also asked for the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer to be consulted so as to set a budget appropriate to support his programme of works, in answer to this final point it was advised that the B&GSO was preparing a Management Plan which would include the necessary budget detail.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, WWSSC Bike racks and Forest School grant funding be added to the plan and budget-setting for further consideration by officers.
3. That, appropriate budgets are set for biodiversity and green space works.

P520 **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The Committee received and considered a schedule of planning applications from West Oxfordshire District Council.

Members received and considered additional correspondence received regarding Planning Application 23/00179/FUL. Members did not wish to submit any additional comment to the existing objection submitted.

The Chair also advised that for future meetings, members would be asked to lead the discussion for planning applications that fall within their ward.

Resolved:

1. That, the comments, as per the attached schedule be forwarded to West Oxfordshire District Council and,
2. That, the correspondence of South Leigh & High Cogges Parish concerning 23/00179/FUL be noted and,
3. That, the wishes of the Chair be noted in respect of future applications.

P521 **PLANNING DECISIONS**

The Committee received and considered a schedule of planning decisions received from West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC).

Members also received a verbal update from the Administrative Support Assistant for Stronger Communities & Planning who relayed feedback taken from the Planning Officer's Delegated

Report. Members were pleased to hear that their observations had been considered in a positive manner.

The Administrative Support Assistant for Stronger Communities & Planning also advised of the upcoming Local Plan 2041 Consultation and reminded members that they were encouraged to engage with this important future planning.

Resolved:

1. That, the list circulated advising of WODC planning decisions be noted and,
2. That, the verbal update in respect of observations made by the committee is noted.

Councillor S Simpson joined the meeting at 6:12pm

P522 LAKE & COUNTRY PARK - EXTERNAL LAKE REPORT

The Committee received a verbal update from the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer in respect of the Barometric survey carried out on the Country Park Lake.

Members were surprised to hear the details of the depth of the lake which ranged from 20cm to 5.2 metres however, were pleased this data provided a benchmark by which the B&GSO could monitor water levels.

They noted there was no bus found, contrary to local speculation.

Resolved:

That, the verbal update be noted.

P523 LAKE & COUNTRY PARK - MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Committee received the report of the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer which provided an update on the Management Plan that was being prepared.

Members raised some questions which the B&GSO was able to respond to in respect of the Water Quality of the lake, which remained very good; there were not as many incidents of contamination by sewage as reported further up the waterways.

The Committee also heard that the reports commissioned by the council had been used in preparation of the Management Plan to help formulate a list of actions.

Resolved

That, the report and verbal update be noted.

The Town Clerk left the meeting at 6:40pm, rejoining at 6:50pm.

P524 LAKE & COUNTRY PARK - CYCLING

The Committee received and considered the report of the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer regarding cycling at the Country Park.

Councillor Bailey proposed, seconded by Councillor Simpson that the decision be delegated to Officers for signage to be ordered and installed, as required around the lake area, to identify areas where cycling was allowed. The council's website would also be updated to confirm the details. All Members were in agreement.

Resolved

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, signage be organised by Officers as required to highlight areas where cycling was allowed and
3. That, the Council website be updated.

The Town Clerk left the meeting at 6:52pm

P525 PAVEMENT LICENCE - THE FLEECE

With the express permission of the Chair, the Committee discussed an application for a new pavement licence for The Fleece Public House, Church Green, under the Business and Planning Act 2020, due to the short timescale of the consultation. Members had no concerns.

Resolved:

That, a 'No Objection' comment is forwarded to the licencing team at WODC.

The meeting closed at: 6.59 pm

Chair

Witney Town CouncilPlanning Minutes - 26th September 2023

520

520- 1 WTC/133/23 Plot Ref :-23/02318/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 19/09/2023
 Location :- 26 WATERFORD ROAD Date Returned :- 27/09/2023
 WATERFORD ROAD
 Proposal : Erection of conservatory.
 Observations : While Witney Town Council does not object to this application in terms of material concerns, it notes the loss of permeable drainage and would ask that mitigating measures are considered to help decrease the possibility of surface water flooding in this area, in accordance with policy EH7 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.

520- 2 WTC/134/23 Plot Ref :-23/02418/NMA Type :- NMA
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 19/09/2023
 Location :- LAND AT WEST WITNEY Date Returned :- 27/09/2023
 DOWNS ROAD
 CURBRIDGE
 Proposal : Common infrastructure including roads, landscaping and drainage (Non material amendment to add additional access footpath, add grass verges on both the left and right hand side of the carriageway, proposed splayed bell mouth allowing access to the allotments, additional crossing points to the north and south of the road and additional street lighting).
 Observations : Witney Town Council make the following observation:
 The scale drawings submitted for this application have been considered by Members - On the junction between Centenary Way and the allotments, the dropped kerb for pedestrians crossing at that junction sends pedestrians across the widest part of the flare. On the current satellite image of this site, (reflecting what has already been built), the crossing area, as marked out by the tactile paving, appears to direct pedestrians to cross on a narrower part of the flare. Members would prefer that the safer, shorter crossing path for pedestrians is considered.

The Meeting closed at : 6:59pm

Signed : _____ Chairman Date: _____

On behalf of :- Witney Town Council

**CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Tuesday, 17 October 2023

At 6.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom

Present:

Councillor G Meadows (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)

Councillors:	R Smith J Aitman	J Robertshaw S Simpson
Officers:	Adam Clapton Derek Mackenzie	Deputy Town Clerk Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
Others:	No members of the public.	

P555 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor O Collins.

P556 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers.

P557 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

P558 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Committee received and considered a schedule of planning applications from West Oxfordshire District Council.

Resolved:

That, the comments, as per the attached schedule be forwarded to West Oxfordshire District Council.

Councillor S Simpson joined the meeting at 6:21pm - From Agenda Item 4.10

P559 OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL PLANNING R3.0121/23 - MOORLAND ROAD, WITNEY

The Committee received and considered Oxfordshire County Council planning application R3.0121/23 at Moorland Centre, Dark Lane, Witney.

Members acknowledged the importance of having a safe location to store vehicles which provided valuable community transport.

Resolved:

That, Witney Town Council has no objection to this application.

P560 **OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL PLANNING R3.0142/23 - SHORES GREEN JUNCTION**

The Committee received and considered Oxfordshire County Council planning application R3.0142/23 at the Shores Green Junction of the A40.

Members whole-heartedly supported this application for the improvement to roads infrastructure as this provided great benefits for Witney and the residents of the town and was long overdue.

Resolved:

That, Witney Town Council supports the application and therefore offers no objection.

P561 **NOTIFICATION OF PLANNING APPEAL - 180 FARMERS CLOSE**

The Committee received notice of Planning Appeal APP/D3125/D/23/3320768 for 180 Farmers Close, Witney

Resolved:

That, the Planning Appeal be noted.

P562 **NOTIFICATION OF PLANNING APPEAL - LAND WEST OF HAILEY ROAD, WITNEY**

The Committee received notice of Planning Appeal APP/D3125/W/23/338652 for Land West of Hailey Road, Witney.

Resolved:

That, the Planning Appeal be noted.

P563 **APPLICATION FOR PAVEMENT LICENCE - PART & PARCEL, 2-4 MARKET SQUARE, WITNEY - W/23/01049/PAVLIC**

The Committee noted the Pavement Licence Application for Part& Parcel, 2-4 Market Square, Witney under the Business and Planning Act 2020.

Given the short statutory timescale for Witney Town Council to respond, by prior agreement of West Oxfordshire District Council, documents were circulated electronically to members of this Committee. Members had no material concerns.

Resolved:

That, a 'No Objection' response be forwarded to the licencing team at West Oxfordshire District Council.

P564 **APPLICATION FOR PAVEMENT LICENCE - GAILS,17 MARKET SQUARE WITNEY - W/23/01080/PAVLIC**

The Committee noted the Pavement Licence Application for Gails, 17 Market Square Witney under the Business and Planning Act 2020.

Given the short statutory timescale for Witney Town Council to respond, by prior agreement of West Oxfordshire District Council, documents were circulated electronically to members of this Committee. Officers received no comments from Members.

Resolved:

That, a ‘No Comment’ response be forwarded to the licencing team at West Oxfordshire District Council.

P565 **APPLICATION FOR PAVEMENT LICENCE - HUFFKINS, 35 HIGH STREET, WITNEY - W/23/01104/PAVLIC**

The Committee noted the Pavement Licence Application for Huffkins, 35 High Street, Witney under the Business and Planning Act 2020.

Given the short statutory timescale for Witney Town Council to respond, by prior agreement of West Oxfordshire District Council, documents were circulated electronically to members of this Committee. Officers received no comments from Members.

Resolved:

That, a ‘No Comment’ response be forwarded to the licencing team at West Oxfordshire District Council.

P566 **APPLICATION FOR PAVEMENT LICENCE - CORN EXCHANGE, 19 MARKET SQUARE, WITNEY - W23/01120/PAVLIC**

The Committee noted the Pavement Licence Application for Corn Exchange 19 Market Square Witney under the Business and Planning Act 2020.

Given the short statutory timescale for Witney Town Council to respond, by prior agreement of West Oxfordshire District Council, documents were circulated electronically to members of this Committee. Members offered no comment due to the Corn Exchange being part of its portfolio.

Resolved:

That, a ‘No Comment’ response be forwarded to the licencing team at West Oxfordshire District Council.

The meeting closed at: 6.48 pm

Chair

Witney Town CouncilPlanning Minutes - 17th October 2023

558

558- 1 WTC/135/23 Plot Ref :-23/02412/FUL Type :- FULL
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 25/09/2023
 Location :- SAINSBURY SUPERMARKET Date Returned :- 18/10/2023
 WITAN WAY
 Proposal : Erection of two camera columns with mounted cameras.
 Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

558- 2 WTC/136/23 Plot Ref :-23/02424/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 25/09/2023
 Location :- 127 FARMERS CLOSE Date Returned :- 18/10/2023
 FARMERS CLOSE
 Proposal : Replace conservatory with single storey rear extension.
 Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

558- 3 WTC/137/23 Plot Ref :-23/02476/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 27/09/2023
 Location :- 59 BARRINGTON CLOSE Date Returned :- 18/10/2023
 BARRINGTON CLOSE
 Proposal : Erection of single storey side extension.
 Observations : While Witney Town Council does not object to this application in terms of material concerns, it notes the loss of permeable drainage and would ask that mitigating measures are considered to help decrease the possibility of surface water flooding in this area, in accordance with policy EH7 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.

558- 4 WTC/138/23 Plot Ref :-23/02294/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 02/10/2023
 Location :- 33 MOORLAND CLOSE Date Returned :- 18/10/2023
 MOORLAND CLOSE
 Proposal : Conversion of garage to create additional living space. Works to include replacing garage door with window along with replacement of all brown framed windows with white UPVC.
 Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

558- 5 WTC/139/23 Plot Ref :-23/01829/S73 Type :- VARIATION
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 02/10/2023
 Location :- COGGES MANOR FARM Date Returned :- 18/10/2023
 CHURCH LANE
 Proposal : Variation of conditions 4 (schedule of materials) and 7 (tree planting scheme)

and removal of condition 6 (Biodiversity Enhancement and Management Plan) of planning permission 17/04043/FUL.

Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

558- 6 WTC/140/23 Plot Ref :-23/02535/ADV Type :- ADVERTISIN
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 02/10/2023
Location :- UNIT 7 MARRIOTTS WALK Date Returned :- 18/10/2023
MARRIOTTS WALK
Proposal : Installation of various illuminated and non-illuminated signage. (Retrospective).
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

558- 7 WTC/141/23 Plot Ref :-23/02574/FUL Type :- FULL
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 02/10/2023
Location :- W. WITNEY SPORTS & SOCIAL Date Returned :- 18/10/2023
CLUB
BURFORD ROAD
Proposal : Proposed alterations and two storey rear extension.
Observations : Witney Town Council make no comments regarding this application.

558- 8 WTC/142/23 Plot Ref :-23/01891/HHD Type :- AMENDED
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 09/10/2023
Location :- 42 OLLEY CRESCENT Date Returned :- 18/10/2023
OLLEY CRESCENT
Proposal : Conversion of existing garage to create an office/storage cupboard and erection of front entrance porch.
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

558- 9 WTC/143/23 Plot Ref :-23/02566/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 09/10/2023
Location :- 118C QUARRY ROAD Date Returned :- 18/10/2023
QUARRY ROAD
Proposal : Erection of a detached garage.
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

558- 10 WTC/144/23 Plot Ref :-23/02383/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 09/10/2023
Location :- 16 CHURCH GREEN Date Returned :- 18/10/2023
CHURCH GREEN
Proposal : Alterations to roof including addition of a roof light and installation of solar panels.
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

558- 11 WTC/145/23 Plot Ref :-23/02384/LBC Type :- LISTED BUI
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 09/10/2023
Location :- 16 CHURCH GREEN Date Returned :- 18/10/2023
CHURCH GREEN
Proposal : Alterations to roof including addition of a roof light and installation of solar panels.
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

558- 12 WTC/146/23 Plot Ref :-23/02000/FUL Type :- AMENDED
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 09/10/2023
Location :- UNIT 13, EAGLE IND ESTATE Date Returned :- 18/10/2023
EAGLE INDUSTRIAL ESTATE
Proposal : Change of use of a warehouse unit from Industrial use to a Gymnasium and associated works.
Observations : Witney Town Council thank the applicant for responding to the previously submitted observations for this planning application. The Town Council strongly support the continuation of business and jobs and welcome the leisure attraction in this part of Witney.

Members of the Committee raised the parking congestion issues, which are known to be a concern in this area - Therefore all opportunities to promote and encourage active travel are supported, this would be of benefit for users of this facility and help reduce parking need in the immediate area.

Further enhancement could include a customer/member drop-off point, to be used at busy times.

558- 13 WTC/147/23 Plot Ref :-23/02534/FUL Type :- FULL
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 09/10/2023
Location :- JASON HYDRAULICS LTD Date Returned :- 18/10/2023
BURFORD ROAD
MINSTER LOVELL
Proposal : Side extension to existing workshop.
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

558- 14 WTC/148/23 Plot Ref :-23/02615/FUL Type :- FULL
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 16/10/2023
Location :- CURBRIDGE ROAD Date Returned :- 24/10/2023
CURBRIDGE ROAD
Proposal : Erection of a Bus Shelter.
Observations : Witney Town Council welcomes the addition of new bus infrastructure. However, the drawings indicate the roof is not flat so would like to confirm it is and that it incorporates living sedum roofs. The Town Council would also ask that less Perspex is included in the shelter to avoid potential costly issues in the future.

558- 15 WTC/149/23 Plot Ref :-23/02617/FUL Type :- FULL
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 16/10/2023
Location :- LAND AT WEST WITNEY Date Returned :- 24/10/2023
DOWNS ROAD

Proposal : Erection of two Bus Shelters.

Observations : Witney Town Council welcomes the addition of new bus infrastructure. However, the drawings indicate the roofs are not flat so would like to confirm they are and that they incorporate living sedum roofs. The Town Council would also ask that less Perspex is included in the shelters to avoid potential costly issues in the future.

558- 16 WTC/150/23 Plot Ref :-23/02614/FUL Type :- FULL
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 16/10/2023
Location :- CURBRIDGE ROAD Date Returned :- 24/10/2023
CURBRIDGE ROAD

Proposal : Erection of a bus shelter.

Observations : Witney Town Council welcomes the addition of new bus infrastructure. However, the drawings indicate the roof is not flat so would like to confirm it is and that it incorporates living sedum roofs. The Town Council would also ask that less Perspex is included in the shelter to avoid potential costly issues in the future.

The Meeting closed at : 6:50pm

Signed : _____ Chairman Date: _____

On behalf of :- Witney Town Council

**CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Tuesday, 7 November 2023

At 6.09 pm in the Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom

Present:

Councillor A Bailey (Chair)

Councillors:	R Smith J Aitman	J Robertshaw S Simpson
Officers:	Adam Clapton Derek Mackenzie Claire Green	Deputy Town Clerk Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk Administration Support - Planning & Stronger Communities
Others:	no members of the public.	

P596 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G Meadows and O Collins.

Due to connectivity issues for Councillor A Bailey and the absence of the Mayor and Deputy Mayor/Chair, it was RESOLVED that Councillor R Smith would Chair the meeting until Councillor Bailey was able to join the meeting.

P597 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers.

P598 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

Councillor S Simpson joined the meeting at 6:13pm

Chair-ship of the meeting was passed from Councillor Smith to Councillor Bailey at 6.20pm following the discussion of the first planning application – 23/02635/S73.

P599 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Committee received and considered a schedule of planning applications from West Oxfordshire District Council.

Members noted that the address of the first application 23/02635/S73 on the agenda showed as 33 Beech Road however, the application was for 38 Beech Road. Members agreed that the application should still be considered.

Members also noted the Council's agreed updated response to planning application 23/01203/RES - Reserved matters approval for local centre and associated infrastructure pursuant to outline permission 12/0084/P/OP. Land East of Isabelle Spencer Way Witney Oxfordshire. Comments had been collated and submitted ahead of this meeting due to a short time frame provided by the Planning Authority following the submission of updated plans.

Resolved:

1. That, the comments, as per the attached schedule be forwarded to West Oxfordshire District Council and,
2. That, the response for planning application 23/01203/RES be noted as submitted to WODC on 25 October 2023.

P600 **PESTICIDES POLICY**

Members received and considered the report of the Operations Manager in relation to a Council Pesticides Policy on land it managed.

Members expressed their awareness that the use of Pesticides was a contentious subject but broadly supported the policy. A member suggested making contact with the Pesticide Action Group who offered support and advice on this issue.

They were pleased to see that pesticides would be used in a controlled manner. and wanted this point to be clearly stated at the head of the policy along with a caveat to explain that this would lead some areas looking less well kempt than others.

The Committee welcomed the use of mapping to illustrate the no-spray zones so that it was clear for any reading the policy to see. There were queries on listed areas in the draft policy and mapping would also help provide guidance.

Members were pleased to hear that the current work practices in respect of reduced mowing around the base of trees and the control of Ivy growth was successful and therefore were in agreement that this continued.

Members asked for additional information to be provided on the alternative mechanical or non-chemical options that had been discounted.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, a re-drafted policy be prepared for review at a future meeting of the Policy, Governance & Finance committee.

The meeting closed at: 6.55 pm

Chair

Witney Town CouncilPlanning Minutes - 7th November 2023

599

- 599- 1 WTC/151/23 Plot Ref :-23/02635/S73 Type :- VARIATION
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 24/10/23
 Location :- 33 BEECH ROAD Date Returned :- 08/11/23
 BEECH ROAD
 Proposal : Variation of condition 2 (approved plans) to permission 23/02023/HHD to substitute flat roof section with pitched roof, addition of rooflight and alteration to door position.
 Observations : Whilst Witney Town Council do not object to this application, a site visit from a Committee Member suggests that the guttering is overhanging the site boundary and effectively overhangs the neighbouring property. Whilst it is acknowledged that any boundary dispute may not be a planning matter, the drawings do not reflect any development outside of the applicant site - Members ask that Officers check that the development as built, is in accordance with any plans or drawings that have been submitted.
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- 599- 2 WTC/152/23 Plot Ref :-23/02470/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 24/10/23
 Location :- 59 BURFORD ROAD Date Returned :- 08/11/23
 BURFORD ROAD
 Proposal : Dropped Kerb for vehicular access.
 Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.
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- 599- 3 WTC/153/23 Plot Ref :-23/02634/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 30/10/23
 Location :- 29 WOODPECKER WAY Date Returned :- 08/11/23
 WOODPECKER WAY
 Proposal : Erection of a garden shed and summerhouse.
 Observations : While Witney Town Council does not object to this application in terms of material concerns, it notes the loss of permeable drainage and would ask that mitigating measures are considered to help decrease the possibility of surface water flooding in this area, in accordance with policy EH7 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.
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- 599- 4 WTC/154/23 Plot Ref :-23/02711/S73 Type :- VARIATION
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 30/10/23
 Location :- 87 CORN STREET Date Returned :- 08/11/23
 CORN STREET
 Proposal : Variation of condition 4 of Planning Permission 20/03281/FUL to allow a mixture of natural stone and stone coloured render in place of artificial stone on external walls.
 Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.
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The Meeting closed at : 7:05pm

Signed : _____ Chairman Date: _____

On behalf of :- Witney Town Council

CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING COMMITTEE

Date:	Monday 27 November 2023
Title:	Financial Report: Revised Budget 2023/24 and Proposed Budget 2024/25 – Revenue and Capital
Contact Officer:	Responsible Financial Officer

Background

The purpose of this report is to present to Members the revised budget for 2023/24 and the first draft revenue budget for 2023/24; please see attached.

The report also considers a bid for the 2024/25 capital programme.

The budget process is ongoing and there is further work to do. Consequently, an updated report on all cost centres which are the responsibility of this committee will be presented later in the budget cycle. This will include a fuller explanation of variances. For now, this report covers only the major matters of note.

Recharge from Works Department and Central Support

To get the true cost of its services, the Council recharges the total cost of its Works Department (Cost Centre 601) and Central Support (Cost Centre 602) across it. For the Works Department this is done based on the weekly time sheets, and for the Central Support is based on the apportionment of responsibilities of the Officers.

The budget holding committee for the Works Department and Central Support is the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee and the first draft revised estimates for 2023-24 and the proposed budget for 2024-25 have now been approved and are reflected in the recharges to service cost centres.

It should be noted when reviewing the accounts that the recharge from the Works Department and Central Support are yet to be made in this financial year and as the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) is using system generated reports it has not been possible to exclude these accounts from this summary. Only when the budget for both these departments has been agreed by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee will the RFO be in the position to calculate the revised recharges and the estimates for 2023/24.

Members should also remember that regarding patterns of income and expenditure, there will always be some variations over the course of the year and for that reason the Council works to annual budgets rather than monthly or quarterly.

Format of the Council's Base Revenue Budget

With regard to the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning budget, the Committee's services are divided into 2 base revenue cost centres, responsibilities [but with other interests overlapping into other Committee's Cost Centres], as follows:

<u>Cost Centre</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Description</u>
206	Witney Country Park	This cost centre relates to the maintenance of the lake and country park.
403	Planning	This relates to the recharge form Central Support for administering the planning function of the Council.

The revenue budgets for the two cost centres are in the attached report. The format of this report is quite straightforward; the first two columns relate to the original budget from 2022/23 against the actual figures for last year. The middle section of three columns relate to the current year's original budget, actual expenditure year to date, the projected budget to 31 March 2024. The remaining section of the report relates to the draft budget for 2024/25.

Budget Parameters – Draft Estimates 2022-23

Draft budgets are prepared on current activities and patterns of income and expenditure.

When considering the estimates, the RFO examines each individual budget line, looking at the historic trends and known future developments so a flat percentage is not applied uniformly across the estimates.

There is a relatively high volatility in relation to inflation, reflecting the international situation. In the light of recent information and [HM Treasury Autumn Statement 2023](#) any cost of living increases, where applied, have been reduced from the 6.7% used earlier in the budget cycle to 4% for 2024-25. This has been applied to staff salaries for 2024-25.

There remains much uncertainty regarding gas and electricity prices. However, for the purposes of the budget for 2024-25 an inflationary increase of 10% over 2023-24 has been assumed. Gas and electricity accounts for 4% of the Council's gross expenditure budget (revised 2023-24).

For information, public sector wage inflation, although lower than that in the private sector, is currently 6.8% (August 2023). The pay increase for 2023-24 has now been agreed at £1,925 for scale points up to SCP43, an equivalent of £1 per hour. In percentage terms this is equivalent to 10.4% for the lowest of the NALC (National Association of Local Councils) pay points and 3.88% for the highest and those from scale point SCP44. The 2023-24 revised gross expenditure budget indicates that employment costs account for 55% of the budget so

inflationary pressure in this area is an important consideration. Note that this is a figure which is typical of a service-based business but has risen in the last year as the grounds maintenance work was taken in house meaning that the contractors' staff previously undertaking Town Council work are now directly employed.

Finally, CPI (Consumer Prices Index) is 4.7% and RPI (Retail Prices Index) is 6.1% (October 2023).

Cost Centre 206 – Witney Country Park

The majority of the expenditure relating to this cost centre are staffing and overhead costs. The expenditure for non-staffing/overheads was £19,000 and has been increased to £20,750 for 2024-25, a necessary increase to give the staff the resources to deliver on the management plan for the area.

In respect of budget line 4042 Equipment part of this budget line relates to the continual maintenance of the paths around the lake which almost annually require attention due to flooding and paths being naturally eroded. The other more substantial part of the budget is for bank erosion works as well managing/increasing the biodiversity of the lake and country park. It also ensures funding is available for replacement life buoys which often are damaged or vandalised.

4059 – Other professional fees have been revised to £5,000 for 2023-24 and retained at this level for 2024-25. These relate to the important surveys which are required, as detailed in the Management Plan summary at agenda item 9. These are essential to allow for proper management of the area and also may be important in attracting grant funding towards revenue and capital.

It should also be noted that within Earmarked Reserve 366 – Climate/Biodiversity there is a sum set aside for biodiversity and bank stabilisation works around the lake.

The costs of the vehicle used by the Climate, Biodiversity and Green Spaces Officer is included under cost centre 604 (works depot/vehicles) and cost centre 206 receives a recharge from this cost centre.

Other Budget Lines Under Indirect Control – for information

4066/402 – Replacement Trees is as follows:

22/23 Budget	Expenditure to date	Proposed 24/25
£8,000	£5,620	£8,000

It is Council policy that any trees which must be removed are replaced and therefore the necessary funding needs to be in place to fulfil its objective, reflected in the budget set aside.

4067/402 – Tree Survey is as follows:

22/23 Budget	Expenditure to date	Proposed 24/25
£8,000	£0	£8,000

The Council has a rolling programme of surveying its tree stock – which is a requirement for insurance purposes. The same level of budget has been retained for the next financial year as recently we have had to carry out pull tests and other surveys on trees – therefore a contingency has been made.

A further report on capital spending in the current year will be presented directly to the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee.

Revenue Budget Summary

The Base Revenue Budget for this Committee is summarised on page one of the attached schedules. The two cost centres are summarised as follows:

Cost centre	Original budget 2023-24	Revised budget 2023-24	Estimate 2024-25
206- Witney Country Park	£93,228	£99,019	£98,795 (+6.0%)
403 – Planning	£31,822	£29,784	£31,986 (+0.5%)

Capital budget bid for 2024/25

There is one capital budget bid for floating platforms as referenced in the Management Plan summary at agenda item 9.

There are earmarked reserves for a number of other major items, a report on the earmarked reserve position will be part of the report in relation to funding Council services for 2024-25 and beyond and will be considered later in the budget cycle.

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.

As mentioned above the Council has now successfully brought its grounds maintenance contract in house. By doing this the Council will be able to take into consideration greener measures to work towards its objective for carbon neutrality by 2028. This, along with the budget allocated to Climate Emergency and Biodiversity should help to facilitate projects yet to be identified by the Council.

Risk

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

All the Council's Committees receive financial reports to carry out their checks and balances. The RFO has approached the budget with prudence so as accurate a budget as possible can be set at this early stage, although there may be some opportunities to make savings if required to balance the budget.

Financial implications

This report forms part of the Council's mechanisms for budgetary control, as it enables income and expenditure incurred to be reviewed and to be compared with the Council's budgets.

Recommendations

Members are invited to:

- (a) Note the report and consider the revised base revenue budget for 2023/24 and the initial estimated base revenue budgets for 2024/25, as detailed in the draft estimates and to approve these estimates so the Council can proceed to the next step of the budget process.
- (b) Recommend the inclusion of a sum of £11,000 for floating platforms as part of the Council's Capital Programme.
- (c) Note that work in relation to both revenue and capital estimates is ongoing and therefore it is likely that the estimates for the various cost centres will change. The estimates must be considered accordingly

Annual Budget - By Committee (Actual YTD Month 6)

Note: Budget Estimates for 2024-25 - Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee

		<u>Last Year 2022-23</u>		<u>Current Year 2023-24</u>				<u>Next Year 2024-25</u>		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
<u>Climate, Biodiversity & Planning</u>										
206	<u>WITNEY COUNTRY PARK</u>									
1030	FISHING RIGHTS	1,450	700	1,500	217	217	0	978	0	0
1171	DONATIONS RECEIVED	0	946	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Income	1,450	1,646	1,500	217	217	0	978	0	0
4001	SALARIES	27,852	19,573	32,410	14,719	31,364	0	33,539	0	0
4002	ER'S NIC	2,861	1,925	3,217	1,404	3,700	0	3,348	0	0
4003	ER'S SUPERANN	6,044	4,222	7,033	3,194	6,806	0	7,239	0	0
4007	PROTECTIVE CLOTHING	0	392	400	151	400	0	400	0	0
4026	BOOKS/PUBLICATIONS	20	39	100	0	100	0	100	0	0
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	100	548	500	908	5,000	0	2,000	0	0
4038	OTHER MAINTENANCE	0	188	0	12	12	0	0	0	0
4040	ARBORICULTURE	2,400	857	1,000	0	1,000	0	1,000	0	0
4041	EQUIPMENT HIRE	0	0	0	172	172	0	0	0	0
4042	EQUIPMENT	15,000	11,803	15,000	840	15,000	0	11,000	0	0
4059	OTHER PROF FEES	1,000	0	1,000	840	5,000	0	5,000	0	0
4064	HEALTH & SAFETY	1,500	639	1,000	79	1,000	0	1,000	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	788	0	36	250	0	250	0	0
4495	TFR FROM EARMARKED R	-4,100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RCHG (TO 30/09/23)	18,707	12,306	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RCHG (TO 30/09/22)	3,817	4,228	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4891	AGENCY R/C (TO 30/09/22)	3,161	3,161	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4892	C/S STAFF RCHG	2,068	1,732	2,246	821	2,066	0	2,256	0	0

Continued on next page

Annual Budget - By Committee (Actual YTD Month 6)

Note: Budget Estimates for 2024-25 - Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee

		<u>Last Year 2022-23</u>		<u>Current Year 2023-24</u>				<u>Next Year 2024-25</u>		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
4893	C/S O'HEAD RCHG	574	567	647	334	642	0	652	0	0
4894	GROUNDS STAFF RECHARGE	0	399	1,683	339	975	0	1,822	0	0
4895	GROUNDS O'HEAD RECHARGE	0	207	622	745	727	0	776	0	0
4896	MTCE STAFF RECHARGE	0	3,232	23,179	1,488	18,761	0	22,201	0	0
4897	MTCE O'HEAD RECHARGE	0	509	2,269	128	1,963	0	2,056	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	0	0	2,422	459	4,081	0	4,156	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	81,004	67,316	94,728	26,669	99,019	0	98,795	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(79,554)	(65,670)	(93,228)	(26,452)	(98,802)		(97,817)		
403	PLANNING									
4892	C/S STAFF RCHG	22,747	19,054	24,705	7,489	22,722	0	24,816	0	0
4893	C/S O'HEAD RCHG	6,312	6,232	7,117	3,157	7,062	0	7,170	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	29,059	25,286	31,822	10,645	29,784	0	31,986	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(29,059)	(25,286)	(31,822)	(10,645)	(29,784)		(31,986)		
	Climate, Biodiversity & Planning - Income	1,450	1,646	1,500	217	217	0	978	0	0
	Expenditure	110,063	92,602	126,550	37,314	128,803	0	130,781	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(108,613)	(90,956)	(125,050)	(37,097)	(128,586)		(129,803)		
	Total Budget Income	1,450	1,646	1,500	217	217	0	978	0	0
	Expenditure	110,063	92,602	126,550	37,314	128,803	0	130,781	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(108,613)	(90,956)	(125,050)	(37,097)	(128,586)		(129,803)		

6

6.1 **WTC/155/23** Plot Ref :- 23/02307/FUL Type :- FULL
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 07/11/2023
Parish :- EAST Date Returned :-
Location :- 63 ETON CLOSE Agent
 ETON CLOSE
Proposals :- Change of use of land to extend domestic curtilage (retrospective)
Observations :-

6.2 **WTC/156/23** Plot Ref :- 23/02789/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOL
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 08/11/2023
Parish :- CENTRAL Date Returned :-
Location :- 1 ELM CLOSE Agent
 ELM CLOSE
Proposals :- Erection of single and two storey front extensions with associated
works including additional hardstanding and extended dropped
kerb.
Observations :-

6.3 **WTC/157/23** Plot Ref :- 23/02759/ADV Type :- ADVERTISIN
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 08/11/2023
Parish :- SOUTH Date Returned :-
Location :- 27 MARKET SQUARE Agent
 MARKET SQUARE
Proposals :- Erection of non-illuminated fascia sign and x2 hanging signs.
Observations :-

6.4 **WTC/158/23** Plot Ref :- 23/02629/FUL Type :- FULL
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 08/11/2023
Parish :- SOUTH Date Returned :-
Location :- WITNEY SERVICE Agent
 STATION
 WELCH WAY
Proposals :- Installation of two EV chargers along with four EV charger bays
with canopy and associated works.
Observations :-

6.5	WTC/159/23	Plot Ref :- 23/02761/HHD	Type :- HOUSEHOL
	Applicant Name :- .		Date Received :- 08/11/2023
	Parish :- SOUTH		Date Returned :-
	Location :- CROFTDOWN	Agent	
		CORN STREET	
	Proposals :-	Alterations to include construction of dormers to rear roof slope and insertion of folding doors to front elevation.	
	Observations :-	-	
<hr/>			
6.6	WTC/160/23	Plot Ref :- 23/02762/LBC	Type :- LISTED BUI
	Applicant Name :- .		Date Received :- 08/11/2023
	Parish :- SOUTH		Date Returned :-
	Location :- CROFTDOWN	Agent	
		CORN STREET	
	Proposals :-	Internal and external alterations to include changes to floor layouts, construction of dormers to rear roof, changes to conservatory French doors and installation of folding doors to front elevation, along with removal of ramps. Internal alterations to include changes to first and second floor bathrooms, removal of gas fires and reopening of fireplaces to second floor and attic. Exterior works to include re-pointing and masonry repairs to elevations.	
	Observations :-	-	
<hr/>			
6.7	WTC/161/23	Plot Ref :- 23/02636/HHD	Type :- HOUSEHOL
	Applicant Name :- .		Date Received :- 08/11/2023
	Parish :- CENTRAL		Date Returned :-
	Location :- 36 BEECH ROAD	Agent	
		BEECH ROAD	
	Proposals :-	Removal of garage and erection of single storey side extension.	
	Observations :-	-	
<hr/>			
6.8	WTC/162/23	Plot Ref :- 23/02856/HHD	Type :- HOUSEHOL
	Applicant Name :- .		Date Received :- 08/11/2023
	Parish :- EAST		Date Returned :-
	Location :- KINGSMEAD	Agent	
		51 WOODLANDS ROAD	
		WOODLANDS ROAD	
	Proposals :-	Proposed garage conversion, erection of single storey front and side extension, proposed conservatory and internal alterations.	
	Observations :-	-	
<hr/>			
6.9	WTC/163/23	Plot Ref :- 23/02819/FUL	Type :- FULL
	Applicant Name :- .		Date Received :- 08/11/2023
	Parish :- EAST		Date Returned :-
	Location :- 65 ETON CLOSE	Agent	
		ETON CLOSE	

6 . 14	WTC/168/23	Plot Ref :- 23/02913/HHD	Type :- HOUSEHOL
	Applicant Name :- .		Date Received :- 14/11/2023
	Parish :- NORTH		Date Returned :-
	Location :- 9 WEST END	Agent	
	WEST END		
	Proposals :-	Erection of boundary fencing, gate and trellis. (Retrospective).	
	Observations :-		
6 . 15	WTC/169/23	Plot Ref :- 23/02914/LBC	Type :- LISTED BUI
	Applicant Name :- .		Date Received :- 14/11/2023
	Parish :- NORTH		Date Returned :-
	Location :- 9 WEST END	Agent	
	WEST END		
	Proposals :-	Erection of boundary fencing, gate and trellis. (Retrospective).	
	Observations :-		
6 . 16	WTC/170/23	Plot Ref :- 23/02730/FUL	Type :- FULL
	Applicant Name :- .		Date Received :- 14/11/2023
	Parish :- NORTH		Date Returned :-
	Location :- CAR PARK REAR OF 58	Agent	
	WEST END		
	WEST END		
	Proposals :-	Redevelopment of existing vehicle dismantling yard including part demolition and part reconstruction of existing single storey building, erection of ten dwellings along with new access from Farmers Close and the provision of parking and landscaping.	
	Observations :-		
6 . 17	WTC/171/23	Plot Ref :- 23/02930/FUL	Type :- FULL
	Applicant Name :- .		Date Received :- 20/11/2023
	Parish :- EAST		Date Returned :-
	Location :- 111 MANOR ROAD	Agent	
	MANOR ROAD		
	Proposals :-	Erection of 1 bed dwelling with associated parking, bin and bike stores.	
	Observations :-		
6 . 18	WTC/172/23	Plot Ref :- 23/02850/HHD	Type :- HOUSEHOL
	Applicant Name :- .		Date Received :- 20/11/2023
	Parish :- CENTRAL		Date Returned :-
	Location :- 31 WOODPECKER WAY	Agent	
	WOODPECKER WAY		
	Proposals :-	Proposed conservatory, raised pond, shed and summer house.	
	Observations :-		

6 . 19 **WTC/173/23** Plot Ref :- 23/02934/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOL
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 20/11/2023
Parish :- SOUTH Date Returned :-
Location :- 32 CURBRIDGE ROAD Agent
CURBRIDGE ROAD
Proposals :- Erection of single storey side and rear extension.
Observations :-

6 . 20 **WTC/174/23** Plot Ref :- 23/02553/FUL Type :- FULL
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 21/11/2023
Parish :- CENTRAL Date Returned :-
Location :- GARAGES Agent
GLOUCESTER COURT
MEWS
Proposals :- Demolish existing boundary wall and replace with close boarded
fencing (part retrospective).
Observations :-

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District Ref

' C ' Contrary to District 'CD' Contrary Delegated
 ' D ' Delegated
 ' E ' Endorsed by District 'ED' Endorsed Delegated

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GRANTED PLANNING PERMISSIONS

<p>E WTC/090/23</p>	<p>Approved with Conditions</p>	<p>LAND EAST OF</p>
<p>E WTC/096/23</p>	<p>Approved</p>	<p>LAND WEST OF WITNEY</p>
<p>C WTC/107/23 District COMMENT</p>	<p>Approved</p>	<p>LAND (E) 432925 (N)209696 Local COMMENT Witney Town Council object to this application:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Witney Town Council question the validity of the application documents. The number of lights that have already been installed exceeds the number of lights that are shown on the plan. The lights are not labelled on the plan and there is no reference or symbol to the lighting on the key. Without a plan which shows clearly what is being proposed (or being granted consent retrospectively), Members do not have faith that a scheme can be considered or agreed, or that enforcement of any consent would be achievable in future. 2. The installed lighting is harmful to neighbouring residential properties. The lights are illuminating gardens and shine in the windows. 3. The proposed buffer, designed to mitigate the light spill, is not fit for purpose. The existing planting is not providing mitigation and members are doubtful that even when the planting matures it will be able to screen the light spill effectively – particularly given that some of the planted specimens are deciduous. 4. The application does not specify any darkness periods. Members ask that any scheme includes provision for some dark hours and that creative options are considered whereby lights are only in use when required for operational reasons on the site. Both in the interest of energy waste and to reduce the environmental impact of artificial light in hours of darkness. <p>Policy OS2 states that all development should "Be compatible with adjoining uses and not have a harmful impact of the amenity of existing occupants". Further, Policy EH8 states that "New development should not take place in areas where it would cause unacceptable nuisance to the occupants of nearby land and buildings from noise and disturbance". The lighting that has already been installed is reportedly having a harmful impact for neighbouring residents and therefore Witney Town Council do not find this scheme to be policy compliant.</p>
<p>E WTC/122/23</p>	<p>Approved with Conditions</p>	<p>UNIT 13 EAGLE IND EST</p>

NOTIFICATIONS OF PLANNING DECISIONS FROM West Oxfordshire District Council

Minute Ref 7

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District Ref

' C ' Contrary to District 'CD' Contrary Delegated
' D ' Delegated
' E ' Endorsed by District 'ED' Endorsed Delegated

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GRANTED PLANNING PERMISSIONS

E WTC/125/23	Approved	2 SNOWSHILL DRIVE
E WTC/126/23	Approved	5 OAKDALE ROAD
E WTC/129/23	Approved	FRIENDS COTTAGE
E WTC/130/23	Approved	FRIENDS COTTAGE
E WTC/131/23	Approved	12 NEWLAND MILL
C WTC/132/23 District COMMENT	Approved	LAND(E) 432925 (N)209696 Local COMMENT Witney Town Council object to this application.

Members acknowledge the applicant's further documents and response to an earlier representation from the Town Council but would like to make the following additional comments.

1. The applicant states that baffles have been installed on the existing lighting to assist in prevention of light spill. Residents have been consulted on this and have reported no betterment in the situation. The installed lighting remains harmful to residential properties neighbouring the site. The lights are continuing to illuminate gardens and shine into the windows of living areas including living rooms and bedrooms.

2. The applicant states that "The landscape buffer between the employment and residential is not the responsibility of the applicant, it is located outside the redline of the development. The landscaping submitted by the wider consortium was submitted to the council for approval and was considered acceptable". Witney Town Council understand that Planning Permission 21/02364/FUL for this application site includes provision for landscaping obligations at both Condition 14 and Condition 15. It is unclear to the Town Council how landscaping is not the responsibility of the applicant based on the documents available?

3. Given the reported harm of the lighting, Witney Town Council request that measuring and review take place - Members acknowledge the responses from ERS and Environmental Health, but ask if site visits have been carried out by the relevant technical consultees during hours of darkness? It is unclear what, if any, on site assessments have taken place. Witney Town Council are aware that residents would welcome the opportunity for the light spill at their properties be assessed and measured during darkness hours. Witney Town Council request that

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GRANTED PLANNING PERMISSIONS

this monitoring and measuring be carried out by West Oxfordshire District Council before any approval being considered.

4. Witney Town Council do not have the technical expertise to offer up further solutions. Members support business and employment in the town and realise that it is a balancing act to support business whilst offering protection to residential amenity. Members would welcome further positive suggestions on the lighting scheme from the applicant in liaison with Planning Officers and their Technical Consultees. Perhaps what is currently installed is not the best option for commercial sites that closely neighbour residential properties? Are there other forms of lighting design that could meet the operational needs of the business, whilst causing less light pollution outside of the site?

Policy OS2 states that all development should be compatible with adjoining uses and not have a harmful impact of the amenity of existing occupants. Further, Policy EH8 states that new development should not take place in areas where it would cause unacceptable nuisance to the occupants of nearby land and buildings from noise and disturbance. It is clear to Members that the installed lighting is causing considerable distress for neighbouring residents and therefore Witney Town Council do not find this scheme to be policy compliant.

E WTC/133/23	Approved	26 WATERFORD ROAD
E WTC/135/23	Approved	SAINSBURY SUPERMARKET
E WTC/136/23	Approved	127 FARMERS CLOSE
E WTC/138/23	Approved	33 MOORLAND CLOSE
E WTC/140/23	Approved	UNIT 7 MARRIOTTS WALK
E WTC/144/23	Approved	16 CHURCH GREEN
E WTC/145/23	Approved	16 CHURCH GREEN
E WTC/146/23	Approved	UNIT 13, EAGLE IND ESTATE

NOTIFICATIONS OF PLANNING DECISIONS FROM West Oxfordshire District Council

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GRANTED PLANNING PERMISSIONS

E WTC/147/23

Approved

JASON HYDRAULICS LTD

**WITNEY TRAFFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Tuesday, 26 September 2023

At 2.30 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor A Coles (Chair)

Councillors:	M Brooker	T Bayliss
	D Enright	A Lyon
	J Aitman	D Miles
	S Simpson	J Doughty (In place of T Ashby)
	R Smith	Steere
	C Hulme	
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Claire Green	Administration Support - Planning & Stronger Communities
Others:	Two members of the public.	

T43 ELECTION OF CHAIR

Nominations were sought for the position of Chair for the municipal year.

It was proposed and duly seconded that Cllr Andrew Coles be elected Chair. There being no other nominations it was:

Resolved:

That, Cllr Andrew Coles be elected Chair of the Committee for the municipal year.

T44 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Ted Fenton and Kevin Hickman from the Windrush Bike Project.

An apology for absence was also received from Councillor T Ashby, Councillor J Doughty attended as a substitute.

The Chair notified the Committee of the recent passing of fellow Member, David Gambier. Members were reminded of David's contributions to Witney, and in particular his meaningful representation at the Chamber of Commerce. The Chair advised that a fundraiser was being held in David's memory. Members stood for a minute silence to remember David.

The Chair introduced a representative from the Witney Chamber of Commerce, Rob Steere. The Chamber of Commerce will be electing a new representative to join the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee for the regular meetings.

T45 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Committee received representations from two residents. A resident from Wood Green came to propose a zebra crossing for West End. A resident from Burwell Meadow came to make comments about the Burwell Meadow ANPR data.

T46 **WEST END CROSSING**

This item was due to be discussed as part of agenda item 10b. However, with the permission of the Chair, this item was moved up the agenda so the member of the public could hear the discussion and outcome.

A resident from Wood Green addressed the Committee about the dangers for pedestrians when trying to cross from the Wood Green area, heading towards Witney. Crossing West End or Oxford Hill as a pedestrian was very difficult and all the roads around the double roundabout are busy. Drivers are concentrating on the tricky double roundabout and there just wasn't a safe place for pedestrians to cross. The resident suggested that a zebra crossing on West End could work well.

A discussion followed; A number of Members supported the idea of a zebra crossing and acknowledged that the suggestion had been raised previously at this Committee. A representative from the Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) Infrastructure Locality Team was present at the meeting and advised that her team were aware of the issues for pedestrians but that presently funding hadn't been made available. Further, Members were reminded that there is a longer-term plan for more radical changes in the Bridge Street area.

OCC Officers advised that there is an LCWIP proposal for a crossing on Wood Green, near the church. This is currently not funded and there are not currently any applicable government grant schemes. Opportunities for funding from Active Travel England were being explored.

Funding for a zebra crossing on West End could potentially be sought from S106 funding, or the OCC road safety budget.

Resolved:

That, OCC Officers would check the road safety budget for funding a zebra crossing on West End.

T47 **BURWELL MEADOW ANPR SURVEY ANALYSIS**

Following the update from the County Council a discussion was held, a number of opinions were expressed regarding the impact of the scheme in the area. It was advised the Community Speedwatch Scheme would hopefully be operating in the area soon.

Resolved:

1. That, Members are aware of this issue, the data and subsequent report be noted, and,
2. That, Community Speedwatch would be operating in Burwell Meadow.

T48 **TO ADOPT AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 JUNE 2023**

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee held on 13 June 2023 be approved and signed by the Chair.

T49 **MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT COVERED IN SUBSEQUENT ITEMS**

A Witney Town Council Officer raised an outstanding item. The minutes of Witney Traffic Advisory Committee meeting 13th June 2023 refer to this issue of a parking permit scheme for Corn Street and a previous consultation with residents. (T41) OCC Officers had contacted the District Council for further details of an earlier study on this issue, a response is outstanding but will be followed up.

Resolved:

That, the information will be shared with this Committee at the next meeting.

T50 **COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee received the report of the Witney Town Council Deputy Town Clerk and accompanying amended terms.

Changes included updates on public participation, future hybrid meeting technology and the remit to set up and run a Community Speedwatch scheme.

Resolved:

That, the amended terms of reference be approved.

T51 **WITNEY HIGH STREET & MARKET SQUARE ENHANCEMENTS**

Members were updated that public engagement on future improvements was well underway. This had included public exhibition events as well as an online survey. A workshop style event was also being held with members of the business community.

Once the consultation ended, the information would be collated and handed to designers. The design process would be carried on through to Spring 2024, when it was hoped that a design and plans would be available for people to see. Further consultation would then be carried out in the community and with stakeholders. Construction was expected to start in Autumn 2024.

Resolved:

That, the updated be noted.

T52 **INFRASTRUCTURE LOCALITY TEAM**

The Committee received and considered the report from the Oxfordshire County Council Area Infrastructure Locality Team concerning updates on several projects underway in Witney. Specific updates included:

7.1 Shores Green, Access to Witney, this project was progressing, key dates and further information were in the Officer report.

7.2 Burford Road Signal Crossing, some work had taken place and the electricity supply had now been installed, OCC would continue to follow up with developers.

7.3 Work to improve and replace bus shelters was scheduled for October. Locations as per the Officer report.

7.4 Work on the short-term measures for Witney High Street had been ordered, delivery of the measures was expected before Christmas.

Cllr R. Smith joined the meeting at 3:15pm

7.5 – This item was heard separately through Agenda Item 6.

7.6 Windrush Place S106 West Witney – Active Travel Schemes. Design work was expected in March 2024, there were no further updates on delivery timescales.

7.7 Bridge Street Area Options Appraisal Report – The report had been finalised but was not yet published. Engagement and publication was planned for after the Witney High Street engagement was finished in October.

7.8 This item was discussed through Agenda Item 3 (T47).

7.9 Traffic Lights on Woodford Way – Oxfordshire County Council Officers conducted a site visit in June. An overview of this was provided in the Agenda Pack. OCC advised that the lights should be retained in the interest of pedestrian safety. Observations had been noted by OCC Officers, to be considered ahead of the next replacement or refurbishment of this infrastructure. In the meantime, it was suggested that a junction count and review of the existing signal timings was conducted.

7.10 A study had been carried out to consider the issues caused by car parking on Harvest Way/Barleyfield Way. OCC Officers had suggested three possible solutions.

The Committee were advised the current setup was a design feature of Madley Park, and that 'Passive Traffic Calming' was designed to reduce vehicle speeds through the estate. There was a danger of increasing vehicle speeds if new measures created faster 'through routes', and one of the solutions came at a cost of losing on-road car parking spaces.

Solution 2 - 'Introduce Keep Clear markings at the dropped kerb crossing points.' was deemed the preferred option. The cost of this is the line marking, the budget for this year was already spent and therefore this would be taken forward for consideration in the next budget year. In the meantime, the Ward Councillor for the area would report back to the residents group that had originally raised this issue and seek feedback on the recommended solution.

7.11 OCC Officers advised that the terms of the 20mph transformation programme did not include traffic calming. A Speed Survey could be carried out, costs being passed to Witney Town Council. Traffic calming was not in the remit of the Town Council, however, given that the Town Council were supporting the Community Speedwatch Scheme, this area would be added to the list of sites where vehicle speeds would be monitored.

7.12 This item was discussed through Agenda Item 3 (T46).

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Cllr. Smith would engage with Madley Park residents' association to seek feedback on enhanced road markings at crossing points on Harvest Way/Barleyfield Way and,
3. That, Officers would find a suitable location for a Community Speedwatch site on Cogges Hill Road.

T53 **TRAFFIC & ROAD SAFETY**

The Committee received and considered the Traffic & Road Safety Report from the County Council Area Operations Officer. The Committee were advised that budgets for this year had been allocated. Work had begun on plans for the coming year, Members were invited to put forward suggestions for future repair and lining works.

Members were advised that The Leys Traffic Calming project is currently out for pricing and procurement. It was acknowledged that delivery of this project would face logistical challenges since parking and access would be suspended at times. The Town Council will be informed of logistics as a strategy is developed.

The Town Clerk gave a verbal update on other projects that would be happening in this vicinity, including the Skate Park and the Courtside development. Witney Town Council will work with stakeholders, including OCC to ensure that the projects are carried out in a logical order, and with the least disruption practicable.

Resolved:

That, WTC Officers host a meeting of stakeholders for the three major projects, for discussion of timelines and access requirements.

T54 **COMMUNITY SPEEDWATCH**

The Committee received the report of the Deputy Town Clerk of Witney Town Council concerning the Community Speedwatch scheme for Witney.

A verbal update was given at the meeting and Members were advised that the scheme needed volunteers in order for sites to be operated. Volunteer recruitment was being advertised in notice boards and on social media. Members were invited to contact the Town Council for more information.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

T55 PUBLIC TRANSPORT UPDATE

The Public Transport Representative and representatives from the bus companies gave verbal updates. These included:

- Consultation was underway for the Rural Transport Grant and the Community Transport Grant. It was perceived that West Oxfordshire was served well by community transport and these monies were likely to be allocated to other areas in the County.
- Bus Service Improvement Plan indicated that a Swindon service will be returning for Witney, earmarked for November.
- The Oxford Tube would be offering a Monday to Friday service to London, this was a trial and residents were encouraged to use the service if it was to be kept. Services start on October 23rd 2023. Drivers were currently being route trained.
- The West Oxfordshire Community Transport (WOCT) supermarket shuttle was now up and running, and residents were already depending on this service.
- The WOCT Kingfisher Meadows service was starting to see passengers, some timetable adjustments might be required in the future to keep services running to time.

Resolved:

1. That, the verbal updates above be noted.

T56 SPEED CAMERAS & SPEEDING ENFORCEMENT

The Committee received correspondence from Thames Valley Police regarding speeding, speed cameras and enforcement in response to a letter sent by the Chair of the Committee following the last meeting.

Resolved:

1. That, the communication from Thames Valley Police be noted.

T57 COGGES HILL ROAD - REQUEST FOR TRAFFIC CALMING

This item was previously discussed as part of the Infrastructure Locality Team update (T52).

Resolved:

That, Cogges Hill Road be added as a Community Speedwatch monitoring site.

T58 ITEMS RAISED AT THE MEETING

A representative from the Witney Chamber of Commerce expressed a desire from the Chamber to attract visitors and tourists to Witney. There had been a lot of discussion about coach parking; support from this Committee would be welcome and the Chamber invite members to contact them with information, ideas and any feedback.

Witney Town Partnership had been re-established - West Oxfordshire District Council had some funding available for 'Wayfinding', particularly to service visitors to the town; This would include heritage information as well as maps and parking details.

A Member suggested that an open-top bus tour should be started to encompass the many places of interest in Witney.

Witney Town Council were considering parking enforcement for the parking bays at The Leys. There was a feeling that some of the bays were being used by sixth-formers of Henry Box School, meaning vehicles were parked for long periods. Time-limited parking might be considered to make more spaces available for visitors using the recreational facilities and requiring the intended short-term parking.

T59 **DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING(S)**

Members were advised that the next scheduled meeting of this committee would be on Tuesday 16 January 2024.

The meeting closed at: 4.05 pm

Chair

WITNEY LAKE AND COUNTRY PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN SUMMARY 2024-2034



Written by Carl Whitehead, Biodiversity and Green Spaces Officer

April 2024

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Where are we now?

Introduction

This management plan has been written by Carl Whitehead, Witney Town Council's Biodiversity and Green Spaces Officer, who has responsibility for the Witney Lake and Country Park. It has been created in response both to his employment and Witney Town Council's current Open Spaces Strategy.

Information from previous reports and surveys has been utilised in the writing of this plan, including the previous management plan written by Adrian Shaw in 1995. The 1995 plan was actioned for the period of both Adrian's employment and that of his successor, Nigel Boden, but the Lake and Country Park was without formal management between December 2004 and July 2022. A number of the aims and objectives in the 1995 plan have been incorporated into this updated plan. It is anticipated that the current management plan will become live from 1 April 2024. After this, it is expected that the document will be regularly reviewed with a yearly re-evaluation of its aims and objectives to ensure that it continues to provide a working and relevant framework for the Park's management.

The following habitats found at the Country Park are considered to be Habitats of Principal Importance (HoPI) for the conservation of biodiversity in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 and are important components of the biodiversity resource of the Lower Windrush Valley:

- The Lake (a eutrophic standing body of water)
- The pond on Snipe Meadow (a freshwater pond)
- The broadleaved woodland fringing the Lake's eastern bank (a wet woodland)
- The remainder of the broadleaved plantation woodlands (lowland mixed deciduous woodland)
- The River Windrush and Emma's Dyke (water courses)

A study by the Lower Windrush Valley Project and Pond Conservation (now Freshwater Habitats Trust) in 2004 recorded 110 bird species, 80 species of invertebrates and 52 different wetland plants on the site. Over the past two years, the meadow and grassland have been managed with the aim of increasing biodiversity and work has been undertaken to commission new reports and surveys to provide updated baseline data (see detailed list below).

Management Reports and Surveys

1995	Management plan by Adrian Shaw
2001-2023	Water level monitoring by Smiths
2004	Lower Windrush Valley Project ecological assessment on Pit 37
2005	Windrush in Witney, Recommendations
2017	Site review by Continental

2021	Phase 1 habitat survey by Dr Frank Lucas
2023	Lake water quality survey Dr Mike Bowes
2023	Lake survey by Dr Robert Aquilia
2023	Ariel survey of Snipe Meadow by Smiths
2023	Bathymetric survey of Lake by Smiths
2023	Invertebrate survey of Snipe Meadow by Lawrence Bee
2023	Invertebrate survey of Mill Meadow by Lawrence Bee

The Country Park Today

The Country Park attracts a wide range of users including (but not limited to):

- Walkers
- Dog walkers
- Runners
- Fisherman
- Cyclists
- Photographers
- Parents/carers and children
- Geocachers
- Community groups such as Nature Now

The Country Park currently has the following amenities:

- Information and interpretation boards (those installed between 1997 and 2004 are in need of updating/replacing)
- Dog bins
- Waste bins
- A defibrillator
- Cycle racks
- Life rings
- Benches; both seating and picnic
- Fishing platforms (including two disabled access platforms)
- Quarter mile marked one mile running/walking circuit

Since Carl Whitehead was employed in July 2022, the following projects have been undertaken/completed on the Country Park:

- Bank stabilization (ongoing)
- Replacement dog bin installation (ongoing)
- Life ring installation with funding from Witney Angling Society (ongoing)
- Fence replacement and new fence installation (ongoing)
- Planting 200 meters of native hedgerow including oak standards every 8 meters with funding from the Woodland Trust
- Hedge management (ongoing)
- Bird box building including three owl boxes by the Witney Shed
- A tern raft built with the support of the Witney Shed (ready for installation on the Lake)

- Re-furnishment of WW2 pill box on Mill Meadow including the installation of an information panel
- Installation of new safety and information noticeboards
- Creation of a one-mile marked running/walking circuit
- Installation of a new 12ft field gate
- General maintenance including paths and overhanging branches/vegetation clearance.
- Removal of 5 tonnes of Himalayan Balsam from water courses and around the Lake
- Creating a fenced area within the nature reserve to provide a safe nesting area for the Lake's swans.

Legal Compliances and Policy Context Frameworks

The management of the Lake and Country Park is subject to a number of legal provisions and statutory obligations. These include:

- Statutory Instrument 2004 No.118 Prescribed Descriptions (England) Order 2004 (established statutory crime and disorder strategies)
- The Local Government Acts 1972, 1999 (established Best Value Authorities) and 2000 (established promotion of economic, social or environmental well-being)
- The Local Government and Rating Act 1997
- The Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996
- The Environmental Protection Act 1990
- The Litter Act 1983
- The Public Health Acts 1848 to 1875
- The Enclosure Act 1845

In addition, a number of local policies need to be considered including:

[Witney Town Council Open Spaces Strategy](#)

Review of Biodiversity Opportunities in the Windrush Valley:

https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/sites/default/files/file/countryside/smreview_of_biodiversity_opportunities_in_the_lower_windrush_valley.pdf

West Oxfordshire Local Plan:

<https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/media/feyjmpen/local-plan.pdf>

Site Description

The Lake is a flooded gravel pit (known as Pit 37) and was dug initially for use in the construction of the A40 Witney bypass in the mid-1970s. It was purchased by Witney Town Council in September 1988. Today the Lake and Country Park covers 91.5 acres (37 hectares) and comprises, the Lake (which has a depth of up to 5.1 meters and is eutrophic), a traditional hay meadow (Mill Meadow) and a wet grassland (called Snipe Meadow and originally another quarry site). The distance around the

Lake measures 1.8 kilometres (approximately 1.1 mile), it has an area of approximately 83,000m² and a volume of 277,493,000 litres. The hay meadow and the grassland are located between tributaries of the River Windrush. The southern end of the Lake is set aside as a nature reserve, with the northern end being designated for leisure activities such as fishing. The grazing land to the east and north of the Park was classified as being an Environmentally Sensitive Area by Natural England following the introduction of the scheme in 1987. To the west, the Park is bordered by an area of small paddocks and allotments, behind which is the village of Ducklington. The site stands at around 80 meters above sea level.

The Lake

The Lake is triangular in outline and bounded to the east by the River Windrush and the west by Emma's Dyke. Neither of these connect directly to the Lake, but they provide groundwater feeds and contribute to floodwaters in extreme conditions. The Lake is partially divided into two by a promontory supporting overhead power cables. The promontory marks the start of the nature reserve area. The entire Lake is tree lined with regular, but small, open areas allowing access for angling 'swims' and dog walkers. The promontory is cordoned off with the shoreline to the northeast also being inaccessible.

Mill Meadow

Mill Meadow comprises 4.9 hectares which includes a wet area of 1.944 hectares, 0.0801 hectares of which is currently fenced. The meadow is a semi-improved neutral grassland, floodplain meadow which was grazed ten years ago. There is a public footpath (No:410/15/10) which transects the meadow and connects the Country Park to Langel Common

[details of invertebrate survey to be inserted once received - expected by end of November 2023]

Snipe Meadow

Snipe Meadow comprises 6.399 hectares which includes several ephemeral ponds. A footpath (No:194/3/10) crosses the eastern edge of the meadow. The main field is a semi-improved neutral grassland, largely dominated by coarse grasses including tall fescue, tufted hair-grass, Yorkshire fog, timothy, common bent, false oat-grass, cock's-foot and hard rush covering approximately 5.93 hectares. Within this area, a small clump of approximately 0.46 hectares of tall ruderal vegetation has also been established. The remaining areas of the meadow are dominated to a varying degrees by broadleaved herbs including meadowsweet, greater plantain, creeping thistle, creeping cinquefoil and red clover with a further scattering of tall ruderals including common nettle, hogweed and occasional hemlock.

In the north-west corner of the site bounded by the Windrush to one side, there is a small outlier area of approximately 0.12 hectares, which in addition to the coarse

grasses listed previously, contains cleavers, broad-leaved dock, creeping buttercup and occasional spear thistles and cut-leaved cranesbill. The western edges of both the main meadow and the smaller outlier area are dominated by a five- to fifteen-meter-wide band of tall ruderal vegetation including common nettle, great willowherb and Himalayan balsam, with hogweed and occasional purple loosestrife, meadowsweet, a comfrey species and a sedge species.

Towards the centre of the meadow at NGR SP 36043 08479 is the largest of the ephemeral ponds. It is kidney-shaped and covers approximately 0.013 hectares. When it was last surveyed in July 2021, the pond was holding shallow water to a depth of approximately 20 centimetres which suggests that it may be a viable long-term reservoir for aquatic flora and fauna. Emergent species were noted as including amphibious bistort and a sweet-grass, with a fringe of silverweed, hard rush and a sedge species.

Where do we want to get to?

Vision

The vision for Park is: 'To work with the community to create a world class, vibrant and safe country park that promotes, health and wellbeing, biodiversity, education, and is accessible to all. 'To achieve high quality green spaces across Witney, including spaces that are nationally recognised for their quality and attractions'. The management of the country park contributes towards achieving this aim.

The Country Park needs to be managed over the long term in such a way as to conserve and enhance its biodiversity, whilst respecting and maintaining the amenity value of the site. Management should contribute to the delivery of the Oxfordshire Nature Recovery Network by taking account of the geographic location in the Lower Windrush Valley. The most effective way to achieve consistent long-term management will be through an integrated management plan with widespread support from stakeholders.

The meadows are the largest single components of the site. The current condition suggests that they have had no recent management. They are now dominated by dense tussocks and mats of coarse grasses and rushes, together with scattered invasive tall ruderal species including common nettle and creeping thistle. This is typical of habitat of this type once traditional management by mowing and/or grazing has ceased. It generally leads to a loss of biodiversity. It may be offset by reinstatement of appropriate management.

Assessment and analysis

Ecology

We need to increase the biodiversity value of the whole site and maintain any area that has a high value in that state. This will be achieved by an active work program and an annual review and, if needed a re-survey of the habitat

Landscape

We plan to improve the overall landscape value of the site where we can make changes to increase the biodiversity while still maintaining the character of the landscape.

Management

We will have a 10-year plan and program of work to improve, develop and maintain the site in its best condition and fit for purpose for the future. The plan will be used as an “organic “document and will be adapted as when needed if policies, legal requirements and needs change

Visitor and Community Needs

There is a need to have a thorough assessment of the users of the site and tie this in with the local open spaces policy and will endeavour to keep customer satisfaction at it highest by listening to their needs and implementing them where possible.

Management Objectives

The following tables detail the objectives and goals set to achieve Witney Town Council’s vision and adhere to the Open Spaces Strategy.

ACTION	HOW	RESOURCES	TIMESCALE
Bird and bat box building and siting	A number of bird boxes have been made by the Witney Shed team and these will be sited in the appropriate areas to support and promote our diverse small bird population. They will have an entrance hole which can only be used by species smaller than Great Tits.	BGSO/Volunteers	Y1
Owl box siting	The Witney Shed team have built 3 owl boxes which will be installed in locations most likely to attract Barn Owls.	BGSO/Volunteers	Y1
Carry out Stonewort survey using boat and grapnel or snorkelling	WTC's aquatic specialist will be asked to undertake this survey	BGSO/Ecologist £1,000	Y1
Develop and implement a management plan for the Witney Lake and Country Park	Ongoing and will be completed by April 2024	BGSO	Y1 WITH AN ANNUAL UPDATE AND REVIEW
1 mile running/walking circuit	The Lake has a 1-mile marked course for use by walkers and runners.	BGSO/Volunteers	Y1
Carry out a botanical survey of Witney Lake	Unless and until evidence is obtained to the contrary, Witney Lake must continue to be protected and managed as one of the foremost Lakes for aquatic plants in the Lower Windrush Valley. A full repeat of the survey undertaken in 2004 (Pond Conservation) is a priority. This survey has already been undertaken by Dr Robert Aquilia (see Appendix)	Ecologist	Y-1
Chestnut fencing installation	This will be constructed at the Avenue 2 access point to the Country Park using staff and volunteers	BGSO/Volunteers	Y1
New noticeboards and interpretation signage	We have 3 access points onto the Country Park and would like to have a main sign and information board at the Avenue 2 entrance and	BGSO/Volunteers	Y1-2

	a smaller noticeboard at the other access points (see Appendix for location map and board designs)	This action has a £7,000 budget already agreed	
Provide information noticeboards about the effects of flea and tick treatments, requesting that recently treated dogs are not allowed into the water.	This is in action now	BGSO £300 pa	Y1-2
Update Fishing Society agreement	The original agreement was signed in 1991 and requires a number of updates.	BGSO/SMT	Y1-2
Rubbing posts for self-guided walks	We are looking to install approximately 12 rubbing posts to create a mini safari for younger users to experience with their parents/carers	BGSO/Comms Team	Y1-2
Allow to fall or fell some trees into the Lake to provide invertebrate and fish fry habitat – trees with many small branches are preferable.	This will be a winter task	BGSO/Works Team	Y1-3
Remove shading trees from a short section of shore along the south side of the Lake where the edge is shallowest. This will encourage marginal vegetation to re-establish so long as access is prevented by fencing off the regenerating vegetation. Some planting can be undertaken to encourage a quicker result but should be as diverse as possible and not include Typha which tends to quickly dominate.	This will be an ongoing and the aim is to begin within Year 1. Turfs from the ephemeral ponds can also be used	BGSO/Works Team	Y1-5
Around the Lake there are several areas that are suitable for developing as wildflower mini meadows. These would be developed using an appropriate wildflower mix and managed in the same way as the larger meadows.	Areas would need to be prepared and an approximate seed mix chosen	BGSO/Volunteers	Y1-8
Maintain Geocache sites – the Country Park is home to a number of geocache sites and the Town Council supports this activity that promotes health and wellbeing	Liaise with Geocache groups to confirm locations and routes.	BGSO/Volunteers	Y1,3,5,7,9

Enhance visitor experience	Conduct a visitor survey	BGSO/Admin Team	Y1,3,5,7,9
Support SSE to carry out tree work underneath power lines to maximise biodiversity.	We have a 3-year work program for SSE to manage all the trees under power lines that cross the Country Park. It has been agreed with SSE's contractors that use will be made of the cleared wood in other habitat creation projects	SSE Contractor	Y1,4,7,10
Carry out E-DNA testing to determine what wildlife (mainly amphibians) are present in the water bodies on site to assist with habitat maintenance and development	Freshwater Habitats Trust (FHT) are able to supply of E-DNA tests	BGSO/Volunteers Cost of tests	Y2
Green Flag A=accreditation	Once we have a management plan in place, an application will be made for Green Flag Status for the Country Park	BGSO and Project Officer	Y2
Graphic Artist Walls Projects	A number of graphic artists have been given permission to use the underpass at Avenue 2 to create ad hoc artworks. Discussions have been undertaken regarding the creation of a commissioned entrance image for the Country Park	Graphic Artist £1,500	Y2
Tern raft building and siting	The building has been completed by the Witney Shed and is now ready to install	BGSO/Volunteers	Y2
Open/Woodland Day to include crafts, events and experiences	A decision needs to be made about the best time of year to hold the event and contact needs to be made with local groups including the Wychwood Trust to get them onboard. Once initial temperatures have been taken, a project plan and timetable will need to be put into place.	BGSO/Comms Team/Project Officer/Volunteers	Y2 AND ONGOING
Install a deer fence and gate on peninsular to provide a barrier to stop dogs entering this area.	Installation of a 2.4 meter galvanized fence and gate.	BGSO/Volunteers £400-£500	Y2-3

Creation of a Volunteer Team to support the management of the Country Park	Create a recruitment strategy and put a training programme in place.	BGSO	Ongoing
Apply for Investors in Volunteers (IiV) accreditation	Once a Volunteer Team is in place and has undertaken a sufficient body of work this should be recognised with an application for IiV.	BGSO and Project Officer	Free to apply for Y2-3
Site designation for Country Park	Apply to Thames Valley Environmental Records Office (TVERC) and Beds, Berks and Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) to have the Country Park designated as a Local Wildlife site (LWS) and a Local Nature Reserve (LNR). The process could take up to a year but attainment of this status will be necessary for the application of future grant funding.	BGSO and Project Officer	Y2-4
Carry out hedgerow planting and management There are a number of hedges around the Country Park that have had little management for a number of years, and we aim to lay or coppice as many as appropriate. This will not only increase the life of the hedges it will also increase the biodiversity value significantly as the hedges mature	We are looking to obtain funding to increase the number of hedgerows throughout the site. And make full use of the annual budget set by the council	BGSO/Volunteers	Y2-4
Creation and siting of floating platforms. The Lake has at present just one small floating island for birds to nest on and for young fish to use as a refuge against predation from birds such as Cormorants. We would like to have within the Lake as a whole, a number of floating platforms to provide additional habitats for the flora and fauna.	These can be made by volunteers and staff	BGSO/Volunteers,	Y2-4
Buy floating planted islands anchored offshore to offer bird nesting habitat as well as rich	These can be built by staff/volunteers and with potential funding we could be more expansive in our plans	BGSO/Works Team and contractors	Y 2-5

invertebrate habitat if the roots can grow through the platform into the water below.		£11,000(Biomatrix)	
Reptile Hibernaculum creation	As we have Grass Snakes and a number of other amphibians present on the Country Park, we will create at selected areas, Hibernaculum's to provide breeding and hibernating habitats to allow them to lay eggs and also overwinter on our site. These can be made with the help of the volunteer team	BGSO/Volunteers	Y2-4
Reinstate management of the meadow by an appropriate mowing and/or grazing regime to control invasive ruderal species and enhance its biodiversity value.	We are managing the meadows by mechanical means at present and we will also look at potential use of graziers in the future	BGSO/Contractors	Y2-5 WITH AN ANNUAL REVIEW AND IMPROVEMENTS
Creation of Otter Holts	We plan to build an Otter Holt at two locations within the Country Park. They will be made using natural wood products collected during normal management of the site.	BGSO/Volunteers	Y2-5
Running Event We are looking at the possibility of having a running event that makes use of the whole of the Country Park	Work with local running club to set a course and run the event	BGSO/Volunteers, and Local Running Club	Y3
Small mammal survey of Snipe and Mill Meadow	Use Longworth traps and ask local mammal group to assist	BGSO BBOWT	Y3
Social and Medical Prescribing, We have the opportunity to use our green spaces as part of a plan to improve both the mental and physical wellbeing of people that are referred to us	Contact local GP's and support groups and offer the use of the Country Park as a venue for physical and mental therapy	BGSO and Project Officer	Discussing with Nature Now team Y3-4
Increase perimeter complexity by creating small promontories from the bank in the northeastern side where access is not public.	These should slope gently into the water at the end to provide shallow submerged habitat for plants and emergent bank for wildfowl nesting	BGSO/Works Team and Contractors	Y3-5

Create a submerged promontory or shelf.to recreate the habitat suitable for stoneworts A submerged shelf or promontory is suggested being built out from a point opposite the existing promontory. This is the easiest access point for vehicles being at the end of a concrete track and free of existing vegetation.	Gravel should be deposited to a depth of 20cms below low water. Ideally once deposited, a channel should be created to prevent access from the shore. If stonewort's are still present, they should colonise quickly from dispersing oospores We are also looking at other areas of the Lake to site this habitat	Biodiversity and Green Spaces Officer (BGSO)/ Works Team/ Contractor 50 Tonne 5-10mm gravel @ £800;00 per 10 tonne	Y3-5
Car Parking Requirements The Country Park suffers greatly from a lack of car parking locations and as an ongoing process	we will be looking to facilitate partnerships with WODC, local businesses and even potentially purchasing/leasing land to create our own car park.	BGSO/WTC	Y3-6
Installation, repair and replacement of Gates/Styles We have over a dozen both metal and wooden gates around and at the entrances to the country park. It has been a number of years since the they have been either serviced, repaired, or replaced if needed. This work is of high priority to provide security and access to areas within the Country Park	We have an ongoing repair and maintenance program for all our gates	BGSO/Volunteers Gate-4ft =£82:00 Gate 10ft = £145:00	AS NEEDED
Path repair/Maintenance We have many paths within the park, and they include grass and ballast pathways.	To maintain the grass paths a structured mowing regime is needed and the Ballast pathway around the Lake needs consistent annual maintenance, as I want to try and maintain this as a DDA access for all compliant pathways.	BGSO/Volunteers and works team	AS NEEDED
Hedgelaying around the Country Park	We have 150 metres of laid hedge within the Country Park and this was planted in 2014, there are also a number of gaps within this hedgerow, and we will be filling those gaps to create a continuous green corridor along the Lake pathway. We also have 200m of new	BGSO/Volunteers	£4;00 per metre for rows and infill AS NEEDED

	hedge planted by volunteers on Snipe Meadow we are also looking at other areas which through potential funding we could create more hedgerows.		
Public Outreach	Maintain an active social media Presence and update pages on a regular basis	BGSO/Publicity Officer	As Needed
Obtaining Grant Funding	There are a number of environmental grant funders that we can apply to for support with identified projects within the country park and working with the project officer we will optimise these opportunities.	BGSO and Project Officer	ONGOING
Corporate Volunteering and support	We are planning to invite local businesses to both support financially and through staff involvement the development and management of the Country Park	BGSO/ Admin Team	ONGOING
Bank Stabilisation Program	We have carried out 60m of bank stabilisation and will do another 60 m in the near future and then assess the need to do more once a Biodiversity Action Plan is drawn up	BGSO/Volunteers Ongoing funding is in place to carry out annual work around the Lake	ONGOING
Boat Work	We have a ridged boat with an outboard motor that can be used for surveys and management of the Lake	BGSO/Volunteers	ANNUAL
Academic projects	We have a link with Oxford Brookes Collage and the team carrying out the Environmental Consultancy module of their degree. We have provided a number of projects which are reviewed each year for the students to choose from	BGSO	YEARLY
Nature Now and Forest School Projects	Witney has a strong commitment to developing the younger members of the town to have a love for the natural world they live in and so WTC have partnered with the local "Nature First" team	BGSO/Volunteers	£2,400 for X6 sessions YEARLY

	to offer training and experience days for both young people and the people who care for them		
We want to start a programme of talks from local experts on a number of environmental subjects such as, birds bats moths etc:	There are a number of local speakers who will willingly carry out talks for both a younger and older audience	BGSO/Volunteers and Local Experts	YEARLY
Review of Biodiversity Opportunities in the Lower Windrush Valley, Conservation Enhancements for Other Habitats and Features, LWVP (2020) suggests a number of ways that the biodiversity of the Lake and Country Park might be increased. Any uptake of these suggestions should be reported to the Lower Windrush Valley Project. These could include, but are not limited to:	Measures to enhance the river corridors for water voles and otters.	BGSO/Works Team 1.5K	ANNUAL
	Pollarding of willows along the river corridors to reduce shading and encourage bankside vegetation.	BGSO/Works Team	ANNUAL
	Installation of bird and bat boxes into the young woodland areas to create nesting and roosting sites where few currently exist.	BGSO/Volunteers £300-£500pa	Y1-2
	Planting of new species-rich hedgerow(s)	BGSO/Volunteers Grant Funding	Y2-10

How will we get there?

Removal and Control of Invasive Species

Schedule 9 Species (including invasive non-native and licensed release only species) Overview Section 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 ('the Act') seeks to prevent the release into the wild of certain plants and animals which may cause ecological, environmental, or socio-economic harm. To achieve this, it makes it an offence *inter alia* to plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild in Great Britain any species of plant listed in Schedule 9 to the Act.

Himalayan balsam is widespread across the site and in the wider Lower Windrush Valley Project area, on the fringes of the watercourses and in areas dominated by tall ruderal vegetation. At present there is no agreed best course of action to eradicate it, and any local attempt to eradicate it at Witney Lake and Country Park is certain to fail because of the prevalence of the species in the wider landscape. If a landscape-scale initiative to eradicate this species is initiated, then local measures should be taken to support the initiative. Meanwhile contractors operating on the site should be required to observe biosecurity measures to prevent the spread of Himalayan balsam from the site, notably the effective cleaning of equipment and clothing to prevent seeds or fragments of the plant being transferred to other sites.

Nuttall's pondweed appears to be well established in Witney Lake having been recorded in the present survey and previously in the Pond Conservation (2005) survey. As with Himalayan balsam it is likely that this species is prevalent across the Lower Windrush Valley Project area and any local attempt to eradicate it is likely to fail. If a landscape-scale initiative is initiated then local measures should be taken to support it, and in the interim, contractors operating on the site should be required to observe biosecurity measures to prevent its spread through the effective cleaning of equipment and clothing.

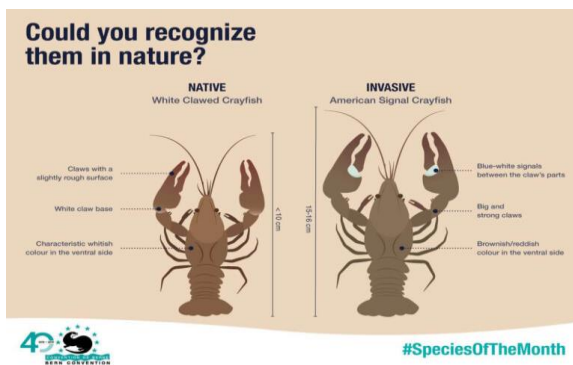
The presence of **Chalara ash dieback** in trees around Witney Lake and Country Park Nature Reserve requires further investigation and monitoring to ensure that dead or dying trees do not become a danger to visitors. Forest Research advise that 'With the exceptions of felling for public safety or timber production, we advise a general presumption against felling living ash trees, whether infected or not. This is because there is good evidence that a small proportion will be able to tolerate *H. Fraxinus* infection. There is also the possibility that a proportion of ash trees can become diseased, but then recover to good health. These, too, would be valuable for our research, although it is still too early to know whether there are such trees in the British ash population'. For further information see

Ragwort is a native species of the British Isles. It is a specified weed under the Weeds Act 1959. It contains toxins which can have debilitating or fatal consequences, if eaten by horses and other grazing animals. Ragwort is less likely to be rejected by stock if dried and contamination of forage (hay, haylage and silage) is a particular problem. Humans may be at risk from ragwort poisoning through direct contact (eg, hand pulling) or the consumption of contaminated food. We have mainly the Oxford Ragwort on our sites.



Oxford ragwort (pictured left) is easily distinguished from common ragwort when in flower because it has loose, spreading flower heads, while common ragwort's flowers are densely packed in tight umbel-like corymbs. The leaves of common ragwort are usually darker and more glossy and tough than those of Oxford Ragwort.

Ragwort also has a very positive side for biodiversity in that it is the larval food source for the Cinnabar Moth (pictured right).



Signal crayfish is an invasive aquatic species, are present throughout mainland UK and have severe negative effects on other aquatic biota. While no effective mechanism for their eradication exists, control attempts often make use of removal by trapping. We had a company that dealt with the removal and disposal of Crayfish but due to EU law this is now not possible.

Giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) is a plant in the Apiaceae family (previously known as the Umbelliferae). This family includes some well-known plants such as parsley, carrot, parsnip, cumin and coriander.



Poison hemlock, *Conium maculatum*, is a member of the plant family Apiaceae, which contains a few important vegetable crops such as carrots, celery, and parsnip, and herbs such as parsley, cilantro, chervil, fennel, anise, dill, and caraway. It is a tall, invasive, highly poisonous weed that is sometimes mistaken for one of its crop relatives.



Mink Monitoring and control: As part of BBOWT's recent Chimney Meadows Wetland Restoration Project, They received some funding towards mink monitoring and control within the upper River Thames catchment, and this includes the River Windrush. The funding has enabled them to buy mink rafts, traps and remote trap monitoring units (Remoti), and they are looking for suitable locations to deploy them. We were asked if we would be willing to host a mink raft and ideally check them in monitoring mode (or even better - trapping mode), then we can provide you with the rafts, traps and Remoti units.

Biological Surveys

A number of Surveys have taken place to provide a baseline set of data to support and guide the development of the management of the Country Park. These are:

- Phase 1 survey of the nature reserve part of the lake and Snipe Meadow
- Witney Lake and Emma's Dyke water test
- Survey of Lake aquatic flora and fauna (see Appendix)
- Entomological survey of Snipe and Mill Meadow (see Appendix)

Wet Meadow management note

Some wet grasslands have been traditionally managed as floodplain or water meadows, and in these areas hay meadow management should be continued. Ditches and other water features are incredibly important for plants, invertebrates and amphibians and should be managed sensitively and protected from agricultural runoff. Water level management is important, in particular the maintenance of a high water table in spring and summer, and management of winter flooding.

The Country Park comprises two meadows of differing characters, one (Snipe) is a meadow created after aggregate removal so has a "cap" of soil and therefore will lack true diversity of flora and fauna but we will manage this in the appropriate way to maximise the potential going forward.

The other meadow (Mill) is a natural floodplain meadow and has benefited from grazing in the past. It will also have the potential for a seedbank that with correct management could be released and developed.

Finance and Resources

Budget

A budget has been agreed with the responsible Finance Officer and Head of Operations to enable all Year 1 projects set out within the Management Plan to be completed. A schedule of expenditure has been proposed for the next ten years. A number of projects within that ten years will require capital funding, but it is hoped that some of this will be secured externally via grant applications and sponsorship.

How will we know when we have arrived?

It will be necessary for detailed key performance indicators (KPIs) to be agreed by Counsellors.

However, the following are suggestions of measures of the success of the management plan:

- The attainment of LWS and LNR status for the Country Park
- Achieving a biodiversity net gain (evidenced by baseline and update surveys)
- Achieving liV status
- Being awarded Green Flag status
- Achieving a Gold award from Britain in Bloom
- Positive user feedback
- Meeting the legal criteria set out in local, regional and national green space strategies
- Delivering to budget

Monitoring and Review

The Management Plan will be a live dynamic document. It will be monitored and reviewed as set out below and any changes required will be actioned quickly and proactively in consultation with the relevant stakeholders.

- Weekly monitoring by the BGSO to inform schedule of works
- Quarterly overview carried out by the BGSO, Head of Operations and relevant stakeholders to ensure timeframes and budgets are being met.
- Annual review by BGSO and all relevant stakeholders to ensure the plan continues to be relevant and to deliver its stated aims.

Appendices

[Paper copies of these documents will be attached to the final Management Plan]

- Tenancy Agreement of Fishing Rights on the Lake at Witney Oxfordshire
- Open Water Policy
- Metal Detecting Policy
- Tree Policy (awaiting agreement)
- Volunteer Policy (awaiting agreement)
- Pictures of proposed plastic furniture
- Breeding bird survey, 2023 James Curren (local Volunteer)
- Survey of Lake aquatic flora and fauna (Robert Aquilia 2023)
- Entomological survey of Snipe and Mill Meadow Lawrence Bee 2023, (awaiting report)
- Budget: 2023-2024