

Full Council Meeting of Witney Town Council



Monday, 15th April, 2024 at 7.00 pm

To members of the Full Council - O Collins, G Meadows, J Aitman, T Ashby, D Enright, R Smith, D Temple, A Bailey, L Cherry, R Crouch, G Doughty, J Doughty, D Edwards-Hughes, D Newcombe, J Robertshaw, S Simpson and J Treloar

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.

Numbers of the public will be limited, with priority given to those who have registered to speak on an item on the agenda. Any member of the public wishing to attend the meeting 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 confirmed to 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. Minutes (Pages 5 - 12)

To approve and adopt the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 19 February 2024 in accordance with Standing Order 18 including questions on the minutes as to the progress of any item.

4. **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.

5. **Witney Community Policing Issues**

To receive an update from the Witney Police Team (if appropriate).

6. **An Update from Witney Oxfordshire County Councillors and West Oxfordshire District Councillors**

To receive a short verbal update from Oxfordshire County Councillors representing Witney Wards and West Oxfordshire District Councillors.

7. **Report Back from the Councillors on the Work with External Bodies where they serve as the Town Council's Nominated Representative**

To receive a short verbal update from councillors who sit on external bodies where they serve as the Town Council's nominated representative.

8. **Minutes of Committees and Sub Committees**

To receive and NOTE the RESOLUTIONS in the minutes of the meetings held between 20 February and 9 April 2024, and agree the RECOMMENDATIONS contained therein.

a) **Climate, Biodiversity & Planning - 20 February, 12 March & 9 April** (Pages 13 - 32)

b) **Parks & Recreation - 4 March 2024** (Pages 33 - 36)

c) **Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments - 11 March 2024** (Pages 37 - 40)

d) **Stronger Communities - 18 March 2024** (Pages 41 - 45)

e) **Policy, Governance & Finance - 25 March 2024** (Pages 46 - 56)

To also consider a subsidised letting request from an external fundraiser to hold a charity quiz night at the Corn Exchange in aid of Oxfordshire Mind and Bridewell Gardens Mental Health Recovery.

9. **Civic Announcements** (Pages 57 - 58)

To receive the report of the Mayor & Mayor's Secretary.

10. **Mayor Elect**

To agree the Mayor Elect for the 2024/25 Municipal Year in line with Standing Order 5.

11. **Health & Safety**

To receive a verbal update from Officers on health and safety items, if appropriate.

a) **Corn Exchange Access & Security** (Pages 59 - 64)

To receive the report of the Venue & Events Officer.

12. **Vandalism & Anti Social Behaviour** (Page 65)

To receive an update showing the latest vandalism to Council property and reported Anti-Social Behaviour.

13. **Communication from the Leader**

To receive such communications as the Leader of the Council may wish to bring before the Council and to consider the recommendation of the Leader on how such communications should be dealt with.

14. **Correspondence**

To receive any correspondence received (if applicable).

a) **OCC Planning Correspondence** (Page 66)

To receive correspondence relating to planning application R3.0142/23 (Shores Green, Witney)

b) **Environment Agency Correspondence** (Pages 67 - 78)

To receive correspondence concerning the Thames Valley Flood Scheme at Witney Lake & Country Park.

c) **Environment Agency Response** (Page 79)

To receive correspondence in response to a letter requested by the Climate, Biodiversity & Climate Committee concerning a maintenance plan for watercourses in Witney. Minute Number P54 Refers.

d) **Police Crime Commissioner Correspondence** (Pages 80 - 81)

To receive correspondence from the Police & Crime Commissioner for Thames Valley.

15. **Questions to the Leader of the Council**

Questions to the Leader of the Council concerning the business of the Council in accordance with Standing Order 15.

16. **Sealing of Documents**

The following documents have been sealed since the last meeting:

Date	No of Seal	Nature of Document
07 March 2024	90	Lease relating to Unit 3 Coseley Building, Windrush Ind Estate, Witney. Welland Property Trustee I Limited & Welland Property Trustee II Limited In duplicate
07 March 2024	91	Licence to carry out works Lease relating to Unit 3 Coseley Building, Windrush Ind Estate, Witney. In duplicate



Town Clerk

Members Interests & Registration Of Gifts & Hospitality

Members are reminded that any changes to the register of interests previously completed by them or any registration of Gifts or Hospitality received which exceed £50 should be reported to the Town Clerk **within 28 days** of the occurrence.

Agenda Item 3

FULL COUNCIL MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday, 19 February 2024

At 7.00 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor O Collins (Chair)

Councillors:	G Meadows J Aitman T Ashby D Enright R Smith D Temple A Bailey R Crouch	G Doughty J Doughty D Edwards-Hughes D Newcombe J Robertshaw S Simpson J Treloar
Officers:	Adam Clapton Sharon Groth Derek Mackenzie	Deputy Town Clerk Town Clerk Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
Others:	None.	

Before the meeting Councillor O Collins paid tribute to former Mayor Michael Chadwick who held the position in 1978, 1987 & 88 and finally in 1991. A one-minute silence was held.

85 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor L Cherry (by previously agreed dispensation).

86 REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION

A further dispensation request was received from Cllr L Cherry to 18 September 2024 and agreed by Members.

Cllr G Meadows would continue to assume Chair-ship of the Stronger Communities Committee and attend the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee and Personnel Sub-Committee meetings as substitute.

Resolved:

That, the further dispensation for Cllr L Cherry be agreed.

87 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Members or officers.

88 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Full Council meetings held on 4 December & 11 December 2023 and 8 January 2024 were received.

Minute Item 4 - The Leader requested a minor amendment to the minutes of 8 January 2024 to clarify that no comments were received in response to the precept budget proposal she made.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Full Council meetings held on 4 December & 11 December 2023 and 8 January 2024 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

89 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

90 **WITNEY COMMUNITY POLICING ISSUES**

Members received a verbal update from Inspector Chris Ball of Thames Valley Police (TVP).

Insp Ball reported that his team had recently:

- Made four arrests relating to drug offences.
- Facilitated education workshops in local schools supported by ex-gang members.
- Provided education to individuals riding E-Scooters
- Been engaged in the operation to locate a local individual who was thought to be lost to the River Windrush.

A Member asked if the use of E-Scooters was related to drug trade. Insp Ball confirmed this was the case and that the team were combating this with the use of cycles which were able to target individuals who attempted to use the pathways around estates to elude enforcement.

The Member also raised the need for Neighbourhood watch scheme. Insp Ball agreed to pass on details of the Oxfordshire Coordinator for Neighbourhood Watch.

Resolved:

That, the verbal update be noted.

Inspector C Ball left the meeting at 7:10pm

91 **AN UPDATE FROM WITNEY OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLORS AND WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILLORS**

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)

Cllr D Enright advised that OCC would be meeting in order to pass the 2024/25 budget the following day and was confident that despite the pressures from Social Care requirements, that a balanced and sustainable budget would be passed.

West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC)

Cllr J Aitman advised that WODC had set up and funded a Youth Officer who would work with Parishes and Town Councils to improve the provision for young people, the position was new and yet to be filled; she would provide further updates when available.

Cllr R Smith recommended Members look at a recent proposal to create a “Nature Recovery Plan” which would engage with parishes to support Biodiversity in the area.

Following positive feedback from a Member that had been received at one of the Town Councils “Councillors in the Café” mornings it was agreed that an invite be extended to WODC and OCC to attend future events to give residents the opportunity to discuss issues that are not under the control of the Town Council.

92 **REPORT BACK FROM THE COUNCILLORS ON THE WORK WITH EXTERNAL BODIES WHERE THEY SERVE AS THE TOWN COUNCIL'S NOMINATED REPRESENTATIVE**

Witney & District Twinning Association

Cllr O Collins advised that the Annual General Meeting of the Association would take place on 27 February and welcomed any members to attend alongside the Council’s representatives.

Witney Town Charity

Cllr R Crouch updated the Council on work being undertaken to improve the Almshouses.

She also advised that Witney Town Charity were providing support to Families in Poverty which was a scheme to help provide beds and mattresses to reduce the need for parents and children to share.

Lastly, she reported that the charity had purchased property at Wilkinson Place and was assisting 8 to 10 residents with their needs.

Witney Town Band

Members congratulated the band on their competition wins the previous weekend.

93 **CLIMATE BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING COMMITTEE - 28 NOVEMBER, 19 DECEMBER, 9 JANUARY & 20 JANUARY**

The minutes of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee meetings held on 28 November & 19 December 2023 & 9 January and 30 January 2024 were received.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee meetings held on 28 November & 19 December 2023 & 9 January and 30 January 2024 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

94 **PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE - 15 JANUARY**

The minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 15 January 2024 were received.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 15 January be received and any recommendations therein approved.

95 **HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE - 22 JANUARY**

The minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 22 January 2024 were received.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 22 January 2024 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

96 **STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE - 29 JANUARY**

The minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee meeting held on 29 January 2024 were received.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee meeting held on 29 January 2024 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

97 **POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE - 5 FEBRUARY**

The minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 5 February 2024 were received.

F79 – The Chair advised he had left the meeting for the discussions on West Oxfordshire Community Transport and a mayoral subsidised letting request due to conflicts of interest.

Resolved:

That, subject to the addition above, the minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 5 February 2024 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

98 **WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL CODE OF CONDUCT & REGISTER OF INTERESTS**

Members were reminded of their obligations relating to declaring their disclosable pecuniary interests in order to keep their Register of Interests up to date, in line with the adopted Member Code of Conduct.

A form was available for any updates, and it was the responsibility of Members to update the register within 28 days of the changes taking place.

Resolved:

That, the update be noted, and members update their Register of Interests in line with the Member Code of Conduct.

99 **MEMBERS USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

The Council received and considered a recommendation provided by the Monitoring Officer at West Oxfordshire District Council which suggested that the Town Council considered the need to promote a better understanding of the use of social media to its Members.

At this juncture the Town Clerk/C.E.O requested the permission of the Chair to make a statement she had prepared as Head of Paid Service and Proper Officer of the Council expressing her disappointment regarding a party-political leaflet which had been issued to residents and reminded Councillors of their duty of care towards its employees.

The publication contained false information concerning the agreed Council budget meeting held on 8 January 2024 and while it contained derogatory attacks on the Council, claims of 'mismanagement' impacted on the Officers and staff who worked extremely hard to deliver services and were understandably concerned about the comments and their future employment with the Council.

The Town Clerk advised that despite the number of projects, financially the Council was in a reasonably comfortable position and officers worked hard to recommend a budget with a minimal increase in line with inflation. She pointed out that Officers try to achieve value for money and are governed by Financial Regulations, audited by independent internal and external auditors.

There were some very exciting and big projects which all Members would be keen to celebrate – despite whether they voted for the budget or not.

Referring to the recommendation from the Monitoring Officer to promote better understanding of the use of social media to its Members – the Town Clerk requested that those responsible for political campaigns be conscious of the impact their narrative had on staff and Council Officers who all work extremely hard to keep services running – in sometimes quite difficult circumstances. She reminded Members that they all signed up to the Civility & Respect Pledge – and that employees should all be afforded dignity at work.

The Chair thanked the Town Clerk for her comments and asked that Members heed the sentiment.

The Leader also welcomed the comments and echoed the Chair. She pointed out that the recommendation before the Council from the Monitoring Officer was for the Council to consider

Social Media Training. There was training available via one of the Council's training providers and she stressed the importance of Members taking this type of training when it became available.

Resolved:

That, the recommendation from the Monitoring Officer at the District Council be approved and the statement from the Town Clerk/C.E.O be noted.

100 **EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS & OUTSIDE BODIES**

The Council received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk regarding vacancies to external organisations and outside bodies.

Firstly, Members considered the vacancy for a nominated trustee on the Witney Educational Foundation. It was proposed, seconded and carried that Mr R Barton be re-appointed to the position for a further four-year term.

Secondly, the Council were invited to consider joining a collaboration group concerning the strategic housing development in North Witney. The Leader gave the background to this group having been approached by the Chairs of the surrounding Parish Councils who had initiated the invitation to Witney.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Mr R Barton be re-appointed as the town council's nominated trustee on the Witney Educational Foundation and,
3. That, Witney Town Council appoints two representatives to the North Witney Collaboration Group and,
4. That, Cllrs R Smith and A Bailey be appointed to those positions.

101 **CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Council received the report of the Mayor and Mayor's Secretary which highlighted the civic engagements of the Mayor and Deputy since the last meeting.

He expressed thanks to his Deputy and Secretary and all those who supported a recent mayoral quiz night, which raised funds for APCAM and Yellow Submarine.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

102 **CALENDAR OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2024-25**

The Council received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning the calendar of Committee meetings for the 2024/25 municipal year, deferred from the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee.

The report included several options on how the first two committee cycle of meetings could be accommodated between the Annual Council meeting and the beginning of August. Members

agreed Option four, which utilised the Tuesday after the late May Bank Holiday would be preferred.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Option four be approved and published accordingly.

103 **HEALTH & SAFETY**

The Council received a verbal update from the Deputy Town Clerk.

He had been advised by other officers there was little new to report since the last meeting. Options on improving security at the Corn Exchange were still being explored following incidents which had occurred at the end of 2023.

Resolved:

That, the verbal update be noted.

104 **VANDALISM & ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR REPORT**

The Council received a list of vandalism reports since the last meeting.

Members were pleased it was a comparatively short list compared to previous meetings.

Resolved:

That, the verbal update be noted.

105 **COMMUNICATION FROM THE LEADER**

The Leader had nothing to be communicated.

106 **PCC CORRESPONDENCE**

The Committee received correspondence from the Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police, not the Crime Commissioner as published, which provided an update on a Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy (PEEL) report.

107 **OXFORDSHIRE HEALTHY CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE**

The Council received correspondence from Oxfordshire County Council concerning the provision of the Young People's Public Health service in the County.

108 **ACCESS TO WITNEY (SHORES GREEN WEST FACING SLIP ROAD) SCHEME**

The Deputy Town Clerk advised correspondence regarding this scheme had been received earlier in the day from Oxfordshire County Council, hence why it was raised verbally at the meeting.

It was advised that, as the Town Council had previously shown support for the scheme, a letter of support would be issued to the Secretary of State outlining the benefits in regard to a recent upcoming public inquiry.

109 **QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

A Member asked the Leader if she had an update on the situation with the Welch Way shopping precinct which was damaged during recent storms, and which was surrounded by inaccessible scaffolding causing an obstruction on the footpath.

As a non-town Council responsibility, the Leader deferred to the Deputy Leader of West Oxfordshire District Council who agreed the current situation was unacceptable. It was complex issue regarding varying stakeholders, but it was hoped different scaffolding which would provide better accessibility would be provided in the coming days.

A further question was raised regarding flooding at Lakeside allotments and whether the Council were considering any options. Officers advised the issue had been investigated approximately three years ago and the costs were prohibitive.

110 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

There were no documents sealed.

The meeting closed at: 8.10 pm

Chair

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 8a

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

Held on Tuesday, 20 February 2024

At 6.01 pm in the Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom

Present:

Councillor A Bailey (Chair)

Councillors:	G Meadows R Smith J Aitman	S Simpson G Doughty (In place of J Robertshaw) T Ashby (In place of D Temple)
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.	

P111 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor O Collins.

Apologies were also received from Councillor J Robertshaw, Councillor G Doughty attended as a substitute and from Councillor D Temple, Councillor T Ashby attended as a substitute.

P112 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Aitman and Meadows declared a non-pecuniary interest in application 24/00123/LBC 2 Station Lane, Witney as they were Town Council appointed representatives of the applicant, Witney Town Charity.

There were no other declarations from Members or Officers.

P113 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

P114 **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

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

Members also discussed correspondence received from the developer representing application 23/02730/FUL – 58 West End, Witney asking for clarification on the Council’s consultee response. Members considered their previous submission which related to technical concerns in the application documents and agreed that no further response would be made to WODC without further consultation via the planning process.

Resolved:

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

P115 **NOTIFICATION OF PLANNING APPEAL**

The Committee received notice of the Planning Appeal for APP/D3125/D/24/3337152 Kingsmead 51 Woodlands Road, Witney.

Resolved:

That, the Planning Appeal be noted.

The meeting closed at: 6.54 pm

Chair

Witney Town Council

Planning Minutes - 20th February 2024

114

114- 1 WTC/020/24 Plot Ref :-24/00073/FUL Type :- FULL
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 29/01/24
 Location :- 61 WOODSTOCK ROAD Date Returned :- 21/02/24
 WOODSTOCK ROAD
 Proposal : Erection of a two-storey dwelling and associated works on land at the rear of 61 Woodstock Road, Witney.
 Observations : Witney Town Council object to this application. Members have shown concern for the scale of the proposed development in contrast to the site dimensions, the proposed dwelling will appear very cramped and not in keeping with the street scene. The application is not compliant with the General Principles of policy OS2 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan, the development is not of a proportionate and appropriate scale to its context and does not form a logical complement to the existing scale and pattern of development.
 Further, policy OS4, requires that development does not harm the use or enjoyment of land and buildings nearby including living conditions in residential properties - Members expressed concern that given the proximity of neighbour dwellings, the development could cause a harmful loss of light to neighbouring residents.

114- 2 WTC/021/24 Plot Ref :-23/03129/FUL Type :- FULL
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 29/01/24
 Location :- MYSTORE SELF STORAGE Date Returned :- 21/02/24
 BOOK END
 Proposal : Erection of eight drive-up storage units, alterations to the existing parking and turning area, and associated works (part retrospective) (amended description).
 Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

114- 3 WTC/022/24 Plot Ref :-24/00123/LBC Type :- LISTED BUI
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 30/01/24
 Location :- 2 STATION LANE Date Returned :- 21/02/24
 STATION LANE
 Proposal : Installation of Secondary Glazing to all Windows (dwellings 2-12 Station Lane).
 Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

114- 4 WTC/023/24 Plot Ref :-24/00119/S73 Type :- DISCHARGE
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 30/01/24
 Location :- 1A WILMOT CLOSE Date Returned :- 21/02/24
 WILMOT CLOSE
 Proposal : Retrospective discharge of conditions 4 (car parking facilities) 6 (Water drainage) 8 (boundary treatment) and 9 (provision of bat and bird boxes) of

permission 21/01193/FUL.

Observations : While Witney Town Council does not object to this application, Members raised the issue of on-site parking as required by Condition 4 of permission 21/01193/FUL. It is acknowledged that the applicant has explained that their current tenants do not own a vehicle, however, Members have asked that any occupants or visitors have access to the agreed off-road parking spaces by removal of the fence.

114- 5 WTC/024/24 Plot Ref :-24/00192/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 30/01/24
Location :- 50 HERON DRIVE Date Returned :- 21/02/24
HERON DRIVE
Proposal : Insertion of a door and window to existing garage.
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

114- 6 WTC/025/24 Plot Ref :-24/00173/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 07/02/24
Location :- KINGSMEAD Date Returned :- 21/02/24
51 WOODLANDS ROAD
WOODLANDS ROAD
Proposal : Removal of existing timber structure on side elevation. Erection of a 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.

114- 7 WTC/026/24 Plot Ref :-24/00291/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 07/02/24
Location :- 19 KINGSFIELD CRESCENT Date Returned :- 21/02/24
KINGSFIELD CRESCENT
Proposal : Erection of a single storey rear extension.
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

114- 8 WTC/027/24 Plot Ref :-24/00303/LBC Type :- LISTED BUI
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 12/02/24
Location :- 13 MARKET SQUARE Date Returned :- 21/02/24
MARKET SQUARE
Proposal : External alterations to front elevation to include the replacement and installation of new signage.
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

114- 9 WTC/028/ADV Plot Ref :-24/00305/ADV Type :- ADVERTISIN
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 12/02/24
Location :- 13 MARKET SQUARE Date Returned :- 21/02/24
MARKET SQUARE
Proposal : Replacement of non illuminated hanging sign, installation of non illuminated new

fascia with new logo and replacement of ATM tablet and decals.

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

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, 12 March 2024

At 6.02 pm in the Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom

Present:

Councillor A Bailey (Chair)

Councillors:	G Meadows R Smith J Aitman O Collins	J Robertshaw S Simpson G Doughty (In place of D Temple)
Officers:	Adam Clapton Derek Mackenzie Claire Green	Deputy Town Clerk Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk Administration Support - Planning & Stronger Communities
Others:	None.	

P136 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was also received from Councillor D Temple, Councillor G Doughty attended as a substitute.

P137 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

At this point there were no declarations of interest from Members or officers.

Councillor O Collins later declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 5 – Application for a New Premises Licence – Witney Pride as he was well known to the applicant. He took no part in the discussion.

P138 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

P139 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.

P140 **APPLICATION FOR NEW PREMISES LICENCE W/24/00144/PRMA - WITNEY PRIDE, THE LEYS, WITNEY**

The Committee received and considered an application for a New Premises Licence for Witney Pride under the Licencing Act 2003.

Resolved:

That, a no objection response be forwarded to the licencing team at West Oxfordshire District Council.

P141 **APPLICATION FOR VARIATION TO PREMISES LICENCE W/24/00207/PRMMV 9-11 HIGH STREET, WITNEY**

The Committee noted the Application for Minor Variation from Co-op, 9-11 High Street, Witney under the Licencing Act 2003.

Members were in agreement that proposed changes were minor, as there was no change to the licenced area, therefore, they had no objections to the application.

Resolved:

That, a no objection response be forwarded to the licencing team at West Oxfordshire District Council.

P142 **PLANNING APPEAL RECEIVED FOR LAND SOUTHEAST OF OXFORD HILL, WITNEY - 20/02654/OUT**

The Committee received notice of the Planning Appeal Public Inquiry for APP/D3125/W/23/3333790- Land Southeast of Oxford Hill, Witney.

Officers advised that all of the Council's consultee responses would form part of the documents reviewed by the planning inspectorate, it was also confirmed that Members were able to attend the inquiry if they wished to.

In response to a question from Cllr R Smith regarding a representative for the Town Council speaking in person at the inquiry, the Deputy Town Clerk advised he would provide further assistance on how to proceed if the Council wanted to protect its requested interests from this development.

Resolved:

1. That, the Planning Appeal be noted and,
2. That, advice on taking part in the planning inquiry is explored by the Deputy Town Clerk.

The meeting closed at: 6.52 pm

Chair

Witney Town Council

Planning Minutes - 12th March 2024

139

139- 1 WTC/029/24 Plot Ref :-24/00093/FUL Type :- FULL
 Applicant Name :- 1 WESLEY WALK Date Received :- 26/02/2024
 Location :- WESLEY WALK Date Returned :- 13/03/2024
 Proposal : Alterations to external doors and ground floor windows.
 Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

139- 2 WTC/030/24 Plot Ref :-24/00414/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 26/02/2024
 Location :- 32 WINFIELD DRIVE Date Returned :- 13/03/2024
 WINFIELD DRIVE
 Proposal : Conversion of integral garage to home office.
 Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

139- 3 WTC/031/24 Plot Ref :-24/00319/FUL Type :- FULL
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 26/02/2024
 Location :- 5 WEST END Date Returned :- 13/03/2024
 WEST END
 Proposal : Demolition of existing timber shed and erection of a replacement building comprising 2 x 1 bedroom apartments.
 Observations : While Witney Town Council does not object to this application in terms of material concerns, the Council ask that the development complies with policy OS4, and that the proposal does not harm the use or enjoyment of land and buildings nearby including living conditions in residential properties.
 Since the proposal includes development in a high density area with close proximity to neighbouring properties, can officers pay due regard to ensuring that the development does not cause harmful loss of privacy to neighbouring properties.

139- 4 WTC/032/24 Plot Ref :-24/00457/ADV Type :- ADVERTISIN
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 28/02/2024
 Location :- 1 WESLEY WALK Date Returned :- 13/03/2024
 WESLEY WALK
 Proposal : Erection of a non illuminated fascia sign.
 Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

139- 5 WTC/033/24 Plot Ref :-23/03239/FUL Type :- FULL
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 28/02/2024
Location :- UNIT 1 CRANBROOK COURT Date Returned :- 13/03/2024
AVENUE TWO
Proposal : Change of use from planning class light industrial use to community centre (F2(b)) (amended).
Observations : Witney Town Council have no objection to this proposal and welcome a place of worship for the Islamic community, and a community and cultural centre.

139- 6 WTC/034/24 Plot Ref :-24/00486/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 01/03/2024
Location :- FIELD VIEW Date Returned :- 13/03/2024
WOODGREEN
WITNEY
OX28 1DE
Proposal : Erection of a single storey side extension.
Observations : While Witney Town Council does not object to this application in terms of material concerns, members 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.

139- 7 WTC/035/24 Plot Ref :-24/00226/ADV Type :- ADVERTISIN
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 05/03/2024
Location :- WINDRUSH LEISURE CENTRE Date Returned :- 13/03/2024
WITAN WAY
WITNEY
OX28 4YA
Proposal : Erection of externally illuminated signage and three non illuminated signs.
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

139- 8 WTC/036/24 Plot Ref :-23/03180/FUL Type :- FULL
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 06/03/2024
Location :- ABBOT DIABETES CARE Date Returned :- 13/03/2024
RANGE ROAD
WINDRUSH IND PARK
OX29 0YL
Proposal : Extensions to buildings known as Evenlode and Wychwood with associated infrastructure (revision to approved Scheme Ref. 23/00469/FUL)
Observations : Witney Town Council support the business growth of Abbott Diabetes Care, Members welcome the improved scheme.

139- 9 WTC/037/24 Plot Ref :-23/02730/FUL Type :- FULL
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 06/03/2024
Location :- CAR PARK, REAR OF 58 WEST Date Returned :- 13/03/2024
END
WEST END
WITNEY
OX28 1NF

Proposal : 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 : Witney Town Council remain supportive of the principal of redevelopment at this site. However, in addition to comments previously submitted, Members of Witney Town Council are concerned that the proposed development will not be accessible via West End for pedestrians and cyclists - this important route should be accessible for residents but is not protected by the proposed scheme.

Witney Town Council would like to see provision for safe access for cyclists and pedestrians with cycling and walking entry and exit points at the North and the South of the site.

The Meeting closed at : 6:51pm

Signed : _____ Chairman Date: _____

On behalf of :- Witney Town Council

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

Held on Tuesday, 9 April 2024

At 6.01 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor A Bailey (Chair)

Councillors:	G Meadows R Smith J Aitman	J Robertshaw S Simpson G Doughty (In place of D Temple)
Officers:	Adam Clapton Derek Mackenzie Sharon Groth	Deputy Town Clerk Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk Town Clerk
Others:	5 members of the public Mr R Courts MP Councillor Thomas Ashby Councillor Rachel Crouch	

P176 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor O Collins.

An apology for absence was also received from Councillor D Temple, Councillor G Doughty attended as a substitute.

P177 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor R Smith declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in Planning Application 24/00655/FUL as she was a resident of the street and would be making a representation on behalf of the neighbouring property who had contacted her as ward Councillor.

There were no other declarations from Members or Officers

P178 MINUTES

The minutes of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee meeting held on 30 January, 20 February and 12 March were received.

P54 – The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that a letter had been sent to the Environment Agency and a reply received which would be circulated as the Full Council meeting on 15 April 2024. The Environment Agency had made it clear that they would not be carrying out any de-silting work at Bridge Street. The Chair confirmed to members that they were minded remembering the Town Councils proposal to clear the silt would be a one-off exercise due to cost.

P55 – The Committee Clerk advised Members the agreement for the issue of the Thermal Camera was being drafted.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee meetings held on 30 January, 20 February and 12 March be approved as a correct record of the meetings and be signed by the Chair.

P179 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Committee adjourned for this item following agreement by the Committee to suspend Standing Order 42 in order to allow a lengthier period of discussion given the interest from Members and the public in attendance.

The committee received representations from Robert Courts MP concerning Agenda Item 5.

Further representation was made by a representative of Windrush Against Sewage Pollution (WASP) also concerning Agenda Item 5.

The Committee reconvened.

P180 **THAMES WATER CORRESPONDENCE - MR R COURTS MP**

Members heard from Mr Courts MP who expressed his willingness to support Witney Town Council, its members and residents with any difficulties being experienced with the services provide by Thames Water. He also provided an update on the future of Thames Water and the work planned to improve the Witney Sewage Treatment Works to reduce the pollution of Colwell Brook.

Mr Courts also commended Windrush Against Sewage Pollution (WASP) for the excellent work they had done to highlight the issues and welcomed the continuation on pressuring Thames Water to improve their practices.

All parties present agreed on the importance of working together, one example which was highlighted by the Leader of the council was to fully explore the infrastructure options to mitigate further flooding when further housing developments and road projects were under consideration, such as the potential North Witney development and West End Link Road.

The representative from WASP outlined the work they had undertaken over the years to highlight in particular the pollution of the waterways however, he was keen to reiterate the need to work together to apply pressure and explained how pleased he was to see this in practice following the Environment Agency’s objection to further development in South Oxfordshire until improvements are made to the Sewage Treatment Works in that area.

He went on to ask that the Council help “drive change” and consider highlighting the issue to residents of pollution further by way of signage along Colwell Brook.

The Chair thanked Mr Courts, representatives from WASP and all others present for their attendance to discuss such an important topic.

Resolved:

1. That, the verbal representations from all parties be noted.
2. That, the Council considers erecting pollution signage in the vicinity of Colwell Brook

(Mr R Courts MP, Cllr R Crouch and all members of the public left the meeting at 7:02pm)

P181 FINANCE REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) detailing income and expenditure for budgets which are the responsibility of the Committee.

A Member raised a query regarding the details of the £2,000 grant received from County Councillor priority funding. The Committee Clerk confirmed this was from Cllr Enright for the establishment of a Dragonfly Pond area on Mill Meadow. Details of which would be included in a future report from the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted.

P182 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

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

Members also noted the “No Objection” response that was submitted on 20 March 2024 in respect of application 24/00093/FUL 1 Wesley Walk by prior agreement of West Oxfordshire District Council due the short timescale of that application, documents had been circulated electronically to members of this Committee prior to this meeting to collate the response.

Resolved:

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

P183 PLANNING DECISIONS

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

Members were pleased to see the conditions applied to the approval of 23/02730/FUL Car Park Rear of 58 West End to deal with the contamination issues they had raised in their consultee response, however, were disappointed that a condition to deal with future access to West End from the development had not been included.

Resolved:

That, the list circulated advising of WODC planning decisions be noted.

P184 **WITNEY TRAFFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES - 26TH MARCH 2024**

The Committee received the minutes of the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee (WTAC) meeting held on 26 March 2024.

Cllr Ashby, a town council representative on the committee updated Members of the proposals for the improvements to be made at the bridleway between Deer Park and Windrush Estate.

The Committee Clerk also advised Members that the date of the next meeting had since been rearranged to 18 June 2024.

Resolved:

1. That, the minutes of the WTAC meeting held on 26 March 2024 be noted and,
2. That, the date of the next meeting date be noted as 18 June 2024.

P185 **FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING COMMITTEE**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk regarding the future format of meetings of the committee.

Following a short debate members agreed to leave the format of meetings in their current arrangement of two of the three meetings per Committee cycle remaining virtual advisory meetings, and the Full meeting as in-person with climate and environmental matters. The decision would be reviewed after six months,

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the current format of meetings remains the same, to be reviewed in six months' time.

P186 **PLANNING APPEAL - 59 BARRINGTON CLOSE, WITNEY - 23/02476/FUL**

The Committee received notice of the Planning Appeal for APP/D3125/W/24/3336974 for 59 Barrington Close, Witney.

Resolved:

That, the Planning Appeal be noted.

P187 **PLANNING APPEAL - 17A MOOR AVENUE, WITNEY - 23/02164/CLE**

The Committee received notice of the Planning Appeal for APP/D3125/X/24/3340800 for 17a Moor Avenue, Witney.

Resolved:

That, the Planning Appeal be noted.

The meeting closed at: 7.58 pm

Chair

Witney Town Council

Planning Minutes - 9th April 2024

P182 Planning Applications

P182- 1 WTC/038/24 Plot Ref :-24/00462/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 11/03/2024
 Location :- 9 MILLERS MEWS Date Returned :- 10/04/2024
 MILLERS MEWS
 Proposal : Replacement and changes to existing rear and side facing ground floor windows and doors.
 Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

P182- 2 WTC/039/24 Plot Ref :-24/00573/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 11/03/2024
 Location :- 80 ABBEY ROAD Date Returned :- 10/04/2024
 ABBEY ROAD
 Proposal : Erection of a front single storey 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.
 Witney Town Council also ask that consideration is given to the neighbour's comments regarding their ventilation which are affected by these proposals.

P182- 3 WTC/040/24 Plot Ref :-23/03056/FUL Type :- FULL
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 18/03/2024
 Location :- WELCOME EVANGELICAL Date Returned :- 10/04/2024
 CHURCH
 HIGH STREET
 Proposal : Alternations and extensions to church building (amended plans).
 Observations : Witney Town Council notes the amended documents submitted for this application but recognises the concerns of the Environment Agency and their technical expertise in relation to an acceptable flood risk assessment.

In its previous response, the Council noted the increased footprint and asked that mitigating measures be considered to help decrease the strain on the local sewer network and commented on known local issues, particularly during heavy rainfall and subsequent high infiltration rates. Given the site location and associated flood risk, the Council stressed the importance of flood protection from both surface and potential sewage water for this site, and neighbouring properties, in accordance with policy EH7 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.

As these, and more importantly, the Environment Agency requirements have not been met, Witney Town Council objects to this application.

P182- 4 WTC/042/24 Plot Ref :-24/00549/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 18/03/2024
Location :- 4 CENTENARY WAY Date Returned :- 10/04/2024
CENTENARY WAY
Proposal : Erection of an orangery to rear elevation of dwelling.
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.

P182- 5 WTC/043/24 Plot Ref :-24/00326/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 18/03/2024
Location :- 163 VANNER ROAD Date Returned :- 10/04/2024
VANNER ROAD
Proposal : Removal of existing conservatory and erection of two story rear 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 by way of suitable drainage 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.

P182- 6 WTC/044/24 Plot Ref :-24/00476/FUL Type :- FULL
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 25/03/2024
Location :- MCDONALDS RESTAURANT Date Returned :- 10/04/2024
DUCKLINGTON LANE
Proposal : Alterations to include extensions incorporating the relocation of the entrance, new access door and glazing. reconfiguration of existing remote corral to include a new maintenance storage room, introduction of 4 new cycle racks and associated works to the site.
Observations : While Witney Town Council has no objections to this application and members acknowledge the additional four-cycle rack provision they would welcome additional provision to approximately twelve in line with WODC Local Plan Policy T3. in order to encourage use and alleviate the known issues of vehicle movements at the site and entrance junction.

P182- 7 WTC/045/24 Plot Ref :-24/00624/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 25/03/2024
Location :- 2 CURBRIDGE ROAD Date Returned :- 10/04/2024
CURBRIDGE ROAD
Proposal : Enlarge two existing dormers, erection of single storey side extension and construction of replacement garage.
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.

P182- 8 WTC/046/24 Plot Ref :-24/00569/FUL Type :- FULL
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 25/03/2024
Location :- 5A WEST END Date Returned :- 10/04/2024
WEST END
Proposal : Conversion of existing first and second floor apartment to form two separate apartments.
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

P182- 9 WTC/047/24 Plot Ref :-24/00570/LBC Type :- LISTED BUI
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 25/03/2024
Location :- 5A West End Date Returned :- 10/04/2024
WEST END
Proposal : Internal and external alterations to divide the existing apartment into two separate apartments. Works to Include installation of timber stud partitioning and the replacement of second floor external door with a window
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

P182- 10 WTC/048/24 Plot Ref :-24/00073/FUL Type :- FULL
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 25/03/2024
Location :- 61 WOODSTOCK ROAD Date Returned :- 10/04/2024
WOODSTOCK ROAD
Proposal : Erection of a two-storey dwelling and associated works on land at the rear of 61 Woodstock Road, Witney (amended plans)
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

P182- 11 WTC/049/24 Plot Ref :-24/00644/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 25/03/2024
Location :- 86 COLWELL DRIVE Date Returned :- 10/04/2024
COLWELL DRIVE
Proposal : Erection of a single storey side extension
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

P182- 12 WTC/050/24 Plot Ref :-24/00631/S73 Type :- VARIATION
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 02/04/2024
Location :- MEADOW COTTAGE Date Returned :- 10/04/2024
NEW YATT ROAD
Proposal : Variation of conditions 2, 3 and 4 of planning permission 23/01099/HHD to allow the reduction in size of rear extension, alterations to design of garage, changes in materials to be used and provision of integrated bat roosting features.
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

P182- 13 WTC/051/24

Plot Ref :-24/00655/FUL

Type :- FULL

Applicant Name :- .

Date Received :- 02/04/2024

Location :- 111 MANOR ROAD
MANOR ROAD

Date Returned :- 10/04/2024

Proposal : Erection of a dwelling with associated parking, bin and bike stores.

Observations : Witney Town Council object to this application. Members have shown concern for the scale of the proposed development in contrast to the site dimensions, the proposed dwelling will appear very cramped and not in keeping with the street scene. The application is not compliant with the General Principles of policy OS2 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan, the development is not of a proportionate and appropriate scale to its context and does not form a logical complement to the existing scale and pattern of development. Further, policy OS4, requires that development does not harm the use or enjoyment of land and buildings nearby including living conditions in residential properties - Members expressed concern to the lack of amenity land/garden.

The Meeting closed at : 7:58pm

Signed : _____ Chairman Date: _____

On behalf of :- Witney Town Council

**PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 4 March 2024

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

Present:

Councillor D Newcombe (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	D Edwards-Hughes
	T Ashby	R Smith
	O Collins	S Simpson
	R Crouch	
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Mark Lewis	Head of Estates & Operations
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Angus Whitburn	Operations Manager
Others:	Cllr J Robertshaw	

PR116 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

PR117 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor J Aitman declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 8 as her spouse held the title of Keeper of the Tiny Forest.

There were no other declarations from Members or Officers

PR118 MINUTES

The minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 15 January 2024 were received.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 15 January 2024 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

PR119 PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

There was no public participation.

PR120 LEYS SPLASH PARK

The Committee received the report of the Operation Manager along with a verbal update from the Head of Estates & Operations (HE&O) to update on the progress of the Leys Splash Park works.

The HE&O advised the scheme was at the exploration stage with officers seeking any potential external funding which could be maximised and to ensure the council was prudent with its spending.

Even if construction of a new splash park commenced immediately, then completion would not be until late summer 2024. Therefore, officers were considering what temporary arrangements could be put in place for 2024 whilst the Courtside Hubs CIC development at The Leys was ongoing. This would allow time to consult with users of the park and the plan would be to then commence after the summer season and have a new provision in place for opening for the 2025 season.

Resolved:

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted.
2. That, any decision be communicated ahead of the Easter School Holidays as the Splash Park would not be open at that time.

PR121 LEYS PARKING RESTRICTIONS

The Committee received the report of the Head of Estates & Operations regarding the proposed introduction of parking restrictions at The Leys.

The report updated Members on the project following issues which arose from Oxfordshire County Council's legal team. This resulted in slow progress of the matters under consideration. The HE&O confirmed that OCC were still keen to enforce the scheme once a Traffic Regulation Order was in place.

The HE&O would continue to press OCC for a decision with the simplest solution as possible.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

PR122 TINY FOREST – REQUEST TO INSTALL A WOODEN MONOLITH

The Committee received and considered the report of the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer (B&GSO) following a request from Earthwatch to install a wooden monolith at the site of the Tiny Forest which acknowledged their legacy donors.

In response to a question from a Member, the Deputy Town Clerk confirmed the reason for the items being brought to this Committee rather than the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee was due to the short timescale prior to a ceremony to be held by Earthwatch on 21 March 2024 where they would like the monolith to be in place.

Members were pleased to see a simple and stylish design and were unanimously in favour of supporting the installation, provided it would be conducted under the supervision of the B&GSO.

A Member noted that Earthwatch were due to replace the signage and asked that information be included to help with species recognition by way of leaf silhouettes or similar.

Resolved:

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, the installation of a wooden monolith be approved and,
3. That, request that Earthwatch include leaf recognition on the replacement signage.

(The Town Clerk/C.E.O joined the meeting at 6:18pm)

PR123 CRICKET AT THE LEYS RECREATION GROUND AND WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND

The Committee received and considered the report along with a verbal update from the Operations Manager.

Members were initially concerned about the retention of a cricket wicket at the Leys. The surrounding area was now frequently used by families and individuals to sit and enjoy the area recreationally, however a Member advised that if the wicket was in use then the events field would usually be free for park users to utilise and once removed it would be difficult to reintroduce in the future; it was also unlikely it would be used for anything other than amateur and junior cricket

Members were hesitant to provide a lease to Witney Swifts CC at West Witney Sports & Social Ground due to the loss of control this would bring over the ground and maintenance, although the possibility of a maintenance agreement should be explored. There was also the risk that the cricket and football seasons could clash causing issues between sporting groups.

A proposal to maintain The Leys cricket square and postpone any decision on its future until 2025 to allow the cricket teams time to explore the need for a wicket was made by Cllr Collins and seconded by Cllr Aitman. All members were in agreement.

Members also agreed with the proposal from Cllr Smith, seconded by Cllr Edwards Hughes to defer any decision again to 2025 to issue a lease to Witney Swifts CC in order to allow Officers to fully explore the options.

Resolved:

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, the decision to no longer maintain a cricket wicket at the Leys recreation Ground be deferred to spring 2025 and,
3. That, the decision to issue a lease agreement at West Witney Sports Ground to Witney Swifts CC be deferred to spring 2025.

PR124 FINANCE REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) detailing income and expenditure for budgets which were the responsibility of the committee.

Ahead of the meeting a non-committee member had asked a question regarding the £30,000 commuted sum shown against the cost centre for Unterhaching play area. The Town Clerk explained how this was derived and the terms attached to such amounts. On this occasion, as far as she was aware, this money was available to spend on the play area to maintain it. However, this did include the maintenance of the Copse as well as the play equipment, dry stone wall and lighting. The Town Clerk advised that at year-end this money would go into an earmarked reserve to ring fence it for future use.

Members were also advised how commuted sums were generally negotiated and how they used to be invested to maximise a return for use on the upkeep of such areas.

A Member asked for clarification as to what action would be taken if the £4,000 sport equipment 203/4046 budget line remained unused for the 2024/25 year to which the Town Clerk confirmed that it would be rolled over into an earmarked reserve.

Resolved:

That, the report and the verbal update by the Town Clerk be noted.

PR125 **MAJOR PROJECTS UPDATE**

The Head of Estates & Operations provided a verbal update to the Committee on the progress of the Councils major projects.

The Leys Stake Park – This was on track for completion at the end of March and therefore opening event arrangements were being put into place.

West Witney Sports & Social Club – Funding applications were being worked on by Officers to maximise the opportunities for the Council to make minimise financial input. The specification of the design was also in progress and the outcome of the funding would allow for this to be finalised.

Leys Masterplan – Work had commenced however, with the multitude of contractors on site officers had had to deal with some inappropriate behaviour in order to ensure compliance and to protect grassed areas of the park.

Courtside Hubs CIC had commenced trading from their temporary location within the Mini Golf area and even at this early stage propose a July 2024 completion of the project.

WTC Depot – Officers had entered the final legal stages of the agreement for the temporary depot facility and were in the process of moving equipment from The Leys Recreation Ground site.

Consultations were taking place with stakeholders ahead of planning applications being submitted for the new permanent depot.

Resolved:

That, the verbal update be noted.

The meeting closed at: 6.54 pm

Chair

**HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 11 March 2024

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

Present:

Councillor R Crouch (Chair)

Councillors:	D Enright O Collins J Aitman D Edwards-Hughes	D Newcombe J Treloar R Smith
Officers:	Adam Clapton Sharon Groth Mark Lewis Derek Mackenzie	Deputy Town Clerk Town Clerk Head of Estates & Operations Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
Others:	None.	

H126 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received

H127 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor O Collins declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest Agenda Item 7 for by virtue of knowing the promoter of the "Over the Hill" festival.

H128 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries and Allotments Committee meeting held on 22 January 2024 were received.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries and Allotments Committee meeting held on 22 January 2024 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

H129 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

H130 **FINANCE REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) detailing income and expenditure for budgets which were the responsibility of the committee.

In response to a Member's question, the Town Clerk confirmed that the rent review for the lease of Langdale Hall and was set out in the terms of the lease and would be enacted accordingly

Members were pleased to see the detailed commentary in the report relating to the letting and Corn Exchange café income.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

H131 **PUBLIC HALLS REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Venue & Events Officer.

Members were pleased to hear that improvements were being considered for a screen, projector and conferencing facilities and they welcomed the visual demonstration from the Head of Estates & Operations as to how these would be installed in the Gallery Room.

Members asked if consideration could be given to a wireless conferencing set up and that officers investigate any potential grant funding options such as those secured by the District Council for their refurbished meeting chamber. Members were all in agreement that they were happy for officers to proceed with the acquisition up to a cost of £7,500.

The Committee also looked forward to seeing the new storage solutions installed in the Corn Exchange which was due to commence on 16 April 2024.

Members then considered a request from White Feather Spiritual Events to reduce their hire period from four to three hours which fell outside of usual Council policy. Members were in agreement subject to the review conditions noted in the report.

Recommended:

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, the purchase of conferencing equipment be delegated to the Head of Estates & Operations up to a maximum of £7,500, utilising funds from the General Reserve and,
3. That, wireless options are explored for the above conferring equipment and,
4. That, the request from White Feather Spiritual Events to reduce to a 3-hour hire period be agreed subject to the regular review as set out in the report.

H132 **PUBLIC HALLS BUSINESS REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Venue & Events Officer.

The Committee was pleased to see the events being planned, including the direct management of the monthly comedy night at the Corn Exchange; the success of the event would be monitored in the coming months. Officers advised wedding packages would also be presented at the next Committee meeting.

Members were presented with a proposal from the promoter of the “Over the Hill” festival, which was being held on the August Bank Holiday, as noted in the report.

Members were happy to hear of alternative approaches which would potentially encourage acts and promoters to use the venue however, wanted clarification on the request of this particular ticket sales split. Members asked that Officers review it with the promoter so that the agreement was clear and speak to a previous venue that hosted the event for feedback.

All Members, excluding Councillor Collins, agreed that the decision be delegated to the Head of Estates & Operations to agree the level of remuneration the Council would receive.

A Member expressed their pride with the presentation of the Corn Exchange for the recent Civic Reception; it was shown at its best and provided a great advertisement for its use as a versatile event venue.

The Deputy Town Clerk provided details of a request from Thames Valley Police for subsidised letting to hold the launch of a new initiative “Through Their Eyes” which would educate secondary school pupils on the effects of crime on the police and community, this would be held in the Corn Exchange on 26th March 2024.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, delegation be given to Officers to investigate the proposal for the “Over the Hill” event further and agree the level of remuneration and,
3. That, the request from Thames Valley Police be approved for the subsidised let of the Corn Exchange Main Hall for the “through their eyes” event, at a cost of £175.

H133 CORN EXCHANGE ILLUMINATION POLICY REVIEW

The Committee received and considered the Corn Exchange Illumination Policy which was due for review.

The Committee agreed the illumination generally worked well and were in favour of renewing agreements already put in place by the previous administration.

Members asked that those requesting illuminations during summer months be advised that due to the nature of the lighting system that they may not be visible until late in the evening along with any request where Officers were aware that the lighting would be delayed due to a Gallery Room booking.

All Members were in agreement with the readoption of the policy.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised of two new requests which had been received to highlight Parkinson UK and World Down Syndrome Day. Members agreed that these should be permitted.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Illumination of Corn Exchange for Events Policy be readopted and,

3. That, the requests to light up the Corn Exchange for Parkinson UK and World Down Syndrome Day be approved.

H134 **CLOSED CHURCHYARDS UPDATE**

The Committee received the report of the Operations Manager updating on the progress of works in the two closed churchyards maintained by the Town Council.

The Town Clerk advised the Operations Manager would ensure the work was completed as soon as authority was received from the Diocese.

Resolved:

That, the report and verbal update be noted.

H135 **PROJECTS UPDATE**

The Committee received a verbal update from Officers on the progress of the ongoing projects.

Members were advised that there had been some delays to the smaller ongoing projects following the absence of the Project Officer however, these would now recommence.

The work to install the Mapping posts in Windrush Cemetery would take place once clarification of the final cost was received from the supplier.

Resolved:

That, the verbal report be noted.

The meeting closed at: 6.45 pm

Chair

**STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 18 March 2024

At 6.10 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

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

Councillors:	L Cherry O Collins R Smith	T Ashby A Bailey J Doughty
Officers:	Sharon Groth Adam Clapton Derek Mackenzie	Town Clerk Deputy Town Clerk Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
Others:	Two members of the public. Councillor Geoff Doughty Councillor Jack Treloar	

SC143 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Cllr J Aitman.

SC144 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Members or officers.

SC145 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Stronger Communities Committee held on 29 January 2024 were received.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee meeting held on 29 January 2024 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the chair.

SC146 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Committee adjourned for this item.

The committee received representations from The Station, Witney concerning Agenda Item 10, Youth Services.

As the detached youth service being funded by the Town Council under Bright Futures Oxfordshire Ltd, the Committee welcomed the update; they were pleased to hear the initiative had launched and youth workers would be out with young people from the end of March and during the summer months.

The Committee reconvened.

SC147 **FINANCE REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted.
2. That, the management accounts of the Committee's services to 31 January 2024 be approved.

SC148 **COMMUNICATIONS REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer (C&CEO).

Members welcomed an update on the Council's website and agreed it needed updating as previously resolved. They noted the cost of an external supplier but felt more detail was needed on what the quote covered along with other comparable quotes. There was agreement the current website should be re-mapped, and a new theme should be tested in-house before committing to a larger project and outlay.

There was also some concern about the speed of the current website and although this would be looked at if externally sourced, it was felt it was not enough of an issue if the website was retained internally.

The Committee also noted an update on the resident's satisfaction survey and an issue with glare, which was hindering viewing of the Council's digital signage.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted.
2. That, re-mapping and a new theme for the Council's website should be trialled internally.
3. That, officers explore options for an anti-reflective shade for the digital signage.

SC149 **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer (C&CEO).

Members were pleased to hear plans to mark the Council's 50th Anniversary were underway which included a young person's Virtual Reality event and that communications regarding voter engagement and the Great British Clean Up were planned. In relation to a young litter picker, it was agreed they should be rewarded for their actions.

The Committee agreed dedicated signage and a gazebo were required for the Councillors at The Café event, which had proved to be very successful and that vouchers for community gardening groups and schools for In Bloom should be increased due to rising costs.

With regard to competitions, Members wanted to continue with the ever-popular Christmas competitions and agreed the Christmas Carol service sheet should be offered to seniors for one final year to gauge interest. The Committee also agreed the Wild Witney competition should be run again but thought needed to be given on how this could be promoted to gain further entries.

Finally, The Committee discussed Heritage Open Days and Car Free Day which were held annually in September. Members were supportive of holding the Heritage days along previous lines which would tie into the Council's anniversary, but there were mixed views on Car Free Day. They noted the interest and uptake had been limited in recent years and agreed that applying resources to the event was not good value for money. However, the climate emergency was one of the Council's key aims and it should be highlighted. There appeared to be a disconnect with 'green' events and residents and apathy from other local authorities who should also be involved.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted.
2. That, the 50th anniversary update be noted.
3. That, the young litter picker be rewarded by attending the opening of the Lake & Country Park art rubbing post trail and tour by the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer.
4. That, permanent signage and a gazebo be purchased for the sole use of Councillors @ The Café.
5. That, a voter engagement campaign is supported.
6. That, the budgets for In Bloom vouchers be increased in 2024/25 and dispersed to community gardeners (£40) and schools (£50).
7. That, the Christmas competitions, including light, official card and Christmas carol service sheet are run in the same way as the previous year.
8. That, the Council runs a Wild Witney competition.
9. That, the Council runs a Heritage Open Day event in 2024.
10. That, Car Free Day is run as a social media event in 2024, unless other authorities are able to assist in the facilitation of an event on Market Square/High Street.

Cllr A Bailey left the meeting at 7:12pm

SC150 **WITNEY FORUM MINUTES - 5 FEBRUARY 2024**

The Committee received the notes of the Witney Forum Meeting held on 6 February 2024.

Through this group an Oxfordshire County Council initiative on creating a Witney Community Profile Steering Group had been established. Members were invited to nominate two Council representatives who may like to attend and feedback information.

Cllr L Cherry and Cllr J Aitman were nominated, seconded and agreed as Members, subject to Cllr Aitman's agreement.

Resolved:

1. That, the Witney Forum minutes of 6 February 2024 be noted.

2. That, Cllrs L Cherry and J Aitman be put forward as nominated representatives of the Council to the Witney Community Profile Steering Group.

SC151 **WITNEY YOUTH COUNCIL**

The Committee received a verbal update from the Deputy Town Clerk.

Members were advised a recruitment video had been recorded, draft terms of reference had been created and work was underway on posters, forms and information. Regrettably, other projects and tasks had meant there was no further update at this time.

Resolved:

That's, the verbal update be noted.

SC152 **INCLUSIVITY & DIVERSITY PANEL**

The Committee received a verbal update from The Leader of the Council.

Unfortunately, time had not allowed for a meeting to take place, but it was hoped this happen before the next meeting of the Committee.

Resolved:

That, the verbal update be noted.

SC153 **YOUTH SERVICES**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk.

There was an update on The Station Youth project, which outlined their plans for the summer and which had already been provided during public participation.

Members also agreed the Council should reform the Youth Services Forum which had met in response to the cessation of Got2B CIC last year. It had provided a useful sounding board for services and would provide an update on the detached youth work to stakeholders and would help glean activities for young people over the summer, to be published by the Council.

In relation to the remaining Youth Services budget, there were hopes that the Council may be able to fund young person's health and wellbeing sessions again during the summer so a decision on how else it should be expended was deferred until the situation was clearer.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted.
2. That, the update regarding the Station, under Bright Futures Oxfordshire be noted.
3. That, the Witney Youth Forum is reformed for a meeting after Easter.
4. That, the decision on expending the remaining amounts of the Council's youth budget be deferred until later in the year.

SC154 **D-DAY 80TH ANNIVERSARY**

The Committee received and considered the report of Communications & Community Engagement Officer (C&CEO).

The Leader, as Chair of the task and finish group also offered a verbal update and went through the proposed timetable of the day on 6 June. The Deputy Town Clerk added that the RAF Cadets had offered to bring their flight simulator which would be recreating the flights who flew to Normandy 80 years ago.

Members were pleased to hear the update and thanked all those involved in the planning. They were supportive of purchasing lanterns of peace which could be taken into care homes during the day by councillors.

Resolved:

1. That, the report and update be noted.
2. That, the purchase of lanterns of peace for care homes be approved.

SC155 **THIRD PARTY EVENTS REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk.

Members were in agreement that subsidised hire of the Leys should be provided to Witney Pride, Witney Carnival and Witney Music Festival due to the social and economic value they provided to the community.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted.
2. That, subsidised hire be awarded to Witney Pride for the value of £715.00.
3. That, subsidised hire be awarded to Witney Carnival for the value of £1,775.00.
4. That, subsidised hire be awarded to Witney Music Festival for the value of £2,365.00 (as agreed in the Partnership Agreement).

The meeting closed at: 7.38 pm

Chair

**POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 25 March 2024

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

Present:

Councillor R Crouch (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)

Councillors:	O Collins R Smith D Newcombe	G Meadows T Ashby (In place of J Doughty)
Officers:	Adam Clapton Sharon Groth Derek Mackenzie Nigel Warner Mark Lewis	Deputy Town Clerk Town Clerk Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk Responsible Financial Officer Head of Estates & Operations
Others:	Councillor James Robertshaw	

F156 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Aitman & L Cherry (the latter by previously agreed dispensation).

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

F157 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor O Collins declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 16 as he was an unpaid Director for West Oxfordshire Community Transport.

There were no other declarations from Members or Officers

F158 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 5 February 2024 were received.

F75 – Cllr Collins thanked officers for the management of the Annual Town Meeting. He had personally received positive feedback on the night and after the event.

F79 – Cllr Collins advised he had left the meeting for the discussions on West Oxfordshire Community Transport and a mayoral subsidised letting request due to conflicts of interest.

F79 – The Committee Clerk advised the amount approved for Witney Carnival was £2,400, not £2,100 as noted in the minutes.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 5 February 2024 be approved, subject to the above amendments, as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

F159 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

F160 **CORN EXCHANGE ILLUMINATION POLICY REVIEW**

The Committee received the Corn Exchange Illumination Policy which had been received and recommended for approval by the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee.

Resolved:

That, the Corn Exchange Illumination Policy, as presented, be adopted by the Council.

F161 **PUBLIC HALLS CANCELLATION POLICY**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Venue & Events Officer and an amended Public Halls cancellation policy, which would form part of the terms and conditions of hire.

There were questions on the various group definitions but recognition that stronger conditions were required to avoid financial and reputational loss for the Council.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted.
2. That, the bookings cancellation policy, as presented, be adopted by the Council and reviewed after six months.

F162 **PESTICIDES POLICY**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations Manager and the accompanying policy document. The item had previously been considered by the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee on 7 November 2023 (minute number P600).

Members welcomed the final policy and recognised the sensitivity around the issue; the Council had to balance biodiversity against the upkeep of its green spaces. As such, they were pleased to see spray/no spray zones listed but asked if there could be more detailed information under each zone heading, possibly even mapping attached.

It would also be useful to include best practice sources, along with acts of parliament which enabled the Council to discharge its functions. It was confirmed that all re-wilding areas were identified, and the use of pesticides would not affect their development.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted.
2. That, the Pesticides Policy, as presented, be adopted by the Council.
3. That, delegation be provided to the Head of Estates & Operations to work with officers on including further details including mapping of zone areas and best practice sources.

F163 **GRANTS POLICY REVIEW**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk and an amended policy document.

Members welcomed the updated document and agreed the grants budget and frequency of awards should remain the same. They also recognised the changes which enabled support for ecclesiastical properties were required in line with National Association of Local Council advice and the inclusion of other items concerning social value, grant monitoring, transparency and data protection.

There was agreement the Council's vision was still evolving as part of a strategic plan so should not be included but its aims and objectives, including gender identity in point 4.1.6 should.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted.
2. That, the Grants Policy, as presented, be adopted by the Council with the above amendments.

F164 **PROCUREMENT POLICY REVIEW**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and accompanying policy document.

The Committee welcomed the amendments to the current policy to help ensure adherence to financial controls and legislation. With regard to the final table in the report, Members felt under 'Above Procurement threshold', the text should be 'Professional or legal advice shall be obtained on the most appropriate processes, if necessary.'

There was further discussion on when the policy should be reviewed as national legislation on procurement was due to change later in the year. It was agreed the review should be one year, or in response to these changes if before that time.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted.
2. That, the Procurement Policy, as presented, be adopted by the Council subject to the above amendments on professional advice and review.

F165 **FINANCE REPORT**

Members received and considered the written report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) along with a verbal summary of the report.

Along with the management accounts, the report also contained information relating to investments and in particular, sustainable investment through Churches, Charities and Local Authorities (CCLA) Investment Management Limited and their ethical standards.

In response to a non-committee member's question, raised ahead of the meeting, the RFO advised the projection for the current year showed a budget surplus for varying reasons, some of which were not known when the budget was prepared in the autumn. Whilst most income for the year had been received, the second instalment of the precept having been paid in September 2023 there was here still a significant amount of expenditure for the year yet to be accounted for. This meant that the surplus of income over expenditure for the year would not be as large as a reading of the management accounts to 31 January 2024 might suggest; the surplus will be at or perhaps above the level we projected - £96,055 to reserves, £103,833 if you include a transfer from earmarked reserves to fund Corn Exchange work.

The RFO went on to state that with regard to the precept for 2024/25 the main driver of the precept was the budget requirement for that year, rather than that of the previous year. The Council had some very large projects ongoing, and the Capital expenditure budget was in excess of £1mi (gross), requiring £190K funding from council tax to deliver. Based on the projections during the budget cycle an additional £238K was required to fund total expenditure for 2024/25, over and above what would have been raised by freezing the council tax at £166.83 (Band D). The 2023/24 surplus and accumulated balances put the council in a favourable position and gave it choices. At the budget meeting in January a number of options for councillors had been presented to consider, ranging from a 0% increase, which would have required drawing £238K from reserves through to a 12.7% increase, which would have required no drawing from reserves. At the meeting one proposal was made, to increase by 6.1% to £177.00 and this was agreed by the Council. Whilst judgement of council tax levels was for members, it should be noted that 6.1% was the RPI as at October 2023 when the budget cycle was well-advanced and Members considered in the context that since the last increase in Council tax the RPI has increased by approximately 20%.

The Town Clerk also advised the Council had received a subscription invoice from the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils of £3,700. Which included the direct access service subscription to the National Association of Local Councils. The subscriptions were important as both organisations provided professional advice, training and more specifically for the town/parish council sector.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted.
2. That, the management accounts of the Committee services to 31 January 2024 be approved.
3. That, information regarding investment returns and sustainability of investments with the CCLA be noted.
4. That, the Council subscribes to OALC and NALC for the 2024/25 year.

The Committee received the report of the Deputy Town Clerk outlining the financial implications pertaining to recommendations of the Council's spending Committees.

The Head of Estates & Operations advised a ticket sales split for an event at the Corn Exchange in August had not been financially viable, so the event organiser would be charged under a Group 4 performance rate.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted.
2. That, the recommendations of the spending Committees be approved.

F167 **GRANTS & SUBSIDISED LETTINGS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk.

A grant request had been received from Madley Park Hall Trust for help towards running costs and for replacement internal doors. Although sympathetic, the Committee were aware of financial support the Council had provided in previous years and wanted to learn more about the financial issues they were encountering.

Subsidised letting requests for the Corn Exchange were received from Witney Photo Group and Thames Valley Police, the latter having already been recommended for agreement by the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee. Members agreed to both requests.

The Deputy Town Clerk also referred to a request received from Thames Valley Police asking for financial support towards hire of the Witney ATP during the summer. The Council's supported youth workers, The Station would be in attendance.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted.
2. That, Madley Park Hall Trust request be declined until representatives of the Council met with them to learn more about these issues. The Members selected for the meeting were Cllr R Crouch (Chair of Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments), Cllr R Smith (Leader of the Council), and the Town Clerk/C.E.O.
3. That, the recommendation of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee to provide subsidised hire to TVP to the value of £175 be noted.
4. That, Witney Photo Group be awarded subsidised hire of the Corn Exchange to the value of £374.
5. That, these amounts be awarded under the General Power of Competence.
6. That, the request for funding towards the hire of the ATP by TVP be refused and that they be signposted to other potential funding opportunities such as Better Leisure.

F168 **PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

The Committee received the report of the Responsible Financial Officer with the accompanying payment schedules, bank statements and reconciliations.

In response to a Member, the Town Clerk advised Officers had reviewed the Council’s banking details in recent years, but recognised the current banker was not considered by many as the most ethical option. It would be looked at again in due course.

The Town Clerk also updated the Committee on the position regarding the bank mandate renewal which was still proving problematic.

Resolved:

That, the report, bank statements and reconciliations be noted, and the following schedule of payments be approved:

Payment reference/ Cheque Numbers	In the sum of:	Account
Cheques 101231-101235, DDs and Standing Orders January 2024 – net excluding transfers	£61,610.95	General CB 1
Cheques 34498-34521, DDs and Standing Orders January 2024 – net including cancelled cheques	£165,852.44	Imprest CB 2

Cllr G Meadows Left the meeting at 7:10pm

F169 EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL CONTROL: CORPORATE & FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT 2023/24

Consideration was given to the report of the Responsible Financial Officer regarding the Risk Management Policy and Corporate & Financial Risk Assessment for 2023-24.

The Committee recognised that the risk assessment ensured the Council was complying with legislation and statute, good practice and Council procedures.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and
2. That, the Risk Management Policy & Corporate Risk Assessment for the financial year 2023-24 be endorsed and signed by the Chair.

F170 INTERNAL AUDIT - SECOND INTERIM REPORT 2023-24

The Committee considered the Interim Audit Report 2023-24 from the Council’s internal Auditors, Auditing Solutions Limited.

Members welcomed the report highlighting there were no areas of concern raised, and that recommendations in the last update had been completed.

The revised stocktake for the period October to December 2023 was considered and now included the income in relation to soft drinks. The RFO was of the opinion that the stocktake showed that income generated in the café/bar was as expected when compared with the purchases (net of stock) for the period.

Resolved:

1. That, the Interim Audit Report 2023-24 from the Council's internal auditors be noted.
2. That, the external stocktake report be noted.

Cllr G Meadows returned to the meeting at 7:16pm

F171 GRANT MONITORING REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk.

Members were pleased to see the reports and updates on the grants provided by the Council during the year which formed part of the Council's due diligence. There would be a further monitoring report later in the year for those organisations which were only awarded amounts at the last meeting.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

F172 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:

That, in accordance with section (1(2) of the Public Bodies (admission to Meetings) Act 1960, and as extended by Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the following business to be transacted.

F173 MAJOR STRATEGIC PROJECTS UPDATE

The Committee received and considered the confidential report of the Head of Estates and Operations.

Members were provided with an update on the Leys Splashpark and options on whether it would be available during the summer. The Committee was aware the Parks & Recreation Committee had resolved to close it for remedial and renovation works until 2025 so any work to bring it online had to be compatible with any future changes and should be completed by the last week of May at the latest for it to be financially viable.

Resolved:

1. That, the confidential report be noted.
2. That, work to open the Splash Park for the 2024 season be approved, subject to the cost, compatibility to future improvements is guaranteed, and that they could be completed by the last week in May.

3. That, delegation on the 2024 be given to the Head of Estates & Operations in line with the above conditions.

F174 **PROPERTY & LEGAL MATTERS**

The Committee received and considered the confidential report of the Town Clerk/C.E.O.

Members were updated on play area transfers and leases from West Oxfordshire District Council, lease negotiations with Council tenants and other updates on town council land and facilities. These included a change to temporary trading arrangements by Courtside CIC, a temporary Council work depot, Windrush Place Pavilion and pitches and a new MUSA/MUGA.

The Town Clerk advised the document was restricted as the items were under negotiation and the Council had no direct control over the items; while updates provided were correct and based on assumption at the time of writing, they could change and jeopardise their completion.

Resolved:

That, the confidential report be noted.

F175 **STAFFING MATTERS**

The Committee received and considered the confidential minutes of the Personnel Sub Committee meeting held on 18 March 2024.

Members also considered the report of the Town Clerk/ Chief Executive regarding Discretionary Policies under the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations. This had been deferred from the above meeting.

Under the LGPS the Council had a number of discretions which it may exercise, and which would result in enhanced benefits if exercised. The Council had to have policies regarding the exercise of these discretions, whether or not these discretions were actually exercised. The Council may also choose to adopt other policies for clarity.

Resolved:

1. That, the confidential minutes of the Personnel Sub Committee meetings held on 18 March January 2024 be noted, and the recommendations contained therein be approved.
2. That, the Council adopt Discretionary and related Policies under the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations, as detailed in the report of the Town Clerk/ Chief Executive.

The meeting closed at: 7.47 pm

Chair




WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Grant-aid to Local Organisations APPLICATION FORM

(PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM IN BLOCK CAPITALS)

(1) Your Organisation			
Name of Organisation	Raising funds on behalf of Oxfordshire Mind and Bridewell Gardens Mental Health Recovery		
Registered Address*	N/A		
Post Code		Tel No.	
Contact Name	Adrian Phillips – external fundraiser		
Position in Organisation	N/A <small>(i.e. Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary)</small>		
Registered Charity	YES	Registration No.	Mind 261475 Bridewell 1158456
Charity Quiz Fri 14 June at The Corn Exchange Witney			
(2) Membership			
How many members do you have?	N/A		
Approximately how many of your members live in Witney?	N/A		
Is membership restricted in any way?	N/A		
What is your annual subscription, if any?	N/A		
Are you affiliated to a national organisation? If so, which one?	N/A		

Local venue/meeting place	N/A
(3) Grants	
To cover the costs of hiring the Corn Exchange	
Amount of grant applied for	£257.00 £187.50 – hire, £19.50 PLI, £50.00 Bar
Has your organisation previously applied to the Town Council for a grant?	NO
If YES please give details	
Have you applied for a grant to any other body or organisation?	NO
If YES please give details	
(4) Financial	
<i>Please enclose a copy of your latest audited accounts, a financial projection for the period following the balance sheet or a Business Plan if a new organisation. N/A</i>	
(5) Fundraising	
See (1) and (3)	
(6) General	
Recipients of a grant from the Town Council should acknowledge the fact on all relevant literature.	
Please provide or attach any additional information which may assist the Council in reaching its decision.	
<i>I certify that the above information is true to the best of my knowledge and belief, and that I am authorised to make this application for Grant-aid.</i>	
Signed: 	Date: 08/04/2024

For office use only:			
Acknowledged		Previously Applied	
Grant Aid Awarded/Amount	Y / N	Chq No.	

FULL COUNCIL

Date: 15 April 2024

Title: Civic Announcements

Contact Officer: Secretary to the Mayor – Loraine Harwood

The role of Mayor involves chairing the Town Council, sitting as an ex officio voting member on council committees, representing and promoting Witney, organising key events in the town in partnership with others, raising funds for local charities, and supporting community activities which contribute to the life of the town and the objectives of the Witney Town Council. The Mayor is supported by the Deputy Mayor, whose attendance in place of or alongside the Mayor is noted in the report below.

This is a regular report to each full council meeting, detailing the activities of the Mayor since the last meeting.

SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY

Meeting to set up WCSS Friends' Association
WCSS hairdressing salon opening ceremony
World Book Day – Madley Park Primary School
Fundraising Ball for Witney Music Festival – Witney Lakes
Insect safari award for 2023 Witney Brownies
CloudKubed new office opening ceremony
Guest DJ WMF silent disco – Fat Lils
Rotary fundraising male voice choir – Methodist Church
Support the Food Bank evening – Bella Italia Marriotts Walk
Visit to sixth form at Henry Box school

REPRESENTING and PROMOTING WITNEY

Henley Civic Service – attended by Deputy Mayor
Twinning Association AGM
'Mumma Mayor' fundraising event in support of Thame mayor

KEY EVENTS AND COUNCIL ACTIVITY

Civic Reception – Corn Exchange
Commonwealth Day flag raising
Opening of the Wheeled Sports Park – The Leys

RAISING FUNDS

Mayor's second Quiz Night March 24 – £612
Rotary Club Fire Walk – Carterton

Mayor's Charities 2023-24:

APCAM
Yellow Submarine
Prepared by: ***Clr Owen Collins and Loraine Harwood***

FULL COUNCIL

Date: Monday, 15 April 2024
Title: Corn Exchange Safety & Security
Contact Officer: Venue & Events Officer

Background

The purpose of this report is to demonstrate action that can be taken to provide improved security at the Corn Exchange for Witney Town Council staff and hirers of the Gallery Room and Main Hall. There is also the benefit of reducing the risk of damage and theft from the premises.

Current Situation

The Council has a duty of care to advise and assess risk for employees who work by themselves under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.

Whilst most employees work in pairs or teams, Caretaking staff within the public halls working outside of office hours are often lone working. In the Corn Exchange there are often periods where there are groups using either the Gallery Room or the Main Hall outside of office hours where there is no café staff or WTC Officers present.

There are instances where there is a need for a Caretaker to be on site to add security for the groups attending a booking in either the Main Hall or the Gallery Room. The security of the people hiring the hall is paramount, and there have been instances where public have entered the Corn Exchange that has ramifications when considering fire safety regulations as well as offering peace of mind to the groups hiring that the hall/room is a secure and safe space.

An example of the type of antisocial behaviour is where there have been several incidents in the Corn Exchange recently which involved three young people accessing both the ladies and gents' toilets and squirting hand soap on the floors, mirrors and wash basin. This resulted in the toilets having to be closed because it was a risk to hall users from slipping over as the floor had been made very slippery. This causes the Caretaker concern and stress as well as potentially upsetting people attending the hiring group.

Currently this results in a Caretaker being present on shift for the duration of hirers bookings to deter this antisocial behaviour and provide a point of contact for the groups. This is not an

ideal situation as this is not always the best use of a caretaker's time. Bookings last an average of four hours and the associated payroll cost for staff to be on site would be based on an approximate Town Council expense of £48.

The Project Officer and Venue and Events Officer have researched options and propose the installation of maglocks to be fitted on the front doors of the Corn Exchange. This in turn would provide the security to the building without the need for someone to wait downstairs until the booking has finished. The caretaker would still meet the group and return at the end of the booking and be contactable via mobile during this time. Note that when the Caretaker has left people will be able to exit the building through the main entrance door via a push button to release the lock, however, they would have to be let back into the building by the hirers.

The cost of the proposed mag lock system to the main Corn Exchange entrance door would be £1321.00 ex VAT. The mag lock would pay for itself within 37 bookings (a caretaker would still need to meet and greet and then return and lock up). The Corn Exchange regularly hosts a minimum of 4 evening bookings a week with more at different times, meaning that the new security mag lock system will have a payback period of just 10 weeks.

The funding for this would come out of the allocated 4038/104 budget line where the RFO has confirmed remains at £4k (2023/24).

An estimated saving on staff time of over £5,000 per annum is anticipated.

Environmental impact

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

Risk

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

As mentioned above, the Council does have a duty of care under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 for its employees. With an increase in these incidents occurring, measures need to be taken to mitigate any impact on staff wellbeing and interrupting meetings/hirings.

Financial implications

The cost of the purchase and installation of the mag lock system detailed in the quote found in Appendix 1.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and the situation around safety and security in the Corn Exchange and approve the installation of a mag lock security system to the main door entrance.

Document is Restricted

Anti-Social Behaviour / Vandalism

20.02.2024 to 15.04.2024

Date	Item/Location	Date/Time/Who Reported	Cost if known	Action	Police Reference
20.02.24	Children on Roof of Burwell Hall		N/A	Removed by Venue & Events Officer Coincidentally loss of Wi-Fi occurred	
24.02.2024	2 Trailers stolen from Leys Depot	25.02.2024	£14,000	Reported to TVP(investigation now Closed) Insurance Claim made by RFO	SP3302224434300
04.04.2024	The "Bear" Bin at the Leys – Vandalised	04.04.2024	£550	Bin removed and replaced with new bin.	
04.04.2024	Bus Garage, Corn Street bus stop - graffitied	04.04.2024	£60	Cleaned by Works Team	
10.04.2024	Window of Lily's Attic Smashed – Premises forms part of WTC Estate.	10.04.2024		WTC assistance provided to tenant.	

Date: 29 February 2024
OCC ref: R3.0142/23

Mrs Groth
Clerk to Witney Town Council
Witney Town Council
Town Hall
Market Square
Witney
OX28 6AG

Environment and Place
County Hall
New Road
Oxford
OX1 1ND

Rachel Wileman
Director of Planning,
Environment and Climate
Change

Dear Mrs Groth

Section 73 for Oxfordshire County Council County Hall, New Road, Oxford, OX1 1ND for: Section 73 to continue the development permitted by R3.0039/22 (construction of two new west-facing slip roads at the Shores Green junction of the A40; an off-slip to allow eastbound vehicles to exit the A40 on to the B4022 towards Witney and an on-slip to allow westbound vehicles to enter the A40 from the B4022 at this junction. Two existing lay-bys to the west of the A40 overbridge will be removed to accommodate the construction of the slip roads) without complying with conditions 1 and 18 in order to replace a proposed shared-use path with a footway, merge two balancing ponds into one, re-align a drainage ditch, extend the highway boundary and make amendments to the landscaping scheme to include additional planting at A40/B4022 Shores Green Junction

The Section 73 has now been approved for the above development.

Please click on the link to view the details:

<https://myeplanning2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Planning/Display/R3.0142/23?cuuid=04D78954-CE5F-4C60-9A0F-5888B2731B21>

Yours sincerely

Anna Herriman

Anna Herriman
Senior Planner

Direct line: 07990 368235

Email: Anna.Herriman@Oxfordshire.gov.uk
www.oxfordshire.gov.uk

creating a better place
for people and wildlife



Town Clerk
Witney Town Council
Town Hall
Market Square
WITNEY
OX28 6AG

Our ref: EM2220.000
Your ref: W 01/1026
Date: 29 February 2024

Dear Witney Town Council

Thames Valley Flood Scheme

Your Property: Witney Lake & Country Park

Land Registry title no(s): ON123730

I am writing to let you know about a project the Environment Agency is leading to reduce flood risk throughout the Thames Valley. The project, called Thames Valley Flood Scheme, is investigating flood storage options in the vicinity of land or property that you own.

We wish to ensure those who own land or use property in these locations are aware of our work, so they can engage with us and share local knowledge to help shape the project. Your above-named property is within the vicinity of one of these areas.

What could the Thames Valley Flood Scheme do?

One of the Environment Agency's functions is to manage the risk of flooding from main rivers. As the climate changes we are expecting more intense rainfall with more frequent and severe flooding. We need to look at how we can better slow the flow of water and create more space for water upstream of communities at risk of flooding. This will reduce flood risk downstream of these areas.

With support from a range of organisations, we are in the early stages of developing the Thames Valley Flood Scheme. We have found formal flood storage supported by natural flood management could work at a large scale to reduce flood risk and improve the environment across the Thames Valley. To date we have identified 17 locations that might be suitable to store flood water to reduce flooding to communities.

These locations are all centred around areas of existing floodplain. We would look to hold water back by temporarily increasing the depth, duration, extent and/or frequency of flooding in these areas, to reduce flooding downstream.

How can I find out more?

I enclose our latest newsletter about the Thames Valley Flood Scheme, which provides further details. This includes an explanation of how we have identified the locations for further investigation and maps of these areas. You can also find out more about the project

customer service line 03708 506 506
[gov.uk/environment-agency](https://www.gov.uk/environment-agency)

by visiting <https://engageenvironmentagency.uk.engagementhq.com/hub-page/thames-valley> and view our short videos explaining the scheme.

When can I give my view?

We will be asking for your input later this year, after we have carried out some more studies into the suitability of these 17 locations. During the next phase of work, we will be refining the precise extent of these locations. It is also likely that we will reduce the number that we are investigating.

What happens next?

The project is at an early stage. As with any large project, it will go through a series of approvals and will need funding from government and partners for each stage. We expect this stage of the project to take about 2 years. At the end of this, the project would require further funding and approvals to proceed. Beyond this, project timescales are difficult to predict as our findings will influence the direction of the project.

Stay in touch

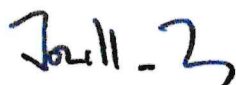
I would be grateful if you would provide an email address which we can use to keep you informed about this project as it develops by emailing us at **TVFS@environment-agency.gov.uk**, or by writing to: **Thames Valley Flood Scheme, Environment Agency, Kings Meadow House, Kings Meadow Road, Reading, RG1 8DQ**. If you would like to receive our electronic newsletter, please state this when you contact us, and we will add you to our mailing list. This will give you an opportunity to keep up to date and help shape the future of the project.

Please use these contact details if you have any questions that are not answered on the enclosed newsletter or on the project website. If your neighbours or tenants would like to be kept informed, please ask them to contact us so we can update them directly.

We are also keeping a range of organisations informed, including the National Farmers Union (NFU), Country Land and Business Association (CLA), and farmer cluster groups (Ock catchment and North-East Cotswold Farmer Cluster). They would welcome any questions or discussions around the scheme.

Finally, I would like to reassure you that we will not share any personal information with anyone else without your explicit consent, unless we are required to do so by law. Please see our enclosed privacy notice.

Yours sincerely



Jonathan Young FRICS FAAV

Senior Estates Surveyor (South-West & Thames Hub)

Privacy notice

Controller and Data Protection Officer contact details:

The Environment Agency is the controller for the personal data we process under the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA 2018). Our contact details are available on GOV.UK. Our personal information charter explains:

- how to contact our Data Protection Officer
- what we do with your personal information (personal data) in general
- your rights and how to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office

Why we may process your personal data:

Our purpose for processing your personal data is to be able to inform you about any work relating to investigating land for flood storage in or near a property or land that you own. The lawful basis we rely on to process your personal data is article 6(1)(e) of the UK GDPR, which allows us to process personal data when this is necessary to exercise our official authority.

What personal data we process and how we use it:

We have used Land Registry and other investigations to obtain your name and address. We use your personal data to provide you with updates where they relate to any investigations into potential for floodwater storage for Thames Valley Flood Scheme in the vicinity of land that you own or have an interest in. We do not share your personal data with any other party without your consent unless we are required or permitted to do so by law.

Where your personal information is stored and processed:

We store and process your personal data in the UK.

How long we keep your personal data:

We keep your personal data for as long as we need to contact you in relation to the Thames Valley Flood Scheme.

Changes to this notice:

We may change this privacy notice. Any changes to this privacy notice will apply to you and your data immediately. If these changes affect how your personal data is processed, we will take reasonable steps to let you know.



Thames Valley Flood Scheme

February 2024 project update

In this issue

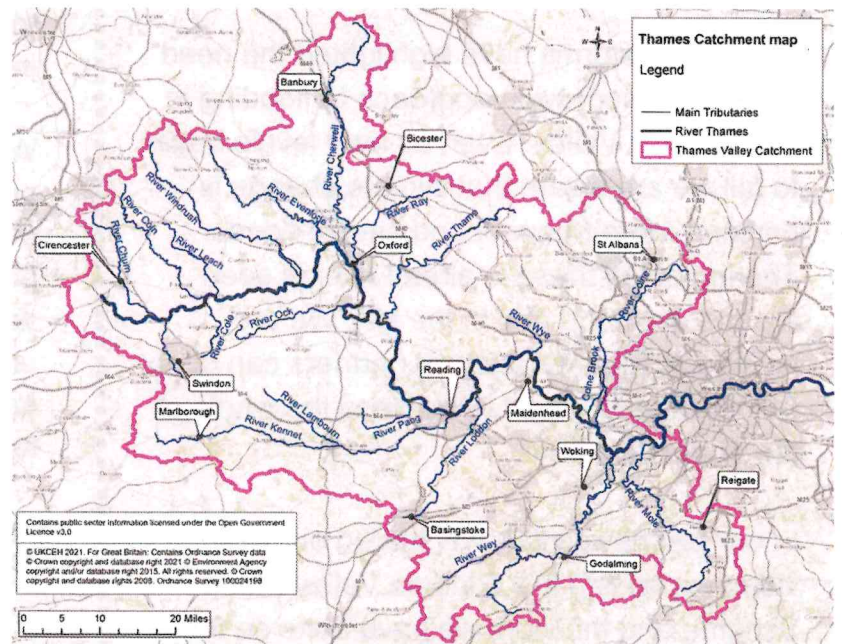
Page 2
Project Director's update

Page 3
Flood storage progress

Page 7
Natural flood management



The Thames Valley Flood Scheme is investigating ways to manage flood risk on a large scale across the Thames Valley. It aims to reduce flood risk and build climate resilience for communities, businesses and infrastructure. We aim to work in partnership to deliver a wide range of environmental and other benefits, supporting people and wildlife in the Thames Valley to thrive throughout the rest of this century and beyond. The project remains in its early stages, and will need to pass approvals and gain further funding to continue to progress.



Catchment map of the Thames Valley Flood Scheme area

Reducing flood risk and enhancing the Thames Valley



Welcome to the Thames Valley Flood Scheme newsletter



I would like to welcome both new and existing readers to the first Thames Valley Flood Scheme newsletter of 2024.

At the Environment Agency we work alongside partners to support communities to manage their flood risk. Our role is to manage the risk of flooding from main rivers. We achieve this in a range of ways, including developing flood alleviation schemes to reduce the likelihood and impact of flooding for thousands of people throughout the Thames Valley. Despite this work, many communities remain at risk of flooding. Whilst it's not possible to protect all properties from flooding, we are looking at ways to reduce it further in the coming years.

The recent storms have highlighted the need for a catchment-wide approach to flooding in the Thames Valley. Even as river levels begin to fall we are aware that climate change is bringing more frequent and severe floods. The impact of these is already being seen around the world and in the UK. We are looking at what we and our partners can do to further manage flood risk across the whole of the Thames Valley.

In our last newsletter, we shared our new video explaining the Thames Valley Flood Scheme and the work we have done so far. I hope you have enjoyed the video, and if you haven't had a chance to watch it yet you can find it on our website.

In this edition, I am happy to share updates from our recent work to identify flood storage areas for further investigation. We began the search with over 700 potential areas, carefully considering a range of factors to narrow down the locations. We have now identified 17 areas for further investigation to establish if they could be used to store floodwater.

In this newsletter, you can read more about how we narrowed down the number of sites and look at maps showing the locations we identified at each step.

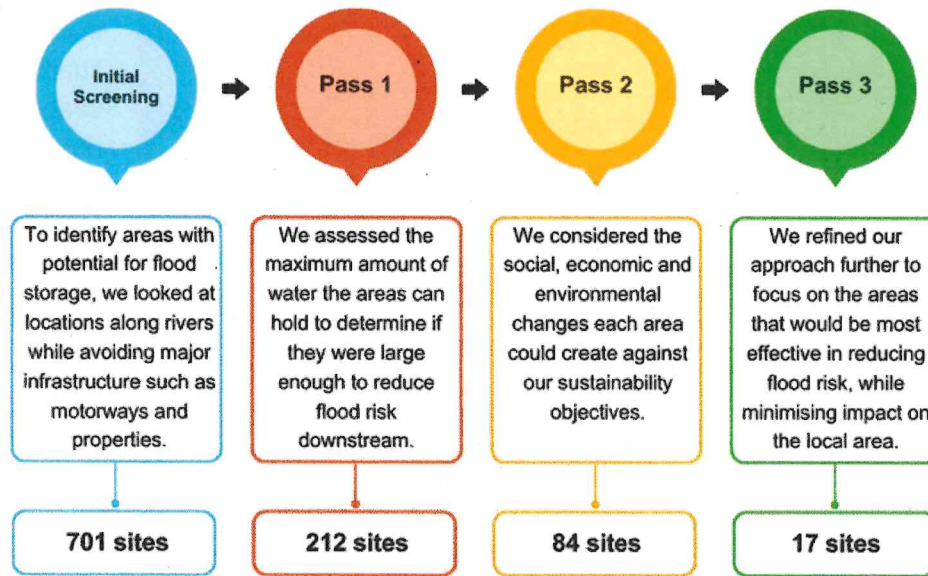
I would like to stress that we are in an early stage of investigation. We expect to continue to reduce the number of locations we are investigating as we identify site constraints.

We are keen to include local knowledge in our plans. When we have greater certainty over which locations have the technical potential to reduce flood risk, we will ask for your input. This information will help us understand the risks and opportunities for each location as we progress the project further.

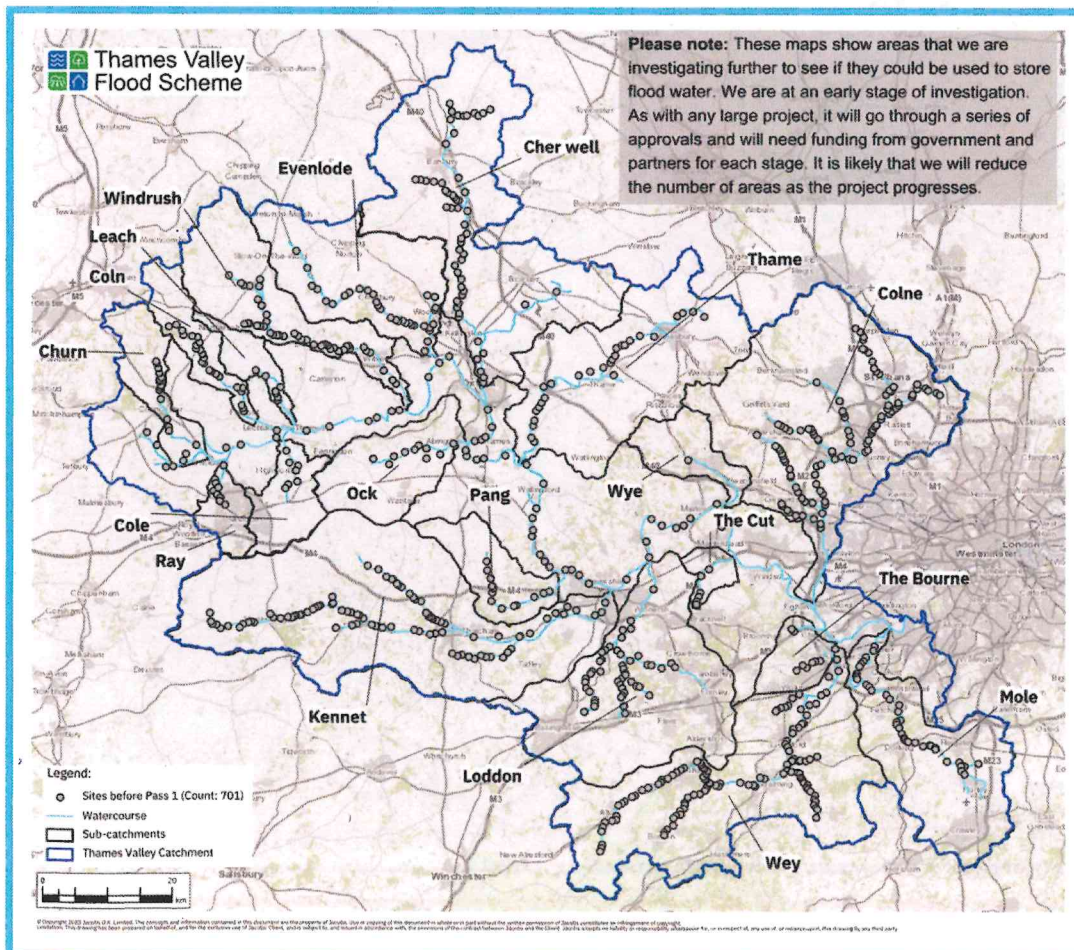
Joe Cuthbertson
Project Director

Flood storage progress

As part of the Thames Valley Flood Scheme, the project team has been identifying areas that could be used to store floodwater to reduce flood risk across the Thames Valley. We have looked at the whole catchment of the non-tidal section of the River Thames. This area is shown on the map on Page 1. We used a 3 pass approach to assess over 700 potential locations for flood storage, narrowing down the locations to 17 for further investigation. Our 3 pass approach is illustrated below, and you can read our report for more information on the process of site selection on our website.

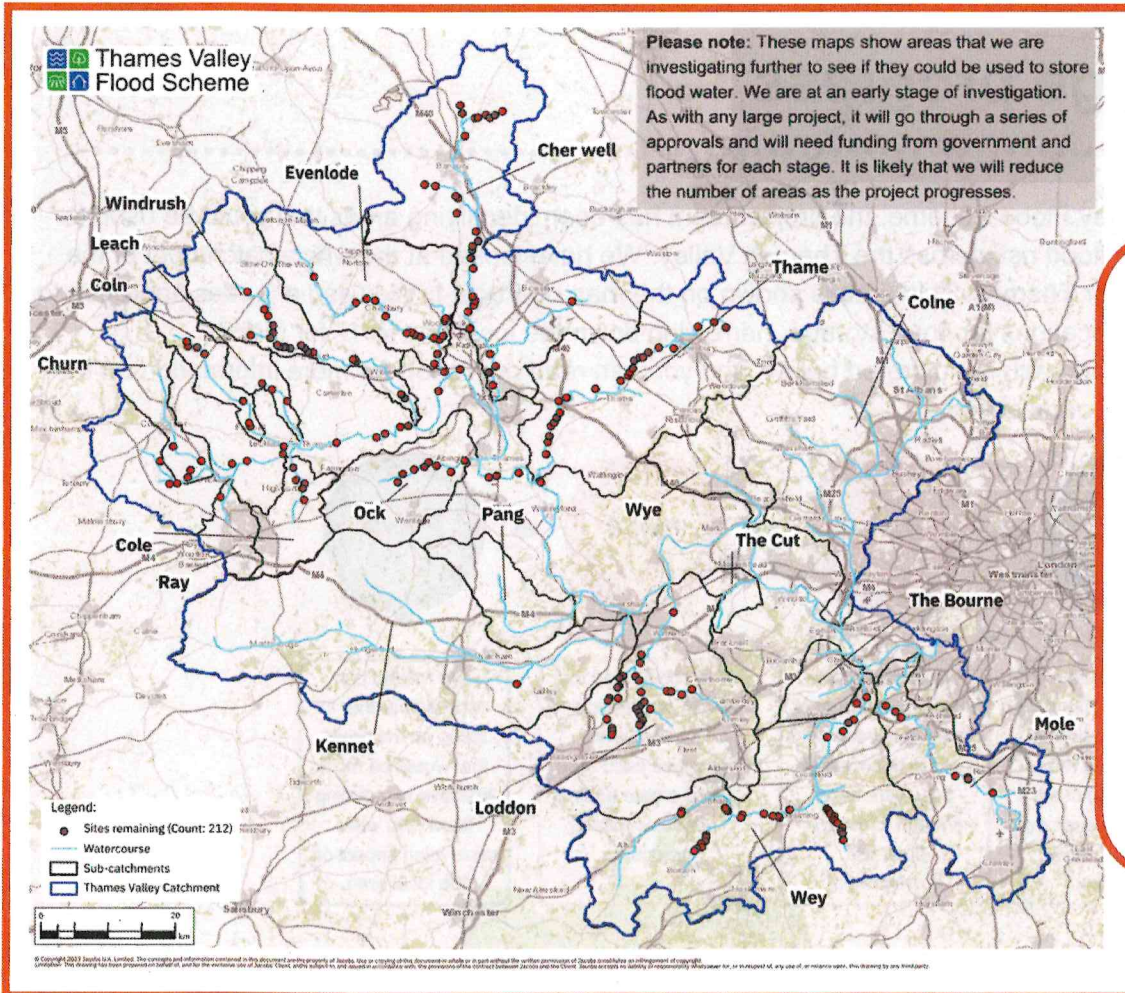


Flood storage areas for further investigation



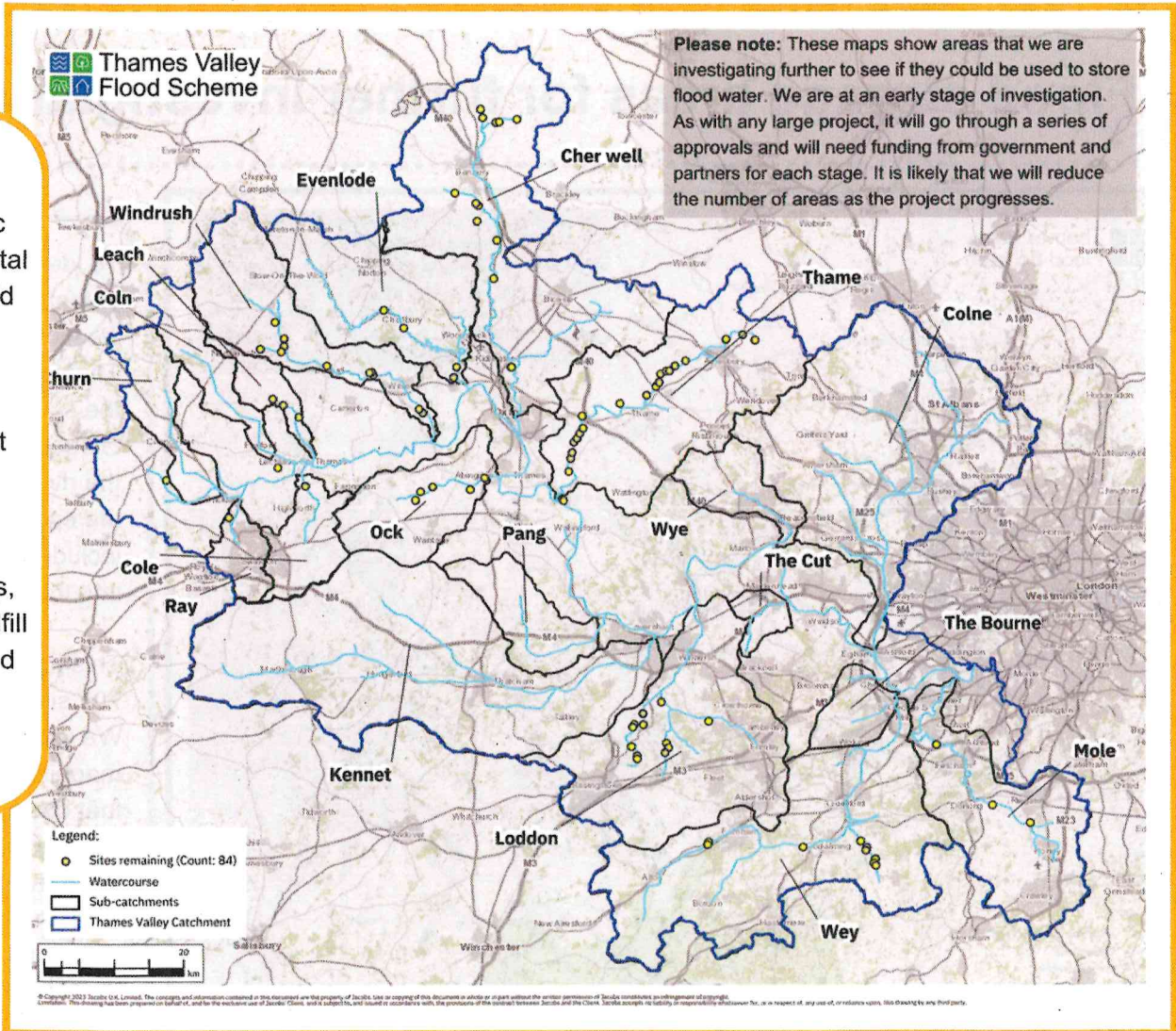
To identify areas with potential for flood storage, we looked across the River Thames catchment from the source of the river in Gloucestershire to where the river becomes tidal on the edge of London. This includes all rivers that flow into the Thames.

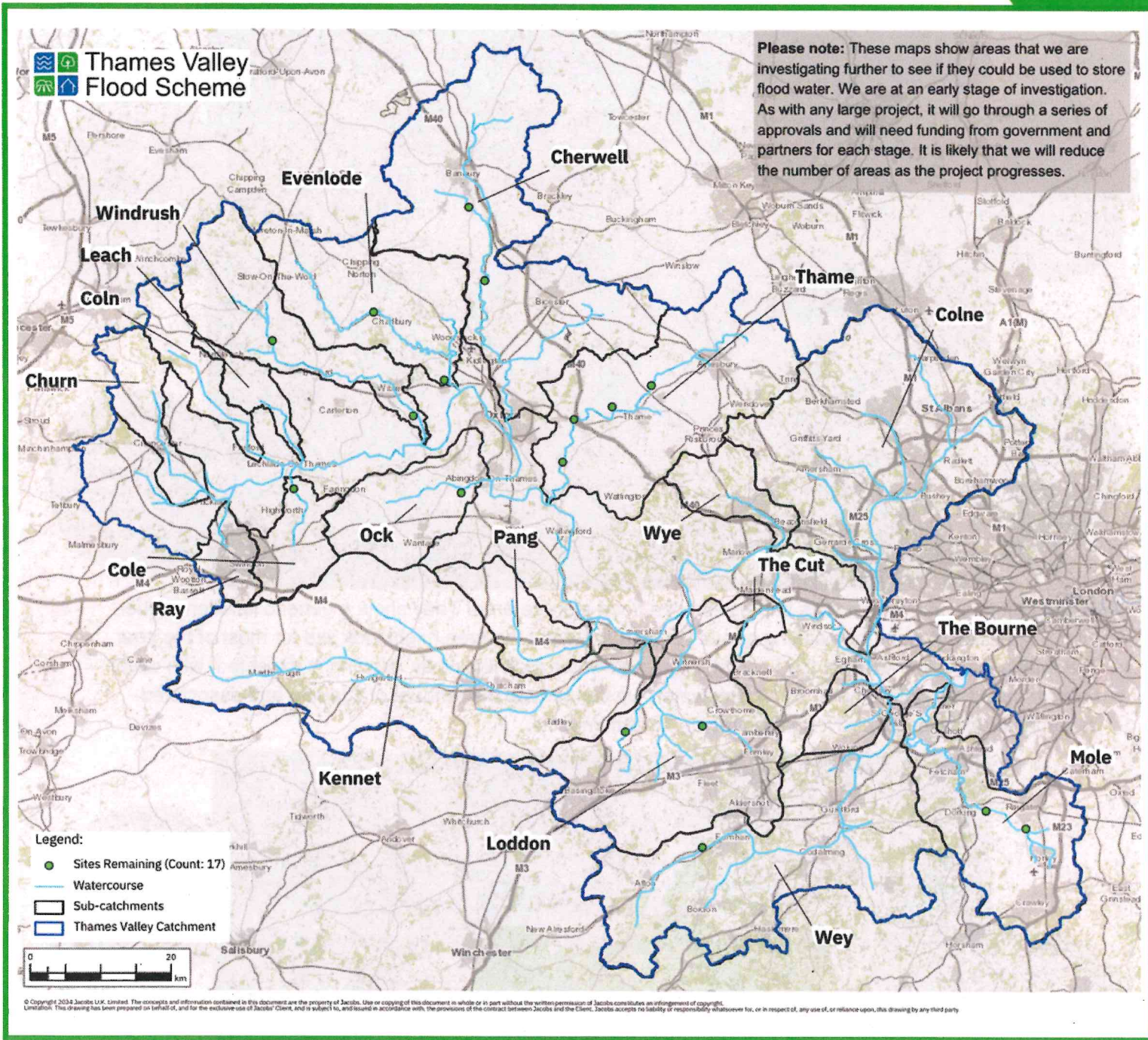
This map shows the initial 701 sites that we assessed. We used computer mapping to identify areas that could be used to store large volumes of water while avoiding major infrastructure and communities.



At the Pass 1 stage we removed any locations which were not suitable for storing water, such as areas of chalk outcrop and spaces that were not large enough. This resulted in us removing 489 sites from consideration, leaving us with 212 sites to investigate further.

For Pass 2, we considered the social, economic and environmental benefits we could create in each area. We also assessed the locations against sustainability criteria, such as wildlife habitats, heritage features, and historic landfill sites. This helped us narrow down our list to 84 possible sites.

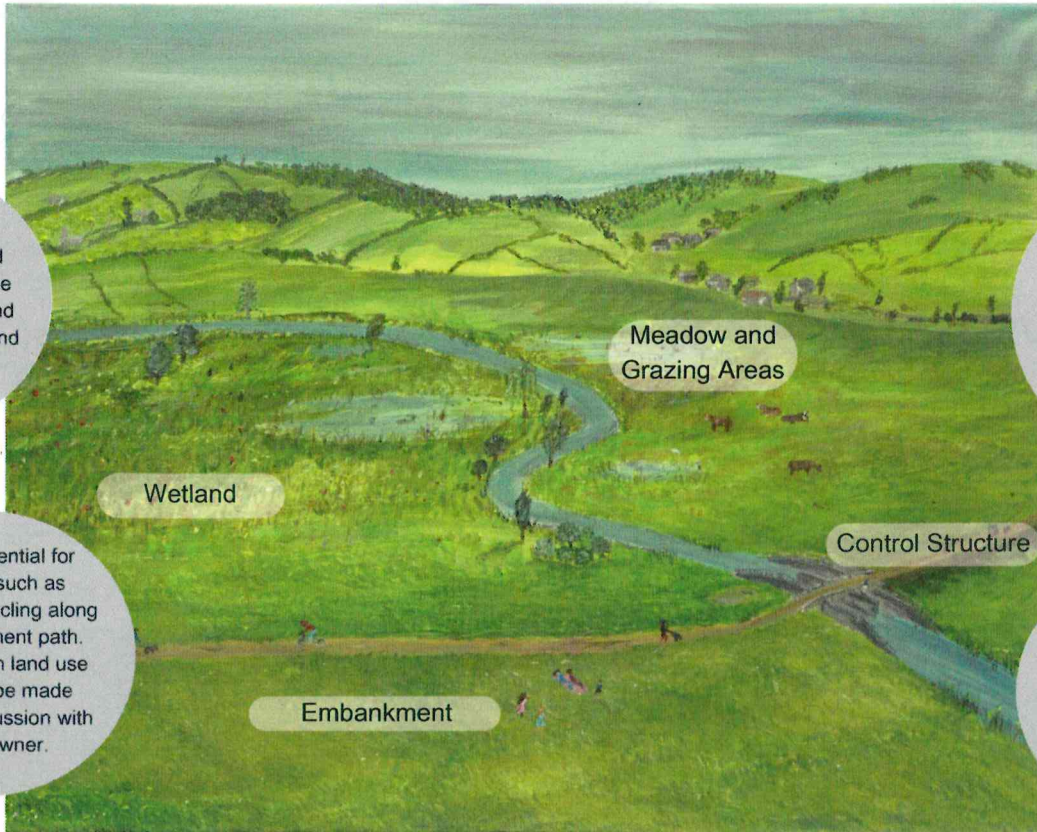




Finally, we looked further at minimising the impact on residential properties. We also reviewed the size of flood storage that would be possible in each location. As each location has different factors impacting them, we carried out a variety of assessments for each site to understand how we could most effectively reduce flood risk. We now have a list of 17 areas for further investigation.

Flood storage artist impressions

This example shows improved connectivity to the floodplain, wetland habitat creation and recreation.



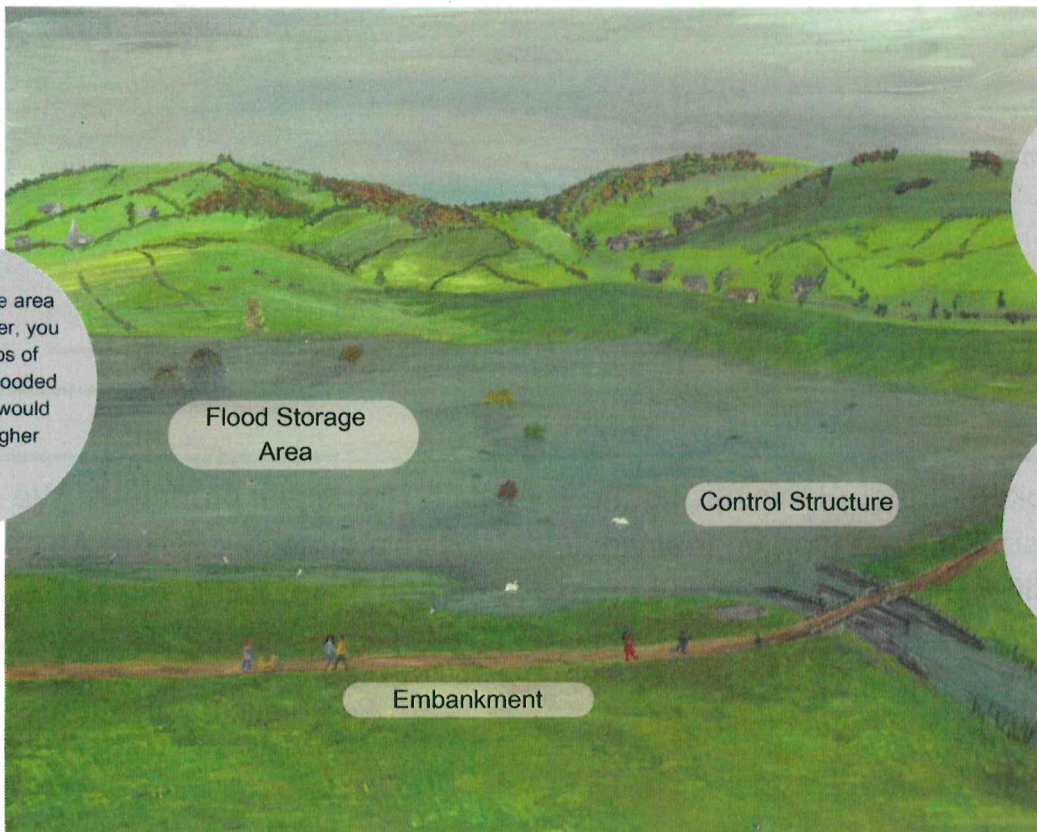
Existing agricultural use could be maintained or adapted, depending on landowner requirements.

There is potential for recreation such as walking and cycling along the embankment path. Any change in land use would only be made following discussion with the landowner.

The embankment grass may be kept short to allow for inspections.

These paintings show an artist's impression of a flood storage area. They show a generic location, rather than a specific place. In the painting above you can see what the area might look like for most of the year. The image below shows what the flood storage area would look like when flooding is expected, with water being temporarily stored there. By storing water, we can reduce the amount of flooding and associated damage, financial costs and long term mental health impacts.

The flood storage area holding back water, you can see the tops of trees within the flooded area. Livestock would be moved to higher ground.



Properties shown being protected from flooding by raised embankment.

The control structure will be an engineered structure and would be designed specifically for each area. These may vary from this example.

Natural Flood Management

The Environment Agency and partner organisations have delivered many natural flood management projects across the Thames Valley, with others still in progress.

There are numerous benefits of natural flood management. It can bring local flood risk benefits, improve water quality, and reduce the impacts of drought as well as improving the natural habitat.

The Thames Valley Flood Scheme is looking to reduce flood risk on a large scale. While the evidence to date shows that natural flood management works well to manage flood risk locally, the size of this project means that large scale flood storage is needed to meet the project aims. Therefore, we are assessing how natural flood management can be used in combination with flood storage as part of the scheme.



Please view our website to find out more about our work on natural flood management.


Next steps

We will continue to look more closely into the 17 sites we have identified for further investigation. As part of this work, we will carry out more detailed modelling on each site to see what flood risk benefits each could provide, both on their own and when combined together with other sites.

When we have completed this work we are likely to have a shorter list of areas to investigate. At this stage we will seek feedback to learn more about these individual locations. We will use this information along with technical findings and sustainability information to establish whether this project would deliver the flood risk benefits needed at a catchment scale to bring long term flood risk benefits to the Thames Valley.


Contact the team

There are many ways you can stay up to date with the Thames Valley Flood Scheme or contact the team to ask questions or provide comments

 <https://engageenvironmentagency.uk/engagementhq.com/hub-page/thames-valley>

 TVFS@environment-agency.gov.uk

 [@TVFloodScheme](https://twitter.com/TVFloodScheme)

 [ThamesValleyFloodScheme](https://www.facebook.com/ThamesValleyFloodScheme)



From: AreaDirectorThames

Sent: Thursday, March 28, 2024 5:43 PM

Subject: River Windrush Flood Alleviation Works, Witney- THMCU21369_CT24796

Dear Mr Clapton,

Thank you for your letter of 21 February 2024, addressed to Caroline Douglass, regarding the River Windrush. Caroline has read your letter and asked me to respond on her behalf. Caroline will receive a copy of this response and I apologise for not being able to respond sooner.

I am grateful to you for bringing this important matter to my attention and I understand the concerns of many communities who are now affected by more frequent flooding.

We are not responsible for main river watercourse maintenance in England. We do, however, use our permissive powers and Defra grant on aid to undertake certain activities on behalf of riparian landowners, who remain legally responsible for all maintenance along the watercourse they own. Riparian landowners are expected to maintain their watercourse in an appropriate, responsible manner that does not increase the flood risk of others. This includes, but is not limited to, the control of in-channel vegetation and sediment accumulations, the repair of banks and the removal of any blockages. Riparian landowners are also expected to operate and maintain structures such as culverts, bridges, weirs and sluices in a similarly responsible manner. Further information relating to riparian responsibilities can be found [here](#).

We invest the funding received from Defra in the highest flood risk areas for the benefit of the wider community. Our work along the River Windrush normally consists of in-channel weed cutting, the cutting back of marginal vegetation and the removal of blockages such as fallen trees. This is subject to change depending on in-year priorities and the level of funding we receive. My operational staff are currently preparing our programme for 2024-2025 and expect the River Windrush to be visited in August 2024. Any work we undertake does not reduce or remove the riparian landowner's responsibilities.

We are aware of silt accumulating near the bridge that you have identified, but do not have any current plans to remove it due to the limitations in our available resource. The riparian landowner or bridge owner could undertake this work as long as they obtained an environmental permit from our regulatory team. This team would be happy to advise on how to progress an application and more information on this can be found [here](#).

My local flood risk management team wrote to riparian landowners along the River Windrush in August 2023 to remind them of their responsibilities regarding watercourse maintenance. This included the offer of self-help advice, which we are still happy to provide if that would be helpful.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at areadirectorthames@environment-agency.gov.uk if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,

Colin Chiverton
Acting on behalf of Anna Burns
Area Director Thames
Environment Agency

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