

Full Council

Meeting of Witney Town Council

Monday, 28th July, 2025 at 7.00 pm



To members of the Full Council - A Bailey, J Doughty, O Collins, G Meadows, J Aitman, T Ashby, D Enright, R Smith, D Temple, A Mubin, R Crouch, G 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 - 16)

To approve and adopt the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 23 June 2025 in accordance with Standing Order 26 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 23 June and 22 July 2025, and agree the RECOMMENDATIONS contained therein.

a) **Planning & Development Committee - 24 June & 15 July 2025** (Pages 17 - 28)

b) **Parks & Recreation Committee - 30 June 2025** (Pages 29 - 32)

c) **Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee - 7 July 2025** (Pages 33 - 36)

d) **Stronger Communities Committee - 14 July 2025** (Pages 37 - 42)

e) **Policy, Governance & Finance Committee - 21 July 2025 (and 23 June 2025)** (Pages 43 - 56)

The minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee held on 23 June 2025 are included for information. The recommendations were presented verbally and approved at the Council meeting held on 23 June 2025.

f) **Climate Action Working Party - 22 July 2025** (Pages 57 - 60)

To receive recommendations from this Working Party for adoption and further development during the summer recess.

9. **Civic Announcements** (Page 61)

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

10. **Health & Safety** (Pages 62 - 66)

To receive an update from Officers on health and safety items.

11. **Vandalism & Anti Social Behaviour** (Page 67)

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

12. **Committee Appointments & Representation on Outside Organisations** (Pages 68 - 70)

To receive and consider the report of the Deputy Town Clerk.

13. **Future Plans for Witney**

Members are asked to consider how the following plans align, with a view to submitting a final response to the Local Plan 2041 consultation on behalf of Witney Town Council.

a) **Witney Town Council Strategic Plan** (Pages 71 - 94)

To receive the draft Strategic Plan as discussed at the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting on 21 July 2025; and

b) **West Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan 2041** (Pages 95 - 98)

To receive the draft consultation response as recommended by the Planning & Development Committee at its meeting on 15 July 2025 and incorporating additional recommendations of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting of 21 July 2025 and,

c) **Witney Oxford Transport Group**

Integrating Rail Infrastructure in Oxfordshire Development Plans

[WOT's response to WODC on the recent consultation](#)

14. **Future of Local Government in Oxfordshire**

To receive a verbal update from Officers as appropriate.

15. **A40 Barnard Gate Junctions - Experimental TRO** (Pages 99 - 100)

To receive notice of an initial consultation from Oxfordshire County Council regarding an Experimental on the A40.

16. **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.

17. **Correspondence**

To receive any correspondence received (if applicable).

a) **Part-Night Lighting Consultation - Oxfordshire County Council** (Page 101)

To receive notice of an Oxfordshire County Council consultation on part night-time lighting. As the Council passed a motion requesting lights remain on in Witney at its meeting held on 17th February 2025, this is for information only.

b) **Police & Crime Commissioner - Newsletters**

To receive the June & July newsletters from the Thames Valley Police, Police & Crime Commissioner.

[June Newsletter](#)

[July Newsletter](#)

18. **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 22.

19. **Sealing of Documents**

To receive details of documents sealed by the Council (If applicable).



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.

**MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 23 June 2025

At 7.05 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor A Bailey (Chair)

Councillors:	J Doughty	R Crouch
	G Meadows	G Doughty
	J Aitman	D Edwards-Hughes
	T Ashby	D Newcombe
	D Enright	J Robertshaw
	R Smith	S Simpson
	D Temple	J Treloar
	A Mubin	
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Nigel Warner	Responsible Financial Officer
Others:	One member of the public.	

349 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Cllr O Collins.

350 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors J Doughty, R Crouch, J Aitman, R Smith, J Robertshaw, T Ashby and D Enright declared a Pecuniary interest in Agenda item 19 – Future of Local Government in Oxfordshire owing to them being an elected Member of either West Oxfordshire District Council or Oxfordshire County Council or both, receiving remuneration.

There were no other declarations from Members or Officers

351 MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 7 May 2025 were received.

Minute 254 – Cllr T Ashby was not appointed a member of the Disciplinary & Grievance Panel; a correction was therefore requested to update the minute.

Resolved:

1. That, a correction be made to remove Cllr Ashby from the Disciplinary & Grievance Panel
2. That, the minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 7 May 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meetings and be signed by the Chair.

352 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Committee adjourned for this item.

The Committee received representations from a resident of Corn Street concerning Agenda Item 5.

The resident was concerned about the speed and noise from motorcycles around the town, in particular at Corn Street and Church Green. An accident had occurred recently at the junction of Holloway Road and Corn Street and the resident believed speed to be a contributing factor.

The Committee reconvened.

353 **WITNEY COMMUNITY POLICING ISSUES**

The Council heard from Inspector C Ball who first acknowledged the issues of bikes in the town however, explained that it was difficult to bring prosecution as the noise caused was not illegal and in terms of speeding this would need to be evidenced. He explained that the police's focus was targeted on the bigger issue of illegal e-bikes. Seizures of three bikes had recently taken place and he hoped more would follow.

Additionally, he advised that Officers had been targeting the town's highest rated problem makers with regular intervention to disrupt their activities, this included visits to their homes to reduce the possibility of anti-social activity.

He also updated members of plans for the summer when TVP would be working in conjunction with The Station to engage with young people. He hoped that this would be a successful venture as it was in 2024.

A presentation of the Pony & Trap racing on the A40 dual carriageway was provided to the Council which includes videos and images of the activity. TVP had considered the options available to them to discourage the use and were in the process of considering an application for a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) which would prohibit the use of the A40 for racing.

The Council welcomed this approach and agreed unanimously, with the exemption of one abstention, to support a PSPO.

Members raised questions regarding issues of drug dealing, illegal use of e-scooters and harassment of residents of the Witney Hotel. In response Insp Ball advised that a number of arrests had taken place in relation to drug offences as well as engagement with users of e-scooters. He was not aware of the incident at the hotel and would further look into this following the meeting.

Resolved:

1. That, the verbal update be noted and,

2. That, the Council supports the PSPO when the formal consultation commences.

Inspector Ball and the member of the public left the meeting at 7:34pm

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

West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC)

Cllr D Enright provided updates on the launch of a **grant scheme for small businesses** as well as grants for the improvement of shop fronts. He also updated Members on the success of cross-party Business and Trade Select Committee visit on June 17 which was aimed at gathering evidence for an inquiry into revitalising town centres.

A Member noted that the visit by the select committee had not been widely advertised, particularly to members of the Witney Chamber of Commerce, Cllr Enright responded that wider notification would have been an increased security risk.

Cllr R Crouch advised that WODC had received a **Council of Sanctuary award** and made the suggestion that this may be something that the Town Council itself consider looking into.

She also provided an update on the **Community activity grants** which had a £22,000 budget and was open to aid small organisations with grants of between £500-1,000.

Cllr T Ashby advised that consultation would soon commence on the vision and policy direction of the new Local Plan, with opportunities to give feedback on specific development sites later in 2025.

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)

Cllr T Ashby shared a comprehensive update on a variety of subjects. He began with confirmation that the **Councillor Priority Fund** had returned, with £10,000 allocated to each councillor to support local groups and initiatives during their May 2025 and May 2027 term.

A programme of **gully cleaning** had commenced with work already carried out in Witney South, ongoing in Witney East, and then due to move on to Witney North in August & West early in 2026. Additionally In terms of **highways** resurfacing and patching work had been completed or scheduled on key roads including Downs Road, Corn Street, and Hailey Road, and a new **zebra crossing** was planned near Sainsbury's on Station Lane.

Meanwhile, the long-awaited redevelopment of **Witney High Street** had been delayed, with construction now expected to begin in January 2026 and ANPR cameras to be installed later in 2025.

He expressed his concerns around delays to infrastructure projects, particularly the **Madley Park, Windrush Place & Deer Park paths and road crossings**, which had been postponed again, with consultations expected in late 2025 or early 2026.

The **temporary Witney Library** at the fire station continued to operate successfully, with positive feedback and welcomed the new community hire space.

Resolved:

That, the updates be noted.

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

Witney Fairtrade Action Group

Cllr R Smith noted that comments had been raised regarding the extent of Fairtrade items available in the Corn Exchange Café. s=She explained that she had spoken with the Café manager to understand the supply issues and the wish to remain using local suppliers also in line with the Council's procurement policy

Witney Town Charity

Cllr R Crouch confirmed that the Almshouses under its remit had all be checked and no issues had arisen.

Resolved:

That, the updates be noted.

356 **CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING COMMITTEE - 22 APRIL 2025**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee meeting held on 22 April 2025 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

357 **PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE - 13 MAY & 3 JUNE 2025**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Planning & Development Committee meeting held on 13 May & 3 June 2025 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

358 **CLIMATE & BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE - 20 MAY 2025**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Climate & Biodiversity Committee meeting held on 20 May 2025 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

359 **PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE - 12 MAY 2025**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

PR265 – In response to a Member's question, it was advised no further update was available on the issues encountered around Basketball.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 12 May 2025 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

360 **HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE - 19 MAY 2025**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

H284 – The Deputy Town Clerk advised no action had yet been taken in respect of engaging with Thames Water.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 19 May 2025 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

361 **STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE - 2 JUNE 2025**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

SC310 – In response to a Member's question, the Chair of the Committee confirmed that it was still his intention to attend the Witney Forum meeting on 24 June.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee meeting held on 2 June 2025 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

362 **POLICY GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE - 9 JUNE & 23 JUNE 2025 (VERBAL UPDATE)**

The Chair of the Committee presented the minutes of the Committee's meeting of 9 June to Council and moved their acceptance.

They also provided a verbal update of the Special meeting held earlier that evening summarising the recommendations made to approve Committee terms of reference, objectives for the year and the award of a £1,080 grant to Apollos Clothing.

The Committee also approved the Annual Governance & Accountability Return which would be discussed later in the meeting and to further advance the work to desilting the River Windrush at Bridge Street.

Resolved:

1. That, the minutes of the Policy Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 9 June be received and any recommendations therein approved.
2. That, the recommendations of the Special Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 23 June, provided verbally, be noted and approved.

363 **STANDING ORDERS**

The Council received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk which re-presented revised Standing Orders for the Council.

The revised document had stood adjourned following its agreement at the Annual Council Meeting on 7 May 2025 (Minute no:256 refers) to allow sufficient time for Members to review and reflect on the revisions.

With no amendments being requested their acceptance was proposed with all Members in agreement.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Standing Orders as presented be adopted by Witney Town Council.

364 **COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Council received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk which provided the agreed Terms of Reference for each of the Council's Committees.

Additionally, a verbal update was provided which updated Members on the recommendation of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committees Terms of Reference which had been agreed earlier that evening.

Members thanked Officers for their diligence in the preparation of the Terms of Reference reports which has been presented to each Committee and provided clarity in each case.

It was proposed by Cllr D Enright, seconded by Cllr R Crouch that the Terms of Reference be adopted with Members unanimous in agreement.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Committee terms of reference for the 2025-26 municipal year as presented be approved.

365 **SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

The Council received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk which was last reviewed in 2019 however, a more regular review would now be put in place.

Members welcomed the confirmation of the extent of the responsibilities of the Council, Committees, Officers and those in a role of responsibility.

Acceptance, as presented was proposed by Cllr J Aitman, seconded by Cllr G Meadows with all members in favour.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Scheme of Delegation as presented be adopted by Witney Town Council

366 **ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) 2025**

The Council received a verbal update from the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) in respect of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2024/25 under its obligations to the Accounts & Audit (England) Regulations 2015.

The Policy, Governance and Finance Committee had scrutinised the documents and recommended approval and adoption at the meeting held earlier that evening.

The general public would have the right to inspection the documents which would be published following being signed by the Mayor, RFO and Town Clerk. These would be advertised via the Council's noticeboard and online.

Members were unanimous in agreement.

Resolved:

1. That, the verbal report be noted and,
2. That, the Annual Governance Statement at Section 1 be approved and adopted by the Council with questions 1 to 8 answered "yes" and question 9 "not applicable" and,
3. That, the Statement of Accounts at Section 2 of the Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2025 be approved and adopted and,
4. That, the Notice of Public Rights and Publication for 2024/24 b5 approved and published.

During the following item Cllr R Crouch left the meeting at 8:03pm.

367 **PUBLIC WORKS LOAN BORROWING - WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND**

The Council received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) which provided a comprehensive summary of the proposal for the Council to make an application to the Public Works Loan Board (PWLb). The loan would facilitate the refurbishment of the West Witney Sports & Social Club and establish a new Works Depot.

Members were advised the necessary public consultation had been conducted earlier in the summer and the response overwhelmingly indicated support for the projects and for applying for a loan to complete the projects.

He confirmed that his report reflected the current and interest rate terms of the PWLB however, since the initial precept budget setting in December 2024, interest rates had changed to a more favourable rate and therefore the proposed costs of the loan were lower than originally

projected. The RFO also provided a mid-term financial forecast which was welcomed by Members and advised a five year plan would be coming to the next meeting.

The RFO responded to the questions of Members explaining that only a single application was needed as both projects were on the same site and therefore tied in together; also that if the full amount applied for was not required then the loan conditions allowed for this to remain undrawn, and interest would only fall due on the amount advanced. Finally, the interest rate to apply would be that applicable at the time of the initial drawdown of funds.

Members moved on to the consideration of which of the two options of repayment should be selected and, following a vote with 14 Members in favour and 1 against, the Equal Instalments of Principal method was chosen although it was acknowledged that inflation would have an effect however, the use of a fixed rate would prove prudent.

Resolved:

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
 2. That, an application for a loan of £1,250,000 be made and,
 3. That, a preference of an Equal Instalments of Principal (EIP) loan be arranged and,
 4. That, Witney Town Council approves Officers to seek the approval from the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to apply for a PWLB loan of up to £1,250,000 over the borrowing term of 40 years for the delivery of the West Witney Project. The annual loan repayments will come to around £107,000 (EIP loan year one). It is not intended to increase the council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments as these have already been provided for in the Council's budget.
- That, the mid-term financial forecast be noted,

368 **CLIMATE ACTION WORKING PARTY**

The Council received the resolution of the Climate & Biodiversity Committee made on 20 May 2025 (Minute CB296 refers) and considered appointments to a Climate Action Working Party.

The appointment of Cllr S Simpson, Cllr D Edwards-Hughes, Cllr D Enright, Cllr J Aitman and Cllr J Robertshaw were proposed, seconded, and agreed unanimously:

Resolved:

That the membership of the Climate Action Working Party be agreed as detailed above.

369 **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.

Both the Mayor and his deputy confirmed that they were enjoying the commencement of their terms in the post and the Mayor thanked his Deputy for her assistance, it had been a very busy start to the year.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

370 **HEALTH & SAFETY**

The Council received the report of the Compliance and Environment Officer regarding Health & Safety matters.

Members welcomed the report. In response to a Member's question, it was confirmed that the surface of renovated Splashpark was installed as per the specification of the professional supplier.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

371 **VANDALISM**

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

A Member noted the incorrect spelling of "Semitic"

Resolved:

That, the report be noted

Cllr D Edwards-Hughes left the meeting briefly between 8:35pm and 8:37pm

372 **COMPLAINTS & COMPLIMENTS**

The Council received the report of the Deputy Town Clerk which outlined complaints, comments and compliments received since the last report in November 2024.

Members heard from the Deputy Town Clerk who provided some additional specific details of the complaint received relating to the acceptance of support dogs into the Corn Exchange and were satisfied with the way in which Officers had dealt with the issue raised.

A concern was raised regarding a Councillor's role as administrator of a social media page that some residents felt presented a biased view and reflected poorly on the Council, particularly in light of the Committees the Councillor served on. The Councillor responded, stating that a recent review by the Monitoring Officer confirmed they had not breached any agreed standards. Members were very pleased to see the positive number of compliments and thanked Officers and Town Council staff for their continued efforts.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

373 **FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN OXFORDSHIRE**

The Council received notification of the proposals of Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) and Oxford City Council in respect of the plans for the future of Local Government in Oxfordshire.

Members agreed that at this stage, in order to ensure impartiality due to the number of Members whom sat on additional tiers of local government, the most appropriate approach would be for Officers to engage with the three authorities by way of letter and ask for them to specifically explain the effects on Witney of their proposals; they should also outline what Witney Town Council would expect to see by way of financial payments or service agreements from the devolution process.

It was additionally agreed that a standing item be added to meetings of the Council for Officers to report back to Members as the proposals progress.

Resolved:

1. That, the notifications from OCC, WODC and Oxford City Council regarding the future of Local Government in Oxfordshire be noted and,
2. That, the Town Clerk/CEO write to WODC, OCC and Oxford City Council requesting further details on their proposals and,
3. That, a standing agenda item be added to meetings of the Council.

374 **PART NIGHT-TIME LIGHTING**

The Council received notification of a consultation on the part-night time lighting framework from Oxfordshire County Council.

Following a Member's question, the Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that the consultation only related to the proposed framework and unless the Council made an application to request lighting to be amended, then no further changes would be implemented.

As the Council had previously resolved to write to Oxfordshire County Council requesting that no further consideration be given to turning the lights off in Witney (Full Council 17 Feb 2025 Minute 114 refers) it was agreed that a response be submitted to confirm acceptance of the framework in order to reinforce their agreement that Parishes would have to apply to amend the lighting within their area.

However, Members were encouraged to complete an individual response should they be minded.

Resolved:

1. That, the correspondence be noted and,
2. That, a response be submitted supporting the introduction of the proposed framework.

375 **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO 5(W)**

Resolved

That, Standing Order 5(w) be suspended in order to allow the meeting to continue as it had now lasted for two hours.

376 **COMMUNICATION FROM THE LEADER**

The Leader offered their congratulations to the Town Clerk/CEO on her achievement of becoming an associate of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD).

Resolved:

That, the Leader's communication be noted.

377 **REMOTE ATTENDANCE AND PROXY VOTING IN LOCAL AUTHORITIES: CONSULTATION RESULTS AND GOVERNMENT RESPONSE**

The Council received notice of this government response following a consultation to town and parish Council's earlier in the year.

Members welcomed the summary and conclusion which indicated the Government would legislate for remote meetings in the future.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted.

378 **WITNEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SURVEY RESULTS**

The Council received the results report provided by Witney Chamber of Commerce (WCoC) following the collaboration with the Council who facilitated the issuing of the survey.

Members welcomed the report and highlighted the insights that the Chamber's work provided. They emphasised the importance of a collaborative approach and were eager to engage further as the implementation work of the WCoC proceeded.

Members noted the points relating to young people in the survey and asked that the results and comments received from young people to the Council's own recent resident survey be shared with the Chamber of Commerce.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised Members that the Survey results would be further considered in detail at the next meeting of the Stronger Communities Committee on 14th July.

Resolved:

1. That, the survey results be noted and,
2. That, Officers write to thank the Chair of the WCoC and provide the details of the responses from young people to the Council's residents' survey.

379 **POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER - NEWSLETTERS**

The Council received the most recent Thames Valley Police & Crime Commissioner newsletters.

Resolved:

That, the PCC newsletters be noted.

380 POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER - NEIGHBOURING POLICING ENGAGEMENT SURVEY

The Council received the additional correspondence from the PCC relating to an engagement survey which Members were encouraged to complete individually.

Resolved:

That, the PCC correspondence be noted.

381 QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

A Member raised a request that all Councillors be provided with details of upcoming flag raising events to which the Leader deferred to the Officers to respond. The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that Officers would review the request however, flag raising was not a civic event and that the Council need to be conscious of any disturbance a large number of people may have on the distraction of motorists at the busy intersection outside the Town Hall.

A Member highlighted to the Leader his pleasure that West Oxfordshire District Council had been voted the second-best place to open a business in a recent survey.

A Member raised a question regarding replacement of vandalised bins on council-owned land. The Leader asked if officers could explore this issue further.

382 SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

The Town Clerk advised that the following documents were sealed by the Council.

Date	No of Seal	Nature of Document
29 April 2025	98	Tenancy at will – Courtside Hubs CIC re: Leys Recreation Ground
29 April 2025	99	Licence for alterations relating to land forming part of land on the northwest side of Station Lane – Courtside Hubs CIC

Resolved:

1. That, the above sealed documents be noted and,
2. That the seal of the Council be affixed to any documents arising from decisions taken by this meeting of the Council.

The meeting closed at: 9.15 pm

Chair

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 8a

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Tuesday, 24 June 2025

At 6.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting via MS Teams - Virtual Meeting

Present:

Councillor G Doughty (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	G Meadows
	J Doughty	R Smith
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Cara Murray	Admin Support Assistant - Communities & Planning
Others:	None.	

P383 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

P384 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or officers.

P385 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

P386 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.

P387 NOTIFICATION OF PLANNING APPEAL DECISION - 17A MOOR AVENUE, WITNEY - APP/D3125/X/24/3340800

The Committee received correspondence concerning the appeal decision APP/D3125/X/24/3340800 for 17a Moor Avenue, Witney

Resolved:

That, the appeal decision be noted.

Cllr R Smith joined the meeting at 6:12pm

P388 LAND SOUTH OF A40 STANTON HARCOURT ROAD, WITNEY

The Committee received and considered an application by Swim Oxford Limited for the proposed construction of a grass mesh car park area and an enclosure for chemical toilet cubicles, to facilitate the use of a lake for open water swimming – Oxfordshire County Council planning application Ref:MW.0034/25.

Although the application site fell outside of the Parish, it was on Witney's boundary and adjacent to the Country Park. After consideration Members agreed the following submission be made:

Witney Town Council welcomes the introduction of an open water swimming facility in close proximity to the town. Members recognise the growing popularity of open water swimming and support the development of recreational and wellbeing opportunities that encourage healthy, active lifestyles. The Council also understands that the proposed facility will operate on a membership basis, which should help to manage numbers and ensure the activity is conducted responsibly.

However, Members wish to raise the following concerns regarding the current proposal:

- **Safe Access:** *The access point to the site appears to be located on a blind bend, raising significant concerns about road safety for both vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians. Increased traffic movements, particularly turning in and out of the site, could pose a hazard unless appropriate mitigations are put in place.*
- **Traffic Management and Signage:** *Given the potential increase in vehicle movements associated with the facility onto a well-used local route, the Council requests a review of signage and traffic calming measures in the area to improve visibility and manage access safely- appropriate directional and warning signage may be necessary.*

Witney Town Council would be happy to explore opportunities for collaboration, including possible future pedestrian access to the Lake and Country Park, as well as working together on biodiversity initiatives, and the development of green corridors onto adjoining town council owned land that enhance both the ecological value and public enjoyment of this important natural space.

Resolved:

That, the above submission be made to Oxfordshire County Council.

The meeting closed at: 6.15 pm

Chair

PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Tuesday, 15 July 2025

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

Present:

Councillor G Doughty (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	G Meadows
	J Doughty	D Temple
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Cara Murray	Admin Support Assistant - Communities & Planning
Others:	Councillor Duncan Enright	

P389 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor R Smith.

P390 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or officers.

P391 MINUTES

The minutes of the Planning & Development Committee meetings held on 3 June & 24 June were received.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Planning & Development Committee meetings held on 3 June & 24 June be approved as a correct record of the meetings and be signed by the Chair.

P392 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

Councillor D Enright joined the meeting at 6:09pm

P393 **WODC - PREFERRED POLICY OPTIONS PAPER CONSULTATION**

With the permission of the Chair, this item was moved up the agenda.

The Committee received the notice of a West Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan 2041 consultation.

Members were advised this was a crucial opportunity to influence development in Witney for the next decade. The Town Council had provided ideas and entered comments on varying policies since its first meeting with District Council officers on this matter in October 2023.

The Committee discussed various topics, picking up on earlier discussions and agreed a draft response, as outline below, should be ratified at the Full Council meeting on 28th July due to the length and importance of the plan.

‘Witney Town Council welcomes the opportunity to contribute to West Oxfordshire District Council’s Local Plan 2041 consultation. The Council acknowledges the extensive work undertaken in developing the draft plan and appreciates the strategic intent behind its proposals. However, it believes that there are several issues and constructive suggestions which should be addressed to ensure the plan fully meets the needs of Witney’s residents, businesses, and future generations.

Policy specific points are as follows:

Core Policies

Core Policies (CP) 1-4 - Settlement Identity, Village Integrity & Community Governance

Witney Town Council supports the principle of maintaining distinct settlement identities and urges that strong safeguards are included to ensure villages retain their separation and character.

However, the Local Plan should recognise and include provision to support Community Governance Reviews. As development expands to the built-up areas of service centres such as Witney beyond current boundaries, there should be a clear and responsive mechanism for reviewing and adjusting parish/town boundaries to reflect this coalescence and ensure coherent community representation and funding for services.

Core Policy (CP) 4 - Housing Quality and Tenure

The town council recommends the Local Plan includes a position discouraging the continued sale of leasehold properties. There are clear disadvantages to developments which provide housing under this framework which is already evidenced in the town.

New development should be prioritised in and around town centres to ensure residents have more sustainable and convenient access to essential services.

The disparity between the quality of private and social housing must be addressed in the Local Plan. Social housing should meet the same standards as private developments to promote equity and dignity in living standards.

Core Policies (CP) 5-6 - Delivery of Infrastructure, Clarity and Enforcement

The plan must take a firmer stance on the delivery of promised infrastructure, particularly shops and community facilities, within large-scale developments. The Council recommend that

developers be subject to stricter conditions and potential penalties if delivery is not made within agreed timescales in line with point 5.100.

Paragraph 5.83 is vague and insufficiently robust. It should clearly set out expectations for coordination between all relevant authorities and infrastructure providers, not just a 'timely manner.' Delays are often caused by third parties, and the policy should reflect this, ensuring that responsibility and accountability are embedded in the planning process.

Overall, Witney Town Council believes Core Policy 6 lacks clarity and enforceability in its current form and should be strengthened accordingly.

Core Policy (CP) 7 - Flood Risk Management

The plan's approach to flood risk, particularly in Witney, is notably weaker than in previous iterations with less of a focus on the subject. The town council strongly urges that flood mitigation policies be made more robust.

Witney, like other areas, faces real flood risks which need to be acknowledged and proactively addressed in Witney specific policies of the plan like they are for others.

Core Policy (CP) 9 - Community, Health, and Wellbeing

The emphasis on community, health, and wellbeing appears reduced compared to previous plans. These themes should be central and crosscutting throughout the plan, underpinning all aspects of development policy.

Although raised under DM 23, Community centres (including multi-use spaces such as public houses or halls) should be a required component of developments over a certain size. These facilities are essential for fostering community cohesion and delivering local services.

There is a significant lack of focus on the needs of young people in the current draft. The town council urges the inclusion of more targeted policies and investment in youth provision, particularly for early teens. This should include Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs), youth centres, recreational spaces, and facilities such as bowling. Provision should be equitable across all settlements, particularly in Witney and surrounding areas where a clear gap of non-sporting facilities exists.

Art and culture initiatives should be given greater consideration by developers from the earliest stages of planning and should be more robustly integrated into the Local Plan. These projects are intrinsic to a thriving town, enriching community identity and playing a vital role in attracting visitors to Witney.

While the aging population is referenced and welcomed in DM29, the plan does not go far enough in addressing/considering the diverse needs of this demographic alongside those of younger residents. Intergenerational planning should be considered, ensuring developments are inclusive, accessible, and support lifelong wellbeing.

Development Management Policies (DM)

DM1 – Key Principles for New Development

To promote sustainable and safe living environments, the following development Infrastructure standards should be included at construction stages in all new developments above a specific threshold:

- Installation of grit bins on roads with gradients above a certain level.

- Provision of bus shelters on key routes to encourage the use of public transport.

DM4 – A Healthy Food Environment

Allotment provision must be strengthened in the plan. While community gardens are a welcome feature, they are not a substitute for full size allotment plots. For developments over a defined threshold, a specific number of full-sized accessible allotments should be required to meet growing demand and support food resilience and community wellbeing.

DM37 - Sustainable Tourism

To support local businesses and promote tourism, Witney must be recognised as a visitor destination. Provision for coach and motorhome parking should be included in the plan, ensuring accessibility for a range of visitors to the towns heritage and provide a boost for the local economy.'

Recommended:

That the above draft response to the consultation be forwarded to Full Council on 28 July 2025 for consideration.

P394 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.

P395 APPLICATION FOR A NEW PAVEMENT LICENCE - THE THREE HORSESHOES, 78 CORN STREET, WITNEY - W/25/00681/PAVLIC

The Committee noted the Pavement Licence Application for The Three Horseshoes, 78 Corn Street, Witney under the Business and Planning Act 2020.

Given the short statutory timescale for Witney Town Council to respond, by prior agreement of West Oxfordshire District Council, documents were circulated electronically to members of this Committee.

Resolved:

That, a no objection response was forwarded to the licencing team at West Oxfordshire District Council on 10 July 2025.

P396 PLANNING DECISIONS

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

The Committee Clerk summarised the reasoning for the decisions that were contrary to the Committee's submission.

Resolved:

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

P397 WITNEY TRAFFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Committee received the minutes of the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee held on 24 June 2025. A Member present at the meeting confirmed to the Committee that the minutes were a true representation.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee held on 24 June 2025 be noted.

P398 WEST END PERMIT SCHEME - INFORMAL CONSULTATION

The Committee received notification from Oxfordshire County Council of their consultation with residents of West End to gather feedback on a potential permit parking scheme which would formalise the parking arrangements.

Members heard how this had been an outstanding request of residents for some time and therefore welcomed this engagement.

Resolved:

That, the notification of the consultation be noted.

P399 A40 EYNHAM PARK & RIDE TO WOLVERCOTE PROJECT UPDATE

The Committee received correspondence from Oxfordshire County Council in respect of the progress of the A40 Eynham to Wolvercote works. Due to the inevitable impact on the town and its residents, Members welcomed the opportunity to comment on the application once it was validated by West Oxfordshire District Council.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted.

The meeting closed at: 7.27 pm

Chair

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

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

Members recognise the importance of providing supportive environments for vulnerable young people and commends the intention to repurpose an existing dwelling in a sustainable and meaningful way.

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

Members trust that West Oxfordshire District Council will give due consideration to the secure placement of the units and ensure that measures are in place to minimise any noise disturbance or potential interference from outside sources.

394- 10	WTC/080/25	Plot Ref :-25/01558/S73	Type :-	VARIATION
	Applicant Name :-		Date Received :-	08/07/2025
	Location :-	82 EARLY ROAD EARLY ROAD	Date Returned :-	16/07/2025
	Proposal :	Variation of condition 2 of permission 24/03135/HHD to allow changes to the approved plans to include a link between the outbuilding and the rear extension.		
	Observations :	Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.		

394- 12	WTC/082/25	Plot Ref :-25/01580/CLP	Type :-	CERT LAWFU
	Applicant Name :-		Date Received :-	08/07/2025
	Location :-	MOORLAND CENTRE, 24 DARK LANE DARK LANE	Date Returned :-	16/07/2025
	Proposal :	Certificate of lawfulness (stationing of two shipping containers for storage in connection with the ongoing use of the site for Oxfordshire County Council fleet vehicles).		
	Observations :	Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.		

On behalf of :- Witney Town Council

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

Held on Monday, 30 June 2025

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

Present:

Councillor A Bailey (Mayor in the Chair)

Councillors:	R Smith	G Doughty (In place of J Treloar)
	J Doughty	R Crouch (In place of S Simpson)
	D Edwards-Hughes	G Meadows (In place of J Aitman)
	D Temple (In place of T Ashby)	

Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Adam Cook	Project Officer
	Angus Whitburn	Operations Manager

Others: Two members of the public.

PR389 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T Ashby, J Aitman, J Treloar & S Simpson, Councillors D Temple, G Meadows, G Doughty & R Crouch attended respectively as substitutes.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised the Committee that Cllr T Ashby had advised he would be stepping down from the Committee and had proposed he should be replaced by Cllr D Temple. The request would be considered at the meeting of the Council on 28 July 2025.

PR390 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers.

PR391 MINUTES

The minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 12 May 2025 were received.

PR265 – Officers advised that the owners of the basketball court adjacent to Windrush Leisure Centre were the responsibility of West Oxfordshire District Council.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 12 May 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

PR392 **PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC**

The Committee adjourned for this item.

The Committee received representations from two residents of Edington Road concerning Agenda Item 7 – Projects Update.

The residents raised concerns of the lack of additional consultation regarding the proposed Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) at Raleigh Crescent. They understood through recent engagement with the Town Council's Project Officer and Cllr T Ashby how the scheme would progress however, felt that alternative locations and designs had not been fully explored.

Concerns were also raised regarding Anti-Social behaviour, noise, lack of parking provision and potential nuisance if the nearby wooded copse was used inappropriately.

The Committee reconvened.

The members of the public left the meeting at 6:30pm following the discussion regarding the Raleigh Crescent MUGA.

PR393 **PROJECTS UPDATE**

With the permission of the Chair, this item was moved up the agenda so the Members of public could hear the discussion and outcome.

The Committee received and considered the report of the Project Officer.

Raleigh Crescent MUGA

Members were provided with an update on the project. They heard that it was still in the early stages with no decision yet on the size, design or exact position. He confirmed that the areas under consideration were owned by West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) and currently designated as a play area.

The financing of the MUGA was reliant on funds from a Section 106 contribution from a development in the Curbridge Parish to provide recreation facilities. Once the procurement process was complete then WODC would move forward with finalising the design and placing a planning application. Residents would at that stage be able to submit their comments for consideration.

It was agreed that the Project Officer would liaise with WODC to ensure that communications with residents were maintained.

Courtside Hub at The Leys

Members received an update and heard that progress had once again slowed due to supply issues and this had led to an updated completion date of December 2025.

The Committee was very disappointed to hear that delays continued and raised concerns of the effect of the overall delay would be having on Courtside's business forecasts. A Member also added the concern of whether some of the clubs and individuals, in particular tennis, would

return to the Leys when it was complete as they were now established in using other facilities during the hiatus.

Members were somewhat reassured that no financial contributions had been made to Courtside and that payments were tied to Courtside reaching set milestones, such as completion of changing rooms, the access road and the completion of the hub building. The Town Clerk/CEO confirmed that she would continue to engage Courtside to obtain assurances before the release of any funds.

Resolved:

1. That, the report and verbal updates be noted and,
2. That, the Chair write to WODC Planning Department to highlight potential issues regarding noise, lighting & use of open space as a toilet and,
3. That, Town Council Officers liaise with WODC Officers to ensure residents are kept informed and,
4. That, the Committee write to Courtside to express the Councils disappointment with continued delays to the project.

The Project Officer left the meeting at 6:40pm

PR394 RECREATION COSTS

With the permission of the Chair, this item was also moved up the agenda.

The Committee received the report of the Operations Manager regarding the costs of maintenance of recreation grounds in respect of the provision for football.

Members heard that the pitches at Burwell were well used, hence the lower subsidy however, this was having an effect on the quality of pitches due to the demand placed on it from the increasing number of teams that used the facility.

It was highlighted that the maintenance of the football pitches also provided benefits to all recreational ground users, including dog walkers and that the annual STRI review of the Council's grass pitches would take place soon to support the work.

A Member noted the absence of the Leys Cricket pitch from the report, in response the Operations Manager confirmed that little was spent to maintain the cricket square as it was not and had not been in use for many years.

A Member was pleased to see that the Council was providing such quality of grass pitch provision for what was an overall subsidy of £34,240. Which in his opinion offered great value.

An issue that did arise during the discussion was that of unofficial training by football clubs who had been witnessed on a number of occasions using the recreational grounds without agreement. This impacted the recovery of pitches as they were not receiving the necessary rest and continued to be compacted from this off-season activity. Teams had been reminded recently of the need to book their use or make use of the alternative locations provided by the Council.

Cllr D Temple, seconded by Cllr R Crouch suggested that the Committee consider the introduction of a fee to cover the annual out of season training and make a recommendation to the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee during budget-setting.

Recommended:

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, the Committee consider the introduction of an annual fee for out of season training.

The Operations Manager left the meeting at 7:03pm

PR395 ANNUAL RESIDENTS SURVEY 2025

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning the results of the resident's annual satisfaction survey which was held at the beginning of the year.

Members were advised the report represented the survey results for the services under the remit of this committee and showed the combined satisfactory and above percentages against poor ones. Previous years data was also included to help benchmark the results. The report also contained all unedited comments on the services.

The Committee were pleased to see a number of positive comments interspersed with the negative ones however overall, it was noted that there was a decline in the overall satisfaction of respondents. It was agreed that any issues that had a simple and quick to action solution, such as the posting of "No Dogs" signs at Underhaching Park should be introduced without delay and communications should be published to highlight facts around pitch booking and minimal cancellations.

The Town Clerk/CEO confirmed to Members that the decision to bring the Council's grounds maintenance contract back in house was not based on cost cutting, rather it was to improve the response and quality of work. There was a budget available to increase the workforce which would have an impact on the delivery of expected Council and resident's standards.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Officers review the comments and schedule work to resolve any simple tasks.

The meeting closed at: 7.18 pm

Chair

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

Held on Monday, 7 July 2025

At 6.02 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor R Crouch (Chair)

Councillors:	J Robertshaw	D Temple
	R Smith	J Aitman (In place of A Bailey)
	O Collins	Doughty (In place of J Treloar)
	G Doughty	
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Mark Lewis	Head of Estates & Operations
Others:	One member of the public.	

H396 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Treloar & A Bailey, with Councillors J Doughty & J Aitman attending retrospectively as substitutes.

H397 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers.

H398 MINUTES

The minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 19 May 2025 were received.

H284 – A Member clarified that the river flow rates were monitored by the Environment Agency.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 19 May 2025 be approved a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

H399 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Committee adjourned for this item.

The committee received representations from a representative of Holy Trinity Church, Woodgreen concerning Agenda Item 8.

Members heard of their concern of the size of an individual tree within the churchyard which they asked to be reviewed as it was a potential risk to the church building, the safety of parishioners and users of the green, including the children that used the adjacent playpark.

They also raised concerns regarding the recent removal of trees from West Oxfordshire District Council office site across the road from the church. Whilst this had not caused a disturbance to Sunday worship, it was the representatives understanding that tree removal in a conservation area could only be instructed by a West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) tree officer of which nobody held that position at that time of the removal. They had requested a response some weeks previously from WODC however nothing had been forthcoming.

In closing they offered their thanks to the Operations Manager and his team for the excellent work in grass cutting regime which had led to biodiversity of the churchyard and the appearance of orchids and other wildflowers.

The Committee reconvened.

H400 **CLOSED CHURCHYARDS**

With the permission of the Chair, this item was moved up the agenda so the member of public could hear the discussion and outcome.

The Committee discussed the issues raised by the representative of Holy Trinity Church. Firstly the Chair, who also held a position as a WODC Councillor agreed she would follow up with Officers there to investigate and respond in respect to the issue of the removal of trees on their property.

Additionally, Members were unanimous in agreement that the Town Council's Operations Manager arrange a review of the trees under the remit of the Town Council in conjunction with the newly appointed WODC tree officer in order to address the church's concerns further.

Members were keen that it be expressed upon the WODC officers that one of the main reasons for the area being a conservation area is due to the location of the church itself.

Resolved:

1. That, Officers engage with the WODC tree Officer and liaise with the church and,
2. That, the Chair follow up with WODC Officers in respect of the church concerns of tree removal in a conservation area.

H401 **ANNUAL RESIDENTS SURVEY RESULTS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning the results of the resident's annual satisfaction survey which was held at the beginning of the year.

Members were advised the report represented the survey results for the services under the remit of this committee and showed the combined satisfactory and above percentages against poor ones. Previous years data was also included to help benchmark the results. The report also contained all unedited comments on the services.

The Committee discussed some of the comments made and reflected that many were relevant to individual residents some of which not able to be resolved as it would not be prudent use of Town Council funds.

Members agreed that Burwell Hall was potentially underutilised and that it should be promoted to highlight its availability as a cut effective venue. It was suggested that an Open Day event could be held as part of the promotion activity.

The Committee also discussed cycling along the St Mary's church path, an issue that had been highlighted by a resident by email to Officers prior to the meeting, it was agreed unanimously that Officers speak with Oxfordshire County Council to review signage to inform of this prohibited use by cyclists.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Officers work with OCC to review the signage at St Mary's Church and,
3. That, Officers compile a promotion strategy to promote Burwell Hall.

H402 PUBLIC HALLS REPORT

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

Members were pleased to hear of the news of the recruitment of a Venue & Events Co-ordinator who was due to commence the role in August.

The Committee heard from the Head of Estates & Operations who provided a verbal update to explain that proposal to review the long-standing seat sponsorship arrangements. Members provided their updated thoughts of how the scheme could be implemented and that it posed a low-risk financial outlay and would be self-advertising once plaques were in place. They welcomed the review report at the next meeting of the Committee.

Members were also pleased to hear that there had not been any negative reaction to the placement of the clothing bin in support of Thames Valley Air Ambulance, however recognised it was still at an early stage of use.

Resolved:

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted.

H403 CORN EXCHANGE BUSINESS REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Venue & Events Officer and verbal update from the Head of Estates & Operations which provided an update on the activity of the Corn Exchange events.

Members were pleased to receive the summary of activity and to hear of the success of events held especially the premiere of Los Banditos of Ducklington Lake by a local young filmmaker.

They also heard of the success of the relaunched summer outdoor music events which had been bolstered by the fine weather in June and welcomed the launch of a quarterly Open Mic showcase event which they hoped would see the same level of engagement from residents.

Resolved:

That, the report and verbal update be noted.

H404 CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL GARDEN

The Committee received the report of the Project Officer confirming the completion of the Children's Memorial Garden project at Windrush Cemetery.

The Head of Estates & Operations summarised the report to highlight the tasks completed and the level of support provided by the Halls & Green Spaces Administration Support Assistant which had been pivotal in bringing a swift conclusion to the project.

Members thanked all those involved and were pleased to hear that the Friends of the Cemeteries group had also passed on their words of gratitude.

Resolved:

1. That, the report and verbal update to noted and,
2. That, all staff involved be thanked for their support in order to complete the project.

H405 NEWLAND ALLOTMENTS - REQUEST FOR SHEDS

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk outlining a Witney Allotment Association request for the Council to pay for the installation of three sheds at the Newlands Allotment site.

Members were unanimous in agreement that the sheds should be replaced at a cost to the Council as the reason for their removal was in order for the Council to install additional fencing to future proof the security of the site.

The Committee thought the budget specified by the Allotment Association was prudent and therefore agreed a budget of £1,000 from the allotments earmarked reserve and that the purchase of the units required be delegated to Officers.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, three new replacement sheds be purchased for the Newland Allotment site utilising a £1,000 budget and,
3. That this be delegated to officer to finalise.

The meeting closed at: 6.50 pm

Chair

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

Held on Monday, 14 July 2025

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

Present:

Councillor T Ashby (Chair)

Councillors:	R Smith	A Mubin (Till 6:10pm)
	G Meadows	J Treloar
	D Edwards-Hughes	J Aitman (In place of A Bailey)
	D Enright	G Doughty (In place of A Mubin from 6:10pm)
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer &
		Committee Clerk
Others:	None.	

SC406 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor A Bailey with Councillor J Aitman attending as a substitute.

Additionally, Councillor A Mubin advised he would have to leave the meeting after a short period at which point Councillor G Doughty would become his substitute.

SC407 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor T Ashby declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in the grant application submitted by Witney Buttercross Scout Group by virtue of his participation with the group as a volunteer.

Later in the meeting Councillor R Smith declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in the grant application of Bright Futures owing to their connection with the church of which she was a Member.

There were no other declarations from Members or Officers

SC408 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Stronger Communities committee held on 2 June 2025 were received.

SC305 – The Chair confirmed that the amount of the Youth Services grant pot had been confirmed by Officers at £20,000.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee held on 2 June 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the chair.

SC409 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

At 6:10pm Cllr A Mubin left the meeting with Cllr G Doughty becoming his substitute as previously advised.

SC410 ANNUAL RESIDENTS SURVEY RESULTS

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning the results of the resident's annual satisfaction survey which was carried out at the beginning of the year.

Members were advised that the report represented the survey results for the services under the remit of this Committee and showed the combined satisfactory and above percentages against poor ones. Previous years data was also included to help benchmark the results. The report also contained all unedited comments on the services.

The chair noted the large response from under 18-year-olds and reflected on the contributions they made, it was hoped that the changes currently underway at The Leys would have a positive impact on their comments.

It was acknowledged by Members that the Council aspires for excellence and should continue the work currently under way to improve services across the town; this included the need to promote its work to residents, such as the rolling programme of repairs to street furniture as the perception was that this was neglected.

The Chair raised the idea of a Working Party for a small number of Members to consider ways in which the Council could promote itself further, however Members wished to provide greater support to the work of the Communication & Community Engagement Officer in improving communications

Members were in agreement of a suggestion to issue a second printed newsletter at an estimated cost of £3,000. It was proposed that Witney businesses could be approached to subsidise costs however, this would need to be weighed up with the potential impact on officer time to arrange this. The Committee requested that the Communication & Community Engagement Officer look into this further and report back.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Communication & Community Engagement Officer research corporate sponsorship of an additional printed newsletter.

SC411 COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer, and the Chair summarised the report.

A Member raised that the draft Social Media Policy did not include items that were in the previous version which he felt were important and should be carried over. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that Officers would review again along with any additional comments that Members may wish to submit ahead of an adoption of the Policy at the meeting of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee on 21 July 2025.

Several Committee Members raised issues with the speed of the Council Website though they were appreciative of the contents of the site and the help that it provided to residents, especially the features such as the land ownership map, which helped guide queries to the Council body responsible.

Resolved:

That, the report and verbal updates be noted.

SC412 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

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

Members welcomed the news that the Army & Air Cadets would be involved with the tidying of war memorials and thanked Officers for the notification of flag raising events which they were able to attend.

The Committee was also pleased to hear of the ongoing work with Thames Valley Police in relation to anti-social behaviour in town with a meeting taking place earlier that day between TVP and Council Officers. Members asked that TVP be approached with a request that an Officer or PCSO attend the monthly Councillor in the Café events as it was thought that this would provide additional feedback to them of other problems that arise within the town. All Members were in agreement.

Members also heard an update on the success of the visit from Le Touquet Youth Council on 8 July which had been enjoyed by all those involved, they were especially thankful of the attendance of the High Sherriff and the further engagement work he had promised.

There were also updates on the proposed climate event to be facilitated by the Council, of the recent meeting of the Witney Forum and an update from The Station, were pleased to report that funding had been achieved for their hot chocolate van project and that the Kick football events would recommence for the summer holidays after their success last year.

They were also looking at their short and longer term objectives and financial planning and would be providing details on these to the Council in an aim to secure a further service level agreement.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and;
2. That, TVP be invited to participate in the Councillor at the Café events.

SC413 **WITNEY FORUM NOTES - 24 JUNE 2025**

The Committee received the minutes of the Witney Forum which had been attended by the Chair who expressed his enjoyment at meeting all the various organisations that participate.

Resolved:

That, the notes of the Witney Forum meeting on 24 June 2025 be noted.

SC414 **YOUTH COUNCIL MINUTES**

The Committee received the notes of the Youth Council meeting held on 19 June 2025.

A meeting had been scheduled for 8 July 2025 to include the attendance from Le Touquet Youth Council Members; however, the meeting did not take place due to time constraints with the other activities on the evening. The meeting would be rescheduled.

Resolved:

1. That, the informal notes of the Youth Council meeting held on 19 June 2025 be noted.

During the following item – Cllr J Treloar left the meeting briefly between 6:55pm and 6:58pm

SC415 **WITNEY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SURVEY**

The Committee received the report of the Deputy Town Clerk which outlined the results of a report provided to the Council by Witney Chamber of Commerce (WCoC).

It was agreed that the Chair should extend an invitation personally to the Chair of WCoC in order that the Committee hear first-hand of the issues faced.

Members thanked the Officers for facilitating the survey on behalf of the Witney Chamber of Commerce and acknowledged the importance of combining the results with that gathered from the under 18's survey to create a clearer roadmap for assisting witney's business community.

It was mentioned that Witney needed to be seen as a destination and not simply a convenience town, the subject of coach parking was raised as this had been an issue over the preceding weeks and no provision existed.

In respect of the recommendation to consider the re-establishment of the Witney Forum to replace the Witney Town Partnership it was unanimously agreed that the Forum be resurrected and administered by the Town Council in order to ensure the necessary traction.

It was highlighted by a Member who was also a Councillor for West Oxfordshire District Council, that he hoped the sale of the town market rights would breathe new life and create a connection with the Marriotts shopping area; the buyer of the market had been successful in other towns where it ran markets.

In response to a Member's question it was confirmed that the project to review wayfinding around the town was also a casualty of the continued delays to the High Street and Market Square redevelopment. It was hoped that this along with a strategy to deal with the unkempt

nature of the centre, such as the flyposting of bus shelters and utility boxes could be looked at again and improvements implemented.

The Committee was encouraged to consider the importance of making a submission to the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2041 which would highlight the need for improvement in order to support the town's business community.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, an invitation be extended by the Chair to his counterpart at Witney Chamber of Commerce to attend a meeting to discuss plans in person. And,
3. That, Officers draft a framework of how the Council can work collaboratively with WCoC for presentation at a future meeting.

SC416 QUEEN EMMA'S DYKE COMMUNITY GARDEN

The Committee received a verbal update from the Committee Clerk outlining that Officers were awaiting a response from the individual(s) looking to establish a community garden. Design of planters and a location had been agreed by the Operations Manager and it was now left with the community to agree responsibility for the upkeep and running.

Resolved:

That, Officers await the community's action with the Queen Emma's Dyke Community Garden.

SC417 WINTER PREPARATIONS

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations Manager relating to grit bins across the town.

It was agreed unanimously that a bin be requested to be introduced at Springfield Oval, Members were encouraged to consider other locations within their wards so that any additional requests could be considered at the meeting of the Committee on 15 September.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Officers submit a request to OCC for consideration of the grit bin to be sited at Springfield Oval.

The Meeting took a short adjournment from 7:15 – 7:20pm

SC418 EXCLUSION OF PRESS & 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.

During the following Agenda item, the following took place:

*Cllr J Treloar left the meeting at 7:27pm and did not return.
Cllr D Edwards-Hughes left the meeting briefly between 7:50-7:53pm*

SC419 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO 5(W)

Resolved:

That, Standing Order 5(w) be suspended in order to allow the meeting to continue as it had now lasted for two hours.

SC420 YOUTH SERVICES GRANT - EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS

The Committee received and considered the applications for the Youth Services Grant. Applications totalling £54,342 had been received from fourteen organisations. However, there was an allocated budget of £20,000.

It was agreed early in the discussions that the Committee would review the applications prior to a decision being taken by the Chair, Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council in conjunction with the Deputy Town Clerk at a future scheduled meeting later that week. All Members were in agreement.

However, Members spoke on the merits of each application in order to provide guidance to those delegated to make the final decision. The Committee was supportive of those organisations that provided a clear benefit to Witney residents, and noted that some of the applications had been received from organisations outside of the parish and it was agreed that a scoring system be implemented in order to assist decision making.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised the Committee that a report would be compiled for presentation to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee on 21 July 2025 for formal agreement on the awarding of funds.

Recommended:

1. That, the decision of awarding the youth services grant be delegated to the Chair, Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council in conjunction with the Deputy Town Clerk and,
2. That, a proposal for the awarding of the Youth Services grant be provided to the meeting of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee on 21 July 2025.

The meeting closed at: 8.15 pm

Chair

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

Held on Monday, 23 June 2025

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

Present:

Councillor R Smith (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman R Crouch A Bailey J Doughty	T Ashby G Doughty S Simpson
Officers:	Sharon Groth Adam Clapton Derek Mackenzie Nigel Warner	Town Clerk Deputy Town Clerk Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk Responsible Financial Officer
Others:	One member of the public.	

F338 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received however Cllr T Ashby had advised he would arrive late.

F339 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or officers.

F340 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Committee adjourned for this item.

The Committee received representations from the spokesperson of the Witney Flood Group concerning Agenda Item 9.

Members heard of the progress of the Witney Flood Group (WFG) in relation to their target to mitigate flood risk within the town. They had recently received a quote from a contractor in respect of the cost to improve the area from Langel Common to Farm Mill Lane which would include lowering the level of the footpath that crossed the common and acted as a dam, as well as the removal of trees and other riverbank obstructions. Additional work required to carry out desilting of the riverbed was projected to raise the entire costs to approx. £500,000.

WFG welcomed the assistance already provided by both West Oxfordshire District Council and Witney Town Council and asked that they continue to set a good example of maintenance in the areas where they were riparian owners which would hopefully be cascaded down to other landowners.

The Council was thanked for their offer of assistance to other residential groups looking to utilise the Oxfordshire County Council flood alleviation grant scheme. This was currently under consideration and the Town Council was asked if they would be happy to accept these grant awards and facilitate works using the specialised equipment, such as its winch for the removal of trees from the river.

The Spokesperson advised that the Flood Warden scheme was well established and that its volunteers were eager to engage and assist with the above works, however Officers advised that the group should clarify with OCC that flood wardens engagement in such work was covered by the insurance cover. Officers also recommended that WFG engaged with the Local Member for Parliament and other agencies to further advance the potential large funding gap needed to carry out the work they proposed.

The Committee reconvened.

Cllr T Ashby joined the meeting toward the end of the following agenda item at 6:25pm.

F341 BRIDGE STREET DESILTING

With the permission of the Chair, this item was moved up the agenda so the member of public could hear the discussion and outcome.

The Chair provided a summary of the current situation which had been discussed at the meeting of the Committee on 9 June 2025.

Officers provided a verbal update to the Committee on the costs received in relation to a road closure to carry out the desilting work at Bridge Street. Four companies had been approached however, only one had responded with a proposed cost for a three-day road closure of between £1,925 and £2,620. These quotes were dependent on whether automatic or manually operated traffic lights were used. It was noted that the cost would need to be taken from the £15,000 agreed budget if required, but other avenues should be sought by officers.

In response to a Members suggestion, it was unanimously agreed that Officers consider an amount to be put aside each year to build an earmarked reserve to repeat this work in the future. Once the work was completed it was felt the situation should be reviewed regularly to see when it required completing again.

Additionally, it was raised that Oxfordshire County Council could levy a fee for the closure of the road and although the amount was unknown, it was suggested that it be requested to be waived in light of the reasoning for the works.

The proposed desilting project was welcomed by the spokesperson of Witney Flood Group present who agreed the worth of carrying out the work and assessing its success.

Resolved:

1. That, the verbal update be noted and,
2. That, de-silting work at Bridge Street should proceed without further delay and,
3. That, Officers and Town Councillors who are also OCC members, engage with Oxfordshire County Council regarding the waiving of any road closure permit cost and,

4. That, Officers consider an amount to be budgeted each year to build an earmarked reserve for further de-silting work.

The spokesperson for WFG left the meeting at 6:30pm

F342 COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The committee considered the changes to the Committee Terms of Reference as deferred from the meeting of the Committee on 9 June 2025 (Minute F324 refers)

Members welcomed the changes and agreed unanimously.

Recommended:

That, the Terms of Reference as detailed be approved at the meeting of the Council to be held later the same evening.

F343 COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES & WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR

As the Committee with strategic oversight of the Council, Members considered the objectives and work programme of all the Council's Committees, this item having been deferred from the meeting of the Committee on 9 June 2025 (Minute F325 refers)

Members welcomed the changes and agreed unanimously to their acceptance.

Recommended:

That, the Council's objectives and work programme for the 2025/26 municipal year be approved.

F344 ACCOUNTS & AUDIT (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2015 - ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) 2024-25

The Council received the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) concerning the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) 2024/25 under its obligations of the Accounts & Audit (England) Regulations 2015

The RFO gave a verbal explanation of each question comprising Section 1, Regarding Question 4 following debate a vote was taken on answering "yes" to the question as members believed that by the Council advertising the publication of the AGAR and Internal Audit information for one day longer than required by the legislation in both 2023 & 2024 it had indeed provided proper opportunity to the electorate. The result of the vote being seven in favour with one abstention.

It was therefore agreed that questions 1 to 8 be answered "yes" and question 9 answered "Not Applicable" in Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement and that the statement be agreed and recommended for signing at the meeting of the Council later that evening. All Members were in agreement.

It was further agreed that the Accounting Statement which formed section 2 be recommended to Full Council for agreement and adoption. All Members were in favour.

The RFO advised that the remainder of the report was for information; Section 3 would be submitted to the External Auditor with supporting information and would be an analytical review concentrating on variances year on year, or above a certain percentage. The general public would have the right to inspect the documents which would be published following adoption.

The Leader of the Council thanked officers, particularly the RFO for their diligence in presenting the information in such an understandable format.

Recommended:

1. That, the report and verbal updates be noted and,
2. That, the Annual Governance Statement at Section 1 of the Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2025 be approved, and formally adopted by the Council and,
3. That, the Statement of Accounts at Section 2 of the Annual Return for the year ended 31 March 2025 be approved, and formally adopted by the Council and,
4. That, in light of the above the Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) for 2024/25 be formally agreed and adopted by the Council.

F345 INTERNAL AUDIT 2024-25

The Council received the final report of the Council's independent Internal Auditor.

Members were advised this was the final report for the fiscal year 2024-25 and there were no issues to draw members attention to.

The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) explained the reasoning behind the auditor's responses to questions (m) & (n) in the Annual Internal Audit Report of the AGAR documents which arose due to the Council advertising the publication of the information for one day longer than required by the legislation in 2024. All Members were in agreement that this only increased the transparency of the Council's records.

The RFO assured members that the Notice of Public Rights and Publication once signed would be advertised for the regulatory 30 working days.

The Leader of the Council thanked Officers, particularly the RFO for their diligence in preparation of the Council's finances.

Recommended:

1. That, the internal Audit report for 2024/25 be approved and,
2. That, the draft notice advertising electors' rights for 2024/25 be noted.

F346 GRANTS & SUBSIDISED LETTINGS

The Committee considered the Deputy Town Clerk's report on local grant activity.

Following its deferment from the meeting of the Committee on 9 June Members welcomed the additional information provided by Apollos Clothing in support of their discretionary grant application (Minute Ref: F333 refers).

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, a grant of £1,080 be awarded to Apollos Clothing be awarded under the General Power of Competence and that they be asked to acknowledge the Council's financial contribution in their promotional literature.

F347 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS & 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.

F348 **PROPERTY, INSURANCE & LEGAL MATTERS**

The Committee received and considered the confidential report of the Town Clerk/CEO.

Updates were provided on lease agreements with Courtside Hubs CIC, Witney Lawn Tennis Club, ICE Centre, Witney Allotment Association, Madley Park Hall, and West Witney Sports & Social Club along with Madley Park and Waterford Road Play Areas.

An issue concerning a piece of land under the town council's ownership was discussed, with the Council agreeing that further information was required from its solicitor to progress the matter.

Resolved:

1. That, the confidential report and updates be noted and,
2. That, further information on the historical designation of the land identified in the report be explored further by the Council's solicitor up to the value of £1,000.

The meeting closed at: 6.58 pm

Chair

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

Held on Monday, 21 July 2025

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

Present:

Councillor R Smith (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	G Doughty
	A Bailey	S Simpson
	J Doughty	O Collins (In place of R Crouch)
	T Ashby	
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Nigel Warner	Responsible Financial Officer
Others:	None	

F421 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Cllr R Crouch with Cllr O Collins attending as a substitute.

F422 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr A Bailey declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda item 13 as there was a request for subsidised hire to fundraise for his mayoral charities in the year, which Cllr J Doughty concurred with as Deputy Mayor.

Cllrs R Smith and T Ashby declared a personal, non-prejudicial interests in agenda item 13 as they were personally linked to Bright Futures and Buttercross Scouts respectively.

The Responsible Financial Officer also declared an interest due to his direct involvement with Witney Food Revolution.

There were no further declarations from either Councillors or Officers.

F423 MINUTES

The minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 9 June 2025 and the Special Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 23 June 2025 were received.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 9 June 2025 and the Special Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 23 June 2025 be approved as correct records of the meetings and be signed by the Chair.

F424 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

F425 ANNUAL RESIDENTS SURVEY RESULTS

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning the results of the resident's annual satisfaction survey which was held at the beginning of the year.

Members were advised the report represented the survey results for the services under the remit of this committee and showed the combined satisfactory and above percentages against poor ones. Previous years data was also included to help benchmark the results. The report also contained all unedited comments on the services.

The Committee welcomed the number of positive comments that were made about its services, and it was agreed that Member cohesion and transparency were paramount to raise the professional profile of the Council and the work being undertaken. It was proposed by Cllr J Doughty and seconded by Cllr S Simpson that consideration be given and officers provide a report on the broadcasting of the Council's meetings. All Members were in agreement.

The negative comments were noted and several of these were linked to those being addressed under the auspices of the Parks & Recreation Committee. However not all areas were under the control of the Town Council and so those would need to be passed onto the relevant landowners.

It was also agreed that the issues raised which impacted those with mobility problems be referred to the town council's Community Voices Task & Finish Group.

Finally, it was agreed that the comments relating to other issues not under the control, or responsibility of the Town Council should be forwarded to those organisations so that they may review and take steps to address the resident's concern.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the comments in relation to Witney Town Council services be noted and,
3. That, the Council promotes You said, we did items where appropriate to better inform residents on comments made and,
4. That, the Council writes to West Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Thames Valley Police, and the Woolgate Centre to lobby and/or highlight the comments in relation to their services and facilities and,
5. That, officers prepare a report on broadcasting Council meetings to be presented to this Committee on 22 September 2025.

F426 SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY REVIEW

The Committee received a draft social media policy which had been recommended for approval by the Stronger Communities Committee on 14 July. At the meeting a Member had raised that there were some items in the original policy which had not been included so a review had taken place by officers and this version included amendments.

Members welcomed the review and asked for a change to section 3, incorporating 'groups and forums' into the final amended paragraph and points on officer and mayoral pages. In addition, it was agreed there should also be wording on Councillors administering and/or moderating social media pages and that in section 6, Officers 'should' report incidents to the Senior Management Team of the Council instead of having just one named individual.

Resolved:

That, the social media policy, as presented be adopted by Witney Town Council with the above amendments.

F427 COUNCILLOR TRAINING POLICY REVIEW

The Committee received and considered the report and accompanying Councillor training policy from the Deputy Town Clerk.

The policy was based on a training statement agreed by the Council in 2024 and suggested that new Councillors should undertake a Council induction, code of conduct, and data protection training. A list of upcoming training opportunities for Councillors was also provided.

Resolved:

That, the Councillor Training Policy, as presented, be adopted by Witney Town Council.

F428 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

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

Members were pleased to note that no cheques were issued in May as a result of moving to electronic payments and this had a monetary benefit to the Council.

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
DDs, ELPs 42-63 ;65- 68 (electronic payments) and Standing Orders April 2025	£245,991.45	General CB 1
Cheques 35161-35179, cancelled cheques 34988 & 35064; DDs, BACs and Standing Orders April 2025	£20,389.67	Imprest CB 2

DDs, ELPs 64 & 69 to 96 and Standing Orders May 2025	£338,626.58	General CB 1
Cancelled cheques 351589, DDs and Standing Orders May 2025	£9,112.47	Imprest CB 2

F429 MODEL PUBLICATION SCHEME

Members were advised that, due to time constraints, this item would now be presented to the meeting of 22nd September, to be ratified at Full Council on 6th October.

Resolved:

That, the update be noted.

F430 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.

Members were provided with the Council's management accounts, a statement of earmarked reserves, investment statements to June, investment activity for the previous fiscal year and the external bar stocktake reports for March and June quarters.

The Chair welcomed the report and financial detail which was supplemented by a summary prepared by the R.F.O at the meeting. Finances were looking healthy as were investment returns which were received along with notification of changes to the investment manager of the Churches, Charities, and Local Authorities (CCLA) funds which the RFO advised was a positive move.

A vote was necessary on the approval of the report recommendations with the result being for each.

For	Seven
Against	Nil
Abstention	One

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the management accounts of the Committee's services to 31 March 2025 be approved and,
3. That, the statement of Council reserves as at 31 March 2025 be approved and,
4. That, the report on investments to the period to 30 June 2025 be approved and,
5. That, the report on investment activity during 2024-25 be approved and,
6. That, the external bar stocktake report for the quarters to 31 March and 30 June 2025 be noted.

F431 FINANCIAL MATTERS REFERRED FROM SPENDING COMMITTEES

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk. Members noted the financial implications from decisions taken by the Council's standing Committees during the last meetings cycle.

Resolved:

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, recommendations of the spending Committees as detailed be approved.

F432 GRANTS & SUBSIDISED LETTINGS

The Committee received the report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning grant activity to local organisations.

Members debated the requests and considered that Witney Flood Group were providing a worthwhile service, they attended and lobbied on residents' behalf and should receive the full amount requested.

With respect to the subsidised letting requests, there was concern the budget for the current year was almost expunged, therefore, the Committee had to scrutinise applications unless they could be covered internally from existing budgets, such as the Climate Fair and Mayor requests.

Members agreed Witney Jazz and Aspire should both be granted their requests, although noted the commercial operation of the former. A shortfall in the budget could be made up from the discretionary fund.

Resolved:

1. That, Witney Flood Group be awarded a grant of £800 and,
2. That, subsidised letting requests for use of the Corn Exchange be approved for Witney Jazz (£160), and Aspire (£70) and,
3. That, any an additional sum over and above the subsidised letting budget for the year be allocated from the discretionary grants cost centre and,
4. That, these grants be awarded under the General Power of Competence and awardees be asked to acknowledge the Town Council in any promotional material and,
5. That, the use of the Corn Exchange for up to three Mayor events be approved at a cost of £480 to be funded from cost centre 401/4150 and,
6. That, the use of the Corn Exchange for a Climate Fayre in October be funded from the Council's Climate & Biodiversity earmarked reserve and,
7. That, the correspondence from Apollos Clothing and Lowland Rescue Oxford be noted and,
8. That, a policy specifically for subsidised lettings be drafted by officers ahead of the next meeting.

F433 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.

F434 YOUTH SERVICES GRANTS

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

Members were advised that due to the overwhelming submission of applications, that the Stronger Communities Committee had delegated allocations to a small group of Members to score the submissions and make recommendations of the level of awards.

Applications had been grouped with the majority being awarded from the Youth Grant budget, however some had been recommended to be paid from the discretionary grant budget due to them not holistically aligning with the terms of the Youth Grant in order that it retained its integrity.

Two applications were unsuccessful, and the applicants would be advised of the reasoning as well as being directed towards other potential sources of funding.

Members thanked those involved in the decision making in what was a tight and restrictive timeframe.

Recommended:

1. That, the confidential report be noted and,
2. That, the following youth service grants should be awarded from cost centre 408/4169:

a) Buttercross Scouts	£3,500
b) Friends of Springfield School	£2,850
c) 4 th Girl Guides	£1,000
d) Parish of Witney	£2,500
e) Bright Futures	£3,648
f) West Oxfordshire Levellers	£1,000
g) Witney Food Revolution	£2,150
h) Yellow Submarine	£2,000
3. That, in addition, the Committee agreed with the following recommendation on awards to be allocated from the discretionary grants fund, cost centre 407/4100:

a) Ducklington Sports Club	£1,700
b) Tower Hill FC	£1,000
c) Witney Town Band (Juniors)	£1,500
4. That, Home Start Oxford be awarded £11,000 from cost centre 418/4173 for their ongoing preventative work with young children in Witney and,
5. That, these grants be awarded under the General Power of Competence and awardees be asked to acknowledge the Town Council in any promotional material and,
6. That, youth services grants are not awarded to Apollos Clothing and the Community Loft at West Oxon Boxing & Fitness Club as they did not align with the purpose and/or criteria of the scheme.

F435 **IT PROVISION**

The Committee received and considered the confidential report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning the Council's future IT provision.

Members were satisfied with the due diligence conducted by officers in line with Council policies and recommended approval of Contractor 3 in the report.

Resolved:

1. That, the confidential report be noted and,
2. That, Contractor 3 be awarded the Council's IT provision contract.

F436 **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 5(W)**

Resolved:

That, Standing Order 5(w) be suspended in order to allow the meeting to continue as it had now lasted for two hours.

F437 **DRAFT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2025-2031**

The Committee received and considered the confidential joint report of the Town Clerk/C.E.O and the R.F.O concerning a medium-term financial strategy (MTFS).

The Town Clerk advised the strategy would provide a robust three-year financial framework and would align with the Council's developing corporate strategic plan; this was a draft document which was currently in progress.

The Chair thanked officers for their work on the strategy, which would re-introduce a written plan for the Council as a model framework. This as well as the first version, provided at the last meeting was setting the parameters for the Council to work towards.

Resolved:

1. That, the confidential report be noted and,
2. That, the principle of adopting a medium-term financial strategy to support the Council's financial planning and management be endorsed and,
3. That, the updated MTFS as presented, providing an updated financial projection based on current assumptions be noted and,
4. That, the R.F.O continues to refine the MTFS to ensure it was fully aligned with the Council's emerging Corporate Strategic Plan and can support informed budgeting and decision-making over the medium term.

F438 **DRAFT CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2029**

The Committee received and considered the confidential report and draft Corporate Strategic Plan 2025-29 from the Town Clerk/C.E.O.

Members heard that the plan was a first draft and as such feedback was welcomed in order to refine it further as the Council continued to incorporate the changes to the WODC Local Plan and the changes to local government restructuring.

The Committee discussed the seven identified priorities with Members agreeing that Community Empowerment was key.

It was agreed the Committee take time to absorb the full documents and that it be reviewed again at the next meeting of the Committee ahead of the budget setting period that would commence in October 2025 with an action plan of works.

The Council was currently compiling its response to the West Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan 2041, Members agreed that the Town Councils strategic priorities be included in that response.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Members consider the full document and provide feedback to the Town Clerk and,
3. That, the seven strategic principles be included in the Councils response to the WODC Local Plan 2041 consultation.

Cllr T Ashby left the meeting during the following item briefly between 8:19 and 8:21pm

F439 PROPERTY, LEGAL & INSURANCE MATTERS

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

Updates were provided on the Courtside Hub development, Windrush Place Pitches and Pavillion and Little Green.

There were also updates on the progress of Witney Lawn Tennis Club's lease agreement, two ongoing insurance claims and the request from Oxfordshire County Council on the designation of a byway at The Leys.

A report was also tabled regarding the issues being experienced with the historical paving of the Buttercross.

Resolved:

1. That, the confidential report be noted and,
2. That, no response be submitted in respect of the Byway request and,
3. That, additional information be provided for the consideration of Buttercross paving works in the 2026/27 budget setting.

F440 STAFFING MATTERS

The Committee received the minutes of the Personnel Sub Committee meeting held on 9 July 2025.

Resolved:

That, the confidential minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting held on 9 July 2025, and the recommendations contained therein be approved.

The meeting closed at: 8.22 pm

Chair

**CLIMATE ACTION WORKING PARTY COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Tuesday, 22 July 2025

At 4.00 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor S Simpson (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	J Doughty (In place of J Robertshaw)
	D Edwards-Hughes	R Crouch (In place of D Enright)
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Janine Sparrowhawk	Compliance & Environment Officer
Others:	None	

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Enright & J Robertshaw, Councillors R Crouch & J Doughty attended as substitutes respectively.

2 ELECTION OF CHAIR

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor S Simpson be elected. There being no other nominations it was:

Resolved:

That, Councillor Sandra Simpson be elected Chair of the Working Party for the 2025/26 municipal year.

3 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The draft Terms of Reference were received and considered and any amendments considered.

Members recognised the impending 2028 deadline originally set in June 2019 for the Council to achieve a target of carbon neutrality and therefore, welcomed the resurrection of a Working Party, including the phased timeframe in the terms of reference which would assist in focusing on those goals.

The Working Party welcomed the focus and hoped their recommendations would assist the work of the Council's Climate & Biodiversity Committee.

It was requested that two small amendments be made with the insertion of "gardens" so that the objective in Phase two read – Witney Allotments and Community Orchards & Gardens.

Additionally, it was suggested that the word “neither” be added to strengthen the line advising that the Working Party or its Members were not able to make decisions and only recommendations to the Climate & Biodiversity Committee or Full Council.

Members were unanimous in agreement to both amendments.

Recommended:

That, amendments be made to the Terms of Reference as noted above.

4 **CLIMATE CHANGE ROAD MAP**

Baseline Report

Members requested a baseline report to measure progress since the Town Council declared a climate emergency in June 2019. The Town Clerk advised that progress updates had been presented to the Full Council as the original plan evolved. However, it was agreed that a summary of historical information would provide the Working Party with a clear starting point.

Key milestones were agreed as follows:

- Draft Roadmap plan to be ready in time for the commencement of the budget setting period on 6th October 2025
- Final Road Map Plan to be presented to the meeting of the Council on 16th February 2026

Carbon Building Audit

Substantial work would follow to compile a carbon audit of council-owned buildings before the draft plan was presented in October. The audit would be conducted with the support of Energy Solutions Oxfordshire, who previously completed a report for Burwell Hall. As their assessments were currently free for community buildings, the following actions were planned:

- **Revise the existing Burwell Hall report (free)**
- **Conduct a new audit for the Corn Exchange (free)**
- **Complete audits for the Town Hall and Admin Office (paid for)**, ensuring all council-owned buildings are assessed.

Members also suggested including Madley Park Hall and Langdale Hall, however the Town Clerk advised prioritising the Town Hall and Admin Office. The other two properties are leased and could be assessed at a later stage when budgeting allowed.

Council Vehicle Fleet

It was agreed that the Works Team vehicle fleet be reviewed in collaboration with the Operations Manager to:

- Evaluate the current vehicle renewal programme
- Discuss potential upgrades and replacements
- Incorporate necessary changes into future budget planning

It was also noted that **£10,000 of matched funding from Energy Solutions Oxfordshire** may be available to support this work.

New Council Facilities

Members queried whether the upcoming capital projects at West Witney would be carbon neutral. The Project Officer would be bringing reports detailing carbon reduction measures for these facilities. These reports would be submitted to the Climate & Biodiversity Committee when available.

Phase 2 Actions

Future actions would focus on:

- **Review and updating Council policies including the events and hire policy** to include stronger sustainability measures
- **Encouraging recycling by event hirers**
- **Collaborating with Café 1863** to increase the use of recyclable products

Carbon Literacy Training

The Compliance and Environmental Officer encouraged Members who also served on West Oxfordshire District Council to advocate for the inclusion of Town Council staff and councillors in the District Council's carbon literacy training. This could include:

- Access to training materials
- Participation in existing training sessions

This initiative would align with the shared goal of collaboration among the three tiers of local government.

Town Council Website

It was proposed that the Climate Emergency page on the Council's website be updated. The current content dates back to 2019. Recommendations include:

- Streamlining the page into a single, concise resource
- Including links to external organisations offering climate change information and support
- Ensuring content remained up to date and easy to navigate

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, a draft roadmap for the climate action plan should be ready in time for the commencement of the budget setting period on 6th October 2025 and,
3. That, the final roadmap for the climate action plan should be presented to the meeting of the Council on 16th February 2026 and,
4. That, carbon building audits should be conducted for Burwell Hall, Corn Exchange, Town Hall and the Council's Reception/Administrative Office, the latter two being funded from existing budgets or EMR's and,
5. That the Work Team vehicle fleet be reviewed in collaboration with the Operations Manager and,
6. That, WODC Councillors approach officers concerning the possibility of extended carbon literacy training and,
7. That, Members research climate change websites and feedback suggestions at the next meeting.

5

CLIMATE FAIR

Event Date

Members were updated that the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee had approved the subsidised use of the Corn Exchange for the Climate Fair at their meeting on 21st July 2025.

Following discussion, Members agreed that holding the event on a Thursday would encourage participation from both partner organisations and stakeholders as well as the intended public audience

It was agreed that the event be scheduled to take place on Thursday, 9th October 2025.

Partner Organisation Engagement

Promotion of the Witney Town Council FLIR camera should be a focus of the event. However, to maximise engagement, members support would be needed ahead of the event, particularly in:

- Providing real-life testimonials about using the FLIR camera
- Sharing their experiences to encourage public interest

Invitees and Participants

An initial list of invitees had been compiled. Additional suggestions for attendees included:

- **Local press/media outlets**
- **Local sustainable businesses**
- **West Oxfordshire District Council** to be encouraged to include a focus on recycling initiatives
- **Witney Fairtrade**
- **Forest School organisations**
- **Climate Action Groups**, the Chair to provide additional contact point to Officers
- **Charity shops**
- **Zimbl EV car hire service**, recently promoted by another local authority

Members were asked to submit any further suggestions for potential invitees to the Compliance and Environmental Officer.

Future Planning

It was proposed that, if the event was successful, future Climate Fairs could include talks or workshops from key partner organisations to further educate and engage the community.

Low Carbon Hub Involvement

The Compliance and Events Officer noted that Low Carbon Hub currently held a three-year service agreement with West Oxfordshire District Council, indicating a substantial and ongoing investment. They were actively engaged in initiatives in Eynsham and could be invited to:

- Focus efforts on projects in Witney
- Potentially bring budgetary benefits and expertise to local initiatives

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Climate Fair event is scheduled for Thursday 9th October 2025 and,
3. That those on the list presented and those above be invited to take part on the day.

6 NEXT MEETING OF THE WORKING PARTY

The next meeting would be scheduled to take place between the Climate & Biodiversity Committee meeting on 9th September 2025 and the presentation of the draft Climate Roadmap to Full Council on 6th October 2025, which marks the beginning of the budget-setting process for the Council.

The meeting closed at: 5.25 pm

Chair

FULL COUNCIL



Agenda Item: Civic Announcements

Meeting Date: Monday 28 July 2025

Contact Officer: Secretary to the Mayor

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 which detailing the activities of the Mayor since the last meeting of the Council.

Supporting the Community

Visiting Witney Food Bank
Annual staff leaving event at Wood Green School; long service retirement of staff member
Witney Carnival 25 procession judging
Wood Green School Summer concert
ICE Centre summer party – also attended by Deputy Mayor

Representing and Promoting Witney

Oxfordshire County Summer Festival of Music concert– also attended by Deputy Mayor
Churchfields Care Home Summer Party – attended by Deputy Mayor

Key Events and Council Activity

Armed Forces Day flag raising
Youth Council meeting with High Sheriff
Hosting supper with Youth Council, High Sheriff and visitors from Le Touquet
Hosting the Mayor of Le Touquet for breakfast at Corn Exchange
In Bloom Volunteer picnic

Raising Funds -Mayor's Charities 2025-26:

Mayor's charities:
Witney & West Oxfordshire Food Bank - <https://witney.foodbank.org.uk/>
Apollos - <https://www.apollos.uk/>

Any hospitality totalling £50 or more afforded to the Mayor whilst undertaking any event as Civic Leader of Witney Town Council will be declared as hospitality in line with the Councillor Code of Conduct & Localism Act 2011. The acceptance of any hospitality does not afford the provider any undue influence or favour in any Town Council business.

FULL COUNCIL



Agenda Item: Health and Safety Report

Meeting Date: Monday, 28 July 2025

Contact Officer: Compliance and Environment Officer

The purpose of this report to update Councillors on Health and Safety across the services and facilities provided by the Council.

Background

It is the policy of Witney Town Council to comply with our obligations under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (as amended), the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 (as amended) and other supporting legislation concerning Health and Safety. At all times we endeavour to provide and maintain a healthy and safe working environment for our employees, and to protect the health and safety of all visitors; including contractors, temporary workers and members of the public, who might be affected by our operations.

Current Situation

In accordance with the approved Witney Town Council Health and Safety Policy Statement, Members are reminded that they have a collective responsibility for the Health & Safety of the organisation.

The current Health & Safety Policy document will be reviewed this year to identify any amendments and actions necessary.

Departmental managers remain accountable for compliance within their areas of responsibility which is overseen by the Compliance and Environment officer.

The key objectives are to ensure that the Council operates in a lawful manner in respect of health and safety compliance with its service delivery and functions, identifying and advising management and Council of possible risks and finding solutions to mitigate such risks.

Compliance Table

Compliance Inspection, Testing and Servicing Status	Corn Exchange	Town Hall	Admin Office	Burwell Hall	Windrush Ind. Est. Temp Works Depot	Stanley Court Temp Works Depot
Fire Risk Assessment	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
Fire Alarm Testing	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Landlord	N/A
Fire Extinguishers	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
Steel fire exit staircase	Completed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Emergency Lighting	Completed	Due	Due	Due	N/A	Added to testing regime
Security	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	N/A	N/A
Lift	Completed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Gas Safety	Completed	N/A	N/A	Completed	N/A	N/A
Electrical Periodic	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Landlord	Landlord
PAT Testing	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed
Legionella Risk Assessment	Review	Completed	Completed	Completed	Landlord	Landlord
Asbestos	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Completed	Report provided with Lease.
Air Handling Unit	Completed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Air conditioning	N/A	N/A	N/A	Completed	N/A	N/A

Admin Office

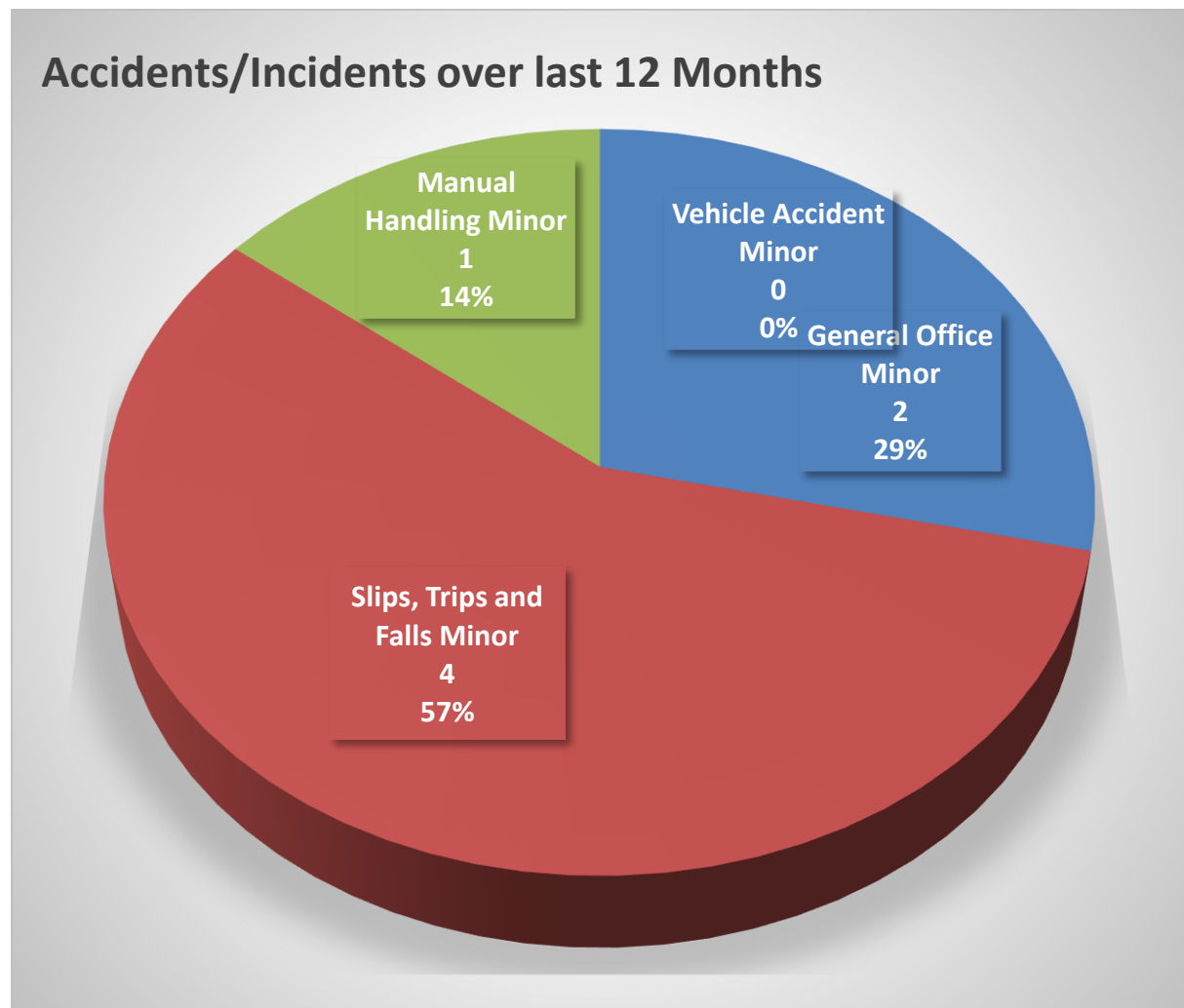
The 'Welcome to Your Community Window Space' guidance has been updated following a recent risk assessment. Minor works will also be carried out by the Works Team. The window remains available for use by charities, groups and community organisations in Witney.

Emergency Plan

The Council's Emergency Plan is currently undergoing a review. As part of this process, officers will consult with the Emergency Planning Officer at West Oxfordshire District Council to gain a detailed understanding of their procedures and systems. The review will also include an evaluation of the Council's out-of-hours emergency call handling arrangements.

Health and Safety incidents

- RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations)
 - No reportable incidents.
- Accidents/Incidents
 - There has been one reported accidents/incidents since the last meeting. See confidential **Appendix A** for supporting documentation.



Impact Assessments

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Ensuring equality in health and safety measures so that all individuals, regardless of their background, job role, or personal circumstances, have equal access to a safe and healthy environment.

- b) Biodiversity plays a crucial role in health and safety measures, influencing public health, workplace safety, and overall environmental well-being.
- c) Crime and disorder pose risks to health and safety in workplaces, public spaces, and healthcare settings. Issues such as violence, theft, and vandalism can compromise safety measures.
- d) The Environment & Climate Emergency is a critical issue that directly impacts health and safety measures in workplaces and communities. It is important to integrate environmental and climate considerations into the council's health and safety policies to protect workers, reduce environmental hazards, and build resilience against climate-related risks.

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.

All accidents and incidents are properly documented and investigated with measures put in place in order to prevent reoccurrences.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

There are the broader benefits that the Council generates for employees and the public embedding a safer, healthier, and more productive workforce.

Financial implications

The Council makes budgetary provision in order to carry out its obligations in relation to its statutory compliance checks using external contractors to certify the work accordingly.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report.

Document is Restricted

Vandalism

18 June to 28 July 2025

Date	Item/Location	Date/Time/Who Reported	Cost if known	Action	Police Reference
27 June	Two occasions of Graffiti on benches at Country Park	B&GSO	N/a	Removed by Ranger	None
2 July	Tree Damaged at Burwell Park	Public	£600	Tree to be removed	Reported to TVP by Public
14 July	Report of wild Swimming and Fire setting	Public	n/a	TVP Notified	BOS-60498-25-4343-03
14 July	Fly tipped Sofa	Public	£25 disposal cost	Removed by Ranger same day	BOS-60498-25-4343-03
14 July	Lifebuoy missing	Ranger	£70	Replacement purchased	BOS-60498-25-4343-03
24 July	Dog Bin – Set alight The Leys	Public	£390	Replacement installed	DP-19264-25-4343-00

Update: The reinstallation of the COVID Memorial and replacement plaque will soon be completed at a cost of £1,850

FULL COUNCIL



Agenda Item: Committee Appointments & Representation on Outside Organisations

Meeting Date: Monday, 28 July 2025

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk

The purpose of this report is for the Council to appoint Members to vacant Committee and outside organisation positions.

Background

Committee positions are reviewed at the Council's Annual Meeting; however, vacancies may arise during the year at the request of Members.

The Town Council also appoints representatives to serve on outside organisations. It is generally recommended that appointees serve until the Annual Council Meeting following the next ordinary election of Councillors (scheduled for May 2027). Nevertheless, requests for changes or new appointments may be brought to the Council for consideration throughout the year.

Current Situation

Committees

Parks & Recreation Committee

Councillor T Ashby has indicated his intention to step down from the Council's Parks & Recreation Committee. It is proposed that Councillor D Temple be appointed as his replacement.

Outside Bodies & External Organisations

Witney Flood Group

The Council has been informed that Councillor J Robertshaw will be stepping down as the Council's liaison to this group. It is proposed that Councillor D Temple be appointed as his replacement.

As a reminder to Members, the purpose of the Witney Flood Group as set out with the Charities Commission is as follows:

'For the benefit of the community the preservation of human life and property by working with other stakeholders to preserve, maintain, restore, and/or improve flood defences and flood protection measures and flood damage in the area of Witney, Oxfordshire.'

The Flood Group will invite the appointed liaison to meet with them as and when required and communicate invites for updates and send updates via email when necessary. They will be invited to specific sessions identified for WFG and WTC collaboration subjects only and will neither be an elected trustee nor observer at regular meetings to preserve the Group's independence.

Although representing the Council, the appointed liaison is not permitted to act ultra vires – commit the Council to any course of action. Issues or reports should be passed to the Council and vice versa via the normal democratic process. Updates should be provided, when possible at Full Council meetings.

The Henry Box Book Collection Trust

The Council has been advised that Mrs E. Duncan wishes to resign from her position as an elected trustee representing Witney Town Council on this organisation.

The objects of the charity, as outlined with the Charity Commission, shall be to 'promote the education of the public, through the maintenance, for the purposes of study, research and exhibition, of a collection of books and manuscripts known as the Henry Box Collection.'

Impact Assessments

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – no direct implications.
- b) Biodiversity – no direct implications.
- c) Crime & Disorder – no direct implications.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – By formalising direct communications with the Witney Flood Group it will help the Council stay abreast of any issues which may arise regarding flooding within the town and assist with collaborative engagement.

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.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

- Representatives on Outside Body groups provide the town council with means to be involved in their work which may affect and improve the lives of residents sustainably, socially, and environmentally.

Financial implications

There are no financial implications.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and;

1. Confirm the appointment of Councillor D Temple to the Parks & Recreation Committee.
2. Confirm the appointment of Councillor D Temple as Witney Town Council's Witney Flood Group Liaison.
3. Consider and nominate a Town Council trustee for the Henry Box Book Collection Trust.

Document is Restricted

Consultee Comments for West Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan 2041

Consultee Details

Name: Mrs S Groth

Address: Witney Town Council, Town Hall, Market Square Witney, Oxfordshire OX28 6AG

Email: info@witney-tc.gov.uk

On Behalf Of: Witney Town Council

Comments

Witney Town Council welcomes the opportunity to contribute to West Oxfordshire District Council's Local Plan 2041 consultation. The Council acknowledges the extensive work undertaken in developing the draft plan and appreciates the strategic intent behind its proposals. However, it believes that there are several issues and constructive suggestions which should be addressed to ensure the plan fully meets the needs of Witney's residents, businesses, and future generations.

The Town Council's response is informed by its forthcoming Corporate Strategic Plan 2025-2029, which is underpinned by core pillars that guide decision-making and resource allocation:

- **An Engaged and Supported Community** – Actively engaging with residents and working collaboratively to promote wellbeing, safety, and opportunity for all.
- **An Empowered Community** – Enabling collaboration and innovation through the support and facilitation of local initiatives that drive positive change.
- **A Respectful Community** – Promoting inclusivity, fairness, and respect for all individuals, regardless of race, sexual orientation, gender, religion, age, or disability.
- **A Vibrant Local Economy** – Supporting and promoting local businesses, while fostering a resilient, locally controlled economy that safeguards Witney's distinctive character and heritage.
- **A Forward-Looking Town Council** – Championing the interests of residents and businesses in key strategic discussions, ensuring local voices are effectively represented.
- **A Beautiful Witney** – Enhancing and protecting open spaces and the natural environment to ensure a high-quality setting for residents and visitors.

Threaded through each of these pillars is a firm commitment to sustainability and resilience, culminating in a further, overarching strategic objective:

- **A Green and Resilient Town** – In line with the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019, it is committed to embedding environmental responsibility in all aspects of its work. The Council has set a goal to achieve carbon neutrality by 2028 and actively supports broader efforts to secure a sustainable, low-carbon future for Witney.

This consultation response seeks to reflect these priorities, offering insights and recommendations to ensure the Local Plan 2041 supports a thriving, inclusive, and environmentally responsible future for Witney within its policies.

Policy specific points are as follows:

Core Policies (CP) 1-4 - Settlement Identity, Village Integrity & Community Governance

Witney Town Council supports the principle of maintaining distinct settlement identities and urges that strong safeguards are included to ensure villages retain their separation and character.

However, the Local Plan should recognise and include provision to support Community Governance Reviews. As development expands to the built-up areas of service centres such as Witney beyond current boundaries, there should be a clear and responsive mechanism for reviewing and adjusting parish/town boundaries to reflect this coalescence and ensure coherent community representation and funding for services.

Core Policy (CP) 4 - Housing Quality and Tenure

The town council recommends the Local Plan includes a position discouraging the continued sale of leasehold properties. There are clear disadvantages to developments which provide housing under this framework which is already evidenced in the town.

New development should be prioritised in and around town centres to ensure residents have more sustainable and convenient access to essential services.

The disparity between the quality of private and social housing must be addressed in the Local Plan. Social housing should meet the same standards as private developments to promote equity and dignity in living standards.

Core Policies (CP) 5-6 - Delivery of Infrastructure, Clarity and Enforcement

The plan must take a firmer stance on the delivery of promised infrastructure, particularly shops and community facilities, within large-scale developments. The Council recommend that developers be subject to stricter conditions and potential penalties if delivery is not made within agreed timescales in line with point 5.100.

Paragraph 5.83 is vague and insufficiently robust. It should clearly set out expectations for coordination between all relevant authorities and infrastructure providers, not just a 'timely manner.' Delays are often caused by third parties, and the policy should reflect this, ensuring that responsibility and accountability are embedded in the planning process.

Overall, Witney Town Council believes Core Policy 6 lacks clarity and enforceability in its current form and should be strengthened accordingly.

Core Policy (CP) 7 - Flood Risk Management

The plan's approach to flood risk, particularly in Witney, is notably weaker than in previous iterations with less of a focus on the subject. The town council strongly urges that flood mitigation policies be made more robust.

Witney, like other areas, faces real flood risks which need to be acknowledged and proactively addressed in Witney specific policies of the plan like they are for others.

Core Policy (CP) 9 - Community, Health, and Wellbeing

The emphasis on community, health, and wellbeing appears reduced compared to previous plans. These themes should be central and crosscutting throughout the plan, underpinning all aspects of development policy.

Although raised under DM 23, Community centres (including multi-use spaces such as public houses or halls) should be a required component of developments over a certain size. These facilities are essential for fostering community cohesion and delivering local services.

There is a significant lack of focus on the needs of young people in the current draft. The town council urges the inclusion of more targeted policies and investment in youth provision, particularly for early teens. This should include Multi-Use Games Areas (MUGAs), youth centres, recreational spaces, and facilities such as bowling. Provision should be equitable across all settlements, particularly in Witney and surrounding areas where a clear gap of non-sporting facilities exists.

Art and culture initiatives should be given greater consideration by developers from the earliest stages of planning and should be more robustly integrated into the Local Plan. These projects are intrinsic to a thriving town, enriching community identity and playing a vital role in attracting visitors to Witney.

While the aging population is referenced and welcomed in DM29, the plan does not go far enough in addressing/considering the diverse needs of this demographic alongside those of younger residents. Intergenerational planning should be considered, ensuring developments are inclusive, accessible, and support lifelong wellbeing.

Development Management Policies (DM)

DM1 – Key Principles for New Development

To promote sustainable and safe living environments, the following development Infrastructure standards should be included at construction stages in all new developments above a specific threshold:

- Installation of grit bins on roads with gradients above a certain level.
- Provision of bus shelters on key routes to encourage the use of public transport.

DM4 – A Healthy Food Environment

Allotment provision must be strengthened in the plan. While community gardens are a welcome feature, they are not a substitute for full size allotment plots. For developments over a defined threshold, a specific number of full-sized accessible allotments should be required to meet growing demand and support food resilience and community wellbeing.

DM37 - Sustainable Tourism

To support local businesses and promote tourism, Witney must be recognised as a visitor destination. Provision for coach and motorhome parking should be included in the plan, ensuring accessibility for a range of visitors to the towns heritage and provide a boost for the local economy.

DRAFT

From: Oxfordshire County Council

Sent: 16 July 2025

Subject: INITITAL Consultation – A40 Barnard Gate junctions (Eynsham) – Proposed experimental right turn prohibition

RE: INITITAL Consultation – A40 Barnard Gate junctions (Eynsham) – Proposed experimental right turn prohibition

We are writing to seek your initial views on the proposal to potentially introduce an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) which would prohibit right turns out of either of the junctions onto the A40 at Barnard Gate in Eynsham (as shown in the attached plan) – traffic would be required to undertake left turns only. The scheme is being promoted as part of the Council's "*2025-26 Vision Zero Junction incidents hot spots (cluster sites) programme*".

The intention would be for a 'sign only' restriction – with some minor kerbing works (i.e. temporary 'bolt-down' style, or water-filled barriers) on the minor road at the western junction to help supplement the signage to guide vehicles to turn left. At the eastern junction, the current layout in any case does this – albeit from a recent traffic survey only a very small number of vehicles were recorded making this turn, which is though currently permitted. It should be noted that Emergency service vehicles would be exempted from the prohibition. In addition to providing regulatory 'No right turn' signing at the junctions, advance-warning signing would also be provided to advise road users of the restriction – including at the junctions of the local roads with the A4095.

If approved, the experimental restrictions would be in place from later in autumn 2025, for up to a maximum of 18 months. A general consultation would then be open for a minimum of six months after the scheme is introduced to allow feedback to be given. The County Council would also closely monitor the effects on all road users during the course of the experiment, specifically regarding potential non-compliance – and should the ETRO be recommended to become permanent in the future, the need for any further supporting measures to ensure compliance would be considered.

Any comments or other representations on the proposal should be submitted by **Friday 15th August 2025**.

Network Management | Highways & Operations | Environment & Place
Oxfordshire County Council | County Hall | New Road | Oxford | OX1 1ND

A40 at Barnard Gate: Proposed experimental prohibition of right turns from Barnard Gate to A40

traffic to turn left only to A40

A

B

You are granted a non-exclusive, royalty free, revocable licence solely to view the Licensed Data



A40 at Barnard Gate Proposed
Experimental Prohibition of
right turns
to A40

SCALE 1 : 2500

DATE 03/07/2025

DRAWING NO.

DRAWN BY

From: Oxfordshire County Council **On Behalf Of** Part Night Lighting

Sent: 11 July 2025


Subject: Part-Night Lighting Consultation - Do you think that your area would be interested in the implementation of part-night lighting schemes?

Dear District, Town and Parish Councils/Meetings,

As many of you are aware the [consultation on the proposed Part-Night Lighting Framework](#) has recently concluded, and we would like to thank those who have submitted responses. We are keen to understand the potential appetite for Part-Night Lighting schemes across the county and **are asking those who didn't respond to the formal consultation** to let us know (using the poll below) whether the area you represent may be interested. More details on the proposals can be found in the [consultation documents](#).

This is not a commitment or formal expression of interest, but will improve our understanding of potential demand.

Please respond using the poll in this email by midnight on Sunday 10 August.

 [Poll: Do you think that your area would be interested in the implementation of part-night lighti](#)

Many thanks,

Economy and Place Directorate | Oxfordshire County Council | County Hall | New Road | Oxford | OX1 1ND