

Stronger Communities

Committee Meeting of Witney Town Council



Monday, 15th September, 2025 at 6.00 pm

To members of the Stronger Communities Committee - T Ashby, R Smith, G Meadows, A Bailey, D Enright, A Mubin, J Treloar and D Edwards-Hughes (and all other Town Councillors for information).

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

Admission to Meetings

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

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 8(e)(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 items under consideration at this meeting in accordance with the Town Council's Code of Conduct.

3. Minutes (Pages 4 - 9)

- a) To receive and consider the minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee held on 14 July 2025.
- b) Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda. (Questions on 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 25. Matters raised shall relate to the following items on the agenda.

5. **Finance Report** (Pages 10 - 17)

To receive and consider the report of the R.F.O concerning the financial position of items under the remit of this Committee.

Communications

6. **Communications Report** (Pages 18 - 24)

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

Community Engagement

7. **Community Engagement Report** (Pages 25 - 42)

To receive and consider the report of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer.

a) **Witney Forum Meeting Notes** (Pages 43 - 47)

To receive the notes of the Witney Forum held on 24 June 2025.

8. **Youth Services** (Pages 48 - 53)

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

9. **Youth Council Update** (Pages 54 - 59)

To receive an update on the Youth Council from the Administrative Assistant – Communications & Engagement.

10. **Christmas Tree and Event Sponsorship** (Pages 60 - 63)

To receive and consider the report of the Project Officer.

11. **Witney Chamber of Commerce** (Pages 64 - 66)

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

12. **West Oxfordshire Community Transport** (Pages 67 - 68)

To receive and consider a request for an increase to the Annual Grant for West Oxfordshire Community Transport (WOCT).

Street Furniture & Infrastructure

13. **Winter Preparations** (Page 69)

To receive further requests for salt bins. (Minute SC417 Stronger Communities 14 July 2025 relates)

Events

14. **Third Party Events** (Pages 70 - 72)

To receive and consider the report of the Venue & Events Officer.

15. **Exclusion of Press & Public**

To consider and if appropriate, to pass the following resolution: That in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions 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



Town Clerk

**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

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Finance Report

Meeting Date: 15 September 2025

Contact Officer: Responsible Financial Officer

Should Members have any queries about this report advance notice would be appreciated, in writing, by 10am on the day of the meeting to allow for a full response at the meeting. E-mail nigel.warner@witney-tc.gov.uk and copy in townclerk@witney-tc.gov.uk

Background

Detailed income and expenditure statements for budgets which are the responsibility of this committee are enclosed; these are the management accounts for this committee. The period to which this report relates is 1 April 2025 to 30 June 2025.

For the Stronger Communities Committee the following cost centres are in place:

Cost centre	Service
402	Community Infrastructure
408	Community Activities

Cost centres, comprising three digits, typically represent a discrete service entity, to which income and expenditure is allocated against previously agreed revenue budgets.

Within each cost centre income and expenditure is then allocated to a four-digit nominal ledger code; these codes are common across the cost centres. Nominal ledger codes further define the costs associated with the cost centre and correspond to a specific type of account, such as materials or staffing costs. Codes commencing with “1” are income codes; codes commencing with “4” are expenditure codes.

A report is regularly submitted to each of the standing committees and previous reports are available on the relevant committee section of the website.

At this meeting the Committee is requested to undertake initial consideration of the revenue budget for 2026-27 and the capital/special revenue budgets for 2026-27 and beyond. This is covered by a separate section within this report.

Current Situation

The summary of income and expenditure for the committee for the first quarter of the financial year is as follows:

The summary for the period is:

	Budget	Months 1 to 3 actual	Percentage of budget spent/received in Months 1 to 3 (25% of the year)
Expenditure	£608,279	£110,943	18.2
Income	(£13,200)	(£0)	0.0
Net expenditure	£595,079	£110,943	18.6

Members may wish to note the following matters in relation to the management accounts:

1. Line 1171/402 – community infrastructure/donations – this relates to Christmas lights sponsorship and grants to the Buttercross clock – no income received to date but expected later in the year.
2. Line 4148/408 – 80th Anniversary commemorations – VE and VJ Day. Original budget £1,500; spend to 30 June £2,023. Additional spend vired (transferred) from 4141/408 events.
3. Overall the income and expenditure is within budget, at 18.6% of full year budget; this time last year it was 15.9% so the position is broadly comparable. During the budget process all budget lines will be examined and will be reported to this Committee at that time.
4. Within the terms of reference for the new Climate and Biodiversity Committee there are a number of responsibilities budgetary provision for which shows in the current year budget being with this committee. These are, referenced directly from the Committee terms of reference for 2025-26:

(b) To manage the Council's Environmental Spaces, including Amenity Areas...

c) To oversee the management of the Council's tree stock across the town;

h) To oversee the maintenance of the Council's infrastructure concerning planting displays (including hanging baskets).

Ahead of the budget your officers will make the necessary changes to the budget/cost centre structures which will relate to cost centre 402 – Community Infrastructure and specifically nominal ledger codes – 4037, 4039, 4040, 4066, 4067, 4888, 4890, 4892, 4893 and 4899. These will be transferred in whole or in part a new cost centre attached to the Climate and Biodiversity Committee.

Note also the following comments relating to the management accounts across the Council:

1. Members should note that the management accounts and the Council's accounting system more generally are driven by the requirements in place for town and parish councils, including the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the Practitioners' Guide issued by the Smaller Authorities' Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP) to support the preparation by smaller authorities in England of statutory annual accounting and governance statements found in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. This means that the accounts can only include actual income and expenditure in terms of money (income and expenditure and sums held with financial institutions) and cannot include anything else.
2. There will always be an inevitable "lag" between expenditure being incurred and being shown in the accounts. Expenditure is not necessarily incurred evenly over the course of the year. For example most expenditure in relation to nominal ledger code 4025 (insurance) is incurred when the annual premium is paid in April. There will also be similar patterns on the income in particular seasonal items such as Christmas lights sponsorship.
3. At 31 March 2025 a number of unspent but committed sums were transferred to the earmarked reserves. During 2025-26 these sums are now reflected as additional sums available in the "current annual budget." The financial software does not show these figures separately in the management account report for this meeting but will show in a separate column in the differently formatted budget report when this is presented in the budget cycle.
Note that the sums themselves remain in the earmarked reserves until they are actually spent.

REVENUE BUDGET 2026-27 AND CAPITAL & SPECIAL REVENUE PROJECTS 2026-27 AND BEYOND

In line with normal Council procedures, the RFO and colleague will shortly be commencing the annual review of all the Committees to prepare the Revenue budget for 2026-27.

Draft budgets are prepared based upon current activities and patterns of income and expenditure. Any additional revenue expenditure is considered separately as Revenue Growth Items.

During the budget cycle the Council also considers the Capital and Special Revenue budget to identify which projects or schemes are to be implemented and undertaken during the next financial year.

In drafting budgets your officers will have due regard to the draft Strategic Plan and the medium term-financial strategy.

Members will be aware that the Council have a number of major projects taking place, the largest of which is the West Witney Project. There are also facilities due to be transferred from the District Council.

It should also be remembered that additional projects may have staffing implications – a sum in a budget to provide a new service or facility or organise an event will also mean that officer time needs to be dedicated to deliver the project.

The budget round promises to be challenging and Members are requested to consider items to be included in next year's budget and any other adjustments in the context of the Council's existing and upcoming service commitments. This will enable Officers to obtain costings and the RFO to draft as accurate budget estimates as possible.

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 – whilst a sufficient budget is necessary for the Council to meet its obligations and objectives, there are no implications directly resulting from this report.
- b) Biodiversity – whilst a sufficient budget is necessary for the Council to meet its obligations and objectives, there are no implications directly resulting from this report.
- c) Crime & Disorder – whilst a sufficient budget is necessary for the Council to meet its obligations and objectives, there are no implications directly resulting from this report.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – whilst a sufficient budget is necessary for the Council to meet its obligations and objectives, there are no implications directly resulting from this report.

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.

The provision of regular financial reports is part of the Council's risk management system.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates. Social value is not quantified in the financial reports but clearly the creation of social value is dependent on setting adequate budgets to meet the Council's objectives.

Financial implications

This report forms part of the Council's due diligence and a process in line with its Financial Regulations. The financial implications are detailed above and also in the attached appendices.

Recommendations

Members are invited:

1. To note and approve the report and the management accounts of the Halls, Cemeteries & Recreation Committee for the period 1 April to 30 June 2025.
2. Consider items to be included in next year's revenue and capital/special revenue item budgets, noting that approval of such items will be for the Council to consider in the budget cycle of meetings.

10/09/2025

WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL Current Year

Page 1

10:26

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 1 April to 30 June 2025

Month No: 3

Stronger Communities Committee - Management Accounts

	Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
Stronger Communities								
402 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE								
1052 EXPENSES RECOVERED	500	0	1,350	1,350			0.0%	
1099 MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	1,000	0	0	0			0.0%	
1170 GRANTS RECEIVED	5,000	0	0	0			0.0%	
1171 DONATIONS RECEIVED	2,665	0	10,350	10,350			0.0%	
COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE :- Income	9,165	0	11,700	11,700			0.0%	0
4014 ELECTRICITY	3,323	739	3,400	2,661		2,661	21.7%	
4017 CONTRACT CLEAN/WASTE	169	57	3,000	2,943		2,943	1.9%	
4025 INSURANCE	112	0	115	115		115	0.0%	
4028 I.T.	117	0	0	0		0	0.0%	
4035 BUS SHELTER MAINTENANCE	484	53	3,000	2,947		2,947	1.8%	
4036 PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	1,490	41	2,600	2,559		2,559	1.6%	
4037 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	646	1,191	1,500	309		309	79.4%	870
4039 HORTICULTURE	16,277	15,003	22,500	7,497		7,497	66.7%	
4040 ARBORICULTURE	11,735	550	28,000	27,450		27,450	2.0%	
4066 TREE REPLACEMENT	6,159	767	4,000	3,233		3,233	19.2%	
4067 Tree Survey	6,845	0	7,500	7,500		7,500	0.0%	
4105 XMAS LIGHTS, TREE & INFRASTRUC	55,337	17,796	48,500	30,704		30,704	36.7%	
4113 XMAS SOCIAL CONTRN - SEE 1099	750	0	0	0		0	0.0%	
4148 VE/ VJ 80th Anniversary comm'n	0	72	0	(72)		(72)	0.0%	
4166 DEFIBRILLATOR EXPENDITURE	1,685	0	4,000	4,000		4,000	0.0%	
4200 STREET FURNITURE	7,047	692	6,000	5,308		5,308	11.5%	
4210 CHURCH CLOCK	0	0	1,500	1,500		1,500	0.0%	
4211 WAR MEMORIAL/ CH.YRD	0	80	0	(80)		(80)	0.0%	
4215 IN BLOOM - INC SCHOOLS CHALLENGE	2,346	802	8,500	7,699		7,699	9.4%	
4888 O/S STAFF RECHARGE	91,284	19,397	150,000	130,603		130,603	12.9%	
4890 O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	8,565	1,391	9,769	8,378		8,378	14.2%	
4892 C/S STAFF RCHG	17,824	4,805	21,362	16,557		16,557	22.5%	
4893 C/S O'HEAD RCHG	6,201	1,120	5,640	4,520		4,520	19.9%	
4899 DEPOT REALLOCATION	19,619	3,280	21,331	18,051		18,051	15.4%	
4990 CONTRN TO CCTV SCH.	10,000	0	11,267	11,267		11,267	0.0%	
COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE :- Indirect Expenditure	268,013	67,836	363,484	295,648	0	295,648	18.7%	870
Net Income over Expenditure	(258,847)	(67,836)	(351,784)	(283,948)				
6000 plus Transfer from EMR	(2,047)	870	0	(870)				
6001 less Transfer to EMR	5,000	0	0	0				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(265,894)	(66,966)	(351,784)	(284,818)				

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 1 April to 30 June 2025

Month No: 3

Stronger Communities Committee - Management Accounts

	Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
408 COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES								
1099 MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	26	0	0	0			0.0%	
1170 GRANTS RECEIVED	1,500	0	1,500	1,500			0.0%	
COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES :- Income	1,526	0	1,500	1,500			0.0%	0
4001 SALARIES	5,022	1,762	15,118	13,356		13,356	11.7%	
4002 ER'S NIC	482	227	1,949	1,722		1,722	11.6%	
4003 ER'S SUPERANN	1,004	382	3,281	2,899		2,899	11.7%	
4103 GRANT YOUTH COUNCIL	81	0	1,350	1,350		1,350	0.0%	
4104 GRANT CARNIVAL/XMAS ROTARY CLB	4,900	2,400	4,900	2,500		2,500	49.0%	
4106 GRANT - PLAY DAY	1,000	1,000	1,000	0		0	100.0%	
4109 BLUE PLAQUES	525	0	0	0		0	0.0%	
4111 WATER SAFETY/EDUCATION	0	0	4,000	4,000		4,000	0.0%	
4112 GRANT - WITNEY TOWN BAND	660	660	660	0		0	100.0%	
4141 EVENTS	4,961	1,097	12,477	11,380		11,380	8.8%	
4147 50th Anniversary Grants	1,100	50	0	(50)		(50)	0.0%	
4148 VE/ VJ 80th Anniversary comm'n	862	2,023	2,023	0		0	100.0%	
4149 WTC 50th ANNIVERSARY	3,332	0	0	0		0	0.0%	
4154 EXPERIENCE OXFORDSHIRE M'SHIP	0	0	1,200	1,200		1,200	0.0%	
4160 TOWN TWINNING	0	0	1,500	1,500		1,500	0.0%	
4161 TOWN TWINNING ROOM HIRE	0	58	1,500	1,442		1,442	3.9%	
4167 BUS SERVICE	23,500	5,250	23,500	18,250		18,250	22.3%	
4169 CHILDREN & YOUTH PROVISION	30,200	0	29,800	29,800		29,800	0.0%	
4170 ADVENT FAYRE	2,064	0	1,000	1,000		1,000	0.0%	
4172 GRANT - DETACHED YOUTH WORK	0	4,500	18,000	13,500		13,500	25.0%	
4173 GRANT - HOME START	0	0	11,000	11,000		11,000	0.0%	
4892 C/S STAFF RCHG	71,310	19,217	85,443	66,226		66,226	22.5%	
4893 C/S O'HEAD RCHG	24,799	4,481	25,094	20,613		20,613	17.9%	
COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES :- Indirect Expenditure	175,801	43,107	244,795	201,688	0	201,688	17.6%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(174,275)	(43,107)	(243,295)	(200,188)				
Stronger Communities :- Income	10,691	0	13,200	13,200			0.0%	
Expenditure	443,813	110,943	608,279	497,336	0	497,336	18.2%	
Net Income over Expenditure	(433,122)	(110,943)	(595,079)	(484,136)				
plus Transfer from EMR	(2,047)	870	0	(870)				
less Transfer to EMR	5,000	0	0	0				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(440,169)	(110,073)	(595,079)	(485,006)				

Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 1 April to 30 June 2025

Month No: 3

Stronger Communities Committee - Management Accounts

	Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
Grand Totals:- Income	10,691	0	13,200	13,200			0.0%	
Expenditure	443,813	110,943	608,279	497,336	0	497,336	18.2%	
Net Income over Expenditure	(433,122)	(110,943)	(595,079)	(484,136)				
plus Transfer from EMR	(2,047)	870	0	(870)				
less Transfer to EMR	5,000	0	0	0				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(440,169)	(110,073)	(595,079)	(485,006)				

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE



Agenda Item:	Communications Report
Meeting Date:	Monday, 15 September 2025
Contact Officer:	Communications & Community Engagement Officer

The purpose of this report is to update councillors on various communication matters.

Background

Witney Town Council's communications need to be fit for 2025 and beyond. Effective communication will be fundamental to fulfilling the priorities of the Council's emerging Strategic plan and achieving its goals. The Communications Strategy is due for review.

The Communications & Community Engagement Officer was asked to investigate the pros, cons and costs of an additional printed Newsletter and this is also reported here.

Current Situation

Communications Strategy Review

The original 2021 strategy has been reviewed and is being rewritten to reflect where actions, improvements and changes have been implemented and new practices adopted.

Analytics and external data sources have been updated. A new action plan has been generated designed to address the objectives and aims of the strategy.

While reviewing the original communications Strategy the Communications and Community Engagement officer discovered a reference to a survey that focused purely on communications as one of the questions in the 2018 Resident's Satisfaction survey. Although there was a small number of respondents it would be interesting to repeat this now across a large number of platforms and age groups and see how much has changed and to see if and how, Witney reflects the National trend of a continuing shift to digital channels. Back then respondents were asked to tick all the boxes that applied to how they found out about Town Council news. The results are shown below just for context. The Witney Gazette was a big source of news for the demographic that responded which was mostly 60+ This is reproduced below for interest.

Communication Section, 2018 Resident's Satisfaction Survey 2018

<i>Website</i>	
55.00%	88
—	
<i>Social Media</i>	
41.88%	67
—	
<i>Local Paper</i>	
56.25%	90
—	
<i>Posters</i>	
20.00%	32
—	
<i>Newsletters</i>	
29.38%	47
—	
<i>Direct Visit</i>	
1.88%	3
—	
<i>Council Minutes</i>	
3.75%	6
—	
<i>Council App</i>	
5.63%	9
—	
<i>Noticeboards</i>	
23.13%	37

Total Respondents: 160

The final draft of the Communications Strategy will be available for review/adoption by Councillors at the November meeting.

Additional Newsletter with Paid Advertising

Introducing paid advertising into the Town Council newsletter could create a useful new income stream which might cover some or all of the cost of an additional printed issue, delivered to households in the second half of the year. It would also strengthen partnerships with local businesses and community groups. To succeed, contents need to have a local interest to residents but demonstrate value to potential advertisers.

A media kit would be needed and this is a huge task. It needs to outline the newsletter's purpose, audience profile, advertising options, pricing, and booking details. Advertisers could be secured through direct outreach, use of advertising platforms, or by offering sponsorship packages such as dedicated sections or whole-issue sponsorships. Pricing would depend on ad size, placement, and duration. The Council is at a disadvantage here in that we have no history and no client base from which to draw testimonials.

The benefits include revenue generation and stronger relationships with the business community. However, there are risks around reputational damage, community backlash over commercialisation, and the need to maintain editorial independence. All adverts would also have to comply with UK advertising standards.

Selling advertising space would place considerable strain on an already at capacity team with a risk to a smaller output of the 'hot off the press' news and community engagement posting we are currently able to achieve.

In summary, paid advertising could provide clear financial and community benefits, but careful management would be required to protect credibility and public trust.

Approximate costs are:

Size A4 Portrait - Endorse folded to A5

Artwork New artwork files supplied to [REDACTED]. Provide PDF Proof

Text 8pp printed 4/4 on 130gsm FSC Gloss

Finishing Fold, stitch, trim and endorse folded to A5

Pricing 15,000 £2,987.00

Delivery Royal Mail Door Drop to 6 Postcodes (13661 total drops) (not all delivered again this year)

Separate delivery to Windrush Place by [REDACTED] 1k copies - £144 plus VAT

The price is confirmed once copy is received and does not include design costs at £60 per hour, because we design and produce and edit in house.

Website

The website newsletter page has been tidied up and now has a link to archived issues.

The Town Councils Vision and Mission statements along with the six pillars that underpin these are now on the Council page of the website.

Website speed

Checks have been made at random times on the performance and speed of the Council's website. It is currently performing well and loading at a good speed. Please continue to report any drop in performance. There is a weekly update each Thursday where the site is unavailable for a short while.

Covid-19 Memorial

The memorial has regrettably been subject to persistent anti-social behaviour over the summer period and the subject of its removal has been raised.

Given that the Council paid a significant sum to repair the memorial in May, this was not the preferred option of the Council when it was last discussed. Instead, discussion centred around its signage and promotion – residents didn't know where it was, what it was, and why it was important. Members may like to consider allocating a budget for improved signage or an information board. Temporary signage has been trialled. The bench does seem to be used by many, so perhaps a notice informing people that if the memorial is subjected to continuous vandalism, both it and the bench will be removed might be effective.

Press Coverage

Latest press coverage information from January 2025 has been prepared by the Administrative Assistant – Communications and Engagement and is attached as **Appendix A**.

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 – the delivery of a further newsletter would provide information to those unable to access digital means.
- b) Biodiversity – no direct implications.
- c) Crime & Disorder – no direct implications.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – We would be printing more copies of the newsletter to give access to certain parts of the community.

Risk

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

As reported above.

Social Value

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

The addition of a second delivered paper magazine in the year would provide information on community events and initiatives, potentially allowing access to further social inclusion.

Financial Implications

- The cost of printing and delivery a further newsletter is approximately £4,000, which could be recouped by sponsorship/advertising.
- Cost of improved signage for the Covid-19 memorial. If agreed, quotes would be required ahead of the next meeting.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and,

1. Consider repeating the 2018 Communications survey and
2. Consider the pros and cons of an additional newsletter that relies on advertising sales.
3. Decide whether further messaging for the Covid-19 Memorial is worthwhile.



WITNEY

TOWN COUNCIL

Date	Story	Reported in	Positive	Negative	Neutral	PR Issued	Social Media Post	Enquiry Response
1.1.25	Review of the Year: Storms and Car Park with no road	Witney Gazette	Yes			No		
1.1.25	Nearly 60kg of Items Donated to Foodbank	Witney Gazette	Yes			No		
8.1.25	Witney Town Council to increase precept for 2025/26	Oxford Mail			Yes	No	https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/24839956.witney-town-council-increase-precept-2025-26/	
22.1.25	Unsafe' Pitch Playable Again	Witney Gazette			Yes	No	https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/24857630.oxfordshire-football-pitch-declared-unsafe/	
19.2.25	Upgrades to Town's Splash Park Due 'Soon'	Witney Gazette, Oxford Mail	Yes			No	https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/24940283.refurbishment-witney-splash-park-happens-soon/	
16.3.25	Dragonfly area in Witney Lake and Country Park restored	Oxford Mail	Yes			No	https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25003217.dragonfly-area-witney-lake-country-park-restored/	
2.4.25	Citizens of the Year Celebrated by Council	Witney Gazette, Oxford Mail	Yes			No	https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25036590.winners-witney-citizens-year-2024-awards-announced/	
2.4.25	Work to upgrade splash park begins	Witney Gazette	Yes			Yes	https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25037749.work-upgrade-splash-park-oxfordshire-town-begins/	
8.5.25	Don't forget... BBC South Today live from Witney (VE DAY)	BBC South Today	Yes			No	https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/live/c62xp202006t	
10.5.25	Witney Town Council to fund initiatives for young people	Oxford Mail	Yes			Yes	https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25144161.witney-town-council-fund-initiatives-benefitting-young-people/	
21.5.25	Twin Town Relationships Celebrated by Officials	Witney Gazette, Oxford Mail	Yes			No	https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25145564.witney-celebrates-partnerships-french-german-towns/	

Date	Story	Reported in	Positive	Negative	Neutral	PR Issued	Social Media Post	Enquiry Response
24.5.25	Witney splash park reopens for summer after upgrades	Oxford Mail	Yes			Yes	https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25186037.oxfordshire-splash-park-reopens-summer-upgrades/	
28.5.25	Football Club Partnership Supporting Health	Witney Gazette, Oxford Mail	Yes			Yes	https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25185174.witney-town-council-announces-witney-town-club-partnership/	
28.5.25	Twin Town's Airport Honours Late Queen	Witney Gazette			Yes	No	https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25179244.witneys-french-twin-renames-airport-queen-elizabeth-ii/	
11.6.25	Witney dog owners asked to stop pets swimming in open water	Oxford Mail			Yes	No	https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25228816.witney-dog-owners-asked-stop-pets-swimming-open-water/	
4.7.25	Witney Town Council completes cemetery improvement works	Funeral Service Times, Oxford Mail	Yes			Yes	https://www.funeralservicetimes.co.uk/news/funeral-plans/2025/07/04/witney-town-council-completes-	
7.7.25	Witney Play Area Closes Temporarily for Safety Inspections	Witney Gazette, Oxford Mail			Yes	No	https://www.witneygazette.co.uk/news/25295546.witney-play-area-closes-temporarily-due-safety-	
9.7.25	Cemetery's New Commemorative Facilities	Witney Gazette, Oxford Mail	Yes			Yes	https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25280025.witney-new-commemorative-facilities-cemetery/	
15.7.25	Leisure Project Progresses Despite 'eyesore' Row	Witney Gazette, Oxford Mail			Neutral	No	https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25302271.witney-major-progress-made-padel-	
23.7.25	Town Preparing to Mark 80th Anniversary of VJ Day	Witney Gazette, Oxford Mail	Yes			Yes	https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25328618.witney-preparing-mark-80th-	
25.7.25	Oxfordshire splash park to remain open despite hosepipe ban	Witney Gazette, Oxford Mail	Yes			Yes	https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25338273.oxfordshire-splash-park-remain-open-hosepipe-ban/	
6.8.25	Anger at Poor Pitches and 'aggressive' Emails	Witney Gazette, Oxford Mail		Yes		Yes (Given Information)	https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25363375.oxfordshire-club-row-council-state-pitches/	
13.8.25	Eight youth organisations to receive share of £20k	Witney Gazette, Oxford Mail	Yes			Yes	https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25379538.witney-eight-youth-organisations-receive-share-20k/	
20.8.25	Oxfordshire town commemorates forgotten army at VJ Day 80	Witney Gazette, Oxford Mail	Yes			Yes	https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25398404.oxfordshire-town-commemorates-forgotten-army-vj-day-80/	
21.8.25	Witney: Vandals 'disrespect' Covid-19 memorial site	Oxford Mail			Yes	No	https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25408560.witney-vandals-disrespect-covid-19-memorial-site/	
23.8.25	Witney football pitches being prepared for new season	Oxford Mail	Yes			No	https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25410635.witney-football-pitches-prepared-new-season/	
30.8.25	Witney bus users to learn about possible changes to services	Oxford Mail	Yes			No	https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25410635.witney-football-pitches-prepared-new-season/	

Date	Story	Reported in	Positive	Negative	Neutral	PR Issued	Social Media Post	Enquiry Response
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Oxford Mail
Witney Gazette

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE



Agenda Item:	Community Engagement Report
Meeting Date:	Monday, 15 September 2025
Contact Officer:	Communications & Community Engagement Officer

The purpose of this report is to inform Councillors about proposed projects, events and activities that will provide opportunities for engaging with the community.

Background

There has been much in the news recently and a direct approach to Witney Town Council from a member of the public about councils making a more visible statement of their heritage and national traditions, including the display of national and local flags. For many, flag-flying is seen as a visible symbol of pride, heritage and community identity and residents are increasingly looking to their councils to reflect these values.

Current Situation

While Witney Town Council already follows established protocols for ceremonial occasions, and frequently uses flags, there is now a wider expectation to embrace flag-flying more regularly as a way of celebrating shared traditions, national pride, celebration, or remembrance.

Brief ideas for the Council to find more occasions to display both civic and national pride are listed here and rounded out in **Appendix A** along with a general statement from Oxfordshire County Council to local councils about the approach they are taking to the current situation of spontaneous painting and placement of St George's flags.

Witney Town Council already does a lot to celebrate the town and its history and heritage and it should publicise that, while making additional plans to expand those activities, bearing in mind that anything that is added beyond what we do each year, will require a budget.

Ideas for WTC to support the desire to celebrate Englishness see full details (**Appendix A**)

- Flag flying and English identity heritage
- Best of English food
- Flying the Town Flag and other flags
- English Flag
- Union Flag/Jack

- Lighting up the Corn Exchange
- St George's Parade
- Corn Exchange St George themed offers
- St George Best Business Window
- Famous English Achievers
- Heritage Open Day - Street Names and Heritage
- Battle of Britain Day (see further details later in the report)

The Council's current flag-flying policy is attached as **Appendix B**

VJ Day 80 review

All feedback from the VJ Day 80 events was positive. People felt that it was respectful and marked the occasion in an appropriate way. The partnership with Witney and District Museum was very successful and the Cemetery Walks led by Sonia were greatly appreciated. A chance to see inside the chapel was also a hit with visitors.

The restoration of Arthur Titherington's bench and simple rededication ceremony and the decoration of this and the War memorials were well attended and valued by those came along.

SSE Priority Service Register

A representative from SSE has asked to attend the September meeting to highlight how the register works and who it is aimed at. It is a free service for vulnerable customers who may struggle without electricity during power cuts or planned outages when we are performing maintenance. Planned work, which may cause interruptions to supply, is likely to increase as work required to the UK's electricity networks to reach Net Zero takes place.

ASB at The Leys – Thames Valley Police Operation Just Update

Officers have been meeting regularly with a TVP stakeholder group concerning anti-social behaviour at West Oxon hotspots – The Leys and The Dell in Carterton. With funds available, TVP have suggested holding a 'Have a Go' day at the Leys in the first half of 2026 to facilitate several sports groups and other activities for young people to try out and potentially get involved in.

In addition, TVP are seeking other projects which would reduce ASB in these areas which may be able to be funded via this initiative.

Reception Community Window Policy Review

At this time annually, this Committee reviews the policy which follows this report.

Remaining Community Engagement Events & Requests for 2025

Battle of Britain 85th Anniversary – 15th September 2025 (and beyond)

This anniversary is not one the Town Council typically marks with large-scale activity. However, given it is a key milestone, and in keeping with the theme of celebrating all things British, which will be discussed at the Stronger Communities Committee that evening, we intend to mark the occasion by raising the Union Flag at the Town Hall, lighting the Corn Exchange in the evening, and sharing dedicated social media:

- Church Green Bombs Local History
- Memorial Stone Witney Aerodrome
- Local History
- WTC Commonwealth War Grave Commission commemoration walks at Tower Hill Cemetery Local History.

In light of the agenda item above, Members may like to consider including this date in the annual flag flying calendar.

International Car Free Day – 22nd September 2025

All online – plans are for a single, comprehensive post this year.

Witney Town Council Eco-Fair – Thursday 9th October 2025

Plans for this event are well underway and a press release will be issued shortly.

World Mental Health Day – Friday 10th October 2025

Officers intend to highlight this day. The Council's MHFA's will share something internally and will post some signposting groups on Social Media to help reach residents with a general support hub and other shared MH and Wellness items on SM.

80th Anniversary of the United Nations – Friday 24th October 2025

A suggestion has been received that the Council should celebrate this anniversary which is also International UN Day by way of a flag-raising and themed coffee morning with the following reasoning:

- It is the 80th Anniversary of the UN this year.
- It is an opportunity to celebrate women in leadership as the UN was championed and helped created by Eleanor Roosevelt.
- We have marked the end of WW2 with VE & VJ Day, considering making the Battle of Britain. These events marked those who sacrificed for peace. The UN Anniversary celebrates that peace.
- It is a chance to focus on peace building and, as we didn't mark Peacekeepers day, remember those who have served as Peacekeepers.
- We have a large peacebuilding/ex diplomatic community in Witney, and it would be a chance to involve them.
- Other local councils also mark this day - one being Chipping Norton who celebrate it each year.

Remembrance Sunday Museum Cemetery Walks – Sunday 9th November 2025

Following the successful Commonwealth graves guided walk, hosted by Witney Museum, they have requested to facilitate a further guided walk at Tower Hill on the afternoon of remembrance Sunday. Their suggestion is that this is a free event with donations provided to the Museum.

As they wanted to go ahead and advertise this and it is something the Council has allowed before, officers have agreed the walk, so long as it is after all the remembrance Sunday services but the Committee should decide on whether it is acceptable to ask for donations.

International Men's Day – Wednesday 19th November 2025

As in previous years, the Council will support this initiative by way of social media posts on the day and will share something in support of our male colleagues. The general themes for this are:

- Making a positive difference to the wellbeing and lives of men and boys
- Raising awareness and/or funds for [charities](#) supporting men and boys' wellbeing
- Promoting a positive conversation about men, manhood and masculinity
- Togetherness ("looking out for our mates" or "making time for old mates" or making time to make new mates" or "reaching out to mates who are finding it tough")

Witney in Orange – 25th November – 10th December 2025

A request has been received from a local organisation to see if the Council will support the United Nations initiative to turn the world orange in support of ending violence against women and girls. November 25th being Stop VAWG day and the 10th December being Human Rights Day.

At this stage, the request is in principle as the details have yet to be finalised but it could be akin to the Witney In Pink charity event and any funds the town council could provide. Please see the attached draft flier as **Appendix C**.

Members should note this is separate to **White Ribbon Day**, supported by the National Association of Local Councils and the town council on 25th November but should note the similar aim to raise awareness about preventing gender-based violence.

Christmas Light Switch On - Gallery Room – Friday 28th November 2025

This year we once again invited young carers for this event and have had a very positive response. We just need to risk assess numbers for safety and can then issue an invitation to a specific number of people.

"Thank you so much for getting in touch. This is such an amazing opportunity for our Young Carers and their families! It's always so wonderful when our young carers are recognised and offered experiences like this.

We would love to have some places for Be Free Young Carers and their family members. Many of our families often miss out on opportunities like this due to accessibility challenges, so this would be an incredible chance for them to spend quality time together and create lasting memories.

Please let me know how many spaces you are able to offer us and I will begin to fill them.

Thank you again!"

Mayors Carols Service - Friday 5th December 2025

The C&CEO has asked the church to stream this and publicise that those who cannot get there can watch from home accessibility as they did for civic VJ Day 80th Anniversary service.

Competitions

Christmas Card Competition 2025

This usually runs from September to the end of November and is due to be advertised shortly.

Citizen of the Year 2025

It is time to launch this now with a closing date at the end of December/beginning of January and a view to selecting a winner in early January. Councillors are encouraged to remind people to use the online form where possible to ensure that entries are received in good time and in a way that means they arrive directly to the right place and cannot be missed.

The guidance for submissions is as follows: <https://www.witney-tc.gov.uk/coy/#guidance>

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 but everyone should feel included in the celebrations of our heritage and sense of belonging in the town.
- b) Biodiversity
- c) Crime & Disorder – no direct implications.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency– no direct implications, but a positive impact in terms of the Witney Town Council Eco-Fair.

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.

Offering the Gallery Room for the Christmas Switch on this year to young carers has been much appreciated.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and,

1. Consider how best the Town Council can celebrate English culture and Britishness.
2. Consider incorporating the anniversary of the Battle of Britain into the regular town council flag flying calendar
3. Consider whether the Town Council should celebrate the 80th Anniversary of the UN in the ways presented.
4. Consider the request from Witney Museum to ask for donations for a guided walk around Tower Hill cemetery on Remembrance Sunday.

5. Consider the request to help with turning Witney orange supporting stopping violence against women and girls.
6. Note the updates and potential presented engagement concerning, Witney VJ Day 80, the SSE Priority Register, ASB at The Leys, Car Free Day, WTC Eco-day, World Mental Health Day, International Men's Day, Christmas Lights switch-on, Mayor's Carol Service, Christmas Card competition and the Citizen of the Year launch.

Appendix A

FLAG FLYING AND ENGLISH IDENTITY HERITAGE

Witney Town Council is very supportive of people flying the Union Flag or England flag on their own property and in a well-maintained condition.

The highway – including roundabouts, pedestrian crossings, traffic lights, and lamp posts – falls under the jurisdiction of Oxfordshire County Council (OCC).

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL has stated that:

“We are aware that roundabouts are being painted up and down the nation. On a general basis, individual judgements are made on such painting of roundabouts based purely on road safety considerations and nothing else.

Flags are being erected throughout the nation including on bridges and other highway infrastructure. OCC are currently liaising with other councils and National Highways to understand how they will be approaching the situation.

If you wish to forward your comments to OCC, the most direct way to report this is via the FixMyStreet service, which passes reports straight to the relevant team for action: <https://fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk>. You can also copy your report to your County Councillor so they are aware and can follow up on your behalf.”

IDEAS FOR WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Witney Town Council already does a lot to celebrate the town and it’s history and heritage and we should publicise that, while making additional plans to expand those activities.

As suggested by a resident - **Best of English food**. This will need defining using the National Survey that takes place annually. It seems to be a two-horse race between, Fish and Chips and Chicken Tikka Massala Fish and chips is favourite at the moment so will depend on the current title holder at the time. The criteria is normally used to decide the wider category of Best of British food.

Flying the Town Flag

We could fly the town flag every day, apart from when that is superseded by a national or local event for which we would normally fly a different flag. We have a smallish version of the town

flag already and this would be better replaced with a bigger one that is more easily identifiable from a distance.

The town flag features Witney's heraldic crest and this demonstrates civic pride, a sense of belonging and reflects the town's history and heritage with references to glove making, the river Windrush, woollen mills etc as depicted on the heraldic crest below a Paschal lamb.



Social Media post -Witney Crest Heraldic Meaning

Official blazon

Arms : Vert on a Fess wavy Argent between in chief a sinister Glove of the last between two Leopards' Faces each holding in the mouth a Shuttle Or and in base a representation of the Butter Cross at Witney Gold a Barrulet wavy Azure.

Crest : On a Wreath of the Colours upon a Mount Vert between a Crescent and a Star Or a Paschal Lamb proper.

Motto: 'INGENIO FLOREMUS'- With ingenuity we flourish

Origin/meaning

The arms were officially granted on September 9, 1955.

The white and blue wavy band on a green background represents the surrounding countryside and the River Windrush on which the town stands. For centuries Witney has been associated with blankets and in 1711 the weavers obtained a charter from Queen Anne incorporating them as a Company and Blanket Hall was built in the High Street. Here all blankets had to be taken for measuring and weighing, thus ensuring that the very high quality of the blankets was maintained.

The two leopard's faces holding shuttles are from the Blanket Makers arms, which appears beneath the one-handed clock on Blanket Hall. The glove represents the gloving industry, for which the town is also famous. At the base is the Buttercross that stands in the heart of Witney, it is said to be the base of an ancient preaching cross - of uncertain age.

The Paschal lamb was used as a device before the arms were granted and the mount on which it stands can be seen as refering to the site (know as the Mount), where the Bishops of Winchester built a palace some time between 1047 and 1070.

Flying the Town Flag

There is also the opportunity to identify as part of the County of Oxfordshire. There is an official flag for Oxfordshire which is flown in Oxford on Historic County Flags Day, an annual celebration on July 23rd and St Frideswide's Day on October 18th. It has since 1949. Thame Town Council flies it for St Frideswide's Day. St Frideswide is the Patron Saint of Oxford. We don't have this flag, but it could be obtained.

Perhaps we could fly it every time a pothole is filled.

Other Flags

English Flag Nationally we fly the flag of St George on 23rd April (also commemorating Shakespeare that day) and we fly it in support of national teams and their sporting achievements.

St George, born in Cappadocia (modern-day Turkey) and raised in Palestine is the patron saint of, or celebrated in around 25 countries cities and regions in the world.

We also fly the **Union Flag/Jack** (both are commonly used these days whether at sea or not) as a marker of our place within Great Britain as a geographical island and as a political region (UK) that also incorporates Northern Ireland.

Union Jack/Flag We also flag fly the Union Jack to commemorate royal, civic and national commemorations, remembrances and anniversaries.

The Town Council needs a new town flag and a St George flag too as ours is a little old and slightly weathered.

Lighting the Corn Exchange

This is the only public building we currently have the ability to illuminate. We might consider lighting up the Corn Exchange in red and white or red, white and blue when appropriate and also the trees in market square when that is possible (out of nesting season).

Random placing of flags

Flags attached in an ad hoc fashion to street furniture (lamp posts, bridges etc) that does not belong to WTC might invoke some liability and subsequent insurance implications. This can be checked out if that is what councillors want to facilitate. These checks and risk assessments should also be carried out if the council wishes to display flags in places it has not done before. -Reference what OCC says above about placing flags on their street furniture.

St George's Parade Might the Town Council be able to offer support to the scouts to bring back their St George's Day parade? A first step would be to discover what made them discontinue this in the first place.

A request to mark St George's Day was made at a previous Stronger Communities meeting and the question asked as to what ways in which people would like to see it marked, but no suggestions were received.

Corn Exchange St George themed offers

Would the corn exchange offer a simple themed coffee or snack menu for St George's day? The shake shop probably already do a shake, but could be asked along with other businesses to take part too.

St George's Day Best Business Window

Mayor to judge

Social Media post -Famous English Achievers

We could find ways to promote the work of our fantastic architects, artists, musicians, engineers, authors etc. Perhaps working in partnership with the museum. This could link to the Heritage Open Day suggestion.

Heritage Open Day - Street Names and Heritage

We previously planned to run this as a Heritage Open Day Activity in 2019. It wasn't taken up so we could try this again with more support to help with research. Full details are still available on the website link below.

Are you a local history buff? We are just launching our @heritageopenday event for 2019. The theme is #ThisIsPeoplePower. Who are the movers & shakers of times gone by commemorated by having streets in Witney named after them? We are asking residents to find out <https://www.witney-tc.gov.uk/heritage-open-day-2019-write-up-your-street/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAYnJpZBExQ1BHTmhweW9IT1dWTIRHWAEEcq86xuOy>

[cMob4STBVdYfJD9GkIQhy0tpNOMa4yLyCmmE2pWcKk8JMbWVNxc aem pulN1wGX HmHF ej10JKmuA](#)

We will mount a family friendly FREE exhibition of findings in the Corn Exchange. Where do you live? Fancy researching your house or business building? Did someone notable live there? We'll include that too.

Lots of hits and tips on how to get started on our website.

Battle of Britain day and bombs on Church green (From the Town Clerk)

The Battle of Britain was a major World War II campaign fought in the skies over the United Kingdom between July and October 1940. It was the first major military campaign fought entirely by air forces.

- After the fall of France, Nazi Germany attempted to gain air superiority over the Royal Air Force (RAF) as a precursor to a planned invasion of Britain (Operation Sea Lion).
- The RAF, supported by radar technology and aided by pilots from many allied nations (including Poland, Canada, New Zealand, and Czechoslovakia), resisted the Luftwaffe's large-scale bombing raids.
- Britain's successful defense prevented a German invasion and marked a turning point in the war, leading Winston Churchill to famously describe the RAF pilots as the "Few": "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."
- The official commemoration is Battle of Britain Day, observed on 15 September, the date considered the climax of the battle.

How councils can celebrate and commemorate the Battle of Britain

Councils play a key role in keeping history alive for their communities. Here are some ways they could celebrate:

Civic & Community Events

- Parades & Services of Remembrance: Organise or support parades with veterans' groups, cadets, and local bands, followed by services at war memorials.
- Flag-raising ceremonies: Fly the RAF Ensign or Union Jack at council buildings on 15 September.
- Moments of silence or bell-ringing to mark the day.

Education & Awareness School programmes: Provide educational packs or host assemblies teaching children about the Battle of Britain.

- Talks & exhibitions: Invite historians, veterans, or family members of “the Few” to share stories.
- Library & museum displays: Highlight archives, wartime photos, and personal stories from local residents.

Community Engagement

- Film screenings: Show documentaries or films such as *The Battle of Britain* (1969).
- Heritage trails: Map local airfields, shelters, or memorials connected to WWII.
- Art & writing competitions: Encourage young people to reflect on themes of bravery, sacrifice, and resilience.

Symbolic Acts

- Lighting buildings: Illuminate landmarks in RAF blue or with themed projections.
- Planting memorial gardens with themed plaques.
- Social media campaigns: Share stories of local connections to the Battle.

What did happen in Witney—Later in 1940

Although 15 September passed without incident in Witney, the town did experience an air raid later that year, specifically on the night of 21–22 November 1940:

- Two bombs struck in two key areas: Church Green and near the Eagle Brewery in the south of town [witney-tc.gov.uk+2Facebook+2](https://www.witney-tc.gov.uk+2Facebook+2).
- These bombs caused significant blast damage:
 - Homes, the grammar school, notable buildings such as the church, police station, and council offices suffered broken windows.
 - The almshouses at 28–38 Church Green were also damaged.
 - Visible remnants, like shrapnel marks on railings at Church Green, still mark the impact’s location [Will Writes Words and Stuff+15witney-tc.gov.uk+15sofo.org.uk+15](https://www.WillWritesWordsandStuff+15witney-tc.gov.uk+15sofo.org.uk+15).

So while the Battle of Britain peaked in the skies on 15 September, for Witney, the tangible impact came a couple of months later—during the early Blitz in November 1940.

Summary: Witney & Battle of Britain Day

Date	Event
15 September 1940	No recorded impact on Witney; the Luftwaffe attacks focused on London
21–22 November 1940	Witney suffered two bomb strikes at Church Green and Eagle Brewery

Social Media post -WTC has its own You Tube interview with Derek West about the Church Green Bombs

<https://studio.youtube.com/video/EUZbet7QWG0/edit>



Social Media post -Memorial Stone unveiling at the old airfield attended by a former Mayor of Witney, Peter Dorward in 2018. Marking Witney Aerodrome

Social Media post -WTC Commonwealth War Grave Commission commemoration walk at Tower Hill Cemetery.

Includes the unmarked grave – Old Witney Gazette story about Christiansen the American airman killed at Witney Aerodrome, buried in Tower Hill Cemetery and cared for in perpetuity by the town of Witney with gratitude and remembrance of his sacrifice.

<https://www.facebook.com/WitneyTownCouncil/posts/pfbid0334E4mzFyL5WEs1WSswZuRwSJmR6bAgKgJzgoE3p5t8ZTLiq6ECectXSUfJPKw3Z9I>

Witney Town Council

Flag Flying & Illumination of Buildings for Events, Campaigns & Commemorations

Policy

Calendar of Events

Date	Occasion	Flag/Lighting	Agreed	Donated/Dictated by
1 st Mon in March	Commonwealth Day	Commonwealth Flag Union Flag	n/a	Council UK Gov Buildings
9 April	His Majesty's Wedding Anniversary	Union Flag	n/a	UK Gov Buildings
23 April	St George's Day	St George's Flag Union Flag	n/a	Council UK Gov Buildings
6 May	Coronation Day	Union Flag	n/a	UK Gov Buildings
1 st Sat in June	Oxford Pride (Taken as Witney Pride weekend since 2021)	Rainbow Flag	C157 – Full Council - 08.04.19	P. Hicks
2nd Sat in June	Official celebration of His Majesty's birthday	Union Flag	n/a	UK Gov Buildings
20 June	World Refugee Day	World Refugee Flag	C126 – Full Council - 08.06.20	L. Ashbourne
21 June	Birthday, Prince of Wales	Union Flag	n/a	UK Gov Buildings
End of June	Armed Forces Day	Armed Forces Flag	n/a	
17 July	Birthday, Her Majesty The Queen	Union Flag	n/a	UK Gov Buildings
3 September	Merchant Navy Day	Red Ensign	C357 – Community Services - 17.07.18	B. Churchill
8 September	His Majesty, The kings Accession	Union Flag	n/a	UK Gov Buildings
Remembrance Day	Second Sunday in November	Union Flag	n/a	UK Gov Buildings
14 November	Birthday, His Majesty The King	Union Flag	n/a	UK Gov Buildings

The Union Flag will also be flown:

- The day of the opening of a Session of the Houses of Parliament by His Majesty (see note 3)

These dates are subject to change so the calendar will be regularly updated

National Flag-Flying Notes

1. Where a building has two or more flagpoles the appropriate national flag may be flown in addition to the union flag but not in a superior position.
2. Union Flags should be flown at full mast all day
3. Flags should be flown on this day even if His Majesty does not perform the ceremony in person.
4. If there is only one flagpole and another occasion fall on a Union Flag-flying day, the Union Flag takes precedence.
5. Where a building has two or more flagpoles, a Commonwealth Flag may be flown in addition to the Union on Commonwealth Day but not in a superior position.

Local Notes

Witney Town Crest

The Witney Town flag is flown at any particularly poignant day for Witney Town Council or Witney at the Council's discretion.

Requests to fly other flags or to illuminate the Corn Exchange

Witney Town Council welcomes engagement within the Community and will consider all reasonable requests to fly a flag from the Town Hall and illuminate the Corn Exchange to mark local or national commemorations/campaigns under the following guidance.

1. Any request must be made in writing to the Council and passed by the relevant committee and/or Full Council by way of resolution.
2. The Council reserves the right to refuse any request for flag-flying or building illumination if it considers the request to be from a politically affiliated party, group or organisation or if it risks bringing the Council into disrepute. The Council must remain politically neutral and its decision on this is final.
3. The Council will not purchase flags for third parties. On a successful request, the applicant will be asked if they wish to do so and be provided the necessary sizes. The Council will acknowledge donation in its committee minutes.
4. The Council will keep any such flag safely but takes no responsibility for its long-term wear and tear or replacement.
5. The flying of flags and illumination of the Corn Exchange will usually only take effect on the day/night which corresponds to the campaign or commemoration for approximately 24 hours (dependent on appropriate staffing).



Policy Document

Community Window Space

Adopted: Stronger Communities Committee. Minute no:

Review Date:

- a. The window is for community use only; open to charities, groups or community organisations operating in Witney, or for the promotion of services to the benefit of Witney. No business or political organisations and all at the discretion of the Town Council (with its decision being final). Advertising for paid services is not permitted.
- b. Each let is for a two-week period. A longer booking can be discussed, again the Town Council has final discretion.
- c. There is no cost for the hire.
- d. All bookings must be made via the Town Council Reception.
- e. Groups are fully responsible for the safe setup and clearing of the space. They must ensure that individuals involved are physically able to access the space and that all setup/takedown activities follow safe working practices as outlined in the Council's Health and Safety guidance.
- f. Any display must adhere to health and safety rules; for example, no additional lighting, naked flames, aerosol cans, glass items or mirrors that may cause a fire risk. We cannot allow balloons or any items that may move about. Staff reserve the right to remove or direct the removal of any item(s) in the display that constitutes a risk to staff, members of the public and/or the building itself. All activities must comply with the Council's Community Window Space Risk Assessment and any guidance provided at the time of booking. A copy is available on request.
- g. The Community Window is located within a historic building, so the space comes with some unique measurements. The space is accessed from the rear of the window, via a step that is approx. 50cm high, this access point is 95cm wide and 176cm tall. The roof slopes down from 220cm at the back to 175cm at the front therefore a maximum height is 210cm. We strongly request that you arrange to view the space ahead of planning your display layout so that you can be sure of the dimensions.
- h. Nothing may be affixed to the window glass. We have some display equipment such as small easels of various sizes and book stands that may be of use to elevate items to eye-level which may be borrowed for the term of the display.
- i. For health and safety reasons, extra care must be taken when entering and exiting the display space, particularly due to the raised step and low ceiling height. We recommend that only individuals who are physically able to safely navigate the step and confined space

undertake the setup. Suitable footwear should be worn, and assistance should be used where needed. The Town Council accepts no responsibility for accidents or injuries sustained during access or egress. Groups must take full responsibility for the safety of anyone entering the space on their behalf. A two-step ladder is available from the Council and must be used to access the window space. It must only be used by competent individuals and checked for stability before use. A second person must always be present to assist and provide guidance while setup or takedown is in progress.

- j. In the event of an emergency, groups are responsible for ensuring that setup/takedown activities are suspended immediately and the space is evacuated safely.

We look forward to hosting your display. If you need help with anything, please ask.

Orange The World

A United Nations initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls across the world. Inner Wheel is a global women's voluntary organisation and proudly supports the campaign.

This international campaign takes place each year, starting on November 25th,

“International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls”

and ends on December 10th,

“Human Rights Day”

The Inner Wheel Club of



**INNER WHEEL
UNITE IN ACTION
HER SAFETY
OUR PRIORITY**

**Supports
ORANGE THE WORLD
www.innerwheel.co.uk**



**Orange The World
Inner Wheel
Working in the Community**

Document is Restricted

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Youth Services

Meeting Date: Monday, 15 September 2025

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on Youth Services being funded by the Town Council.

Current Situation

Youth Services Grant

The Council has received signed agreements back from most grant awardees.

Unfortunately, the Friends of Springfield School have been unable to facilitate the therapeutic horse-riding sessions proposed in their application. The group is now exploring alternative, similar youth services that may be more feasible as a replacement. They have been advised any new proposal funding would be subject to the Council's discretion and cannot be guaranteed.

Following the agreement of grant allocations in July, a representative of the **Parish of Witney** asked for the parishes aims and activities to be updated with the following, which was an agreed statement on their website. They were awarded part funds for an enrichment programme.

'Our churches share a common purpose: to help each person in our communities grow deeper in their knowledge of and relationship with God. Our vision is to be a community of mercy and kindness.'

We cherish the Eucharist and the Daily Office, and we are an inclusive church committed to a hospitable Christianity where everyone is welcome.

As an outward-looking church, we seek to demonstrate God's love through our actions. We actively engage with 11 schools, 6 nursing and care homes, and provide outreach to new housing communities and those in need throughout the area.'

The Station Detached Youth

Officers met with the Project Director on 9 September 2025 and received an update on their summer programme, KICK, which was delivered at Witney ATP during the school holidays.

This year, only half of the pitch was available due to issues encountered with the booking process. However, this proved to be manageable, as attendance was lower than in 2024. The team believes this is likely because many of last year's attendees have since aged out of the target group, providing an opportunity for younger participants to take part.

In total, 94 young people attended across the summer, with approximately 25–30 participants at each session (held three days per week). Both the organisation and Thames Valley Police were pleased with this level of engagement.

As a result of these structured sessions, no additional detached youth work took place during this period. There is ongoing reflection on how the organisation's delivery model has evolved, and this will be shared in the form of a verbal update at the meeting. Officers were also updated on the leadership of the organisation and future projects.

A confidential report from The Station is attached as **Appendix A**, outlining their budget request and forward plan for future years and an updated Service Level Agreement (SLA).

BREAK – The Station has provisionally booked the café for 3 evenings in the October and February half-terms to run youth café sessions per a trial held earlier this year. It is proposed this runs along the same format, i.e. with free use of the bar, but The Station paying for wages of staff and discounted drinks from the cafe.

Mental Health Drop-in & We Game Sessions

Officers have requested an update from APCAM concerning in these sessions and hope to be able to report back at the next meeting, ahead of budget setting for 2026-27.

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 – the provision of free to access to services.
- b) Biodiversity – no direct implications.
- c) Crime & Disorder – the provision of youth services, particularly during the summer is aimed at reducing anti-social behaviour.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – no direct implications.

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.

The Council must ensure it is receiving value for money in the services it commissions or any group it enters into a partnership with to mitigate against both financial and reputational risk.

Social Value

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

The social value of services and support (via The Station's detached youth work) should be considered. Support contributes to young people being able to live fulfilling lives.

Financial Implications

- If the Friends of Springfield School are not awarded their youth services grant, £2,850 will still be available.
- Funding for The Station in 2025-26 is £18,000. The report from The Station suggests an increase to this amount for 2026-27.
- A discount for drinks purchased and paid for by The Station for the BREAK sessions.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and,

1. Note the updates concerning the Youth Services Grant awards.
2. Consider permitting winter BREAK sessions in the Corn Exchange café, paid for by the Station.
3. Consider the report and requests from The Station for the 2026-27 fiscal year and recommend for budget-setting accordingly.

Document is Restricted

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE



Agenda Item:	Youth Council Update
Meeting Date:	Monday, 15 September 2025
Contact Officer:	Administrative Assistant – Communications & Engagement

The purpose of this report is to inform Councillors about the progress and work of the Witney Youth Council.

Background

The Witney Youth Council was established in September 2024 with a group of 12 members. Since its formation, the council has actively participated in numerous town events, including the Christmas Lights Switch-on and the Witney Carnival. The primary purpose of the Witney Youth Council is to provide children and young people with a collective voice that is heard by decision makers. By giving young people a voice, the Witney Youth Council plays a vital role in shaping a more inclusive and responsive local government, encouraging active participation and developing leadership skills among Witney's young people.

Current Situation

Several youth councillors show great enthusiasm for supporting and participating in events. However, their limited communication with one another results in insufficient time to thoroughly discuss projects and ideas. They have formed a WhatsApp group between them, but as this is formed and monitored by them, therefore we cannot be sure if all members are active or included in the group chat. There are currently 5 or 6 members that are consistent with their attendance of meetings.

Officers' approach to addressing communication challenges involves expanding the Youth Council by inviting new members. Currently, officers have received two new applications, and interviews are scheduled to take place shortly. Additionally, we are offering the option for youth members to be contacted via mobile phones through WhatsApp. Since emails don't appear to be a preferred option, WhatsApp provides a more familiar and accessible means of contact for the youth councillors. This communication method is managed by the Communications and Engagement Administrative Assistant using a work mobile. It is important to clarify that this is not a group chat but a direct messaging system, ensuring privacy and protecting confidential information.

High Sheriff's Breakfast

Since the most recent Youth Council meeting in July was cancelled, the planned discussion for the High Sheriff's Big Breakfast Conversations did not take place. Consequently, Officers reached out to the High Sheriff and requested an extension for the project to hold the event in November. Further discussions on this were due to be held at a Youth Council Meeting on 5th September but was unable to be take place due to numbers.

Youth-led Culture Day

This suggested event is a significant project that has yet to be successfully planned. It was intended to be an evening featuring performances, world foods, and music representing various cultures (including Britain). The event was to be organised and led by the Youth Council. As the September Youth Council meeting was due to determine whether the planning and execution of this event would proceed it is now likely that the event will be cancelled or postponed.

Events Survey

The Youth Council initiated an events survey as one of their initial actions following their earlier meetings. This survey is designed to be distributed and promoted by the Youth Council to collect information on the preferences and interests of young people in Witney regarding upcoming events.

An additional question was included in the survey to assess perceptions of Anti-Social Behaviour following officer meetings with TVP, specifically whether young respondents believe it is a significant issue in their community. The survey has now been completed and will be distributed to schools through their daily slides, aiming to reach a broad audience of young people and gather valuable insights. The survey is attached as **Appendix A**.

Officers have discussed the importance of increasing the visibility of Witney Town Council as a brand among the youth of Witney. Many young residents seem to not be aware of the functions and roles of both the Witney Town Council and the Witney Youth Council. To improve awareness, a practical approach would be to distribute a monthly slide poster to local schools. This presentation would serve as a brief newsletter, featuring the council's logo and recent activities or initiatives undertaken by the youth and town council. As young people are less likely to follow the council on social media platforms, it is important to try to reach them directly through channels they frequently access, such as schools. Additionally, the youth council mentioned the daily slides as a successful source of information. This strategy aims to increase engagement and understanding of the council's work among the younger demographic, ensuring that all parts of the community are well-informed and involved.

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 – The Youth Council has not yet shown interest in climate initiatives. However, when they buy items for their projects, officers have prioritised sustainability and the use of eco-friendly materials.

Risk

Officers recognise the potential risks associated with using WhatsApp and have developed a consent form that details the data collection and usage when employing third-party applications. Youth Councillors and their guardians retain the right to refuse the use of WhatsApp and can remain to communicate exclusively through email.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates. Benefits provided by the above items are:

- Communication methods tailored to young people's preferences, enabling more effective collaboration.
- Organisations and local groups able to gather valuable insights on the perspectives and needs of young people in Witney through a small, representative sample.

Financial Implications

- Officers' working time.
- Possible costs relating to Youth Council plans for the Corn Exchange Event.

Recommendations

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

1. Confirmation of the use of WhatsApp as an additional form of communication (within suggested age guidelines)
2. Creation of a monthly slide newsletter for schools outlining the Council's work.



Witney Events for Young People Survey - 2025

* 1. Do you think Witney would benefit from more events for young people?

☐ Yes

☐ No

* 2. Which events would you go to?

☐ Football

☐ Youth Talent Show

☐ Rugby

☐ Live Music/Bands

☐ Basketball

☐ Board Games & Puzzles

☐ Film Club

☐ Youth Club/Café

☐ Disco/party

☐ Arcade

☐ Dance (Tap-dance, breakdance, etc.)

☐ Book Club

☐ Arts & Crafts

☐ All

☐ Other (please specify)

* 3. What is the most you would be comfortable paying for a ticket?
(Select all that apply)

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> £1 | <input type="checkbox"/> £20 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> £5 | <input type="checkbox"/> £30 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> £10 | <input type="checkbox"/> None of the above |
| <input type="checkbox"/> £15 | |

* 4. Where do you look the most for events happening in Witney?

- ☐ Instagram Posts
- ☐ Instagram Stories
- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Posters
- ☐ School Morning Notices
- ☐ School Noticeboards
- ☐ Town Noticeboards
- ☐ Other (please specify)

5. Anything else about events in Witney for young people?

6. Would you like to help plan the events?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Maybe with more information.
- ☐ No

7. Bonus Question from Thames Valley Police:

What do you think is the biggest issue in Witney when it comes to crime and anti-social behaviour (e.g. vandalism, littering, noise, intimidation)?

- Is there a **particular area** where you notice this happening the most?
- Do you have any comments or ideas to share with **Witney's neighbourhood policing team** which could help **reduce** these problems?

Keep up with the Witney Youth Council ☐

Follow us on Instagram @youthwitney and Facebook to find the latest news. You can also contact us through our email youthcouncil@witney-tc.gov.uk if you have any ideas or are interested in getting involved!

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Christmas - Lights Contract & Sponsorship 2025

Meeting Date: Monday, 15 September 2025

Contact Officer: Project Officer

The purpose of this report is to update Councillors on the Christmas Lights Contract and potential sponsorship opportunities.

Background

Traditionally Witney Town Council offer sponsorship of our 'Tree's' and 'Children's Display' to a small selection of businesses who have loyally sponsored these displays year on year.

However, through the procurement of the new 3-year Christmas Light contract in 2024, officers were able to carry out a detailed cost analysis and identified a significant cost gap between the cost of the trees and children's display vs. the sponsorship income.

Whilst engaging with existing sponsors in 2024 officers discussed the probable increase to secure sponsorship in 2025. Most sponsors were understanding of the increase and some suggested sharing the tree sponsorship with other companies.

Current Situation

Sponsorship

Therefore, when compiling the 2025 sponsorship offering, officers have taken this on board and identified the addition of the Advent Fayre as an opportunity for businesses to get involved with lower cost entry point. Several local businesses have already expressed interest and officers are confident that this refreshed approach will result in strong uptake, increased community engagement and a more collaborative festive season for Witney.

As we approach Christmas 2025, officers are seeking Council approval to offer a refreshed and expanded sponsorship package that will strengthen our ties with local businesses and help fund the much-loved Christmas displays. Sponsorship communications are attached as **Appendix A**.

Christmas Lights Social Value Fund

Witney Town Council awarded a 3-year Christmas light contract in 2024. Included within this contract, the winning contractor LITE, agreed to donate £1,000 per year to local charities to help people in need have a better Christmas.

In 2024, the council gave 4x equal payments of £250 to the following charities:

- Witney Foodbank (enhance Xmas food parcels for community in need)
- Witney Food Revolution (Treats and presents for children in need at the larder)
- Witney Community Church (enhanced a Christmas party for refugee and asylum families)
- High Street Methodist Church (Christmas Meals for people in need)

The above beneficiaries were agreed by a working group of councillors. Do members want to agree a similar working group? In addition, do members want to consider the same charities for donation for 2025 or donate to different charities?

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 – the social value fund could be used to support harder to reach in our community
- b) Biodiversity – no direct impact.
- c) Crime & Disorder – no direct impact.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency– no direct impact.

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.

The social value fund should be allocated fairly and as widely as possible to mitigate against reputational risk.

Social Value

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

As stated in the report above.

Financial Implications

- Sponsorship will help raise funds towards the Christmas Lights contract, reducing use of precepted funds
- The value of the social fund for 2025 is £1,000.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and,

1. Consider approving the Christmas sponsorship opportunities for 2025.
2. Consider options for the allocation of the Christmas Lights social value fund.

Christmas Lights Sponsorship 2025

Help your brand glow
by sponsoring the
Witney Christmas lights



WITNEY
TOWN COUNCIL

www.witney-tc.gov.uk



Page 62

Witney Town Council
Tel: 01993 704379
Town Hall, Market Square,
Witney, Oxon OX28 6AG

Two Packages Pick One or Both!

CHRISTMAS TREE SPONSORSHIP

Every year, **two stunning Christmas Trees** are beautifully decorated and installed in central Witney, captivating **thousands of residents and visitors**. From late November to early January, these trees are the most photographed and admired part of the town's festive display.

- Unmatched brand visibility with **estimated ootall o** with improved fencing and eye-catching banners.
- Reach thousands of Witney residents at **Christmas iht itch-n ent**
- Shows your support and commitment to the local community.
- **Multi-Channel Brand Promotion** in partnership with Witney Town Council

ONLY
£1500

2024 Tree Sponsorship



...and so
much more!
Scan the QR code
for more benefits



Santa's Grotto at the
2024 Advent Fayre



ADVENT FAYRE EVENT SPONSORSHIP

Bring festive joy to Witney families by sponsoring the sell-out Advent Fayre: a beloved, free community event that draws **huge local crowds**. Held at the historic Corn Exchange, the Fayre transforms the rooms into a magical Christmas experience, with lots of arts and crafts activities, **a branded photo booth** and popular Santa's Grotto.

- **Exclusive access** to a large, captive audience
- High brand visibility at a **flagship festive event**
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STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Witney Chamber of Commerce

Meeting Date: Monday, 15 September 2025

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk

The purpose of this report is for Members to consider collaboration with Witney Chamber of Commerce through a Witney Town Centre Forum.

Background

At the meeting of the Committee on 14 July 2025, it was resolved that 'officers draft a framework of how the Council can work collaboratively with Witney Chamber of Commerce for presentation at a future meeting' (minute no. SC415 refers).

At the above meeting, it was unanimously agreed that the Council should re-establish a Town Centre Forum, which was previously run and administered by the Council between approximately 2008 and 2017. The Forum would serve as a platform to discuss matters relating to the town centre, aligning with the shared aims of the existing Witney Town Partnership.

Current Situation

The purpose of the Forum is to bring together representatives from the Chamber and other stakeholders with a common goal: to help create a vibrant town centre where people want to live, work, shop, and spend their leisure time.

While it has not been possible to progress this further over the summer due to limited Town Council resources, this item remains a key aim of the Committee and further discussion is required with the Chamber of Commerce.

The Town Centre Forum appears to be the most practical channel for establishing a collaborative framework with the Chamber, supporting the shared goal of a vibrant local economy; meeting the committee's terms of reference and helping to progress the findings of the Chamber's survey conducted earlier in the year including:

- Sharing of information and updates on town centre issues
- Support for joint initiatives and events
- Providing feedback on public realm, safety, and regeneration projects
- Acting as a consultative body for the Town Council and partners

The membership could be open to representatives from:

- Town, District, and County Councils
- Local businesses and business groups
- Police and public services
- Community and voluntary sector

The governance of the Forum meetings:

- Held quarterly or as needed
- Chaired by a Town Councillor or appointed representative
- Administrative support provided by the Town Council
- Non-decision-making but can make recommendations

Reporting:

- Notes shared with the Town Council and members
- Issues raised may inform Council policy or action

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 impact although collaborative working may highlight good practice for all parties.
- b) Crime & Disorder – the Forum will provide a larger audience to discuss issues relating to crime and disorder in the town centre.
- c) Environment & Climate Emergency – the Council representatives will be able to engage with business owners and advise them on future schemes which will help achieve shared goals.

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.

- The town council is only able to conduct activities within its remit and legislation and only has limited resources.

Social Value

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

A vibrant local economy delivers social value by creating employment opportunities and supporting overall community wellbeing. It enhances access to services, fosters civic pride, and encourages social interaction through public spaces and local events. In turn, increased

footfall and spending help sustain local infrastructure and public services, contributing to a stronger, more cohesive, and prosperous community.

Financial implications

- There is no set budget for any projects associated with a Town Centre Forum.
- Officer time for administration and attendance of meetings and any actions arising.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and:

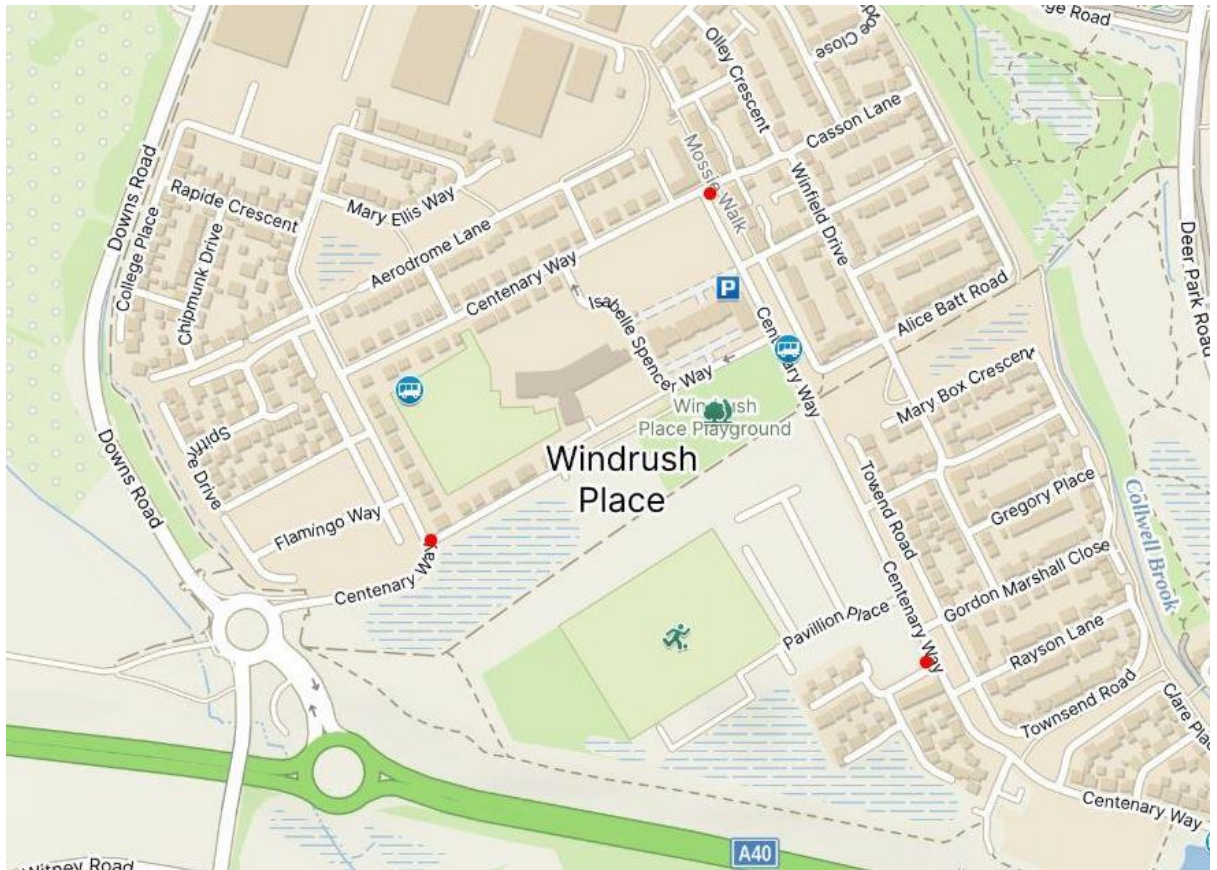
1. Consider approval of the Town Centre Forum along the above lines (and further discussion with the Chamber of Commerce).

Document is Restricted

Officers have received the following suggested locations:

Windrush Place

- Corner of Mott Close at Centenary Way
- Corner of Winfield Drive with Centenary Way
- On the corner of Hurricane Close with Centenary Way (near the existing bins)



STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Third-Party Events Report

Meeting Date: Monday 15th September 2025

Contact Officer: Venue & Events Officer

The purpose of this report is to update members on the Third-Party Events that have taken place on WTC land over the summer of 2025.

Background

Witney Town Council facilitates a number of events throughout the year on council managed land such as The Leys, Burwell Recreation Ground and West Witney Playing Fields. Officers work with the organisers of these events to review their event plans to ensure; health and safety, licensing and legal compliance, protection from damage to our ground (through measures to limit damage and holding damage deposits) and to obtain their specific requirements for the grounds team to facilitate such as removing bollards for vehicle access etc.

Witney Town Council is also a partner of some of these events, including Witney Music Festival. Officers work in collaboration with the partner organisations by providing promotional support to help maximise the attendance of the event and to showcase the partnership between the council and the organisation.

Current Situation

Past Events

- **Hatwell's Funfair – 14th – 18th May:** A yearly fairground event, aimed at younger children and families. This event is on a smaller scale than the Witney Feast, but still a substantial event for the town. This event was well attended this year, largely helped by the good weather that week.
- **Witney Pride – 24th May:** Witney pride hosted their third annual event at The Leys on 24th May 2025. The event began with a procession through the Town centre to the Leys, where the main event had been set up. The main event on the leys included live music and entertainment, community groups, and food and drink vendors. The event received some positive media coverage, praising the impressive turnout.
- **Witney Music Festival – 6th & 7th June:** Witney Music Festival took place on The Leys on a very rainy weekend in June. Whilst the weather would've impacted the attendance numbers, the event ploughed on in good spirit. The event supported local musicians and DJ's, with the majority of the main stage acts being local bands. Officers

have arranged a full wash up meeting for 15th September with the festival directors, to review this year's performance and look ahead at improvements that will be made to next year's festival. A report for the Council (including finances has also been requested).

- **Circus Cortex – CANCELLED:** Unfortunately, this new event planned for June 2025 was cancelled by the production, along with their other dates nationally.
- **Witney Carnival – Saturday 12th July:** The carnival, which is organised by Witney Round Table, Witney Lions Club, Witney Rotary Club and the Witney Air Cadets, returned on 12th July 2025. The Carnival is the largest annual event at The Leys by land, covering both sides of the recreation ground. Officers worked closely with the organisers to ensure we can facilitate the event and that their plans for the event were safe and compliant.
- **OPA Play Day – Thursday 7th August.** The OPA Play Day ran at Burwell Recreation Ground was a successful event, well attended by families of Witney. The event was free of charge with free activities. Taken from OPA's report on the event: *"Playday is the national day for play, celebrated each year across the UK. The theme for this year's Playday is ... Spaces for Play. This year's theme highlights the vital importance of accessible, inclusive spaces where children and young people have opportunities to play freely, spending time, and connecting with friends – and feel valued as part of their community.* This a valuable event for the town and Officers will welcome them back next year.

Upcoming Events

- **Witney Feast – 14th – 16th September:** Witney Feast is operating an additional day on Sunday 14th September, on top of their regular Monday and Tuesday openings. The Golden Gallopers service will occur at 1pm on the Sunday, blessing the fair which celebrates the rededication of St Mary's Church. After the service, the fair will open for a special family afternoon. There will be street entertainers including jugglers, as well as music, food, drink, rides and games.
- **Circus Ginnett 27th October – 2nd November:** A popular touring circus event is returning to the leys this year.
- **Remembrance Service:** Officers are into the planning phase of this years Remembrance Service. This event is run by Officers of WTC, with involvement from local organisations. After a successfully ran event last year, there will be minimal changes to this year's event plan, with some minor adjustments to ensure things run smoothly on the day.

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 – All events should be equal and inclusive.
- b) Biodiversity – see below – environment and climate.
- c) Crime & Disorder – third party hirers should be including mitigation in their event plans.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – The Compliance & Environment Officer will be looking at third party hire and the initiatives hirers should take in relation to these areas.

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.

Community events such as music festivals, fairs, pride celebrations, and carnivals play a vital role in strengthening the social fabric of a town. These gatherings create inclusive spaces where people from diverse backgrounds can come together to celebrate, connect, and share experiences.

These events also encourage volunteerism and community involvement, empowering residents to actively shape their town's character.

Financial implications

- The subsidised letting budget at the Leys was oversubscribed in 2025-26.
- An annual grant of £10,000 to Witney Music Festival.
- The budget for contributions towards Witney Carnival and the Christmas Lights switch on events are likely to be exceeded in the current year (decision pending).

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and,

1. Consider increasing the subsidised lettings budget for the Leys in 2026-27 which was slightly above budget within this year.
2. Consider raising the budget of the town council's contribution to Witney Carnival for 2026-27.
3. Consider reconfirming the grant award for Witney Music festival for 2026-27 in line with the partnership agreement.