

Parks & Recreation

Committee Meeting of Witney Town Council



Monday, 3rd November, 2025 at 6.00 pm

To members of the Parks & Recreation Committee - J Aitman, S Simpson, J Treloar, R Smith, A Bailey, J Doughty, D Edwards-Hughes and D Temple (and all other Town Councillors for information).

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

Admission to Meetings

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

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 of the items under consideration at this meeting in accordance with the Town Council's code of conduct.

3. **Minutes** (Pages 4 - 9)

a) To adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee held on 1 September 2025;

b) Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda (Questions on the progress on any item).

4. **Participation of the Public**

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: Revised Revenue Budget 2025/26 and Draft Base Revenue Budget for 2026/27**
(Pages 10 - 29)

To receive and consider the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and the Draft Revised Revenue Budget for 2025/26 and Draft Budget for 2026/27.

6. **Revenue Growth Items, Special Revenue Projects, and Capital Projects** (Pages 30 - 32)

To receive and consider the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) with an update on the current year's work programme relating to Capital and Special Revenue Projects; as well as projects identified during the course of the year for inclusion as Revenue Growth Items or Special Revenue Projects in the Council's Revenue Budget or Capital Projects for 2026/27 and beyond.

7. **Schedule of Proposed Fees & Charges 2026/27** (Page 33)

During the Budget Setting Cycle the Council reviews its Fees and Charges for various facilities and services it operates.

Included is the schedule of charges in respect of the assets and services which fall under the responsibility of this Committee, and the Committee is requested to review and approve or amend, as necessary.

Parks

8. **Sports Pitches Update** (Pages 34 - 50)

To receive the report of the Operations Manager with an accompanying STRI (formerly the Sports Turf Research Institute) report following the evaluation of the Council grassed sports provision.

Recreation

9. **Major Projects** (Pages 51 - 59)

To receive and consider the report of the Project Officer concerning the progress of projects under the remit of this Committee being undertaken by the Council or Stakeholders.



Town Clerk

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

Held on Monday, 1 September 2025

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

Present:

Councillor S Simpson (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)

Councillors:	J Treloar	D Temple
	R Smith	G Doughty (In place of J Doughty)
	A Bailey	D Newcombe (In place of J Aitman)
	D Edwards-Hughes	
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Adam Cook	Project Officer
	Angus Whitburn	Operations Manager
Others:	Three members of the public. Councillor Georgia Meadows	

PR481 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Aitman and J Doughty, Councillors D Newcombe and G Doughty attended as substitutes respectively.

PR482 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers.

PR483 MINUTES

The minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 30 June 2025 were received.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 30 June 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

PR484 PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

The Committee adjourned for this item.

The Committee received representations from representatives of Witney Vikings and Tower Hill Football Clubs concerning Agenda Items 7 & 8.

The representative for Witney Vikings led the participation outlining the clubs plans to work better with the Council and the proposed changes to streamline administration, fee collection and how they could work alongside the Council in the application of grant funding.

The representative from Tower Hill, expressed their pleasure at hearing of the potential collaboration between teams and the Council.

The Committee reconvened.

PR485 FOOTBALL CLUB TRAINING FEES

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

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations Manager, who also provided a verbal explanation. He confirmed the main issue with training was that it took place on match pitches during the time that renovations works were ongoing.

The football club representatives present acknowledged that training did take place without booking with the Council. The clubs also agreed with the comments of the Operations Manager that training should never take place on match pitches and that they were aware this was the directive of the Football Association (The FA), with the outcome being that this may potentially affect grant funding from the FA.

In order that a full discussion took place, with the permission of the Chair, the representatives present participated in the discussion.

Members had heard earlier from the football club representatives who had asked that the implementation of training fees be delayed as training fees had not been factored into the club's fee charging structure for 2025.

In response to a Member's question regarding the impact to membership if training fees were enforced by the Council, the representative for Witney Vikings advised that with such demand for places he did not expect a drop in their membership due to a potential higher registration fee needing to be charged. However, he hoped that the collaboration with the Council to seek grant funding could mitigate the need for training fees.

Members discussed various options which resulted in a proposal to which all members unanimously agreed that:

1. Training sessions be allowed to proceed without charge this season and,
2. That all training must be booked via the bookings office to determine demand and so the correct maintenance can be carried out by the Council's work team and,
3. The Council identify and prepare other grassed areas, with a maximum 9 x 9 pitch being made available for training and,
4. That areas designated for training are used instead of match pitch areas (in line with FA guidance) and,
5. Absolutely no training must take place on match pitches outside of the football season (During renovation periods) and,
6. Storage containers be considered at the additional training sites identified and,
7. That the demand for training be monitored and its success reviewed in March 2026.

Recommended:

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, the above decisions, numbered 1-7, be communicated to the football teams at the upcoming new season meeting with clubs on 4 September 2025.

PR486 SPORTS PITCH UPDATE

Also, with the permission of the Chair, this item was moved up the agenda so the members of public could hear the discussion and outcome.

The Committee received and considered the report and accompanying verbal update from the Operations Manager outlining the position of the sports pitches as the new football season approached.

Members heard that following a dry spring and summer the renovations had not been fully successful with areas of newly seeded ground not taking properly due to a lack of rain. The Operations Manager explained that the decompaction work had not taken place and in hindsight this was the correct decision as it would have led to create drying of the ground and creation of dangerous playing surface due to large cracks.

An update was provided on the grant funding that the Council was in receipt of, it was hoped that further funding may be sought from the Football Foundation to carry out further drainage consultations, specifically at West Witney. Members welcomed this having heard earlier from the representative of Witney Vikings that the club would look to support the Council in any grant applications.

The Operations Manager highlighted the potential risk of ground allocation for junior teams in so much as if one recreation ground was to suffer from poor weather, this would lead to the potential cancellation of all of that club's games and therefore adversely affect them. It was agreed that a trial allocation be discussed further with the football clubs at the meeting on 4 September.

The Committee discussed the request from Witney Vikings for the siting of a storage container at King George's field, Members were very supportive of this and highlighted the need to ensure that consideration also be given to storage for the Witney Wolves Basketball team who intended to make use of the court in the Multi Use Games Area.

Discussion regarding the request for additional inseting of pitches took place, it was proposed by Cllr R Smith, seconded by Cllr G Doughty that this should not be undertaken. Members heard this was the advice from the Football Association and was further supported by the news of damage witnessed from the overuse of the Burwell pitches in previous years.

A vote was taken with six members supporting the proposal, one member abstained.

Recommended:

1. That, the report and verbal updates be noted and,
2. That, Officers discuss ground allocation with the junior football clubs and,
3. That, no marking of inset pitches take place and,
4. That, agreement to install a storage container at King George's field be granted and consideration given to storage for Witney Wolves and,

5. That, potential grant funding opportunities is explored by Officers.

The representative of Witney Vikings left the meeting at 6:58pm.

The remaining members of the public left the meeting at 7:07pm

During the following Agenda Item Cllr D Edwards-Hughes left the meeting briefly between 7:10 and 7:12pm

PR487 FINANCE REPORT

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

Members heard that the net expenditure was at 22% of budget- it being three months into the financial year the news was welcomed.

Members considered items for inclusion in the 2026/27 budget, Members highlighted the potential need to set funds for improvements to the Basketball Court at King Georges Field, the path at West Witney to enhance the Park Run, Consideration for pitch drainage at any sites that require it and for consideration by Officers of an increase of benches in the Council's recreation areas.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, consideration be given to the suggested budget items listed above and,
3. That, the management accounts of the Parks & Recreation Committee for the period 1 April to 30 June 2025 be approved.

PR488 PLAY AREA REVIEW

The Committee received and considered the report of the Project Officer along with a verbal update explaining how the play review tied into the Council overall strategy. Councillors agreed that age and diversity along with the provision of seating and shade for parents should be prioritised by Officers when considering future improvements

The Committee were pleased to see the additions to the inclusive play range and particularly the play panels and welcomed the suggestion for Ralegh Crescent, to replace once of the current inclusive swing with a traditional swing. This would resolve the need to install a path and would allow for funds to be utilised instead provide an additional inclusive play item in an area with existing suitable access.

Officers explained further how consideration would be given to improve the access to inclusive equipment in all the Council's parks to ensure that their use is maximised, this would be carried out in conjunction with users and their families. Following a proposal from Cllr G Doughty, seconded by Cllr A Bailey it was agreed unanimously to delegate to Officers the installation of this equipment.

A paper with three options of replacement swing equipment for Burwell and The Leys play parks was tabled, members discussed each of the options. It was proposed by Cllr J Treloar, seconded by Cllr R Smith that Option One be selected as it provided a piece that could be used by up to four users at a time and could be used by children five and older.

The Committee welcomed the suggestion to install non-verbal communication boards in the play parks at Woodgreen, Oxlease and Quarry Road. These would be provided by Oxfordshire County Council Councillor priority funding and members were appreciative that Officers were carrying out this work alongside the ICE Centre.

Recommended:

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, inclusive play equipment as detailed in the report should be purchased for the sum of £16,980 from the play areas budget and,
3. That, officers be authorised to procure and implement access/surfacing or a new inclusive swing at Raleigh Crescent Play Area as a high priority, within a maximum budget of £8,000, to be funded as a supplementary estimate from the General Reserve, the most expedient and cost-effective solution being sought, subject to RFO confirmation.
4. That, Option One (Agito Cyclone) be selected for the replacement swing at both Burwell Recreation Ground and The Leys for the sum of £19,240 from the play area budget.
5. That, prior to placing orders for the inclusive equipment listed in the report, the Project Officer engages with the residents who previously raised accessibility concerns and were promised involvement, to ensure suitability and siting within the available budget.
6. That, before procurement and installation of inclusive items, officers undertake proportionate access checks (edging, thresholds, approach surfacing and gate convenience) and minor enabling works to be authorised under existing delegation, with any material cost brought back to Committee.

PR489 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.

PR490 PROJECTS UPDATE

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

Members were provided with updates on the West Witney Sports & Social Club building, the Raleigh Crescent new sports and social area and new works depot.

West Witney Projects.

Members heard that the Project Officer was confident that the tender document was progressing well and that it would be advertised in the following two weeks, they received an outline project timescale and were pleased to see that this showed that both projects would be completed by spring of 2026.

Raleigh Crescent

The Committee heard that the amended tender was due to be reviewed by WODC earlier the following week and, providing it was acceptable then it too would be advertised in the coming weeks.

Resolved:

That, the report and verbal updates be noted.

PR491 **PROJECTS UPDATE - COURTSIDE/THE LEYS**

The Committee received the confidential update prepared by Jeff Hunter, Courtside CIC Chief Executive.

Members were extremely disappointed to learn of a potential funding gap for the project and how this may impact on the Council.

The Town Clerk reported that she had been in contact with West Oxfordshire District Council in order to request their consideration in helping to resolve the issue

A Members asked that the Chief Executive of Courtside be invited to the meeting of the Council on 6 October 2025 in order that Members heard directly from him.

Resolved:

1. That, the confidential Courtside update be noted and,
2. That, Courtside Chief executive, Jeff Hunter be invited to the meeting of the Council on 6 October 2025.

The meeting closed at: 8.00 pm

Chair

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Finance Report: Revised Revenue Budget 2025/26 and Draft Base Revenue Budget for 2026/27

Meeting Date: 3 November 2025

Contact Officer: Responsible Financial Officer

Should Members have any queries about this report advance notice would be appreciated, in writing, by 12 noon on Monday 3 November to allow for a full response at the meeting.

Background

Each year the committees review their estimates of income and expenditure so that proposals can be submitted to the Council in relation to revised revenue estimates for the current year and proposals for the next year.

Consequently, this report presents Members with the revised budget for 2025/26 and the first draft of the revenue budget for 2026/27 for the cost centres which are the responsibility of this Committee. Please see attached document.

The budget process is ongoing and there is further work to be done. Therefore, this report will be subject to updates when this Committee's estimates are presented at the meeting of the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee on 24 November.

Current Situation

For the Parks and Recreation Committee the following cost centres are in place and these are shown in the report. Cost centres, comprising three digits, typically represent a discrete service entity, to which income and expenditure is allocated against previously agreed revenue budgets.

Cost centre	Service
201	Splash Park at the Leys Recreation Ground
202	The Leys Recreation Ground
203	West Witney Sports Ground
204	Burwell (Queen Elizabeth 2) Sports Ground
205	King George V/ Newland Recreation Ground
207	Moorland Road Play Area
208	Woodgreen/ Play Area
209	Eton Close Play Area
210	Oxlease Play Area
211	Fieldmere Play Area
212	Quarry Road Play Area

213	Raleigh Crescent Play Area/ Deer Park pitches
214	Park Road Play Area
215	Cedar Drive Play Area
216	Unterhaching Play Area
217	Waterford Lane Play Area
218	Windrush Place
230	Play Areas – Holding Budget

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.

The format of this report is straightforward; the first two columns relate to the original budget from 2024/25 against the actual figures for last year. The middle columns relate to the current year’s original budget, actual expenditure year to date, the projected budget to 31 March 2026, based on the latest estimates. The right-hand columns relate to the draft budget for 2026/24.

The Committee’s revenue budget growth items for 2026/27, and its capital/special revenue projects programme for 2026/27 and beyond are dealt with as a separate budget item.

Members have requested an analysis of estimates by nominal code ledger so there are figures for overall staffing costs, utilities, property and equipment etc. The accounting software enables these reports to be produced but only on a full council basis and not by committee. The estimates, analysed by nominal ledger code, will be produced alongside the cost centre estimates for the PGF Committee at its meeting on 24 November 2025.

BUDGET PARAMETERS – DRAFT ESTIMATES 2026-27

Draft budgets are prepared based on current activities and patterns of income and expenditure. At this stage most of the budget lines have been kept as previously agreed unless there are known variations.

When considering the estimates the RFO examines each individual budget line, looking at the historic trends and known future developments so a flat percentage is not applied uniformly across the estimates. There has been significant inflationary pressure over recent years, peaking at 14.2% (RPI) and 11.1% (CPI) in the year to October 2022. Whilst inflation has since fallen it is higher than the Bank of England’s target, running at 3.8% (CPI) and 4.5% (RPI) in September 2025.

In preparing these estimates the following budget parameters, agreed by the Council, in the last cycle, have been applied:

INCOME

1. Fees and Charges

Fees and charges for recreation services need to be considered. The Council is subject to inflationary pressures and so it is reasonable that fees and charges are increased to cover these. It should be remembered that services run at a net cost to the Council taxpayer – which is the ultimate reason they are provided by a local authority. Fees and charges are set at a level at which a reasonable amount is then recovered by those actually benefiting from the service which has been paid for by all Witney council taxpayers. 4% was previously proposed as the baseline for fees and charges increases.

EXPENDITURE

2. Staffing Costs

The national pay award for 2025-26 was agreed at 3.2%.

Previously an increase of 4% in line with inflation forecasts for 2025 was proposed; in this report the RFO has reduced this to 3.8%, in line with the latest CPI rate.

3. Utilities

There remains uncertainty regarding **gas and electricity prices** and these could change depending on the increasingly unstable international circumstances.

The contract placed for 2025-26 and energy efficiency improvements made by the Council mean that the budgets for gas and electricity were reduced from £87,598 to £53,396.

In relation to 2026-27 we are awaiting advice from our current suppliers although the anticipation is that any increase will be less than the current rate of inflation. However, to be prudent an increase of 3.8% has been applied.

Regarding **water charges** the latest information is that business charges will increase in this area by an average of 4.5% and this has been applied.

Regarding National Non-Domestic Rates, the increase for 2026-27 this will be announced in the government's budget is normally based on the CPI in the autumn and so again an increase of 3.8% has been applied.

4. Insurance

The Council's Long-Term Agreement (LTA) with Zurich Municipal ends as of 31 March 2026. The LTA has guaranteed the same rate (insurance charge per £1K insured) for

five years although premiums have risen with sums insured. The end of the LTA will likely result in significant increases, and your officers should have more information in this regard following a meeting next month, although rates for any potential future LTA will not have been settled by then.

The Council will seek tenders early in 2026 but for now an increase of 28% has been applied, the CPI rate increase over the previous 5-year period.

5. Other expenditure lines

When considering the estimates the RFO examines each individual budget line, looking at the historic trends and known future developments so a flat percentage is not applied uniformly across the estimates. However, where a cost-of-living increase is applied, 3.8% has been used for 2026-27.

REVENUE BUDGET SUMMARY

The Base Revenue Budget for this Committee is summarised on page one of the attached schedules.

Members may wish to note the following general comments:

1. The actual year to date figures are for the first half year, the period April to September 2024 and include the recharges from central budgets.
2. Income - note the seasonal nature of the income in relation to sports facilities, with cricket skewed to the April – September period when income from football is skewed to the period from September.
3. All codes 4047 – play equipment maintenance. Until now a budget was allocated to each of the play areas on an annual basis. However, this was not always required and when it was it often exceeded the annual budget amount allocated to the relevant site for that year. Consequently, a new system is now in place to account for these budgets. Instead of having 15 separate budgets across the different play areas, these have been consolidated into one budget under a new cost centre (cc), cc230, with a budget this year of £14,760 and £15,320 next year. When money is then spent on a play area it is recorded against that play area. Budget is then vired (transferred) to that specific play area budget and the amount in cc250 is reduced accordingly. Consequently, Members will see that the amount remaining for play area maintenance this year is £6,825.

Note that there is a separate play area capital budget of £75,000 (current year), under the capital budget cost centre 800. The capital budget is the responsibility of the

Policy, Governance and Finance Committee although the other spending committees have a significant role in formulating and spending these budgets.

4. As previously reported the Council is now accounting for earmarked reserve movements differently. The previous system, used by this and other councils, was to represent in-year funding from earmarked reserves as negative expenditure (4995 – transfer from earmarked reserves) and transfers to earmarked reserves as expenditure (code 4991). These fund movements are now shown in these reports as a “below the line” adjustment “Transfer from/to EMR” so they do not impact on expenditure but are correctly shown as funding. Appropriate adjustments were made in the 2023-24 accounts. The intention is also that such transfers are undertaken at or shortly after expenditure has been incurred.

However, for sums in relation to earmarked reserve 326 – committed sums – these have been input directly in to committed sums against individual budget lines and has the impact of increasing the budget line by that amount. A budget report can be run to show these sums but when that report is run it does not then show the 2025-26 revised budget so on this occasion, I am listing these sums which have been included in the 2025-26 budget lines, listed as cost centre/nominal ledger code:

202/4059 - £10,000

202/4215 - £2,000

203/4059 - £2,000

205/4100 - £500

214/4013 - £125

5. There have also been a number of changes in relation to the treatment of property budgets. Previously where a property was leased out this was represented in the accounts against the site where the property was located.

For this Committee the best example is the West Witney Clubhouse, leased to West Witney Sports and Social Club; the Witney Mills and West Witney Bowls Club and the Witney Projectile Range buildings. These were previously shown under the West Witney Sports Ground budget, cc203. However, this inadvertently has the impact of distorting revenue budgets such as cc203. This is because the vast majority of expenditure in this cost centre is not related to these buildings, and those that are was recharged, whereas the income shown on these rentals represented 45% of the income shown on cc.203, thus understating the cost of operating the sports ground. In governance terms it should also be noted that whilst clearly spending committees have an interest, property matters in relation to leases etc are primarily a matter for the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee (PGF).

Consequently, a new cost centre – 501 – has been created under PGF and this will consolidate all rented property income and expenditure.

Current year budgets have been vired over to that cost centre which has the impact of ensuring that like for like comparisons may more readily be made between 2025-26 and 2026-27.

The virements made are:

202/1050 Income £1,000

202/1058 Income £195

202/4025 Expenditure £120

203/1042 Income £3,175

203/1050 Income £10,366

203/1060 Income £455

203/4025 – Expenditure £695 – Note still showing on original budget line, this will be adjusted before the next PGF meeting.

6. It should be noted that a significant proportion of expenditure in the Parks and Recreation budgets relate to recharges from central budgets. The latter will be considered by PGF at its next meeting but for now Members may wish to note the following:
 - (i) Works team recharges for the year to 30 September 2025 are based on timesheet analysis. This means that there will often be significant variation against individual cost centre budgets depending on what works has taken place on individual sites.
 - (ii) The revised 2025-26 estimates are based on expected outturn for the central budgets and for works, this has been allocated according to the percentage of time spent on that cost centre April to September 2025.
 - (iii) The 2026-27 estimates are based on the first draft estimates for cc.601 to 604 allocated to service cost centres based on the percentages used in the original 2025-26 estimates.
7. Cost centre 218- Windrush Place. A revenue budget was approved for 2025-26 to represent 6 months of running costs (i.e. from October 2025) but transfer from WODC has been delayed so it is not expected this will be required this year. However, the non-overhead elements of this budget, £59,250 are accounted for on the revised budget and will be “rolled over” to 2026-27. The same budget has been suggested for 2026-27.

There should be more detail on the revenue costs to the Council of this facility over the coming months, but the above approach is a prudent and sensible one to ensure there are enough funds for 2026-27.

Overall, the budget estimates show:

Original 2025-26 revenue budget: £513,551 less the 203/4025 virement (see above) = £512,856.

Revised 2025-26 revenue budget: £482,945.

Proposed 2026-27 revenue budget: £536,470 (+4.6% on original 2025-26).

Note the above figures will likely change when the works/central budgets and earmarked reserve movements are considered by the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee.

The Council has major ongoing capital projects and is also taking on new facilities and this will be an important consideration in setting a balanced budget.

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 implications directly resulting from this report.
- b) Biodiversity - no implications directly resulting from this report.
- c) Crime & Disorder - no implications directly resulting from this report.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency - no implications directly resulting from this report.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should consider any risks to the Council and any action they can take to limit or negate its liability. The RFO has approached the budget with prudence so as accurate budget as possible can be set at this early stage, although there may be some opportunities to make savings if required to balance the budget.

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.

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

Recommendations

Members are invited:

Members are invited to note the report and consider the revised base revenue budget for 2025/26 and the estimated base revenue budgets for 2026/27, as detailed in the draft estimates.

WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL Current Year
Annual Budget - By Committee (Actual YTD Month 6)
Note: PARKS & RECREATION - ESTIMATES 2026-27, FIRST DRAFT.

		<u>Last Year 2024-25</u>		<u>Current Year 2025-26</u>				<u>Estimate 2026-27</u>		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
<u>Parks & Recreation</u>										
<u>201</u>	<u>SPLASHPARK</u>									
4012	WATER RATES	12,000	19,404	15,000	12,033	15,000	0	15,000	0	0
4016	CLEANING MATERIALS	300	0	305	197	305	0	300	0	0
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	5,651	5,841	5,100	1,728	3,500	0	3,500	0	0
4047	PLAY EQUIP MAINTENCE	2,668	0	5	5	0	0	0	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	500	0	510	0	0	0	510	0	0
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	0	0	0	72	0	0	0	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	51	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	9,315	4,956	7,500	2,951	6,162	0	8,358	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	854	392	488	208	452	0	494	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	1,699	1,256	1,067	440	930	0	1,239	0	0
Overhead Expenditure		32,987	31,900	29,975	17,634	26,349	0	29,401	0	0
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve		(32,987)	(31,900)	(29,975)	(17,634)	(26,349)		(29,401)		
<u>202</u>	<u>THE LEYS RECREATION GROUND</u>									
1020	SPORTS - FOOTBALL	3,400	3,147	2,600	316	2,700	0	2,810	0	0
1043	GREEN FEES - WTBC	5,420	5,420	5,500	5,550	5,550	0	5,760	0	0
1050	RENT RECEIVED	1,000	1,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1051	GROUND HIRE	16,038	15,991	17,650	17,901	17,901	0	18,257	0	0
1052	EXPENSES RECOVERED	160	1,228	165	308	308	0	171	0	0
1054	EASEMENTS/WAYLEAVES	0	6	6	0	0	0	6	0	0
1058	WATER RECOVERED	190	2,370	0	0	0	0	202	0	0

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Annual Budget - By Committee (Actual YTD Month 6)

Note: PARKS & RECREATION - ESTIMATES 2026-27, FIRST DRAFT.

		<u>Last Year 2024-25</u>		<u>Current Year 2025-26</u>				<u>Estimate 2026-27</u>		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
Total Income		26,208	29,162	25,921	24,074	26,459	0	27,206	0	0
4012	WATER RATES	3,000	8,445	1,350	668	0	0	1,401	0	0
4014	ELECTRICITY	5,202	2,422	3,600	1,513	1,350	0	3,737	0	0
4016	CLEANING MATERIALS	0	0	0	0	3,600	0	0	0	0
4017	CONTRACT CLEAN/WASTE	609	869	425	640	640	0	665	0	0
4024	SUBSCRIPTIONS	0	0	0	430	430	0	446	0	0
4025	INSURANCE	256	112	0	112	224	0	285	0	0
4028	I.T.	0	0	0	13	13	0	13	0	0
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	7,500	6,991	5,000	3,859	6,000	0	6,000	0	0
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	8,120	8,118	5,000	4,867	8,000	0	8,000	0	0
4038	OTHER MAINTENANCE	2,500	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4041	EQUIPMENT HIRE	0	38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4046	SPORTS EQUIPMENT	4,000	3,495	2,000	1,687	3,500	0	3,500	0	0
4047	PLAY EQUIP MAINTENCE	5,000	1,728	3,882	3,882	3,882	0	0	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	1,055	1,043	1,060	940	940	0	1,100	0	0
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	144	420	140	72	0	0	145	0	0
4059	OTHER PROF FEES	0	0	10,000	0	10,000	0	0	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	8	0	41	0	21	0	0	0
4110	SUBSIDIZED LETTINGS	10,000	4,855	5,500	5,763	5,763	0	5,980	0	0
4215	IN BLOOM - INC SCHOOLS CHALLENGE	1,000	50	4,000	0	0	0	1,038	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	66,175	75,610	80,000	42,551	82,022	0	89,149	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	15,690	7,751	5,210	2,926	6,518	0	5,268	0	0
4892	C/S STAFF RCHG	18,431	17,825	21,358	9,970	20,835	0	20,319	0	0
4893	C/S O'HEAD RCHG	5,214	6,201	5,650	2,634	5,217	0	5,817	0	0

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Annual Budget - By Committee (Actual YTD Month 6)

Note: PARKS & RECREATION - ESTIMATES 2026-27, FIRST DRAFT.

		<u>Last Year 2024-25</u>		<u>Current Year 2025-26</u>				<u>Estimate 2026-27</u>		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	7,483	14,657	11,376	5,116	13,410	0	13,215	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	161,379	160,638	165,551	87,685	172,344	21	166,078	0	0
	202 Net Income over Expenditure	-135,171	-131,476	-139,630	-63,611	-145,885	-21	-138,872	0	0
6000	plus Transfer from EMR	0	0	0	1,875	0	0	0	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(135,171)	(131,476)	(139,630)	(61,736)	(145,885)		(138,872)		
203	<u>WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND</u>									
1020	SPORTS - FOOTBALL	8,536	10,464	8,050	2,599	9,900	0	10,300	0	0
1021	SPORTS - CRICKET	1,500	1,470	1,500	1,939	1,938	0	2,000	0	0
1041	RENTAL - TENNIS CLUB	0	4,970	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1042	RENTAL- PROJ.RANGE	3,110	3,110	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1044	GREEN FEES - WMBC	3,254	3,250	3,325	3,350	3,325	0	3,450	0	0
1045	GREEN FEES - WWBC	3,254	3,250	3,325	3,325	3,325	0	3,450	0	0
1050	RENT RECEIVED	10,366	10,352	0	0	0	0	10,760	0	0
1054	EASEMENTS/WAYLEAVES	6	6	6	0	6	0	6	0	0
1060	INSURANCE RECOVERED	427	457	0	0	0	0	472	0	0
1170	GRANTS RECEIVED	0	0	0	6,986	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Income	30,453	37,329	16,206	18,199	18,494	0	30,438	0	0
4024	SUBSCRIPTIONS	0	0	0	430	430	0	445	0	0
4025	INSURANCE	774	681	695	704	0	0	0	0	0
4028	I.T.	0	0	0	47	47	0	50	0	0
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	1,500	2,708	3,300	687	2,100	0	3,000	0	0
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	11,500	11,374	11,600	10,612	11,000	0	11,400	0	0

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Annual Budget - By Committee (Actual YTD Month 6)

Note: PARKS & RECREATION - ESTIMATES 2026-27, FIRST DRAFT.

		<u>Last Year 2024-25</u>		<u>Current Year 2025-26</u>				<u>Estimate 2026-27</u>		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
4046	SPORTS EQUIPMENT	1,000	156	1,000	0	500	0	500	0	0
4047	PLAY EQUIP MAINTENCE	0	6	0	5	5	0	0	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	213	207	210	376	376	0	390	0	0
4059	OTHER PROF FEES	2,000	0	4,000	0	4,000	0	2,000	0	0
4062	SPORTS PITCH MATERIALS	0	1,665	1,285	0	600	0	1,200	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	8	0	82	82	0	0	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	37,622	65,701	70,000	29,858	62,350	0	78,005	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	13,071	7,977	4,559	2,063	4,574	0	4,609	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	2,275	14,337	9,954	2,965	9,410	0	11,563	0	0
Overhead Expenditure		69,955	104,821	106,603	47,829	95,474	0	113,162	0	0
203 Net Income over Expenditure		-39,502	-67,491	-90,397	-29,631	-76,980	0	-82,724	0	0
6001	less Transfer to EMR	0	0	0	6,986	0	0	0	0	0
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve		<u>(39,502)</u>	<u>(67,491)</u>	<u>(90,397)</u>	<u>(36,617)</u>	<u>(76,980)</u>		<u>(82,724)</u>		
204	<u>BURWELL (QE2) SPORTS GROUND</u>									
1020	SPORTS - FOOTBALL	8,000	6,859	7,150	1,981	7,000	0	7,280	0	0
Total Income		8,000	6,859	7,150	1,981	7,000	0	7,280	0	0
4017	CONTRACT CLEAN/WASTE	0	700	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4024	SUBSCRIPTIONS	0	0	0	215	215	0	220	0	0
4028	I.T.	0	0	0	36	0	0	0	0	0
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	1,000	1,626	1,000	468	1,000	0	1,038	0	0
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	9,745	9,745	9,950	9,749	9,950	0	10,328	0	0
4046	SPORTS EQUIPMENT	2,000	0	2,000	1,285	2,000	0	1,000	0	0

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Annual Budget - By Committee (Actual YTD Month 6)

Note: PARKS & RECREATION - ESTIMATES 2026-27, FIRST DRAFT.

		<u>Last Year 2024-25</u>		<u>Current Year 2025-26</u>				<u>Estimate 2026-27</u>		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
4047	PLAY EQUIP MAINTENCE	2,000	2,053	130	130	130	0	0	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	587	546	560	1,200	1,200	0	1,245	0	0
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	100	70	75	72	72	0	75	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	0	0	41	41	21	0	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	21,124	37,944	35,000	22,099	46,148	0	39,003	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	8,809	4,182	2,279	1,493	3,385	0	2,305	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	577	8,920	4,977	2,698	6,965	0	5,782	0	0
Overhead Expenditure		45,942	65,785	55,971	39,485	71,106	21	60,996	0	0
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve		(37,942)	(58,927)	(48,821)	(37,504)	(64,106)		(53,716)		
205	<u>KING GEORGE V / NEWLAND</u>									
1020	SPORTS - FOOTBALL	1,700	1,539	1,750	532	1,600	0	1,665	0	0
Total Income		1,700	1,539	1,750	532	1,600	0	1,665	0	0
4028	I.T.	0	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	534	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	4,003	4,003	5,700	2,895	5,700	0	5,917	0	0
4047	PLAY EQUIP MAINTENCE	500	38	33	33	33	0	0	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	480	472	480	496	496	0	515	0	0
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	100	70	75	72	72	0	75	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	0	0	41	41	21	0	0	0
4100	GRANTS GENERAL	500	0	1,000	0	0	0	500	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	15,699	13,570	20,000	8,010	16,727	0	22,287	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	3,502	1,507	1,303	550	1,227	0	1,317	0	0

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Note: PARKS & RECREATION - ESTIMATES 2026-27, FIRST DRAFT.

		<u>Last Year 2024-25</u>		<u>Current Year 2025-26</u>				<u>Estimate 2026-27</u>		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	1,881	2,853	2,844	914	2,524	0	3,304	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	27,199	22,513	31,435	13,019	26,820	21	33,915	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(25,499)	(20,974)	(29,685)	(12,486)	(25,220)		(32,250)		
207	<u>MOORLAND ROAD PLAY AREA</u>									
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	0	60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4047	PLAY EQUIP MAINTENCE	500	905	449	449	449	0	0	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	293	273	280	313	313	0	325	0	0
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	100	70	75	72	72	0	75	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	20	0	41	41	21	0	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	2,728	7,095	7,000	3,745	7,820	0	7,801	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	251	898	456	255	574	0	461	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	498	1,502	995	458	1,180	0	1,156	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	4,370	10,824	9,255	5,334	10,449	21	9,818	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(4,370)	(10,824)	(9,255)	(5,334)	(10,449)		(9,818)		
208	<u>WOOD GREEN/PLAY AREA</u>									
4047	PLAY EQUIP MAINTENCE	500	574	63	63	63	0	0	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	300	298	305	313	313	0	325	0	0
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	100	70	75	72	72	0	75	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	20	0	41	41	21	0	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	8,637	5,862	5,000	4,045	8,447	0	5,572	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	2,854	647	326	268	620	0	329	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	592	1,198	711	509	1,275	0	826	0	0

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Note: PARKS & RECREATION - ESTIMATES 2026-27, FIRST DRAFT.

		<u>Last Year 2024-25</u>		<u>Current Year 2025-26</u>				<u>Estimate 2026-27</u>		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
Overhead Expenditure		12,983	8,670	6,480	5,311	10,831	21	7,127	0	0
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve		(12,983)	(8,670)	(6,480)	(5,311)	(10,831)		(7,127)		
209	<u>ETON CLOSE PLAY AREA</u>									
4047	PLAY EQUIP MAINTENCE	250	38	9	9	9	0	0	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	200	199	205	209	209	0	213	0	0
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	100	70	100	72	72	0	75	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	20	0	41	41	21	0	0	0
4222	TINY FOREST EXPENSES	150	0	150	0	150	0	150	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	0	6,037	6,000	3,079	6,430	0	6,686	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	0	687	391	205	472	0	395	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	0	1,344	853	373	970	0	991	0	0
Overhead Expenditure		700	8,395	7,708	3,988	8,353	21	8,510	0	0
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve		(700)	(8,395)	(7,708)	(3,988)	(8,353)		(8,510)		
210	<u>OXLEASE PLAY AREA</u>									
4047	PLAY EQUIP MAINTENCE	500	102	1,732	1,732	1,732	0	0	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	614	621	635	524	524	0	659	0	0
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	100	70	75	72	72	0	75	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	20	0	41	41	21	0	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	10,240	8,858	7,000	6,247	13,045	0	7,801	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	3,001	1,041	456	417	957	0	461	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	885	1,777	995	775	1,969	0	1,156	0	0
Overhead Expenditure		15,340	12,490	10,893	9,809	18,340	21	10,152	0	0

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Note: PARKS & RECREATION - ESTIMATES 2026-27, FIRST DRAFT.

		<u>Last Year 2024-25</u>		<u>Current Year 2025-26</u>				<u>Estimate 2026-27</u>		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve		<u>(15,340)</u>	<u>(12,490)</u>	<u>(10,893)</u>	<u>(9,809)</u>	<u>(18,340)</u>		<u>(10,152)</u>		
211	<u>FIELDMERE PLAY AREA</u>									
4047	PLAY EQUIP MAINTENCE	250	2,312	1,482	1,482	1,482	0	0	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VARIABLE)	300	298	305	313	313	0	317	0	0
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	100	70	75	72	72	0	75	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	20	0	41	41	21	0	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	4,810	5,743	4,000	2,858	5,968	0	4,457	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	441	606	261	192	438	0	263	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	877	1,038	569	345	901	0	661	0	0
Overhead Expenditure		<u>6,778</u>	<u>10,087</u>	<u>6,692</u>	<u>5,303</u>	<u>9,215</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>5,773</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve		<u>(6,778)</u>	<u>(10,087)</u>	<u>(6,692)</u>	<u>(5,303)</u>	<u>(9,215)</u>		<u>(5,773)</u>		
212	<u>QUARRY ROAD PLAY AREA</u>									
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	0	47	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4047	PLAY EQUIP MAINTENCE	250	66	91	91	91	0	0	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VARIABLE)	250	323	250	339	339	0	260	0	0
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	100	70	75	72	72	0	75	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	20	0	41	41	21	0	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	217	2,275	4,000	534	1,115	0	4,457	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	20	204	261	0	82	0	263	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	39	659	569	0	168	0	661	0	0
Overhead Expenditure		<u>876</u>	<u>3,664</u>	<u>5,246</u>	<u>1,078</u>	<u>1,908</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>5,716</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

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Note: PARKS & RECREATION - ESTIMATES 2026-27, FIRST DRAFT.

		<u>Last Year 2024-25</u>		<u>Current Year 2025-26</u>				<u>Estimate 2026-27</u>		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve		<u>(876)</u>	<u>(3,664)</u>	<u>(5,246)</u>	<u>(1,078)</u>	<u>(1,908)</u>		<u>(5,716)</u>		
213	<u>RALEGH CRES.PLAY/DEER PK PITCH</u>									
1201	COMMUTED SUMS	0	7,748	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Income	<u>0</u>	<u>7,748</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
4013	RENT PAID	5	0	5	0	5	0	5	0	0
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	0	0	9,250	0	0	0	9,602	0	0
4047	PLAY EQUIP MAINTENCE	500	32	25	25	25	0	0	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	500	0	500	0	0	0	519	0	0
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	100	70	75	72	72	0	78	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	20	0	41	41	21	0	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	4,374	2,999	20,000	1,562	10,096	0	22,287	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	401	384	1,302	101	233	0	1,317	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	798	429	2,844	193	480	0	3,304	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	<u>6,678</u>	<u>3,934</u>	<u>34,001</u>	<u>1,994</u>	<u>10,952</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>37,112</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
	213 Net Income over Expenditure	<u>-6,678</u>	<u>3,814</u>	<u>-34,001</u>	<u>-1,994</u>	<u>-10,952</u>	<u>-21</u>	<u>-37,112</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
6001	less Transfer to EMR	0	74,999	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>(6,678)</u>	<u>(71,185)</u>	<u>(34,001)</u>	<u>(1,994)</u>	<u>(10,952)</u>		<u>(37,112)</u>		
214	<u>PARK ROAD PLAY AREA</u>									
4013	RENT PAID	125	0	250	0	125	0	125	0	0
4047	PLAY EQUIP MAINTENCE	500	32	9	9	9	0	0	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	275	0	275	0	0	0	285	0	0

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Note: PARKS & RECREATION - ESTIMATES 2026-27, FIRST DRAFT.

		<u>Last Year 2024-25</u>		<u>Current Year 2025-26</u>				<u>Estimate 2026-27</u>		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	100	70	75	72	72	0	75	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	20	0	41	41	21	0	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	0	3,024	0	1,635	3,414	0	4,184	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	0	397	0	113	250	0	247	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	0	458	0	213	515	0	620	0	0
Overhead Expenditure		1,000	4,001	609	2,083	4,426	21	5,536	0	0
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve		(1,000)	(4,001)	(609)	(2,083)	(4,426)		(5,536)		
215	<u>CEDAR DRIVE PLAY AREA</u>									
4047	PLAY EQUIP MAINTENCE	500	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	500	0	500	0	0	0	519	0	0
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	100	0	100	0	0	0	104	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Overhead Expenditure		1,100	20	600	0	0	0	623	0	0
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve		(1,100)	(20)	(600)	0	0		(623)		
216	<u>UNTERHACHING PLAY AREA</u>									
4014	ELECTRICITY	0	2,681	2,100	527	1,500	0	1,500	0	0
4047	PLAY EQUIP MAINTENCE	500	53	25	25	25	0	0	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	500	0	500	0	0	0	519	0	0
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	100	70	100	72	72	0	75	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	1,572	0	41	41	21	0	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	0	2,780	0	860	1,796	0	2,221	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	0	246	0	58	132	0	131	0	0

Continued on next page

Annual Budget - By Committee (Actual YTD Month 6)

Note: PARKS & RECREATION - ESTIMATES 2026-27, FIRST DRAFT.

		<u>Last Year 2024-25</u>		<u>Current Year 2025-26</u>				<u>Estimate 2026-27</u>		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	0	701	0	113	271	0	329	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	1,100	8,102	2,725	1,696	3,837	21	4,775	0	0
6000	plus Transfer from EMR	0	1,551	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(1,100)	(6,551)	(2,725)	(1,696)	(3,837)		(4,775)		
217	<u>WATERFORD LANE PLAY AREA</u>									
4047	PLAY EQUIP MAINTENANCE	500	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	500	0	510	0	0	0	529	0	0
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	100	0	102	0	0	0	106	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	1,100	0	612	0	0	0	635	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(1,100)	0	(612)	0	0		(635)		
218	<u>WINDRUSH PLACE</u>									
4037	GROUND MAINTENANCE	0	0	9,250	0	9,250	0	9,602	0	0
4098	NET COSTS - PAVILION	0	0	50,000	0	50,000	0	51,900	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	0	0	20,000	0	0	0	22,287	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	0	0	1,303	0	6	0	1,317	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	0	0	2,844	0	13	0	3,304	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	0	0	83,397	0	59,269	0	88,410	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	0	0	(83,397)	0	(59,269)		(88,410)		
230	<u>PLAY AREAS HOLDING BUDGET</u>									
4047	PLAY EQUIP MAINTENANCE	0	0	6,825	0	6,825	0	15,320	0	0

Continued on next page

Annual Budget - By Committee (Actual YTD Month 6)

Note: PARKS & RECREATION - ESTIMATES 2026-27, FIRST DRAFT.

	<u>Last Year 2024-25</u>		<u>Current Year 2025-26</u>				<u>Estimate 2026-27</u>		
	Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
Overhead Expenditure	0	0	6,825	0	6,825	0	15,320	0	0
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	0	0	(6,825)	0	(6,825)		(15,320)		
Parks & Recreation - Income	66,361	82,637	51,027	44,786	53,553	0	66,589	0	0
Expenditure	389,487	455,844	564,578	242,247	536,498	256	603,059	0	0
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>-323,126</u>	<u>-373,207</u>	<u>-513,551</u>	<u>-197,461</u>	<u>-482,945</u>	<u>-256</u>	<u>-536,470</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
plus Transfer from EMR	0	1,551	0	1,875	0	0	0	0	0
less Transfer to EMR	0	74,999	0	6,986	0	0	0	0	0
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>(323,126)</u>	<u>(446,655)</u>	<u>(513,551)</u>	<u>(202,572)</u>	<u>(482,945)</u>		<u>(536,470)</u>		
Total Budget Income	66,361	82,637	51,027	44,786	53,553	0	66,589	0	0
Expenditure	389,487	455,844	564,578	242,247	536,498	256	603,059	0	0
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>-323,126</u>	<u>-373,207</u>	<u>-513,551</u>	<u>-197,461</u>	<u>-482,945</u>	<u>-256</u>	<u>-536,470</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
plus Transfer from EMR	0	1,551	0	1,875	0	0	0	0	0
less Transfer to EMR	0	74,999	0	6,986	0	0	0	0	0
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>(323,126)</u>	<u>(446,655)</u>	<u>(513,551)</u>	<u>(202,572)</u>	<u>(482,945)</u>		<u>(536,470)</u>		

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Finance Report: Revenue Growth Items, Special Revenue Projects, and Capital Projects

Meeting Date: 3 November 2025

Contact Officer: Responsible Financial Officer

Should Members have any queries about this report advance notice would be appreciated, in writing, by 12 noon on Monday 3 November to allow for a full response at the meeting.

Background

In line with the Council's Financial Regulations the purpose of this report is to enable Members to consider proposed works and projects discussed over the course of the year for potential inclusion in the budgets for 2026-27 and/or subsequent financial years.

Note that these matters are brought to this Committee for consideration but that revenue growth and capital projects are matters for recommendation by the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee at its meeting on 25 November 2024. It will be for the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee to prioritise projects and recommend funding to the full Council.

Current Situation

- 1. Revenue Growth Items during current year .** There are major sports facilities which the Council has agreed to adopt from West Oxfordshire District Council. Sums were included in the 2025-26 budget and are also now in the 2026-27 revenue budgets.
- 2. Capital and special revenue projects.**

A report in relation to existing budget lines will be included for consideration by the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee. However the relevant current year budgets are:

1. Burwell changing rooms - £72,030 (EMR £47,030; s.106 £25,000).
2. Play area improvements - £75,000 (revenue funded). 2025-26 budget is fully committed and Members should consider a similar sum for 2026-27 budget.
3. Leys – Parking restrictions - £5,000 (EMR).
4. Footpaths (West Witney) - £40,000 (EMR £10,000; Grant £30,000).

There are also Capital budgets in relation to the Leys Masterplan (£250,000) and the West Witney Clubhouse.

Members are requested to consider capital items for 2026-27 and in particular their priority order, whether they are aiming for 2026-27 or to place them in a “preparation pool for 2027-28 and beyond. Your officers will be undertaking costing work ahead of the PGF committee, depending on this Committee’s prioritisation and further direction.

The following projects are for consideration by the Committee:

1. The potential need to set funds for improvements to the Basketball Court at King George V Field (see minutes PR487 and PR267).
2. The path at West Witney to enhance the Park Run (PR 487). Note current year budget £40,000 of which £10,000 is from an EMR and £30,000 is allocated from grants to be identified.
3. Consideration for pitch drainage at any sites that require it and for consideration by Officers of an increase of benches in the Council’s recreation areas (PR487). There is a report from the Operations Manager in relation to pitch drainage at agenda item 8 which will inform this item.

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 implications directly resulting from this report.
- b) Biodiversity - no implications directly resulting from this report.
- c) Crime & Disorder - no implications directly resulting from this report.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency - no implications directly resulting from this report.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should consider any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability. The RFO has approached the budget with prudence so as accurate budget as possible can be set at this early stage, although there may be some opportunities to make savings if required to balance the budget.

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.

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

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider the capital/ special revenue growth items for 2026/27 and beyond and make a recommendation to the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee, the latter committee being responsible for budget bids and capital projects.

WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

SCHEDULE OF RECREATIONAL CHARGES

2025 / 2026

PROPOSED 2026/27

Increases:
Football 4%
Others 3.8%

CRICKET

ADULTS

JUNIOR TEAMS (UNDER 16)

BOWLS

GREEN FEES PER HOUR, PER PERSON

WOODS - HIRE OF PAIR PER HOUR

SEASON TICKETS

CHANGING ROOMS - THE LEYS

FOOTBALL

ADULTS /OVER 16S

JUNIOR TEAMS (UNDER 16)

MINI TEAMS (UNDER 10) SMALL PITCHES ONLY

HARDCOURT PLAY AREA- BURWELL - LIGHTING CHARGE

DEPOSIT FOR HIRE OF EQUIPMENT

CLUBS AND COMMERCIAL USE

WEST WITNEY TENNIS CLUB

WEST WITNEY BOWLS CLUB (3 RINKS)

WITNEY MILLS BOWLS CLUB (3 RINKS)

PROJECTILE RANGE CONSORTIUM

WITNEY TOWN BOWLS CLUB (5 RINKS)

MINOR FAIRS

CIRCUSES AND SIMILAR PERFORMANCES

HORSE SHOWS AND GYMKHANAS

WITNEY FEAST

COMMUNITY GROUP OR REGISTERED CHARITY -PARK HIRE

PER ACRE (football pitch size) (SMALLER AREAS - PRO RATA)

THE LEYS - EVENTS

ALL OTHER AREAS -EVENTS

FISHING RIGHTS

WITNEY LAKE (WITNEY ANGLING SOCIETY)

WINDRUSH RIVER (NEWLAND ANGLING CLUB)

TENNIS

MINI GOLF

PAVILION HIRE

Under the Management of

£71.50	£74.50
£36.75	£38.50
£5.75	£6.00
£3.60	£4.00
£95.00	£99.00
£38.75	£40.50
£66.50	£69.50
£33.50	£35.00
£22.50	£23.50
£27.50	£29.00
£10.25	£11.00
£5,425.00	£5,631.50
£3,350.00	£3,477.50
£3,350.00	£3,477.50
£3,175.00	£3,296.00
£5,550.00	£5,761.00

by Negotiation	by Negotiation
----------------	----------------

£200.00	£208.00
£90.00	£93.50
£1,225.00	£1,272.00

PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE



Agenda Item:	Sports Pitch Update
Meeting Date:	Parks & Recreation
Contact Officer:	Operations Manager

Background

Officers reported to members on the condition of pitches at the Parks and Recreation meeting on the 1st September 2025. The report detailed the renovations programme, grant funding and potential football team booking amendments. Officers raised the poor condition the pitches were in heading into the 2025-26 season, and that the renovations programme had been adjusted to address these issues. Additionally, at the time of the report, the STRI inspections were still due to take place, so members had not been updated on the consultants' findings.

Current Situation

STRI Report (attached as Appendix A)

The STRI report is positive, especially taking into account the challenging weather conditions the operations team have had to tackle in maintaining the sports surfaces. Summarising the report, the key points are the heavy thatch over both bowls' greens, which has been addressed in the renovation programme already. The other key takeaway is the weed coverage over West Witney and Burwell pitches; this will be addressed during the spring in 2026, in line with the council's pesticide policy.

Leys Bowls Green

Due to the dissatisfaction raised by Witney Town Bowls Club with the Council's maintenance of the bowls green, members agreed to use contractors to renovate the green at the Leys in 2024. A professional contractor was commissioned to complete the renovations, and the programme of works the contractor followed was identical to that of the council renovation programme. Despite this, the two greens produced vastly different results.

After a season-long review, it was found that the micron size of the sand was not fine enough for a bowls green. Additionally, the renovations took place far too late in the year, the sand did not work into the root zone for the spring because of the frost. This has meant the council maintenance team has been working extensively to recover the green from these mistakes. The green is now in a better condition after the 2025 renovation into the 2026 season; however, the work completed by the contractors has set the green back rather than improving it.

West Witney Bowls Green

West Witney Bowls green was renovated by the council maintenance team at season close in 2024. The quality of this renovation can't be reviewed until the green is in use for the 2025 season. Feedback from both clubs that use the green has been positive, with comments that visiting teams are also praising its quality. There were some localised dry patch issues which were addressed near the beginning of the season, but the record dry weather did eventually mean these were lost.

West Witney Cricket Square

Under the user agreement between Witney Swifts and the council, the Swifts volunteer team manage the match preparation, with the council undertaking the renovation and out-of-season maintenance. The club have not raised any issues with the square, and the square has been booked three times this year by visiting teams, of which Swifts supported with marking out creases for them.

Leys Cricket Square

Witney Swifts have indicated they plan to field a 3rd team for the 2026 cricket season. In anticipation of this, the square has been lightly renovated to ensure it is in a playable condition for 2026. If Witney Swifts can't field a 3rd team, it may be in the council's interest to encourage some level of friendly games on the field. Due to the health and safety concerns of the field, it would have to be at an amateur level. Two sight screens would have to be procured for this in the current financial year.

Football Pitches

The natural recovery of football pitches at West Witney and Burwell has quelled officers' concerns on their playability for the season. To further aid the recovery, the pitches have been fertilised to help boost the sward growth and strength going into the winter.

Leys Football Pitches

The Leys pitches, especially, were not in good condition for the 2025-26 season; this was not helped by the level of footfall over the field and the events schedule. Before the Witney Feast, large areas of bare earth were apparent, and the traction of the event's vehicles left the field in an unsuitable condition for football. Following this, a secondary renovation programme has been carried out, and the pitches have been re-mapped to utilise the better areas of grass.

This is the second time in 4 years that large areas of the Leys have been left unplayable, and a second renovation schedule has had to be carried out. Officers would like to review the events schedule to determine if a rest period for the field is required, so that a program of autumn renovation can be completed.

Grant Funding

Officers have approached the FA for potential grant funding on drainage solutions. The FA's approved contractor for the area has agreed to preliminary site meetings, but from initial discussion, it appears unlikely the pitches would be suitable for drainage. The cost of this drainage is estimated at £75,000 per 11a-side pitch, with the FA funding up to £25,000. In a situation where the field is suitable for draining, the council would need to allocate sufficient funding to meet the gap between the FA's grant funding.

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 the effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – Sports clubs can ensure equality by establishing clear policies, providing diversity training, making facilities accessible, promoting diverse leadership, and creating a culture of inclusivity where everyone feels safe and valued.
- b) Biodiversity - The application of selective weedkillers can be harmful to non-targeted species.
- c) Crime & Disorder – Sports equipment has been vandalised across all sites, including both cricket sightscreens and goalposts.

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.

There is a risk that, without the correct attention, the Leys recreation sward will continue to deteriorate year on year.

Financial implications

- 2 x Tildenet Fixed Net Screens – Portable – £2,880.00 inc. VAT (for the two)
- Budget code 4046 - sports equipment has a total underspend of £2,028.00 across The Leys, West Witney, and Burwell.
- The cost of this drainage is estimated at £75,000 per 11a-side pitch, with the FA funding up to £25,000.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and

1. Approve the purchase of two portable sight screens for Leys cricket use.
2. Consider options for friendly cricket games for officers to explore to ensure the Leys cricket square receives use in 2026.
3. To note the condition of the Leys football pitches and action taken to repair the ground.
4. To delegate to officers to review the events schedule to determine if a rest period for the field is required, so that a program of autumn renovation can be completed at The Leys.
5. Discuss if a budget needs to be allocated for potential pitch drainage solutions in the 2026-27 financial year.



Witney Town Council

Advisory Report on West Witney, The Leys & Burwell QE2 Sports Pitches

Report date: 29th September 2025

Consultant: Michael Boyes

Date of visit: 23rd September 2025

Visit objective: Review agronomic conditions and performance of the natural turf sports pitches at West Witney, The Leys and Burwell QE2 playing field.

Present: Angus Whitburn – Operations Manager, Witney TC
Michael Boyes – Consultant Turfgrass Agronomist, STRI Group Ltd

Weather:

Visit summary

- Despite challenging weather patterns this year, starting with a cold, unproductive spring growth wise and culminating in a hot and dry summer, the natural turf surfaces continue to improve under the stewardship of Witney Town Council, and the focussed supervision of Operations Manager, Angus Whitburn.
- The bowling greens at West Witney and The Leys exhibit improving grass cover, with larger proportions of the more desirable finer turf species. The soil profiles show reasonable soil health and aggregation but a persistent element of thatch in the upper zones, which will require targeted material removal and sand integration to enhance drainage potential and reduce disease activity.
- Post season bowling green renovations will include a programme of aeration and thatch removal with multiple scarification operations, for the introduction of a sand-based top dressing and the selected fescue (80%)/browntop bent (20%) seed mix.
- The southeast corner of the bowling green at West Witney displays signs of localised dry patch which is impacting turf health and an inspection of the profile in the worst impacted areas revealed a soil moisture of just 1.4%, and a significant thatch layer over hydrophobic soils. Substantial organic matter removal and the application of a curative wetting agent (i.e., Aquatrols Aqueduct, or similar) will be key to recovery.
- The cricket outfield at West Witney continues to improve, showing fuller grass cover and no problematic surface undulations. Cricket square renovations have been positive with significant repairs at the wicket ends, comprising clay loam introduction and overseeding. Notable weed populations are evident and will require chemical intervention in spring 2026.
- The cricket pitch at The Leys has reportedly not been used now for the last 5-6 years but the square construction remains viable and could be renovated for the potential return to play for the Swifts CC in 2026. The outfield area is gainfully employed for Junior football but shows significant wear and tear, from substantial levels of use, endured.
- The football pitches at West Witney and Burwell display generally complete grass cover, with particularly encouraging repairs having been carried out in the goalmouths at each site. More frequent cutting operations at each venue have been beneficial to overall presentation and performance, as has the installation of new goalposts.
- Due to the oppressive weather patterns over previous months, the end of 2024/2025 football season renovations have been fairly conservative and simply constituted a top-dressing application (at approximately 60 tonnes per 11-a-side pitch) followed by overseeding. With more favourable prevailing weather of late, plans are in place to deliver a Verti-Quake aeration operation across all football sites, complemented by an application of Autumn/Winter granular fertiliser, via appointed outside contractor.

Record of site conditions – West Witney - Bowls



Photo 1: The condition of the bowling green at West Witney continues to improve, despite the challenging weather patterns which have prevailed this year.



Photo 2: In the strongest sections of the green the grass sward is reasonably dense and healthy, but there are twinges of historic disease incidences still visible.



Photo 3: Following recent rainfall events, soil moisture levels are high for the time of year in places, as illustrated by the random reading of 41.3%.



Photo 4: Encouragingly, surface hardness readings were around close to the projected target range of between 120-170 gravities and the green feels firm underfoot.



Photo 5: In general, the soil profile continues to show improved signs of sand integration and is benefitting from light scarification operations throughout the year.



Photo 6: Worm casting still presents a challenge and with no chemical intervention available, continual top-dressing and the use of acidifying fertiliser will help deter activity.

Record of site conditions – West Witney - Bowls



Photo 7: The south-eastern corner of the West Witney Bowls green shows sections of weak grass cover and severe drought stress, from the oppressive conditions over summer.



Photo 8: An inspection of the profile shows powder dry conditions, with water beading (circled) on the surface of hydrophobic soils.



Photo 9: An extremely low moisture reading of just 1.4% was randomly observed in the drier area, against a projected target range of between 15-30%.



Photo 10: Sporadic weed ingress is evident across the green and every effort should be made to remove the offending plant matter, as part of routine mowing operations.



Photo 11: Reduction of the perimeter hedgerow, and potentially removal of the trees as part of depot development works, improves light and air circulation to the green.



Photo 12: Housekeeping operations around the green include necessary repairs to the ditch impact boards where misplaced steps have caused damage to the wooden batons.

Record of site conditions – West Witney - Cricket



Photo 13: Very effective fencing has been employed around the cricket square to provide appropriate protection following the programme of end of season renovations.



Photo 14: The well-discussed “drop off” beyond the stumps at the southern end of the square remains evident but is not negatively impacting wicket preparation.



Photo 15: Repairs around the crease at each of the wickets have been substantial with high levels of loam employed, followed by targeted over-seeding.



Photo 16: The visual evidence of recent aeration operations are clear, and the process helps the profile to breathe and improves overall drainage potential.



Photo 17: Weed ingress is extensive across the cricket square and a selective herbicide is advised when appropriate weather conditions present again in spring 2026.



Photo 18: The health and conditions of the cricket outfield has improved, and displays an encouraging sward colour given the oppressive weather of the summer.

Record of Site Conditions – West Witney – Football



Figure 19: Grass cover appears complete and relatively healthy and is benefitting from an increased regime of cutting with the commencement of the football season.



Figure 20: The football infrastructure is in good condition and the pitches in general are well-presented and ideally situated for the early season fixtures.



Figure 21: Grass cover is a little sparse in the goalmouths but greatly improved on past seasons. An even more focused renovation is prescribed for the end of the 2025/2026 season.



Figure 22: A random surface hardness reading of 144 gravities was recorded in the 18-yd box which is a little on the firm side but deemed perfectly acceptable and safe.



Figure 23: An ingress of weeds was seen in a localised area of the 6-yd box and can be addressed with spot treatment via backpack and a selective herbicide.



Figure 24: The traditionally wet section in the south-east corner of the playing field appears in reasonably good condition and currently hosts a 5x5 and 9x9 pitch.

Record of site conditions - The Leys - Bowls



Photo 25: The bowling green at The Leys was neatly presented on the day of the visit and displays a largely complete grass cover, with reasonable sward colour.



Photo 26: The results of recent aeration practices are clear and help with gaseous exchange whilst improving drainage characteristics. This positive operation barely impacts surface performance.



Photo 27: A random surface firmness reading of 110 gravities is just below the suggested target of 120-170 gravities, but acceptable upon completion of the bowling season.



Photo 28: A positive random moisture reading of 24.2% was taken on the green, which is around the expected value for the time of year, despite recent rainfall events.



Photo 29: The soil profile on the green at The Leys appears reasonably healthy, but there is a persistent element of thatch in the upper zones.



Photo 30: The stronger sections of the green display good grass cover and a particularly encouraging element of the finer, more desirable grass species.

Record of Site Conditions – The Leys - Bowls



Figure 31: In the areas of the green where worm casting is prevalent, the smearing of the displaced materials effectively seals sections of the surface.



Figure 32: This is particularly evident along the sheltered southern perimeter of the green, on the rink ends in the shade of the adjacent hedgerow.



Figure 33: Sections of weed ingress are quite large in localised areas, and it is likely that chemical intervention will now be required with an appropriately timed selective herbicide application.



Figure 34: Evidence of cranefly activity was seen on the green on the day and vigilance is advised in the future to monitor the impact of the insect, and subsequent larval presence.



Figure 35: The large tree at the corner continues to present a challenge with shade across the green but in lieu of removal, efforts should be made to raise the canopy.



Figure 36: The hedgerow also requires continuous attention to manicure the vegetation and optimise light penetration and air circulation to improve the growing conditions for the green.

Record of Site Conditions - The Leys - Cricket & Football



Figure 37: The playing field at The Leys displays a patchy grass coverage which appears to have struggled with the erratic weather patterns this year.



Figure 38: Junior pitches have been configured across the site but sections nearest the busy pavilion have been impacted by increasing use.



Figure 39: The constructed cricket square remains apparent in the central section of the playing field but has reportedly been redundant for some 5 to 6 years now.



Figure 40: An inspection of the cricket square construction highlights the continued presence of the original clay loam profile. The square is deemed recoverable should play recommence.



Figure 41: The recent food festival has had a significant detrimental impact of the separate football field at The Leys, with heavy plant and equipment employed during inclement weather.



Figure 42: The vehicles which accessed the field have caused considerable damage to the goalpost sockets and severely compacted the impacted underlying soils.

Record of Site Conditions – Burwell QE2 field



Figure 43: Grass coverage across the Burwell playing field has improved noticeably and has undoubtedly benefitted from a more routine cutting regime.



Figure 44: New goalposts have been installed on two of the three full-size pitches at Burwell, optimising the provision for the early season fixtures.



Figure 45: A random surface hardness reading of 209 gravities is quite high, but understandable given recent hot and dry conditions. The surfaces are deemed safe for use.



Figure 46: Soil moisture yielded an encouraging random value of 22.9%, which is ideally placed for the time of year, providing good surface cushioning and traction.



Figure 47: Weed populations are particularly high across the Burwell playing field, as evidenced on Pitch 3 above, and a blanket selective herbicide application will be required in spring 2026.



Figure 48: Positive goalmouth repairs are welcome but there is some level differences with the adjacent surfaces, which has caused some scalping which requires attention.

Observations & Recommendations

Bowling Green Maintenance

- Erratic weather patterns saw the season start with cold spring conditions, not conducive to early growth, to only be followed by the oppressive hot and dry weather patterns of the summer. Therefore, it was encouraging to see that the general condition of the bowling greens at West Witney and The Leys continue to improve.
- In the stronger sections of the West Witney green, the preferred fine grass species are forming stronger populations, and the underlying soil profile displays reasonable soil aggregation and encouraging sand integration, despite an element of organic matter accumulation.
- At The Leys, where levels of play are recognised to be more intensive, it was positive to see that the amount of wear and tear experienced does not appear to be as negatively impactful as that seen at the time of the 2024 visit. The soil profile is reasonably healthy but there remains a distinct thatch layer in the upper sections of the rootzone.
- Random soil moisture content on the West Witney green is a little high at present given recent rainfall events which highlights the necessity for ongoing thatch removal and sand integration. A more acceptable random moisture content was identified on The Leys bowling green, but the requirement for organic matter management continues.
- Surface hardness readings were taken randomly on both greens which delivered positive readings and the playing surfaces remain firm underfoot, and were both reported to have performed well over the bowling season.
- The previously discussed southeastern corner of the West Witney green historically sat extremely wet during the inclement winter period and now in stark contrast dried out considerably during the drought stressed period of the past summer. The high element of organic matter accumulation at the surface, combined with hydrophobic soils at depth, effectively bakes-off over the summer and acts like a sponge during the wet winter months. At present, the worst areas display a very low soil moisture content (1.4%) and as advised previously, a significant thatch removal operation is prescribed, and the use of a curative wetting agent will be absolutely essential to correct the soil moisture levels.
- Weed ingress remains evident on both greens, to varying degrees, and as advised every effort should be made in the first instance to remove the smaller examples by hand as part of routine cutting operations, to avoid the need for extensive chemical weed intervention with a selective herbicide.
- Worm casting is apparent, and to some extent inevitable, on both greens and where the disturbed materials have been smeared the surface is effectively sealed off, which can smother out grass cover leading to a thinning of the sward. In the absolute and permanent absence of chemical control for worms the continued introduction of sand-based dressings and the employment of acidic fertilisers will help to discourage worm activity, and should any casting be evident the sandier material will be easier to disperse.
- Regular maintenance of the perimeter hedgerows is key to optimising light penetration and air flow across the playing surfaces at both sites, to improve the general growing environments for the greens and keep the surfaces dry. Strategic tree thinning and removal, including lower limb trimming, would also be advantageous, which could be likely at West Witney with the development of the new Council depot, but probably less achievable at The Leys with the large mature specimen at the southeast corner of the site.
- Housekeeping at both venues would include maintenance of the ditches and wooden support boards, which can be damaged by misplaced footfall from the users of the site, as evidenced on the day at West Witney.

End of Season Bowling Green Renovations

- Essential end of season renovations should include chisel or needle tine aeration (SISIS Dart) and multiple scarification operations with the Dennis 510 mower cassette system, tailored to the respective green. As highlighted, the challenging southeast section of the West Witney green must be subject to a least 4 passes with the scarifier.
- Heavy top-dressing (70:30 mix) should be applied to each green, in conjunction with the suggested specialist Bowling Green seed mix of 80% Fescue/20% Browntop Bentgrass.

Cricket - Maintenance

- The cricket pitch at West Witney has reportedly received a lower level of use this season than has been evident in previous years, so the drought stressed conditions of the summer may not have experienced the negative impact which could have occurred.
- Excellent protective fencing has been employed to preserve the integrity of the cricket square and negate typical animal scrape damage.
- The much-discussed drop off beyond the stumps at the southern end of the square remains but does not have a negative impact on wicket preparation or performance.
- The outfield at West Witney displays a much-improved grass cover, with less signs of surface undulations, and was reported to have performed well over the season. More regular cutting operations undoubtedly helps the development of denser turf and a more uniform coverage.
- It was reported that the cricket pitch at The Leys has now not been used for between 5-6 years and the cricket square is cut as part of routine mowing operations across the extended section of the playing field.

Cricket - Renovations

- The end of season cricket square renovations at West Witney have comprised needle tine aeration, three passes with the scarifier and two runs with the hollow corer on each wicket. The incorporation of a suggested 4 ½ tonnes of loam has followed with appropriate overseeding, with particular attention focussed on the crease at each wicket end.
- It was suggested that the cricket pitch at The Leys could be brought back into use during 2026 to accommodate the expansion of the Swifts Cricket Club, and the necessity for additional wickets. At this point, despite, the lack of use and end of season renovations, the integrity of the cricket square construction remains intact and is recoverable with some intensive renovative operations should the requirement arise.
- There remains a substantial weed element across both cricket squares and chemical intervention will be required as part of routine blanket treatments across the playing field.

Football - Maintenance

- The football pitch area at West Witney is in much better condition to that viewed in 2024, benefitting considerably from more routine mowing operations at a reported 35mm height of cut with the commencement of the season in recent weeks.
- There are fewer clippings on the surface with the return of drier conditions, but there is a minor element of missed cuts with not sufficient overlap being employed with the cutting decks on each pass with the mower.
- General surface levels are very good at West Witney and the repairs to the goalmouth areas are particularly encouraging. The grass coverage in the 6-yard boxes is better, but there is still some thinning of grass cover, so focussed effort is suggested as part of the end of the 2025/2026 season renovations to target specific repairs in these key areas. The goalmouths on the pitch closest to the changing facilities are typically used more than most, so have suffered greater levels of damage already.
- A random moisture value of 31.1% is acceptable and although the surface firmness of 209 gravities is a little high at present, the surfaces are deemed perfectly safe with adequate traction.
- The traditionally challenging southeast corner of the West Witney playing field appears in good condition at present and currently hosts junior pitches. As identified previously, increased aeration in this area would be advantageous to optimise drainage potential over the tricky winter period.

- The cricket outfield/football area at The Leys has been used exclusively for junior football this year hosting two 9-a-side, two 5-a-side and one 7-a-side. Use is extremely heavy and there is significant wear and tear, particularly towards the southern end of the site. It is suggested that reorientation of the pitches could facilitate better use of the areas which display increased grass coverage.
- Regretfully, the historic football area at The Leys beyond the treeline, has suffered significant damage following the hosting of the recent food festival, with heavy plant and equipment situated on site, left during particularly inclement conditions. Substantial damage has occurred to goalpost sockets, and the underlying soil structure has been seriously compromised by heavy traffic.
- The Burwell QE2 Playing Fields also displays very encouraging grass coverage, and a marked improvement on 2024 conditions, despite the acknowledged high levels of use on site. The field currently accommodates eight pitches which constitutes three 11-a-side, two 9-a-side, two 7-a-side and one 5-a-side.
- Routine cutting operations have undoubtedly enhanced presentation and performance but there is an element of clippings following recent productive growth.
- New goalposts have been installed on two of the three full-size pitches which is an excellent enhancement to the provision on site.

Football - Renovations

- End of 2024/2025 season renovations across the sites were reportedly conservative as a result of prevailing hot and dry conditions and comprised a basic top-dressing operation, typically 60 tonnes per 11-a-side pitch, followed by targeted overseeding.
- Now that weather patterns have eased, and ground conditions are more conducive, plans are in place for a Verti-Quake aeration across the pitches to improve drainage heading into winter.
- More slitting and raking operations are also planned across the respective sites.
- Provision is also being made for the application of an Autumn/Winter granular fertiliser application, via appointed outside contractor.
- Localised repairs to the goalmouths have been very positive with excavation of the existing turf, restoration of underlying materials and re-turfing of the impacted areas. There is an element of scalping on sections around the repairs due to a difference in surrounding surface levels, so targeted repairs will be necessary.

Signed



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PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Major Capital Projects Update

Meeting Date: Monday 3rd November 2025

Contact Officer: Project Officer

The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update regarding the major capital projects that are currently in flight.

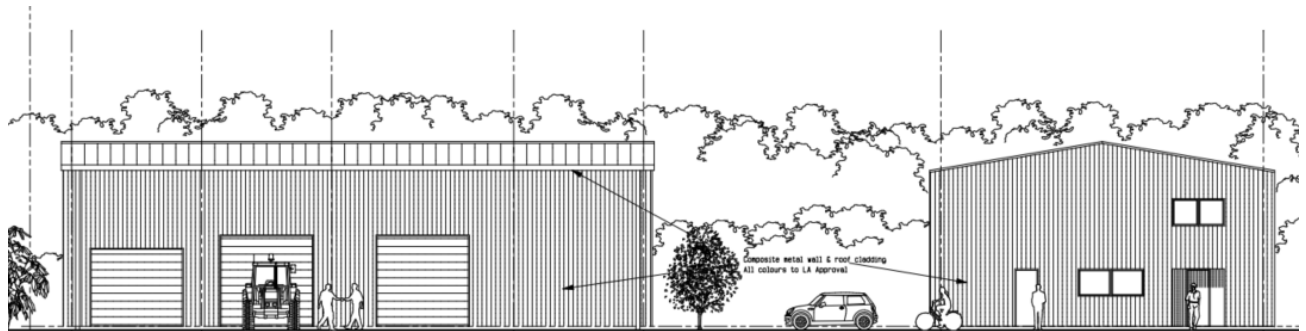
Background

As you are aware, Witney Town Council's Open Spaces Strategy cited 5x themes to deliver improvements for our community: Parks, Sport, Leisure, Infrastructure & Effectiveness.

This report aims to provide you with an update on the major capital projects linked to Parks and Recreation, which are: 'West Witney Project', 'Courtside Hub at the Leys' and 'Ralegh Crescent MUGA'

West Witney Project

New Depot



West Witney Clubhouse



Current Situation

- The West Witney Project combines the construction of a new works depot and the refurbishment of the existing Clubhouse.
- All mandatory documentation—including technical drawings and surveys—has been completed and approved. This enabled the creation of a tightly defined, specification-led tender document designed to ensure submissions deliver best value for money, meet quality compliance standards, and align with required delivery timeframes.
- In accordance with the Council’s financial regulations, the project tender was published on 16th September 2025 and remained open for five weeks, closing on 20th October 2025.
- The tender process has significantly surpassed initial expectations. While Officers and Berry’s (consultant) projected up to 8 site visits resulting in 4 submissions, the actual outcome was 15 site visits and a substantial number of formal tender submissions
- Officers and Berry’s are currently evaluating all submitted tenders in accordance with the Council’s financial regulations. A report containing the award recommendation will be issued in time for the scheduled meeting on 10th November 2025.
- Work to satisfy planning approval conditions has been completed and submitted to West Oxfordshire District Council. Confidence is high that we will obtain a positive decision, which is due at the beginning of December.
- The Loan Application to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government has been successfully approved.
- Following contractor consultations, the revised project delivery dates are as follows:
 - New Works Depot = 13th February 2025
 - Clubhouse Refurbishment = mid- April 2025

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 – n/a
- b) Biodiversity – In accordance with planning conditions the new depot satisfies the required uplift in BNG rating.
- c) Crime & Disorder – security of both buildings have been specified in the tender to ensure the building remains safe and potential thieves are deterred. This includes required ratings of locks, doors and windows together with window bars, external lighting and CCTV.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – building construction consists of environmentally friendly materials, which will also improve thermal efficiency. PV roof panels have also been included in specification to reduce energy consumption.

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.

- To reduce the risks typically associated with construction projects, the council is working in partnership with Berry's, a specialist construction consultancy. This collaboration provides assurance that the project will deliver value for money, meet the required specifications and be completed within the agreed timeframes
- The council's rigorous procurement protocols and use of financial regulations significantly reduces the risk of engaging substandard contractors, thereby safeguarding public funds from corrective costs and legal disputes.

Social Value

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

- New depot will improve the team's ability to maintain and enhance the valuable services they provide the town. This improves the appearance of the town and its green spaces, making it a cleaner, neater and more pleasant environment for our residents.
- A refurbished Clubhouse will provide the community with a new modern building to socialise and rent function rooms. It will also provide the community with refurbished changing rooms facilities for sports teams and eliminates the current safeguarding issue restricting its use for youngsters.

Financial implications

- The financial implications have been documented comprehensively in our RFO's Full Council Report dated 23rd June 2025

Recommendations

This is a project update however any feedback is always appreciated.

Courtside Hub at the Leys



Current Situation

- Councillors attended a site visit on 30th September 2025 for an in-depth tour and update.
- Currently contractors are working on the interior fit out, changing rooms and drainage infrastructure.
- Project is on track for opening in January 2026

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.

- e) Equality – n/a
- f) Biodiversity – the project plans to achieve over 100% improvement in BNG
- g) Crime & Disorder – contractors are on site, which ensures site security and reduces risk of trespassing, vandalism and anti-social behaviour
- h) Environment & Climate Emergency – building construction consists of environmentally friendly materials, which will also improve thermal efficiency and reduce energy consumption.

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.

- Officers intend to phase the council's £250,000 contribution to Courtside at set milestones that are weighted towards the end of the project, to minimise the risk of any financial loss.

Social Value

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

- Increased variety of sports will encourage Witney's residents to exercise and feel the physical and social benefits
- The completion of the Courtside Hub, coupled with new skatepark, mini-golf, renovated splashpad and excellent play area, establishes the Leys as a destination park for the area.

Financial implications

- Witney Town Council's contribution of £250,000 will be segmented and phased in accordance with project milestones and acceptable level of risk.
- Work is underway to renegotiate the lease between the council and Courtside

Recommendations

This is a project update however any feedback is always appreciated.

Ralegh Crescent MUGA



Current Situation

- Officers have received clarification from District Council on the conditions of use for the S106 money allocated to provide a MUGA at Ralegh Crescent.
- Officers have re-issued the tender document to reflect the S106 requirements for WODC to approve and publish in November 2025.

- WTC Officers have collaborated with WODC Officers to respond to several complaints from a local resident who is concerned with location of planned MUGA. Officers have captured relevant concerns and included within proposed tender to WODC. Resident has also been given guidance on formal process they can follow to comment on planning when design and location has been confirmed.

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 – inclusivity and accessibility to everyone are important design features of this park, which are highlighted in tender and subsequent evaluation process.
- b) Biodiversity – the project plans to deliver above the minimal uplift in BNG
- c) Crime & Disorder – location is an area subjected to occasional anti-social behaviour, which was raised at consultation events. We have asked for this issue to be addressed within the design and lighting/CCTV innovations.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – building construction consists of environmentally friendly materials and lighting will be energy efficient. Muga specification includes soundproof materials to reduce sound of ball strikes.

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.

- Differences in Town Council and District Council protocol, processes and cultures could present challenges agreeing tender specifications and transferring ownership to Witney Town Council. We are managing risk by learning from previous experience with Play Park and effective comms through robust procurement process and project management.
- Officers recognise that concepts which were presented at public consultation last year will be different to what is being delivered due to S106 spending criteria. Officers are taking relevant feedback from consultation event to incorporate into new design scope. In addition, officers are working with WODC officers to re-engage community to reset expectations.

Social Value

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

- A key objective of the park is to encourage exercise through fun activities, which attracts users from every segment of the community to encourage social, generational, cultural and physical integration.

- Another key objective is making a safe and fun area for girls to participate in sporting activities.
- The park will address a growing concern of anti-social behaviour in the existing park, due to its covered seating areas, which are poorly lit.

Financial implications

- The project budget is reliant on S106 monies from District Council, which means the town council must work in partnership to deliver project. Robust processes need to be in place to ensure robust contracts are in place and smooth transfer of ownership is achieved.

Recommendations

This is a project update however any feedback is always appreciated

The Splash Park



Current Situation

- In preparation for the winter period, the seasonal closure and protective maintenance of the splash park have been successfully completed. The park has now been secured for colder weather to ensure its longevity and readiness for reopening next year.
- The park experienced a successful summer season, operating without any faults or technical issues. Community feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, even with the introduction of reduced operating hours due to the hosepipe ban.

- Notably, the park has significantly improved water efficiency, allowing for extended operating hours while reducing our water bills. This has resulted in the Council achieving cost savings on water consumption, coming in under budget for the season.
- All outstanding defects have now been resolved with Ustigate. This included the correct sizing of water jets and the installation of water efficient features, which were initially capped off. These enhancements will contribute to an improved user experience when the park reopens in 2026.
- The project is now formally classified as complete.

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.

1. Equality – WTC aim to ensure that all children, regardless of their background or abilities, have access to safe, inclusive, and engaging play environments with good accessibility, diverse equipment, safe spaces that are welcoming and enjoyable for everyone, helping to break down barriers and promote social equality from a young age.
2. Biodiversity – Integrating biodiversity into playground design not only enriches the play experience but also fosters a deeper connection between children and the natural world. WTC aim to incorporate natural elements like trees, shrubs, and wildflower meadows, which help support local wildlife and create more engaging environments for children.
3. Crime & Disorder – consideration is given to equipment that can withstand vandalism and reduce risk of anti-social behaviour. Efforts will be made revitalise spaces leading to improved community relations and a reduction in crime and disorder, ultimately enhancing the quality of life for residents.
4. Environment & Climate Emergency – consideration is given to ensuring equipment is manufactured from sustainable and recycled materials for equipment and surfaces. Equipment and sequencing indicates we will reduce our water usage by 60%.

Risk

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

- n/a

Social Value

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

- A key objective of the play areas review is to identify parks that can be improved to encourage exercise through fun activities to attract users from every segment of the community which encourages social, generational, cultural and physical integration.

Financial implications

➤ n/a

Recommendations

This is a project update however any feedback is always appreciated.