

Stronger Communities Committee Meeting of Witney Town Council



Monday, 23rd March, 2026 at 6.00 pm

To members of the Stronger Communities Committee - T Ashby, R Smith, G Meadows, A Bailey, D Edwards-Hughes, D Enright, A Mubin and J Treloar (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

In accordance with the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, public meetings may be filmed, audio-recorded, or photographed. Anyone intending to record the proceedings is asked, as a courtesy, to inform the Committee Clerk before the meeting begins.

This meeting will be broadcast live via Microsoft Teams and recorded; by attending or participating, you consent to the recording and public sharing of audio and video, which may be made available for later viewing. For details on how personal data is handled, please see the [Privacy Notice](#)

To view the meeting please follow this [Stronger Communities Committee | Meeting-Join | Microsoft Teams](#)

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence

To consider apologies and reasons for absence.

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

Standing Order 8(e)(v) permits the appointment of substitute Councillors to a Committee whose role is to replace ordinary Councillors at a meeting of a Committee if ordinary Councillors of the Committee have confirmed to the Proper Officer **before** the meeting that they are unable to attend.

2. Declarations of Interest

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

3. **Minutes** (Pages 4 - 9)
 - a) To receive and consider the minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee held on 26 January 2026.
 - b) Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda. (Questions on the progress of any item).

4. **Public Participation**

The meeting will adjourn for this item.

Members of the public may speak for a maximum of **five minutes** each during the period of public participation, in line with Standing Order 25. Matters raised shall relate to the following items on the agenda.

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

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

Communications

6. **Communications Report** (Pages 18 - 35)

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

Community Engagement

7. **Community Engagement Report** (Pages 36 - 39)

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

a) **Witney Forum Minutes** (Pages 40 - 43)

To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Witney Forum held on 29 January 2026.

8. **Youth Council Minutes** (Pages 44 - 48)

To receive and consider the report of the Administrative Support Assistant – Communities & Engagement and accompanying minutes from the Youth Council meeting held on 11 March 2026.

9. **Witney: Past Present & Future Working Party** (Pages 49 - 51)

To receive the notes and recommendations contained therein from the meeting held on 18 February 2026.

10. **Youth Services** (Pages 52 - 53)

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

11. **Witney Town Centre Forum**

To receive a verbal update from Officer on the progress of the Forum.

12. **WODC Consultation - Proposed Controls relating to Dog Fouling** (Pages 54 - 56)

To receive and consider a response to the current consultation regarding the proposal to introduce a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO)

Consultation closes 7 April 2026.

Street Furniture & Infrastructure

13. **Witney Town Centre Improvements**

To receive a verbal update from officers on District Council schemes presented at the previous meeting.

Events

14. **Third Party Events** (Pages 57 - 59)

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



Town Clerk

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

Held on Monday, 26 January 2026

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

Present:

Councillor T Ashby (Chair)

Councillors:	R Smith G Meadows A Bailey D Edwards-Hughes	D Enright A Mubin J Treloar
Officers:	Adam Clapton Derek Mackenzie Mark Lewis	Deputy Town Clerk Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk Head of Estates & Operations
Others:	3 members of the public.	

SC39 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

SC40 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Members or officers.

SC41 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Stronger Communities committee held on 17 November 2025 were received.

SC659 – The Deputy Town Clerk reported that the Town Council had been notified of its successful application for a £1,000 Community Resilience Grant towards the replacement bus shelter at Oxford Hill.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee meeting held on 17 November 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

SC42 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Committee adjourned for this item.

The Committee received representations from a resident of Farmers Close, Witney, who spoke in support of the installation of a bollard under agenda item 11, and from a representative of the Oxford for Europe Group, who attended in relation to agenda item 6.

The Committee reconvened.

SC43 **REQUEST TO INSTALL BOLLARD - FARMERS CLOSE**

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

The Committee received and considered the report of the Head of Estates & Operations concerning the installation of a bollard at Farmers Close, Witney.

Members welcomed the request, noting that it would provide greater protection to well-used amenity land in the Council's ownership from existing maintenance budgets. They were satisfied that the proposed improvement would not impede pedestrians and that the path would remain accessible for bicycles, mobility aids and the Council's grounds maintenance equipment.

Officers advised that installation would be subject to approval from Oxfordshire County Council and the emergency services.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the installation of a bollard in the area presented at Farmers Close in the report be agreed, subject to the necessary permissions being granted.

CLLr D Edward-Hughes briefly left the meeting from 6:41 to 6:44pm during the next item.

SC44 **COMMUNICATIONS REPORT**

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

Members agreed that the residents' communication preferences survey and the annual satisfaction survey should be included in the spring newsletter, and that a quotation be sought from a local leaflet delivery company to improve delivery across Witney.

Updates were received on the Council's website, including performance improvements, potential streamlining of the biodiversity page, and proposed updates to the Youth Council page.

The Committee agreed that the Councillors @ The Café initiative remained an effective engagement activity aligned with Council strategies and should continue with increased Councillor involvement. Current press coverage, provided as an appendix, was noted.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and
2. That, the communications preference survey be included in the annual newsletter and,
3. That, a further quote be sought for local delivery of the annual newsletter and,
4. That, Councillors @ The Café should continue on the first Saturday of each month and,
5. That, the updates on the website and press coverage be noted.

SC45 **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT**

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

Members received an update on the Witney: Past, Present and Future Working Party, together with the notes of the previous meeting. The Committee noted some apprehension expressed by young people about the event and reiterated its intention for the event to be celebratory and inclusive, per what was being planned.

Further updates were provided on engagement for the Advent Fayre in November, Witney Carnival 2026 and Heritage Open Day.

It was agreed that the Council should facilitate SEND sessions at this year's Advent Fayre, retain the wheelbarrow competition at the Carnival with the necessary resources in place, and mark Heritage Open Day in collaboration with local heritage contacts. A wider Visit Witney project was also noted.

Finally, the Committee considered a request to fly the Council of Europe flag annually in May from the Town Hall. The request was assessed against the Council's flag-flying criteria and, subject to the flag being donated and no planning legislation being contravened, the Committee agreed that the flag could be flown.

The Committee also noted the Community Insight Profile Steering Group notes from 2 December 2025 which were appended to the report.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the proposed small-scale, family friendly format for St George's Day events, with activities split across 23rd and 26th April 2026, be approved and,
3. That, the introduction of dedicated SEND friendly sessions at future Advent Fayres be approved and,
4. That, the success of the Christmas Lights Engagement event in the Gallery Room be noted and use by the ICE Centre in 2026 be approved, subject to capacity and,
5. That, the Schools in Bloom wheelbarrow competition be judged at Witney Carnival, subject to officers being delegated responsibility for agreeing a pragmatic solution for storage and staff facilitation and,
6. That, officers develop a low-cost partnership event for Heritage Open Days 2026, working with local heritage partners and,
7. That, the Council of Europe flag be flown from the Town Hall annually, subject to its donation and appropriate planning consent, if required.

SC46 **WITNEY: PAST PRESENT & FUTURE WORKING PARTY**

The Committee received and considered the notes of the meeting held on 14 January 2026.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the meeting held on 14 January be noted and the recommendations therein approved.

SC47 **IN BLOOM**

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

It was confirmed that the Council would not be entering the Thames in Chiltern Bloom competition in 2026 as resources would be diverted to improving Unterhaching Park and preparing it for future planting.

In relation to the Schools in Bloom wheelbarrows, the Committee was presented with theme options for this year's challenge and invited to nominate an organisation to be offered a guest wheelbarrow, in line with recent practice.

The Committee also discussed community gardening and schools' vouchers. It was agreed that schools should be asked to retain receipts for purchased items. Community gardening groups would be asked to identify any items required, with vouchers issued only where items could not be sourced through the Council's suppliers. As a new garden bed, it was agreed that the Queen Emma's Community Garden group should be provided with a £50 voucher to support its establishment.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the decision not to enter Thames & Chiltern in Bloom be agreed and,
3. That, Yellow Submarine be invited to be the guest wheelbarrow organisation for the In Bloom Challenge 2026 and,
4. That, the theme for Schools in Bloom challenge for 2026 be Sensory Wheelbarrows (plants to stimulate the senses) and,
5. That, the voucher arrangements for community gardens and schools as presented in the report be approved.

SC48 **WITNEY YOUTH COUNCIL**

The Committee received the report of the Administrative Assistant – Communications & Engagement, which provided an update on their recent activities and notes of their meeting held on 8th January 2026.

Details were provided on meeting frequency, discussions, daily school slides, elected roles, a visit to the House of Commons and an event – A Taste of Witney which the group were planning to run in the spring.

Members welcomed the updates but expressed disappointment that a visit to Parliament was proving difficult to arrange. It was suggested that the Council could also consider informal engagement events hosted by the Youth Council, such as the recent Pizza and Politics evening in Witney, which was oversubscribed and well attended by young people.

Resolved:

1. That, the updates and notes of the Youth Council be noted and,
2. That, consideration be given to future informal engagement events.

*During the Following item Cllr J Treloar left the meeting briefly between 7:11pm and 7:13pm
Cllr A Bailey left the meeting between 7:17 pm and 7:20pm*

SC49 **YOUTH SERVICES**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk on youth services in Witney and matters currently being addressed by the Town Council.

Members discussed the Youth Services Grant Scheme, as requested by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee, and agreed that the criteria and timeframe should remain unchanged.

Updates were received on The Station detached youth group, the West Oxfordshire Youth Partnership, and youth club provision in Witney. Members agreed that youth clubs were needed but noted that the Town Council did not have the budget to support them directly. It was acknowledged that other stakeholders and existing groups, including uniformed organisations, already provided a mosaic of youth activities, and that further work should be informed by the Youth Needs Assessment.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Youth Services grant and previous timeframes remain the same for the 2026 awards and,
3. That, the updates on Youth Club provision, The Station and the West Oxfordshire Youth Partnership be noted.

SC50 **TOWN CENTRE FORUM**

The Committee received an update on the Forum and delay in the process of holding the first meeting. Invitations had been sent to relevant stakeholders asking for their nominations to the group.

Members welcomed the update and expressed their enthusiasm to take forward this collaborative opportunity.

Resolved:

That, the update on the progress of the Town Centre Forum be noted.

SC51 **MARKET SQUARE SEATING**

The Committee received and considered correspondence from West Oxfordshire District Council concerning the installation of seating in the High Street, Witney.

Members were advised that the proposal had been under consideration at District Council level for some time and would be funded from a specified grant and was therefore entirely separate from the County Council's Witney High Street refurbishment project.

Concerns were raised regarding the ongoing cleaning, maintenance and suitability of the proposed circular benches around trees at the location. Instead, Members agreed that the Council would take on ownership and future maintenance only if two or more Eastgate benches were installed in the area.

Recommended:

1. That, the correspondence from West Oxfordshire District Council be noted and,

2. That approval be given for the Town Council to take on responsibility and future maintenance of two or more Eastgate benches in the High Street area, as presented, with the cost of installation being met by the District Council.

SC52 **BIKE RACKS & BIN STORES**

The Committee received and considered correspondence from West Oxfordshire District Council concerning a request to remove bike racks to allow the installation of a bin store in Market Square, Witney.

Members supported the proposal, noting that it would improve the appearance of this area of Market Square, but confirmed that the Council would not take on responsibility for bin store maintenance. In response, it was agreed that all cycle racks removed, together with additional racks, should be relocated elsewhere in the town centre, with all costs met by the District Council.

Recommended:

1. That, the correspondence be noted and,
2. That, approval be given for the removal of the cycle racks at the proposed location, subject to the same number (or more) being relocated within the town centre, with costs and any necessary pavement repairs funded by West Oxfordshire District Council as part of this scheme.

SC53 **WITNEY TOWN CENTRE IMPROVEMENTS - DISCUSSION ON POTENTIAL PROJECTS TO UTILISE S106 DEVELOPER FUNDING**

The Committee received and considered correspondence from the Infrastructure Delivery Team at West Oxfordshire District Council concerning unspent Section 106 developer funding for town centre improvements.

Members were advised that a proportion of the funding had been allocated to two other District Council projects, including wayfinding, which was agreed to be a high priority. Members expressed disappointment that the request had been received now, with funding needing to be spent by the end of autumn, making forward planning difficult, particularly given the lack of an agreed plan for the County Council's forthcoming High Street refurbishment.

There was no clarity on the town centre limits or the remaining funding available, but several options were discussed, including a bandstand, arts trail, additional High Street seating and benches incorporating public art. However, Members agreed that the preferred option was the creation of a parklet in the parking area to the north of Witney's War Memorial, noting that this had been considered previously but deemed too costly within earlier budgets.

Recommended:

1. That, the correspondence be noted and,
2. That, the town centre limits and approximate amount of remaining funding be clarified and,
3. That, a parklet on Market Square in front of the war memorial be proposed.

The meeting closed at: 7.57 pm

Chair

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Finance Report
Meeting Date: Monday 23 March 2026
Contact Officer: Responsible Financial Officer

Should Members have any queries about this report advance notice would be appreciated, in writing, by 12 noon on Friday 20 March to allow for a full response at the meeting.

Background

Detailed income and expenditure statements for budgets which are the responsibility of this committee are enclosed. The period to which this report relates is 1 April to 31 December 2025.

Current Situation

A Management accounts

The Council has appointed five standing committees which have delegated powers to make decisions, including financial decisions, regarding the services which are included within their terms of reference, subject to the committee having the necessary budget. The Council's coding system and management accounts reflect the committee structure.

Within each committee, there are individual cost centres, comprising three digits, typically representing a discrete service entity and to which income and expenditure is allocated against previously agreed revenue budgets.

The cost centres for which this committee has responsibility are:

Cost centre	Service
402	Community Infrastructure
408	Community Activities

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 "3" or "4" are expenditure codes.

The format of this report is as follows: 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 estimates agreed during the budget cycle. The right-hand columns relate to the agreed estimates for 2026/27.

A full review of the budgetary position was undertaken during the budget cycle. This received detailed consideration at the last meeting of this committee and the subsequent Policy Governance and Finance Committee and full Council meetings. The RFO would refer members to the finance/ budget reports which were approved at those meetings for further information.

Members may wish to note the following:

1. There will be some codes where the year-to-date figure now exceeds the projected estimate for the whole year. This is to be expected as the projections were the best estimates made in September/ October and clearly matters move on. Equally there will be other codes where not all the projected budgets will be required. Virements (transfers) between budgets will be made where these can be justified but overall there are no budget lines which cause concern.
2. However, notwithstanding the above comments, on line 4200/402 year to date expenditure of £6,953 is higher than the revised budget of £6,000. The major item of expenditure in this budget line is the purchase of six Eastgate seats at a total cost of £3,648 including carriage. This may be funded at year end via transfer in from the earmarked reserve 369 (Infrastructure) and will be a judgement to be made at year end taking in to account the Council's outturn for the year and the impact on the general reserve.
3. As reported previously was a change to Committee responsibilities earlier in the financial year which affects the Stronger Communities Committee and its estimates.

Within the terms of reference for the Climate and Biodiversity Committee there are a number of responsibilities budgetary provision for which were previously under the remit of this Committee. These are, referenced directly from the Committee terms of reference for 2025-26:

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

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

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

Your officers have now made the necessary changes to the budget/cost centre structures which will relate to cost centre 402 – Community Infrastructure and

specifically nominal ledger codes – 4017, 4036, 4037, 4039, 4040, 4066, 4067, 4888, 4890, 4892, 4893 and 4899. These have been transferred in whole or in part a new cost centre attached to the Climate and Biodiversity Committee. The virement in relation to the 2025/26 original budget amounted to £238,491.

Note that in relation to works team allocations, of which a total of £162,990 has been transferred in relation to the 2025/26 budget, the amounts will be subject to review over the next twelve months.

4. At line 4141/408 (Events) the current year budget of £12,477 includes earmarked reserve funding of £5,500. This will not all be spent during 2025/26 and so as agreed during the budget cycle any underspend will be transferred to the earmarked reserves. This has enabled the Council to hold the budget funded through precept for 2026/27 at £7,500.
5. The Committee's services are operating within agreed budgets – the original budget for 2025/26 was revised down from £308,288 to £264,503 during the budget cycle and net expenditure to 31 December 2025 was £174,378 (57% of original and 66% of revised 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 it can take to limit or negate its liability.

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

Social Value

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

Financial implications

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

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 approve the report and the management accounts of the Committee's services to 31 December 2025.

Annual Budget - By Committee (Actual YTD Month 9)

Note: Management accounts - year to 31 December 2025 - Stronger Communities Cttee, 23 March 2026

		<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>Stronger Communities</u>										
402	<u>COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE</u>									
1052	EXPENSES RECOVERED	1,336	500	1,350	0	500	0	1,000	0	0
1099	MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	0	1,000	0	1,500	1,000	0	1,000	0	0
1170	GRANTS RECEIVED	0	5,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1171	DONATIONS RECEIVED	1,334	2,665	10,350	4,800	4,800	0	7,500	0	0
	Total Income	2,670	9,165	11,700	6,300	6,300	0	9,500	0	0
4014	ELECTRICITY	3,411	3,323	3,400	1,061	2,300	0	2,100	0	0
4017	CONTRACT CLEAN/WASTE	3,000	169	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4025	INSURANCE	112	112	115	112	112	0	150	0	0
4028	I.T.	0	117	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4035	BUS SHELTER MAINTENANCE	3,000	484	3,000	303	1,500	0	3,000	0	0
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	2,630	1,490	2,600	77	1,400	7	2,600	0	0
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	3,000	646	1,500	401	900	0	1,557	0	0
4039	HORTICULTURE	19,500	16,277	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4040	ARBORICULTURE	20,000	11,735	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4066	TREE REPLACEMENT	8,000	6,159	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4067	Tree Survey	8,000	6,845	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4105	XMAS LIGHTS, TREE & INFRASTRUC	55,000	55,337	48,500	40,972	48,500	0	50,300	0	0
4113	XMAS SOCIAL CONTRN - SEE 1099	0	750	0	1,125	1,000	0	1,000	0	0
4166	DEFIBRILLATOR EXPENDITURE	4,000	1,685	4,000	315	1,800	0	4,000	0	0
4200	STREET FURNITURE	5,000	7,047	5,000	6,857	6,000	19	5,000	0	0
4210	CHURCH CLOCK	1,500	0	1,500	0	625	0	1,500	0	0
4215	IN BLOOM - INC SCHOOLS CHALLEN	7,250	2,346	3,500	3,974	4,750	0	3,500	0	0

Continued on next page

Page 14

Appendix

Annual Budget - By Committee (Actual YTD Month 9)

Note: Management accounts - year to 31 December 2025 - Stronger Communities Ctte, 23 March 2026

		<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
4495	TFR FROM EARMARKED R	0	0	0	-17,040	-18,307	0	0	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	161,845	91,284	15,000	8,087	9,741	0	16,715	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	43,819	8,565	977	641	401	0	988	0	0
4892	C/S STAFF RCHG	18,431	17,824	10,681	7,439	10,418	0	10,160	0	0
4893	C/S O'HEAD RCHG	5,214	6,201	2,820	2,059	2,609	0	2,909	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	15,763	19,619	2,133	1,447	1,470	0	2,478	0	0
4990	CONTRN TO CCTV SCH.	10,000	10,000	11,267	0	11,267	0	11,591	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	398,475	268,013	115,993	57,831	86,486	26	119,548	0	0
	402 Net Income over Expenditure	-395,805	-258,847	-104,293	-51,531	-80,186	-26	-110,048	0	0
6000	plus Transfer from EMR	0	-2,047	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6001	less Transfer to EMR	0	5,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(395,805)	(265,894)	(104,293)	(51,531)	(80,186)		(110,048)		
408	COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES									
1099	MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	0	26	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1170	GRANTS RECEIVED	0	1,500	1,500	0	0	0	1,557	0	0
1171	DONATIONS RECEIVED	0	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0
	Total Income	0	1,526	1,500	2	2	0	1,557	0	0
4001	SALARIES	4,888	5,022	15,118	4,665	6,324	0	7,197	0	0
4002	ER'S NIC	498	482	1,949	600	811	0	929	0	0
4003	ER'S SUPERANN	1,061	1,004	3,281	1,010	1,372	0	1,432	0	0
4103	GRANT YOUTH COUNCIL	1,350	81	1,350	0	1,350	0	500	0	0
4104	GRANT CARNIVAL/XMAS ROTARY CLB	4,500	4,900	4,900	5,075	5,075	0	5,100	0	0
4105	XMAS LIGHTS, TREE & INFRASTRUC	0	0	0	640	0	0	0	0	0

Continued on next page

Page 15

Annual Budget - By Committee (Actual YTD Month 9)

Note: Management accounts - year to 31 December 2025 - Stronger Communities Ctte, 23 March 2026

		<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
4106	GRANT - PLAY DAY	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	0	1,000	0	0
4109	BLUE PLAQUES	0	525	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4111	WATER SAFETY/EDUCATION	2,000	0	2,000	0	2,000	0	2,000	0	0
4112	GRANT - WITNEY TOWN BAND	660	660	660	660	660	0	660	0	0
4141	EVENTS	10,000	4,961	6,977	5,341	12,407	0	7,500	0	0
4147	50th Anniversary Grants	0	1,100	0	50	50	0	0	0	0
4148	VE/ VJ 80th Anniversary comm'n	1,500	862	2,023	2,271	2,269	0	0	0	0
4149	WTC 50th ANNIVERSARY	5,000	3,332	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4154	EXPERIENCE OXFORDSHIRE M'SHIP	1,200	0	1,200	0	0	0	0	0	0
4160	TOWN TWINNING	500	0	500	0	500	0	500	0	0
4161	TOWN TWINNING ROOM HIRE	500	0	500	58	500	0	500	0	0
4167	BUS SERVICE	21,000	23,500	23,500	20,750	26,000	0	26,000	0	0
4169	CHILDREN & YOUTH PROVISION	40,000	30,200	0	18,600	29,800	0	20,000	0	0
4170	ADVENT FAYRE	2,000	2,064	1,000	1,650	1,000	0	1,000	0	0
4172	GRANT - DETACHED YOUTH WORK	0	0	18,000	13,500	18,000	0	28,500	0	0
4173	GRANT - HOME START	0	0	11,000	11,000	11,000	0	12,000	0	0
4495	TFR FROM EARMARKED R	0	0	0	-40,000	-40,000	0	0	0	0
4892	C/S STAFF RCHG	73,721	71,310	85,443	59,509	83,333	0	81,268	0	0
4893	C/S O'HEAD RCHG	20,857	24,799	25,094	16,470	20,868	0	23,267	0	0
Overhead Expenditure		192,235	175,801	205,495	122,849	184,319	0	219,353	0	0
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve		(192,235)	(174,275)	(203,995)	(122,847)	(184,317)		(217,796)		

Continued on next page

Annual Budget - By Committee (Actual YTD Month 9)

Note: Management accounts - year to 31 December 2025 - Stronger Communities Ctte, 23 March 2026

	<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
Stronger Communities - Income	2,670	10,691	13,200	6,302	6,302	0	11,057	0	0
Expenditure	590,710	443,813	321,488	180,680	270,805	26	338,901	0	0
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>-588,040</u>	<u>-433,122</u>	<u>-308,288</u>	<u>-174,378</u>	<u>-264,503</u>	<u>-26</u>	<u>-327,844</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
plus Transfer from EMR	0	(2,047)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
less Transfer to EMR	0	5,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>(588,040)</u>	<u>(440,169)</u>	<u>(308,288)</u>	<u>(174,378)</u>	<u>(264,503)</u>		<u>(327,844)</u>		
Total Budget Income	2,670	10,691	13,200	6,302	6,302	0	11,057	0	0
Expenditure	590,710	443,813	321,488	180,680	270,805	26	338,901	0	0
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>-588,040</u>	<u>-433,122</u>	<u>-308,288</u>	<u>-174,378</u>	<u>-264,503</u>	<u>-26</u>	<u>-327,844</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
plus Transfer from EMR	0	(2,047)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
less Transfer to EMR	0	5,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>(588,040)</u>	<u>(440,169)</u>	<u>(308,288)</u>	<u>(174,378)</u>	<u>(264,503)</u>		<u>(327,844)</u>		

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE



Agenda Item:	Communications Report
Meeting Date:	Monday, 23 March 2026
Contact Officer:	Communications & Community Engagement Officer

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

Current Situation

2026 Spring Newsletter

A review of newsletter distribution has highlighted potential issues with delivery. Of the 15 staff and Councillors who responded to a request to confirm receipt, only three confirmed that they had received a copy through their door. One of these added that it was bundled in with three other leaflets. A follow-up email was issued to the distributor requesting further information on how delivery was carried out, whether any issues were encountered, and whether delivery data is available. A copy of this correspondence is included at **Appendix A**. Councillors should consider how they would like to address this.

Surveys

To date, 57 responses have been received for the annual satisfaction survey and 47 responses for the communications preferences survey. Officers intend to further promote both surveys via social media in the coming weeks to increase participation and ensure a broader and more representative dataset.

Digital Newsletters

Officers have offered space within the digital newsletter to local charities that attend the Witney Forum, which has been met with a positive response.

Participating organisations provide their own content and images in line with agreed deadlines. This initiative serves to raise the profile and extend the reach of local groups, whether they are promoting recruitment, training opportunities, support services, or general updates, while also enhancing the newsletter by incorporating a wider range of voices and softening its corporate tone.

This offer is currently limited to the digital newsletter, as it does not incur additional printing costs.

This opportunity to contribute content to the digital newsletter could also be extended to all groups listed on the Council's website under the partners page, further strengthening engagement with local organisations.

Vevox Polling App

The Council subscribed to the polling and Q&A platform VEVOX for use at the Annual Town Meeting. This platform represents a cost-effective option, at approximately one-third of the cost of comparable alternatives, while offering a high degree of versatility. Officers are currently familiarising themselves with its functionality and exploring additional uses, including use at consultation events. Members are invited to suggest further uses to ensure maximum value for money and to maximise feedback capture.

Press Coverage

Latest press coverage information from January 2026 has been prepared by the Administrative Assistant – Communications and Engagement see **Appendix B**.

Officers are issuing a weekly round-up of social media news and events directly to press contacts. This will go out on Thursday where possible and include news posts and stories and full press releases where applicable. Officers will include any photographs and comments from Chair, Mayor, or Leader where possible.

Impact Assessments

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

a) Equality

The Council's communications activity seeks to minimise equality risks by using a mix of digital and non-digital channels to reach residents of different ages, abilities, and circumstances. The availability of the Communications Preference Survey in both paper and online formats helps to reduce digital exclusion, particularly for older residents and those without regular internet access.

b) Biodiversity

No direct impact on biodiversity is anticipated from the communications work or production of printed materials.

c) Crime & Disorder

Improved communication and community engagement may contribute to greater awareness of community activities and indirectly support community cohesion, helping to reduce anti-social behaviour.

d) Environment & Climate Emergency –

While print production has some environmental impact, efforts will be made to minimise waste, use sustainable materials where possible, and promote digital communication channels in line with the Council's Climate Emergency declaration.

Risk

The risks linked to the matters in this report are low. However, there is a possibility that staff time, tight deadlines, and reliance on external suppliers for printing and delivery could cause some pressure on resources or delays. There is also a risk that some residents may not be

reached, particularly where digital access is limited or postal delivery is unreliable. These risks will be reduced through careful planning, using a range of communication methods, checking delivery arrangements, and regularly reviewing how the Council engages with the community.

Social Value

The Council's communications activity delivers clear social value by promoting transparency, improving awareness of Council services and initiatives, and encouraging residents to engage with local decision-making.

Activities such as the Town Council newsletter, consultation surveys, press engagement and *Councillors in the Café* provide opportunities for two-way communication and help build trust between councillors, officers, and the community.

Financial Implications

The production and distribution of printed materials, particularly the Spring Newsletter, represent a significant and recurring cost to the Council.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and,

1. Consider how to respond to the delivery issues encountered with this year's paper newsletter.
2. Consider additional uses for Vevox as a method of community engagement and feedback gathering.

Newsletter Distribution maps and tracking

Request for feedback

Good morning

I'm just putting together my report for the Stronger Communities Committee, and they're expecting an update on the Newsletter delivery.

Could you let me know how it's gone? Do you have a map or list of the areas targeted and delivered? Were there any hiccups or delays along the way?

A few councillors haven't received theirs yet, so any insight would be really helpful.

Thanks so much for your help.

Good morning

I have pleasure in sharing the tracking maps for the distribution we have recently carried out on your behalf.

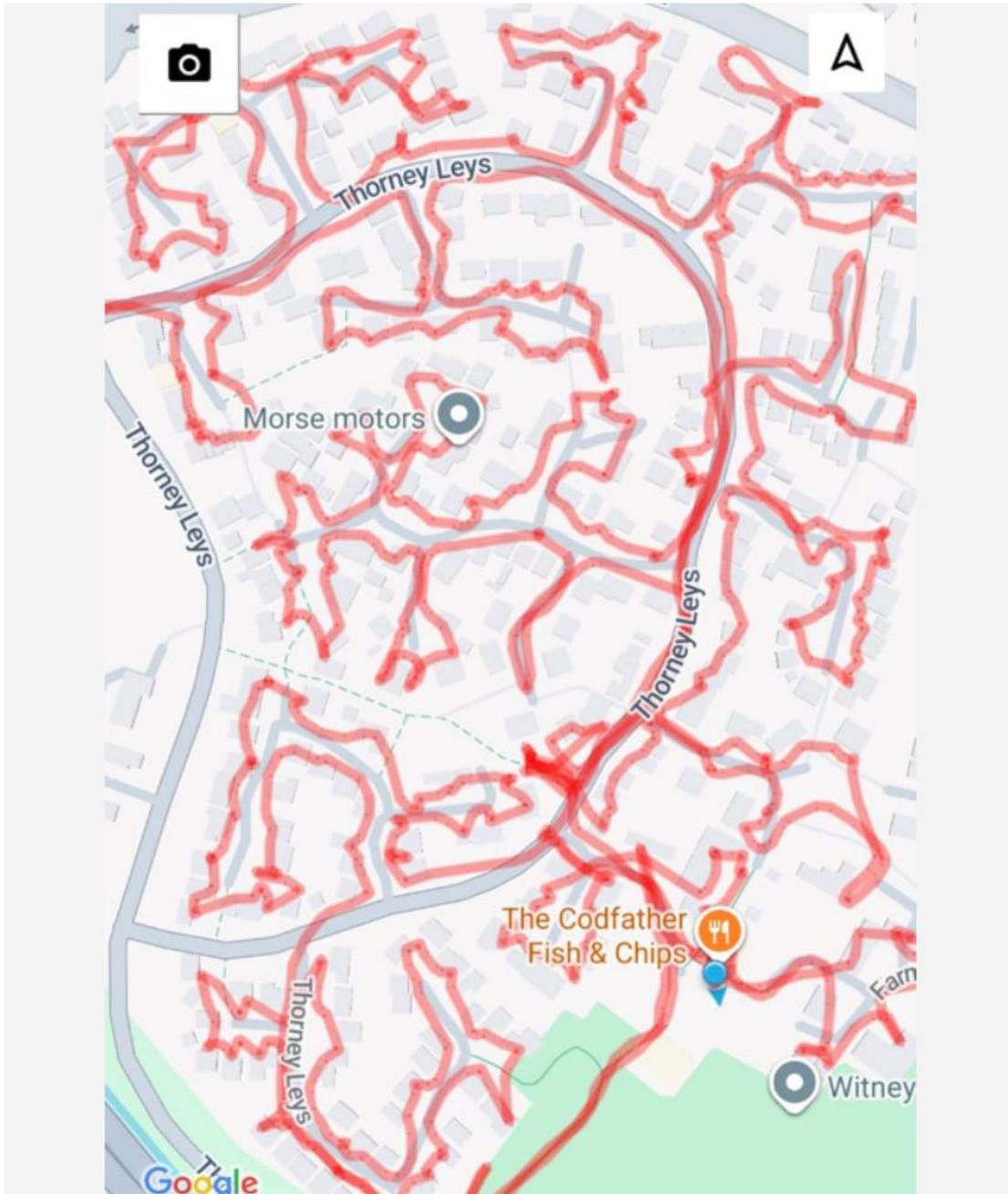
<https://we.tl/t-rwvIOysHHa>

We commenced your distribution on Monday 23rd February, delivering to all households in OX28 and OX29 Windrush Estate, completing this project on the 17th March. We printed and worked with 15,000 newsletters.

The majority of households welcomed your newsletter delivery, but we always get a handful of households that choose to refuse deliveries or households have a notice on their front door to prevent us from delivering, we have to adhere to these requests. With your newsletters some households actually declined the delivery, and a resident was seen putting the newsletter straight into the bin, which is very frustrating, but this is to be expected to some degree from recipients and part of the nature of the door-2-door distribution service. Sometimes, partners/families may throw away the newsletters, brochures and flyers before other members of the household have actually viewed them.

I hope this helps and allows you to compile your report to the Stronger Communities Committee.

With thanks and warm wishes





08:34

93



NORMAL HYBRID SATELLITE



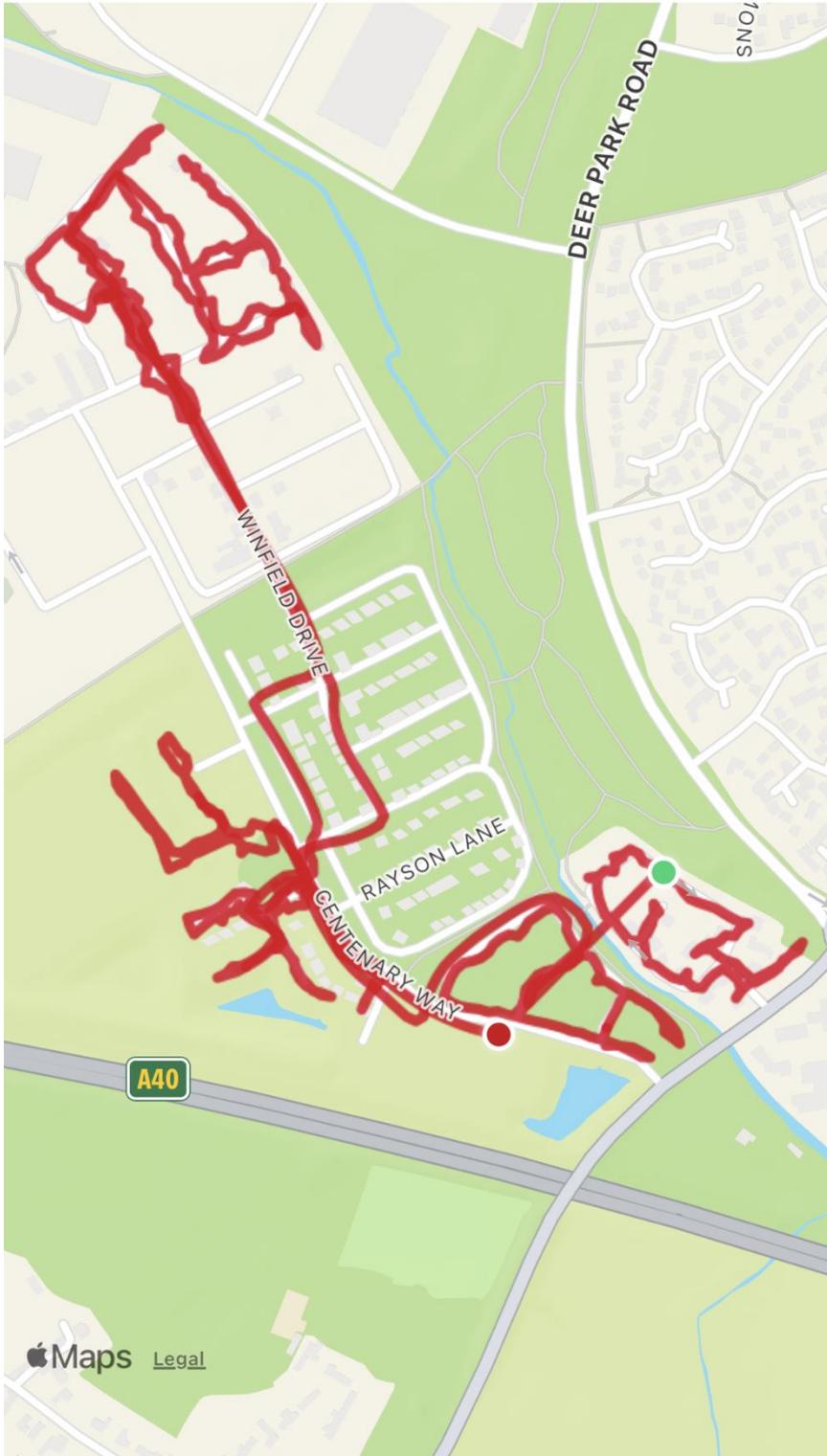
Apple Maps Legal

08:33

93



NORMAL HYBRID SATELLITE



Apple Maps Legal

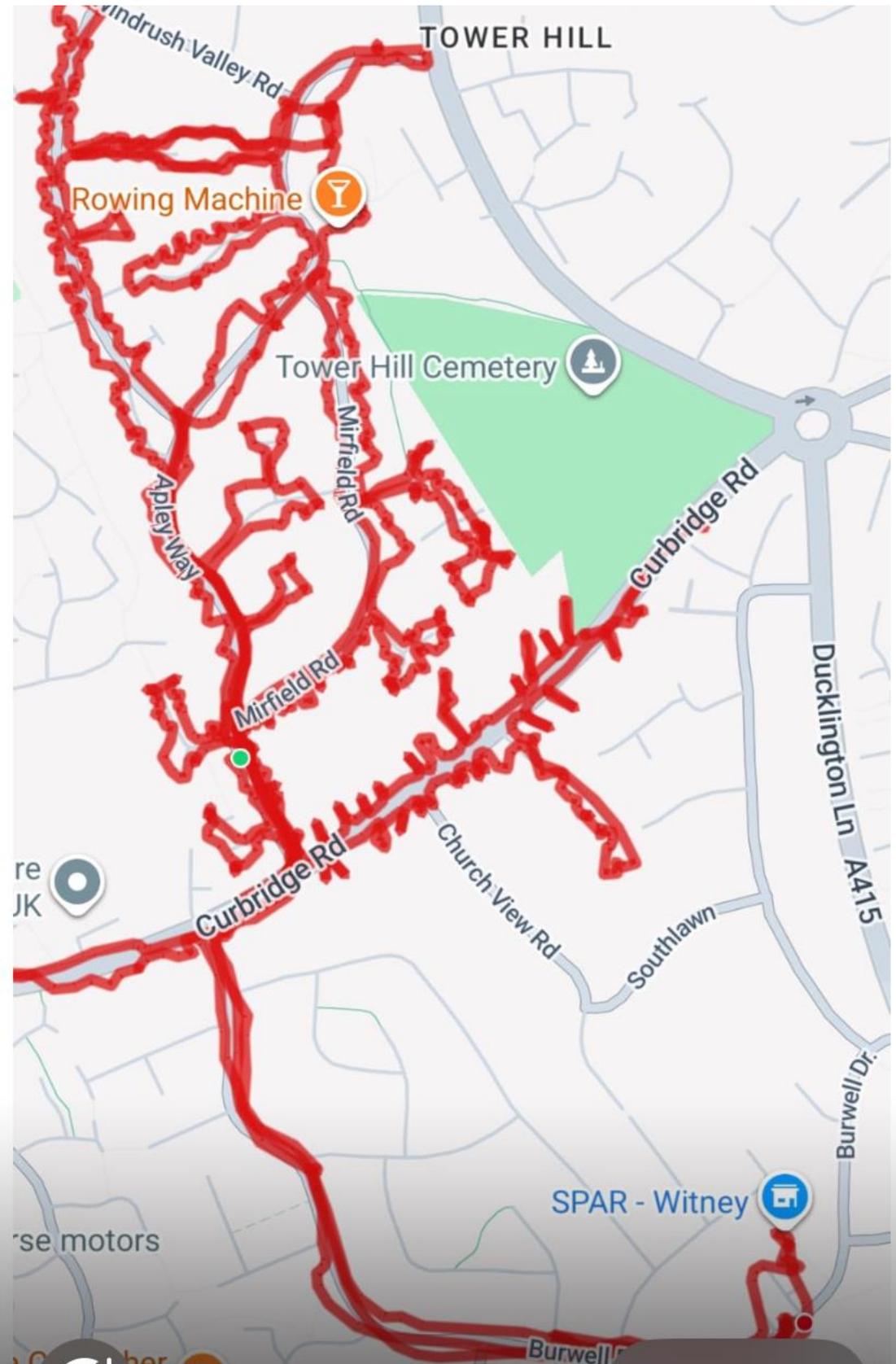


NORMAL

HYBRID

SATELLITE





08:34

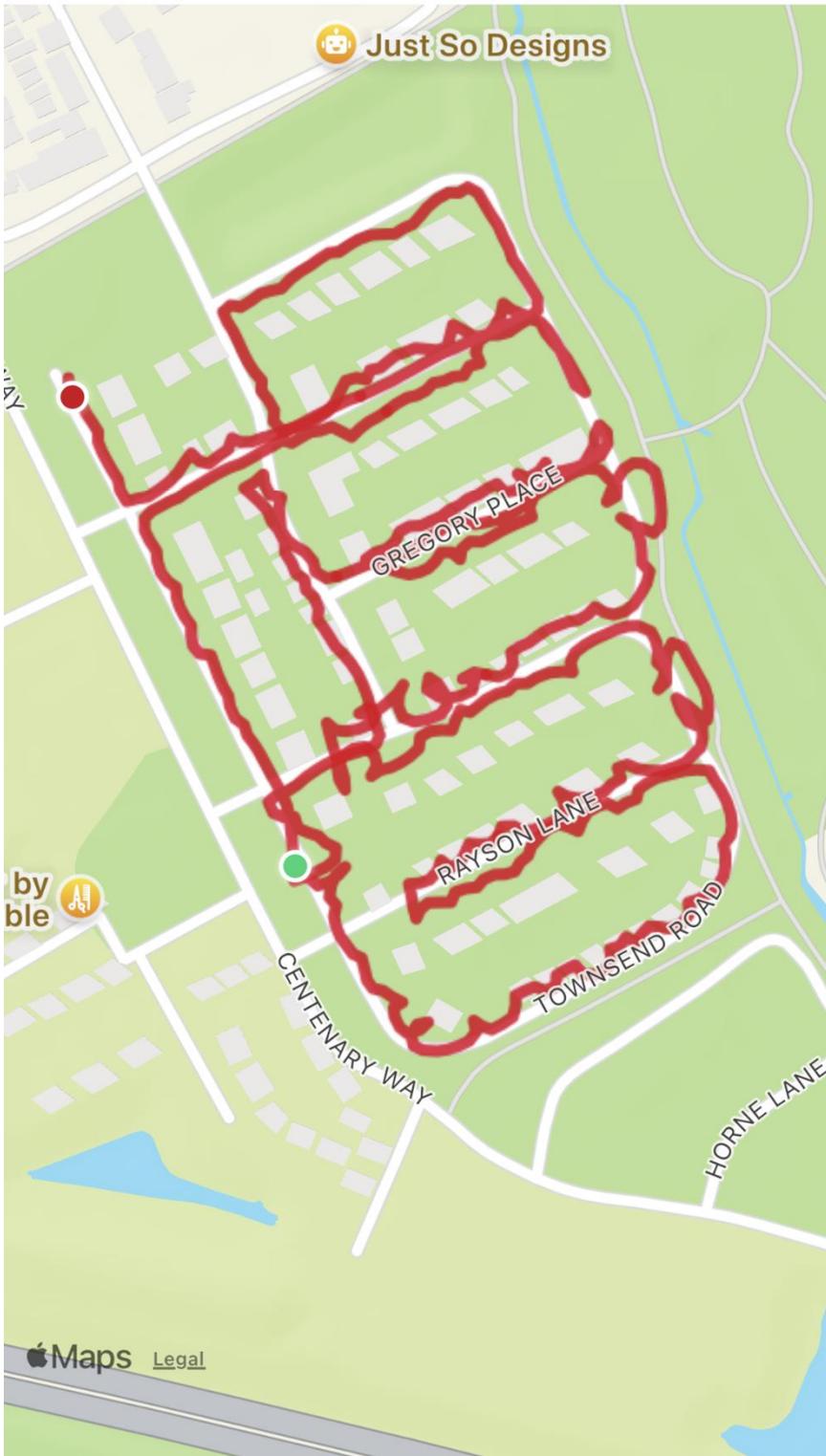
93

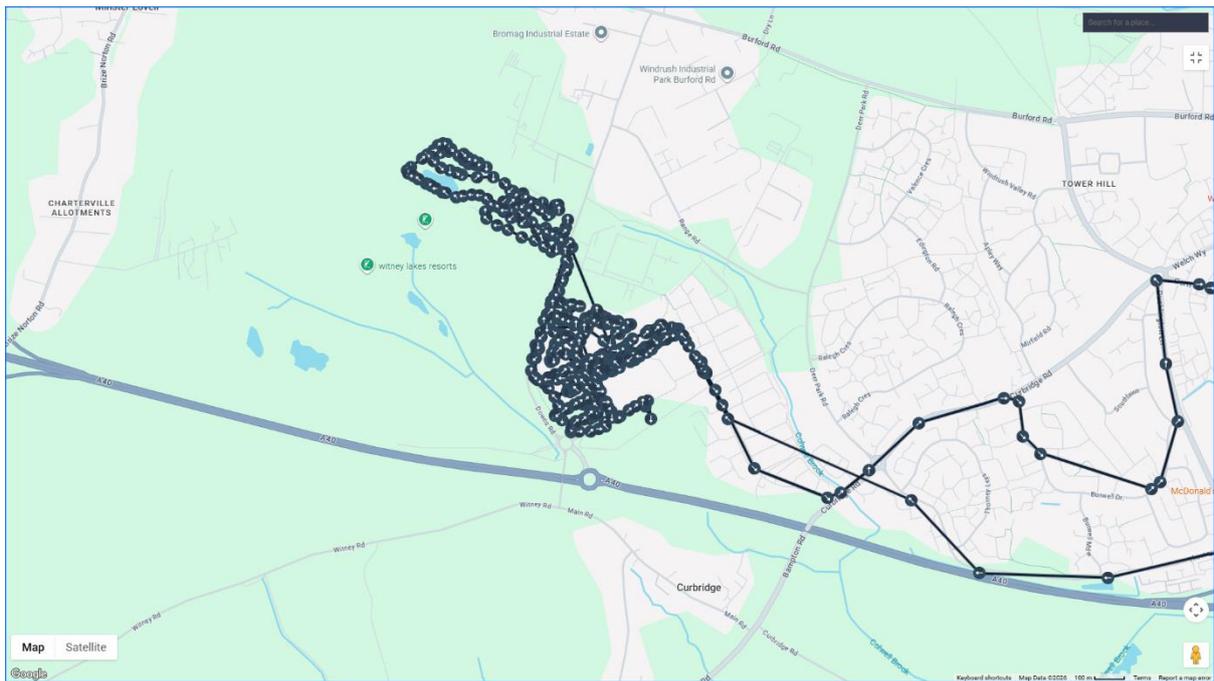


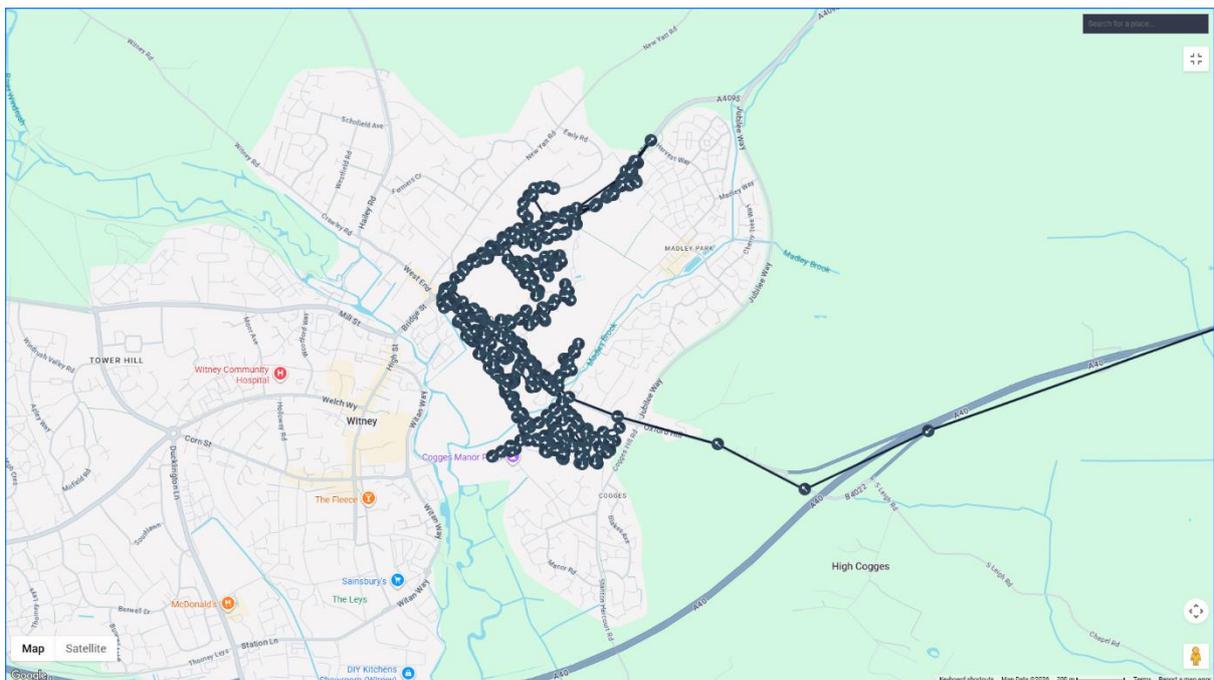
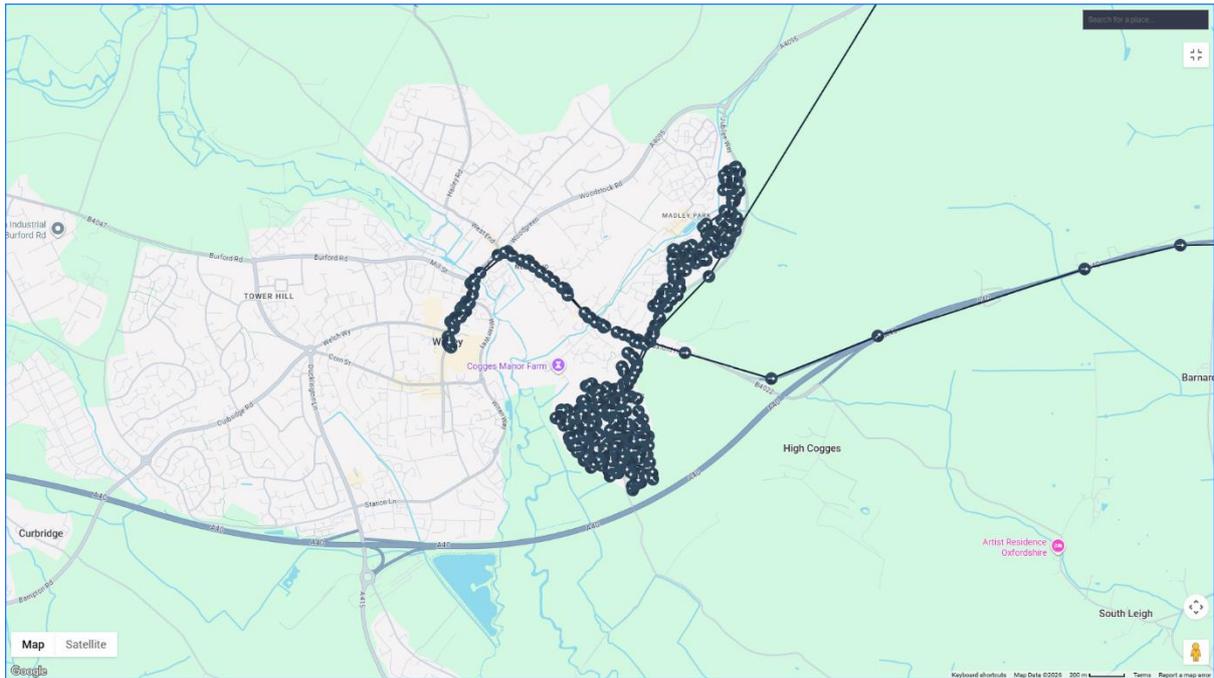
NORMAL

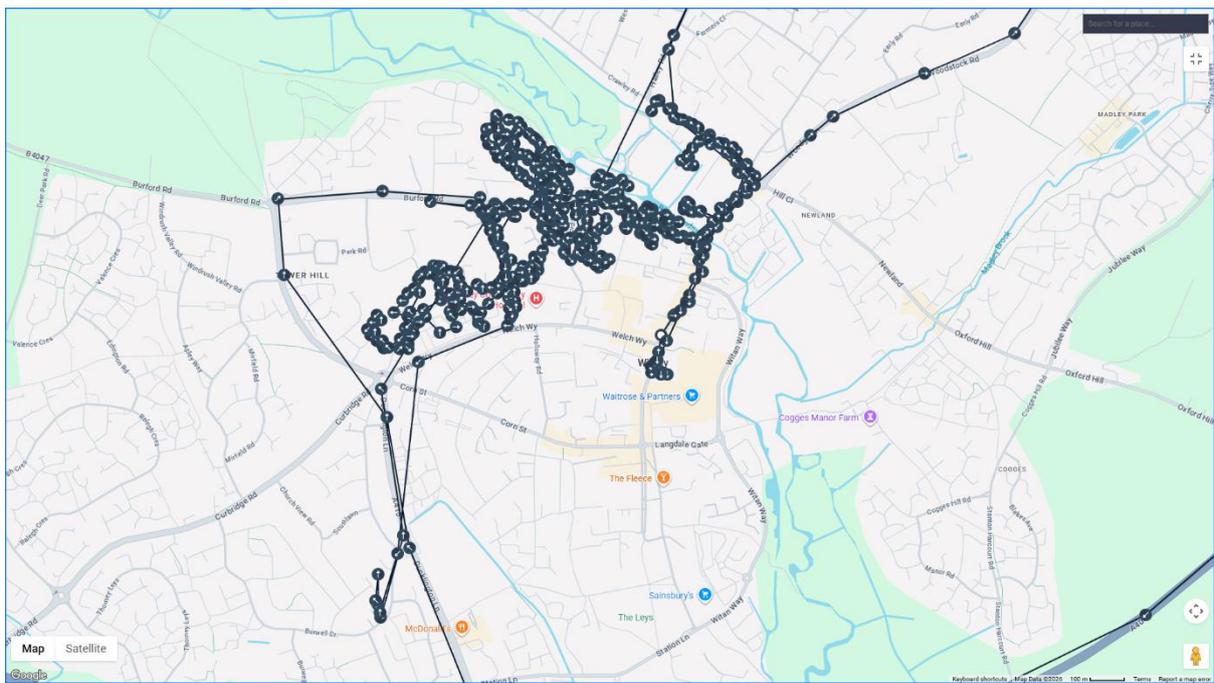
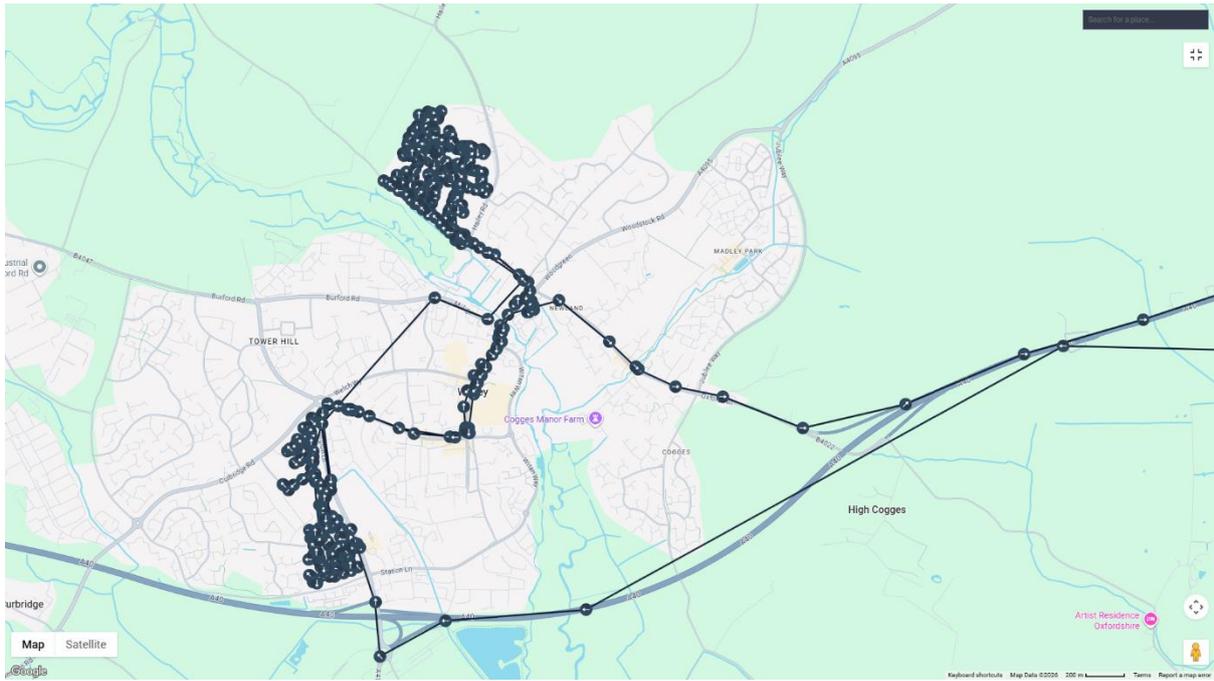
HYBRID

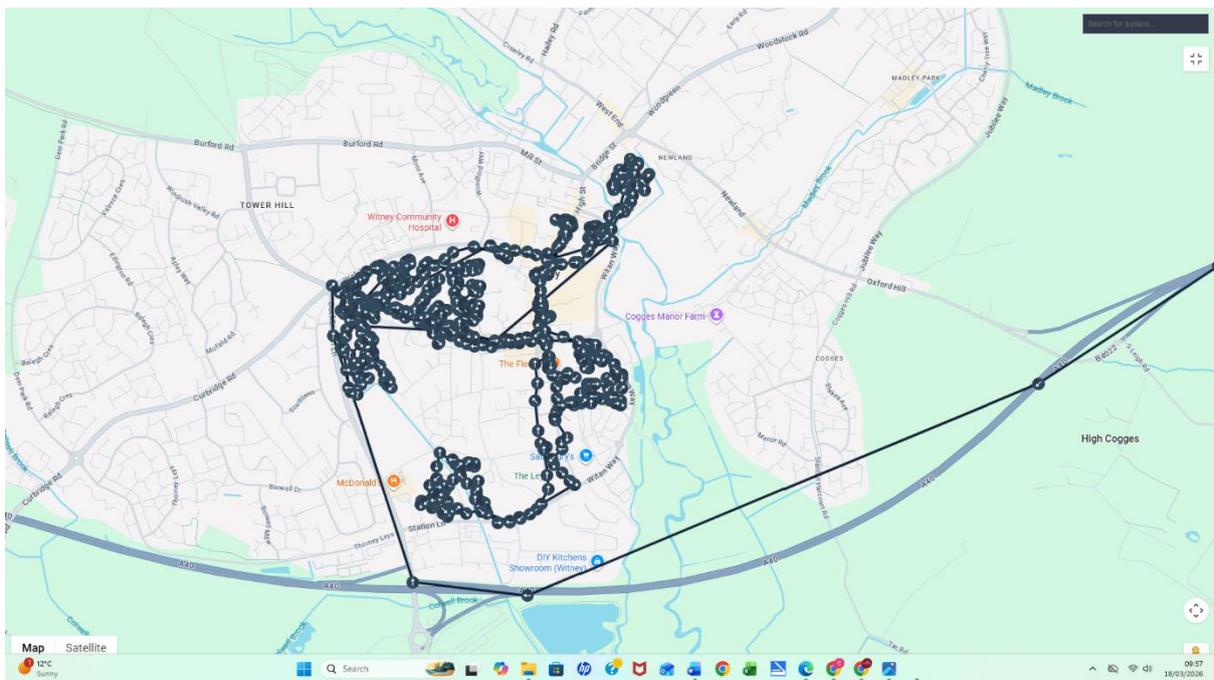
SATELLITE













WITNEY

TOWN COUNCIL

Date	Story	Reported in	Positive	Negative	Neutral	PR Issued	From WTC Social Media Post	News Article Page	Enquiry Response
06 January 2026	Cost of fixing Flag Vandalism on Lamp Posts (Features leader of the Council)	Oxford Clarion			Yes	No	No	https://oxfordclarion.uk/new-year-clarion-6-january-2026/	
07 January 2026	Witney Lake Gold In Bloom Award	Cotswold Life	Yes			Yes	Yes	https://www.greatbritishlife.co.uk/magazines/cotswold/25693560_rich-textile-heritage-witney-wool-blanket-trail/	
11 January 2026	Oxfordshire town rejects controversial fire service reforms	Witney Gazette, Oxford Mail, This is Oxfordshire			Yes	No	No	https://www.thisisoxfordshire.co.uk/news/25738722_oxfordshire-council-poised-oppose-fire-service-reforms/	
12 January 2026	Major Cotswolds road in Oxfordshire to close next month	Witney Gazette, Oxford Mail			Yes	No	Yes (On behalf of OCC)	https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25757595_major-cotswolds-road-oxfordshire-close-next-month/	
14 January 2026	Key Cotswolds road will close overnight next month	Cotswold Journal			Yes	No	Yes (On behalf of OCC)	https://www.cotswoldjournal.co.uk/news/25764016_key-cotswolds-road-will-close-overnight-next-month/	
17 January 2026	Witney community speedwatch volunteers celebrate anniversary	Witney Gazette	Yes			No	No	https://www.witneygazette.co.uk/news/25773859_witney-community-speedwatch-volunteers-celebrate-second-anniversary/	
24 January 2026	Witney Volunteer Fair gives locals opportunities to connect	Witney Gazette	Yes			No	Shared from WODC	https://www.witneygazette.co.uk/news/25791942_witney-volunteer-fair-gives-locals-opportunities-connect/	
02 February 2026	Oxfordshire mayor weighs in on football pavilion controversy	ThisisOxfordshire			Yes	Yes	No	https://www.thisisoxfordshire.co.uk/news/25797140_oxfordshire-mayor-weighs-football-pavilion-controversy/	
03 February 2026	Oxfordshire football club responds to pavilion 'stitch up'	Witney Gazette		Yes		Yes	No	https://www.witneygazette.co.uk/news/25812769_oxfordshire-football-club-responds-pavilion-stitch-up/?utm_term=.Autofeed&utm_m	
12 February 2026	Oxfordshire council defends tax increase amid Tory criticism	Oxford Mail, Yahoo News, msn News			Yes	No	No	https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25847720_oxfordshire-council-defends-tax-increase-amid-tory-criticism/	

Appendix B

Date	Story	Reported in	Positive	Negative	Neutral	PR Issued	From WTC Social Media Post	News Article Page	Enquiry Response
22 February 2026	Public purse to end Oxfordshire estate's flooding nightmare	Oxford Mail, Infrastructure Now			Yes	No	No	https://www.infrastructure-now.co.uk/article/422315/public-purse-to-end-oxfordshire-estates-flooding-nightmare	
25 February 2026	Popular play area to close temporarily	Witney Gazette			Yes	No	Yes	https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25870360.witney-mini-golf-kiosk-skatepark-close-temporarily/	
28 February 2026	New benches made from recycled plastics installed in Witney	Oxford Mail, Witney Gazette	Yes			No	Yes	https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25883785.new-benches-made-recycled-plastics-installed-witney/	
02 March 2026	New parking restrictions on road in Witney introduced	Oxford Mail			Yes	No	No	https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25899349.new-parking-restrictions-road-witney-introduced/	
04 March 2026	Annual Town Meeting	Witney Gazette			Yes	No	Yes		
11 March 2026	Awards given to outstanding individuals in community	Witney Gazette	Yes			Yes	Yes		

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE



Agenda Item:	Community Engagement Report
Meeting Date:	Monday, 23 March 2026
Contact Officer:	Communications & Community Engagement Officer

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

Current Situation

Past Present and Future Working Party- St George's Day

Publicity has been issued for the St George's Day events on the Council's website, social media and officers have taken advantage of the offer a full page, free advert in Letter Box magazine. The Venues and Events officer will be ordering two A1 signs for the boards outside the Corn Exchange. A press release will go out shortly and the Digital Signage and the window it sits in will be filled with more information. Councillors are asked to share as much as possible.

Minutes from the Witney: Past, Present & Future Working Party are attached as a separate item.

Great British Spring Clean (13-29 March 2026)

Councillors are asked if they would like to add the Great British Spring Clean to the events calendar. The Council already shares communications from Keep Britain Tidy and has litter-picking equipment available for community loan. If councillors wish to actively do more a small budget of around £500 could be used to support more groups wishing to undertake litter picks and clean ups, or for the Council to undertake something itself. It should be noted that March and the month before is a very busy time with the newsletter preparation and follow up, civic events such as Civic Reception with Citizen of the Year and the Annual Town meeting.

Thames Valley Orienteering Event Request

Thames Valley Orienteering Club has requested confirmation that the Town Council has no objections to a second urban orienteering event in Witney, proposed for Sunday 15 November 2026. A previous event held in September 2021 took place without issue. The organisers have confirmed they are fully self-sufficient and require no road closures, facilities, or direct Council support. See **Appendix A**

Surplus Spring Flowers

The Communications and Community Engagement Officer is seeking permission for unused bulbs and flowers from the Civic Reception to be repurposed within the children's memorial garden at Windrush Cemetery. Due to current workload pressures on the Works Team, this may be undertaken voluntarily by staff as a wellbeing and team activity. The scale of work is minimal. It would take three people twenty minutes plus travel time.

Reducing the Risk – Domestic Abuse Awareness Training

Free training opportunities are available through Reducing the Risk, including:

- “DA Friends” awareness sessions (1 hour, online or in person), aimed at increasing understanding of domestic abuse and promoting the message: *Listen, Link, Lend a Hand*.
- “DA Champion” training, a two-day professional course for those wishing to act as a key contact within their organisation.

The organisation has offered to attend a Town Council meeting to provide further information and outline current initiatives, including the Military DA Torchbearer project.

Christmas Competitions and Sponsorship

Councillors are asked to consider whether the Council wishes to run the usual Christmas competitions this year, including:

- “Design a Light” (typically launched in June), and
- Christmas Card competition (typically launched in late September).

There will also be the necessity to offer back the oldest light to its creator so that there is sufficient space for the new one.

The Communications Team has also been tasked with following up on last year’s Christmas sponsorship packages, seeking feedback from participants on their experience and identifying potential improvements. Officers will be able to provide an update on this later in the year.

Town Twinning Visit – May 2026

Officers are aware of a planned visit by representatives from Witney’s twinned towns at the beginning of May. However, the Town Council has not received an official request to host these visitors. If the Council wishes to do so, it would be helpful for a nominated Council representative to formally raise this and for the Committee to pass a resolution confirming its intention to organise or support an event and what this should consist of.

Impact Assessments

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

a) Equality –

All proposed projects and events aim to be inclusive and accessible to all residents, supporting equal participation across the community.

b) Biodiversity –

No direct impact on biodiversity is anticipated from these activities. Outdoor events will continue to use existing green spaces responsibly.

c) Crime & Disorder –

Community events and engagement activities promote civic pride and positive social interaction, contributing to a reduction in anti-social behaviour.

d) Environment & Climate Emergency –

Events and communications will consider environmental impact, minimising waste and promoting sustainable practices in line with the Council’s Climate Emergency declaration.

Risk

Councillors should note potential risks relating to event management, staffing capacity, and weather conditions for outdoor activities. Appropriate risk assessments will be undertaken for each project to minimise liability.

Risks are considered low and manageable through established procedures and officer oversight.

Social Value

Council-led events and partnerships create opportunities for community connection, volunteering, and cultural enrichment. Initiatives such as training with local organisations to become ambassadors, champions and key contacts strengthen community identity and wellbeing.

These projects deliver strong social value by supporting local groups, encouraging participation, enhancing civic engagement and providing safe spaces within Town Council buildings.

Financial

All activities will be delivered within existing budgets apart from Great British Spring Clean for which a budget of £500 would be sufficient. Event costs and officer time will be managed to ensure best value for the community.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and:

- 1.** Councillors endorse adding the Great British Spring Clean to the events calendar and set a budget of £500 to support any initiatives arising.
- 2.** Councillors approve the urban orienteering event in Witney in November 2026.
- 3.** Councillors agree to the repurposing of leftover spring flowers to brighten up the children’s memorial garden
- 4.** Councillors consider inviting a representative from Reducing the Risk to a future meeting to talk about free Domestic Abuse Awareness Training opportunities for councillors and staff.
- 5.** Councillors decide which Christmas Competitions they would like to run in 2026 and also consider the sponsorship of the lights and trees for this year.

Dear Witney Town Council.

I wanted to let you know that Thames Valley Orienteering Club (TVOC) plans to run a second urban orienteering event in Witney on Sunday 15th November this year, 2026.

On September 26th 2021, TVOC organised their first urban orienteering event around the streets of Witney. The event ran without any problems.

Prior to that event, I had an email dialogue with [REDACTED] at the Council (see below) where I sought permission for that event from the Council. I have retained the previous dialogue below as it explains what we were after.

In summary, we would need no help or assistance at all from the Town Council. We do not need road closures or access to any buildings. We do not plan to use any property owned by the Town Council. We don't need any facilities from the Town Council. We are entirely self-sufficient. We will update our own orienteering map of the area, we will make sure we keep people solely to the public parts of the town, and (unless you were around on the day), you would probably not even know we had been here. We plan routes to avoid busy roads, and love the navigational choice provided by the footpaths, cut-throughs, bridges, side-roads and tracks that seem to be everywhere in Witney!

For our event in September 2021 (as you will see below), we did not require permission from the Council. Would you be able to check that the Town Council has no concerns with our plan for an event on the 15th November, and let me know of any questions or comments whatsoever?

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]
Secretary
TVOC

Document is Restricted

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Youth Council Update

Meeting Date: Monday, 24 March 2026

Contact Officer: Admin Assistant – Communications & Engagement

The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on the Witney Youth Council.

Background

The Witney Youth Council was established in September 2024 with a group of 12 members. Since its formation, the council has actively participated in town events, including the Christmas Lights Switch-on and the Witney Carnival.

The primary purpose of the Witney Youth Council is to provide children and young people with a collective voice that is heard by decision makers. By giving young people a voice, the Witney Youth Council plays a vital role in shaping a more inclusive and responsive local government, encouraging active participation, and developing key skills among Witney's young people.

Current Situation

The Benefice of Witney Youth Chaplain

At the March Youth Council meeting, the Youth Council were pleased to welcome the new Youth Chaplain from the Benefice of Witney, currently based at St Mary's Church. She spoke with Youth Councillors about a new Youth Café taking place every Friday at the church, as well as future plans for a Youth Culture Festival and other events. Youth Councillors were very engaged in the discussion and agreed to support any future steering groups or promotion if needed.

Youth Council Meeting Frequency and Attendance

Alternating between a formal meeting one month and an informal meeting the next has proven to be the most effective approach for maintaining motivation and progressing projects, although consistent attendance remains a challenge. Providing refreshments has had mixed success in encouraging greater attendance, but those who regularly attend do appreciate them.

A Taste of Witney – Witney Youth Council Event

Witney Youth Councillors decided to host an event for young people in response to a lack of activities in Witney, with the aim of celebrating different cultures through food. Rather than preparing the food themselves, they plan to invite local restaurants to provide samples, with

the restaurants responsible for food safety while the Youth Council provides the venue, support, and manages attendance. The free event will be held at the Corn Exchange, with any donations raised contributing to the planned water re-filling station at The Leys.

So far, two restaurants have expressed interest. At least seven restaurants need to confirm their participation by the next meeting on 14 April 2026 for the event to go ahead. Youth Councillors will continue to visit local restaurants and discuss taking part.

National Youth Council UK

Witney Youth Council voted in favour of joining the National Youth Council when presented with the benefits of becoming a member and looked forward to the opportunities it would bring.

Witney and District Museum Youth Council Tour

Officers have discussed the possibility of organising a Witney History Tour specifically for the Witney Youth Council with Sonia from the Witney and District Museum, who leads a number of walking tours around Witney. She has kindly offered to support this idea and, when it was raised at the March meeting, Youth Councillors expressed strong interest in taking part. Further details of the walk will be discussed in due course.

House of Commons Visit

Witney Youth Council has shown a strong interest in both local and national politics and has frequently requested a visit to the House of Commons. MP Charlie Maynard has offered to provide a guided tour; however, a specific date is still in the process of being arranged with his team.

Daily Slides and End of Term Newsletters

Updates from Witney Youth Council and Witney Town Council concerning young residents are continuing to be shared with local secondary schools for inclusion in their newsletters.

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 – Witney Youth Council inherently tackles inequality by giving a voice and a platform to young people, often apart of diverse communities. Many issues youth councillors want to tackle involve discrimination.
- b) Biodiversity – The Youth Council has begun to show interest in climate initiatives, although specific plans to help Witney's green spaces have not yet been discussed.
- c) Crime & Disorder – Helping young people feel listened to through avenues such as a Youth Council can help reduce anti-social behaviour and crime by Young People through

promoting mental health awareness, peer-led activities/initiatives, and improving the reputation of young people in Witney.

- d) Environment & Climate Emergency –When Witney Youth Council buy items for their projects, officers have prioritised sustainability and the use of eco-friendly materials.

Risk

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

Social Value

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

- Organisations and local groups able to gather valuable insights on the perspectives and needs of young people in Witney through a small, representative sample.
- Young residents of Witney feel heard and that their voice can make an impact.

Financial implications

- Officers' working time
- Additional internal hall hire and costs relating to Corn Exchange bookings for the Youth Council meetings.

Recommendations

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

1. Consider the Youth Council update.



Minutes of the meeting of the Witney Youth Council held At 4.00 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney on Wednesday 11th March 2026.

Youth Councillors Present:

Four Youth Councillors

Witney Town Council Mentors Present:

Cllr G Meadows

Cllr S Simpson

Witney Town Council Officers Present:

A Hathaway – Admin Assistant for Communications and Engagement

P Inness – Communications and Community Engagement Officer

The Councillors in attendance were Youth Council mentors and were there to guide and answer questions. Officers advised Members this was their opportunity to provide a voice for young people in Witney and the Town Council would try and bring about their ideas and suggestions.

1. **Apologies**

Apologies from three youth councillors were received.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

Youth Councillors were advised that if they knew anyone or had any involvement in any of the items being discussed at the meeting, they should say it at this point.

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th January 2026 were adopted and signed as correct.

4. **Guest Participation**

Participants at the meeting spoke with the Youth Council.

- Dianne Augustine, Youth Chaplain for The Benefice of Witney

The Youth Chaplain informed the youth council of her role, the Youth Café currently taking place at the St Mary's Church every Friday, from 3PM to 7.30PM, and of the potential of a steering group for future events. By the end of April, the Youth Café will be monitored and considered expanding to other locals around Witney.

The Youth Chaplain also shared information about the cooked meals she provides at the church every Wednesday, as well as the Employability and Wellbeing Workshops currently held at Witney College and soon to be offered at Henry Box. She also discussed plans for a Youth Voice App, which would allow young people to quickly share their opinions and access helpful resources. The Youth Chaplain encouraged Youth Councillors to get involved and share their ideas to help shape these initiatives.

5. Updates on the House of Commons Visit

The Youth Council Admin Assistant provided a verbal update that we were still waiting on MP Charlie Maynard's response.

6. Cultural Foods in Witney Event (A Taste of Witney (?))

Youth Councillors reported that two restaurants had shown interest in the event. The Admin Assistant informed that in order for the event to take place, there would need to be at least seven restaurants confirmed in attending before the end of March as per the event plan.

The Youth Council Chair confirmed that further visits were to take place on the 14th and 15th of March. A Youth Mentor advised that handing out small leaflets with all the details on may be the best way to encourage responses by giving information to take away. The Admin Assistant agreed to create and print simple leaflets for youth councillors to pick up on Friday before the visits.

7. Annual Town Meeting Invitation and Video

Chair of the Youth Council agreed to try to film a short video over the weekend for inclusion in the Annual Town Meeting.

8. National Youth Council

Youth Councillors were informed of the reinstatement of the National Youth Council and voted all in favour of becoming a member.

9. Items for Future Agenda

A youth councillor suggested further planning for this event and a recap of the results from 31st Jan be discussed at the next meeting.

10. Dates of Future Meetings

The dates of the upcoming Youth Council meetings were received.

- Tue 14 April 2026 (Informal Meeting) – 4PM to 5PM

**WITNEY PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE WORKING PARTY MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Wednesday, 18 February 2026

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

Present:

Councillor R Crouch (Chair)

Councillors:	G Meadows	J Robertshaw
Officers:	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Thomas Davies	Deputy Venue & Events Officer
	Polly Inness	Communications & Community Engagement Officer
Others:	Claire Hermon	Corn Exchange Café Manager
	Beverley Sherwood	Witney Museum

4 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors J Treloar & R Smith.

Apologies were also received from Community representatives, Paul Foster (Witney Town Football Club), Sonia Jervis (Witney Museum), Brian Conroy (Witney Vocals) and Tom Hinton (Resident).

5 MINUTES

The minutes of the Witney: Past, Present & Future Working Party meeting held on 14 January 2026 were received.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Witney: Past, Present & Future Working Party meeting held on 14 January 2026 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

6 ELECTION OF CHAIR FOR THE MEETING

With the Chair of the Committee offering his apologies it was necessary to elect a chair for the meeting.

It was proposed that Cllr R Crouch chair the meeting. All members were in agreement.

Resolved:

That, Councillor Rachel Crouch be elected Chair of the meeting.

7 **ST GEORGE'S & ARMED FORCES DAY EVENTS UPDATE**

The Working Party received a report from the Communications and Community Engagement Officer which provided updates on St George's Day and Armed Forces Day since the last meeting.

Members also received an update from the representative present from Witney Museum regarding its planned contribution. The Museum would be hosting a family friendly "Build a Dragon" event on Saturday 25 April, taking place from 10.00am to 1.00pm. The session will focus on creativity and storytelling and would be held at the Museum.

On Sunday 26 April, the Museum would also be arranging guided walks in the Market Square area. The walks would be open to all; however, advance booking was required. Should demand be high, additional walks could be arranged where possible, subject to capacity and ticket availability.

The main St George's Day activity on Sunday 26 April would be held in the Market Square. The Communications and Community Engagement Officer expressed her sincere thanks to the Events Officer for his assistance in coordinating the arrangements and providing logistical support.

The Square would host a picnic-style celebration featuring music, a compère and PA system, background entertainment and local quiz questions. A food vendor will serve traditional sausage and mash, alongside a collaboration with Smarts to offer traditional fish and chips. Witney Viking Football Team had confirmed it would host a small-scale activity.

Invitations had been extended to the Fire, Ambulance and Police Services, with confirmation of their level and type of attendance awaited. Bunting and flags would be displayed to create a celebratory atmosphere.

Members also noted details of the schools' competition. The Communications and Community Engagement Officer would be liaising with Councillor Crouch regarding the delivery of materials to schools, and the Events Officer would investigate the most appropriate way to display the selected artwork.

The newly appointed Chair of the Chamber of Commerce had expressed a strong interest in encouraging shops in the High Street and Market Square to become involved, and the Communications and Community Engagement Officer had been in contact to provide further information.

Members were advised that advertising materials were prepared and promotional activity would commence shortly.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the proposed weekend delivery model be approved.
3. That, members confirmed their support for front line service providers to be recognised and,
4. That, it be delegated to officers in consultation with the Chair to finalise the operational arrangements in order that they proceed without undue delay.

8 **TERMS OF REFERENCE PROGRESS REVIEW**

The Working Party received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk.

Members reflected on the success of the agreed objectives and the clarity they had provided in highlighting the Council's year-round activity in promoting Witney as an inclusive and welcoming place to live. It was noted that previous expressions of interest from members of the community regarding St George's Day celebrations had not yet been fully explored, and Members considered this an opportunity for further development.

In considering point 5, *"How can Witney Town Council encourage community engagement and collaboration?"*, Members recognised that while many families and residents were likely to attend the planned celebrations and events taking place from 23–26 April, there remained an opportunity to further strengthen awareness and engagement across the town.

It was therefore agreed that a post-event meeting should be arranged to reflect on the St George's Day activities and to explore additional ideas and initiatives. The meeting would provide an open forum for residents, community groups, diverse communities, businesses, shopkeepers, publicans and other local organisations to share suggestions and contribute to the continued development of activities celebrating Witney's past, present and future.

To encourage broad participation, it was agreed that the meeting be held in the early evening and be open to all who wish to attend, supporting inclusivity and reflecting the aspirations of the town.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, a post event review meeting be arranged to encourage greater community participation.

9 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Having discussed and agreed the idea of a post event review the Working Party agreed that Officers set this date to allow for a meeting to be held outside in the early evening to allow attendance from members of the community that would usually find it difficult to attend a daytime meeting.

This should be held shortly after the events arranged for 23-26 April. However, the date should be agreed ahead of the event being held so that any enquirers could be invited to attend the review meeting.

Recommended:

1. That, Officers establish a suitable weekday evening date and,
2. That, the date of the post events meeting be advertised at the events of 23-26 April 2026.

The meeting closed at: 4.52 pm

Chair

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Youth Services
Meeting Date: Monday, 23 March 2026
Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on youth services funded by the Town Council in 2026/27, together with services delivered by other authorities and/or stakeholders.

Background

At the previous meeting of the Committee, it was resolved that the timeframe and criteria for the Council's **Youth Servies Grant Scheme** should remain unchanged for the 2026-27 year (minute no. SC49(2) refers).

Current Situation

Youth Services Grant 2026–27

In accordance with the resolution, and aligned with a subsequent resolution regarding the Committee Calendar for the 2026–27 year, the following key dates are proposed for the scheme:

- 8th May 2026 Scheme opens for applications
- 7th June 2026 Scheme closes for applications
- 15th June 2026 Evaluation Meeting (Stronger Communities Committee)
- 22nd June 2026 Agreement on Awards (Policy, Governance & Finance Committee)
- 13th July 2026 Full Meeting of Witney Town Council (final decisions)

Please note that the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee retains final authority over grant awards.

APCAM

APCAM have welcomed the Council's decision to continue offering school holiday mental health drop-in sessions for young people at the Corn Exchange and dates are currently being booked.

There will be one remaining We Game Session which had to be cancelled during half term due to unforeseen circumstances.

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 – Access to well-funded, quality services can help mitigate the effects of social inequality. Ensuring that resources are directed toward the communities and individuals who need them most is a crucial step toward improving outcomes for young people, fostering social mobility, and promoting a more just and equal society.
- b) Biodiversity – no direct impact from the contents of this report.
- c) Crime & Disorder –By offering young people the tools, opportunities, and support they need to thrive, youth services reduce the likelihood that they will engage in criminal behaviour, contribute to social disorder, or face long-term negative outcomes. These services not only benefit individuals but also promote the well-being and safety of entire communities.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – no direct impact from the contents of this report.

Risk

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

- Town and Parish Councils have no statutory duty to provide youth services. There is a reputational risk residents will see further funding as additional taxation. This needs to be balanced against the social value to the community.

Social Value

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

Investment in youth services can reduce the risk of negative outcomes, such as involvement in crime, substance abuse, or mental health crises. By offering structured activities and support systems, these programs help prevent young people from falling into harmful behaviours and provide alternatives to risky or destructive paths.

Funding youth services is a critical investment in the future of individuals and communities. It creates long-term social value by addressing the needs of young people, promoting positive development, reducing social inequalities, and fostering a more resilient and cohesive society.

Financial implications

- The budget for the Youth Services Grant in 2026-27 is £20,000 (4169/408).

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report.

Reply to: Jack Graham
Email: ers@publicagroup.uk
Phone: 01993 861000

Council Offices
Woodgreen,
WITNEY,
Oxfordshire,
OX28 1NB
Tel: 01993 861000
www.westoxon.gov.uk



Ref: W/26/00254/ASB

Date: 17/02/2026

Dear Consultee,

Statutory Consultation – Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) – Proposed Controls relating to Dog Fouling across West Oxfordshire District.

West Oxfordshire District Council is writing to consult with you on a proposal to introduce a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) under Section 59 of the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. The proposed Order will make it an offence for a person in control of a dog to fail to remove dog faeces from land to which this Order applies. West Oxfordshire District Council has received over 63 reports in the last 3 years relating to dog fouling and as the current existing legislation is outdated, the West Oxfordshire District Council therefore proposes the introduction of a district wide PSPO in order to enhance its enforcement ability with regard to dog fouling.

To address this issue the Council has undertaken periodic patrols and installed anti-dog fouling signage in areas identified through reported complaints. The Council, in making this proposal, wishes to set a clearer, consistent and more enforceable requirement that we believe will provide a meaningful deterrent and result in fewer incidences of dog fouling across the district.

As required under the legislation, the Council must consult the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and other relevant organisations before implementing or varying a PSPO.

West Oxfordshire District Council is satisfied that the legal threshold for making a PSPO have been met.

These tests require that the behaviour:

- has had, or is likely to have, a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality;
- is, or is likely to be, persistent or continuing in nature;
- is, or is likely to be, unreasonable; and
- justifies the restrictions proposed.

In proposing this PSPO, the Council has considered the rights and freedoms under the European Convention on Human Rights, including Article 10 (freedom of expression). Having done so, the Council is satisfied that the measures proposed are lawful, reasonable, and proportionate. The PSPO may remain in place for up to three years, after which it may be renewed or varied following review.

The consultation will run from 23rd February to 7th April 2026. During this time, a link to an online questionnaire will be available on the West Oxfordshire District Council website here:

<https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/communities-and-leisure/community-safety/anti-social-behaviour/public-space-protection-orders/>

The link on the website will be live starting from the 23rd February. During this time, we encourage you to share this questionnaire so that the public can provide their comments, or suggestions regarding the proposed PSPO.

Alternatively, you are encouraged to email or post in your comments regarding the PSPO, please use the following email and subject line:

ers@publicagroup.uk (please use the subject line: *PSPO Consultation – Dog Fouling*)

Or by post to:

Environmental & Regulatory Services
West Oxfordshire District Council
PSPO Consultation – Dog Fouling
Council Offices
Witney

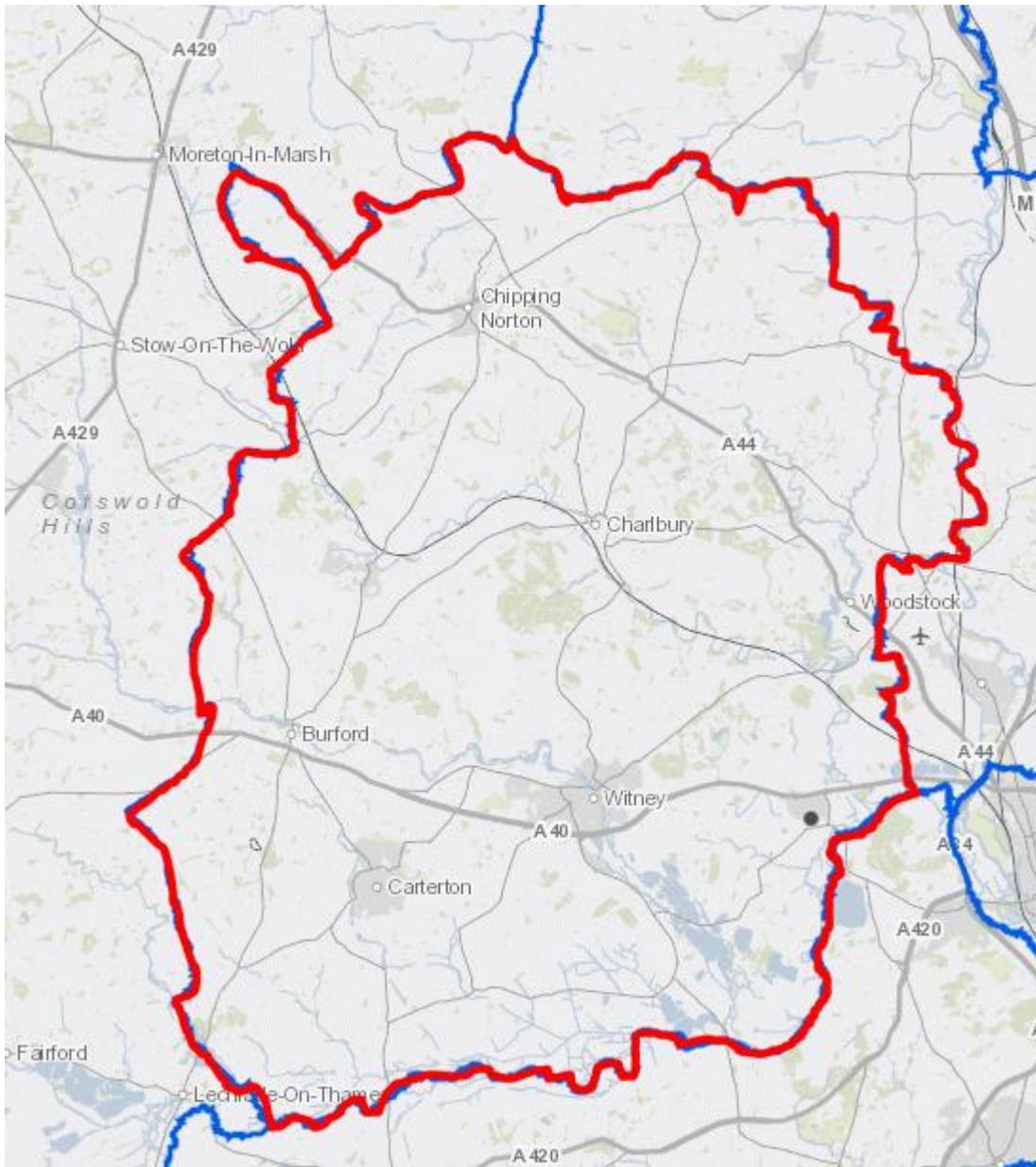
If you require additional time to respond, please let us know. Thank you for taking the time to contribute to this consultation.

Yours faithfully,



Jack Graham
Environmental Crimes
Environmental Protection Services
West Oxfordshire District Council

Proposed land affected under this Public Space Protection Order.



STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Third-Party Events Report

Meeting Date: Monday 23rd March

Contact Officer: Venue & Events Officer

The purpose of this report is to update members on the Third-Party Events that have taken place or are due to take place on WTC land in 2026.

Background

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

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

Current Situation

2026 Events

West Oxfordshire Levellers Girls Skills Day – 8th March

The West Oxfordshire Levellers hosted a skills day aimed at getting girls into playing Rugby League. The event was delivered successfully and the club thanked Witney Town Council for allowing them to use The Leys.

Upcoming Events 2026

Thames Valley Police Have a Go Day – 28th March

The event is being organised by TVP Witney & Carterton Neighbourhood Policing Team aimed at 10–18-year-olds.

Activities confirmed so far include:

- Terry Price skatepark session
- A boxing club
- Witney Vikings YFC – goal shooting etc.
- Woodwork sessions

Hatwell's Funfair – 13th – 17th May

Annually returning funfair at the Leys.

Witney Pride – 23rd May

This event involves a procession through the Town Centre, to the Leys where the remainder of the event is held. There will be multiple local stall holders and entertainment.

Witney Music Festival – 11th – 13th June

Witney Music Festival will be operating on Friday and Saturday as usual, with an additional comedy event on Thursday 11th June. The Comedy will take place in the dance tent, further utilising their time on site. Tickets are on sale now via witneymusicfestival.com

Witney Carnival – Saturday 11th July

The annual carnival is due to take place on Saturday 11th July.

OPA Play Day – Thursday 6th August. The OPA Play Day will be returning to **Burwell Recreation Ground**. Officers are planning an Open Day at Burwell Hall on this date to make the most of the high footfall at the rec.

Witney Feast – 13th – 15th September (dates TBC)

Operational Update

Due to the decision to re-instate the 11-a-side football pitch on the events field at The Leys, Witney Feast will be the last event of the year on this field. This means that one regular circus hirer is unable to return for their usual October date. As their touring route is already planned, officers are working to find a solution for 2027 to allow them to visit at a different time of year.

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 impact
- b) Biodiversity – no impact
- c) Crime & Disorder – no impact
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – All events outline steps to minimise their impact on the environment within their event management plan.

Risk

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

Social Value

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

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

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

Financial implications

- Already agreed through the budget-setting process

Recommendations

This is an update. Members are invited to note the report.