

Climate & Biodiversity Committee Meeting of Witney Town Council



Tuesday, 8th September, 2026 at 6.00 pm

To members of the Climate & Biodiversity Committee - S Simpson, A Mubin, D Newcombe, J Robertshaw, J Aitman, G Meadows, R Smith and J Doughty (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.

Any member of the public wishing to attend the meeting should contact the Committee Clerk derek.mackenzie@witney-tc.gov.uk in advance. Priority will be given to those who have registered to speak on an item on the agenda.

Commitment to Civility and Respect

This meeting will be conducted in accordance with Witney Town Council's commitment to the Civility and Respect Pledge. Councillors, officers and members of the public are expected to treat one another with courtesy, dignity, and respect, ensuring that debate remains professional, objective and focused on the business being discussed. Personal criticism, intimidation, or behaviour that could undermine the wellbeing of those present is inconsistent with the standards expected of the Council.

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 link [Climate & Biodiversity Committee 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 - 12)

To receive and consider the minutes of the Climate & Biodiversity committee meeting held on 19 May 2026;

Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda (Questions on the progress on 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 13 - 17)

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

6. **Climate Action Working Party Minutes** (Pages 18 - 23)

To receive the minutes of the Climate Action Working Party meeting held on 11 June 2026 and consider the recommendations contained therein.

7. **Biodiversity Update** (Pages 24 - 25)

To receive and consider the report of the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer.

8. **Lake & Country Park Report** (Pages 26 - 28)

To receive and consider the report of the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer.

9. **Burford Road - Road Verge Nature Reserve**

To note the designation of the Burford Road – Road Verge Nature Reserve by Oxfordshire County Council.

Oxfordshire County Council has confirmed that the road verges from the top of Tower Hill to Dry Lane have been designated as the Burford Road - Road Verge Nature Reserve (RVNR). The designation recognises the ecological importance of the site and follows a collaborative effort involving local councils, with signage, appropriate verge management, and ongoing biodiversity monitoring planned to support and enhance the habitat.

10. **Community Hub - Development Land north of Burford Road** (Pages 29 - 49)

To receive a proposal from a resident for a Community Hub to the north of Witney and consider supporting.

11. **Carbon Reduction Action Plan** (Pages 50 - 89)

To receive and consider the report of the Administrative Support Assistant – Communities & Planning.



Town Clerk

**CLIMATE & BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Tuesday, 19 May 2026

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

Present:

Councillor S Simpson (Chair)

Councillors:	J Robertshaw	R Smith
	J Aitman	J Doughty
	G Meadows	
Officers:	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Janine Sparrowhawk	Compliance & Environment Officer
	Carl Whitehead	Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer
Others:	One member of the public.	

CB243 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor D Newcombe.

It was also noted that Cllr R Smith was running late however would be joining the meeting.

CB244 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers.

CB245 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

The Chair called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Committee.

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor G Meadows be elected. There being no other nominations, it was:

Resolved:

That, Councillor Georgia Meadows be elected Vice-Chair of the Committee for the 2026/27 municipal year.

CB246 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Committee adjourned for this item.

The committee received representations from a resident concerning Agenda Item 9 who shared his thoughts on the proposals for the introduction of PV Solar panels as well as wider climate action activity.

The Committee reconvened.

CB247 MINUTES

The minutes of the Climate & Biodiversity Committee meeting held on 13 January 2026 were received.

CB28 – An update was provided on the progress of the Nature Verges projected being spearheaded by a resident. Members heard that engagement was ongoing between the Council, Oxfordshire County Council and the neighbouring parish councils of Minster Lovell, Hailey and Curbridge. The Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer was also due to meet with the group for an onsite visit in June.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Climate & Biodiversity Committee meeting held on 13 January 2026 be approved as a correct record of the meetings and be signed by the Chair.

CB248 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.

A question arose from a Member regarding income from fishing rights, it was confirmed that it was not expected that the Newland Angling Club, who historically had utilised fishing rights on the river section within the Country Park, would be replaced by any other entity.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the management accounts of the Climate & Biodiversity Committee for the period to 31 March 2026 be approved.

CB249 COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee considered whether any changes were needed to the current Terms of Reference.

It was unanimously agreed that the following additional term be added to reflect the oversight of the Climate & Biodiversity Working Party.

(k) To oversee the work of the Council's Climate Action Working Party.

Recommended:

That, the Terms of Reference including the above suggested change be recommended for approval by the Full Council at the meeting of 13 July 2026.

CB250 ANNUAL RESIDENTS SURVEY RESULTS

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning the results of the residents' annual satisfaction survey, which was conducted at the beginning of the year.

Members were advised that the report represented the survey results for services within the remit of this Committee, presenting combined 'satisfactory', 'good' and 'excellent' responses alongside negative feedback. Comparative data from previous years was included to assist with benchmarking performance trends. The report also contained all unedited comments received in relation to the services.

Members welcomed the overall increase in satisfaction ratings and noted the positive comments received, particularly in relation to the Country Park, where accessibility improvements were recognised as having made a significant impact. Clarification was provided regarding comments about the use of material to fill holes on the lake pathway. It was confirmed that the material used is binding ballast, which is appropriate for this type of surface; when damp, it forms a firm, durable compound, although it may initially appear dusty in dry conditions.

The Committee noted that the cycle stand had been temporarily removed to facilitate the installation of new noticeboards, with works nearing completion, and requested that the cycle stand be reinstated as soon as possible.

Concern was expressed regarding the reduction in responses from residents under the age of 18. Members agreed that further work should be undertaken to raise awareness of the Country Park and lake, recognising it as a valuable community asset. It was suggested that this could include increased promotion through social media and other channels, as well as exploring opportunities to involve the Youth Council in supporting engagement and awareness-raising initiatives.

Members placed on record their appreciation for the continued hard work and commitment of the Operations Team, Ranger, and Biodiversity and Green Spaces Officer in delivering and maintaining high-quality services.

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted;
2. That officers explore opportunities to increase awareness and usage of the Country Park and lake, particularly among younger residents, including through social media and engagement with the Youth Council; and
3. That the cycle stand be reinstated at the earliest opportunity following completion of the noticeboard works.

CB251 CLIMATE ACTION PLAN REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Compliance and Environment Officer (C&EO) providing an update on the Council's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

The C&EO presented the report, advising that it was a detailed and comprehensive document covering a wide range of climate-related priorities. Members were informed that, following a period of competing operational demands, the C&EO was in a position to progress the proposals within the Action Plan. It was also noted that, as previously requested by Members, colour

coding had been incorporated into the Action Plan to clearly identify priority actions requiring more immediate attention.

Members noted the findings of the energy assessments commissioned through Energy Solutions Oxfordshire for the Council's buildings. It was reported that a recent assessment of the Windrush Cemetery Depot (undertaken in December 2025) identified a range of potential energy efficiency measures, many of which could be progressed through existing maintenance budgets, alongside further opportunities such as solar photovoltaic panels and alternative heating systems. The building was fully electric, with relatively modest annual energy costs, and therefore presents opportunities for targeted improvements to further reduce emissions.

Members further noted the assessment of the Corn Exchange, completed in April 2026, which highlighted the building as the Council's largest energy consumer in terms of electricity, gas and water usage. The report identified a number of potential improvements; however, it also noted that further investigation would be required where limited data was available, particularly in relation to insulation and building fabric. Members acknowledged that, due to the building's scale and usage, it offered significant potential for carbon reduction, particularly through measures such as solar panel installation and improved energy efficiency controls.

In relation to Burwell Hall, Members heard that the assessment was undertaken in 2022 and that improvements had already been made since that time, including the upgrade of the gas boiler system. The report identified additional opportunities for further savings through fabric improvements, enhanced controls, and renewable energy installations. In response to a question, it was confirmed that an updated assessment could be commissioned; however, this would incur an additional cost. Members agreed that the existing report continued to provide a sufficient evidence base for the time being and that a further assessment was not currently required.

The Committee welcomed the benchmarking information included within the report and expressed particular interest in the significant emissions reductions achieved by Corsham Town Council. Members recommended that the C&EO engage with those councils, especially Corsham, to better understand the measures implemented and associated costs, with a view to applying relevant learning to Witney's own approach.

Members also considered the Council's first Eco Fair held in October 2025 and agreed that a further event should be planned for autumn 2026. Discussion took place regarding the merits of holding the event on a weekday or at the weekend. It was noted that while weekday events may support attendance from partner organisations and council stakeholders, a weekend event could enable greater participation from residents, volunteers, and smaller community groups. Members agreed that further exploration of format and promotion would be beneficial to maximise engagement. In addition, it was suggested that climate- and energy-focused organisations could be invited to attend existing "Councillors at the Café" sessions to further raise awareness of the Council's climate objectives.

In relation to funding, Members considered how the allocated £50,000 capital budget for carbon reduction projects could best be utilised, and how this may be enhanced by matched funding available through Energy Solutions Oxfordshire's Green Fund. It was suggested that priority projects could include energy improvement works at Windrush Cemetery Depot (estimated at approximately £14,000) and the installation of solar panels at the Corn Exchange (estimated at approximately £34,000).

Members agreed that further detailed consideration of these options was required and therefore agreed that a Climate Action Working Party meeting be convened on 11 June 2026 to review the proposals in more detail. It was proposed by Cllr R Smith, seconded by Cllr J Doughty, and unanimously agreed that officers should scope the proposals further and present options to that meeting to inform recommendations on the allocation of the budget.

Recommended:

1. That the report be noted;
2. That authority be delegated to officers to scope options for the allocation of the £50,000 carbon reduction budget and report back to the Climate Action Working Party meeting scheduled for 11 June 2026;
3. That officers engage with other councils, including Corsham Town Council, to gather information on effective carbon reduction measures and the associated costs they incurred; and
4. That a further Eco Fair be considered for autumn 2026, with the Climate Action Working Party to further explore the format, including the potential for a weekend event, and improved promotion and engagement opportunities.

CB252 SEASONAL PLANTING SCHEMES

The Committee received and considered the report of the Head of Operations and Estates (H&O), as presented by the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer (B&GSO).

The B&GSO advised Members that the report outlined proposals for the future delivery of the Council's seasonal planting scheme. It was highlighted that there would be a short-term increase in costs associated with the purchase and planting of perennials; however, this approach would deliver environmental and financial benefits over the longer term. Members were informed that, with the establishment of the new depot facility, there was now capacity to lift and store certain bulbs over the winter period, enabling reuse and reducing future purchase costs. It was noted that, when considered over a number of years, the overall financial outlay should remain broadly comparable.

The Committee considered the proposal to move towards a mixed planting approach, incorporating both perennials and seasonal planting, and expressed support for this direction.

Members highlighted the current planting at Church Green as a positive example of the visual and environmental benefits of the towns approach, with one Member noting that similar attractive planting schemes appeared to have been adopted by Henry Box School within its grounds.

A Member raised the proposed wildflower planting at Deer Park Roundabout, Officers reported that operational challenges had arisen, with the initial maintenance and practical considerations being highlighted. It was therefore agreed that a further report be presented to the next meeting of the Climate Action Working Party scheduled for 11 June 2026, to enable a more detailed consideration and to inform a decision on how the Council should proceed with this location.

Members were unanimous in their support for the recommendations set out within the report.

Resolved:

1. That the proposed transition to a mixed planting scheme incorporating perennials and seasonal planting be approved; and
2. That a further report on the Deer Park Roundabout wildflower planting be presented to the Climate Action Working Party meeting on 11 June 2026 for consideration.

CB253 BIODIVERSITY UPDATE

The Committee received the report along with a verbal update from the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer (B&GSO).

Members were advised that a name had been proposed for the new community orchard at the Country Park, with "Railway Orchard" put forward for consideration. The Committee agreed to adopt this name and requested that its existence be promoted more widely within the community to encourage awareness and use.

The B&GSO also provided an update on the Council's Green Flag Award application, which was nearing submission. It was noted that the application had been strengthened in response to feedback received previously, with a more detailed and comprehensive submission being prepared. Members were informed that a fee of £500 would be required for the resubmission.

Members discussed the importance of recognising the Council's achievements in biodiversity and environmental management. It was suggested that any awards received by the Town Council in respect of its biodiversity objectives should be shared with the Planning & Development Committee, to support and strengthen the Council's responses to larger-scale applications within the parish.

Recommended:

1. That the report be noted;
2. That the name "Railway Orchard" be approved for the new community orchard at the Country Park;
3. That the orchard be actively promoted to the local community;
4. That the update regarding the Green Flag Award application, including the associated resubmission fee, be noted; and
5. That any biodiversity-related awards received by the Council be shared with the Planning & Development Committee.

CB254 LAKE & COUNTRY PARK REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer (B&GSO), together with a verbal update.

Members were advised that external grant funding of £4,500 had been secured and was being utilised to support activities within the Lake and Country Park area. This included the provision of a lectern board and noticeboard at Mill Meadow and the Avenue Two entrance as well as additional seating, aimed at improving visitor information, engagement, and interpretation of the site.

The B&GSO reported that water quality testing at the lake was ongoing and had now reached a stage where sufficient data had been collected. Members were informed that a detailed report

on the findings would be presented to the Committee at its meeting scheduled for 8 September 2026.

Members also heard that discussions were ongoing with Synolos, who had expressed an interest in supporting the Country Park through the provision of volunteer assistance. This was welcomed as a positive opportunity to enhance maintenance and biodiversity work within the park as well as volunteer enrichment.

The Committee was informed of proposals to create a small, informal natural area within the park designed specifically for young children visiting the site. This space would enable children to sit, explore, and engage with the natural environment. Members were supportive of this initiative, recognising its value in promoting early understanding of environmental and biodiversity principles.

It was further noted that work was continuing to improve and establish pathways around the lake. Members welcomed that this work was being supported in part through external grant funding, thereby reducing the financial impact on the Council.

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted;
2. That a further report on lake water quality testing be presented to the Committee on 8 September 2026.
3. That the proposed use of a designated natural area for young children to support early learning and engagement with the environment be approved;

CB255 NATIONAL EMERGENCY BRIEFING

The Committee received and considered the report of the Committee Clerk regarding the National Emergency Briefing film.

Members agreed that hosting a screening would be beneficial and supported the proposal to hold an afternoon showing on 27 July 2026, with a particular focus on encouraging attendance from younger people. It was noted that though the film carries a 12A rating, there was additional guidance that those under the age of 16 should be accompanied by an adult.

Members discussed opportunities to enhance the event and recommended that The Station be approached to explore their involvement, including supporting promotion of the showing, potential use of their hot chocolate van and potentially participating in, or chairing, a discussion following the screening.

It was agreed that Members seek to attend one of the other local screenings taking place in advance of the proposed event, to assess the suitability of the film for a younger audience. Members also suggested that local schools could be engaged to help promote the event ahead of the summer holidays, noting that the proposed date would fall within the holiday period and therefore maximise accessibility for young people.

In addition, Members supported the invitation of the local Member of Parliament to attend the event, recognising that the film's objective was to raise awareness of climate change issues at a national level.

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted;
2. That an afternoon screening of the National Emergency Briefing film be shown on 27 July 2026, with a focus on engaging younger audiences;
3. That Members attend alternative local screenings in advance to assess the suitability of the film for younger viewers;
4. That The Station be approached to explore opportunities to support and participate in the event;
5. That local schools be engaged to help promote the screening; and
6. That the local Member of Parliament be invited to attend the event.

CB256 DEFRA BIODIVERSITY CONSULTATION

The Committee received and considered the correspondence regarding the DEFRA consultation on Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), which proposed an exemption for residential development on brownfield land.

Members discussed the implications of the proposed changes and expressed concern regarding the potential impact on biodiversity within Witney. It was noted that all development sites within the parish were brownfield, and as such, any exemption applied to this category could have a significant cumulative effect locally.

Members highlighted that, while brownfield land was often perceived as having limited ecological value, it could in practice support important habitats and form part of wider ecological networks. Concern was expressed that relaxing BNG requirements could result in a loss of biodiversity and undermine the progress made both nationally and locally.

The Committee emphasised the importance of ensuring that development continues to deliver environmental improvements and supported the principle that new developments should be at least as biodiverse as existing sites and ideally deliver measurable enhancements.

Members further noted the significant work undertaken by the Town Council to improve biodiversity across its estate, including initiatives supporting insects, small mammals, reptiles, wildflower planting, and the creation of nature corridors. It was agreed that these efforts should not be put at risk by any weakening of current requirements.

The Committee agreed that a clear and robust response should be submitted to DEFRA, reflecting these concerns and reinforcing the importance of maintaining strong biodiversity protections within the planning system.

Recommended:

1. That the report be noted; and
2. That officers draft a response to the DEFRA consultation for circulation to Members, prior to submission.

CB257 ANNUAL COMMUNITY PAYMENTS FROM RENEWABLE ENERGY

The Committee received and considered correspondence from Oxfordshire County Council's relating to the consultation on annual community payments from renewable energy.

Members discussed the content and noted the length and complexity of the survey questions. It was therefore agreed that a coordinated response on behalf of the Town Council would be prepared, ensuring alignment with the Council's climate objectives and its commitment to supporting renewable energy initiatives.

In doing so, attention was drawn to one of the Committee's Terms of Reference which was to *"explore and promote the expansion of community energy to keep the benefits of our local energy generation in our local economy"*. It was agreed that this principle should be reflected within the Council's response.

The Committee agreed that the submission would be made jointly by the Leader of the Council, the Chair of the Committee, and the Deputy Leader. Members also noted that individual councillors were able to submit their own responses should they wish to do so.

The delegation to the three Members was supported in order to ensure that a clear, consistent, and considered response could be prepared in an efficient manner, reflecting the Council's strategic priorities and commitment to community energy.

Recommended:

1. That the correspondence be noted; and
2. That it be delegated to the Leader of the Council, the Chair of the Committee, and the Deputy Leader to prepare a response on behalf of the Town Council.

The meeting closed at: 7.40 pm

Chair

CLIMATE & BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Finance Report

Meeting Date: Tuesday 8 September 2026

Contact Officer: Responsible Financial Officer

Should Members have any queries about this report advance notice would be appreciated, in writing to nigel.warner@witney-tc.gov.uk by 12 noon on the day of the meeting 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 July 2026.

Current Situation

The Committee is responsible for cost centres 206 - Witney Lake and Country Park; 250 – Amenity Areas and 403 – Planning.

The summary for these cost centres from 1 April to 31 July 2026 is:

	Months 1 to 4 actual	Budget	Percentage of budget spent/received in Months 1 to 4 (33% of the year)
Income	(£27,879)	£1,038	2685.8% - see note 1 below
Expenditure	£122,915	£420,738	29.3%
Net expenditure	£95,037	£419,700	22.6%

A full commentary on budget lines will be undertaken as part of the budget process. Although early in the financial year Members may wish to note the following in relation to the management accounts for this first quarter:

1. Net expenditure of 22.6% is artificially low due to the impact of the grants received in the year to date. All these grants are restricted and will eventually be matched by expenditure and therefore a more accurate indicator is the line above, expenditure, which is running at 29.3%. The grants received are:
 - Code 1170/206 – Mill Meadow – West Oxfordshire DC – £2,458.

- Code 1170/250 – Flood resilience store, Millers Mews – Oxfordshire CC - £21,621.
 - Code 1170/250 – Witney Public footpath 13, Information Boards and benches - £4,800.
2. With regard to income, the invoice in relation to fishing rights is due to be invoiced shortly.
 3. With regard to expenditure in cost centre 206, Witney Lake and Country Park the amount allowed for budget lines from 4007 to 4222 inclusive amounts to £26,875. In any given year the expenditure allocated to individual nominal codes in this range will vary but the practice is that expenditure may be vired between lines in this cost centre provided that expenditure remains within the overall total. The spend to 31 July 2026 amounts to £5,110, representing 19.0% of budget.

Members should note that the management accounts and the Council's accounting system more generally is driven by the requirements in place for town and parish councils, including the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the Practitioners' Guide issued by the Smaller Authorities' Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP) to support the preparation by smaller authorities in England of statutory annual accounting and governance statements found in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. This means that the accounts can only include actual income and expenditure in terms of money (income and expenditure) and sums held with financial institutions and cannot include anything else.

Corporate Strategy

The Council's Strategic Plan 2025–29 sets out the Council's long-term priorities and direction, supporting its mission to 'make Witney a great place to live, work and visit.' This report contributes to the delivery of the following strategic pillar of the plan:

1. A Forward Looking Town Council

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 give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

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

Social Value

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

Financial implications

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

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

1. Approve the report and the management accounts of the Committee's services to for the period 1 April 2026 to 31 July 2026.

04/09/2026

Witney Town Council Current Year

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 31/07/2026

Month No: 4

Climate & Biodiversity Committee: Draft management accounts 1 April to 31 July 2026

	Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual	Variance Annual	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
<u>Climate & Biodiversity</u>								
<u>206 WITNEY COUNTRY PARK</u>								
1030 FISHING RIGHTS	1,000	(1,000)	1,038	2,038			(96.3%)	
1170 GRANTS RECEIVED	1,500	2,458	0	(2,458)			0.0%	
WITNEY COUNTRY PARK :- Income	2,500	1,458	1,038	(420)			140.4%	0
4001 SALARIES	63,386	21,502	66,956	45,454		45,454	32.1%	
4002 ER'S NIC	8,007	2,725	8,543	5,818		5,818	31.9%	
4003 ER'S SUPERANN	13,694	4,279	11,334	7,055		7,055	37.8%	
4007 PROTECTIVE CLOTHING	691	162	1,038	876		876	15.6%	
4008 TRAINING	485	210	2,076	1,866		1,866	10.1%	
4017 CONTRACT CLEAN/WASTE	0	0	1,038	1,038		1,038	0.0%	
4026 BOOKS/PUBLICATIONS	72	0	104	104		104	0.0%	
4036 PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	1,284	1,640	2,118	478		478	77.4%	
4037 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	9,022	321	7,266	6,945		6,945	4.4%	
4038 OTHER MAINTENANCE	215	0	0	0		0	0.0%	
4040 ARBORICULTURE	3,533	0	1,038	1,038		1,038	0.0%	
4041 EQUIPMENT HIRE	909	0	519	519		519	0.0%	
4042 EQUIPMENT INC. FURNITURE	3,125	1,868	2,076	208		208	90.0%	
4043 SMALL TOOLS & EQUIPT	2,423	132	2,595	2,463		2,463	5.1%	
4044 FUEL	1,293	689	1,038	349		349	66.4%	
4050 VEHICLE MAINTENANCE	3,022	60	1,038	978		978	5.8%	
4059 OTHER PROF FEES	1,551	0	1,557	1,557		1,557	0.0%	
4064 HEALTH & SAFETY	287	0	1,557	1,557		1,557	0.0%	
4066 TREE REPLACEMENT	0	0	1,349	1,349		1,349	0.0%	
4099 MISCELLANEOUS	373	28	260	232		232	10.8%	
4163 GREEN FLAG APPLICATION	60	0	0	0		0	0.0%	
4222 TINY FOREST EXPENSES	0	0	208	208		208	0.0%	
4888 O/S STAFF RECHARGE	19,646	6,138	16,715	10,577		10,577	36.7%	
4890 O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	1,238	475	988	513		513	48.0%	
4892 C/S STAFF RCHG	2,501	843	2,539	1,696		1,696	33.2%	
4893 C/S O'HEAD RCHG	721	265	727	462		462	36.4%	
4899 DEPOT REALLOCATION	3,330	1,092	2,478	1,386		1,386	44.1%	
WITNEY COUNTRY PARK :- Indirect Expenditure	140,868	42,427	137,155	94,728	0	94,728	30.9%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(138,368)	(40,970)	(136,117)	(95,147)				
6000 plus Transfer from EMR	1,250	0	0	0				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(137,118)	(40,970)	(136,117)	(95,147)				

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 31/07/2026

Month No: 4

Climate & Biodiversity Committee: Draft management accounts 1 April to 31 July 2026

	Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual	Variance Annual	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
250 AMENITY AREAS								
1170 GRANTS RECEIVED	2,925	26,421	0	(26,421)			0.0%	
AMENITY AREAS :- Income	2,925	26,421	0	(26,421)				0
4016 CLEANING MATERIALS	0	255	0	(255)		(255)	0.0%	
4017 CONTRACT CLEAN/WASTE	(64)	0	0	0		0	0.0%	
4036 PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	0	295	0	(295)		(295)	0.0%	
4037 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	57	75	0	(75)	15	(90)	0.0%	
4039 HORTICULTURE	17,883	10,761	20,200	9,439	494	8,945	55.7%	
4040 ARBORICULTURE	11,700	0	20,000	20,000		20,000	0.0%	
4066 TREE REPLACEMENT	767	0	4,000	4,000		4,000	0.0%	
4067 Tree Survey	0	0	7,500	7,500		7,500	0.0%	
4068 FLOOD ALLEVIATION	4,861	0	1,250	1,250		1,250	0.0%	
4888 O/S STAFF RECHARGE	109,924	46,868	150,439	103,571		103,571	31.2%	
4890 O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	7,753	3,730	8,889	5,159		5,159	42.0%	
4892 C/S STAFF RCHG	7,439	3,373	10,160	6,787		6,787	33.2%	
4893 C/S O'HEAD RCHG	2,059	1,057	2,909	1,852		1,852	36.3%	
4899 DEPOT REALLOCATION	10,356	1,584	22,300	20,716		20,716	7.1%	
AMENITY AREAS :- Indirect Expenditure	172,735	67,998	247,647	179,649	509	179,140	27.7%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(169,810)	(41,577)	(247,647)	(206,070)				
403 PLANNING								
4028 I.T.	294	306	0	(306)		(306)	0.0%	
4892 C/S STAFF RCHG	27,507	9,277	27,937	18,660		18,660	33.2%	
4893 C/S O'HEAD RCHG	7,929	2,908	7,999	5,091		5,091	36.3%	
PLANNING :- Indirect Expenditure	35,730	12,490	35,936	23,446	0	23,446	34.8%	0
Net Expenditure	(35,730)	(12,490)	(35,936)	(23,446)				
Climate & Biodiversity :- Income	5,425	27,879	1,038	(26,841)			2685.8%	
Expenditure	349,333	122,915	420,738	297,823	509	297,314	29.3%	
Net Income over Expenditure	(343,908)	(95,037)	(419,700)	(324,663)				
plus Transfer from EMR	1,250	0	0	0				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(342,658)	(95,037)	(419,700)	(324,663)				
Grand Totals:- Income	5,425	27,879	1,038	(26,841)			2685.8%	
Expenditure	349,333	122,915	420,738	297,823	509	297,314	29.3%	
Net Income over Expenditure	(343,908)	(95,037)	(419,700)	(324,663)				
plus Transfer from EMR	1,250	0	0	0				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(342,658)	(95,037)	(419,700)	(324,663)				

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

Held on Thursday, 11 June 2026

At 3.30 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor S Simpson (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	D Enright
	D Edwards-Hughes	J Robertshaw
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Kate Heeley	Admin Support Assistant - Facilities
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Janine Sparrowhawk	Compliance & Environment Officer
	Carl Whitehead	Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer
Others:	Councillor Ruth Smith	

16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

Members noted that Cllr D Enright would arrive late to the meeting.

17 MINUTES

The minutes of the Climate Action Working Party meeting held on 25 September 2025 were received.

13 - Members of the Working Party who were also West Oxfordshire District Council representatives provided an update, advising that an approach to the Audit & Governance Committee had not yet been made.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that an opportunity could arise to access Carbon Literacy Training through one of the Council's existing training partners, which could provide a practical and flexible route to supporting both Member and Officer development in this area.

Members noted the updates and welcomed the potential for exploring alternative training avenues to support the Council's ongoing commitment to achieving carbon neutrality.

Resolved:

1. That, the verbal updates be noted and,
2. That, opportunities to access Carbon Literacy Training via existing training partners be explored and,

3. That, the minutes of the Climate Action Working Party meeting held on 25 September 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

During the following Item.

The Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer arrived at 3:51pm

Cllr D Enright arrived at 3:58pm

18 **CARBON REDUCTION PLAN**

The Working Party received and considered the report of the Compliance & Environment Officer, supported by a detailed update of ongoing and planned activity to support the Council's carbon reduction objectives.

Members were advised that, following completion of the West Witney project, the Project Officer would provide increased focus to climate action priority areas. This would include internal engagement with the Operations Manager to identify smaller-scale, practical measures, as well as liaison with energy providers regarding the potential for the installation of smart meters across Council buildings.

It was further noted that discussions would take place with the West Oxfordshire District Council as the planning authority to clarify requirements relating to potential installations at the Corn Exchange due to its protected building status. Officers also confirmed that available grant funding opportunities would be actively pursued, including maximising the use of match funding available through Energy Solutions Oxfordshire and Members were supportive of Officers intentions to submit an application ahead of the 9th September deadline.

Members discussed potential options for carbon reduction measures, including solar PV and air-to-water heat pump systems. It was noted that while both options were of comparable indicative cost, the air-to-water system could deliver more significant carbon savings. Members also suggested that the estimated cost of solar installation may be lower than initially indicated; however, it was acknowledged that the procurement of the required quotations in line with the Council's Financial Regulations would provide further clarity of competitive costings.

In response to a query regarding heating usage at the Corn Exchange, Members were advised that a heating engineer would be attending site to provide guidance on system operation, efficiency improvements and programming..

The Working Party reflected on the Council's overall carbon footprint, currently estimated at 65.08 tCO₂e. Members acknowledged that some emissions were inherently linked to operational requirements, particularly where equipment did not yet have suitable low-carbon alternatives.

Members were reminded that a budget of £50,000 was available and that, in line with previous decisions of the Climate & Biodiversity Committee (Meeting 19.05.2026 Minute: CB251 Relates), priority should be given to projects at the Corn Exchange and Windrush Cemetery. The Working Party agreed that Burwell Hall should also be included within the scope of works to maximise overall carbon reduction impact.

Members emphasised the importance of identifying "quick wins" including measures that could be delivered through existing maintenance budgets or improved staff awareness. A proposal was

made that smaller-scale items be grouped and considered as part of general maintenance activity, alongside increased staff engagement and education.

It was noted that matched funding applications to Energy Solutions Oxfordshire could be submitted in stages as individual projects are developed, allowing flexibility and responsiveness in delivery. Members also welcomed the commitment to, where possible, procure locally and utilise local contractors, in line with existing financial and tendering policies.

Members requested that a clear schedule of works be developed by Officers, outlining planned activities and progress. It was agreed that authority be delegated to Officers to proceed with grant funding applications to ensure that opportunities are not missed within required timescales.

It was noted that the focus of the current plan related to Council-owned buildings, including its halls and buildings. Any works to the Town Hall or Reception Office would require approval from the Town Hall Charity as the property owner. Members who sat on the Town Hall Charity were encouraged to raise this matter at forthcoming meetings of the charity.

Members also noted that water usage formed part of the Council's overall carbon footprint and this had increased in recent years, partly reflecting the success of facilities such as Café 1863 and the Splash Park. It was noted that steps had already been taken to improve efficiency, including the removal of the water tank at the Corn Exchange, allowing direct mains supply and reducing water wastage.

Overall, Members welcomed the progress being made and the clear direction of travel, recognising the importance of a structured and deliverable programme of works to support the Council's carbon neutrality ambitions.

Recommended:

1. That, the report and update be noted and,
2. That, Officers be delegated authority to develop and implement a carbon reduction programme focusing on the Corn Exchange, Windrush Cemetery and Burwell Hall and,
3. That, a schedule of works be prepared and presented to Members, identifying priority actions including "quick wins" and maintenance-based improvements and,
4. That, Officers progress grant funding applications as opportunities arise in order to maximise external funding support and,
5. That, measures to improve operational efficiency, including staff engagement and system optimisation, be incorporated into the programme of works.

19 **ECO FAIR 2026**

The Working Party received an update from the Chair reflecting on the success of the Eco Fair held in 2025. Members noted that the event had been well supported, particularly by West Oxfordshire District Council and a range of partner organisations. However, it was recognised that attendance from such organisations may be more limited should a future event be held at a weekend.

In considering arrangements for 2026, Members discussed opportunities to further enhance the event by targeting engagement more effectively toward individuals and community organisations. It was suggested that the event adopt a Nature Recovery theme and align with a recognised national initiative in the latter half of the year.

Members unanimously supported the principle of holding a 2026 Eco Fair and explored ways to build upon the previous event's success. Suggestions included incorporating talks or short presentations, potentially utilising the Gallery Room for these sessions while hosting the main exhibition in the Corn Exchange Main Hall. Emphasis was placed on securing high-quality exhibitors to ensure a meaningful and engaging experience.

Members unilaterally agreed that a weekday event, held in the late afternoon and early evening, would provide the best opportunity to maximise participation. It was also proposed that invitations be extended to higher-profile attendees, such as the local Member of Parliament and representatives from Windrush Against Sewage Pollution (WASP), to broaden the event's reach and impact.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the event be planned to take place during the period 7th to 11th September 2026, on a weekday between 2pm and 6pm.

Members further agreed that West Oxfordshire District Council be approached regarding the potential to either co-host the event or provide support. A request would also be made to the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee for the use of the Corn Exchange and that Officers liaise with the Bookings Team to identify a suitable date.

Additionally, Members agreed to develop their own promotional display board for use at session of Councillors at the Café to help communicate the Council's aims in relation to carbon reduction. All Members of the Council should be encouraged to actively support and promote this initiative as part of the Council's wider climate engagement work.

Recommended:

1. That, the update be noted and,
2. That, an Eco Fair be held in 2026 during the period 7th to 11th September, on a weekday between 2pm and 6pm and,
3. That, West Oxfordshire District Council be approached to explore joint working or support for the event and,
4. That, approval be sought from the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee for use of the Corn Exchange and,
5. That, Officers liaise with the Halls Bookings Team to secure a suitable date and,
6. That, a promotional display board be developed to support Councillors in promoting the Council's carbon reduction aims.

20 **WILDFLOWER PLANTING - CURBRIDGE ROUNDABOUT**

The Working Party received and considered the report of the Biodiversity and Green Spaces Officer, supported by a verbal update explaining the available options for addressing root intrusion at the Curbridge roundabout.

Members noted that the works required could not be undertaken using the existing equipment available to the green spaces team and would necessitate the use of heavier machinery, either through the larger Operations Team or via an external contractor.

Members were keen to ensure that improvements were carried out to enhance the appearance of the roundabout, recognising the positive impact of similar initiatives such as the Fiveways roundabout and the wildflower planting at Windrush Cemetery, both of which had received favourable public feedback.

Following discussion, it was proposed by Councillor J Aitman, seconded by Councillor R Smith, that a hybrid approach be adopted. Under this proposal, an external contractor would undertake the initial removal of the roots, following which the Council's Operations Team clearing and preparing the site for sowing by the Green Spaces Team.

Members noted that the estimated cost for the contractor element of the works would be in the region of £500–£800, with an additional £500 for suitable low-height wildflower seed, ensuring that visibility and sightlines were maintained. The cost of the Council's workforce would be met through existing budgets and recharged accordingly.

A vote was taken and Members were unanimous in their support for the proposed hybrid approach. Members welcomed this as a practical and cost-effective solution that would both resolve the existing issue and contribute positively to the visual and environmental quality of the area.

Resolved:

1. That, the report and update be noted and,
2. That, a hybrid approach be adopted, with a contractor undertaking root removal and the Operations Team completing site preparation and planting and,
3. That, provision be made for the associated costs as outlined, including the purchase of suitable low-height wildflower seed.

Cllr D Edward Hughes left the meeting at 5:12pm. Hearing the majority of the debate on the following item but not participating in the vote

21 **NATIONAL EMERGENCY BRIEFING**

The Committee Clerk provided a verbal update, advising that concerns had been raised by Members outside of the meeting regarding the suitability of the film's content for a younger audience. It was noted that the material was more sensitive and thought-provoking than originally anticipated and, as such, the initial concept of a youth-led screening may benefit from being reconsidered.

Members further noted that attendance at a recent OALC briefing had highlighted a recommendation for the film to be shown across towns and parishes to encourage wider public engagement with the subject matter.

Following discussion, Members were supportive of the Council hosting a screening, to follow the event being arranged at St Mary's Church on 16th July. It was agreed that the screening would take place on 27th July at 2pm. Members emphasised that the event should be clearly advertised as suitable for audiences aged 16 and over.

It was further agreed that the event would be free to attend but ticketed, and would include a facilitated discussion following the screening, to be hosted by Councillors, enabling attendees to share views and reflections in a constructive environment.

Members welcomed the opportunity to support informed community engagement on climate issues and agreed that arrangements and publicity be progressed by Officers.

Resolved:

1. That, the update be noted and,
2. That, a public screening be held on 27th July at 2pm, with attendance advised for those aged 16 and over and,

3. That, the event be free and ticketed, with a facilitated discussion hosted by Councillors following the screening and,
4. That, Officers progress the necessary arrangements and publicity.

The meeting closed at: 5.15 pm

Chair

CLIMATE & BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE



Agenda Item:	Biodiversity Update
Meeting Date:	Tuesday 8 September 2026
Contact Officer:	Biodiversity and Green Spaces Officer

The purpose of this report is to update officers on the biodiversity developments within Witney Town Council Green Spaces

Background

Witney Town Council continue to develop and improve its biodiversity and fulfil its part in the wider county and national biodiversity targets

Current Situation

The latest updates on projects the projects completed are:

- Curbridge Road roundabout: Progress has stalled due to Officer concern regarding the contractor's proposal for additional costs outside of the original quotation
- Officers have put in two applications to Trust for Oxfords Environment (TOE) for a Stonewort Bank and another Tern Raft
- The Council are continuing to monitor reptiles on Snipe Meadow
- The Council are being helped by both U3A and SSE who are carrying out bat surveys around the Country Park and the records will be shared with the council
- Officers are working with, The Lower Windrush Vally Project and Berks, Bucks and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) on wildlife recording and reporting

Corporate Strategy

The Council's Strategic Plan 2025–29 sets out the Council's long-term priorities and direction, supporting its mission to 'make Witney a great place to live, work and visit.' This report contributes to the delivery of the following strategic pillar of the plan:

5. A Beautiful Witney

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 – Equality in biodiversity in green spaces refers to the idea that all species regardless of their size, role, or ecological status should have the opportunity to thrive and be represented within urban and natural green spaces. Achieving equality in

biodiversity involves not just conserving a wide variety of species but also ensuring that ecological systems are designed and managed in ways that support diverse species' needs. This can be applied to urban parks, nature reserves, forests, and other green spaces, aiming for a balance where no group of species is disproportionately favoured over others.

- b) Crime & Disorder –Green spaces such as Lakes and Parks can contribute to reducing urban crime by making spaces more inviting and safer for residents.
- c) Environment & Climate Emergency –This is deeply intertwined with both the protection of biodiversity and the fight against climate change. Both challenges require urgent and comprehensive action, as they not only affect the country's natural systems but also its economy, society, and future well-being.
- d) All aspects of this report are to action our responsibilities to this situation

The Lake and Country Park and the facilities it provides the following

- Benefits to the local community at all levels giving users a resource to enjoy and experience nature and all it provides
- Benefits to the economy, employment, a free natural resource and support to local contractors
- Benefits to the environment, increasing species levels and creating new habitats for rare and endangered species (Water Voles)

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.

Financial implications

- The Trust for Oxford's Environment grants combined would provide around £2,000 for the projects mentioned.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the actions in this report and approve the works planned

CLIMATE & BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE



Agenda Item:	Lake and Country Park Report
Meeting Date:	8th September 2026
Contact Officer:	Biodiversity and Green Spaces Officer

The purpose of this report is to update members on the works carried out on the Lake, Country Park by the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer and the Park Ranger.

Background

The Lake and Country Park continue to be managed for recreation and conservation, and we continue to work within the 10-year management plan. <https://www.witney-tc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2025/08/aaaaaManagement-plan-summary.docx>

Current Situation

The latest update on projects completed are:

- Interpretation boards at two main entrances of Country Park: they have been installed/sited and are well received by users of the country park
- 2 additional benches have been installed around the lake
- The Council have been approached to instal a memorial bench (paid for by the member of public) and will be seeing if the council can accommodate this request when the necessary information is available
- SSE have requested to do a drone survey of their power lines, and this will be completed in the next month
- Green Flag application is almost ready to be applied for and should be so by this meeting
- We will soon be designing a sign for the Railway Orchard at the end of Mill Meadow and making use of information on the old Witney branch line to provide context to the naming of this new orchard
- The Council has taken delivery of the palisade gate to be installed on the lake peninsula and will make use of the works team to install in near future

Corporate Strategy

- The Council's Strategic Plan 2025–29 sets out the Council's long-term priorities and direction, supporting its mission to 'make Witney a great place to live, work and visit.' This report contributes to the delivery of the following strategic pillar of the plan:

- 5. A Beautiful Witney

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 –Equality in biodiversity in green spaces refers to the idea that all species regardless of their size, role, or ecological status should have the opportunity to thrive and be represented within urban and natural green spaces. Achieving equality in biodiversity involves not just conserving a wide variety of species but also ensuring that ecological systems are designed and managed in ways that support diverse species' needs. This can be applied to urban parks, nature reserves, forests, and other green spaces, aiming for a balance where no group of species is disproportionately favoured over others.
- b) Crime & Disorder –Green spaces such as Lakes and Parks can contribute to reducing urban crime by making spaces more inviting and safer for residents.
- c) Environment & Climate Emergency –This is deeply intertwined with both the protection of biodiversity and the fight against climate change. Both challenges require urgent and comprehensive action, as they not only affect the country's natural systems but also its economy, society, and future well-being.
- d) All aspects of this report are to action our responsibilities to this situation

The Lake and Country Park and the facilities it provides the following:

- Benefits to the local community at all levels giving users a resource to enjoy and experience nature and all it provides
- Benefits to the economy, employment, a free natural resource and support to local contractors
- Benefits to the environment, increasing species levels and creating new habitats for rare and endangered species (Water Voles)

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.

Financial implications

- There is an agreed budget for the management of the Country Park but as it grows and the usage increases, then a regular review of financial requirements will be needed
- The sign for the Railway orchard will make use of re-cycled signage and the skills of the “Witney Shed” and only the interpretation panel will need to be bought at around £70.00 based on A2 on an aluminium back board
- We have also secured £2500 from Freshwater Habitats Trust and Lower Windrush Valley Project and £2000 from Oxford County Council towards the design and purchase of the new interpretation boards and Two recycled plastic benches

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the actions in this report and approve the works planned

Community Hub Proposal

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Introduction

A previous report entitled [Chalk and River Landscape Conservation – Witney mapped areas v.11](#) made the case for a way of integrating proposed developments to the west and east of Dry Lane, now bordering the newly-established Burford Road RVNR (Road Verge Nature Reserve) as of 12 June 2026, into the wider chalk/limestone natural and historical landscape which surrounds them.

Only by understanding the features, habitats and wildlife, including the Maggots Grove designated ancient woodland and wildflower meadows in close proximity as one example, can thoughtful planning and design of green spaces, footpaths and trails be exercised to dovetail with existing formal and informal access points.

Likewise, the recent discoveries from archaeological test trenches underline the historical importance of the area under consideration which, if handled professionally and sympathetically, can contribute to an educational and recreational experience for residents and passing visitors on how much the special landscape has to offer.

Purpose

This document aims to build on the previous outline [Community Hub Location Proposal](#) for the location of a Community Hub that benefits the four local communities where the two proposed developments intersect on Dry Lane, with a more detailed design and visualisation of how such a facility can be not only a welcome rest stop for walkers and cyclists and showcase for its historical and natural setting, but also be a testament to environmental biodiversity and sustainability employing renewable energy sources and building-integrated photovoltaics (BIPV), such as solar roof tiles and transparent solar windows.

It is hoped that the exterior and interior conceptual designs that follow, inspired by the history of the area and native tree species, can inform the important decisions to be made to create the legacy of a Community Hub enjoyed for generations to come.

Community Hub Location Proposal

Published: 13 July 2026

The following is a suggestion as to the possible location of a Community Hub that benefits from

- ✚ Ease of access from Dry Lane—anticipating a reduction in speed limit by Highways from existing national 60mph to 20-30mph
- ✚ Extensive views across stunning chalk grassland meadows below to the north of the site, proximity to adjoining ancient woodland hedgerow leading to the designated Ancient Woodland of Maggots Grove to the west and onto the Windrush valley below
- ✚ Ease of access across Dry Lane to the west where Maggots Grove is less than 100m away
- ✚ Access to all four circular walks linking the four communities for walkers, cyclists and day visitors
- ✚ Access to existing high level chalk ridgeway that meets a junction of footpaths and bostalls descending to the valley floor
- ✚ Being a buffer zone where housing development can blend in with the natural landscape, especially if a small tranche of fields were converted to wildflowers known to former farmer's crops (linseed, cornflowers, corn cockles, native poppies) that would mirror the grassland meadows below that boast alfalfa, sainfoin and crimson clover— all of the above representing the third crop rotation fallow cycle

If the site were to showcase artefacts from any archaeology performed to the west of Dry Lane, then a rest stop location with drinks and refreshments would benefit from a small car park for deliveries and staff with circular tethering cycle posts to encourage active exercise.

These images from Apr 2026 give an idea of the landscape and terrain involved. Firstly an approach from the east along the ridgeway path at a high level would be open all year round.



High-level ridgeway path view to Ancient Woodland Maggots Grove with wildflower meadow downslope to ancient woodland hedgerow with Spindle, Guelder Rose and Wild Bullace indicator species.

Figure 1 Approach from east along high level ridgeway

The main site would have extensive, inviting views over the landscape and valley below.



Figure 2 Site location from Dry Lane with views North and East



Access would be from four directions, including a new proposed link circular path skirting inside the hedges on the Burford Road and Dry Lane (east side), currently signposted as private land.

Figure 3 New footpath South to Burford Road from Dry Lane

The site could make use of the existing bridleway path from Dry Lane descending to the Windrush as the start of two circular paths going west (left) to Crawley—badger setts and wetland rushes/drains— or east (right) to Witney wetlands where a field of ragged robin, buttercups and horsetails are to be found.



Figure 4 Bridleway from Dry Lane down to the Windrush

A wild flower meadow to complement the existing one in Fig 15, could replace some of the rape seed field bordering the meadow and provide wildflower seasonal walks for photographers in front and to the east of the Community Hub, similar to the sample below.

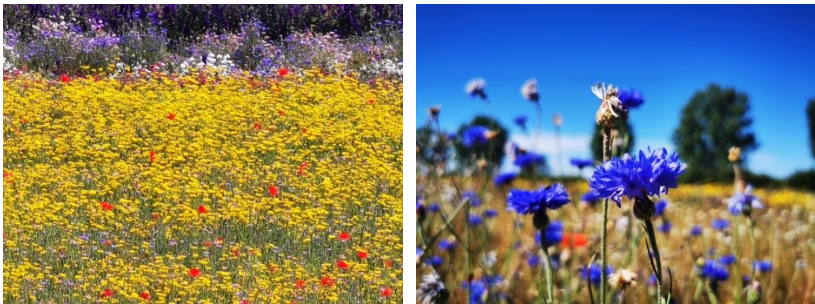


Figure 5 Sample wildflower seasonal walks with BAP Priority Species

Note: The Biodiversity Action Plan cites the cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*) as a "Priority Species" under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework due to its rapid decline.

It also calls out specific taxonomic groups, here below with local references highlighted in red that have been sighted in this landscape.

UK BAP Priority Species Taxonomic Groups

Birds: Including **turtle dove** (Kingfisher Meadows KFM), **skylark** (Maggots Grove), corn crane, grey partridge, **house sparrow** (KFM), and various warblers.

Terrestrial Mammals: Including the **brown hare** (wildflower meadow to east), hedgehog, **water vole** (Windrush 2021-22), and various **bat** species (Pipistrelle in KFM)

Marine & Fish: Including salmon, various shark species, and marine mammals.

Invertebrates: Including moths (e.g., Straw Belle), butterflies, and stag beetles.

Plants & Fungi: Vascular plants, non-vascular plants, and **lichen** (Maggots Grove).



Figure 6 Updated wildlife sightings with BAP Priority Species

[illegible]

Community Hub — Design Inspiration

The design draws on both the history and natural landscapes of the area.

The history of the textile industry is steeped into the Windrush and other valleys of the Cotswolds and while the Witney blanket achieved fame far beyond these shores into North America and beyond, it must be remembered that it was the clear chalk stream waters, native trees and meadows and, of course, the Cotswold Lions sheep breed that made it all possible.

While mills powered the industrialisation latterly, leats that diverted water had been known in this valley since Roman times, with yellow dye being provided since 1000BC from the yellow mignonette (*Reseda lutea* and *luteola*) flowers growing on both sides of the valley.

The humble native Spindle tree (*Euonymus europaeus*) gave its straight white stems to the product that now bears its name which twists the raw woollen fibres into yarn. The vast open meadows on our gentle slopes saw tuckers hanging the finished blankets out to dry, rushing to take them down before the rain came and re-hanging them on tenterhooks until they were dry.

Their use dates from Neolithic times (6000-9000 years ago) when fibres were hand spun on using a notched stick and weighted whorl at one end.



Figure 8 Spindle fruits and Wild Bullace blossom and berries

Both Guelder Rose (*Viburnum opulus*) and Spindle are ancient woodland indicator species. They are joined by Wild Bullace (*Prunus domestica subsp. insititia*) that may have been introduced by the Romans as an edible, oval-shaped ‘sloe’ fruit and the prime, ideal rootstock for grafting stone fruit trees such as plum, apricots, peaches, and nectarines. All three species are present in the hedgerow that leads to Maggots Grove.

While Spindle and Wild Bullace provide possible colour schemes that can be used in the interior design, *Viburnum opulus* was the inspiration for the floor patterns and mirrored seasonal landscape planting outside.



Figure 9 *Viburnum opulus* leaf, berries, bark and inflorescence

The bench seating externally (or internally if space permits) is modelled on the automation provided by the shuttles used in weaving cloth. Their provenance could be from already felled trees where available and can have circular and elongated recesses at either end to act as ad hoc tables.

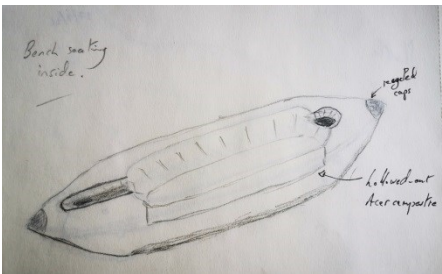


Figure 10 Bench Shuttle-type Seating

Community Hub — Exterior Design

The exterior comprises a community hub landscape with seasonal interest, natural exploration areas, and functional zones. Since access to all four communities in all four directions for walks, runs, rides and recreation is centred on this hub, perhaps a working title for the building at a conceptual stage can be the Four Ways Community Hub.

A brief descriptive breakdown¹ of the external facilities and connections follows:

Core Site Layout & Buildings

The Community Hub Main Building features a central structure called "Four Ways" with outdoor porches and an adjacent terrace. Two wings spur off to the rear of the building to house the 'History and Heritage' and 'Nature and Exploration' zones.

Access and Logistics

The design includes a car park, deliveries area, and an external vehicular approach from Dry Lane on the western boundary

Circular Paths

It complements existing circular paths with a new circular path looping around the property before heading south inside the existing hedgerow turning left, before running parallel to the new Burford Road RVNR

Landscape & Planting Zones

A seasonal colour gradient displays a large Guelder Rose leaf section tracking colour transitions across Spring, Summer, and Autumn. This display is mirrored on the inside of the building to provide symmetry and a sense of continuity between the outside and inside environments.

Shade Gardens

There will be groups of shade-giving trees together, specifically noting native *Acer campestre* and *Sorbus torminalis* (Wild Service) trees, an ancient woodland species

¹ Sourced from the sketched drawing (Fig. 11) and adapted from an AI summary

Formal Rows

These define a structural boundary using a combined *Cornus sanguinea* (Dogwood) and *Viburnum opulus* (Guelder Rose) hedge to shield the viewing and sensory area for calm enjoyment of the same.

Avenue Planting

This leads the eye and body to the exceptional valley view with a funnelled, expanding line of white bark trees, composed ideally of *Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii* 'Snow Queen' AGM (similar to those at the Common Leys campus) or alternatively with the native *Betula pendula* (Silver Birch). Once mature, this avenue will open out onto a stunning vista waiting to be explored.

Viewing and Sensory Area

This area couples a seating/viewing area with aromatic planting beds of rosemary and lavender

Educational and Community Features

Natural Landscape Exploration outlines dedicated zones and paths for interactive outdoor exploration. The main introduction to the zones and their species will be inside the building, but these should be supplemented with information boards externally on the circular walk that crosses this area in front of the building.

Seasonal 'Species Spots' can detail dedicated observation points along each circular route, where species have been recorded.

It would also be wise to include an awareness poster of any species to enjoy within the ancient woodland of Maggots Grove, together with those that need to avoid physical contact with.

Community Hub — Interior Design

The interior design entrance was conceived as a mirror to the external seasonal landscaping using the *Viburnum opulus* leaf design to provide continuity between both environments.

The aim is to turn an observer into a participant, in the understanding that we are all part of the natural landscape, we walk the same ancient paths as our ancestors did, we admire the same flowers, hedgerows and trees and that we are custodians of it.

A brief descriptive breakdown² of the interior design proposal follows, based on the spatial layout with the material, colour and thematic elements included:

Exterior and Threshold

The architectural shell is a traditional Cotswolds oolitic limestone facade

The Threshold

Large French double doors act as a transparent framing device, providing an immediate, expansive view directly into the main community hub and café interior

Flooring and Spatial Flow (The *Viburnum opulus* leaf)

The floor design serves as the primary visual anchor and intuitive wayfinding system for visitors entering the space

Central Feature

A large, stylised floor rendering of a *Viburnum opulus* leaf

Colour Gradient

The leaf coloration bleeds dynamically from an autumnal red on the left toward a spring light green on the right

² Sourced from the sketched drawing (Fig. 12) and adapted from an AI summary

Circulation Borders (Hard Shoe Traffic)

The outer floor zones border the central leaf and mimic the textures and tones of *Viburnum opulus* bark. This provides a durable pathway that guides visitors to the two distinct wings:

- To the Left it follows the "Historical Track" past a front window
- To the Right it follows the "Nature Track" past a front window

Café Zones and Furnishings

The central area visible through the French doors balances cosy, seated dining with casual, standing-only spaces near the service counter

Main Seating Area

Approximately a dozen traditional wooden tables and chairs arranged directly over the central leaf-rendered floor zone

Standing Zone

Located closer to the main serving counter, it features tall, standing-only circular tables crafted from white or cream-coloured wood, each supported by a single, elegant spindle-like leg

The Shuttle Counter

Positioned prominently at the rear centre under a "Welcome to Four Ways" sign

Design Concept: Mimics a light brown wooden shuttle from the local historical wool industry

Features: Tapered at both ends with a sleek, light steel cap. The front section is cut away cleanly for customer service

Layout: Two professional espresso/barista coffee machines are centred behind the bar, with displays of light snacks and cakes flanking both ends of the counter

Rear Wings and Exhibits

The rear boundary of the café transitions smoothly into specialized cultural and environmental zones via symmetric architectural elements.

Left Wing —History and Heritage

Transition: Small steps and an entrance curve gracefully around the left "Pit" seating area (featuring white stone surrounds and matching white cushions)

Key Features

Leads into an open-plan heritage space

Features an Artefacts Display & Story cabinet alongside an interactive Discovery Table

Convenient access to the facilities (WCs) is located further to the left

Right Wing —Nature and Exploration

Transition: Mirroring the left side, small steps curve around the right "Pit" seating area (also styled with white stone surrounds and white cushions)

Key Features

Leads into an open-plan environmental space

Features the prominent Four Ways Trails exhibition plan and interactive mapping area

Flooring details

For high durability and distinct zoning, here are the flooring material specifications:

The Bark Track (Outer Borders): To handle the heavy, hard-shoe traffic leading to the Historical and Nature tracks, the outer borders will utilize a commercial-grade, textured luxury vinyl tile (LVT) or porcelain stoneware planking. These materials are completely waterproof, highly washable, and slip-resistant, while accurately mimicking the deep, rugged textures and natural earth tones (greyish-brown, white and pale green) of *Viburnum opulus* bark

The Leaf Area (Main Café Floor): The central zone featuring the *Viburnum opulus* leaf design will be constructed using high-traffic commercial laminate flooring with a realistic wood-grain finish. This provides the warm, inviting aesthetic of real timber but offers superior scratch, dent, and fade resistance to ensure the multi-coloured autumnal red to spring green gradient remains vibrant and long-lasting under heavy foot traffic

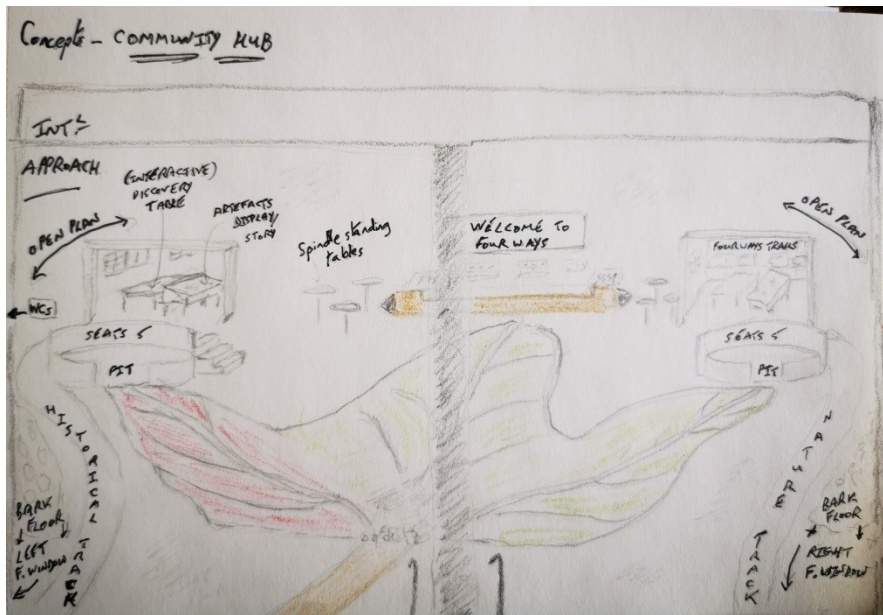


Figure 12 Four Ways Community Hub Internal Approach

The sketch above depicts a view through one of the twin French windows (with plate-enabled automatic opening for disabled access) into the area inside that welcomes participants in for refreshment and sustenance, yes, but also invites them to choose a track depending on their inclination.

The hard shoe border routes permit cyclists with such footwear to explore both landscapes to determine their next route after resting without having to change or remove footwear.

The two circular, white 'Pit' spaces are to mimic the Neolithic round spaces or fire pits where communities would gather to exchange stories, share moments and thoughts in a circle of both friends and perhaps those new to the area. It is hope this 'sharing space' will thrive with lively conversations.

The main area and wings are designed to be open plan, with space enough behind for automatic inward-opening fire doors as a pre-requisite to meet safety and disabled access standards.

Community Hub —Design Visualisation

The following two visualisations³ of exterior and interior designs have been constructed from the sketch drawings above to simulate one possible view of the whole community hub.

Any errors shown are down to my bad handwriting and are retained to remind the reader that these are representative of what an AI engine has made of a drawing and its detailed descriptions.

Among them for example, the compass direction at the end of the Spring seasonal planting is North-East. Similarly, the two signs nearest to the shady zones are meant to refer to disabled access and the location for cyclists of the tethering cycle posts.

Additionally, the access slope to the main entrance beneath the terrace should be gentle, since the current geography already lends itself to this.



Figure 13 Four Ways Community Hub - External view

³ Credit to Gemini for the AI generation component and depictions

The internal view has a cut-away section of the façade to afford a more comprehensive view of the layout once inside.

The intention is to create a light, airy space that feels more like a part of the natural and historical environment only a few metres away in any direction.



Figure 14 Four Ways Community Hub - Internal view

Reports Cited

(Massam, 2026) *CHALK AND RIVER LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION – WITNEY MAPPED AREAS v.11*

CLIMATE & BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE



Agenda Item:	Carbon Reduction Action Plan & Report
Meeting Date:	Tuesday 8 September 2026
Contact Officer:	Administrative Support Assistant – Communities & Planning

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on Witney Town Council's Carbon Reduction Action Plan.

Background

At its meeting on 26 June 2019, Witney Town Council formally declared a Climate Emergency. In response, the Council committed to taking all necessary measures to address climate change, setting a target to achieve carbon neutrality by 2028 in pursuit of a cleaner, more sustainable future for its residents.

Current Situation

Since the previous update, officers have progressed the draft Climate Change Strategy, identified the next grant funding deadline, referred low cost Windrush Cemetery Depot measures for implementation, and begun further investigation of larger carbon reduction measures. The report also updates Members on benchmarking, fuel tariff options, Eco Fair planning, the UTV replacement, and tree and hedgerow planting.

The matters set out in this report are primarily for noting and feedback at this stage. Where further approval is required, including for significant expenditure, procurement decisions, or implementation of larger carbon reduction measures, separate reports will be brought to the appropriate Committee and, where necessary, Full Council.

Draft Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan

The fourth draft Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (**Appendix A**) has been prepared following the preliminary roadmap presented to the Climate and Biodiversity Committee on 20 May 2025 and the Climate Action Working Party on 25 September 2025, where Members provided further direction to officers. A detailed Action Plan, including key performance indicators (KPIs) and timelines, will now be further developed to accompany the Climate Change Strategy. This will allow the Council to track progress and link strategic objectives directly to measurable outcomes. The document has now been circulated to all officers for review, and any comments received will be considered as part of the ongoing assessment.

Progress can be seen the attached Matrix (**Appendix B**)

Carbon Reduction Recommendation Reports and Grant Funding Update

It is unlikely that the September application deadline for the Energy Solutions Oxfordshire Green Fund will be met. Officers therefore intend to submit a grant funding application by the next deadline of 2 December 2026. The fund can provide up to £10,000 towards eligible energy efficiency measures or renewable energy projects identified in the Carbon Reduction Recommendation Reports. Officers will also continue to explore other suitable grant funding opportunities to support delivery of the recommended measures.

Windrush Cemetery Depot

The following measures identified within the Carbon Reduction Recommendations Report have been referred to the Operations Manager for implementation by the Operations Team as soon as practicable, utilising existing maintenance budgets:

- Recommendation 3: Install loft insulation.
- Recommendation 4: Install a timer on the hot water system.
- Recommendation 6: Add draught-proofing to the main external door.
- Recommendation 8: Install appropriate signage on the accessible toilet door.

Officers are currently assessing the feasibility, costs, and potential carbon reduction benefits associated with the remaining recommendations, including the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and an air-to-air heat pump. Further updates will be provided to Members as this work progresses.

Corn Exchange

The following measures identified within the Carbon Reduction Recommendations Report have been allocated to the relevant officers for investigation and implementation where appropriate.

The Venue and Events Officer is undertaking an out-of-hours energy survey to identify opportunities to reduce energy consumption when the building is unoccupied. This includes taking meter readings and identifying equipment that can be switched off when not required to minimise unnecessary energy use.

The Operations Manager is collating information on the existing boiler and heating system and obtaining comparable quotations for its replacement. The review will also consider the report's recommendation regarding the installation of a heat pump, together with any other relevant measures identified within the Carbon Reduction Recommendations Report. A further update will be provided to this Committee in due course.

The Deputy Town Clerk has submitted a Pre-Application Planning Advice request to West Oxfordshire District Council regarding the potential installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels at the Corn Exchange. As the building is Grade II listed and located within a Conservation Area, planning constraints will need to be carefully considered. The advice received will be reported to Members once available.

Benchmarking

Officers have contacted Corsham Town Council, which has reported 2025/26 greenhouse gas emissions of 26.96 tCO₂e. This represents a small increase from 2024/25 and indicates that progress towards its net zero target has slowed, with actual emissions remaining above the planned reduction trajectory. Corsham has advised that this is partly due to the planned installation of air source heat pumps at its Town Hall being delayed until 2027/28, subject to grant funding and budget availability.

Officers will also seek to contact Cirencester, Shrewsbury and Woodley Town Councils to share learning and best practice, and to identify any approaches that may support the Council's carbon reduction ambitions.

Fuel

Officers are currently investigating the 100 Origin gas tariff offered by the Council's existing energy supplier, 100Green. Further information has been requested to enable a detailed financial and contractual comparison with the Council's current gas supply arrangement.

The 100 Origin tariff provides 100% green gas derived exclusively from natural sources. 100Green advises that it is currently the only UK supplier offering an eco-labelled energy tariff. Adoption of this tariff has the potential to reduce the Council's reported carbon emissions by an estimated 4.45 tCO₂e per annum.

A further report will be presented to Members once the information has been received and assessed, setting out the financial, contractual, and environmental implications for consideration.

Eco Fair 2026

The second Eco Fair has been booked and will be held in the Main Hall, Corn Exchange on Thursday 24th September 2026 and open to the public 14:00 – 18:00 hrs.

Invitations to organisations are being sent out and publicity will begin once main partner organisations have confirmed attendance.

National Emergency Briefing

The Corn Exchange screened the National Emergency Briefing on 27 July 2026, with 61 people attending. Members who attended the screening and facilitated the discussion afterwards are requested to provide a verbal update at this meeting.

Vehicle Replacement

The Biodiversity and Green Spaces Officer has provided information for noting by the Committee regarding the replacement of the Council's Utility Terrain Vehicle (UTV). The existing UTV has reached the end of its effective operational life and is increasingly unreliable for the range of duties required.

The UTV is an essential operational vehicle used across a variety of Council services, including:

- Grounds maintenance operations
- Parks and open spaces management
- Event support and logistics
- Transportation of equipment and materials
- Inspection and maintenance activities within the Lake and Country Park
- Tree maintenance works, including winching operations
- Recovery of vehicles and equipment where access conditions are difficult
- Supporting partner organisations undertaking environmental and ecological surveys by transporting personnel and equipment across sites

In assessing replacement options, officers considered both operational requirements and environmental impacts, including:

- Low-emission engine alternatives
- Electric UTV options
- Fuel efficiency
- Whole-life environmental costs and benefits

Following a review of the available market, officers concluded that there is currently no suitable electric UTV capable of meeting the Council's operational requirements, particularly in relation to towing capacity, winching capability, site access, and operational range. Consequently, a conventional replacement vehicle has been identified as the most appropriate option at this time. Officers will continue to monitor the market for suitable low-emission or electric alternatives for future replacement cycles.

The replacement UTV is expected to be delivered in September 2026.

Tree and hedgerow planting

The Biodiversity and Green Spaces Officer has provided information relating to tree and hedgerow planting for 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27. The 2026/27 planting numbers may change due to the exceptional hot summer and the assessment of any replacement planting that is needed. Based on indicative UK carbon sequestration data, the planting over these three years is estimated to sequester approximately 0.41 tonnes of CO₂e per year once established. This is an indicative estimate rather than a verified carbon offset and the amount of carbon sequestered will increase as the trees and hedgerows mature in addition to supporting biodiversity, habitat creation and local food production.

Year	Planting	Number	Estimated annual sequestration*
2024/25	Native orchard trees	24	0.12 tCO₂e
2025/26	Native orchard trees	32	
	Acer trees	2	
	2025/26 total	34 trees	0.19 tCO₂e

Year	Planting	Number	Estimated annual sequestration*
2026/27	Whitebeam	2	0.04–0.05 tCO ₂ e
	Native wild cherry	2	0.04–0.05 tCO ₂ e
	Native hazel hedging	697	Indicative; see note below
	2026/27 total	4 trees + 697 hedging plants	~0.1 tCO₂e

* Indicative annual carbon sequestration once established. These figures are estimates and should not be treated as verified carbon offsets or deducted directly from the Council's operational carbon footprint.

For the Councils Carbon Reduction Plan, it is recommend recording the carbon sequestration separately from the 2024-2025 65.08 tCO₂e operational emissions. The Woodland Carbon Code makes the distinction between carbon sequestration and verified carbon units, and formal carbon credits require a much more rigorous methodology.

Corporate Strategy

The Council's Strategic Plan 2025–29 sets out the Council's long-term priorities and direction, supporting its mission to 'make Witney a great place to live, work and visit.' This report contributes to the delivery of the following strategic pillar of the plan:

7. A Green and Resilient Town – Rooted in the Council's 2019 Climate Emergency declaration, with a commitment to embedding environmental responsibility into all Council activities and achieving carbon neutrality by 2028.

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 impacts of implementing a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan for Witney will have equal impact on all services, customers, and staff as there is shared benefit.
- b) Biodiversity – Climate change action plans can include measures to protect and restore biodiversity, which in turn can help with climate adaptation and mitigation as detailed in the report.
- c) Crime & Disorder - No direct crime and disorder impact with regards to the content of this report.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – The information and suggested targets within the report will have a direct, positive impact on the Council's plan for the wider positive benefits towards climate change mitigation and adaptation across the town.

Risk

In decision making Members should consider any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability. Any recommendations will be reported to the appropriate Committee and Full Council for approval.

Delivery of the estimated emission savings is ambitious and dependent on securing sufficient financial resources and Council approval within the required timeframe. Key risks include missing grant funding deadlines, cost escalation, delays linked to planning or listed building advice, and limited availability of suitable low-emission operational vehicles.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates. The Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan will have a multi-dimensional impact across social, economic, and environmental areas. Stakeholder engagement with the public, community groups, and local businesses will be crucial. Consideration of the effects on local communities, including economic development, social inclusion, and environmental sustainability, will inform the draft documents.

Financial implications

- Any costs associated with the Climate Emergency Action Plan incorporating the reduction of the carbon footprint for Witney will follow Council process and be reported to appropriate committees for approval or from existing budget allocations.
- The 2026–2027 budget allocated for capital projects for carbon reduction is £50,000.
- All external funding opportunities will be explored to support climate action costs.
- Officers will maximise the use of support by the various organisations and agencies available.
- All procurement activities will comply with:
 - Relevant legislation.
 - Council Procurement Policy.
 - Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and:

1. Provide feedback on the draft Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan and support the continued development of the detailed Action Plan, including key performance indicators, timelines, and further reports where Member approval is required.

DRAFT



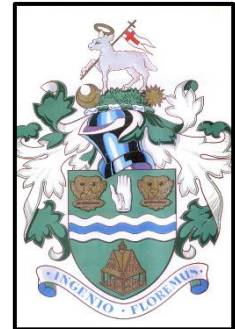
Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan

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1. Introduction

Guided by our motto, Ingenio Floremus – 'With Ingenuity We Flourish' – Witney Town Council's Climate Change Strategy reflects our commitment to innovative and forward-thinking environmental action. We recognise that flourishing as a community means embracing sustainable practices, empowering local stakeholders, and investing in creative solutions to address the climate emergency.



This document sets out what Witney Town Council is doing to reduce the impact of climate change on our community through reducing carbon emissions, improving biodiversity, building resilience to extreme weather and supporting a greener economy.

This document explains the roles, opportunities and drivers for Town Council-led action and sets out the benefits for local people and places.

2. Our Commitment to Action

On 26th June 2019, Witney Town Council declared a climate emergency stating:

1. Witney Town Council joins other Councils in declaring a Climate Emergency, and commits to the vision of carbon neutrality by 2028 at the latest, and;
2. calls on Westminster to provide the necessary powers and resources to make local action on climate change easier, and;
3. explores the expansion of community energy to keep the benefits of our local energy generation in our local economy, and;
4. works with partners anchored in the area to deliver carbon reductions and grow the local economy, and;
5. holds a public meeting made up of a representative range of our community members to establish the facts and make recommendations for our council, and;
6. establish a council working party to respond to the recommendations of the public meeting and establish a strategy to act on the vision of carbon neutrality by 2028 at the latest.

Actions already taken:

- A public meeting was held on 28 July 2019 enabling the public to share ideas and visions for change, and to explore ways in which we can all work together to make Witney net-zero carbon as soon as possible.
- Climate and Biodiversity Committee and Climate Action Working Party established with clear Terms of Reference.

Beyond the Town Council's own assets and services and clear environmental improvements, there are co-benefits of taking action on climate change including

economic - job creation, and social - equity and social cohesion, health and wellbeing, resilience and community engagement.

3. How we will achieve our Objectives

Society is dependent on our climate and biodiversity; we need to acknowledge the impact that the decisions we make have on these natural systems.

Our goal is to ensure that the climate emergencies are at the centre of all our decisions, so we reach carbon neutrality by 2028 at the latest.

Our key decision-making processes include listening and engaging with our community; establishing and maintaining partnerships; empowering people and groups; providing support, funding and information; representing, through advocating for change, and looking after the interests of vulnerable people. We will provide transparency and accountability about our goals, actions and progress against targets.

Our key decisions involve considering how we will help meet national and local net zero carbon targets, reduce air pollution and protect and restore nature.

All Councillors and staff will be required to complete carbon literacy training. This training is essential to ensure that everyone has the knowledge and understanding needed to reduce carbon emissions in their roles and make informed, sustainable decisions. Embedding carbon literacy across the organisation supports our commitment to climate action and responsible governance.

4. Finance and Resources

Our objective is to have sufficient resources to invest in the changes needed to meet carbon reduction and biodiversity goals. Many of the environmental solutions offer long term investments such as saving money on energy bills through better insulation. The majority of the changes we need to make to reduce our environmental impact will require initial resources and funding. We will seek to identify grants and external funding opportunities to help us deliver our ambition.

As well as the Town Council's own resources to reducing our climate impacts, we will use planning mechanisms such as Section 106 agreements and the Community Infrastructure Levy to fund climate actions and biodiversity improvement projects within our town boundary.

We will continue to seek to procure locally sourced services and products, or Fairtrade alternatives where available.

We will review our bank accounts to access where possible their environmental credentials.

5. Community Engagement

Active engagement with residents and businesses is essential in realising the benefits of adapting and responding to the challenges of climate change and in the creation of a low carbon and climate-resilient community.

There are significant opportunities for coordinated action to help deliver local priorities, improve health, save money, boost the local economy, improve the transport system and enhance biodiversity and the natural environment.

Impact, the community carbon calculator, shows the average household footprint in Witney is 12.1t carbon dioxide equivalent. This is below the West Oxfordshire District of 14.1t carbon dioxide equivalent and the GB national average of 13.3t carbon dioxide equivalent.

An understanding of Witney Parish's carbon footprint is essential for developing an effective emissions reduction strategy. Carbon calculators can be used to measure emissions from energy consumption, transport, and waste. Establishing a baseline through a carbon audit will help identify key areas for improvement across the community.

An early priority will be to engage and educate the community on how to interpret and use the Impact tool's insights. The footprint data can guide strategic efforts to reduce emissions and support the Council in setting meaningful change targets.

Each section of the report includes suggested targets and reflective questions to help the Council identify potential areas for action. The data is intended to raise awareness and deepen understanding of the activities contributing to emissions, thereby encouraging both individual and collective action.

The carbon footprint report will be reviewed annually to monitor progress, benchmark against regional and national averages, and inform future Council decisions.

6. Collaborative Working

Addressing climate change requires action across the whole of society. By working together, we will be able to share resources and expertise and have a greater impact on cutting carbon emissions locally. Our goal is to encourage, support, showcase and bring people together to help with their contribution to addressing the climate emergency.

We will continue to promote community sharing and reuse to reduce waste and unnecessary consumption.

Residents - Engagement and support from residents is essential in constructing plans and we will involve a diverse range of residents from our community to help ensure a wide variety of ideas are heard and that solutions to problems are found collectively.

Businesses - We will support local businesses towards lowering their carbon emissions and will direct them to sources of information, expertise and funding to help cut energy, water and resource use.

Schools – We will foster partnerships with our local schools to support climate initiatives.

Community Groups – We will work collaboratively with community groups to drive forward climate, environmental and biodiversity projects that will also create material benefits to Witney.

We will build on our relationship with other local town and parish councils and work closely with West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council in exploring opportunities for collective action and collaboration.

We will work collaboratively with groups and organisations to host events that encourage our residents, businesses and organisations to take a positive action for the environment.

7. Buildings

We acknowledge the challenges with gaining permission for energy improvements to our listed buildings that we own and long-term lease through Witney Town Hall Charity. We will seek to overcome these through innovative retrofit solutions and close working with Witney Town Hall Charity and West Oxfordshire District Council, as the local planning authority.

Any lighting replacements will utilise the latest technology, prioritising high-efficiency LED units wherever feasible. Installation or optimisation of lighting control, including motion sensors where appropriate will be considered for all buildings.

Any refurbishment of Town Council buildings or new building projects will be designed to achieve our target of net zero carbon by 2028.

As part of our commitment to sustainability, we will work with long-term leaseholders of Council-owned buildings to promote positive environmental action, by signposting them to relevant grants and external funding opportunities.

As part of our emergency response efforts, we will work closely with partner organisations and community groups to ensure our public hall venues are available as safe, warm or cool spaces for vulnerable residents during extreme weather events or other local emergencies.

8. Transport

Our goal is to significantly increase the proportion of people that travel by walking, cycling, public transport, car share schemes and electric vehicles through support of lower carbon travel initiatives. The benefits of this include improving local health and wellbeing,

encouraging investment by promoting sustainable transport and creating a cleaner environment.

We are committed to supporting West Oxfordshire District Council and businesses with the deployment of electric vehicle charging infrastructure within our town.

We will promote the use of public transport to our events and activities and ensure we provide cycle stands in our parks.

The Council offers staff the Cycle to Work scheme for employees to help them purchase cycles and accessories at a reduced cost.

9. Fleet and Machinery Commitment

The Town Council is committed to reducing its environmental impact by transitioning its vehicle fleet and operational machinery to electric alternatives wherever feasible. This initiative supports our broader sustainability objectives, including lowering greenhouse gas emissions, reducing air and noise pollution, and promoting cleaner technologies in public service delivery.

As part of the vehicle renewals programme, each asset will be evaluated based on its operational lifespan and the availability of suitable electric replacements. We acknowledge that due to the specialised nature of certain operations, not all vehicles, plant, and machinery can be replaced by electric alternatives. Officers will continue to monitor specialised equipment as new models and advancements become available in the UK.

In support of this commitment, all small machinery and equipment used across our operations will be replaced with electric versions where practicable. This shift will contribute to improved air quality, reduced carbon emissions, and a quieter working environment, benefiting both our workforce and the wider community.

10. Energy

The Town Council will purchase 100% renewable electricity from utility companies for its electrical energy use of Council property, buildings and electrical vehicle fleet. The current gas energy provider supplies 100% green gas which is from anaerobic digestion. It is worth noting that the price of purchasing renewable energy is usually higher than the price associated with a normal tariff. The purchasing of renewable energy requires ongoing financial commitment from the Council. There is currently no official gas impact measurement.

We will work to reduce energy use in all Council owned and long term leased buildings and switch to renewable energy systems such as solar panels, heat pumps, etc. where and when feasible.

Promoting Community Use of Thermal Imaging Technology

The Town Council will actively promote the community use of its thermal imaging camera to support residents in identifying areas of heat loss within their properties. By enabling property owners to make informed decisions about insulation and energy efficiency improvements, this initiative aims to:

- Enhance the overall energy performance of homes,
- Reduce household energy bills,
- Lower carbon emissions associated with domestic heating.

This community-focused approach aligns with our commitment to environmental sustainability and empowers residents to contribute to local climate action efforts.

11. Water

Water is a valuable resource. We seek to avoid wasteful practices and reduce our use of water. We will explore water-saving devices in all Council owned and long term leased buildings and install these where practicable.

Our aim is to further reduce consumption in our floral displays by greywater harvesting from The Leys Splash Park. This greywater will be used to water the towns floral displays and newly planted trees. We have reduced the amount of water needed for our summer hanging baskets and window boxes by using containers that have self-watering facilities and using more drought-resistant plant varieties.

Best available technology to reduce water consumption will be incorporated into Council building refurbishment programmes and new building projects.

12. Waste

The Town Council is committed to building a sustainable community by minimising waste and embracing circular economy principles. We recycle our business waste throughout all our operations including food waste, ink and toner cartridges and specialist waste recycling of electronics (WEEE). We will continue to minimise waste sent to landfill and explore options for reuse.

We provide public litter recycling bins in our parks, Lake and Country Park and play areas. Any wood waste from our maintenance operations is chipped where possible and used as a weed suppressant on shrub beds or hedge lines.

We actively encourage hirers of our premises and land to adopt sustainable alternatives and limit the use of single-use plastics.

We offer the public free water refills at the Corn Exchange to reduce plastic bottle waste. We will explore the installation of a public water refill station at The Leys Recreation Ground.

We want to engage with residents, businesses and organisations to reduce waste in our town and promote community sharing and reuse.

13. Land Use

We will manage Town Council owned land in an environmentally sensitive way. This includes minimising pesticide use wherever possible. However, we acknowledge that due to the specialised nature of certain operations in providing sporting facilities, this may not always be possible.

The Witney Lake and Country Park Management Plan 2024-2034 will continue to protect and enhance biodiversity of the site.

Our Tree Planting Policy sets out our commitment to planting trees on Witney Town Council land. The Council has also created a Tiny Forest at Eton Close amenity area.

We will continue to protect our existing tree stock in order to store carbon, support nature, aid flood protection and deliver mental health benefits. Trees will only be felled where they pose an identifiable risk to people or property.

Our goal is to ensure everyone has access to nature and to restore nature to help draw down carbon pollution from the atmosphere.

We will support and encourage the major landowners within or adjoining the Witney town boundary in restoring land for wildlife.

The Council will continue to support the Witney Allotment Association who administer and manage the four allotment sites in Witney. These are located at Lakeside, Hailey Road, Newland and Windrush Place.

Allotments are valuable community assets, boosting health & wellbeing, providing sustainable growing spaces and creating biodiverse green corridors. The Council will continue to look for an additional site (or sites) to meet demand for allotments.

The Council actively supports the development of community gardens and orchards on our amenity land, recognising their value in promoting biodiversity, improving mental and physical wellbeing, strengthening community ties, and providing access to fresh, locally grown produce.

14. Adapting to the effects of Climate Change

Adaptation to climate change will protect people from higher temperatures, flooding, more extreme weather events and impacts on health and well-being. The community of Witney are vulnerable to a range of effects of climate change and are likely to experience an increase in flooding, droughts and possible wildfires as summers are predicted to get hotter and winters are expected to get wetter.

Witney Town Council is working to adapt the town to the effects of climate change by implementing the following measures:

- **Flooding**
 - Witney has several areas that are at high risk of flooding. A Community Emergency Plan will be developed and maintained for the town in conjunction with West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council.
 - The Council will continue to support and work with Witney Flood Group.
 - Creating ponds and wetlands within our green spaces will also help absorb floodwaters.
- **Droughts**
 - Hotter, drier summers are expected because of climate change. This will mean increased care for the vulnerable and increased care of the Council's outdoor spaces such as parks, country park, etc.
 - The Town Council will need to consider creating cooler spaces for people by creating tree shade in our parks and green spaces. Green canopies provide shade from direct sun and cooler air through transpiration.
 - The Town Council will need to review the type of planting that is used in green spaces and floral displays and changing to more drought resistant species.
 - The health of the Council's existing tree stock will be monitored against new threats such as disease caused by warming weather.
- **Grassfires**
 - Areas of long grass within the Council's green spaces may become at risk of fire during heatwaves. The Town Council will need to review the location and management regime of wildflower meadows and areas of rewilding.

15. Planning and Development

The Planning and Development Committee shall undertake an annual review of its Terms of Reference and submit recommendations for any amendments required for the forthcoming municipal year. The current Terms of Reference are published on the Town Council's website. In relation to the Climate Change Strategy, the following provisions within the Terms of Reference are applicable:

- b) To consider any planning decisions, appeals, planning briefs and tree preservation orders, and recommend, if appropriate, any views that should be expressed by the Council, or any action that should be taken, in respect of these;
- f) To consider and submit appropriate representations on behalf of the Council concerning the potential impact of flooding in Witney, including requests for mitigation measures and comments on sustainable drainage solutions. Due to the serious nature of flooding events, any incidents will be referred to Full Council for further consideration, response and escalation with other agencies;

- g) To consider the impact on the green environment and biodiversity of all planning applications and comment in the name of the Council accordingly;
- h) To promote sustainable and active travel in the future planning of the town;

16. Transparency and Community Engagement

The Town Council is committed to transparency and accountability in its climate action efforts. We will provide clear, accessible updates on our website and other communications to ensure residents are informed about the initiatives we are undertaking and planning. By sharing our progress openly, we aim to build trust and encourage community involvement in our sustainability journey.

17. Delivery and Monitoring

Witney Town Council's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan will be aligned with all other Council plans, policies and guidance. The Council's Corporate Strategic Plan 2025-2029 has a focus on dealing with the effects of climate change and this will weave throughout all Council objectives.

Our Climate Change Action Plan will include SMART objectives with measurable carbon reduction objectives to enable the Climate Change Strategy to be monitored for its impact.

The Council's Climate & Biodiversity Committee will receive regular progress reports on the delivery of the action plan. The Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan will be reviewed and updated annually.

The Council recognises that it could offset its remaining carbon emissions through a certified UK Tree Planting Scheme and will initially focus on carbon offsetting that derives local benefit as a priority over investing in schemes further afield.

18. Baseline Emissions Assessment

Historical emissions data for 2019–2020 was submitted to the Council as part of the initial assessment. The Council carbon footprint for 2019-2020 was calculated to be 64.08 tCO₂e. Following this initial assessment, the Council internalised the grounds maintenance contract in 2022, resulting in a material change to operational scope. The 2019–2020 assessment cannot be considered directly comparable to the 2024–2025 baseline due to the substantial expansion of Council activities. Nevertheless, historical building data on water, heating, and electricity consumption will be reviewed.

The Council has undertaken a detailed review of its carbon emissions for the period April 2024 - March 2025, using the local authority industry recognised GHG Accounting Tool. The accounting tool has been developed by The Local Government Association and is widely used by local authorities to establish their baseline greenhouse gas emissions over a single reporting year. This assessment has established total Council emissions of 65.08 tCO₂e.

Scope	Emissions tCO ₂ e	Percentage of Total Emissions
Scope 1	51.39	79%
Scope 2	0.55	1%
Scope 3	13.14	20%

Scope 1: Direct emissions from Council owned operations, excluding any buildings leased to third parties. e.g. Liquid fuel for vehicles (petrol, diesel).

A breakdown of Scope 1 emissions sources details heating emissions at 26.91 tCO₂e and the Council's fleet use at 24.48 tCO₂e.

Scope 2: Indirect emissions from purchased energy e.g. gas used in Council buildings.

A breakdown of Scope 2 emissions relates to the electricity supplied via Oxfordshire County Council's street lighting for the Town Councils Christmas Lights display.

Scope 3: Other indirect emissions where data is reasonable available e.g. water.

A breakdown of Scope 3 emissions relates to the supply and treatment of water 2.46 tCO₂e and emissions associated with the extraction, refinement and transportation of fuel prior to combustion (Well to Tank) 10.63 tCO₂e.

Out of scope for reporting are supply chain emissions from procurement and waste from properties and sites.

Calculations only cover Council owned operations or long term leased building e.g. Town Hall and Admin Offices. The assessment currently excludes any buildings leased to third parties e.g. Langdale Hall, Madley Park Hall, Towerhill Cemetery Lodge, West Witney Sports and Social Club etc.

The baseline helps the Council to identify key opportunities and challenges as the Council moves towards the 2028 carbon neutral target.

19. Carbon Reduction Plan Summary

2024-2025 Baseline Emissions (65.08 tCO₂e)

- **Scope 1:** 51.39 tCO₂e
 - Heating (Buildings): 26.91 tCO₂e
 - Fleet fuel: 21.39 tCO₂e
 - Other Scope 1: 3.09 tCO₂e
- **Scope 2:** 0.55 tCO₂e (Christmas Lighting)
- **Scope 3:** 13.14 tCO₂e
 - Water use & treatment: 2.46 tCO₂e
 - Other Scope 3: 10.68 tCO₂e

20. Implementation Roadmap & Estimated Reductions

Clear carbon reduction priorities have been established, highlighting the main opportunities for impactful change.

Year	Key Measures	2028 Net Zero tCO ₂ e Reduction Target
2026–2027: Foundation & Infrastructure	• Council Building Retrofits & Upgrades - <i>Lighting, heating, insulation improvements, secondary glazing</i> • Building Efficiency Enhancements - <i>HVAC optimization, rooftop PV feasibility studies</i> • Water Efficiency Initiatives • Depot EV Charging Infrastructure • Fleet Transition – <i>Further EV adoption</i> • Sustainable Energy Integration • Waste, Water & Procurement Improvements	25 tCO ₂ e
2027–2028: Expansion & Optimisation	• Continued Building Retrofits & Upgrades • Advanced Efficiency Measures - <i>HVAC optimisation, rooftop PV implementation</i> • Water Efficiency Initiatives • Fleet Transition -<i>Further EV adoption</i> • Waste, Water & Procurement Improvements	20 tCO ₂ e
2028: Consolidation & Completion	• Final Building Retrofits • Fleet Transition - <i>Complete EV replacement program where feasible.</i> • Waste, Water& Procurement Improvements	10 tCO ₂ e

Total Estimated Reductions: ~55 tCO₂e by end of 2028, residual (~10 tCO₂e) offset providing local benefit alongside recognised off set schemes like the Woodland Carbon Code projects.

Appendix 1 – Climate Change Action Plan – Witney Town Council

Note: Projects and ideas presented may require budget or utilise existing Council budgets. All new projects to be agreed by Committee or Council.

Climate Action	Lead Officer / Partner Organisations	Impact of action on carbon footprint reduction	Scope of emissions	Budget	KPI	Progress / Comments
Witney Town Council Total Carbon Footprint 2024-25 65.08 tCO ₂ e.	ALL	High	ALL		2026-27 Target: 60-70% reduction on 2024-25 baseline	Net Zero by 2028
Finance and Resources						
1. Annually review the WTC Procurement Policy.	HEO/OM/ ASA-CP /VEO/BGSO	High	3	Nil	Policy reviewed and updated on an annual basis. All staff involved with procurement have read and understood their responsibilities to deliver the policy.	Review current policy and determine if changes are required. Report to Council on policy review.
2. Aim to reduce the calculated supply chain emissions by purchasing locally sourced and environmentally friendly goods and services, wherever possible, in line with the Procurement Policy.	ASA-CP	High	3	Nil	Emissions from supply chains.	Establish a method for reporting supply chain emissions. Review annual supply chain carbon emissions and look where reductions can be made.

Climate Action	Lead Officer / Partner Organisations	Impact of action on carbon footprint reduction	Scope of emissions	Budget	KPI	Progress / Comments
3. Main contractors hired by WTC to have an Environmental Policy.	HEO/ASA-CP CEO/PO/OM	Low	3	Nil	2026 – 75% 2027 – 100% % of main contractors (any contractor paid over £30k per annum or a Capital Project exceeding £30k) to have an Environmental Policy.	Align with WTC Standing Orders and Financial Regulations and Supplier/Contractor Vetting.
4. Review use of all chemicals used by WTC (e.g. cleaning products) and seek environmentally friendly alternatives where feasible.	OM/ ASA-CP/BGSO/VE O	Low	3	Existing	% of harmful chemicals replaced by environmentally friendly alternatives where feasible. 2026/27 - 80%	Review all chemicals being used are environmentally friendly where feasible. Continually review best alternatives as suppliers review and develop products available.
5. Review WTC banking arrangements	RFO	High	3	Nil	WTC partners 100% with ethical organisations to deliver trusted banking and investment solutions.	Confirm banking and investment arrangements with RFO.
6. External grants and funding opportunities identified and applied for to support and implement delivery of the action plan.	ASA-CP	High	1, 2 & 3	Nil for application of grant to support budgeted projects.	Grant funding successfully applied for to support WTC budgets.	Grant funding researched for each major element of climate action proposed.

Climate Action	Lead Officer / Partner Organisations	Impact of action on carbon footprint reduction	Scope of emissions	Budget	KPI	Progress / Comments
Buildings						
7. Commission energy feasibility reports for WTC buildings: Corn Exchange, Burwell Hall, Town Hall, Admin Office and Windrush Cemetery Depot.	ASA-CP	High	1 & 2	Existing	Reports on 5 buildings commissioned.	Reports commissioned for Windrush Cemetery Depot, Burwell Hall & Corn Exchange.
8. Improve the energy efficiency of the WTC buildings by undertaking the recommended actions from the energy feasibility report.	HEO/ ASA-CP /PO	High	1 & 2	Proposals to be submitted.	2026/27 – specific project proposals identified.	Projects to be discussed with WODC as Planning Authority to agree feasibility of implementing recommendations. Review reports and agree actions/timelines at CBC and submit proposals to Full Council for consideration.
9. Building refurbishment and new building projects designed with energy efficiency systems.	HEO/PO	High	1 & 2	Existing	Report on energy saving measures incorporated into refurbishment /building works project.	West Witney Sports & Social Club refurbishment works, and the new Works Depot have incorporated energy efficiency measures. Works commenced.
Transport						
10. Encourage staff to use lower carbon forms of transport for work travel or car share for journeys outside of Witney.	ASA-CP	Low	3	Nil	2026-27 replace at least 50% of current staff work trips made by car with lower carbon transport options.	Establish a method of reporting.
11. Reduce Town Councillor travel emissions for	ASA-CP	Low	3	Nil	Reduce Councillor town council related travel.	Establish a method of annual reporting.

Climate Action	Lead Officer / Partner Organisations	Impact of action on carbon footprint reduction	Scope of emissions	Budget	KPI	Progress / Comments
Witney Town Council business.						
Fleet and Machinery Commitment						
12. Transition vehicle fleet and operational machinery to fully electric alternatives.	HEO/OM/ASA-CP/BGSO	Medium	1	Proposals to be submitted.	Vehicle and machinery renewals plan to be reviewed. Suitable alternatives to be researched and options detailed. % of Council owned vehicle fleet and operational machinery that are low-emission.	Electric alternatives to be considered and if none are feasible this will be recorded. Continually review suitable alternatives as industry review and develop choices.
13. Transition small machinery and equipment to fully electric alternatives.	HEO/OM/ASA-CP/BGSO	Low	1	Proposals to be submitted.	Small machinery and equipment to be reviewed when replacement is required. Suitable alternatives to be researched and options detailed for consideration.	Electric alternatives to be considered and if none are feasible this will be recorded. Continually review suitable alternatives as industry review and develop choices.
14. Where feasible hired vehicles and equipment to be electric.	HEO/OM/ASA-CP/BGSO	Low	1	Existing	Annual report on number of hired vehicles and equipment detailing % electric.	Electric alternatives to be considered and if none are feasible this will be recorded.
Energy						
15. Renewable energy to be used in all Council owned buildings and properties.	HEO/PO/RFO/ASA-CP	High	2	Existing	100% renewable electricity and gas.	Review all WTC energy providers. 100Green current provider.

Climate Action	Lead Officer / Partner Organisations	Impact of action on carbon footprint reduction	Scope of emissions	Budget	KPI	Progress / Comments
16. Town Centre Christmas Lights Display	HEO/PO/ASA-CP	High	2	Existing	100% renewable electricity	Investigate with OCC the energy provider for Christmas Lights.
17. Encourage staff to identify and reduce energy use and wastage.	ASA-CP	Medium	1 & 2	Existing	Regularly monitor and inform staff of energy usage against target. Identify and implement energy saving/reduction actions.	Ongoing general awareness of where energy is being used and potentially wasted. Lights and heaters being switched off when not necessary.
Water						
18. Reduce carbon emissions from water usage and waste water. Reduce water consumption by installation of water saving devices in Council buildings.	HEO/OM/ASA-CP/PO/VEO	High	3	Existing or proposals to be submitted for larger schemes outside of maintenance budgets.	Implement annual reductions in water use and waste to reduce carbon emissions.	Monitor water consumption regularly and set measurable targets to drive continuous reduction. Total Council water consumption 2024-2025 = 8021 m3
Waste						
19. Reduce emissions from waste.	HEO/OM/ASA-CP/VEO/BGSO	Medium	3	Existing	% of annual waste recycled compared to waste to landfill reported.	Establish a method of reporting the annual emissions of waste from Council operations. Investigate ways to reduce amount of waste produced throughout all service areas and buildings. Maximise the amount of waste that can be recycled.
20. Wood waste and green waste	HEO/OM/ASA-CP/BGSO	Medium	3	Existing	% of annual green and wood waste reused	Wood waste is chipped and reused as a weed suppressant on shrub beds and hedge

Climate Action	Lead Officer / Partner Organisations	Impact of action on carbon footprint reduction	Scope of emissions	Budget	KPI	Progress / Comments
					compared to waste to landfill reported.	lines. Green waste is composted and reused to enrich soil on Council amenity land and flower beds. Storage bays to be installed at West Witney Depot to enable processing.
21. Completely reduce the use of single-use plastic in Council offices and premises.	HEO/OM/ASA-CP/VEO	Low	3	Existing	Identify single use plastics and target reduction of single use plastic to zero.	
22. Reduce the use of single-use plastics and waste at all internal and external events.	VEO/ASA-CP	Low	3	Existing	Annual review of hire forms and Events Policy. Reports to be provided in Event Management Plans by event organisers.	Events Hosting Policy reviewed 28.07.26 to be considered at PGF 28.09.26. All external events on WTC land to provide recycling and food waste recycling. Events Policy to detail the number of attendees e.g. 400 that requires recycling facility provision. Reviews and reports submitted to the CBC.
23. Ensure all waste bins have the facility to recycle within WTC amenity land, play areas, Lake & Country Park and cemeteries to reduce landfill waste.	HEO/OM/ASA-CP/BGSO	Low	3	Proposals to be submitted following review.	Ongoing review of the potential for installing more bins.	Undertake audit of public waste bins on WTC amenity areas, Lake & Country Park, Play Areas and Cemeteries. Maximise the amount of waste that can be recycled.
24. Aim to move to paperless offices and meetings.	ASA-CP	Low	3	Existing	% reported annually to reduce paper buying and waste produced.	Review processes for reducing paper use. All paper purchased is recycled.

Climate Action	Lead Officer / Partner Organisations	Impact of action on carbon footprint reduction	Scope of emissions	Budget	KPI	Progress / Comments
Land Use						
25. WTC Witney Lake & Country Park.	HEO/ ASA-CP /BGSO	Low	N/A	Existing		Continue to manage the area in line with the Witney Lake and Country Park Management Plan 2024-2034.
26. WTC amenity land.	HEO/ ASA-CP /BGSO	Low	N/A	Existing		Continue to manage WTC land in line with the Biodiversity Policy. Reviews and reports submitted to the CBC.
27. Review use of all pesticides used by WTC and seek environmentally friendly alternatives where feasible.	OM/ ASA-CP/BGSO	Low	1 & 3	Nil	Review current Pesticides Policy.	Review all pesticides being used. Continually review best alternatives as suppliers review and develop products available. Reviews submitted to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee.
28. Support the development of community gardens and orchards within Witney on WTC land.	HEO/OM/ ASA-CP /BGSO	Low	3	Proposals to be submitted when required.	Number of community gardens and orchards on WTC land.	Seek adequate spaces for growing food and garden areas within the community on WTC land. Reviews and reports submitted to the CBC.
Adaption						
29. Create a Community Emergency Plan.	HEO	N/A	N/A	Nil	2025/26 Community Emergency Plan created and adopted by Council and shared with relevant organisations/groups. Comms plan in place during extreme weather events and local emergencies.	Community Emergency Action Plan drafted and with WODC Officers for review.

Climate Action	Lead Officer / Partner Organisations	Impact of action on carbon footprint reduction	Scope of emissions	Budget	KPI	Progress / Comments
30. Review location and management regime of wildflower meadows and rewilding areas.	HEO/BGSO	N/A	N/A	Proposals to be submitted when required.	Areas and regime reviewed on an annual basis.	Reviews submitted to Climate & Biodiversity Committee.
31. Create an Environmental Emergency Plan.	HEO	N/A	N/A	Nil	Community Emergency Plan created and adopted by Council and shared with relevant organisations/groups.	Ensure staff are trained in emergencies such as wildfire, drought, flood, storms focussing on prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery.
Transparency						
32. Provide clear, accessible updates on the council's climate action progress through the Council website and other communications.	ASA-CP	Low	N/A	Nil	Updates provided as agreed.	Not yet started
Delivery and Monitoring						
33. Establish WTC Climate Action Working Party.	WTC/ASA-CP	High	N/A	Nil	Terms of Reference agreed. Reporting into CBC with recommendations.	CAWP established.

Climate Action	Lead Officer / Partner Organisations	Impact of action on carbon footprint reduction	Scope of emissions	Budget	KPI	Progress / Comments
34. Review and update the Town Council's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan so that it delivers the Town Council's net zero goal.	WTC/CBC/AS A-CP	High	N/A	Nil	Annually updated and approved by the Council and presented to Councillors and staff	Review, and if necessary, update the Strategy each year.
35. Create an annual Carbon Emissions report that shows year on year reduction in the Town Council's carbon emissions in line with achieving net zero by 2028.	ASA-CP	High	N/A	Nil	Annual plan completed showing year on year reductions, based carbon emissions from baseline year of 2024-25, in line with net zero.	A summary of historical information to be provided to the CAWP. Initial assessment information for 2019-2020. Assessment completed for 2024-25.
36. Staff and Councillors are knowledgeable about the climate emergency.	ASA-CP	High	1, 2 & 3	Proposals to be submitted.	Percentage of staff and Councillors who have undertaken a climate literacy course. All staff and Councillors climate literate by end of 2026.	Carbon literacy training delivery to be progressed with WODC partnership working.
37. All staff encouraged to identify and implement changes to reduce WTC's greenhouse gas emissions.	ASA-CP	High	1, 2 & 3	Existing	Record the number and type of staff-initiated ideas that are implemented.	To be incorporated into staff meetings.

Climate Action	Lead Officer / Partner Organisations	Impact of action on carbon footprint reduction	Scope of emissions	Budget	KPI	Progress / Comments
38. Benchmark WTC against other successful carbon-neutral town councils.	ASA-CP	N/A	N/A	Nil	Increase in ranking against other successful carbon-neutral town councils.	Investigate an annual list of town councils who are reporting on their carbon emissions. Benchmarking established against Corsham TC, Cirencester TC, Shrewsbury TC & Woodley TC.
39. Carbon sequestration recording of WTC's planting trees and hedges.	BGSO/ASA-CP	High	1, 2 & 3	Existing	Detail target numbers for planting projects. 2024/25 – 24 trees 2025/26 – 34 trees 2026/27 – 4 trees & 697 hedging plants 2027/28 - * to be agreed	Detail planting undertaken since reporting on WTC climate impact by recording the annual carbon sequestration. Review required of replanting any failed trees and hedging following exceptionally hot summer of 2026.

Climate Action	Lead Officer / Partner Organisations	Impact of action on carbon footprint reduction for Witney Parish	Budget	KPI	Progress / Comments
Witney Community					
Community Engagement					
40. Witney Parish Impact Carbon Footprint Report to be undertaken.	ASA-CP	High	Nil	2025 – Report undertaken. Undertake annual report comparison for: 2026 2027	Analysis of 2025 report and make recommendations to CBC.

Climate Action Witney Community	Lead Officer / Partner Organisations	Impact of action on carbon footprint reduction for Witney Parish	Budget	KPI	Progress / Comments
				2028	
41. Facilitate a Eco Fair to promote climate action taking place in Witney, with WODC, OCC, eco-friendly businesses, organisations and community groups.	ASA-CP	High	Nil	Monitor the impact in terms of number of stall holders and local community response.	Eco Fair held on 9 October 2025. Consider whether an annual Eco Fair is facilitated by WTC by the CBC. Eco Fair planned for 24 September 2026.
42. Engage with local schools within Witney to support environmental activities and initiatives.	ASA-CP	Medium	Existing – may need revising	Number of primary schools participating.	Witney primary schools are invited to participate in Schools in Bloom. Consider whether this is extended to all educational facilities with a specific eco theme.
43. Creation of a Climate Emergency webpage to enable discussion, idea sharing and extended public awareness of the issues.	ASA-CP	Low	Nil	2025/26 - Council website is up to date with climate information. Number of visitors per year to webpage. Social media content planning to allow for regular programme of climate action.	National Emergency Briefing film screened in Corn Exchange 27 July 2026. 61 attendees.
44. Sign post local businesses to grants and advice on climate initiatives.	ASA-CP	Medium	Nil	2025/26 - Council website is up to	

Climate Action Witney Community	Lead Officer / Partner Organisations	Impact of action on carbon footprint reduction for Witney Parish	Budget	KPI	Progress / Comments
				date with climate information. Number of visitors per year to webpage. Social media content planning to allow for regular programme of climate action campaigns and initiatives.	
Collaborative Working					
45. Work with and support OCC and WODC on climate initiatives within Witney Town boundary.	All	High	Nil	Partnerships formed with OCC & WODC.	
46. Support and encourage local major landowners within or adjoining the Witney town boundary in restoring land for wildlife.	BGSO/WTC/WODC	High	Nil	% number of local landowners supported & encouraged with projects.	
47. Support community groups with sharing and to reduce waste and unnecessary consumption	ASA-CP /WTC/WODC	Medium	Nil	Number of groups supported.	

Climate Action Witney Community	Lead Officer / Partner Organisations	Impact of action on carbon footprint reduction for Witney Parish	Budget	KPI	Progress / Comments
Buildings					
48. Council Public Halls: Promote as cold and warm spaces during extreme weather events.	WTC/ASA-CP /VEO	N/A	Existing	Number of social media posts reported in event of extreme weather.	Comms plan in place during extreme weather events.
49. Work with long term leaseholders of Council owned buildings e.g. Madley Park Hall Trust, to promote positive environmental action on energy efficiency.	WTC/ASA-CP	N/A	Dependent on lease agreements.		Energy efficiency measures and funding opportunities will be shared with long term leaseholders.
Transport					
50. Promote the use of public transport to Council events and activities.	WTC/ASA-CP /VEO	Low	Nil	Actively promote and inform community of public transport routes available to events using social media, etc.	28.07.26 - Sustainable travel incorporated into Event Hosting Policy.
51. Encourage users of our amenity areas and buildings to cycle.	WTC/ASA-CP /VEO/OM	Low	Proposals to be submitted following review.	Actively promote and inform community of cycling routes to Council facilities using social media, etc.	Review cycle stand provision.

Climate Action Witney Community	Lead Officer / Partner Organisations	Impact of action on carbon footprint reduction for Witney Parish	Budget	KPI	Progress / Comments
52. Promotion of walking in Witney.	WTC/ASA-CP /BGSO	Low			Walking trails in and around Witney regularly promoted along with healthy outdoor activities e.g. outdoor gym.
53. Sustainable transport investment.	WTC/OCC/W ODC	High	Nil		Support OCC and WODC cycling initiatives, EV charging networks, active travel, public transport and expanding network of local footpaths.
Energy					
54. Promotion of Community use of WTC thermal imaging camera to identify areas of heat loss within their properties.	WTC/ASA-CP	Medium	Nil	Promotion at events and through communication platforms.	Review TIC Policy & Public Use and TIC User Agreement. Adopted by Policy, Governance & Finance Committee Minute F680 24.11.25. Hiring commenced to Witney residents.
55. Renewable energy projects	WTC/OCC/W ODC				Support OCC and WODC initiatives including community energy schemes.
Waste					
56. Provision of public water refill station at The Leys Recreation Ground.	Officers to work with Courtside Hubs CIC.	Low	£4.5k Capital budget requested 26/27	Installation completed	Removed from budget request PGF 24.11.25 minute F690.
57. Support local community fridge projects with redistributing food going to waste.	WTC/ASA-CP	Low	Nil	Number of projects supported.	

Climate Action Witney Community	Lead Officer / Partner Organisations	Impact of action on carbon footprint reduction for Witney Parish	Budget	KPI	Progress / Comments
58. Support litter picking initiatives within the community.	WTC/ASA-CP	Low	Existing	Number of events per year.	Community litter picking kits are available from the WTC Admin office.
Land Use					
59. Allotments – Work with Witney Allotment Association to promote positive environmental action.	WTC/ASA-CP	Low	Nil	Number of environmental actions supported.	Support Witney Allotment Association.

Key:	
Grey	WTC Net Zero emissions reduction action
Blue	Not started
Red	Unlikely to be achieved
Amber	In progress/likely to be mostly achieved
Green	Complete/likely to be achieved

Abbreviations:

* – KPI figure to be agreed

WTC – Witney Town Council

CBC – Climate & Biodiversity Committee

CAWP – Climate Action Working Party

Existing – This means that existing budgets or Ear Marked Reserves may be used to deliver the target/project

Lead officers:

RFO – Responsible Finance Officer

HEO - Head of Estates & Operations

OM - Operations Manager

BGSO - Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer

PO - Project Officer

VEO - Venue and Events Officer

ASA-CP – Administrative Support Assistant – Communities & Planning

Partner Organisations:

WODC – West Oxfordshire District Council

OCC – Oxfordshire County Council

Appendix 2 – Explanation of Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions

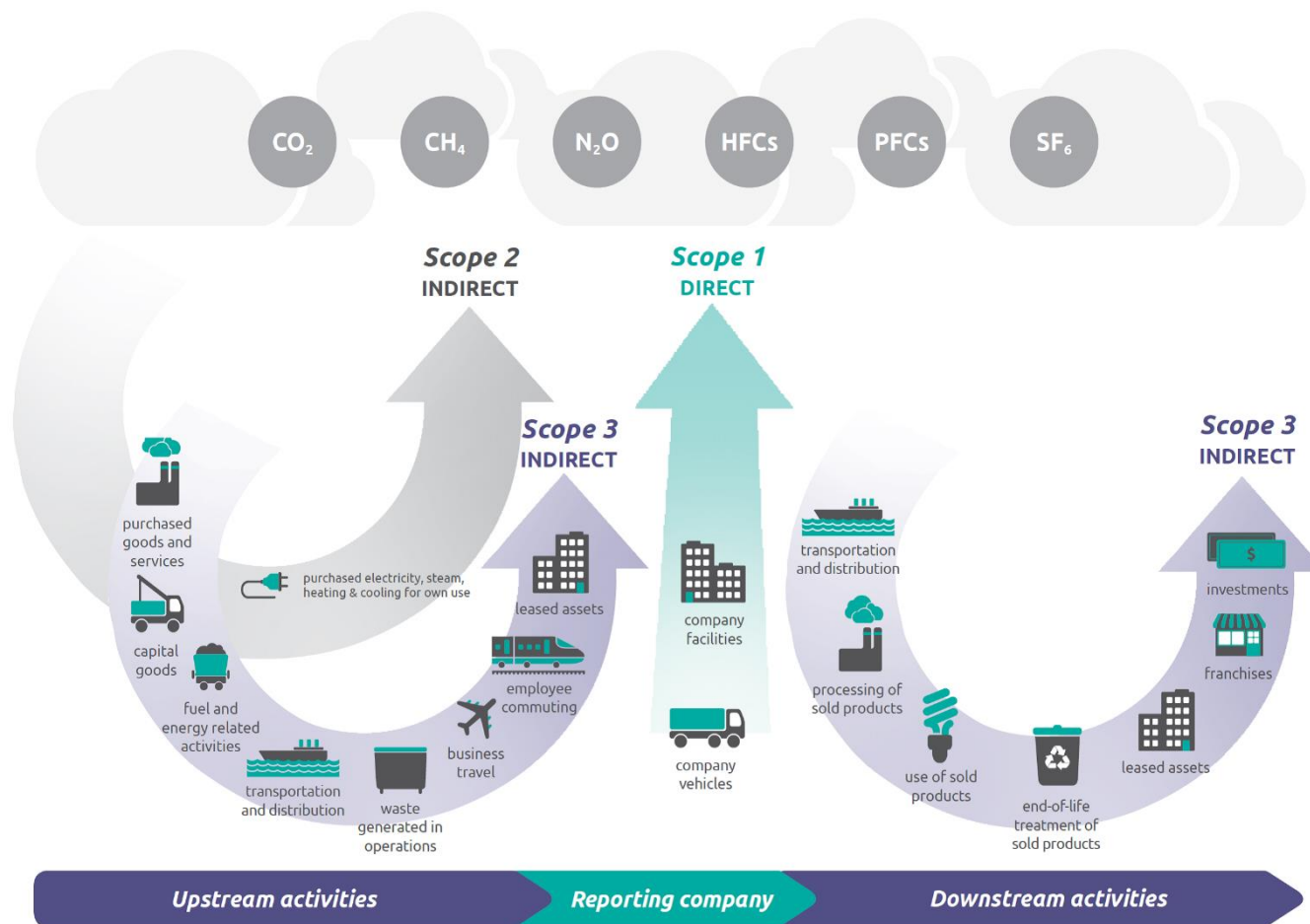
What are Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions?

Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions are ways to categorise where a company or organisation's emissions are coming from. While the first scope comes from direct emissions owned or controlled by a company, Scope 2 and 3 are indirect emissions that come about because of what that company does. These emissions come from sources not owned or controlled by the company.

These categorisations first appeared in the Greenhouse Gas Protocol in 2001, the world's most widely used greenhouse gas accounting standard. The scopes are a useful tool for businesses to discover and understand their entire value chain emissions so as to put their resources behind the best reduction opportunities.

Measuring Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions provides a comprehensive view of a company's total greenhouse gas impact, supports regulatory compliance, and helps identify risks and opportunities. It enables strategic planning, enhances corporate reputation, and drives competitiveness by meeting stakeholder expectations. Accurate measurement also aids in setting and tracking sustainability goals, improving efficiency, attracting investment, and fostering innovation.

Breakdown of Scope 1, 2, and 3 emission sources



Source: Greenhouse Gas Protocol (WRI & WBCSD), Corporate Value Chain (Scope 3) Accounting and Reporting Standard, page 7

Corn Exchange

Opportunity	Action completed	Action in progress	Not begun but intending to	Not begun, not intending to	Not applicable
1) Manage heating	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
2) Conduct an out of hours survey	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
3) Upgrade lighting to LEDs	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
4) Add draught proofing to external doors	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
5) Install secondary glazing	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
6) Manage summer heat	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
7) Add solar PV panels	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
8) Consider an air to water heat pump system	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐

Windrush Cemetery

Opportunity	Action completed	Action in progress	Not begun but intending to	Not begun, not intending to	Not applicable
1) Take & submit meter readings	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
2) Add heating controls* (<i>depends on 10</i>)	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
3) Add loft insulation	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
4) Add timer to hot water	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
5) Upgrade lighting to LEDs	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
6) Add draught proofing to external door	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
7) Investigate fridge use	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐
8) Provide signage for disabled toilet door	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
9) Add solar PV panels	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
10) Consider an air-to-air heat pump	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐

Burwell Hall

Opportunity	Action completed	Action in progress	Not begun but intending to	Not begun, not intending to	Not applicable
1) Option A – Ground Source Heat Pump*	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
2) Option B – Air source heat pump (air to air)*	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
3) Timers for hot water heaters	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
4) Zone heating in the changing rooms	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
5) Replace lights with LEDs	☐	☒	☐	☐	☐
6) Solar PV panels	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
7) Ceiling insulation	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
8) Additional low & no cost measures	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
a) Repair the thermostat/check the programmer	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Set heating time to match usage	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐
c) Make use of the ventilation system in the main hall	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
d) Turn off the kitchen hot water boiler when not in use	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐
e) Take and report gas meter readings	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐

*Survey taken in 2022. Replacement energy efficient gas boiler was installed.