

## Full Council

## Meeting of Witney Town Council

**Monday, 12th October, 2026 at 7.00 pm**



To members of the Full Council - A Bailey, J Doughty, O Collins, G Meadows, J Aitman, T Ashby, D Enright, R Smith, D Temple, A Mubin, R Crouch, G Doughty, D Edwards-Hughes, D Newcombe, J Robertshaw, S Simpson and J Treloar

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

### Admission to Meetings

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

Any member of the public wishing to attend the meeting should contact the Committee Clerk [derek.mackenzie@witney-tc.gov.uk](mailto: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 [Full Council Meeting | 12 October 2026](#)

### 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](mailto: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 6 - 19)

To approve and adopt the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 13 July 2026 in accordance with Standing Order 26 including questions on the minutes as to the progress of any item.

4. **Public Participation**

The meeting will adjourn for this item.

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

5. **Witney Community Policing Issues**

To receive an update from the Witney Police Team (if appropriate).

6. **An Update from Witney Oxfordshire County Councillors and West Oxfordshire District Councillors**

To receive a short verbal update from Oxfordshire County Councillors representing Witney Wards and West Oxfordshire District Councillors.

7. **Report Back from the Councillors on the Work with External Bodies where they serve as the Town Council's Nominated Representative**

To receive a short verbal update from councillors who sit on external bodies where they serve as the Town Council's nominated representative.

8. **Minutes of Committees and Sub Committees**

To receive and NOTE the RESOLUTIONS in the minutes of the meetings held between 14 July and 6 October 2026, and agree the RECOMMENDATIONS contained therein.

a) **Planning & Development Committee - 14 July, 4 August, 25 August, 15 September & 6 October** (Pages 20 - 50)

As the meeting of the Full Planning & Development Committee held on 6 October was inquorate and therefore proceeded on an advisory basis when an additional Member was available online, the attached minutes have not yet been formally approved or signed by the Chair. They will be submitted for approval to the next Full meeting scheduled for 17 November 2026.

At the 6 October meeting, the Advisory Committee also resolved to recommend an Infrastructure Funding Statement be approved subject to further work and that the Council should write to Oxfordshire County Council, supporting Witney Infrastructure Neighbourhood Group's (WING) stance on the West End Link Road and Northern Distributor Road delivery as part of the North Witney Strategic Development.

b) **Parks & Recreation Committee - 7 September** (Pages 51 - 54)

c) **Climate & Biodiversity Committee - 8 September** (Pages 55 - 60)

d) **Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee - 14 September** (Pages 61 - 65)

e) **Stronger Communities Committee - 21 September** (Pages 66 - 76)

f) **Policy, Governance & Finance Committee - 28 September** (Pages 77 - 85)

To note minute no. F478 which recommended Cllr G Doughty be co-opted to the Community Governance Working Party to ensure representation from all current town council wards.

9. **Conclusion of Audit 2025-26** (Pages 86 - 97)

To receive the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (R.F.O).

10. **Representation on Outside Bodies** (Pages 98 - 101)

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

11. **Climate Change Strategy & Action Plan** (Pages 102 - 138)

To receive the finalised draft of the Climate Change Strategy & Action Plan.

12. **Dependents Carers Allowance** (Pages 139 - 142)

To receive and consider the report of the Town Clerk/CEO.

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

To note that, following a Government decision announced on 16 July 2026, Witney was proposed to form part of the new Northern Oxfordshire Council, one of three new unitary authorities for Oxfordshire from 1 April 2028. Members are further advised that, on 7 September 2026, the Government announced a pause to the implementation of these proposals to allow a review of local government reorganisation decisions across England, following the receipt of legal advice.

Further details from Witney's Principal Authorities can be found here:

[Local government reorganisation \(LGR\) and devolution | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

[Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution: What you need to know - West Oxfordshire District Council](#)

14. **West Oxfordshire Draft Local Plan 2043** (Pages 143 - 149)

To consider and approve the Council's response to the statutory consultation on the Draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043, as deferred from the previous meeting.

Further information about the consultation, supporting documents and how to make a representation is available at [www.westoxon.gov.uk/localplan2043](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk/localplan2043)

15. **Community Asset Acquisition & Management Policy** (Pages 150 - 167)

To receive the report of the Town Clerk/C.E.O. in relation to this policy, which was approved for adoption by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee on 28 September, subject to an addition contained within.

16. **20mph Scheme Feedback** (Page 168)

To receive and consider a request from OCC for feedback on the 20mph scheme.

17. **Governance – Register of Interests, Hospitality & Data Protection** (Pages 169 - 172)

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

18. **Witney High Street & Market Square Works**

To receive a verbal update from the leader of the Council regarding the High Street Benches & Planter Schemes.

19. **Civic Announcements** (Pages 173 - 174)  
To receive the report of the Mayor & Mayor's Secretary.
20. **Health & Safety** (Pages 175 - 179)  
To receive the report of the Compliance and Health & Safety Officer.
21. **Vandalism & Anti Social Behaviour** (Page 180)  
To receive an update showing the latest vandalism to Council property and reported Anti-Social Behaviour.
22. **Communication from the Leader**  
To receive such communications as the Leader of the Council may wish to bring before the Council and to consider the recommendation of the Leader on how such communications should be dealt with.
23. **Correspondence**  
To receive any correspondence received (if applicable).
  - a) **Oxfordshire County Council - Witney High Street/Market Place Works** (Pages 181 - 182)  
To note the response to the Leader's letter to OCC regarding the High Street/Mark Place works. (FC 13.07.2026 Minute 383 Refers)
  - b) **OxBus 2040** (Pages 183 - 196)  
To receive notification that Oxfordshire County Council will be issuing a 4-week consultation on bus services in the county, called OxBus2040, commencing 13 October.
  - c) **Oxfordshire Casualty Report 2025**  
To receive notification that [OCC Road Traffic Collisions Casualty Data Summary 2025](#) is available via its website. The information will also be referred to the next meeting of the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee.
  - d) **Police and Crime Commissioner Newsletters**  
To receive the [August update](#) from the Thames Valley Police & Crime Commissioner.
  - e) **West Oxfordshire District Council - Community Governance Review** (Pages 197 - 201)  
To receive the correspondence including Terms of Reference from WODC regarding the upcoming Community Governance Review and consider the submission of the Town Council's proposal.
  - f) **Oxfordshire County Council - Annual Residents' Survey Response** (Pages 202 - 203)  
To receive a response from Oxfordshire County Council to a letter issued concerning feedback in the Witney Town Council annual resident's survey.
  - g) **West Oxfordshire District Council - Annual Residents' Survey Response** (Pages 204 - 206)  
To receive a response from West Oxfordshire District Council to a letter issued concerning feedback in the Witney Town Council annual resident's survey.
  - h) **British Regional Transport Association - Support for Rail Link** (Pages 207 - 208)  
To receive correspondence from BRTA regarding support for rail travel.

24. **Questions to the Leader of the Council**

Questions to the Leader of the Council concerning the business of the Council in accordance with Standing Order 22.

25. **Sealing of Documents**

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



Town Clerk

**Members Interests & Registration Of Gifts & Hospitality**

Members are reminded that any changes to the register of interests previously completed by them or any registration of Gifts or Hospitality received which exceed £50 should be reported to the Town Clerk **within 28 days** of the occurrence.

**MEETING OF THE  
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Held on Monday, 13 July 2026**

**At 7.30 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney**

**Present:**

Councillor J Doughty (Chair)

|              |                 |                                                    |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Councillors: | G Meadows       | R Crouch                                           |
|              | J Aitman        | G Doughty                                          |
|              | T Ashby         | D Newcombe                                         |
|              | R Smith         | J Robertshaw                                       |
|              | D Temple        | S Simpson                                          |
|              | A Mubin         | J Treloar                                          |
| Officers:    | Adam Clapton    | Deputy Town Clerk                                  |
|              | Derek Mackenzie | Senior Administrative Officer &<br>Committee Clerk |
|              | Nigel Warner    | Responsible Financial Officer                      |
| Others:      | None            |                                                    |

**349     APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

At the commencement of the meeting apologies for absence were received from Councillors O Collins, D Enright & D Edwards-Hughes.

Cllr D Enright subsequently joined the meeting at 8:45pm.

**350     DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

*Cllr A Mubin arrived at 7:03pm*

**351     MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings held on 13 April, 6 May and 22 June 2026 were received.

202 – The Deputy Town Clerk reminded Members of the Code of Conduct training session being run by West Oxfordshire District Council online on 14 July 2026.

**Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the meetings held on 13 April, 6 May and 22 June 2026 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

352 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

353 **WITNEY COMMUNITY POLICING ISSUES**

No representative from Thames Valley Police was available to attend the meeting. Members with issues were encouraged to contact the Witney Neighbourhood Policing Team directly and no items were raised.

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

**West Oxfordshire District Council**

Cllr R Crouch advised that the hotel hosting asylum seekers had closed approximately six weeks previously. She also updated Members on the Council of Sanctuary application and reported that a submission was due to be made in September.

Cllr J Aitman reported that she was pleased to see the new Shores Green slip roads due to open in the coming days.

Cllr J Treloar updated Members on proposals for the installation of electric vehicle charging points on Church Green and that he was working to ensure there was no reduction in the provision of central Post Office services within the town.

**Oxfordshire County Council**

Cllr T Ashby reported that the High Street & Market Square improvement works were progressing to schedule. He advised that works associated with the A40 scheme, including bringing the Eynsham Park & Ride into use, were due to commence over the summer and noted that some disruption was likely during the construction period.

He further reported that the Oxford congestion zone would be replaced by a Traffic Filters scheme on 14 September, that Botley Road was expected to reopen soon following its prolonged closure and, that the footpath for Madley Park and Deer Park Road were progressing following the award of the contract.

Cllr J Robertshaw advised that the outcome of the Local Government Review was expected to be announced shortly. He also highlighted ongoing efforts to recruit additional foster carers across Oxfordshire.

**Resolved:**

That, the verbal updates be noted.

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

Cllr R Crouch reported that **Witney Town Charity** would be hosting an afternoon tea event in September to bring together residents of the various Almshouses and strengthen community connections.

Cllr Crouch also provided an update from the **Witney Educational Foundation**, highlighting the ongoing need to recruit governors for local primary schools. She advised that one of the Foundation's principal aims remained the provision of financial assistance to children and families experiencing hardship to participate in school trips.

Lastly, Cllr Crouch reported that the **Witney Twinning Association** was seeking new members to the group and was undertaking work to raise awareness of the Association and its activities within the town.

Cllr J Doughty updated Members on **West Oxfordshire Community Transport (WOCT)** and advised that she would shortly be visiting the organisation and travelling on one of its bus services in order to speak directly with users and gain a better understanding of the service provided.

Cllr R Smith reported that a recent **Witney Town Band** event held at Oxlease had been well attended. She also advised that the Band was seeking a musical lead for its junior band section.

Cllr D Newcombe provided an update from the **RAF Brize Norton Local Consultation Group**, which had met the previous week. Members heard about plans for a new hangar and a number of other infrastructure improvements and upgrades across the RAF Brize Norton site.

The Mayor added that she and the Deputy Mayor had recently attended a formal event at RAF Brize Norton and commented positively on the occasion and the hospitality received.

**Resolved:**

That, the verbal updates be noted.

356 **PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE - 21 APRIL, 12 MAY, 2 JUNE & 23 JUNE 2026**

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

**Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Planning & Development Committee meetings held on 21 April, 12 May, 2 June & 23 June 2026 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

357 **CLIMATE & BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE - 19 MAY 2026**

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

CB 257 – No response was received and therefore nothing was submitted.

**Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Climate & Biodiversity Committee meeting held on 19 May be received and any recommendations therein approved.

358 **PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE - 1 JUNE 2026**

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

**Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 1 June be received and any recommendations therein approved.

359 **HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE - 8 JUNE 2026**

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

H295 – Members heard that the entries were limited to one cemetery and therefore the entry of Windrush Cemetery was progressed.

**Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 8 June 2026 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

360 **STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE - 15 JUNE 2026**

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

SC304 – The Leader and Mayor thanked officers for their work at Witney Carnival and the positive response to the residents' survey activity. They also welcomed the attendance of the Youth Councillors and noted the excellent level of engagement throughout the lively event.

**Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee meeting held on 15 June 2026 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

361 **POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE - 27 MAY 2026 & 22 JUNE 2026**

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

F327 - In response to a Member's question, it was clarified that the grant awarded to Courtside Hubs CIC was specifically to support free sessions for local schools, providing opportunities for young people to be introduced to a range of sporting activities.

**Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance meetings held on 27 May 2026 & 22 June 2026 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

362 **WITNEY: PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE WORKING PARTY - 26 MAY 2026**

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

The Mayor congratulated the Working Party and officers for all their work on the St George's Day event in April.

**Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Witney: Past, Present & Future Working Party meeting held on 26 May 2026 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

363 **CLIMATE ACTION WORKING PARTY - 11 JUNE 2026**

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

Cllr Smith asked that she be added to the meeting attendance as this has been omitted.

**Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Climate Action Working Party meeting held on 11 June 2026 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

364 **COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Council received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk regarding the annual review of the Committee Terms of Reference.

Members were satisfied with the Standing Committee recommendations as presented and agreed them unanimously.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Committee Terms of Reference for the Council's Standing Committees as presented be approved.

365 **REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

The Council received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk regarding appointments to Outside Organisations.

Members heard that Mr C Woodward was happy to continue as the Town Council's appointed Trustee to the **Witney Educational Foundation** for a further four-year term.

The Council also noted and thanks of **Witney Town Charity** following their request for the appointment of Mr M Lee as the town council trustee.

**Cogges Welfare Trust Charity**, following the resignation of Cllr J Aitman from the role, it was proposed by Cllr J Treloar, seconded by Cllr D Temple and unanimously agreed that Cllr J Robertshaw be appointed as the Town Council's nominated Trustee.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the continuation of Mr C Woodward as the Council's Trustee to the Witney Educational Foundation be noted and,
2. That, the thanks in respect of the appointment of Mr M Lee to Witney Town Charity be noted and,
3. That, Cllr J Robertshaw be appointed as the Council's Trustee to the Cogges Welfare Trust Charity.

*The Deputy Town Clerk advised that, following the Council's decision earlier in the year to reduce the number of Committee cycles, a small number of matters required consideration by Council in order that work could progress over the summer and not be delayed until the September cycle of meetings.*

366 **HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS**

The Chair of the Committee presented the report and explained the request from Witney Allotments (North) for two additional sheds. Members heard that the request had arisen following the division of two larger plots to create additional allotment plots, which would assist in reducing the waiting list.

During discussion, a Member expressed opposition to the proposal, noting that the request was not related to improving accessibility provision and therefore, in their view, should not be supported. Additionally, the Members along with another believed that as the Town Council did not receive income from the Allotments that the financial cost should not be borne.

The Responsible Financial Officer advised that the cost of the sheds would be met from the Allotments Earmarked Reserve and could only be utilised for allotment-related purposes. Additional costs for the installation would be met from existing operational budgets.

Following the confirmation that it was a duty of the Council to provide allotments where there was demand, it was proposed by Cllr J Aitman, seconded by Cllr R Smith, that the proposal be approved as presented.

A named vote was requested with the result as follows:

For: (10) Cllrs R Crouch, J Doughty, G Doughty, J Aitman, R Smith, S Simpson, T Ashby, D Newcombe, G Meadows and A Mubin.

Against: (2) Cllrs J Robertshaw and J Treloar.

Abstention: (1) Cllr D Temple.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report be noted and
2. That, the request from Witney Allotments North for the provision of two additional sheds be approved at a cost of £657.98.

*Cllr J Treloar left the meeting at 7:58pm rejoining at 8:03pm*

367 **POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE**

Members received a verbal update from the Responsible Financial Officer which provided additional context to the Earmarked Reserve information published as part of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return considered by the Council at their meeting of 22 June. The Responsible Financial Officer outlined the current position of the Council's Earmarked Reserves and advised that further information would be presented to Members in September prior to the commencement of the precept setting process.

The Responsible Financial Officer also provided an update on the financial position of the West Witney project. Members heard that expenditure to date stood at £2,002,775, with an estimated £101,362 remaining to complete the project. The Leader thanked Officers for their work in ensuring that the overall project remained within the approved budget.

The Deputy Town Clerk presented a grant application from Witney Community Primary School, which had been carried forward from an earlier Committee cycle. Members felt that the proposed play equipment formed part of the school's core infrastructure and would primarily be available to pupils rather than the wider community. It was therefore considered not to meet the ethos of the Council's grant funding scheme, which sought to support projects offering wider community benefit and enrichment opportunities.

It was proposed by Cllr J Treloar, seconded by Cllr R Smith, that the application be refused. A vote followed, with ten votes in favour of refusal and two against.

Members also received updates on the grant awards received from Witney Town Charity towards accessibility improvements at Unterhaching Park and the replacement bus shelter at Oxford Hill.

The Council considered a request for a subsidised hire of the Corn Exchange for the annual Eco Fair at a cost of £210, which was agreed unanimously.

The Deputy Town Clerk further updated Members on changes to the financial contribution made by the Cogges Welfare Trust towards the upkeep of the Buttercross Clock. Members noted the resolution to address the future management of this long-standing arrangement.

A request submitted by the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer for the installation of protective fencing at the Country Park was also considered. Members heard that the fencing was intended to reduce anti-social behaviour and protect wildlife habitats. Concerns were raised regarding ground stability in the proposed location; however, it was noted that any such matters would be addressed by officers as part of the operational delivery of the works. Approval was made for a budget of £1,200 to be set.

Finally, the Deputy Town Clerk provided a verbal update regarding a request from The Station Youth Outreach Service to deliver six parenting courses in the Gallery Room commencing in September. Following discussion, a vote was taken and the proposal in principle was approved by eleven votes in favour and one against.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the verbal update regarding the Council's Earmarked Reserves and the current financial position of the West Witney Project be noted and,
2. That, the grant application from Witney Community Primary School be refused and,
3. That, the grant awards made by Witney Town Charity towards accessibility improvements at Unterhaching Park and the Oxford Hill bus shelter be noted and,
4. That, the request for a subsidised hire of the Corn Exchange for the annual Eco Fair at a cost of £210 be approved and,
5. That, the proposed arrangement regarding the future contribution towards the upkeep of the Buttercross Clock be approved and,
6. That, a budget of £1,200 be allocated for the installation of protective fencing with officers authorised to determine the most appropriate method of installation and,
7. That, The Station Youth Outreach Service be permitted in principle to deliver six parenting courses as subsidised lettings in the Gallery Room commencing in September.

368 **PARKS & RECREATION**

Members received the report of the Deputy Town Clerk including an update from the Head of estates & Operations regarding the extended opening hours of the Splash Park, where they heard that the approved budget was expected to utilise its full allocation. A Member noted that some of the signage was displaying incorrect information and officers agreed that this would be corrected as soon as possible.

Members also received a verbal update on proposed KICK football sessions to be delivered by The Station at The Leys during the summer holiday period. Officers advised that a suitable area had been identified which would not impact upon the ground recovery works currently taking place on the football pitch areas used during the playing season.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the update on the extended opening hours of the Splash Park be noted and,
2. That, officers arrange for the correction of the Splash Park signage and,
3. That, the proposed KICK football sessions at The Leys be noted.

*During the following item Cllr T Ashby left the meeting at 8:38pm rejoining at 8:41pm  
Cllr D Enright joined the meeting at 8:45pm*

369 **STRONGER COMMUNITIES**

The Council received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk which contained proposals in relation to wayfinding for the town.

The Council received and considered a request from West Oxfordshire District Council regarding its proposed Wayfinding Scheme and the associated proposal for Witney Town Council to assume ownership and future maintenance responsibility for the assets following installation.

Members welcomed the principle of the project and recognised the potential benefits that improved wayfinding could bring to the town. However, concern was expressed that the proposed commuted sum was insufficient to mitigate the Council to a potentially significant future liability arising from the maintenance and replacement of approximately thirty signs. Members felt that insufficient information had been provided on the long-term warranties and guarantees that would accompany the assets.

Reservations were also raised regarding the proposed gateway signage at Corn Street and Langdale Gate. Members were disappointed that no visual representations of the proposed designs had been made available, which limited their ability to provide informed comments on the appearance of the scheme. Members expressed a desire for Town Council involvement in the design process as the project developed.

Following discussion, Members unanimously agreed that the request to assume ownership and maintenance responsibility should be declined in its current form.

The Council also received additional information via the report from the Communications & Community Engagement Officer regarding the development of an interactive town map.

Members were supportive of the project in principle and agreed that the Deputy Town Clerk should be authorised to progress the work over the summer. Whilst willing to host the map, Members considered that further information was required regarding its content and functionality and felt that West Oxfordshire District Council should meet any associated hosting costs.

Cllr D Enright did not participate in the vote on this item due to his late arrival during the discussion.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the principle of the Wayfinding Scheme be supported and,
2. That, the request for Witney Town Council to assume ownership and maintenance responsibility for the wayfinding assets be declined in its current form and,
3. That, the Council seek greater involvement in the design process and request further information regarding warranties, maintenance liabilities and gateway signage proposals and,
4. That, authority be delegated to the Deputy Town Clerk to progress the interactive map project, with West Oxfordshire District Council being requested to fund any associated hosting costs.

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

**Resolved**

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

371 **STANDING ORDERS - REVIEW**

The Council received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk regarding the annual review of the Council's Standing Orders that current stood adjourned.

Members raised no questions and were satisfied with the Standing Orders as presented.

The Deputy Town Clerk added that he had been notified that the National Association of Local Council had advised that a review of the model standing orders had been authorised and he would circulate the consultation to all Members for their individual responses.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Standing Orders as presented be approved and,
3. That, details of the NALC Model Standing Orders review and consultation be circulated.

372 **FINANCIAL REGULATIONS - REVIEW**

The Council received and considered the revised Financial Regulations together with a verbal explanation from the Responsible Financial Officer.

Members were advised that paragraph 4.8 had been amended to include reference to the relevant legislation in order to provide greater clarity.

Members were unanimously in agreement to approve.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the verbal update be noted and,
2. That, the Financial Regulations as presented be approved and adopted.

373 **CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Council received the report of the Mayor and Mayor's Secretary which highlighted the civic engagements of the Mayor and Deputy since the last meeting.

The Mayor expressed her thanks to former Mayor, Cllr A Bailey, for his service to the Council and the town during his Mayoral year. She also advised that she and the Deputy Mayor had enjoyed the start of their terms of office and looked forward to representing the Council at forthcoming engagements.

The Mayor took the opportunity to promote her forthcoming charity events scheduled for July and September and encouraged Members to support them where possible.

**Resolved:**

That, the report be noted.

374 **HEALTH & SAFETY**

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

Members heard an update on preparations for the implementation of Martyn's Law, with officers continuing to share knowledge and review procedures to ensure the Council complies with the new requirements. Updates were also provided on a range of Health & Safety matters, including water risk assessments and the recent RoSPA inspections of the skate park at The Leys.

**Resolved:**

That, the report be noted.

375 **VANDALISM & ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

The Council received the report of vandalism and anti-social behaviour incidents that had occurred since the last meeting.

The Committee Clerk provided a verbal update on a recent act of vandalism which had resulted in damage requiring repairs estimated at approximately £400. He also advised that further information would be obtained regarding an incident involving a swan and that the matter would be reported to Thames Valley Police as appropriate.

Members expressed their disappointment at the continued occurrence of such incidents and thanked officers for their ongoing efforts in responding to and recording issues as they arose.

**Resolved:**

That, the report and verbal update be noted.

376 **COMPLAINTS, FEEDBACK & INFORMATION GOVERNANCE**

The Council received the bi-annual report of the Deputy Town Clerk outlining complaints, comments and compliments received from November 2025 to July 2026.

Members noted the contents of the report and were pleased to see the continued positive feedback received in respect of Council services, facilities and events. The report provided assurance that complaints and comments received were being considered and addressed appropriately in accordance with the Council's adopted procedures.

No questions were raised by Members.

**Resolved:**

That, the report be noted.

377 **FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN OXFORDSHIRE**

The Council heard that there was no substantive update at the present time, although it was anticipated that an announcement from the Government on its preferred option would be made later that week. Following this, further consideration and discussion of the implications for Witney Town Council would take place.

**Resolved:**

That, the verbal update be noted.

378 **COMMUNICATION FROM THE LEADER**

The Leader advised Members of the forthcoming screening of the *National Emergency* film. She and the Chair of the Climate & Biodiversity Committee would be appearing on Witney Radio alongside a representative of the Witney Eco Forum to promote the event and the opportunity to discuss and raise awareness of environmental issues.

The Leader also updated Members on correspondence received from Witney Swifts cricket club regarding the continued delay to the delivery of the West Witney clubhouse project. Members heard that a meeting would be arranged between officers, Councillors and representatives of the Club to discuss the current position and identify how the Council may assist in supporting the project.

**Resolved:**

That, the Leader's update be noted.

379 **POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER NEWSLETTERS**

The Council received the April, May and June 2026 newsletters from the Thames Valley Police & Crime Commissioner.

**Resolved:**

That, the newsletters be noted.

380 **NALC LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME - SILVER AWARD**

The Council were pleased to acknowledge the successful attainment of the NALC Local Council Award Scheme Silver Award.

Members congratulated officers and staff on the achievement, recognising the significant work undertaken across the Council to meet the required standards. Thanks were expressed to all officers and staff for their contribution towards securing the award.

**Resolved:**

That, the Council's achievement of the NALC Local Council Award Scheme Silver Award be noted.

381 **MINISTRY OF HOUSING, COMMUNITIES & LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

The Council received a letter from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government in response to the Council's concerns about the financial pressures on parish and town councils, as previously agreed.

A Member sought clarification on the process for issuing the letter. The Leader confirmed that she had viewed a draft before it was submitted.

**Resolved:**

That, the correspondence be noted.

382 **REVIEW OF SPEED LIMITS ON OXFORDSHIRE RURAL A AND B CLASS ROAD NETWORK**

The Council received notification of Oxfordshire County Council's review of speed limits on the rural A and B class road network.

Members agreed that the consultation should be referred to the Planning & Development Committee for consideration and the preparation of a Council response. The Committee Clerk

would also circulate the consultation details to all Members to enable individual responses to be submitted if desired.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the consultation be referred to the Planning & Development Committee for consideration and response and,
2. That, details of the consultation be circulated to all Members for information.

*Cllr A Mubin left the meeting at 9:30pm rejoining at 9:34pm*

383 **QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

**Windrush Pavilion**

Cllr T Ashby asked that now that the electricity supply had been connected to the pavilion was there a timescale for the transfer of the facility into the ownership of Witney Town Council.

In response, the Leader advised that she was not aware of a date for the transfer and suggested that, in his capacity as a West Oxfordshire District Councillor, Cllr Ashby raise the matter directly with West Oxfordshire District Council officers.

**High Street/Market Square Works**

Cllr J Treloar raised concerns regarding the impact of the High Street and Market Square improvement works on local businesses. In particular, he highlighted the lack of signage advising visitors that businesses remained open and trading during the works.

Members shared these concerns and felt that greater efforts should be made to support town centre businesses throughout the construction period. It was unanimously agreed that the Leader write to Oxfordshire County Council and West Oxfordshire District Council on behalf of the Council, copying in the local bus company. It was not felt needed for the letter to be circulated for approval however the Leader confirmed that she would provide a copy of the letter to all Councillors once issued.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the Leader write to West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council on behalf of the Council, highlighting Members' concerns regarding the impact of the works on local businesses and requesting improved signage and promotion to make clear that businesses remain open and trading.
2. That, the question and response be noted.

*Cllr J Treloar left the meeting at 9:36pm.*

384 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

The Committee were given notice of the following signed documents, signed by the Deputy Mayor in the Mayor's absence.

| Date         | No. of Seal | Nature of Document                                                                                   |
|--------------|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 11 June 2026 | 100         | Lease of The Leys Recreation Ground Multi-Activity Hub Courtside CIC<br><b>In Duplicate</b>          |
| 11 June 2026 | 101         | Concession contract relating to The Leys Recreation Ground Multi-Activity Hub<br><b>In Duplicate</b> |
| 11 June 2026 | 102         | Parent Company Guarantee Courtside Hubs CIC<br><b>In Duplicate</b>                                   |

**Resolved:**

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

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The meeting closed at: 9.40 pm

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Chair

# Public Document Pack Agenda Item 8a

## **PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Held on Tuesday, 14 July 2026**

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

### **Present:**

Councillor G Doughty (Chair)

|              |                                            |                                                    |
|--------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Councillors: | J Aitman                                   | J Treloar                                          |
|              | G Meadows                                  | R Smith                                            |
|              | D Temple                                   |                                                    |
| Officers:    | Adam Clapton                               | Deputy Town Clerk                                  |
|              | Derek Mackenzie                            | Senior Administrative Officer &<br>Committee Clerk |
| Others:      | One member of the public.                  |                                                    |
|              | Two Officers of Oxfordshire county Council |                                                    |
|              | Councillor Rachel Crouch                   |                                                    |

### **P385 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

Cllr R Crouch attended as a non-Committee Member to represent residents in Witney South Ward on agenda item 9.

### **P386 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

### **P387 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

*The Committee adjourned for this item.*

The Committee received a presentation from the Oxfordshire County Council Senior Project Manager regarding agenda item 10. They heard about the proposed Electric Vehicle (EV) charging-only parking spaces scheme. Ms Figueredo provided additional background the project, outlined the future ambitions of the wider countywide programme, and gave further detail on the specific proposals for Church Green.

Members asked questions to gather further details ahead of a debate on the subject.

*The Committee reconvened.*

P388 **ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING PARKING SPACES**

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

The Committee had received a presentation from OCC regarding proposals for dedicated EV charging parking spaces at Church Green.

Members discussed the growth in EV ownership and agreed that charging infrastructure was needed for residents without off-street parking. However, Members noted concerns about the loss of parking spaces in an area that was heavily utilised particularly by Church Green permit-holders, the actual current need within this vicinity, but acknowledging that EV uptake was often dependent on charging infrastructure being available first.

Members had heard that the proposal could potentially be reduced from six spaces to four, although any further reduction would make the scheme financially unviable. Whilst recognising that the charging points would align with the Town Council's own environmental priorities and provide futureproofing for increased EV ownership, concerns remained regarding the impact on parking availability for non-electric vehicles, the effect on the character of Church Green, and potential mis use during school drop-off and pick-up periods so the Committee was therefore not supportive of the proposal.

The Committee expressed a preference for higher-powered charging facilities in more strategic locations and suggested that alternative sites identified by OCC should be considered ahead of Church Green. Members also recommended that all Town Councillors, local residents, and affected permit holders be encouraged to submit comments to OCC as part of the consultation process.

The Committee agreed the following response be submitted:

*Witney Town Council supports the principle of increasing access to electric vehicle charging infrastructure and recognises the important role such infrastructure will play in supporting the transition to lower-emission transport.*

*However, the Council **objects** to the current proposal for Church Green and requests that Oxfordshire County Council reconsider both the location and scale of the scheme.*

*The Council's principal concern is the loss of existing parking provision in an area that already experiences significant parking pressures. Church Green serves local residents, visitors to the church, users of nearby facilities and school-related traffic. The proposal would remove up to six spaces from general use and dedicate them exclusively to electric vehicle charging. The Council considers this a substantial loss of parking capacity in a location where parking is currently fully utilised throughout the day and where available spaces are already at a premium.*

*Members expressed particular concern regarding the impact on permit holders. The residents' parking scheme was introduced in Church Green and Corn Street to address longstanding parking issues experienced by local residents and to improve their ability to park close to their homes. The proposed conversion of six permit-holder spaces into EV-only bays would reduce the availability of parking for residents who do not own electric vehicles and may have no realistic prospect of doing so in the short term. Members were concerned that this could undermine some of the intended benefits of the recently introduced permit parking scheme.*

*The Council also questions whether the allocation of six dedicated EV charging bays is proportionate to current demand within the immediate area. Whilst future demand for EV charging may grow, Members considered there to be insufficient evidence that the removal of six valuable parking spaces is currently justified. If charging infrastructure is considered necessary in this location, a smaller number of bays may represent a more balanced and proportionate approach.*

*Members further expressed concern regarding the suitability of Church Green as a location. Church Green forms part of one of Witney's most historic and sensitive areas and makes an important contribution to the character and appearance of the town's conservation area. The Council believes particular care should be taken before introducing additional street furniture and associated infrastructure into this setting.*

*The Council also identified concerns regarding the practical enforcement of EV-only parking restrictions. Given the proximity of the church, local schools and other town-centre destinations, there is a risk that the bays may be occupied by vehicles that are not charging, whether for short stays or longer periods. This raises questions regarding the effectiveness of enforcement and the potential for conflict between residents, visitors and EV users.*

*The Council would therefore encourage Oxfordshire County Council to investigate alternative locations where EV charging infrastructure could be delivered with less impact on resident parking. Members noted that public car parks, charging hubs, or locations with lower existing parking demand may provide a more appropriate solution.*

*Should Oxfordshire County Council wish to proceed at Church Green, the Council would strongly encourage a reduction in the number of dedicated bays together with a comprehensive review period to assess actual demand and usage before any further expansion is considered.*

*For these reasons, Witney Town Council **objects** to the proposal in its current form.*

**Resolved:**

That, the agreed response be submitted.

*The member of the public left the meeting at 6:22pm  
The two non-councillors left the meeting at 6:34pm*

P389 **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The Committee received and considered a schedule of planning applications from West Oxfordshire District Council.

**Resolved:**

That, the comments, as per the attached schedule be forwarded to West Oxfordshire District Council.

P390 **APPLICATION FOR NEW PAVEMENT LICENCE - ROOTS & STONE, 53 HIGH STREET, WITNEY**

The Committee received and considered an application for a pavement licence for Roots & Stone, 53 High Street.

**Resolved:**

That, a No Objection response be forwarded to the licencing team at West Oxfordshire District Council.

**P391 APPLICATION FOR A NEW PREMISES LICENCE - 888 DRIP & VAPE, 62 CORN STREET, WITNEY**

The Committee received the application from 888 Drip & Vape, 62 Corn Street, Witney for a new premises licence.

*Witney Town Council objects to the application on the grounds that it does not adequately promote the licensing objective of the protection of children from harm under the Licensing Act 2003.*

*Whilst acknowledging that the sale of alcohol, vaping products and tobacco-related products is lawful, The Council has concerns regarding the proposed layout of the premises. Children visiting the shop to purchase everyday items such as confectionery, crisps and soft drinks would be required to pass displays of vaping products, smoking-related paraphernalia and, if this application is granted, alcohol. Locating alcohol alongside products that are commonly purchased by children would increase their exposure to age-restricted goods during routine visits to the premises.*

*The Council considers this level of visibility does not demonstrate sufficient regard for the protection of children from harm.*

*Witney Town Council therefore objects to the application and asks the Licensing Authority to encourage the applicant to consider reconfiguring the layout to provide a clearer separation between age-restricted products and goods primarily purchased by children.*

**Resolved:**

That, the Council submit the above response to this application.

**P392 NOTIFICATION OF PLANNING APPEAL 17 SPRINGFIELD OVAL, WITNEY - OUTBUILDING ONE**

The committee received details of an appeal that had been lodged against a planning enforcement notice for Outbuilding One at 17 Springfield Oval.

**Resolved:**

That, the appeal be noted.

**P393 NOTIFICATION OF PLANNING APPEAL 17 SPRINGFIELD OVAL, WITNEY - OUTBUILDING TWO**

The committee received details of an appeal that had been lodged against a planning enforcement notice for Outbuilding Two at 17 Springfield Oval.

**Resolved:**

That, the appeal be noted.

*Cllr D Temple left the meeting at 7:23pm having spoken in support of the decision made on the following item*

P394 **QUIET LANES**

The Committee received and considered the further information regarding the Oxfordshire County Council's Quiet Lanes Scheme following the submission of an expression of interest at the previous meeting; this being for a section of Station Lane to be considered as an experimental pilot area.

A Ward Member reported that they had met with residents to discuss the proposal. While residents welcomed the opportunity to consider measures to improve the area, they expressed the view that the proposed scheme would not achieve the outcomes they were seeking and were therefore not in support. Members also noted that the additional information provided indicated the pilot would extend beyond comparable schemes elsewhere by restricting access to all vehicles, giving rise to concerns regarding access for emergency services and residents.

Following discussion, Members unanimously agreed not to progress the expression of interest any further.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the correspondence be noted and,
2. That, Oxfordshire County Council be advised that the Council does not wish to proceed with the request.

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The meeting closed at: 7.25 pm

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Chair

Witney Town CouncilPlanning Minutes - 14 July 2026

389

389- 1    26/077

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|        |                   |                                                                                                                                    |                  |            |
|--------|-------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------|
| 389- 2 | 26/078            | Plot Ref :-26/01287/FUL                                                                                                            | Type :-          | FULL       |
|        | Applicant Name :- |                                                                                                                                    | Date Received :- | 15/06/2026 |
|        | Location :-       | 10 Tungsten Park<br>OX29 0AX                                                                                                       | Date Returned :- | 15/07/2026 |
|        | Proposal :        | Erection of an external remote cooling plant enclosure to accompany the installation of an internal tornado environmental chamber. |                  |            |
|        | Observations :    | Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.                                                                  |                  |            |

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389- 3 26/079 Plot Ref :-26/01398/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE  
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 15/06/2026  
Location :- 8 Birdlip Close Date Returned :- 15/07/2026  
OX28 5GE  
Proposal : Conversion of garage to additional living space, and associated works

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

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389- 4 26/080 Plot Ref :-26/01271/ADV Type :- ADVERTISIN  
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 16/06/2026  
Location :- 11 Market Square Date Returned :- 15/07/2026  
OX28 6AB  
Proposal : Erection of non illuminated fascia signage and one hanging sign

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

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389- 5 26/081 Plot Ref :-26/01487/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE  
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 22/06/2026  
Location :- 1 Robinson Lane Date Returned :- 15/07/2026  
OX29 7AQ  
Proposal : Erection of a single storey side extension, loft conversion with insertion of windows in gables, and associated works

Observations : While Witney Town Council does not object to this application in terms of material concerns, it notes the loss of permeable drainage and would ask that mitigating measures are considered to help decrease the possibility of surface water flooding in this area, in accordance with policy EH7 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.

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389- 6 26/082 Plot Ref :-26/01437/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE  
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 23/06/2026  
Location :- 15 Church Green Date Returned :- 15/07/2026  
OX28 4AZ  
Proposal : Installation of solar panels on first floor roof.

Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application. They welcome the proposed rood mounted solar panels which will contribute towards reducing carbon emissions and improving the energy efficiency of the property aligning with Policy CO17 (Energy Efficiency) of the WODC Local Plan 2031.

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389- 7 26/083 Plot Ref :-26/01440/LBC Type :- LISTED BUI  
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 23/06/2026  
Location :- 15 Church Green Date Returned :- 15/07/2026  
Proposal : Internal and external works to install solar panels on first floor roof.

Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application. They welcome the proposed rood mounted solar panels which will contribute towards reducing carbon emissions and improving the energy efficiency of the property aligning with Policy CO17 (Energy Efficiency) of the WODC Local Plan 2031.

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389- 11 26/087

Plot Ref :-26/01556/LBC

Type :- LISTED BUI

Applicant Name :- .

Date Received :- 06/07/2026

Location :- 28 Lyneham Close  
OX28 5BS

Date Returned :- 15/07/2026

Proposal : | Internal and external alterations to convert storage area of loft to create second floor bathroom, including insertion of two rooflights in side (East) elevation, raise ceiling in main area of the loft to increase head height in existing bedroom together with changes to layout to form dressing area, and replacement of timber windows in existing rear dormers. Associated works.

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

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The Meeting closed at : 7:25pm

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman Date: \_\_\_\_\_

On behalf of :- Witney Town Council

## **PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Held on Tuesday, 4 August 2026**

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

### **Present:**

Councillor G Doughty (Chair)

|              |                                       |                                                                                                       |
|--------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Councillors: | J Aitman<br>G Meadows                 | J Doughty (In place of R Smith)                                                                       |
| Officers:    | Derek Mackenzie<br>Janine Sparrowhawk | Senior Administrative Officer &<br>Committee Clerk<br>Administration Asst - Communities &<br>Planning |
| Others:      | None.                                 |                                                                                                       |

### **P395 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor R Smith, Councillor J Doughty attended as a substitute.

### **P396 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor J Aitman declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in Planning Application 26/01592/FUL owing to being a resident of Eton Close.

### **P397 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

### **P398 PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The Committee received and considered a schedule of planning applications from West Oxfordshire District Council.

### **Resolved:**

That, the comments, as per the attached schedule be forwarded to West Oxfordshire District Council.

P399 **APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL OF PAVEMENT LICENCE - YE OLDE CROSS KEYS, MARKET SQUARE, WITNEY**

The Committee received and considered an application for a pavement licence for Ye Olde Cross Keys, Market Square, Witney.

**Resolved:**

That, a no objection response be forwarded to the licencing team at West Oxfordshire District Council.

P400 **REVIEW OF RURAL SPEED LIMITS**

Following deferment from the meeting of the Council (Minute FC382 13.07.2026 relates) the Committee considered the correspondence received from Oxfordshire County Council regarding a consultation of proposed rural speed limit changes.

Members generally supported the proposals, noting that the recommendations appeared proportionate and aimed at improving road safety.

The Committee was in unanimous agreement that the following submission be entered.

*Witney Town Council supports the proposed scheme and welcomes measures that improve road safety for all users. The Council is particularly supportive of changes to speed limits where they will help reduce the risk of collisions and create safer conditions for all road users.*

*The Council also recognises the wider benefits that appropriately managed speed limits can bring, including improvements to the local environment through reduced noise and emissions, and enhanced quality of life for residents.*

*Overall, Witney Town Council welcomes the review and supports proposals that contribute to making Oxfordshire's roads safer.*

**Resolved:**

That, the above response be submitted to the Vision Zero team at Oxfordshire County Council.

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The meeting closed at: 6.34 pm

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Chair



|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                         |                  |            |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|------------|
| 398- 3 | 26/091                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Plot Ref :-26/01666/S73 | Type :-          | VARIATION  |
|        | Applicant Name :- .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                         | Date Received :- | 15/07/2026 |
|        | Location :- 2 Willowbank                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                         | Date Returned :- | 05/08/2026 |
|        | Proposal : Variation of condition 2 of Planning Permission 26/00757/HHD to allow clear glass in place of approved frosted glass in side elevation windows.                                                                                                                                                                                                |                         |                  |            |
|        | Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                         |                  |            |
|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                         |                  |            |
| 398- 4 | 26/092                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Plot Ref :-26/01026/HHD | Type :-          | HOUSEHOLDE |
|        | Applicant Name :- .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                         | Date Received :- | 17/07/2026 |
|        | Location :- 62 Burwell Meadow<br>OX28 5JQ                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                         | Date Returned :- | 05/08/2026 |
|        | Proposal : Erection of single storey rear extension to replace conservatory & erection of single storey extension to the rear of the garage (amended description)                                                                                                                                                                                         |                         |                  |            |
|        | Observations : While Witney Town Council does not object to this application in terms of material concerns, it notes the loss of permeable drainage and would ask that mitigating measures are considered to help decrease the possibility of surface water flooding in this area, in accordance with policy EH7 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031. |                         |                  |            |
|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                         |                  |            |
| 398- 5 | 26/093                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Plot Ref :-26/01682/HHD | Type :-          | HOUSEHOLDE |
|        | Applicant Name :- .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                         | Date Received :- | 20/07/2026 |
|        | Location :- 38 Mary Ellis Way                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                         | Date Returned :- | 05/08/2026 |
|        | Proposal : Erection of a single storey rear extension                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                         |                  |            |
|        | Observations : While Witney Town Council does not object to this application in terms of material concerns, it notes the loss of permeable drainage and would ask that mitigating measures are considered to help decrease the possibility of surface water flooding in this area, in accordance with policy EH7 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031. |                         |                  |            |
|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                         |                  |            |
| 398- 6 | 26/094                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Plot Ref :-26/01680/S73 | Type :-          | VARIATION  |
|        | Applicant Name :- .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                         | Date Received :- | 22/07/2026 |
|        | Location :- 8 Stanway Close<br>OX28 5GA                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                         | Date Returned :- | 05/08/2026 |
|        | Proposal : Variation of conditions 2 and 3 of planning permission 19/02762/HHD to allow alterations to the rear dormers and replacement of the front dormers with rooflights                                                                                                                                                                              |                         |                  |            |
|        | Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                         |                  |            |
|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                         |                  |            |
| 398- 7 | 26/095                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Plot Ref :-26/01592/FUL | Type :-          | FULL       |
|        | Applicant Name :- .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                         | Date Received :- | 22/07/2026 |
|        | Location :- 80 Eton Close<br>OX28 3GB                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |                         | Date Returned :- | 05/08/2026 |
|        | Proposal : Change of use of land to enlarge domestic garden and erection of boundary fencing and gate. (Retrospective).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                         |                  |            |
|        | Observations : Witney Town Council objects to this application.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                         |                  |            |

Members are concerned that the proposal would result in the narrowing and increased restriction of an existing route used by pedestrians, cyclists and mobility scooter users, to the detriment of accessibility and active travel within the locality. The Council considers the retention of safe and convenient routes for non-motorised users to be an important consideration and is concerned that the proposal would diminish this.

Members are also concerned that approval of this application could set an undesirable precedent for similar proposals in the surrounding area, leading to the gradual erosion of these routes and the openness they contribute to the street scene.

The Council notes that the applicant declares that they own the land in question and acknowledges that, should this be confirmed and no public access rights be affected, this will be a matter for the Local Planning Authority to consider. However, Members consider that land ownership does not outweigh the planning concerns arising from the proposal.

Accordingly, Witney Town Council maintains its objection on the grounds of the impact on pedestrians, cyclists and mobility scooter users, together with the precedent that approval may establish within the locality.

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|        |                                                                                  |                         |                  |            |
|--------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|------------|
| 398- 8 | 26/096                                                                           | Plot Ref :-26/01696/HHD | Type :-          | HOUSEHOLDE |
|        | Applicant Name :- .                                                              |                         | Date Received :- | 22/07/2026 |
|        | Location :- 27 South Lawn                                                        |                         | Date Returned :- | 05/08/2026 |
|        | Proposal : Conversion of existing garage to create additional living space.      |                         |                  |            |
|        | Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application. |                         |                  |            |

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|        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                         |                  |            |
|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|------------|
| 398- 9 | 26/097                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Plot Ref :-26/01736/HHD | Type :-          | HOUSEHOLDE |
|        | Applicant Name :- .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                         | Date Received :- | 24/07/2026 |
|        | Location :- 44 Ducklington Lane<br>OX28 5JA                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                         | Date Returned :- | 05/08/2026 |
|        | Proposal : Erection of a two storey side extension to replace garage, erection of single storey rear and front extensions, and associated works                                                                                                                                                                                                           |                         |                  |            |
|        | Observations : While Witney Town Council does not object to this application in terms of material concerns, it notes the loss of permeable drainage and would ask that mitigating measures are considered to help decrease the possibility of surface water flooding in this area, in accordance with policy EH7 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031. |                         |                  |            |

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|         |                                                                                              |                         |                  |            |
|---------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------|------------|
| 398- 10 | 26/098                                                                                       | Plot Ref :-26/01621/LBC | Type :-          | LISTED BUI |
|         | Applicant Name :- .                                                                          |                         | Date Received :- | 24/07/2026 |
|         | Location :- Blanket Hall<br>100 High Street<br>OX28 6HL                                      |                         | Date Returned :- | 05/08/2026 |
|         | Proposal : External works to include repairs to the Bellcote on the roof of the Blanket Hall |                         |                  |            |
|         | Observations : Witney Town Council has no objection to this application.                     |                         |                  |            |

Members welcome the proposed repairs to the Bellcote and support the continued conservation and protection of this important heritage asset. The Council is particularly pleased to note the intention to retain the known graffiti-marked lead sections and preserve them for heritage and educational purposes

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |        |                             |         |            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----------------------------|---------|------------|
| 398- 11                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | 26/099 | Plot Ref :-26/01565/ADV     | Type :- | ADVERTISIN |
| Applicant Name :- .                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |        | Date Received :- 28/07/2026 |         |            |
| Location :- 52 High Street                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |        | Date Returned :- 05/08/2026 |         |            |
| <p>Proposal : Installation of externally illuminated fascia sign together with window graphics, applied internally and externally to existing glazing and non-illuminated signage and two internal poster frames to front elevation.</p>                                           |        |                             |         |            |
| <p>Observations : Witney Town Council has no objection to this application.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                    |        |                             |         |            |
| <p>Members welcome the amendments made by the applicant in response to comments raised during the previous application process and are pleased to note that the revised signage proposals have taken account of the recommendations of the Conservation and Planning Officers.</p> |        |                             |         |            |
| <p>The resulting scheme represents a more sympathetic approach to the character and appearance of the building and its setting and is considered to integrate more appropriately within the surrounding streetscape.</p>                                                           |        |                             |         |            |

|         |                   |                                                                                           |                  |            |
|---------|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------|
| 398- 12 | 26/100            | Plot Ref :-26/01684/FUL                                                                   | Type :-          | FULL       |
|         | Applicant Name :- |                                                                                           | Date Received :- | 28/07/2026 |
|         | Location :-       | 1 Weavers Bridge House<br>OX28 1YG                                                        | Date Returned :- | 05/08/2026 |
|         | Proposal :        | Change of use of commercial area of existing live/work unit to create an additional flat. |                  |            |
|         | Observations :    | Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.                         |                  |            |

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

On behalf of :-                      Witney Town Council

## **PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Held on Tuesday, 25 August 2026**

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

### **Present:**

Councillor G Doughty (Chair)

|              |                    |                                                    |
|--------------|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Councillors: | J Aitman           | J Treloar                                          |
|              | G Meadows          | J Doughty (In place of D Temple)                   |
| Officers:    | Adam Clapton       | Deputy Town Clerk                                  |
|              | Derek Mackenzie    | Senior Administrative Officer &<br>Committee Clerk |
|              | Janine Sparrowhawk | Administration Asst - Communities &<br>Planning    |
| Others:      | None.              |                                                    |

### **P401 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence was received from Councillors R Smith & D Temple, Councillor J Doughty attended as a substitute for the latter.

### **P402 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

Later in the meeting when consideration was given to application 26/02042/LBC – 6 Station Lane, Witney Cllr G Meadows declared a non-pecuniary interest due to her position as an appointed trustee of the applicant, Witney Town Charity.

### **P403 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

### **P404 PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The Committee received and considered a schedule of planning applications from West Oxfordshire District Council.

### **Resolved:**

That, the comments, as per the attached schedule be forwarded to West Oxfordshire District Council.

P405 **WITNEY TRAFFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The Committee received the minutes of the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee held on 30 June 2026

**Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee held on 30 June 2026 be noted.

P406 **APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL OF PAVEMENT LICENCE - PART & PARCEL, 2-4 MARKET SQUARE, WITNEY**

The Committee noted the Pavement Licence Application for Part & Parcel, 2-4 Market Square under the Business and Planning Act 2020.

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

**Resolved:**

That, a no objection response was forwarded to the licencing team at West Oxfordshire District Council on 17 August 2026.

P407 **APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL OF PAVEMENT LICENCE - GAIL'S, 17 MARKET SQUARE, WITNEY**

The Committee noted the Pavement Licence Application for Gail's, 17 Market Square under the Business and Planning Act 2020.

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

A Member noted an apparent discrepancy in the operating hours stated within the application, which referred to Monday to Sunday, 07:00 to 09:00 hours. Officers advised that this had been queried with the Licensing Authority, which confirmed that the application sought permission for trading between 07:00 and 19:00 hours, seven days a week.

**Resolved:**

That, a no objection response was forwarded to the licencing team at West Oxfordshire District Council on 21 August 2026.

P408 **WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL - LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (LDS) UPDATE JULY 2026**

The Committee received the update from West Oxfordshire District Council regarding the Local Development Scheme (LDS).

In response to a question regarding the receipt of any Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding, it was confirmed that no such funding had been received by the Town Council.

The Committee noted that the report was provided for information and outlined the anticipated timetable for the progression of the Local Plan. Members were advised that a further

consultation on the emerging Local Plan 2043 was expected imminently, although publication had been delayed from the previously anticipated June date and was now indicated for August 2026. Any further consultation would be brought before the Committee at a future meeting for consideration.

The Committee considered whether a response to the Local Development Scheme update was required and agreed that no formal response was necessary at this stage.

**Resolved:**

That the update be noted.

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The meeting closed at: 6.18 pm

---

Chair





404- 10 26/110 Plot Ref :-26/01733/LBC Type :- LISTED BUI  
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 14/08/2026  
Location :- Almshouses 5-15 Newland Date Returned :- 26/08/2026  
Proposal : Internal and external alterations to include erection of rear first floor dormer window extensions to each cottage to provide additional living space, alterations to the rear roof, and alterations to internal layout. Rebuilding of the front boundary wall.  
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objection to this application. Members welcome the additional living space to these Almshouses.

---

404- 11 26/111 Plot Ref :-26/01864/S73 Type :- HOUSEHOLDE  
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 17/08/2026  
Location :- Scrap Yard, Rear of 58 West End Witney Date Returned :- 26/08/2026  
Proposal : Conversion of existing building to create 3 no dwelling houses together with alterations and associated works including formation of parking and private gardens. Non-compliance with conditions 8, 9 & 10 of 25/02265/FUL to allow some alterations to convert the building to commence without the required details to be submitted and approved by the Local Planning Authority (retrospective).  
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objection to this application.

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The Meeting closed at : 6:18pm

Signed : \_\_\_\_\_ Chairman Date: \_\_\_\_\_

On behalf of :- Witney Town Council

## **PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Held on Tuesday, 15 September 2026**

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

### **Present:**

Councillor G Doughty (Chair)

|              |                                                       |                                                                                                                            |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Councillors: | J Aitman<br>D Temple                                  | J Treloar<br>R Smith                                                                                                       |
| Officers:    | Adam Clapton<br>Derek Mackenzie<br>Janine Sparrowhawk | Deputy Town Clerk<br>Senior Administrative Officer &<br>Committee Clerk<br>Administration Asst - Communities &<br>Planning |
| Others:      | None.                                                 |                                                                                                                            |

### **P440 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

### **P441 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

### **P442 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

*Cllr D Temple joined the meeting at 6:07pm from Application number 26/01995/LBC*

### **P443 PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The Committee received and considered a schedule of planning applications from West Oxfordshire District Council.

#### **Resolved:**

That, the comments, as per the attached schedule be forwarded to West Oxfordshire District Council.

### **P444 NOTIFICATION OF PLANNING APPEAL - 2 VINER CLOSE, WITNEY**

The Committee received notification of Planning Appeal 26/00025/APPEAL in respect of 2 Viner Close, Witney.

**Resolved:**

That the notification of the Planning Appeal be noted.

**P445 APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL OF PAVEMENT LICENCE - HUFFKINS, 35 HIGH STREET**

The Committee received and considered an application for a pavement licence for Huffkins, 35 High Street, Witney.

**Resolved:**

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

**P446 OCC CONSULTATION - WITAN WAY ZEBRA CROSSING**

The Committee received details of a consultation from Oxfordshire County Council concerning the installation of a Zebra Crossing at Witan Way.

Members strongly welcomed the proposed zebra crossing, highlighting longstanding road safety concerns at the location, particularly for schoolchildren, pedestrians and users travelling between Station Lane and surrounding residential and commercial areas.

The following response was agreed:

*Witney Town Council strongly supports the proposed zebra crossing and welcomes its installation. Members consider this to be a long-awaited improvement that will provide a safer and more convenient crossing point for pedestrians.*

*The Members believe the proposal will significantly enhance road safety by improving pedestrian visibility and providing a dedicated crossing point at a location with high levels of pedestrian movement. Members particularly welcome the crossing's proximity to the nearby supermarket, business premises and industrial units, which generate regular pedestrian activity throughout the day.*

*The crossing will improve access for employees, customers, residents, schoolchildren, older people and those with mobility impairments, making it easier and safer to travel between these destinations on foot. Members also consider that the scheme will encourage active travel and support sustainable transport options within the town.*

*Overall, Witney Town Council fully supports the proposal and welcomes its implementation as a positive and much needed measure to improve pedestrian safety, accessibility and connectivity for all road users.*

**Resolved:**

That, the above response be submitted to Oxfordshire Country Council for consideration.

*Cllr D Temple left the meeting at 6:22pm*

P447 **WEST OXFORDSHIRE DRAFT LOCAL PLAN 2043**

Members received notification of consultation on the draft Local Plan 2043 and noted that a formal response was required by 9 October 2026.

Discussion included the supporting Infrastructure Delivery Plan and whether sufficient infrastructure detail was available to inform consideration of the draft Plan. A Member highlighted the importance of ensuring that proposals relating to youth provision and enhanced sport and leisure facilities were appropriately reflected within the Witney-specific sections of the Plan.

Concerns were raised regarding terminology used within the draft document, including references to a "Northern Distributor Road", and it was considered important that such infrastructure terminology is clearly defined. Members further discussed the strategic transport requirements associated with future growth and expressed the view that, should a second river crossing not be delivered, there were questions as to whether elements of the Plan could be considered sound, noting that soundness was a key consideration identified within the District Council's consultation guidance.

It was agreed that Members would review the draft Plan in detail ahead of the Committee's next meeting on 6 October 2026, when a formal response would be formulated. The Committee Clerk invited Members to submit comments and observations to officers in advance of that meeting to enable a robust draft response to be prepared for consideration by the Committee.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the Committee welcomes the receipt of the draft West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043 and;
2. That, Members review the details of the plan and;
3. That, the Committee formulate their response to the consultation at its meeting on 6 October 2026.

P448 **MINOR VARIATION - NEWSLINK, CORN STREET, WITNEY**

At the express permission of the Chair, and given the short statutory timescale for Witney Town Council to respond, the Committee received the Application for Minor Variation from NewsLink, Corn Street, Witney under the Licensing Act 2003.

Members concluded that the changes appeared minor in nature. No concerns were raised regarding the licensing objectives.

Members did, however, note that the submitted licence plan appeared not to include certain storage areas and ask that Officers query whether any alcohol storage associated with the premises should be reflected within the licensed area.

**Resolved:**

That, a no objection response be forwarded to the licensing team at West Oxfordshire District Council.

---

The meeting closed at: 6.41 pm

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Chair



Observations : Witney Town Council has no objection to this application.

|        |                   |                                                                                                                                           |                  |                 |
|--------|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 443- 7 | 26/118            | Plot Ref :-26/02042/LBC                                                                                                                   | Type :-          | LISTED BUILDING |
|        | Applicant Name :- |                                                                                                                                           | Date Received :- | 01/09/2026      |
|        | Location :-       | 6 Station Lane<br>Witney                                                                                                                  | Date Returned :- | 16/09/2026      |
|        | Proposal :        | Internal alterations to install a toilet into first floor bedroom                                                                         |                  |                 |
|        | Observations :    | Witney Town Council has no objection to this application. Members welcome the improvements to the living accommodation of this Almshouse. |                  |                 |

|        |                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                  |            |
|--------|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|------------|
| 443- 8 | 26/119            | Plot Ref :-26/00776/S73                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Type :-          | VARIATION  |
|        | Applicant Name :- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Date Received :- | 07/09/2026 |
|        | Location :-       | Scrap Yard Rear of 58 West End<br>West End<br>Witney                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Date Returned :- | 21/09/2026 |
|        | Proposal :        | Variation of conditions 1, 6 (cycle parking details), 17 (drainage) and 18 (surface water drainage scheme) of planning permission 26/00478/S73 to allow changes to internal layout (Plots 1 - 5), reconfiguration of garden boundaries (Plots 6 - 9) and changes to parking layout. External alterations to windows, doors and external amenity space of plot 5 (amended description and plans) |                  |            |
|        | Observations :    | Witney Town Council has no objection to this application.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                  |            |

On behalf of :- Witney Town Council

**PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE  
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Held on Tuesday, 6 October 2026**

**At 6.20 pm in the Virtual Meeting via MS Teams - Virtual Meeting**

**Present:**

Councillor G Doughty (Chair)

|              |                                                       |                                                                                                                            |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Councillors: | J Aitman                                              | R Smith                                                                                                                    |
| Officers:    | Adam Clapton<br>Derek Mackenzie<br>Janine Sparrowhawk | Deputy Town Clerk<br>Senior Administrative Officer &<br>Committee Clerk<br>Administration Asst - Communities &<br>Planning |
| Others:      | Councillor Owen Collins<br>Councillor Duncan Enright  |                                                                                                                            |

The Chair advised that the meeting was inquorate, as insufficient Members were physically present to satisfy the quorum requirements for a full meeting of the Committee under the Council's Standing Orders. Whilst two Members attended remotely, bringing the total attendance to the number required, remote attendance could not be counted towards the quorum when making formal resolutions in accordance with relevant legislation.

In view of the statutory consultation deadlines applicable to the planning applications, those present agreed to proceed in an advisory capacity only, consistent with the arrangements adopted for other virtual meetings of the Committee. Any comments or recommendations arising from the discussions would be referred to the next quorate in-person meeting of the Committee for ratification. The advisory minutes and consultation responses submitted on behalf of the Council would also be reported to Full Council for information.

**P490 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor G Meadows.

**P491 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors J Aitman, O Collins, D Enright and R Smith declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in Planning Application 26/02206/HHD due to knowing the applicant.

Councillor D Enright further declared that he undertook work with The Community Communication Partnership (CCP). In this role Councillor Enright noted that he did not undertake any work in Oxfordshire and would declare any direct conflict should they arise.

There were no other declarations from Members.

P492 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Committee meetings held on 23 June, 14 July, 4 & 25 August and 15 September were not considered due to the meeting being inquorate.

**Recommended:**

That, the minutes of the Committee meetings held on 23 June, 14 July, 4 & 25 August and 15 September be presented to the meeting of the Committee on 17 November.

P493 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

P494 **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The Committee received and considered a schedule of planning applications from West Oxfordshire District Council.

**Recommended:**

That, the comments, as per the attached schedule be forwarded to West Oxfordshire District Council.

P495 **PLANNING DECISIONS**

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

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

**Recommended:**

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

P496 **NOTIFICATION OF PLANNING APPEAL - 5A WEST END, WITNEY**

The Committee received notification of Planning Appeal 26/00028/APPEAL in respect of 5a West End, Witney

**Resolved:**

That, the Planning Appeal be noted.

P497 **OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION - SPRING MEADOW PROPOSED ONE-WAY TRAFFIC RESTRICTION**

The Committee considered proposals to formalise a one-way traffic arrangement at Spring Meadow, Witney.

Members agreed that the proposal reflected the established use of the estate and would improve road safety. The Committee expressed support for the formalisation and welcomed the consultation exercise.

The following submission was agreed.

*Witney Town Council support the formalisation of the One-Way Traffic Restriction. Members welcome the proposal, recognising that it will formalise the traffic flow arrangements within the residential development and help to provide a clearer and safer environment for residents, pedestrians, cyclists and motorists. The Council supports measures that contribute to improved road safety and the efficient movement of traffic within the development.*

**Recommended:**

That, the above submission be made to support the one-way traffic restriction at Spring Meadows.

P498 **WEST OXFORDSHIRE DRAFT LOCAL PLAN 2043**

The Committee discussed the Town Council's response to the draft Local Plan 2043, noting this was the last opportunity to provide comments.

Members highlighted a number of key issues that should be reflected in the Council's response, including:

- Increased provision of youth facilities and services.
- Allotments and additional allotment provision to meet growing demand.
- Clear definition and specification of strategic transport infrastructure, including the Northern Distributor Road and West End Link Road.
- Delivery of the West End Link Road alongside, or in advance of, future growth.
- Additional sports, leisure and community facilities, including a replacement leisure centre, football pitches and other outdoor sports provision.
- Appropriate healthcare infrastructure and primary care capacity to support future population growth.
- Reference to the Council's Infrastructure Funding Statement as a supporting evidence base.
- Protection and safeguarding of land and opportunities associated with future rail connectivity.
- Greater emphasis on public art, culture and heritage.
- Recognition of public houses and similar venues as important community assets contributing to community wellbeing and social cohesion.
- Sustainable drainage measures, rain gardens, green canopies, tree planting and wider flood mitigation measures.
- Improved arts, exhibition and community spaces.
- Support for the vitality and viability of Witney town centre through cultural, community and public spaces.
- Ensuring that infrastructure and community facilities are planned and delivered alongside development so that growth is supported by the necessary services and amenities.

**Recommended:**

1. That, Officers prepare a draft consultation response reflecting the comments made by the Committee, and circulate it to the Chair and Leader prior to submission and;  
That, the agreed consultation response be submitted to WODC and presented to Full Council on 12 October 2026 for noting.

P499 **WING - WEST END LINK ROAD**

The Committee received an update from both the Chair and Leader of the Council regarding concerns raised by the Witney Infrastructure Neighbourhood Group (WING) in relation to the North Witney development proposals; this being Oxfordshire County Council's stance on the omission of the West End Link Road and the adequacy of the proposed Northern Distributor Road.

Members expressed support for the approach being taken by WING and agreed that their concerns aligned with those of Witney Town Council regarding future infrastructure provision.

It was unanimously agreed that a letter of support be submitted highlighting the need for the West End Link Road and greater designation of the Northern Distributor Road.

The Committee also received an update from the Committee Clerk regarding a proposed councillor briefing with Oxfordshire County Council on the West End Link Road and noted that the date would be circulated to members.

**Recommended:**

That, a letter of support be prepared, following ratification by Full Council.

P500 **INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT**

The Committee considered the draft Infrastructure Funding Statement and welcomed the work undertaken by officers in preparing the document.

Members agreed that it provided a comprehensive basis for future Section 106 and infrastructure funding requests and discussed a number of potential refinements. These included strengthening references to youth provision and the development of youth hubs, recognising the aspiration for a running track within the town, retaining support for basketball and other multi-use games facilities, and reflecting the need for ongoing improvements to cemetery buildings and infrastructure.

Officers emphasised the importance of retaining sufficient flexibility within project descriptions to ensure the Council was well positioned to maximise future funding opportunities as priorities and funding streams evolve.

**Recommended:**

1. That the draft Infrastructure Funding Statement be approved in principle, subject to further officer refinement and the completion of estimated funding figures,
2. That, the document remains under review with referral to Full Council for wider member consideration.

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The meeting closed at: 7.09 pm

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Chair

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

**Held on Monday, 7 September 2026**

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

**Present:**

Councillor J Aitman (Chair)

|              |                  |                                                    |
|--------------|------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Councillors: | S Simpson        | D Temple                                           |
|              | J Treloar        | R Smith                                            |
|              | R Crouch         | T Ashby (In place of J Doughty)                    |
|              | D Edwards-Hughes |                                                    |
| Officers:    | Adam Clapton     | Deputy Town Clerk                                  |
|              | Derek Mackenzie  | Senior Administrative Officer &<br>Committee Clerk |
|              | Nicholas Brown   | Operations Manager                                 |
|              | Mark Lewis       | Head of Estates & Operations                       |
|              | Nigel Warner     | Responsible Financial Officer                      |
|              | Adam Cook        | Project Officer                                    |
| Others:      | None.            |                                                    |

**PR409 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor J Doughty. Councillor T Ashby attended as substitute.

**PR410 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

**PR411 MINUTES**

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2026.

**Resolved:**

That the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 1 June 2026 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair

**PR412 PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC**

There was no public participation.

**PR413 FINANCE REPORT**

The Committee received the report and verbal update of the Responsible Financial Officer concerning the financial position of items under the remit of the Committee for the period 1 April 2026 to 31 July 2026.

Members were advised that the accounts represented the first four months of the financial year and that expenditure remained broadly in line with expectations. It was noted that some expenditure and income patterns reflected the seasonal nature of Council facilities and activities.

Discussion took place regarding the operation of the Splash Park following the introduction of extended opening hours during the summer season. Members heard that usage levels remained positive and that expenditure was anticipated to remain within the approved budget. A Member requested that the amended operating hours be maintained and therefore considered as such in the 2027/28 budget setting process.

In considering future budget requirements, Members were referred by the Deputy Town Clerk to comments received through the Council's Annual Residents Survey, which had identified requests for additional benches, bins and play equipment across recreation and play areas. Particular reference was made to requests for picnic benches at Raleigh Crescent Play Area and potential improvements to recreational facilities at West Witney.

A Member also raised a request received from a constituent regarding the possible installation of a stair rail feature at the skate park. Officers agreed to investigate the feasibility and likely cost of such a facility and report back to a future meeting.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report be noted; and
2. That, the management accounts of for the period 1 April 2026 to 31 July 2026 be approved.
3. That, Officers prepare estimates for revenue, capital and special revenue projects identified by Members for consideration during the 2027/28 budget-setting process.

**PR414 SPORTS PITCHES**

The Committee received the report of the Operations Manager who was introduced to Members ahead of the item. His report concerned sports pitches and associated facilities.

Members heard that the cricket season had concluded and the football season had commenced successfully, with 18 matches having been played across the Council's pitches during the opening weekend. Positive feedback had been received from clubs, particularly regarding pitch quality and communication with Officers. The Committee congratulated Officers on the successful start to the football season practically following such a dry summer period.

The Committee received the notes of the Football Season Meeting held on 18 August 2026. Members who had attended the meeting confirmed that it had been a positive and successful engagement with local clubs, providing a valuable opportunity to discuss facilities, future developments and operational matters.

The Committee received an update on the future of the cricket square at The Leys. Members noted that despite repeated efforts over a number of years to secure cricket use of the facility, no organisation had expressed a formal commitment to utilise the square. Concerns had also been raised regarding the suitability of the location given the increasing recreational use of the surrounding area and the associated health and safety considerations.

During discussion, Members reflected on the historic purpose of The Leys as land provided for sport and recreation following the First World War, with the intention of promoting health, wellbeing and physical activity within the town. It was noted that the Council, as custodian of the land, should seek to maximise its recreational use for the benefit of the community in whichever way was best.

It was further noted that a final expression of interest process remained underway, with a deadline of 30 September 2026 for any organisation wishing to utilise the cricket square. Members considered whether a decision on the future of the facility should be delegated to Officers following the expiry of that deadline. Following debate, a proposal was made that, subject to no suitable expression of interest being received, Officers be authorised to discontinue the cricket square and reconfigure the area for football and wider recreational use.

Upon being put to the vote, the proposal was carried. The vote being:

|            |       |
|------------|-------|
| For        | Seven |
| Against    | Nil   |
| Abstention | One   |

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report and updates be noted.
2. That, subject to no suitable expression of interest being received by 30 September 2026, Officers be authorised to discontinue the cricket square at The Leys and reconfigure the area for football and wider recreational use.

**PR415 WEST WITNEY PROJECTS**

The Committee received the report of the Project Officer concerning the West Witney Projects.

Members were advised that progress had been made regarding the installation of the new electricity supply serving both the clubhouse and depot. Additionally, they heard that following discussions with relevant stakeholders, a trenching solution had now been agreed, providing a more practical and cost-effective route to completion.

The Committee also received an update regarding contractor performance and noted that officers had reviewed the contractual obligations and that they continued to work closely with clubs and user groups to minimise disruption arising from ongoing delays.

Members commended Officers for their continued management of the project and stakeholder engagement.

**Resolved:**

That the update be noted.

*Cllr J Treloar left the meeting at 6:38pm*

**PR416 RALEGH CRESCENT MUGA/MUSA**

The Committee received a verbal update from the Project Officer regarding the Raleigh Crescent MUGA/MUSA project.

Members were advised that procurement issues affecting progress by West Oxfordshire District Council had now been resolved and that additional resources had been allocated by WODC to progress the tender process. Regular meetings had been established to expedite the project.

Although not related to this project, Members welcomed the completion of a path at King George V recreation ground which had been recently completed by Oxfordshire County Council.

**Resolved:**

That the update be noted.

*Cllr J Treloar rejoined the meeting at 6:43pm*

**PR417 EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC**

**Resolved:**

That, in accordance with Section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 and as extended by Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted.

**PR418 WEST WITNEY PROJECTS - PART 2**

The Committee received the confidential update of the Project Officer regarding the ongoing delays to the West Witney Project. Members were advised of the actions being taken in relation to contractor performance and project delivery.

The Committee noted that a full update, including any financial, contractual and governance implications, would be presented to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee at its meeting on 28 September 2026.

**Resolved:**

That the update be noted.

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The meeting closed at: 6.55 pm

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Chair

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

**Held on Tuesday, 8 September 2026**

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

**Present:**

Councillor S Simpson (Chair)

|              |                                                       |                                                    |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Councillors: | A Mubin                                               | G Meadows                                          |
|              | J Robertshaw                                          | R Smith                                            |
|              | J Aitman                                              | J Doughty                                          |
| Officers:    | Derek Mackenzie                                       | Senior Administrative Officer &<br>Committee Clerk |
|              | Adam Clapton                                          | Deputy Town Clerk                                  |
|              | Janine Sparrowhawk                                    | Administration Asst - Communities &<br>Planning    |
|              | Carl Whitehead                                        | Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer                |
| Others:      | One member of the public.<br>Councillor Geoff Doughty |                                                    |

**CB419 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor D Newcombe.

**CB420 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

**CB421 MINUTES**

The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 19 May 2026 were received.

**Resolved:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

*Cllr R Smith joined the meeting at 6:05pm*

**CB422 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

*The Committee adjourned for this item.*

A resident addressed the Committee regarding Agenda Item 9 (Burford Road Verge Nature Reserve) and Agenda Item 10 (Community Hub Proposal, Land North of Burford Road), outlining the biodiversity and community benefits associated with both projects.

The resident provided updates on progress since submission of the Community Hub proposal and advised that support for the proposal had been received from neighbouring Parish Councils. The resident also provided information regarding Road Verge Nature Reserve scheme.

*The Committee reconvened.*

CB423 **BURFORD ROAD - ROAD VERGE NATURE RESERVE**

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

Members welcomed confirmation from Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) that the verges between Tower Hill and Dry Lane had now been formally designated as a Road Verge Nature Reserve.

The Committee recognised the significant contribution made by the resident, OCC and neighbouring parish councils in securing the designation and noted that signage installation and monitoring arrangements would follow.

Members suggested that the designation should be promoted through the Council's communications channels once signage had been installed.

**Resolved:**

1. That the designation of the Burford Road Verge Nature Reserve be noted; and
2. That Officers promote the designation through appropriate communication channels and on the Council's Website.

CB424 **COMMUNITY HUB - DEVELOPMENT LAND NORTH OF BURFORD ROAD**

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

The Committee received and considered the Community Hub proposal prepared by the resident for land north of Burford Road and heard an update on discussions held with neighbouring parish councils and developers.

Members noted that written support for the proposal had already been provided by neighbouring parish councils and recognised the potential for the project to deliver a community facility serving a number of surrounding communities whilst providing wider educational, recreational and biodiversity benefits.

During discussion, Members considered the opportunities for securing future funding through Section 106 contributions and agreed that the proposal should form part of the Council's developing infrastructure priorities. Reference was also made to the emerging Local Plan, current planning applications affecting the area and the need to ensure that appropriate community infrastructure was secured alongside future development. Particular interest was expressed in the proposals for a biodiversity buffer zone incorporating wildflower habitats, woodland planting and the restoration of a veteran orchard.

Members expressed broad support for the aspirations of the proposal and noted that consideration of infrastructure priorities properly fell within the remit of the Planning & Development Committee. As four members of that Committee were present, constituting a quorum, it was agreed that support should be given to the inclusion of the Community Hub proposal within the Council's emerging Section 106 infrastructure priorities and that an additional representation be submitted in support of the Community Hub proposal as part of the Council's response to the Curbridge Downs planning application currently under consideration.

**Resolved:**

1. That, support for the Community Hub proposal be incorporated into the Council's infrastructure and Section 106 priorities where appropriate; and
2. That, support for the proposal be conveyed through future planning representations where relevant.
3. That, an additional response be submitted to the Curbridge Downs planning application expressing the Town Council's support for the Community Hub proposal.

**CB425 FINANCE REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer concerning the financial position of services within the remit of the Committee.

A Member sought clarification regarding the grant income associated with the flood resilience store project. Officers clarified that the amounts shown in the report related to grant income received, rather than expenditure.

Members noted that the report marked the beginning of the Council's budget setting process and acknowledged that a number of matters later on the agenda may have financial implications. It was therefore agreed that budget requirements arising from the review of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan would be considered later in the meeting.

During consideration of the Carbon Reduction Action Plan later in the meeting, Members returned to budget planning. A proposal was made by Councillor R Smith, seconded by Councillor J Doughty, to include a provisional budget request of £50,000 within the 2027/28 budget for carbon reduction projects which matched the previous year, subject to review and refinement as further information and costings became available. This was unanimously supported.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report be noted;
2. That, the management accounts of the Committee's services for the period 1 April to 31 July 2026 be approved;
3. That, a provisional request of £50,000 for carbon reduction projects be considered within the 2027/28 budget setting process, subject to future review.

**CB426 CLIMATE ACTION WORKING PARTY MINUTES**

The minutes of the Climate Action Working Party meeting held on 11 June 2026 were received.

Members reviewed the recommendations arising from the Working Party and noted the progress being made on climate action projects.

**Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Climate Action Working Party meeting held on 11 June 2026 be approved as a correct record.

**CB427 BIODIVERSITY UPDATE**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer together with a verbal update.

Members were advised that progress on the Curbridge Roundabout wildflower project had been delayed following discussions with contractors regarding traffic management requirements. A Member, in their capacity as an Oxfordshire County Councillor, offered to assist Officers in seeking traffic management support and progressing the project.

Updates were provided on grant applications submitted to Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE), ongoing biodiversity monitoring across Council sites and partnership working with local conservation organisations.

Members also considered a biodiversity planting proposal for the large bed at Fiveways roundabout which had been raised during Public Participation and were advised via an officer update that many of the principles were already reflected the Council's existing planting strategy for the town and the ongoing transition towards increased perennial planting.

Members supported the continued development of perennial planting schemes, recognising the biodiversity and long-term maintenance benefits. Updates were also provided on future biodiversity recording projects, including species surveys and monitoring initiatives.

The Committee welcomed the biodiversity improvements being achieved across Council-managed land and thanked Officers and volunteers that provided support for their continued work.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report be noted;
2. That, assistance be sought through Oxfordshire County Council to help address traffic management requirements associated with the Curbridge Roundabout wildflower project; and
3. That, support be given to the continued development of perennial planting schemes as part of future budget planning.

*Cllr G Meadows left the meeting at 6:48pm*

**CB428 LAKE & COUNTRY PARK REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer along with a verbal update.

Members noted the installation of interpretation boards at key entrances to the Country Park, additional seating funded through external grants and the submission of the Green Flag Award application.

An update was provided on the Railway Orchard project, including proposals for further interpretation signage reflecting the history of the former Witney branch railway line.

Officers advised that work would shortly commence on the development of the peninsula area, including installation of a palisade gate and creation of a Stonewort Bank. Members noted that the works were intended to protect wildlife and reduce disturbance to nesting birds. It was requested that appropriate signage be installed to explain the purpose of the gate and encourage public support for wildlife protection measures.

The Committee also noted ongoing consideration of a memorial bench request, wildlife monitoring initiatives and future biodiversity recording opportunities within the Country Park.

Members welcomed the continued progress being made and thanked Officers for their ongoing work.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report be noted;
2. That, the continued development of the lake peninsula area, including the installation of the palisade gate and creation of the Stonewort Bank, be approved;
3. That, explanatory signage be installed at the peninsula to highlight the purpose of the gate and the need to protect wildlife and nesting birds;
4. That, the re-submission of a Green Flag Award application be noted;
5. That, the production and installation of an interpretation board for the Railway Orchard, at a cost of £70, be approved; and
6. That, Officers continue to assess requests for memorial benches in accordance with its policy.

*Cllr G Meadows returned to the meeting at 6:56pm. She did not participate in the vote on items in Agenda Item 8 (Lake & Country Park Report) having not been present for the majority of the debate.*

*The Member of the Public left the meeting at 6:57pm.*

**CB429 CARBON REDUCTION ACTION PLAN**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Administrative Support Assistant, Communities & Planning providing an update on progress towards delivery of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

Members noted that a number of low-cost carbon reduction measures at Windrush Cemetery Depot had been identified for implementation and welcomed benchmarking work being undertaken with other local councils.

Work was also progressing to assess larger carbon reduction projects at the Corn Exchange, including solar photovoltaic panels, boiler replacement options and potential heat pump installation. Members noted that investigations were ongoing, including discussions with the West Oxfordshire District Council Planning Department regarding the feasibility of solar panel installations.

The Committee received updates on arrangements for the 2026 Eco Fair, the National Emergency Briefing screening held on 27 July 2026, and a range of wider environmental initiatives including energy tariffs and water conservation measures.

Members also received a verbal update from the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer regarding consideration of the replacement of the Council's Utility Terrain Vehicle and noted that no suitable electric alternative had yet met operational requirements.

Further discussion took place regarding the impact of the exceptionally hot summer on newly planted trees. Members noted that a full assessment of losses was being undertaken and welcomed plans to develop replacement planting proposals focused on resilient, drought-tolerant native species. The Committee also noted, in response to a Member's question, that wildfire resilience was addressed within Action 31 of the draft Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan through the proposed Environmental Emergency Plan.

The Committee welcomed the progress made since the previous review and agreed that, subject to the incorporation of Member and Officer feedback, the revised Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan should be presented to Full Council on 12 October 2026 for adoption.

Members further agreed that a meeting of the Climate Action Working Party should be held following the Full Council meeting to review implementation priorities and make recommendations regarding budget requirements for 2027/28.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report be noted;
2. That, Member feedback be incorporated into the draft Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan;
3. That, authority be delegated to the Deputy Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair, to finalise the document for submission to Full Council on 12 October 2026;
4. That, a Climate Action Working Party meeting be held following Full Council to review implementation priorities and budget requirements; and
5. That, the continued development of the detailed Action Plan, associated KPIs and future reporting arrangements be supported.

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The meeting closed at: 7.37 pm

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Chair

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

**Held on Monday, 14 September 2026**

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

**Present:**

Councillor R Crouch (Chair)

|              |                              |                                                    |
|--------------|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Councillors: | O Collins                    | J Doughty                                          |
|              | G Doughty                    | T Ashby (In place of J Robertshaw)                 |
|              | J Treloar                    | J Aitman (In place of D Enright)                   |
|              | R Smith                      |                                                    |
| Officers:    | Derek Mackenzie              | Senior Administrative Officer &<br>Committee Clerk |
|              | Mark Lewis                   | Head of Estates & Operations                       |
|              | Nigel Warner                 | Responsible Financial Officer                      |
| Others:      | Three members of the public. |                                                    |

**H430 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Enright and J Robertshaw, Councillors J Aitman and T Ashby attended as substitutes respectively.

**H431 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

**H432 MINUTES**

That, the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 8 June 2026 were received.

**Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 8 June 2026 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

**H433 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

*The Committee adjourned for this item.*

The committee received representations from a local resident and advocate for the "Boys need Bins Campaign" which was included in Agenda Item 6.

Further representation was made by two members of the Witney Allotment Association Committee concerning Agenda Item 10.

*The Committee reconvened.*

**H434 PUBLIC HALLS REPORT**

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

During the earlier public participation item, the Committee had heard detail regarding the need for the provision of sanitary disposal facilities in men's toilets and wider awareness of continence-related conditions.

Members received the report along with a verbal update from the Venue & Event Officer which advised that the installation of sanitary bins within men's toilet facilities at the Corn Exchange and Burwell Hall had now taken place. The committee welcomed the initiative, discussed opportunities to promote the campaign more widely, and noted the positive impact on dignity, accessibility and inclusion.

Members also received details of the proposed Auracast and infrared hearing assistance systems for the main hall and gallery room at the Corn Exchange and noted that provision at Burwell Hall would be considered separately.

Additionally, two portable induction loops had been procured and were now operational in the town hall reception and café 1863.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, the installation of the male sanitary bins be promoted via the council social media channels and;
3. That, the Auracast and infrared systems be installed at the Corn Exchange at a cost of £11,378.33 from identified budgets.

**H435 ALLOTMENTS - PROPOSED SEPARATION OF WITNEY ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION**

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

The Committee had heard earlier in the meeting from the representatives of the Witney Allotment Association (WAA) Committee who had outlined their proposal and process for the separation of the Association into two successor organisations. Members were advised that any separation would be subject to consultation with, and approval by, the Association's membership.

The Committee considered the detailed proposal submitted by the WAA, which set out the arrangements and governance framework for the proposed separation.

Members welcomed the thorough and considered approach, noting that the growing size of the Association and allotment provision within Witney would support two separate organisations, each of sufficient scale to manage its affairs effectively and potentially streamline administration

and governance. Members were pleased to see a clear plan setting out how any separation would be undertaken and consulted upon.

The Committee were unanimously in agreement.

**Resolved:**

That, the Committee supports, in principle, the proposed separation of the Witney Allotment Association, subject to the necessary membership approval and the establishment of suitably constituted successor associations.

*The two members of the Witney Allotment Association left the meeting at 6:41pm*

**H436 FINANCE REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) detailing income and expenditure for budgets within the remit of the Committee.

In considering 2027/28 capital budget priorities, Members requested the continued allocation of £50,000 towards property asset carbon reduction projects.

Members also identified potential kitchen and equipment improvements at the Corn Exchange and Burwell Hall. Whilst recognising that officer capacity to deliver additional projects was currently limited, Members agreed that earmarking funding would enable such projects to be progressed when resources became available.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report be noted; and
2. That, the management accounts of the Halls, Cemeteries and Allotments Committee for the period 1 April to 31 July 2026 be approved and;
3. That, consideration be given, as part of the 2027/28 budget-setting process, to maintaining an annual allocation of £50,000 for carbon reduction projects, together with the earmarking of funding for future improvements to facilities and equipment at the Corn Exchange and Burwell Hall.

**H437 PUBLIC HALLS BUSINESS REPORT**

The Venue and Events Officer presented report and highlighted the continued success of events, in particular the summer Tunes on the Square programme. Members noted it had seen a growing attendance throughout the season with positive feedback from attendees and local businesses, and increased bar revenue. It was further noted that the earlier start time had benefited both the Corn Exchange and neighbouring food premises through increased footfall and sales.

Members congratulated officers and staff on the success of the programme, with the Mayor reporting positive feedback regarding the professionalism and welcoming approach of the venues team.

Members welcomed proposals to explore evening cinema screenings and discussed opportunities to strengthen future marketing and promotion of the variety of events the Corn Exchange hosted.

In considering future major sporting events such as the Rugby World Cup 2027, Members asked that opportunities to screen matches be explored. Officers advised that uncertainties around tournament progression could make reserving the venue challenging and potentially result in lost booking income, however they agreed to investigate options.

A Member queried attendance figures against attendance targets however, it was noted that over half of the events listed had met or exceeded their target attendance. Members also discussed the provision of additional seating for outdoor events. Officers heard that storage limitations remained a constraint and noted that attendees were encouraged to bring their own folding chairs where required.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report be noted and;
2. That, officers continue to explore options to maximise the venues event offerings

**H438 PUBLIC HALLS BUSINESS PLAN REVIEW**

The Committee received and considered the report which focused on the business plan review and opportunities for future development. The Venue & Events Officer also provided a verbal update.

Members heard further details of the Tunes on the Square programme which considered extending the programme into May to maximise attendance and income, noting that whilst additional costs would be incurred through security provision and event infrastructure, these would be outweighed by increased bar sales. The potential installation of festoon lighting was also discussed as a means of enhancing the atmosphere within the Market Square.

Members received an update on marketing activities, including the introduction of a "What's On" brochure and a WhatsApp channel to promote events. It was noted that the existing publicity budget of £3,000 was largely committed to printing and event promotion. Members supported further consideration of increased marketing resources, particularly to improve engagement with older audiences through wider poster distribution, including the use of noticeboards across the town, supermarkets and the library. Officers advised that such promotion already formed part of marketing activity and that a list of poster locations would be included in a future report.

The Venue and Events Officer advised that proposals and options for future marketing investment would be presented to the next meeting in November.

During discussion, Members emphasised that the programme generated significant social and community value in addition to financial benefits and that this should not be underestimated when considering future investment.

It was also noted that the recommendation printed within the report was incorrect and that Members were simply being asked to note the update report at this stage.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

H439 **CEMETERY REGULATIONS REVIEW**

The Committee received and considered the revised Cemetery Regulations prior to their submission to the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee.

Members welcomed the clearer drafting and simplification of the document and discussed the provisions relating to Islamic burials and the Council's efforts to accommodate faith requirements wherever reasonably practicable.

Members also considered the wording relating to liability for damage to memorials, the arrangements for the removal of seasonal tributes and other grave items.

Members also noted the success of the wildflower meadow area at Windrush Cemetery which had attracted favourable public comment. The Committee thanked Officers for the extensive review work undertaken and for producing a clearer and more user-friendly document.

**Recommended:**

That, the revised Cemetery Regulations be noted and forwarded to the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee for approval.

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The meeting closed at: 7.29 pm

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Chair

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

**Held on Monday, 21 September 2026**

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

**Present:**

Councillor G Meadows (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)

|              |                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Councillors: | D Enright<br>S Simpson<br>R Smith                                                             | R Crouch (In place of A Bailey)<br>J Treloar (In place of J Doughty)                                                                                                                                             |
| Officers:    | Adam Clapton<br>Derek Mackenzie<br><br>Annie Hathaway<br><br>Polly Inness<br><br>Nigel Warner | Deputy Town Clerk<br>Senior Administrative Officer &<br>Committee Clerk<br>Admin Assistant - Communications &<br>Engagement<br>Communications & Community<br>Engagement Officer<br>Responsible Financial Officer |
| Others:      | One member of the public.                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

**SC449 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Bailey & J Doughty, Councillors R Crouch and J Treloar attended as substitutes respectively.

Apologies for absence were also received from Councillors A Mubin & T Ashby.

**SC450 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

**SC451 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Stronger Communities committee held on 15 June 2026 were received.

**Resolved:**

That, the minutes of the Stronger Communities committee held on 15 June 2026 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the chair.

**SC452 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Committee adjourned for this item.

The committee received representations from a resident of Kingfisher Meadows concerning Agenda Item 15 (Burford Road – Replacement Bus Shelter Request)

The Committee reconvened.

SC453 **BURFORD ROAD - REPLACEMENT BUS SHELTER REQUEST**

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

The Committee considered a request relating to the replacement of the existing bus shelter on Burford Road to include a sedum roof and received an update from the Deputy Town Clerk regarding historic discussions on the asset and the possibility of potential funding opportunities from S106 monies. Members noted that similar shelters had recently been installed elsewhere at a cost of approximately £10,000.

Whilst recognising that further details and costings would be required before any final decision could be taken, Members were unanimously in support, in principle, for an upgraded shelter and agreed that opportunities for external funding should continue to be explored before any financial commitment was considered by the Council.

**Recommended:**

That, the replacement and upgrade of the Burford Road bus shelter be supported in principle, subject to funding opportunities and detailed costings being identified.

*Cllr J Treloar left the meeting between 6:11pm and 6:14pm – and therefore did not participate in the vote regarding the replacement bus shelter.*

SC454 **FINANCE REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) concerning the financial position of items under the remit of the Committee.

Members noted that expenditure remained broadly in line with expectations for this stage of the financial year and considered matters that may require inclusion within the forthcoming budget-setting process.

Members considered future infrastructure requirements including bus shelters, grit bins and street furniture. A Member raised the issue of future maintenance responsibilities arising from the High Street improvement works and emphasised that any future budget provision should relate to ongoing maintenance rather than capital replacement or enhancement works.

Members were reminded that Oxfordshire County Council would be expected to provide an appropriate commuted sum to support future maintenance when responsibility for street furniture was transferred to the Town Council. It was also noted that Oxfordshire County Council should continue to bear full responsibility for delivering and funding the proposed improvement scheme.

Members also discussed the annual provision for maintenance of the Church Clock and noted that this should continue within future budgets. It was further noted that any repair project would be considered separately through the work of the Project Officer.

In addition, Members discussed the RAF's forthcoming 50th Anniversary of the Freedom of Witney in 2027 and noted that provision may be required within future budgets to support commemorative activities associated with RAF Brize Norton. A budget of £750 was unanimously agreed to support the facilitation and refreshments for the celebrations.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report be noted and;
2. That, the management accounts for the period 1 April to 31 July 2026 be approved and;
3. That, a budget of £750 be considered within the 2027/28 budget process for the RAF 50th Anniversary of the Freedom of Witney.

*The Responsible Financial Officer left the meeting at 6:20pm*

SC455 **COMMUNICATIONS REPORT**

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

Members considered the suggestion of developing a Town Council podcast as an additional communications channel. Whilst recognising the potential opportunities to promote Council activity and community initiatives, Members felt that podcasting generally achieved limited engagement for local authorities and that current officer resources would be better focused on existing communication methods. It was also observed that successful podcasts were often driven by individuals rather than institutions. Consequently, Members did not support progressing a podcast at this stage.

The Committee welcomed the revised format of the annual budget survey and agreed that a shorter and more accessible approach would encourage greater public participation. Members felt that asking residents to identify their key priorities would provide clearer feedback than requiring the ranking of multiple individual services.

Members also considered the proposed Town Guide and remained supportive of developing the publication as an additional communication tool. It was noted that one of the Committee's Terms of Reference was "*to oversee community engagement with all residents of Witney, relevant stakeholders and businesses*" and Members considered that the Town Guide would help fulfil that objective. Members welcomed the fact that the publication would be produced biennially, would not place a significant burden upon officer resources and would provide an additional opportunity to promote Council services, local businesses, visitor information and community organisations.

With regard to website accessibility, Members welcomed the considerable work already undertaken by officers to improve compliance and accessibility. They were satisfied that the current approach provided an appropriate level of assurance and agreed that it would not be necessary to subscribe to the proposed external monitoring service at the present time. Members expressed their appreciation to officers for the progress already achieved in improving accessibility across the Council's website.

The Committee discussed future arrangements for distribution of the Spring Newsletter and acknowledged that no delivery method had proven entirely reliable. Members discounted the use of Royal Mail, citing previous experience which suggested it had not been effective in reaching residents. Whilst recognising that hand-delivery was not without its limitations, Members considered it to be the most effective option currently available and were keen to continue supporting a local delivery company.

Members also considered options for the provision of lockable noticeboards at play areas and recreational facilities. The Committee welcomed the proposal and unanimously supported the fourth example presented within the report. It was noted that three boards would be required and that £1,500 should be included within future budget discussions to allow for their purchase.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report be noted.
2. That, the revised budget survey be adopted;
3. That, development of the Town Guide continue;
4. That, hand delivery remains the preferred method for future newsletter distribution and;
5. That, provision of £1,500 be considered within the 2027/28 budget process for the installation of three lockable noticeboards.

**SC456 PRESS COVERAGE**

The Committee received details of recent press coverage relating to the activities of the Town Council.

Members welcomed the breadth of positive media coverage achieved during the reporting period and noted the continuing efforts of officers to promote Council services, community events and local initiatives.

**Resolved:**

That, the report be noted

**SC457 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer (C&CEO) which provided updates on Heritage Open Day, Christmas activities, the Eco Fair, World Mental Health Day and the forthcoming Citizen of the Year Awards.

The Committee was pleased to hear of the success of Heritage Open Day and noted the positive feedback received from residents regarding the opportunity to access local heritage sites, historic buildings and local heritage displays.

Members also welcomed proposals for World Mental Health Day and agreed that the promotion of resources relating to social media usage, doom-scrolling and personal wellbeing should proceed as outlined within the report.

Members noted that no nominations had been received for the Young Citizen of the Year category in either 2024 or 2025. The Committee agreed that councillors should actively promote

the award within their communities and that additional youth organisations should be contacted directly to encourage nominations to come forward.

In response to a Member's question regarding the Christmas Light Switch-On event, Officers advised that discussions between Witney Rotary Club and Oxfordshire County Council remained ongoing in relation to the potential impact of the High Street improvement works and it was hoped that no issues would arise affecting delivery of their event.

The Committee considered proposals relating to Town Council bunting and reviewed designs produced by pupils from Blake C of E Primary School. Members praised the quality and youthfulness of the work undertaken and felt that similar opportunities should be offered to all Witney primary schools. It was suggested that bunting produced by schools could be showcased within the Market Square and supported by an online gallery to celebrate the work of participating pupils. Members agreed that development of the wider schools' bunting initiative should be referred to the Witney: Past, Present & Future Working Party and that it be developed as a St George's Day activity for 2027, allowing completed bunting to be displayed in the Market Square as part of the celebrations.

Members also considered the procurement of Town Council bunting and expressed a preference for a modern design featuring both the Witney logo and the Town Council logo. It was agreed that two lengths of bunting be purchased at a cost of £374 per length.

The Committee discussed the possibility of a Big Lunch event in June 2027 and agreed that partnership working with local organisations represented the most practical method of delivery. Members welcomed the potential involvement of Courtside Hubs CIC and the Witney Town Band in any future event. Following discussion, a vote was taken on a proposal to support an additional Children's Play Day with a budget of £1,000 as part of the event. The proposal was carried with four votes in favour, no votes against and two abstentions.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report be noted.
2. That, support be given to the development of a community-led Big Lunch event in June 2027 and;
3. That, provision of £1,000 be included within the 2027/28 budget process to support an additional Play Day associated with the event and;
4. That, officers proceed with the purchase of two 80 metre lengths of Town Council bunting at a cost of £374 per length and;
5. That, the development of a schools' bunting competition be referred to the Witney Past, Present & Future Working Party and;
6. That, councillors and officers actively promote the Young Citizen of the Year category and engage with youth organisations to encourage future nominations.

SC458 **WITNEY FORUM MINUTES**

**Resolved:**

The Committee received the minutes of the Witney Forum meeting held on 30 June 2026.

That, the minutes of the Witney Forum meeting held on 30 June 2026 be noted.

**SC459 WITNEY: PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE NOTES**

The Committee received the notes of the Witney: Past, Present & Future Working Party meetings held on 26 May and 15 July 2026 from the Chair of the Working Party.

Members noted the ongoing discussions regarding plans to mark the 50th Anniversary of the granting of the Freedom of Witney to RAF Brize Norton in 2027. It was recognised that early budget provision would assist the Venue & Events Officer with planning in support of the commemorative activities.

Members discussed the scale and significance of the occasion, noting that 2027 would also mark the 90th Anniversary of the establishment of RAF Brize Norton. It was agreed that an appropriate budget provision should be made to support the facilitation of the event and the provision of refreshments for participants and guests. A sum of £750 was unanimously supported for inclusion within the 2027/28 budget considerations.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the notes of the Working Party meetings be noted and;
2. That, provision of £750 be recommended for inclusion within the 2027/28 budget to support activities associated with the RAF's 50th Anniversary of the Freedom of Witney.

**SC460 YOUTH COUNCIL**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Administrative Assistant - Communities & Engagement together with the minutes of the Youth Council meeting held on 3 September 2026.

Members welcomed the continued enthusiasm shown by Youth Councillors and were pleased to note that two additional members had joined. It was further noted that the Annual General Meeting of the Youth Council would shortly take place, allowing members to elect office holders and review future priorities.

Members welcomed progress on the forthcoming "A Slice of Politics" event planned for 29 October and recognised it as a valuable opportunity for young people to engage with councillors and local decision makers. In considering the catering options presented, Members noted that the preferred option represented the best value for money.

The Committee also considered a request from the Youth Council to amend the upper age limit for membership. Members recognised the importance of retaining young people whilst they completed post-16 education and discussed a number of options, including the creation of a mentoring role for former members. During discussion, concerns were raised regarding safeguarding responsibilities, accountability and the potential requirement for safeguarding training should a formal mentoring arrangement be introduced. Following consideration of the options presented, Members unanimously agreed that Youth Council members should be permitted to retain their position until the end of the academic year in which they reach the age of 18, allowing continued membership whilst undertaking full-time education and therefore providing a practical upper age limit of 19.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report be noted and;

2. That, Business 1 be approved as the supplier for refreshments for the “A Slice of Politics” event at a cost of £75 and;
3. That, Youth Council members be permitted to retain their position until the end of the academic year in which they reach the age of 18, allowing continued membership whilst in full-time education and therefore providing a practical upper age limit of 19 and;
4. That, no formal mentoring category be introduced and;
5. That, the minutes of the Youth Council meeting held on 3 September 2026 be noted.

*Cllr R Crouch left the meeting between 7:13pm and 7:16pm.*

**SC461 YOUTH SERVICES UPDATE**

The Committee received and considered the report along with a verbal update from the Deputy Town Clerk concerning youth services within Witney.

Members noted that all 2026/27 Youth Services Grant agreements had been completed and that a sum of £3,500 remained ringfenced for any further youth related grant applications. Members also noted that monitoring reports had been requested from previous grant recipients so that they may be assessed as part of the grant monitoring arrangements.

Members welcomed an interim update provided on the work of The Station Detached Youth Service. The Deputy Town Clerk provided a verbal update outlining the significant success of the converted milk float project, which had substantially increased engagement with young people across the town. It was noted that detached youth sessions which had previously engaged with around ten young people were now regularly engaging with between fifty and eighty young people, with one recent session attracting 112 young people. Members were also pleased to hear that the mentoring programme continued to perform well and noted that the next stage of development would be the creation of a youth café run by young people for young people.

The Committee was pleased to note the reduction in anti-social behaviour at The Leys during the summer period and welcomed the positive outcomes reported through Thames Valley Police’s Operation Just. It was also suggested that the opening of Courtside Hubs CIC had contributed positively by increasing the presence of users of the facilities creating a more active and supervised environment.

Members agreed that the services being provided continued to deliver significant social value and acknowledged the importance of maintaining support for youth-related initiatives through the budget-setting process. In considering future provision, Members supported the continuation of the Youth Services Grant Scheme, ongoing funding for Home-Start Oxford and the inflationary uplift required under the Service Level Agreement with The Station.

Members noted that no further information had been received from APCAM regarding the Mental Health Drop-In Sessions and agreed that consideration of future funding should be deferred pending receipt of this additional information.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report be noted.
2. That, a budget of £20,000 be retained for the Youth Services Grant Scheme in 2027/28 and;
3. That, a budget of £12,000 be retained for Home-Start Oxford in 2027/28 and;

4. That, provision of £29,250, subject to inflation, be included within the 2027/28 budget for The Station Detached Youth Service and;
5. That, future provision for APCAM Mental Health Drop-In Sessions be considered once further information has been received.

**SC462 IN BLOOM**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer regarding In Bloom initiatives for 2027.

Members welcomed proposals marking the tenth anniversary of wheelbarrows being used for the Schools In Bloom Challenge and supported the continuation of existing arrangements which have proven successful in encouraging participation from schools and community groups. Members agreed that the existing Schools In Bloom voucher value of £40 remained appropriate and noted that compost would continue to be provided. Given the increasing cost of plants and gardening materials, Members unanimously supported an increase in Community Gardening vouchers to £75.

The Committee noted that the Town Council would not be submitting an entry to the Thames & Chiltern In Bloom Awards during 2027. Instead, efforts would be focused on continuing improvements to Unterhaching Park, including the introduction of additional features such as sensory gardening, woodland planting and other environmental enhancements with the aim of preparing the site for future entry. In response to a Members comment, officers would liaise with West Oxfordshire District Council regarding their proposals for a sensory style planting and landscaping within the green space at Marriotts Walk adjacent to Unterhaching Park in order that they complement each other.

Members welcomed proposals for special tenth anniversary prizes and supported visits to Witney Lake & Country Park for schools, led by the Council's Green Spaces and biodiversity staff. It was felt that this would provide an enjoyable educational opportunity whilst helping to promote the facilities and environmental work taking place by the Council at the Country Park.

During discussion, Members considered possible themes for the anniversary challenge. Following several suggestions, it was agreed that the theme should simply be "The Number Ten", providing schools with maximum flexibility and encouraging creative interpretation by participants.

In considering future financial requirements, Members agreed that a budget provision of £4,200 be recommended for 2027/28. This would comprise funds to support the Schools In Bloom Challenge, awards and community gardening initiatives together with £2,200 earmarked for improvements at Unterhaching Park.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report be noted and;
2. That, Schools In Bloom vouchers remain at £40 and;
3. That, Community Gardening vouchers increase to £75 and;
4. That, the theme for the 2027 Schools In Bloom Challenge be "The Number Ten" and;
5. That, the proposed tenth anniversary prizes of visits to Witney Lake & Country Park be approved and;
6. That, a budget of £4,200 be included within the 2027/28 budget, including £2,200 for improvements to Unterhaching Park.

**SC463 WODC CONSULTATION - PROPOSED CONTROLS RELATING TO DOG FOULING**

The Committee Clerk provided a verbal update regarding the consultation that was undertaken by West Oxfordshire District Council on proposed Public Space Protection Order controls relating to dog fouling.

Members were reminded that the consultation document had been circulated to the Committee during the consultation period to allow comments and observations to be submitted for consideration.

It was noted that no responses had been received from Members and, consequently, no official response had been submitted by the Town Council to West Oxfordshire District Council regarding the proposed Order.

**Resolved:**

That, the verbal update be noted.

**SC464 COMMUNITY & CIVIC EVENTS**

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

Members welcomed updates relating to events held during the summer including Witney Pride, Witney Music Festival, Witney Carnival, Oxfordshire Play Associations Play Day and other community events facilitated on Town Council land.

Particular praise was expressed for the continued success of OPA's Play Day and the contribution made by volunteer organisations in delivering accessible activities for local families.

The Deputy Town Clerk provided a verbal update and advised that a detailed report had been requested from the organisers of Witney Music Festival for consideration by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee on 28 September as part of future budget discussions.

The Committee also received an update regarding forthcoming civic events, including Remembrance Sunday and the Advent Fayre. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that officers were continuing to engage with those responsible for the High Street improvement scheme and were preparing contingency arrangements should the works not be completed by the anticipated completion date of 3 November.

Members recognised the importance of councillor participation in supporting delivery of the Advent Fayre and one Member encouraged Members to ensure that 29 November was reserved in their diaries to maximise support for the event.

Members noted that the revised dates for Circus Ginnett had resulted in the event taking place closer to other activities than would normally be desirable. It was noted that officers would encourage earlier booking of future circus events to provide greater flexibility and reduce the likelihood of clashes with other events in the Council's calendar.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report be noted and;

2. That, subsidised use of The Leys be approved for Witney Pride and Witney Carnival in 2027 and;
3. That, provision of £1,000 for the existing annual OPA Play Day be retained within the 2027/28 budget process.

**SC465 WINTER PREPARATIONS**

The Committee received and considered the report concerning winter preparations and the provision of grit bins.

Members reviewed existing grit bin provision across the town and identified two locations where additional bins may improve public safety. The Member suggesting he would send location specifics to officers for submission and consideration by Oxfordshire County Council.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report be noted and;
2. That, the installation of two salt bins be recommended for approval at South Lawn and Burwell Meadow for the sum of £600 for both.

**SC466 NEW PUBLIC BINS POLICY & REQUESTS**

The Committee received and considered the proposed Public Bins Policy.

Members discussed several requests received from residents and acknowledged continuing concerns regarding litter and dog fouling across parts of the town. Whilst recognising public expectations, Members reiterated that responsibility for the provision and maintenance of bins on land outside the Town Council's ownership rested with West Oxfordshire District Council.

The Committee felt that the proposed policy provided a clear and proportionate framework for future decision making whilst ensuring that resources remained focused upon land and facilities owned or managed by the Town Council.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the Public Bins Policy be approved and recommended to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee for formal adoption.
2. That, no outstanding requests for bins made to the Town Council should be progressed.

**SC467 WITNEY TOWN CENTRE WAYFINDING**

The Committee received correspondence from West Oxfordshire District Council regarding the proposed wayfinding scheme. Proposed illustrations of potential signage, together with a draft Memorandum of Understanding relating to an archway project, had been received from West Oxfordshire District Council, circulated to Members and tabled for consideration at the meeting.

Members welcomed the principle of providing improved wayfinding within the town centre and considered the example designs provided. It was generally felt that any signage should reflect the heritage, identity and character of Witney, including reference to the town's blanket-making heritage, whilst retaining a modern appearance. Members also supported the inclusion of clear mapping and visitor information to assist residents and visitors navigating the town centre.

The Committee also considered correspondence relating to the potential Langdale Court archway project. Members supported the principle that any future agreement with West Oxfordshire District Council should clearly protect the Town Council's interests as landowner and ensure that ownership, maintenance, liability and future costs are fully considered.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the wayfinding project be supported in principle and;
2. That, officers continue discussions with West Oxfordshire District Council regarding detailed designs and future proposals and;
3. That, the Town Council's position as landowner be protected through any agreement associated with the project with points raised by officers.

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The meeting closed at: 7.56 pm

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Chair

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

**Held on Monday, 28 September 2026**

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

**Present:**

Councillor R Smith (Chair)

|              |                                                            |                                                                                                 |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Councillors: | T Ashby<br>G Doughty<br>J Aitman                           | J Doughty<br>R Crouch                                                                           |
| Officers:    | Sharon Groth<br>Nigel Warner<br>Adam Cook<br>Thomas Davies | Town Clerk<br>Responsible Financial Officer<br>Project Officer<br>Deputy Venue & Events Officer |
| Others:      | Two members of the public.                                 |                                                                                                 |

**F468 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence received.

**F469 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

**F470 MINUTES**

The minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 22 June 2026 were received.

F317 – Members were advised an outstanding matter relating to the Terms of Reference would be brought forward in due course.

F321 – Members were advised that the External Auditor's Report and Certificate for 2025/26 had been received since publication of the agenda and no matters had been raised affecting the auditor's opinion.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 22 June 2026 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

**F471 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

*The Committee adjourned for this item.*

The Committee received representations from Witney Music Festival under agenda item 15.

Members received thanks and a presentation on the success of the festival, including its positive contribution to the local economy, support for local artists and community organisations, and the challenges currently facing the events sector. Members discussed opportunities for future development, including sponsorship and audience growth and addressed concerns relating to noise.

The Chair thanked the representatives for their presentation.

*The Committee reconvened.*

**F472 GRANTS & SUBSIDISED LETTINGS (D)**

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

Members considered the report and supporting update as part of the Council's ongoing review of the festival's operation, funding arrangements and wider impact. In undertaking its due diligence, the Committee noted the information provided in relation to financial performance, community engagement, business benefits and the contribution the festival makes to visitor footfall and the local economy.

Members discussed the festival's role in supporting the cultural life of the town and considered a request for an increase in annual funding, together with the potential for a longer-term funding commitment.

In considering the proposal, Members reviewed the implications of entering into a multi-year funding agreement, including the Council's financial commitments, value for money considerations and the potential for similar events to be delivered by alternative organisers in the future.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report provided by Witney Music Festival be noted and,
2. That, Witney Music Festival be awarded £12,500 annually from 2027, for a three-year term.

*The Venue & Events Officer and both members of the public left the meeting at 6:37pm*

**F473 CEMETERY REGULATIONS**

The Committee received revised Cemetery Regulations as recommended for approval by the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee at its meeting on 14 September 2026.

Members welcomed the work undertaken in reviewing and updating the regulations.

**Resolved:**

That, the revised Cemetery Regulations, as presented, be readopted by the Town Council.

**F474 COMMUNITY ASSET ACQUISITION & MANAGEMENT POLICY**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk/C.E.O with an accompanying Community Asset Acquisition & Management Policy.

Members welcomed the framework provided by the policy and proposed a minor amendment to broaden its scope to include changes to the management arrangements of existing Council assets that are leased to third parties and subsequently returned to the Council during or at the end of the lease term. The Town Clerk clarified that the termination of leases would be governed by the relevant legal framework, but that she could incorporate a separate section into the policy to address the management of assets returned to the Council.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Community Asset Acquisition and Management Policy, together with the supporting Decision Framework, be recommended to Council for approval, subject to minor amendments and,
3. That, delegated authority be granted to the Town Clerk to implement the agreed amendments and,
4. That, the updated Policy and Decision Framework be adopted by Council at its meeting on 12 October 2026.

**F475 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

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

Members noted the reports and thanked officers for the quality of the information provided. It was further requested that a timetable be prepared by the RFO and circulated to Members wishing to submit alternative budget proposals as part of the forthcoming budget-setting process.

**Resolved:**

That, the report, bank statements and reconciliations be noted, and the following schedule of payments be approved:

| <b>Payment reference</b>                                     | <b>In the sum of:</b> | <b>Account</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|
| DDs, ELPs (electronic payments) and Standing Orders May 2026 | £529,879.87           | General CB 1   |
| Cheques, DDs, BACs and Standing Orders May 2026              | £14,968.82            | Imprest CB 2   |
| DDs, ELPs and Standing Orders June 2026                      | £255,617.41           | General CB 1   |
| Cheques, DDs and Standing Orders June 2026                   | £11,354.12            | Imprest CB 2   |

|                                              |             |              |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|
| DDs, ELPs and Standing Orders July 2026      | £285,197.73 | General CB 1 |
| Cheques, DDs and Standing Orders July 2026   | £16,351.36  | Imprest CB 2 |
| DDs, ELPs and Standing Orders August 2026    | £210,319.73 | General CB 1 |
| Cheques, DDs and Standing Orders August 2026 | £11,353.00  | Imprest CB 2 |

**F476 GRANT MONITORING - YOUTH SERVICES AWARDS 2025**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk, highlighting the work of those awarded youth services grants in 2025, with accompanying documents.

The monitoring highlighted the Council's internal financial controls and Members were pleased to see the results of the funding and how it had made a positive impact on young people in the community.

As part of the due diligence governing the awarding of the grants, Members were satisfied that the majority of organisations had appropriately accounted for the use of grant funding received. Concern was expressed regarding the absence of a monitoring report from Witney Food Revolution.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report and accompanying documents be noted and,
2. That, Witney Food Revolution be requested to provide the outstanding information in accordance with the Council's Grant Aid Policy.

*Cllr J Aitman left the meeting at 6:50pm to attend another meeting.*

**F477 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning the decision taken by West Oxfordshire District Council to undertake a Community Governance Review.

Members welcomed the decision and the opportunity to consider future parish boundaries, agreeing that the Community Governance working party should be convened to lead the Council's response.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report be noted and,

2. That, Cllr G Doughty be co-opted onto the Community Governance Working Party at the next Full Council meeting, ensuring representation from each town council ward and,
3. That, a meeting of the Community Governance Working Party be arranged at the earliest opportunity and,
4. That, authority be delegated to the Working Party to formulate and submit responses on behalf of the Council as required.

**F478 NALC LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME - GOLD AWARD**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning the Council's aspiration to seek gold status in the National Association of Local Council's Award Scheme.

Members welcomed the progress made to date and noted that work would continue towards submission of an application in early 2027.

**Resolved:**

That, the report be noted.

**F479 FINANCE REPORT**

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

Members noted the Council's current financial position and welcomed the additional information provided on operational income and expenditure. The Committee also reviewed the performance of the Council's investments and noted the positive returns being achieved.

The bar stock reports were received and noted by the Committee. A Member congratulated the Bar Manager and her staff on the efficient running of the Council's bars, as evidenced by the reports.

The Committee considered the potential project and growth items for the 2027/28 budget appended to the RFO's report. The Project Officer advised that there was insufficient space within the existing skate park to safely accommodate an additional rail. A Member highlighted that the S1A bus service now served Range Road and requested that provision be made in the budget to replace the two old and damaged bus shelters.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the report and the management accounts of the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee for the period 1st April to 31st July 2026 be approved and,
3. That, the investment statement for August 2026 be noted and,
4. That, the bar stocktake report for the period to 8th July 2026 be noted and,
5. That, the updates relating to business risk assessments and procurement policy & procedures be noted and,
6. That, the 2027-28 budget request for funding towards a Skate Park Rail be removed as there was no room for it and,
7. That, a budget be added for replacement bus shelters (two) at Range Road.

**F480 BUDGET PARAMETERS 2027-28**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (R.F.O) outlining suggested parameters for the 2027-28 budget.

Members discussed a range of emerging budget pressures and project proposals and reviewed potential additions to future budgets. Particular consideration was given to community infrastructure projects, previously identified Council priorities, and the proposed use of online consultation to help inform future community spending priorities.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the report and the budget parameters contained therein be approved and,
3. That, the budget consultation for 2027-28 be noted.

**F481 FINANCIAL MATTERS REFERRED FROM SPENDING COMMITTEES**

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

Members noted the budget implications for the current and future financial years and reviewed a request for £1,500 to fund noticeboards within the Council's parks from the Stronger Communities Committee. Following consideration, Members agreed that the proposal should not be taken forward.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the financial recommendations arising from the spending Committees be approved.

**F482 GRANTS & SUBSIDISED LETTINGS**

The Committee received and considered the joint report of the Deputy Town Clerk and R.F.O concerning the allocation of grant funding by the Council.

Members reviewed each application against the Council's grant criteria and considered the extent to which the proposed activities would benefit residents of Witney. It was noted that no discretionary grants had been awarded in June; consequently, this represented the second round of grant funding allocations in the current financial year.

With regard to subsidised lettings, Members noted that awards to The Station, Witney Sports & Social Club and WOXPAP had previously been approved. Members were advised that the Burwell Seniors Christmas Party would no longer be taking place. A request for additional subsidised sessions at the Corn Exchange for The Station was not approved; however, Members agreed to award subsidised lettings to OCVA.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, subsidised letting request be approved for OCVA (£147) and,

3. That, the subsidised letting for the sum of £441 to Bright Futures be noted but a request for a further six-week session be declined and,
4. That, subsidised lettings to WOXPAP (£1,648) and Witney Sports & Social Club (£129) be noted, having already been agreed earlier in the year and,
5. That, the following discretionary grants be awarded under the General Power of Competence and recipients be asked to acknowledge the Council's financial contribution in their promotional literature:
  - Cotswold Rivers Trust - £740
  - Ducklington Sports Club - £1,000
  - Witney Mills Cricket Club - £1,700
  - Witney Congregational Church - £500
  - Little Oak Preschool - £500
  - Parent SENSE Witney - £200
  - Clean Slate - £200
6. That, a grant request from Sounds of Support be declined as the application did not clearly demonstrate the benefit for Witney residents and the event was supporting a national charity.

**F483    SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 5(W)**

**Resolved:**

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

**F484    IT PROVISION**

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

Members discussed the ongoing provision of IT support services, cyber security arrangements, future hardware requirements and the further development of online systems. Consideration was also given to the potential replacement of the committee management system and future arrangements for councillor devices; however, it was noted that further work and evaluation would be required before any recommendations could be brought forward.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the existing IT support contract be extended for a further year and,
3. That, officers progress Cyber Essentials accreditation and associated cyber security measures and,
4. That, further work be undertaken regarding future committee management software and councillor device provision before final decisions are made with a report to the next meeting.

F485 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**Resolved:**

*That in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, and as extended by Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the following business to be transacted.*

F486 **WEST WITNEY PROJECTS UPDATE**

The Committee received and considered the confidential report and accompanying verbal update of the Project Officer concerning this project.

Members noted the updates provided by officers regarding the project, including the current position in relation to the contract and the completion of the Clubhouse. The Committee discussed electricity supply arrangements and the next steps to be considered with the Council's Contract Administrator ahead of a Council resolution. Members also considered communication arrangements and how best to provide updates on the current situation, including the use of external professional advice and support where appropriate.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the confidential report and verbal updates be noted and,
2. That, project status communications are considered by officers.

F487 **PROPERTY, LEGAL & INSURANCE MATTERS**

Members received and noted the confidential report and updates on current property, legal and insurance matters.

In relation to Springfield Oval, Members noted that WODC had completed the public consultation, with no representations received, and had instructed its solicitors to progress the freehold transfer. The Project Officer would liaise with residents and Ward Members to develop the proposed play area and open space improvements, mindful of the Section 106 funding deadline of 3 July 2027.

Members noted that the proposed transfer of the former public conveniences at The Leys remained subject to clarification of the registered title by WODC's legal team. Potential future uses and indicative costings would be explored once the legal position was clear and officer capacity allowed. Updates were also received on the future governance and lease arrangements for West Witney Sports & Social Club and a verge at Thorney Leys.

The Project Officer provided a verbal update on parking restrictions at The Leys, highlighting difficulties in engaging with OCC Officers to progress the application for a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). A Member offered to raise the matter with the relevant Director at OCC.

Members also received updates on current insurance matters and were advised that the insurance claim settlement would fund the majority of the cost of replacing the damaged bus shelter at Valence Crescent.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the confidential report be noted and
2. That, additional funds of £1,600 to upgrade the replacement bus shelter at Valence Crescent to a sedum roof shelter be taken from an infrastructure earmarked reserve.

**F488    STAFFING MATTERS**

The Committee received the minutes of the Personnel Sub Committee meetings held on 1 July, 29 July, 20 August and 17 September which had been circulated prior to the meeting.

**Resolved:**

That, the confidential minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meetings held on 1 July, 29 July, 20 August and 17 September, and the recommendations contained therein be approved.

**F489    LITTER BIN POLICY**

The Committee received an updated Litter Bin Policy as recommended for approval by the Stronger Communities Committee at its meeting on 21 September 2026.

**Resolved:**

That, the Litter Bin Policy, as presented, be readopted by the Town Council.

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The meeting closed at: 8.45 pm

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Chair

## FULL COUNCIL



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|                         |                                                                                                                                                                      |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Agenda Item:</b>     | Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the Year ended 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2026 – external audit report and certificate and notice of conclusion of audit |
| <b>Meeting Date:</b>    | Monday, 12 October 2026                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b> | Responsible Financial Officer                                                                                                                                        |

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The purpose of this report is to update Members on the external audit report and the notice of conclusion of audit in relation to the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the Year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026. The report also considers the letter from the auditors to the Town Clerk/ Chief Executive dated 25<sup>th</sup> September 2026 and the Council's response.

### Background

The Council's accounts are prepared in accordance with proper practices set out in statute, including the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015, and detailed further in the Smaller Authorities' Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP), 2025 edition of the Practitioners' Guide published by the National Association of Local Councils, the Society of Local Council Clerks and the Association of Drainage Authorities.

In accordance with Section 6 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, Witney Town Council is defined as a 'smaller authority' because the higher of the authority's gross income for the year and its gross expenditure for the year does not exceed £6,500,000. The Council may also be referred to, for the purposes of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, as a "Category 2 authority."

As a result, the Council has to approve an Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) each year. The AGAR for year ending 31 March 2026 was approved by the Council at its meeting of 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2026.

The AGAR is subject to external audit on the basis of a limited assurance review, as required by law. The external audit report and certificate for 2025-26 have now been received together with a letter to the Town Clerk/ Chief Executive drawing attention to the level of the general reserve. This report considers these documents.

The Council published the audited version of the Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement, the auditor's certificate and opinion the Notice of Conclusion of Annual Audit on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2026.

## Current Situation

### External Auditor Report and Certificate 2025-26

The External Auditor Report and Certificate 2025-26 from Moore, dated 21<sup>st</sup> September 2026 is attached.

- (a) There are no matters detailed in the report where the auditor raises a concern that relevant legislation and regularity matters have not been met.
- (b) There are no matters in the report which are classified as “Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority.”

### Letter from Moore to Town Clerk/ Chief Executive dated 25<sup>th</sup> September 2026

This is a letter from the auditor detailing matters to the Clerk which are not included in the auditor’s certificate and opinion which they wish to draw attention to. There is one item in this letter regarding the level of general reserves. This states: “Upon review, general reserves are being held at a low level. We are aware that the council is aware and that the clerk is monitoring the position. Per Paragraph 5.34 of the SAPPP Practitioners' Guide 2025, best practice suggests this level should be at least 3 months expenditure as a minimum. These cannot include ring fenced funds and should avoid including funds which are designated for another purpose.”

The Practitioners’ Guide referred to in the letter states:

*“5.33. The general reserve of an authority comprises its cash flow and contingency funds to cover unexpected inflation, unforeseen events and unusual circumstances.*

*“5.34. The generally accepted recommendation with regard to the appropriate minimum level of a smaller authority’s general reserve is that this should be maintained at between three and twelve months of net revenue expenditure.*

*“5.35. The reason for the wide range is to cater for the large variation in activity level between individual authorities. The smaller the authority, the closer the figure may be to 12 months expenditure, the larger the authority, the nearer to 3 months. In practice, any authority with income and expenditure in excess of £200,000 should plan towards 3 months equivalent general reserve.”*

It should be noted that the reference in the Practitioner’s Guide is to net revenue expenditure, which is revenue (i.e. not including capital) expenditure minus non-precepted income rather than expenditure.

The Council’s net revenue expenditure for 2025-26 was £1,729,393 and so three months’ expenditure is £442,439; the general reserve at 31 March 2026 was £662,733 which is the equivalent to approximately 140 days’ or between four and five months’ net revenue expenditure in relation to the year under consideration. It should also be noted that the Council

has significant earmarked (not restricted) reserves (£2,347,526 at 31 March 2026) which are revenue funds and could be redesignated at any time.

Incidentally, for the current year (2026-27) the three-month net revenue expenditure is £545,927 so the position remains satisfactory during the current year.

The Council will, as is its practice, consider its reserves position as part of the budget process but the RFO reiterates at this stage his opinion that the general reserves are held at an appropriate level for an authority of this size.

It is suggested that in responding to the audit letter the reserve position is addressed and the Council's view that it has an adequate general reserve is made clear.

## **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 Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 require relevant bodies to complete and approve an Annual Return which must then be submitted to the external auditors by the 30 June each year. Undertaking this exercise is an important part of considering and managing the Council's risk. Furthermore, consideration and action in relation to the matters outlined in this report is essential in order to comply with the law.

## **Social Value**

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates. Robust financial management, control and compliance with the Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 is a prerequisite of enabling the Council to deliver social value.

## **Financial implications**

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

## **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and

1. That the Council notes the External Auditor Report and Certificate 2025-26 from the auditors Moore, dated 21<sup>st</sup> September 2026.
2. That the Council notes the Letter from Moore to the Town Clerk/ Chief Executive dated 25<sup>th</sup> September 2026.
3. That authority is delegated to the Town Clerk/ Chief Executive to respond to the external auditors in relation to the general reserve position and the Council's view that the general reserve level at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2026, being approximately 140 days' or between four and five months' net revenue expenditure in relation to the year under consideration, is at an appropriate level for an authority of this size.
4. That the Council notes that the Notice of Conclusion of Audit was published on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2026.



Our ref: 979/2125471

25 September 2026

Mrs S Groth  
Witney Town Council  
Town Hall  
Market Square  
Witney  
Oxfordshire  
OX28 6AG

#### Moore East Midlands

Oakley House  
Headway Business Park  
3 Saxon Way West  
Corby, NN18 9EZ

T 01536 461900

#### Moore East Midlands

Rutland House  
Minerva Business Park  
Lynch Wood  
Peterborough, PE2 6PZ

T 01733 397300

**mooreeastmidlands.co.uk**

Dear Clerk

### **Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the Year ended 31 March 2026**

Please find enclosed the signed External Audit Report to accompany your Annual Governance and Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2026.

We also enclose a note of our charges based on the fixed rate audit fee as set by the Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd.

#### **Authorities who have not claimed exemption**

Regulation 13 of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 stipulate that Authorities, who are not inactive Authorities, must publish the following (including on the Authority's website):

- (a) The audited version(s) of the Statement of Accounts and Annual Governance Statement
- (b) The auditor's certificate and opinion
- (c) Any public interest report or other recommendation of the auditor.
- (d) A form of Notice of Conclusion of Annual Audit

#### **We draw your attention to the following point:**

- Upon review, general reserves are being held at a low level. We are aware that the council is aware and that the clerk is monitoring the position. Per Paragraph 5.34 of the SAPPP Practitioners' Guide 2025, best practice suggests this level should be at least 3 months expenditure as a minimum. These cannot include ring fenced funds and should avoid including funds which are designated for another purpose.

A template Notice of Conclusion of Audit form is available in the useful documents section on our website [mooreeastmidlands.co.uk/sectors/smaller-authorities/smaller-authorities-agar-forms/](http://mooreeastmidlands.co.uk/sectors/smaller-authorities/smaller-authorities-agar-forms/)

The notice must also state that an elector may inspect those documents at all reasonable times and without payment. The address and times when this inspection may be carried out must also be given.

Yours sincerely

**Moore**  
Encs.

**Partners:** Carolyn Rossiter FCA, Mohamed Mavani FCA, Matthew Grief CTA TEP, April Foster FCCA, John Harvey BFP ACA FCCA, Tim Woodgates ACA CTA FCCA, Jen Nixon ACA FCCA MAAT, Michelle Watson FCCA, Robert Pluck FCCA, Gemma Roger FCA, Amanda Etty FCA.

**Associates:** Paul Nash FCCA, Lorna Bloor FCCA, Hannah Sardeson FCCA, Ben Higgins FCCA, Leanne Plumpton FCA, Chloe Hickman FCCA MAAT. Registered to carry on audit work in the UK and regulated for a range of investment business activities; and licensed to carry out the reserved legal activity of non-contentious probate in England and Wales by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales. An independent member firm of Moore Global Network Limited – members in principal cities throughout the world. This firm is not a partner or agent for any other Moore firm and is a separate partnership with offices in Corby, Peterborough and Northampton.

Smaller Authority Name: **WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**NOTICE OF CONCLUSION OF ANNUAL AUDIT**

**ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026**  
**Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015**

- 1** The audit of accounts for (Smaller Authority Name) **WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL** for the year ended 31 March 2026 has been completed and the accounts have been published.
- 2** The Annual Return is available for inspection by any local government elector in the area of (Smaller Authority Name) **WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL** on application to
  - (a) (Name of Clerk)  
**SHARON GROTH FSLCC FCMI Assoc.CIPD**
  - (b) (Address of Clerk)  
**TOWN HALL**  
**MARKET SQUARE**  
**WITNEY**  
**OXON. OX28 6AG**
  - (c) (Telephone/email, and hours and arrangements to view)  
**Telephone (01993) 704379; e-mail [info@witney-tc.gov.uk](mailto:info@witney-tc.gov.uk)**  
**Arrangements to view – by appointment, Monday to Friday**  
**between 10am and 4pm**
- 3** Copies will be provided to any person on payment of £ **NIL** for each copy of the Annual Return

Announcement made by (Name of Clerk)

**Mrs Sharon Groth, FSLCC FCMI Assoc.CIPD**

Date of Announcement

**28 September 2026.**

## Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26 Form 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities\*:

- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £15 million; or
- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:
  - are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or
  - have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)

### Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2025/26

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
  - The **Annual Internal Audit Report** must be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
  - **Sections 1 and 2** must be completed and approved by the authority.
  - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2026**.
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2026** Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
  - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
  - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2026
  - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
  - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
  - Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/26

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability Return **Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate** will be returned to the authority by email or post.

### Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities **must** publish the following information on the authority website/webpage:

**Before 1 July 2026 authorities must publish:**

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2025/26** approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2025/26** approved and signed, page 5

**Not later than 30 September 2026 authorities must publish:**

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review. It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

\*for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

## Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2025/26

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide\** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty) and is properly signed and dated. Any amendments **must** be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2026
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) **must** be approved before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references, even where approved on the same day.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) **must** certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority **must** in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period which **must** be a single period of 30 working days for inspection (this excludes weekends and public holidays) which **must** include the first 10 working days of July.
- You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chair, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor **must** be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (Section 2, page 5). An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide\**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on page 5. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- Additional costs may be incurred if additional audit work is required.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2025) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2026).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights which **must** be a single period of 30 working days for inspection (this excludes weekends and public holidays) which **must** include the first 10 working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2026**

| Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements |                                                                                                                                                                             | Yes | No             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----------------|
| All sections                                                               | Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?                                                                                                                             | ✓   |                |
|                                                                            | Has all additional information requested, including the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights, been provided for the external auditor?                 | ✓   |                |
| Internal Audit Report                                                      | Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?                                                                                | ✓   |                |
| Section 1                                                                  | For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?                                                                                         | ✓   |                |
| Section 2                                                                  | Has the Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval?                                                   | ✓   |                |
|                                                                            | Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chair of the approval meeting?                                             | ✓   |                |
|                                                                            | Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?                                                                                                 | ✓   |                |
|                                                                            | Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2026 been reconciled to Box 8?                                                                                                   | ✓   |                |
|                                                                            | Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?                                                                                                 | ✓   |                |
| Sections 1 and 2                                                           | Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? NB: do not send trust accounting statements unless requested. |     | Not applicable |

\*Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices, can be downloaded from [www.nalc.gov.uk](http://www.nalc.gov.uk) or from [www.ada.org.uk](http://www.ada.org.uk)

# Annual Internal Audit Report 2025/26

## WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

www.witney-tc.gov.uk

During the financial year ended 31 March 2026, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2025/26 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

| Internal control objective                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Yes | No* | Not covered**  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|----------------|
| A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | ✓   |     |                |
| B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.                                                                                                                                                                                        | ✓   |     |                |
| C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | ✓   |     |                |
| D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.                                                                                                                                                                                         | ✓   |     |                |
| E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.                                                                                                                                                                                                              | ✓   |     |                |
| F. Cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | ✓   |     |                |
| G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.                                                                                                                                                                                              | ✓   |     |                |
| H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | ✓   |     |                |
| I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | ✓   |     |                |
| J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.                                                 | ✓   |     |                |
| K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2024/25, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2024/25 AGAR tick "not covered")                                                                                                      |     |     | ✓              |
| L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.                                                                                                                                                                                           | ✓   |     |                |
| M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2025/26 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2024-25 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set). | ✓   |     |                |
| N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2024/25 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | ✓   |     |                |
| O. The authority has complied with laws, regulations & proper practices relating to digital and data compliance.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | ✓   |     |                |
| P. (For local councils only)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Yes | No  | Not applicable |
| Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |     |     | ✓              |

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

18/12/2025

20/02/2026

08/06/2026

A.C. Shepherd-Roberts

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit

Date 08/06/2026

\*If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).

\*\*Note: If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

## Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2025/26

We acknowledge as the members of:

### WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2026, that:

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Agreed |     | Yes | No* | Yes' makes that this authority:                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----|-----|-----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Yes    | No* |     |     |                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.                                                                                                                           | ✓      |     |     |     | prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.                                                                                               |
| 2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.                                                                                                           | ✓      |     |     |     | made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.                                                                     |
| 3. We have assured ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances. | ✓      |     |     |     | has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.                                                                                     |
| 4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.                                                                                                        | ✓      |     |     |     | during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.                                                               |
| 5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.                                                     | ✓      |     |     |     | considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.                                                                                          |
| 6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.                                                                                                                                   | ✓      |     |     |     | arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority. |
| 7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.                                                                                                                                                                         | ✓      |     |     |     | responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.                                                                                                           |
| 8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.           | ✓      |     |     |     | disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.                                           |
| 9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.  | Yes    | No  | N/A |     | has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.                                                               |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |        |     | ✓   |     |                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 10. We have put in place arrangements for the effective IT and data management in accordance with proper practices during the year under review.                                                                                                                         | ✓      |     |     |     | has made suitable arrangements for its IT and data management and has complied with proper practices in doing so.                                                                       |

\*Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

22/06/2026

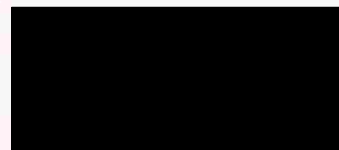
and recorded as minute reference:

333

Signed by the Chair and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chair

Clerk



[www.witney-tc.gov.uk](http://www.witney-tc.gov.uk)

## Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2025/26 for

### WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

|                                                             | Year ending                              |                    | Notes and guidance                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                             | 31 March 2025<br>£                       | 31 March 2026<br>£ |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| 1. Balances brought forward                                 | <del>2,654,529</del><br><b>2,654,529</b> | 2,668,913          | Please round all figures to nearest £1. Do not leave any boxes blank and report £0 or Nil balances. All figures must agree to underlying financial records.<br><br>Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year. |
| 2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies                          | 1,984,834                                | 2,297,745          | Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 3. (+) Total other receipts                                 | 642,404                                  | 2,307,625          | Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.                                                                                                                                                                         |
| 4. (-) Staff costs                                          | 1,376,872                                | 1,464,073          | Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.                                                                                                       |
| 5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments                     | 0                                        | 0                  | Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 6. (-) All other payments                                   | 1,235,982                                | 2,678,949          | Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 7. (=) Balances carried forward                             | 2,668,913                                | 3,131,261          | Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 8. Total value of cash and short term investments           | 3,225,412                                | 3,488,976          | The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.                                                                                                                                                           |
| 9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets | 7,599,269                                | 7,663,305          | The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.                                                                                                                                                                            |
| 10. Total borrowings                                        | 0                                        | 960,000            | The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

| For Local Councils Only                                                              | Yes | No |                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 11 Do the figures in the accounting statements above exclude any trust transactions? | ✓   |    | For guidance refer to the Practitioners' Guide sections 2.31 to 2.33. |

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2026 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval.

[Redacted Signature]

Date

17/06/2026

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

22/06/2026

as recorded in minute reference:

333

Signed by Chair of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

[Redacted Signature]

## Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate 2025/26

In respect of **Witney Town Council**

### 1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/>

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2026; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors

### 2 External auditor limited assurance opinion 2025/26

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with the *Proper Practices* and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

There are no other matters affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority.

### 3 External auditor certificate 2025/26

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2026.

External Auditor Name



External Auditor Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maxe', written over a horizontal line.

Date

21/09/2026

## FULL COUNCIL



---

**Agenda Item:** Appointment to External Bodies & Outside Organisations

**Meeting Date:** Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> October 2026

**Contact Officer:** Deputy Town Clerk

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The purpose of this report is to present correspondence received from Witney Town Charity for the Council's consideration and to enable Members to determine any appropriate response or action arising from its contents.

### Background

The current constitution of Witney Town Charity provides for up to six members of Witney Town Council to serve as nominated Trustees of the Charity.

At the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 6 May 2026, the following Councillors were appointed as Trustees for the municipal year and beyond. Members are also reminded of the charitable objectives of the Charity, which guide the Trustees in the exercise of their responsibilities.

#### Term of office expires

Witney Town Charity – 4-year term of office

The charitable objectives of the Witney Town Charity are:

1. The provision and maintenance of Almshouses for poor persons
2. The relief of poor persons in conditions of need, hardship, or distress. It operates 18 Almshouses and also provides grants for those in need.

|                |          |
|----------------|----------|
| Mr B Beadle*   | May 2030 |
| Mrs M Jones*   | Jun 2028 |
| Mrs R Crouch   | May 2030 |
| Cllr G Meadows | May 2027 |
| Mr M Lee*      | Jun 2030 |
| Mr C Woodward* | Feb 2030 |

(\* Denotes Non-Member of Witney Town Council)

### Current Situation

The Town Council has received correspondence from Witney Town Charity advising that the Charity is seeking to convert to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) which is attached as **Appendix A**. As part of this process, the Charity is undertaking a review of its governing

document and is seeking the Council's views on a proposed wording amendment relating to Council Trustees appointed to the Charity.

The Council has also been advised that Mr B. Beadle has resigned from his position as a Town Council-nominated Trustee following his appointment as Deputy Clerk to the Charity, creating a vacancy. The Charity has suggested that the vacancy could be filled by a non-Council resident of Witney who has expressed a strong interest in supporting the Charity and who, in the view of the Charity, would make a valuable contribution to its Residents and Grants Committee.

Members should note that, at the Annual Council Meeting held in May, Councillor D. Temple also expressed an interest in serving as a Trustee of the Charity. This interest was subsequently communicated to the Chair of Trustees.

### **Impact Assessments**

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

- a) Equality – no direct implications.
- b) Biodiversity – no direct implications.
- c) Crime & Disorder – no direct implications.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – no direct implications.

### **Risk**

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

### **Social Value**

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

### **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and;

1. Consider the suggested change of wording relating to town council nominated trustees in the new CIO founding document.
2. Consider a replacement for Mr B Beadle as a town council nominated trustee.

# Witney Town Charity

Registered Charity No. 202996

PO Box 638  
Witney, Oxon  
OX28 9QP

Tel: **(Redacted)**

Email:

[witneytowncharity@gmail.com](mailto:witneytowncharity@gmail.com)

28 Sept 2026

Witney Town Council  
51B Market Square  
Witney  
OX28 6AG

**For the attention of Adam Clapton, Deputy Clerk.**

Dear Adam

## **Witney Town Charity**

Our charity is going through some significant changes including the appointment of a new Clerk Lyn Absolom and Deputy Clerk Barry Beradle. Lyn will be your main point of contact on the email above.

The other important change is to move from being a Charity to become a Charitable incorporated Organisation or CIO. This is on the advice of the Almshouse Association and in laymen's terms means that the Charity has legal responsibility for its activities rather than the Trustees, which is the current situation

To implement the actions required to become a CIO we have engaged solicitors who are experienced in this area and one of their main tasks is to rewrite our Governing Document. As this was last done in the 1950's it gives us the opportunity to address how we currently operate and one area for review is the number of Trustees and your Council's involvement in nominations.

The CIO process is being driven on behalf of all Trustees by Dr Paul Watson, a resident of Witney and ex GP who has been a Trustee for many years and therefore very familiar with the town and our involvement within it.

He has asked that we bring to your attention this letter

*"I am writing on behalf of Witney Town Charities. We are in the process of changing the legal status of the charity into a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). As part of this work, we need to rewrite our governing document, and we are taking the opportunity to update it to reflect modern realities and changing needs. As you will be aware, our charity currently has 14 trustees of which 6 are nominated by Witney Town Council. At times, when we have needed specific skills or expertise, we have asked the Council to appoint particular individuals, which you have done. In our new constitution, we intend to word the section on trustees in a way that gives us a little more flexibility. The exact wording will be written by our*

*solicitors but in essence we would like it to say that “the body of trustees will have at least 14 trustees of which up to 6 could be nominated by the Town Council”. It would be very helpful to the Charity if the Town Council were prepared to reply to this letter to state that the Council has no objections to our proposed wording about the number of trustees.*

*If you needed to discuss this with me before replying formally, I would be happy to discuss it by email **(Redacted)** , phone **(Redacted)** or face to face.*

*We would like to set up our CIO with the minimum delay in order to facilitate some essential repairs to our almshouses. We would really appreciate an early response from you, which would help enormously in getting our new document approved by The Charity Commission.*

*Yours faithfully*

*Dr Paul Watson (Trustee of Witney Town Charities responsible for CIO matters)*

Your Council may like to consider how much if any involvement you need to have with our Charity as your work, like ours, gets more complex by the year. We don't know why in the 1950's it was thought necessary for you to have trustees of the charity but assume this was probably to protect the heritage of Witney, of which the almshouses form an important part. However I can assure you that we are committed by our Governing Document to maintain the almshouses in a good state of repair and in fact are about to start major refurbishment and upgrading. The other aspect may be to protect the vulnerable residents of the town but our reach has expanded to the West Oxfordshire area, particularly as far as our Grants are concerned.

Therefore, Adam, this may be a good opportunity to review where we jointly go in the future and we look forward to your Council's comments. However if you could note Paul's comment about timescale this would be very much appreciated.

We look forward to your response.

Many thanks

Yours sincerely

**Ashley**

Ashley Farmer  
Chair of Trustees

DRAFT



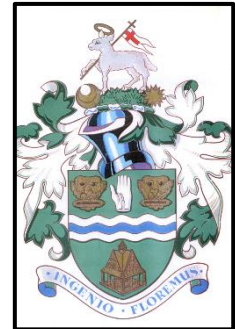
# **Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan**

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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 tCO<sub>2</sub>e. 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 tCO<sub>2</sub>e.

| Scope   | Emissions tCO <sub>2</sub> 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 tCO<sub>2</sub>e and the Council's fleet use at 24.48 tCO<sub>2</sub>e.

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 tCO<sub>2</sub>e and emissions associated with the extraction, refinement and transportation of fuel prior to combustion (Well to Tank) 10.63 tCO<sub>2</sub>e.

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 tCO<sub>2</sub>e)

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

## 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 <sub>2</sub> e Reduction Target |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| 2026–2027: Foundation & Infrastructure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council Building Retrofits &amp; Upgrades - <i>Lighting, heating, insulation improvements, secondary glazing</i></li> <li>• Building Efficiency Enhancements - <i>HVAC optimization, rooftop PV feasibility studies</i></li> <li>• Water Efficiency Initiatives</li> <li>• Depot EV Charging Infrastructure</li> <li>• Fleet Transition – <i>Further EV adoption</i></li> <li>• Sustainable Energy Integration</li> <li>• Waste, Water &amp; Procurement Improvements</li> </ul> | 25 tCO <sub>2</sub> e                             |
| 2027–2028: Expansion & Optimisation    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued Building Retrofits &amp; Upgrades</li> <li>• Advanced Efficiency Measures - <i>HVAC optimisation, rooftop PV implementation</i></li> <li>• Water Efficiency Initiatives</li> <li>• Fleet Transition -<i>Further EV adoption</i></li> <li>• Waste, Water &amp; Procurement Improvements</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                      | 20 tCO <sub>2</sub> e                             |
| 2028: Consolidation & Completion       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final Building Retrofits</li> <li>• Fleet Transition - <i>Complete EV replacement program where feasible.</i></li> <li>• Waste, Water&amp; Procurement Improvements</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | 10 tCO <sub>2</sub> e                             |

**Total Estimated Reductions:** ~55 tCO<sub>2</sub>e by end of 2028, residual (~10 tCO<sub>2</sub>e) 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                                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------|--------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Witney Town Council Total Carbon Footprint 2024-25 65.08 tCO<sub>2</sub>e.</b>                                                                                                             | <b>ALL</b>                           | <b>High</b>                                    | <b>ALL</b>         |        | <b>2026-27 Target: 25 tCO<sub>2</sub>e reduction on 2024-25 baseline</b>                                                                                   | <b>Net Zero by 2028</b>                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Finance and Resources</b>                                                                                                                                                                  |                                      |                                                |                    |        |                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                |
| 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.<br>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<br>CEO/PO/OM              | Low                                            | 3                  | Nil                                                        | 2026 – 75%<br>2027 – 100%<br><br>% 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<br>O              | Low                                            | 3                  | Existing                                                   | % of harmful chemicals replaced by environmentally friendly alternatives where feasible.<br>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.                                                                     | RFO confirmed investment arrangements are with ethical investment company. 02.10.26 - RFO is actively investigating ethical banking arrangements.                     |
| 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                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Buildings</b>                                                                                                                              |                                      |                                                |                    |                            |                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 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.<br>Review reports and agree actions/timelines at CBC and submit proposals to Full Council for consideration.<br>28.08.26 – Pre-Planning Application Advice request sent to WODC regarding the possible installation of Solar PV at the Corn Exchange. Awaiting response.<br>2.09.26 - EOI for Windrush Cemetery projects issued. |
| 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.<br>Works commenced.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

| Climate Action                                                                                                          | Lead Officer / Partner Organisations | Impact of action on carbon footprint reduction | Scope of emissions | Budget                     | KPI                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Progress / Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Transport</b>                                                                                                        |                                      |                                                |                    |                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 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.<br>Installation of new cycle racks & shelter at WW Depot.                                   | Creation of FB poll or Survey Monkey to be established & repeated annually.<br>Council rejected installation of electric bike charging point at WW Depot.<br>WTC e-bike now considered unsuitable for use by staff to undertake work journeys between sites.<br>Installation of cycle racks & shelter planned to be completed at new WW Depot.<br>15.09.26 - Reintroduction of cycle to work scheme for staff. |
| 11. Reduce Town Councillor travel emissions for Witney Town Council business.                                           | ASA-CP                               | Low                                            | 3                  | Nil                        | Reduce Councillor town council related travel.                                                                                                                                                        | Creation of FB poll or Survey Monkey to be established & repeated annually.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Fleet and Machinery Commitment</b>                                                                                   |                                      |                                                |                    |                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 12. Transition vehicle fleet and operational machinery to fully electric alternatives.                                  | HEO/OM/<br>ASA-CP<br>/BGSO           | Medium                                         | 1                  | Proposals to be submitted. | Vehicle and machinery renewals plan to be reviewed. Suitable alternatives to be researched and options detailed.<br>% 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.<br>Continually review suitable alternatives as industry review and develop choices.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

| Climate Action                                                                 | Lead Officer / Partner Organisations | Impact of action on carbon footprint reduction | Scope of emissions | Budget                     | KPI                                                                                                                                                       | Progress / Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 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.                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Energy</b>                                                                  |                                      |                                                |                    |                            |                                                                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 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.                                                                                                                                                          |
| 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. 2.10.26 – info requested from SSEN.                                                                                                                   |
| 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. Posters to be created & distributed around buildings & staff noticeboards. |

| Climate Action                                                                                                                                       | Lead Officer / Partner Organisations | Impact of action on carbon footprint reduction | Scope of emissions | Budget                                                                                   | KPI                                                                             | Progress / Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Water</b>                                                                                                                                         |                                      |                                                |                    |                                                                                          |                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 18. Reduce carbon emissions from water usage and waste water. Reduce water consumption by installation of water saving devices in Council buildings. | HEO/OM/<br>ASA-CP<br>/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.<br>Total Council water consumption 2024-2025 = 8021 m3<br>Reuse of The Leys Splash Park grey water by watering floral displays, grass sports areas and trees. Testing of water undertaken to ensure suitable for use. Establish and report on water reuse from The Leys Splash Park. |
| <b>Waste</b>                                                                                                                                         |                                      |                                                |                    |                                                                                          |                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| 19. Reduce emissions from waste.                                                                                                                     | HEO/OM/<br>ASA-CP<br>/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.<br>Review of Waste Transfer Notes to establish annual figure. Spot checks on waste bins to ensure waste is correctly recycled.           |
| 20. Wood waste and green waste                                                                                                                       | HEO/OM/<br>ASA-CP/BGSO               | Medium                                         | 3                  | Existing                                                                                 | % of annual green and wood waste reused compared to waste to landfill reported. | Wood waste is chipped and reused as a weed suppressant on shrub beds and hedge lines. Green waste is composted and reused to enrich soil on Council amenity land and flower beds.<br>Storage bays to be installed at West Witney Depot to enable processing.                                                                                                                       |

| Climate Action                                                                                                                                           | Lead Officer / Partner Organisations | Impact of action on carbon footprint reduction | Scope of emissions | Budget                                      | KPI                                                                                                                         | Progress / Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 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.                                            | To be discussed at staff meetings to establish single use plastics.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 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.<br><br>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.<br>Events Policy to detail the number of attendees e.g. 400 that requires recycling facility provision. Reviews and reports submitted to the CBC.<br>02.10.26 - Community events use recyclable or reusable refreshment containers.<br>Individual water bottles will no longer be in use. Craft making at community events avoids single use plastics. |
| 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.<br>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.<br>All paper purchased is recycled.<br>Consider options for Council meetings.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

| Climate Action                                                                                              | Lead Officer / Partner Organisations | Impact of action on carbon footprint reduction | Scope of emissions | Budget                                   | KPI                                                                                                                                                                                      | Progress / Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Land Use</b>                                                                                             |                                      |                                                |                    |                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 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.<br>Reinstatement of community gardening group in 2027.<br>Introduction of Best Kept Allotment award at Citizen of the Year Awards. | Seek adequate spaces for growing food and garden areas within the community on WTC land. Reviews and reports submitted to the CBC.<br>Consider identifying and promoting further community gardening areas on redundant amenity land. |
| <b>Adaption</b>                                                                                             |                                      |                                                |                    |                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 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.                                                                           | 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                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                      |                                      |                                                |                    |                                          | Comms plan in place during extreme weather events and local emergencies.                                   |                                                                                                                                                          |
| 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/BGSO                             | N/A                                            | N/A                | Nil                                      | Environmental 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. |
| <b>Transparency</b>                                                                                                                  |                                      |                                                |                    |                                          |                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                          |
| 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.                                                                                | Social media updates on initiatives, projects etc.                                                                                                       |
| <b>Delivery and Monitoring</b>                                                                                                       |                                      |                                                |                    |                                          |                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                          |
| 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.<br>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.<br>2024/25 – 24 trees<br>2025/26 – 34 trees<br>2026/27 – 4 trees & 697 hedging plants<br>2027/28 - * to be agreed | Detail planting undertaken since reporting on WTC climate impact by recording the annual carbon sequestration.<br>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                                      |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Witney Community</b>                                            |                                      |                                                                  |        |                                                                                      |                                                          |
| <b>Community Engagement</b>                                        |                                      |                                                                  |        |                                                                                      |                                                          |
| 40. Witney Parish Impact Carbon Footprint Report to be undertaken. | ASA-CP                               | High                                                             | Nil    | 2025 – Report undertaken.<br>Undertake annual report comparison for:<br>2026<br>2027 | Analysis of 2025 report and make recommendations to CBC. |

| Climate Action<br><br>Witney Community                                                                                                                    | Lead Officer /<br>Partner<br>Organisations | Impact of action<br>on carbon<br>footprint<br>reduction for<br>Witney Parish | Budget                       | KPI                                                                                                                                                  | Progress / Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                                                                                           |                                            |                                                                              |                              | 2028                                                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 41. Facilitate an 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.<br>Eco Fair held on 24 September 2026.<br>Consider whether an annual Eco Fair is facilitated by WTC by the CBC.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| 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. 10 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of Schools in Bloom in 2027.<br>Following the competition, the Schools in Bloom wheelbarrows are gifted to local care and nursing homes, extending the life of the displays and bringing joy to residents through the children's creativity.<br>Consider whether this is extended to WTC tenants, affiliated partners and organisations 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                          | 2026/27 - Council website is up to date with climate information.<br>Number of visitors per year to webpage.<br><br>Social media content planning to | National Emergency Briefing film screened in Corn Exchange 27 July 2026. 61 attendees.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

| Climate Action<br><br>Witney Community                                                     | Lead Officer /<br>Partner<br>Organisations | Impact of action<br>on carbon<br>footprint<br>reduction for<br>Witney Parish | Budget | KPI                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Progress / Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                                            |                                            |                                                                              |        | allow for regular<br>programme of<br>climate action.                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 44. Sign post local businesses to grants and advice on climate initiatives.                | ASA-CP                                     | Medium                                                                       | Nil    | 2026/27 - Council website is up to date with climate information.<br><br>Number of visitors per year to webpage.<br><br>Social media content planning to allow for regular programme of climate action campaigns and initiatives. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Collaborative Working</b>                                                               |                                            |                                                                              |        |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 45. Work with and support OCC and WODC on climate initiatives within Witney Town boundary. | All                                        | High                                                                         | Nil    | Partnerships formed with OCC & WODC etc.                                                                                                                                                                                          | Agreed micro EV hubs in Council facility car parks, planning responses etc.<br><br>Following feedback from exhibitors at the Eco Fair 2026, it is proposed that a networking platform be established and supported to bring together local organisations, fostering collaboration and enabling joint initiatives to be developed. |

| <b>Climate Action</b><br><b>Witney Community</b>                                                                                                            | <b>Lead Officer / Partner Organisations</b> | <b>Impact of action on carbon footprint reduction for Witney Parish</b> | <b>Budget</b>                  | <b>KPI</b>                                                                                                    | <b>Progress / Comments</b>                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 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.                                                                                   |                                                                                                  |
| <b>Buildings</b>                                                                                                                                            |                                             |                                                                         |                                |                                                                                                               |                                                                                                  |
| 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. |
| <b>Transport</b>                                                                                                                                            |                                             |                                                                         |                                |                                                                                                               |                                                                                                  |
| 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.                            |

| Climate Action<br><br>Witney Community                                                                               | Lead Officer /<br>Partner<br>Organisations | Impact of action<br>on carbon<br>footprint<br>reduction for<br>Witney Parish | Budget                                      | KPI                                                                                                               | Progress / Comments                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 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 and events using social media, etc. | Review cycle stand provision.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| 52. Promotion of walking in Witney.                                                                                  | WTC/ASA-CP /BGSO                           | Low                                                                          |                                             | Promotion of walks around the Lake & Country Park on social media and website.                                    | Walking trails in and around Witney regularly promoted along with healthy outdoor activities e.g. outdoor gym.<br>WTC website to be updated to include outdoor gym equipment listing.<br>Themed walking trails to be investigated e.g. blue plaque heritage trail.<br>Nature trail to be investigated within Witney. |
| 53. Sustainable transport investment.                                                                                | WTC/OCC/W ODC                              | High                                                                         | Nil                                         | Partnership working with OCC and WODC.                                                                            | Support OCC and WODC cycling initiatives, EV charging networks, active travel, public transport and expanding network of local footpaths.<br>Themed walking trails to be investigated linking WTC & WODC land.                                                                                                       |
| <b>Energy</b>                                                                                                        |                                            |                                                                              |                                             |                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| 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.<br>Hiring commenced since 2025 to Witney residents.<br>Promoted at Witney Eco Fair 2026 & on social media.                                                                            |

| Climate Action<br><br>Witney Community                                                            | Lead Officer /<br>Partner<br>Organisations | Impact of action<br>on carbon<br>footprint<br>reduction for<br>Witney Parish | Budget                               | KPI                                                                                                                        | Progress / Comments                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 55. Renewable energy projects                                                                     | WTC/OCC/W<br>ODC                           |                                                                              |                                      |                                                                                                                            | Support OCC and WODC initiatives including community energy schemes.   |
| <b>Waste</b>                                                                                      |                                            |                                                                              |                                      |                                                                                                                            |                                                                        |
| 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.                                                                                              |                                                                        |
| 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. |
| <b>Land Use</b>                                                                                   |                                            |                                                                              |                                      |                                                                                                                            |                                                                        |
| 59. Allotments – Work with Witney Allotment Association to promote positive environmental action. | WTC/ASA-CP                                 | Low                                                                          | Nil                                  | Number of environmental actions supported.<br><br>Introduction of Best Kept Allotment award at Citizen of the Year Awards. | 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

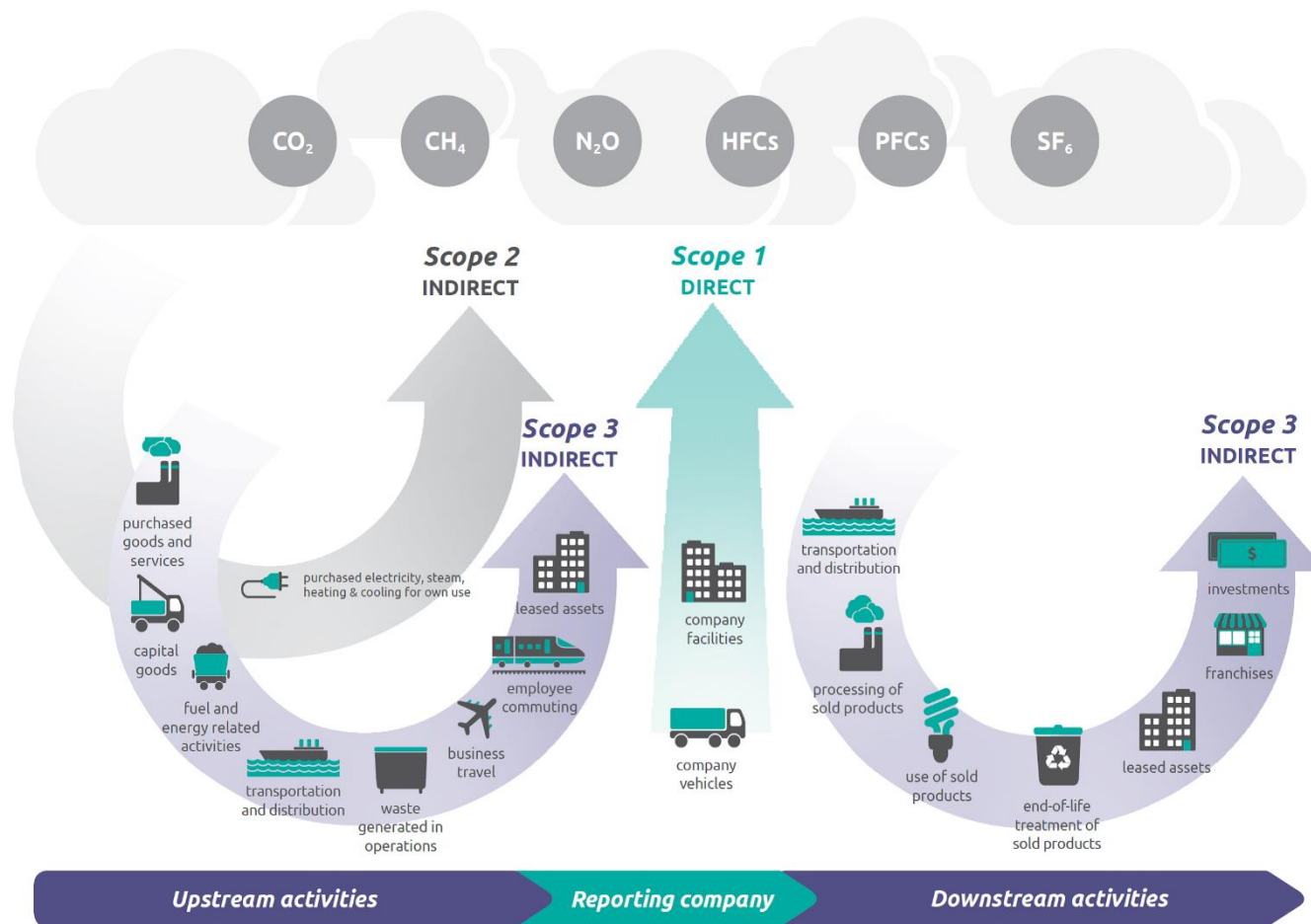
### What are Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions?

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

**FULL COUNCIL**


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|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Agenda Item:</b>     | Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan                                |
| <b>Meeting Date:</b>    | Monday 12 October 2026                                                 |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b> | Administrative Support Assistant – Communities, Environment & Planning |

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This report presents the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan for adoption and provides an update on progress towards the Council's carbon reduction objectives.

## **Background**

At its meeting on 26 June 2019, Witney Town Council formally declared a Climate Emergency. In response, the Council committed to taking meaningful action to address climate change and set a target of achieving carbon neutrality by 2028, supporting a cleaner, more sustainable future for the town and its residents.

## **Current Situation**

Officers have finalised the draft Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan for consideration by Full Council. In parallel, opportunities for external grant funding have been reviewed, low-cost carbon reduction measures at Windrush Cemetery Depot have been identified for implementation, and investigations into larger-scale carbon reduction projects have commenced.

The draft Strategy and Action Plan has been circulated to all officers for review. Feedback received from Members and officers has been considered and incorporated where appropriate.

Should the Strategy be adopted, any future initiatives requiring further approval, including significant expenditure, procurement activity, or major carbon reduction projects, will be reported separately to the appropriate Committee or Full Council for consideration and approval.

## **Draft Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan**

The Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (Version 5) is attached as Appendix A. It has been developed from the preliminary roadmap presented to the Climate and Biodiversity Committee on 20 May 2025 and the direction subsequently provided by the Climate Action Working Party on 25 September 2025.

The Action Plan includes defined actions, timescales and key performance indicators to enable progress to be monitored against measurable outcomes and the Council's carbon neutrality target.

On 8 September 2026, the Climate & Biodiversity Committee reviewed Version 4 and delegated authority to the Deputy Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee, to finalise the document for submission to Full Council on 12 October 2026.

The Action Plan will remain a live working document and will be reviewed regularly by the Climate & Biodiversity Committee to monitor delivery and progress. Significant amendments or matters requiring approval will be referred to Full Council as necessary.

### **Carbon Reduction Recommendation Reports and Grant Funding Update**

A progress matrix on the building carbon reduction recommendations is now presented to the Climate and Biodiversity Committee for information.

An Expression of Interest has been submitted to potential delivery organisations in respect of the capital projects identified for Windrush Cemetery. These projects comprise of the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and an air-to-air heat pump. Further updates will be provided as the projects progress.

Officers were unable to meet the September application deadline for the Energy Solutions Oxfordshire Green Fund and will instead submit an application by 2 December 2026. The fund provides grants of up to £10,000 towards eligible energy efficiency and renewable energy projects identified within the Carbon Reduction Recommendation Reports.

In addition, officers will continue to identify and pursue other suitable funding opportunities to support the delivery of climate action projects.

### **Corporate Strategy**

The Council's Strategic Plan 2025-2029 sets out its long-term vision and priorities in support of its mission to make Witney a great place to live, work and visit. This report supports delivery of the following strategic priority:

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 implementation of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan is expected to deliver benefits across Council services, residents and staff, with no adverse equality impacts identified.
- b) Biodiversity – The Strategy includes actions that support the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, contributing to both climate change mitigation and adaptation.

- c) Crime & Disorder - No direct crime and disorder implications have been identified arising from the recommendations contained within this report.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – The Strategy and Action Plan will support climate change mitigation and adaptation through the delivery of environmental improvements and the reduction of carbon emissions across Council operations.

## **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 emissions savings depends on securing sufficient funding and obtaining Council approval within the required timescales. Principal risks are missed grant deadlines, rising costs, delays in obtaining planning or listed-building advice, and limited availability of suitable low-emission operational vehicles.

## **Social Value**

Social value is the positive impact the Council creates for the communities it serves.

The Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan has the potential to generate significant social, economic and environmental benefits for Witney. Engagement with residents, community groups and local businesses will help ensure implementation supports local economic resilience, social inclusion and environmental sustainability.

## **Financial implications**

Costs arising from the implementation of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan will be met from approved budgets or submitted for approval through the Council's established decision making processes.

A capital budget of £50,000 has been allocated for carbon reduction projects during 2026-2027.

Officers will actively pursue external grant funding and other financial support opportunities to maximise available resources.

Officers will seek to make full use of specialist advice, guidance and support available from partner organisations and agencies.

All procurement activity will be undertaken in accordance with:

- Relevant legislation.
- The Council's Procurement Policy.
- Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

## **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and:

1. Adopt the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan attached at Appendix A; and
2. Note the progress made in relation to carbon reduction projects and external funding opportunities.

## FULL COUNCIL



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**Agenda Item:** Dependants Carers Allowance

**Meeting Date:** Monday, 12 October 2026

**Contact Officer:** Town Clerk/CEO – Sharon Groth

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The purpose of this report is to seek the Council's support for the campaign led by Weymouth Town Council, with the backing of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), to enable town and parish councils in England to pay dependants' carers' expenses, and to authorise the Town Clerk to write to the local MP in support.

### Background

Previous administrations of Witney Town Council have supported efforts to address the anomaly whereby the Dependants' Carers' Allowance available to councillors at principal authorities does not extend to town and parish councils in England.

The cost of arranging childcare or care for a dependant while attending council business can discourage, or prevent, people with caring responsibilities from standing for election or serving as town councillors.

This exclusion can limit the range of candidates able to seek election and the extent to which local councils reflect their communities. The campaign seeks a discretionary power to reimburse care costs associated with official council business, rather than a requirement for every council to introduce an allowance.

### Current Situation

The Town Clerk received correspondence from NALC on 28 September 2026 inviting councils to write to their local MP in support of Weymouth Town Council's forthcoming amended proposal under the Sustainable Communities Act 2007. A suggested letter is attached as Appendix A.

NALC's correspondence reports that the Government decided in April 2026 not to take forward the proposed change, and that Weymouth Town Council agreed on 2 September 2026 to seek reconsideration. Weymouth is gathering further evidence, with a view to NALC resubmitting an amended proposal in or by December 2026.

Writing to the local MP now would help raise awareness ahead of that submission and reaffirm Witney Town Council's previous support for addressing this barrier to participation.

The proposed change would provide a power, rather than a duty, to pay carers' expenses. Each council would therefore retain the choice whether to introduce a scheme, subject to the terms of any legislative change.

## **Corporate Strategy**

Supporting wider participation in local democracy is consistent with the Council's Strategic Plan 2025–29 and its mission to make Witney a great place to live, work and visit. It would help the Council reflect the community it serves and enable a wider range of residents to contribute to local decisions.

This report contributes to the delivery of the following strategic pillars of the plan:

1. A Forward Looking Town Council
2. An Engaged & Supported Community
3. An Empowered Community
4. A Respectful Community

## **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: Removing financial barriers associated with caring responsibilities could widen access to elected office and support more representative town and parish councils.
- b) Biodiversity: No direct implications arising from this proposal.
- c) Crime & Disorder: No direct implications arising from this proposal.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency: No direct implications arising from this proposal.

## **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 campaign's outcome and timetable remain outside the Council's control. Supporting the proposal would not authorise payments under the current arrangements. Any future scheme would need to comply with the legislation then in force and be subject to a separate Council decision.

## **Social Value**

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

Enabling more residents with caring responsibilities to participate in local democracy would bring a wider range of experience and perspectives to Council decisions and strengthen community representation.

### **Financial implications**

There are no additional budget requirements arising from sending a letter of support, which can be undertaken within existing staff resources. Any future allowance scheme would require separate consideration of eligibility, payment limits and budget provision.

### **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and resolve to:

1. Support Weymouth Town Council's forthcoming amended Sustainable Communities Act proposal, backed by NALC, to give town and parish councils in England the discretion to pay dependants' carers' expenses for councillors undertaking official council business.
2. Instruct the Town Clerk to write to the local MP on behalf of Witney Town Council using the suggested letter at Appendix A, adapted to reflect the Council's support and with any necessary factual or legal corrections before issue.

Dear **[insert name of MP here]**

I am writing from **[insert council name here]** to ask you to support an important matter being raised by Parish and Town Councils in England.

Back in 2019 Weymouth Town Council submitted a challenge to the government under the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 regarding the ability of Parish and Town Councils in England to be able to pay dependents care expenses for Councillors when attending Council meetings.

Currently principal authorities have the right to make payments using this allowance to their Councillors to assist them to part pay for childcare and dependent's care while those Councillors carry out official council business such as council meetings. This same right is not currently given to parish and town councils in England, although it is in Wales.

Earlier this year the government responded to Weymouth Town Council saying that MHCLG had decided not to take forward changes to right this inequality.

Weymouth Town Council will be appealing this decision and will be requesting re-submission of an amended Dependents' Carers' Allowance proposal to the Government in the next few months. The change being asked for is that Parish and Town Councils in England are given the ability to pay carer's expenses, not a duty to, so it will not be compulsory.

**[Insert council name here]** want you to support the forthcoming appeal for two main reasons:

- To ensure that carers in England are no longer disadvantaged in this way. There is no reason for carers in England to be singled out for this disadvantage and that this omission from the audit regulations represents an inequality under the Equalities Act 2000. While not having their own specific protected characteristic, carers are covered by equalities legislation regarding employment, service provision, and education, prohibiting unfair treatment or "discrimination by association".
- To remove this barrier to civic participation, to ensure a diverse range of candidates are able to stand for election to make sure our most local councils reflect our communities.

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and I hope you feel able to support our sector in this vital area of work.

Yours....

## **Witney Town Council Response to the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043 Consultation**

Witney Town Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2043.

As the principal settlement within the District, Witney will continue to accommodate substantial housing, employment, and infrastructure growth throughout the plan period. The Town Council supports sustainable growth where it is infrastructure-led and accompanied by appropriate investment in transport, community facilities, leisure provision, environmental improvements, and public services that maintain and enhance residents' quality of life.

The Council has recently adopted an Infrastructure Funding Statement and associated infrastructure project list, identifying a range of local infrastructure priorities across the town. This document will be maintained and updated throughout the plan period and should be used to inform infrastructure planning, developer contributions and investment decisions associated with future growth.

Whilst the Council supports many of the ambitions contained within the emerging Local Plan, it considers that several policies require strengthening to ensure that development is supported by the infrastructure necessary to create sustainable, healthy, and resilient communities.

### **Strategic Infrastructure and Transport**

Policies CP3 and CP8

Witney Town Council strongly supports the inclusion of the Northern Distributor Road and West End Link Road within the Local Plan. However, the Council considers the current policy approach insufficiently robust to guarantee delivery.

The Local Plan should:

- Require the delivery of the Northern Distributor Road and West End Link Road as critical infrastructure necessary to support planned housing growth. with key infrastructure delivered alongside or in advance of major development.
- Include clear phasing requirements linking the occupation of development to the delivery of strategic transport infrastructure.
- Require land safeguarding and route protection throughout the plan period.

The Council further recommends that the Northern Distributor Road be explicitly identified as a strategic distributor route forming part of Witney's long-term ring road network. The route should be designed to a standard comparable to Deer Park Road and not as an estate road serving adjoining development. The policy should clearly require a design specification capable of accommodating long-term traffic growth, public transport, active travel infrastructure, and future strategic connectivity needs.

Without stronger policy safeguards, there is a significant risk that piecemeal development could compromise the effectiveness and capacity of this strategically important route.

### **Future Public Transport Infrastructure**

Policies CP8 and SP5

The Council recommends that the Local Plan adopt a more ambitious and longer-term approach to public transport planning.

Specifically, the Local Plan should:

- Safeguard land for a future transport interchange or bus terminal within or adjoining the town centre.
- Require major developments to contribute towards strategic public transport infrastructure.
- Support enhanced bus services linking new development with employment, education, and service centres.
- Safeguard potential corridors and land required for future rail infrastructure and future rail connectivity serving Witney and West Oxfordshire.

The Council believes that the aspiration for a future railway connection between Witney and Oxford should be formally recognised within the Local Plan. Although delivery may be beyond the plan period, safeguarding opportunities now will ensure future generations retain the option of delivering transformational public transport improvements.

### **Housing Growth and Strategic Development Areas**

Woodford Way / Woodford Road Strategic Area

The Council supports the allocation of this area but considers that development must be accompanied by comprehensive infrastructure provision.

The Local Plan should require a holistic approach that delivers:

- Community facilities;
- Green infrastructure;
- Active travel routes;
- Public open space;
- Sustainable drainage infrastructure;
- Biodiversity enhancements;
- Youth facilities.

The Council would be against piecemeal development that delivers housing ahead of supporting infrastructure.

#### Policy WIT4: Town Centre Strategic Sites

The Council notes that the current approach could result in some of the most strategically important town centre sites being dominated by residential uses.

The Local Plan should require a comprehensive town centre masterplan for the Welch Way area and associated sites and should prioritise:

- Community uses;
- Public realm improvements;
- Cultural and arts facilities;
- Civic infrastructure;
- Public transport facilities;
- Green spaces;
- Mixed-use development.
- Flexible exhibition and community spaces.

The Council recommends that housing forms one component of redevelopment proposals rather than the principal objective.

Given the central location of these sites, they should be expected to deliver wider community and economic benefits which cannot easily be accommodated elsewhere.

#### **Community Infrastructure**

##### Policy CP7: Youth Services

The Council believes youth provision should be specifically identified as critical community infrastructure.

The Local Plan should require major residential developments to contribute towards:

- Dedicated youth facilities;
- Youth outreach services;
- Flexible community spaces suitable for young people;

Youth infrastructure should be planned alongside schools, sports provision, and open spaces rather than considered as an optional enhancement.

#### **Healthcare Infrastructure**

##### CP4: Delivering Infrastructure In-step with New Development

The Council considers healthcare provision to be a critical component of sustainable development.

The Local Plan should require major developments to contribute towards the expansion of primary healthcare facilities and capacity, ensuring that healthcare infrastructure keeps pace with population growth and does not place additional pressure on existing services.

## **Sport, Leisure, and Recreation**

Policies CP4 and DM7

The Council considers the evidence demonstrates that existing leisure provision within Witney is already under significant pressure.

Resident feedback gathered through the Town Council's Annual Survey consistently identifies demand for additional leisure, recreation, and sporting opportunities.

The Local Plan should:

- Recognise the need for a new or replacement leisure centre serving Witney and the wider catchment area, alongside enhanced indoor and outdoor sports provision, including the development of an athletics running track to address a recognised gap in local sporting infrastructure.
- Identify leisure, sport and recreation facilities as strategic infrastructure required to support planned growth and healthy communities.
- Require major developments to make proportionate contributions towards the provision, enhancement and maintenance of indoor and outdoor sports facilities, including playing pitches, changing facilities and recreational spaces.
- Ensure that sufficient land is allocated and safeguarded to enable the future expansion of leisure, sport and recreation facilities where demand arises.

Without additional investment, population growth will place further strain on facilities that are already operating at or near capacity.

## **Allotments and Sustainable Communities**

Policies CP7, DM1 and DM8

The Council recommends that allotments become a standard requirement within major residential developments.

The Local Plan should require development proposals to demonstrate how allotment provision has been incorporated into neighbourhood design and should only permit departures from this requirement where exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated.

Allotments support:

- Food security;

- Climate resilience;
- Healthy lifestyles;
- Community benefit;
- Biodiversity.

The Council considers these benefits sufficiently important to justify stronger policy protection and delivery requirements.

### **Community Facilities and Public Houses**

Policies CP6 and DM15

The Council recommends strengthening policies relating to the protection of public houses and other valued community facilities.

The Local Plan should:

- Presume against the loss of viable public houses and community facilities.
- Require comprehensive evidence demonstrating that continued operation is not feasible before alternative uses are considered.
- Recognise public houses and similar venues as important social infrastructure contributing to community wellbeing, social cohesion and local identity.
- Encourage the provision of new public houses, community hubs and comparable social gathering spaces within major residential developments, ensuring that growing communities are supported by accessible facilities that promote social interaction, community cohesion and a sense of place.

### **Arts, Culture and Public Art**

The Council believes the Local Plan should place greater emphasis on cultural infrastructure.

The Council recommends that:

- Arts, cultural, exhibition and community spaces be recognised as essential infrastructure supporting vibrant communities.
- Strategic development sites be expected to contribute towards cultural facilities and programming.
- Public art requirements include clear arrangements for location, ownership, maintenance, and future funding.

Public art should not simply be installed to meet a planning requirement but should form part of a wider placemaking strategy that delivers long-term value for the community.

## **Climate Change, Flooding and Environmental Resilience**

Policies CP1, CP10, DM1, DM2, DM9, DM10 and DM11

Given Witney's known vulnerability to flooding and increasingly frequent extreme weather events, the Council considers stronger climate resilience requirements are necessary.

The Local Plan should require all major developments to demonstrate how they will:

- Increase resilience to extreme weather events;
- Reduce surface water flood risk;
- Incorporate nature-based solutions;
- Deliver measurable climate adaptation benefits.

The Council particularly supports requirements for:

- Rain gardens;
- Sustainable Drainage Systems;
- Tree planting programmes;
- Green corridors;
- Water attenuation infrastructure;
- Nature-based flood management measures.
- Green canopies and urban greening measures;

These measures should become standard design requirements.

## **Biodiversity, Rewilding and Nature Recovery**

The Council supports the biodiversity objectives within the Plan but considers opportunities exist to strengthen policy expectations.

The Local Plan should:

- Encourage biodiversity outcomes that exceed minimum statutory requirements.
- Support rewilding initiatives within strategic developments.
- Require connected ecological networks between development sites.
- Promote long-term habitat management arrangements.
- Encourage the use of native planting and locally appropriate landscape design.

The Council believes developments should actively contribute to nature recovery and environmental enhancement rather than simply mitigate their impacts.

## **Governance and Infrastructure Delivery**

### **Policies SP1 and SP2**

The Council notes the newly announced Community Governance Review and wider local government reorganisation proposals.

The Local Plan should recognise that governance arrangements may change during the plan period and should include sufficient flexibility to ensure infrastructure, assets and service provision reflect community needs regardless of future administrative boundaries.

Where development occurs adjacent to Witney, infrastructure planning should take account of the potential future governance and service responsibilities of local councils.

### **Infrastructure Funding Statement**

The Council has adopted an Infrastructure Funding Statement project list identifying the infrastructure priorities necessary to support Witney's future growth.

The Council recommends that the Local Plan explicitly recognise locally prepared infrastructure plans as evidence when determining infrastructure requirements and allocating developer contributions. The Town Council's Infrastructure Funding Statement should be recognised as part of the Local Plan evidence base when identifying infrastructure priorities and allocating developer contributions and will continue to be updated throughout the plan period.

## FULL COUNCIL



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**Agenda Item:** Community Asset Acquisition and Management Policy

**Meeting Date:** Monday, 12 October 2026

**Contact Officer:** Town Clerk/CEO

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The purpose of this report is to seek Full Council's approval of the Community Asset Acquisition and Management Policy and supporting Decision Framework, including the amendment requested by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee to address existing Council assets returned from third party occupation or management.

### Background

The draft Policy and supporting Decision Framework were considered by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee on 28 September 2026, following referral from the Personnel Sub-Committee on 29 July 2026. They establish a proportionate approach to assessing asset opportunities, taking account of community benefit, strategic fit, legal responsibilities, affordability, operational capacity and the most appropriate governance and delivery model.

The Committee asked for clarity on the process for managing assets returning to the Council. The Town Clerk explained that the ending of a lease is governed by its terms and the applicable legal framework, including any statutory rights of the tenant. The expiry of a stated lease term does not necessarily entitle the Council to vacant possession, as some business tenancies may continue beyond that date. Appropriate legal advice would therefore be required before taking steps to terminate a lease, oppose renewal or recover possession. The Policy can, however, provide a separate process for handover, interim management and consideration of the asset's future use once possession or management lawfully returns to the Council.

### Current Situation

Members welcomed the framework and recommended the Policy and Decision Framework to Full Council for approval, subject to a minor amendment broadening the scope to include existing Council assets leased to third parties and subsequently returned to the Council during or at the end of the lease term. The Committee delegated authority to the Town Clerk to implement the agreed amendment before presentation to Council on 12 October 2026.

The proposed addition is Section 10, "Council assets returned from third party management", with the existing Monitoring and Review sections renumbered accordingly. The wording is set out below. It addresses the legal position, handover obligations, asset condition, interim costs and responsibilities, and the subsequent review of long-term use and management.

The Policy does not itself authorise termination of a lease or assume that expiry of a stated term automatically gives the Council vacant possession. Appropriate legal advice will be obtained on the relevant agreement and any statutory rights before action is taken.

Consequential amendments will extend Sections 3 and 5 of the Policy to cover significant changes to the use or management of existing Council assets. An introductory note to the Decision Framework will explain how its stages apply proportionately to returned assets, without requiring acquisition stages where ownership is unchanged.

## **PROPOSED POLICY ADDITION**

### **10. COUNCIL ASSETS RETURNED FROM THIRD PARTY MANAGEMENT**

10.1 This section applies where an existing Council-owned asset returns to the Council's possession or operational management following the lawful expiry, termination, surrender or non-renewal of a lease or other management agreement. In these circumstances, ownership remains with the Council, but it will need to review the asset's future use and management arrangements.

10.2 The ending of any lease or management agreement will be governed by its terms and the applicable legal framework, including any statutory rights of the tenant or occupier. Appropriate legal advice will be obtained before the Council takes steps to terminate an arrangement, oppose renewal or recover possession. Nothing in this Policy overrides those requirements or authorises termination.

10.3 Where a return is anticipated, the Town Clerk/CEO will coordinate proportionate planning for the handover and interim management of the asset. This will include, as appropriate:

- establishing the legal position, relevant deadlines and responsibilities of each party;
- inspecting and recording the asset's condition and identifying outstanding repairs, reinstatement obligations or potential dilapidations claims;
- addressing outstanding rent, charges and other contractual liabilities;
- confirming ownership of fixtures, equipment and any items remaining on site;
- arranging the handover of keys, records and relevant compliance information; and
- ensuring appropriate security, insurance, maintenance, utilities and health and safety arrangements are in place when the Council resumes possession or management.

10.4 Officers will assess the financial and operational implications of the asset's return, including any immediate works, ongoing holding costs, loss of rental income and implications for existing users. Necessary interim measures will be taken within approved budgets and delegated authority, with further approval sought where required.

10.5 The Council will review the asset's future use and management through a proportionate application of the supporting Decision Framework. Options may include direct Council management, a new lease or management agreement with a suitable organisation, partnership arrangements, an alternative community use or, where appropriate,

consideration of disposal through the relevant statutory and Council procedures. Direct Council management will not automatically be presumed to be the preferred long-term option.

10.6 Proposals for significant changes to use or management will be reported to the appropriate Committee and/or Full Council in accordance with the Council's governance arrangements. Reports will address community benefit, stakeholder engagement, legal restrictions, asset condition, affordability, staffing, risks and the recommended delivery model. Any interim arrangements will be monitored pending a decision on the asset's long-term future.

10.7 Any proposed disposal of Council land or buildings, including the grant of a lease, will be subject to the applicable statutory requirements, including section 127 of the Local Government Act 1972. Where a disposal at less than the best consideration reasonably obtainable is proposed, the Council will obtain appropriate valuation and legal advice to establish whether the General Disposal Consent (England) 2003 applies or specific Secretary of State consent is required. Any applicable public notice requirements, charitable trusts, title restrictions and other statutory consents will also be addressed at the appropriate stage. Where required, public notices will be published and any objections considered before a final decision to dispose is made.

## **CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS**

Section 3 Scope: Add

*"reviewing the future use or management of an existing Council asset following its return from a third party lease or management arrangement" to the list of circumstances covered by the Policy.*

Section 5 Decision Making: Extend the Framework's application to

*"significant community asset acquisitions and significant changes to the use or management of existing Council assets".*

Decision Framework: Add the following introductory note:

*"For existing Council assets returning from third party occupation or management, the legal position and handover requirements must first be established. The relevant appraisal, engagement, business case and decision stages will then be applied proportionately; acquisition and transfer stages will be adapted or omitted where they do not apply."*

Decision Framework: Add under Stage 7:

*"Where disposal or the grant of a lease is proposed, confirm the applicable statutory disposal requirements, obtain appropriate valuation and legal advice, establish whether general or specific Secretary of State consent is required, and complete any necessary public notice procedures before the transaction is completed. Where public notice and consideration of objections are required before the final disposal decision, those steps will be undertaken ahead of Stage 6."*

## **Corporate Strategy**

The Policy supports delivery of the Council's Strategic Plan 2025–29 and its mission to “make Witney a great place to live, work and visit”. It provides a consistent basis for decisions about assets and facilities that support the Council's priorities, while ensuring that future commitments are sustainable and supported by appropriate resources.

This report contributes to the delivery of the following strategic pillar of the plan:

1. A Forward Looking Town Council
2. An Engaged & Supported Community
3. An Empowered Community
6. A Vibrant Local Economy

## **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 – Assessment of future uses and management arrangements will consider accessibility, inclusion and the effects on existing users. Engagement will be proportionate to the significance of the proposed change.
- b) Biodiversity – Relevant biodiversity and environmental obligations will be considered when reviewing an asset's condition and future use.
- c) Crime & Disorder – Handover and interim management planning will address site security, public safety and the risks associated with vacant premises.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – Maintenance, investment and future use will be assessed with regard to environmental sustainability, climate resilience and whole-life implications.

## **Risk**

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

The additional section reduces the risk of an asset returning without suitable security, insurance, compliance arrangements or provision for ongoing costs. It also requires consideration of outstanding contractual liabilities and a documented appraisal before significant long-term changes are agreed. Decisions remain subject to the Council's existing governance arrangements, budgets and delegated authority.

## **Social Value**

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

The Policy will help safeguard valued facilities and identify sustainable arrangements for their future use. The additional section supports continuity and appropriate engagement where a change of occupier or management arrangement affects existing users.

## **Financial implications**

There are no direct financial commitments arising from adoption of the Policy.

Individual proposals will be assessed separately, including legal and survey fees, repairs, security, insurance, utilities, business rates where applicable, lost rental income, staffing and ongoing maintenance.

Interim measures must remain within approved budgets and delegated authority, with further approval sought where required.

## **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and

1. The recommendation of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee of 28 September 2026;
2. Approve and adopt the Community Asset Acquisition and Management Policy and supporting Decision Framework, incorporating the additional section and consequential amendments set out in this report.

## **Decision Framework for the Consideration of Community Asset Transfers & New Asset Opportunities**

*“For existing Council assets returning from third party occupation or management, the legal position and handover requirements must first be established. The relevant appraisal, engagement, business case and decision stages will then be applied proportionately; acquisition and transfer stages will be adapted or omitted where they do not apply.”*

### **Stage 1 – Opportunity Identified**

#### **Initial Information Received**

- Asset identified by another authority, organisation or developer.
- Establish the nature of the opportunity.
- Does it benefit the residents of Witney?
- Identify any deadlines or expressions of interest required.
- Confirm whether there is sufficient information to undertake an initial assessment.

#### **Outcome**

- Proceed to initial appraisal or decline opportunity.

### **Stage 2 – Initial Strategic Appraisal**

#### **Consider:**

- Does the opportunity support the Council's Strategic Plan?
- Does it benefit the residents of Witney?
- Does it align with the Council's powers and objectives?
- Are there obvious financial or operational constraints?
- Are there any immediate legal concerns?

#### **Outcome**

- Report to Members recommending whether to explore the opportunity further.

### **Stage 3 – Outline Feasibility**

If Members agree in principle:

Undertake proportionate investigations, which may include:

- Asset condition
- Existing liabilities
- Revenue implications
- Staffing implications
- Maintenance requirements
- Legal considerations
- Health & Safety
- Environmental obligations
- Funding opportunities
- Assessment of whether the asset is best retained within the Council or delivered through an alternative governance model.
- Income generation potential
- Risks
- Opportunities

Professional advice commissioned where appropriate.

### **Stage 4 – Stakeholder & Community Engagement**

Where appropriate and proportionate, consider engagement with:

- Existing users
- Local residents
- Community groups
- Sports clubs
- Partner organisations
- Ward Members
- Other stakeholders

Engagement methods may include:

- Public meetings
- Surveys
- Workshops
- Focus groups
- Online consultation
- Targeted stakeholder meetings

*The scale and method of engagement will depend upon the nature, complexity and significance of the proposed asset transfer.*

## **Stage 5 – Business Case**

Prepare a report for Members setting out:

- Strategic benefits
- Community benefits
- Financial implications
- Capital costs
- Ongoing revenue costs
- Staffing implications
- Governance implications
- Risks and mitigations
- Consultation outcomes
- Recommended governance and delivery model
- Options appraisal

### **Governance & Delivery Model Assessment**

As part of the business case, consideration should be given to the most appropriate long-term governance and management arrangements for the asset. Depending on the nature of the opportunity, options may include:

- Direct management by Witney Town Council.
- Management by an existing community organisation or charity.
- Management by a sports club or user group.
- Lease or Service Level Agreement with a third party.
- Establishment of a Community Trust, Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), Community Interest Company (CIC) or another appropriate vehicle.
- Partnership management with another public body or organisation.
- A phased approach, whereby the Town Council initially manages the asset before transferring operational responsibility to another body.

For each option, consideration should be given to:

- Governance arrangements.
- Financial sustainability.
- Community capacity and capability.
- Skills and experience.
- Legal implications.
- Risk allocation.
- Accountability.
- Long-term resilience.
- Community benefit.

## Stage 6 – Council Decision

Council considers:

- Business case
- Community feedback
- Financial affordability
- Risk profile
- Long-term sustainability
- Recommended governance and delivery model

### Decision

- Approve
- Do Not Approve
- Request further work is undertaken

## Stage 7 – Due Diligence & Legal Process

If approved:

- Legal investigations
- Surveys
- Funding agreements
- Contract negotiations
- Insurance
- Asset management planning
- Operational planning
- Staffing arrangements (if applicable)

*“Where disposal or the grant of a lease is proposed, confirm the applicable statutory disposal requirements, obtain appropriate valuation and legal advice, establish whether general or specific Secretary of State consent is required, and complete any necessary public notice procedures before the transaction is completed. Where public notice and consideration of objections are required before the final disposal decision, those steps will be undertaken ahead of Stage 6.”*

## **Stage 8 – Asset Transfer**

- Completion of legal documentation
- Handover arrangements
- Communications plan
- Operational mobilisation
- Budget implementation
- Governance arrangements

## **Stage 9 – Review**

Following acquisition:

- Post-implementation review
- Financial monitoring
- Performance monitoring
- Community impact
- Lessons learned

**Decision-Making Principles - Throughout every stage the Council should have regard to:**

- Community benefit, in particular to residents of Witney
- Value for money
- Long-term financial sustainability
- Strategic fit
- Transparency
- Appropriate community engagement
- Proportionate decision making
- Legal compliance
- Environmental sustainability
- Risk management

### **Important Note - Applying this Framework**

This framework is intended to provide guidance rather than prescribe a fixed process. Every opportunity to acquire or manage a community asset will present different circumstances, opportunities, risks and timescales. The Town Council will apply this framework proportionately, taking account of the nature and complexity of each proposal, and may adapt the sequence or extent of individual stages where appropriate.

In determining whether to acquire and how best to manage a community asset, the Council will seek to identify the governance and delivery model that best secures long-term community benefit, financial sustainability and effective stewardship of public assets. Direct management by the Town Council will not automatically be presumed to be the preferred option. Alternative delivery models, including management by existing community organisations, charitable trusts, community interest companies, sports clubs, partnership arrangements or other appropriate bodies, will be considered where they better achieve these objectives and align with the Council's Strategic Plan.



## **Draft Community Asset Acquisition and Management Policy**

### **Policy Statement**

Witney Town Council recognises that community assets play an important role in supporting the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of the town. The Council will consider opportunities to acquire, manage or facilitate the management of community assets where doing so delivers long-term public benefit, represents value for money and supports the Council's Strategic Plan.

### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this Policy is to establish the principles that will guide Witney Town Council when considering opportunities to acquire, own, lease, manage or facilitate the management of community assets.

The Policy recognises that opportunities may arise through:

- Local Government Reorganisation;
- Asset transfers from principal authorities;
- Developer contributions;
- Community initiatives;
- Charitable organisations;
- Public bodies; or
- Other opportunities that support the Council's Strategic Plan.

This Policy provides the overarching principles to support transparent, robust and proportionate decision making.

### **2. Policy Objectives**

The Council aims to:

- safeguard community assets for public benefit;
- support thriving and resilient communities;
- secure value for money;
- ensure long-term financial sustainability;
- encourage community involvement;
- consider innovative governance arrangements;
- manage risk effectively;
- protect public funds.

### 3. Scope

This Policy applies whenever the Council is invited to consider:

- accepting ownership;
- accepting a lease;
- accepting management responsibility;
- acquiring land or buildings;
- establishing a new community facility;
- taking on additional public services linked to an asset;
- *reviewing the future use or management of an existing Council asset following its return from a third party lease or management arrangement.*

The Council will ensure that any proposed acquisition is supported by an appropriate statutory power and complies with all relevant legislation.

Nothing within this Policy places the Council under any obligation to accept the transfer, ownership or management of any community asset. Each opportunity will be considered on its own merits, having regard to the Council's statutory powers, financial position, strategic priorities, available resources and the long-term interests of the community.

For the purposes of this Policy, a *community asset* may include (but is not limited to):

- parks and open spaces;
- sports facilities;
- community centres;
- civic buildings;
- public conveniences;
- car parks;
- allotments;
- heritage assets;
- play areas;
- recreational facilities;
- commercial premises held for community benefit;
- other land or buildings that contribute to the wellbeing of the community.

### 4. Guiding Principles

Throughout every stage the Council should have regard to:

- Community benefit
- Value for money
- Long-term financial sustainability
- Strategic fit
- Transparency
- Appropriate community engagement
- Proportionate decision making

- Legal compliance
- Environmental sustainability and climate resilience
- Risk management
- Equality, diversity, accessibility and inclusion

## 5. Decision Making

The Council has adopted a **Decision Framework for the Consideration of Community Asset Transfers & New Asset Opportunities**, attached at **Appendix A**, which will normally be followed when considering significant community asset acquisitions *and significant changes to the use or management of existing Council assets*. Where it is considered appropriate to depart from the Framework, the reasons will be clearly documented within the report to Members.

## 6. Community Engagement

The Council recognises that meaningful engagement is fundamental to successful community asset ownership.

The scale of engagement will be proportionate to:

- the value of the asset;
- the significance to the community;
- the potential financial implications;
- the number of stakeholders affected.

Engagement may include:

- public consultation;
- stakeholder workshops;
- surveys;
- user group meetings;
- statutory consultation where required.

## 7. Governance & Delivery Models

This framework is intended to provide guidance rather than prescribe a fixed process. Every opportunity to acquire or manage a community asset will present different circumstances, opportunities, risks and timescales. The Council will apply this framework proportionately, taking account of the nature and complexity of each proposal, and may adapt the sequence or extent of individual stages where appropriate.

In determining whether to acquire and how best to manage a community asset, the Council will seek to identify the governance and delivery model that best secures

long-term community benefit, financial sustainability and effective stewardship of public assets. Direct management by the Council will not automatically be presumed to be the preferred option. Alternative delivery models, including management by existing community organisations, charitable trusts, community interest companies, sports clubs, partnership arrangements or other appropriate bodies, will be considered where they better achieve these objectives and align with the Council's Strategic Plan.

| <b>Governance Model</b>                           | <b>Typical Circumstances</b>                 |
|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Direct Council Management                         | Civic buildings, parks, open spaces          |
| Lease to Community Organisation                   | Sports clubs, community centres              |
| Community Trust                                   | Multi-use community facilities               |
| Community Interest Company                        | Commercial/community mixed use               |
| Charitable Incorporated Organisation              | Charitable facilities                        |
| Partnership Agreement                             | Joint public services                        |
| Service Level Agreement                           | Specialist operational services              |
| Charitable Trust administered by the Town Council | Heritage, civic or endowed charitable assets |

## 8. Financial Considerations

Cover:

- Whole life costs including ongoing maintenance
- Capital investment
- Revenue implications
- Reserves
- External funding
- Income generation
- Borrowing
- Staffing
- Asset management plans
- Exit strategy where appropriate

## 9. Risk Management

Requires consideration of:

- Legal risk
- Financial risk
- Reputational risk
- Operational risk
- Environmental risk
- Community expectations
- Future liabilities
- Health & Safety risk

## **10. Council Assets Returned From Third Party Management**

10.1 This section applies where an existing Council-owned asset returns to the Council's possession or operational management following the lawful expiry, termination, surrender or non-renewal of a lease or other management agreement. In these circumstances, ownership remains with the Council, but it will need to review the asset's future use and management arrangements.

10.2 The ending of any lease or management agreement will be governed by its terms and the applicable legal framework, including any statutory rights of the tenant or occupier. Appropriate legal advice will be obtained before the Council takes steps to terminate an arrangement, oppose renewal or recover possession. Nothing in this Policy overrides those requirements or authorises termination.

10.3 Where a return is anticipated, the Town Clerk/CEO will coordinate proportionate planning for the handover and interim management of the asset. This will include, as appropriate:

- establishing the legal position, relevant deadlines and responsibilities of each party;
- inspecting and recording the asset's condition and identifying outstanding repairs, reinstatement obligations or potential dilapidations claims;
- addressing outstanding rent, charges and other contractual liabilities;
- confirming ownership of fixtures, equipment and any items remaining on site;
- arranging the handover of keys, records and relevant compliance information; and
- ensuring appropriate security, insurance, maintenance, utilities and health and safety arrangements are in place when the Council resumes possession or management.

10.4 Officers will assess the financial and operational implications of the asset's return, including any immediate works, ongoing holding costs, loss of rental income and implications for existing users. Necessary interim measures will be taken within approved budgets and delegated authority, with further approval sought where required.

10.5 The Council will review the asset's future use and management through a proportionate application of the supporting Decision Framework. Options may include direct Council management, a new lease or management agreement with a suitable organisation, partnership arrangements, an alternative community use or, where appropriate, consideration of disposal through the relevant statutory and Council procedures. Direct Council management will not automatically be presumed to be the preferred long-term option.

10.6 Proposals for significant changes to use or management will be reported to the appropriate Committee and/or Full Council in accordance with the Council's governance arrangements. Reports will address community benefit, stakeholder engagement, legal restrictions, asset condition, affordability, staffing, risks and the recommended delivery model. Any interim arrangements will be monitored pending a decision on the asset's long-term future.

10.7 Any proposed disposal of Council land or buildings, including the grant of a lease, will be subject to the applicable statutory requirements, including section 127 of the Local Government Act 1972. Where a disposal at less than the best consideration reasonably obtainable is proposed, the Council will obtain appropriate valuation and legal advice to establish whether the General Disposal Consent (England) 2003 applies or specific Secretary of State consent is required. Any applicable public notice requirements, charitable trusts, title restrictions and other statutory consents will also be addressed at the appropriate stage. Where required, public notices will be published and any objections considered before a final decision to dispose is made.

## 11. Monitoring

The implementation of this Policy will be monitored through individual project reviews and, where appropriate, periodic reports to Members. Lessons learned from completed projects will be used to inform future asset acquisition decisions.

## 12. Review

This policy will be reviewed every four years or following significant legislative or organisational change.

|                |              |
|----------------|--------------|
| <b>Version</b> | <b>1.0</b>   |
| Adopted by     | Full Council |
| Date adopted   | xx xxxx 2026 |
| Review date    | xx xxxx 2030 |

|                       |                                        |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------------|
| <b>Version</b>        | <b>1.0</b>                             |
| Policy Owner          | Town Clerk & CEO                       |
| Responsible Committee | Policy, Governance & Finance Committee |

**From:** Plater, Roger - Oxfordshire County Council

<[Roger.Plater@Oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Roger.Plater@Oxfordshire.gov.uk)>

**Sent:** 10 September 2026 17:05

**To:** Plater, Roger - Oxfordshire County Council <[Roger.Plater@Oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Roger.Plater@Oxfordshire.gov.uk)>

**Subject:** Request for feedback on 20mph schemes - West Oxfordshire

Good afternoon town and parish council clerks, and County Cllrs,

The implementation of the County Council's 20mph programme saw about 280 parish and town councils participating, and with the new limits in some cases now having been in place for three or more years we are keen to understand how they are working from a local perspective.

The very wide take up of the programme by local councils across Oxfordshire has supported the provision to provide a safer and more pleasant environment for all road users and residents.

We are now contacting all parish and town councils to seek your views on how the 20mph speed limits are working in your community, acknowledging that it will take time for a culture of lower speeds in our towns and villages to become the norm.

We would be very grateful to receive your comments on the following:

- Examples of roads / parts of your town and village where the 20mph limits are working well and why you consider this to be the case.
- Examples where you consider 20mph is not working as effectively or as hoped, and what you think is the cause of this and what might be required to make it more effective.

The County Council is also monitoring changes in the number of reported collisions and changes in traffic speeds. We would be happy to provide this information for roads in your area if of interest.

At the outset of the programme, it was also acknowledged that resources for providing traffic calming measures to help support the new lower limits was not possible through the 20mph programme, and would need to be funded locally through s106, CIL or other funding. This is still the case, but we would be very happy to support – by providing advice etc. – on possible measures should there be local funding opportunities.

Although there is no deadline for sending your observations, we would be grateful to receive any responses (by reply to this email) by the end of November.

Kind regards

***Roger***

Roger Plater - Senior Officer – Vision Zero - Central Programme Delivery -Highway Maintenance - Environment and Highways - Oxfordshire County Council

## FULL COUNCIL



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**Agenda Item:** Governance – Register of Interests, Hospitality & Data Protection

**Meeting Date:** Monday, 12 October 2026

**Contact Officer:** Deputy Town Clerk

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The purpose of this report is to remind Members of their obligations concerning register of interests, declarations of hospitality and data protection.

## Background

### Members' Register of Interests

The *Local Government Act 2000* and *Localism Act 2011* dictate rules on this and set out that all elected town and parish councillors must complete a register of interests' form. This form should detail any financial or other interests that might cause a conflict of interest in their Councillor duties.

Councillors are required to register their interests within 28 days of taking office. They must also keep their statutory register updated, notifying the Town Clerk and District Council's Monitoring Officer of any changes within 28 days of their occurrence.

Additionally, councillors must declare any interests in matters discussed at council meetings. This declaration is made through their general declaration form, or at Council, or committee meetings they attend. Parish and Town Councils are required to publish the register on their own website, if they have one.

### Hospitality & Gifts

Witney Town Council has an adopted Code of Conduct, as set out in The Localism Act 2011. The Code of Conduct states Councillors:

- 8.1 *Shall not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimated value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the local authority or from persons who may apply to the local authority for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.*
- 8.2 *Shall register with the Monitoring Officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £50 within 28 days of its receipt.*
- 8.3 *Shall register with the Monitoring Officer any significant gift or hospitality that they have been offered but have refused to accept.*

Members should report any Gifts or Hospitality received which exceed £50 to the Town Clerk within 28 days of the occurrence in the first instance.

### **Data Protection**

The Town Council must ensure it adheres to the Data Protection Act and UK GDPR 2018.

***Witney Town Council as a corporate body is a Data Controller for all the personal data which is processed for Council activities and has a collective responsibility for ensuring compliance with this legislation.***

There are policies, privacy notices, a data map for processing in place and training is provided to staff and Councillors. The Council's current policies and Privacy Notice can be found here [Privacy Notice](#)

Members were provided with data protection information in their Councillor Induction packs in May 2023 and training was provided in September 2023 and June 2025. As a general reminder:

- Personal data is information about a living person, that can identify them either directly or indirectly.
- Processing is anything done with or to personal data, including collecting, using, storing and deleting it
- The data subject is the person about whom personal data is processed e.g. a resident
- The data controller is the person or organisation who determines the 'how and what' of data processing.

### **Current Situation**

Members are reminded of their individual obligations with processing personal data, as data collected in the role of Councillor is also subject to this legislation.

Members are likely to have three roles where processing the personal data of others and must be cautious, particularly regarding 'sensitive data'.

- Member of the Council  
Councillors make use of personal data provided by the Council when acting as a member of the Council, for example, as a member of a committee. In this circumstance the Council is the registered data controller. Personal information held by the Council will not be used for political purposes unless both the Council and the individuals concerned provide consent.
- Ward Councillor  
Councillors use personal case work material in their own right when they are acting as a representative of residents of their ward, for example, in dealing with complaints. All Councillors are required to take the context in which personal information is collected to decide whether their use of the information will be fair and lawful.

- **Political Party**  
Councillors access, collect and deploy personal data through their political campaigning, particularly at election time. In this circumstance, the political party will be the data controller. When campaigning for election as the representative of a political party, candidates can use personal information, such as mailing lists, legitimately held by their parties. However, personal information they hold in their role as representative of local residents, such as complaints casework, will not be used without the consent of the individual

**Personal data should only be kept as long as necessary;** it cannot be kept 'in case' you need it. Once a subject has been dealt with, all personal data should be deleted. Please remember WhatsApp messages as part of any formal group, are subject to Data Subject Access and Freedom of Information requests.

### Dual/Triple-hatted Members

Each individual Authority has its own privacy notice which sets out what data it processes and why. These will all be different as each Council has separate remits.

If contacted from a resident on your Town Council platform on a non- town council related issue, please reply to them on the email address for the Authority which is responsible and explain this to the resident. Please then delete from the town council platform.

## **Impact Assessments**

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

- a) Equality – no direct implications.
- b) Biodiversity – no direct implications.
- c) Crime & Disorder – no direct implications.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – no direct implications.

## **Risk**

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

Personal/reputational risk to Members should they break they fail to update their register of interests, advise of hospitality provided. Failure to register or disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest is a criminal offence under the Localism Act 2011.

Reputational/financial risk to the Council as a corporate body if data protection laws are not adhered to. Members are reminded the Council has a training budget and if any Councillor does not understand their obligations, they should ask for training.

## **Social Value**

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

## **Financial implications**

There are no financial implications pertaining to this report.

## **Recommendations**

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

1. That, Members note their obligations regarding Register of Interests,
2. That, Members note their obligations regarding Gifts & Hospitality,
3. That, Members note their obligations regarding Data Protection and ask for additional training should it be required.

## FULL COUNCIL



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|                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Agenda Item:</b>     | Civic Announcements    |
| <b>Meeting Date:</b>    | Monday 12 October 2026 |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b> | Secretary to the Mayor |

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The role of Mayor involves chairing the Town Council, sitting as an ex officio voting member on Council Committees, representing and promoting Witney, organising key events in the town in partnership with others, raising funds for local charities, and supporting community activities which contribute to the life of the town and the objectives of the Witney Town Council. The Mayor is supported by the Deputy Mayor, whose attendance in place of or alongside the Mayor is noted in the report below which detailing the activities of the Mayor since the last meeting of the Council.

### Supporting the Community

Wood Green School summer concert

Opening of Courtside The Leys

Rosebank Care home Open Day

Visiting Witney Army Cadets

H Samuel store reopening Woolgate Centre

Support meeting with Ladies Circle for their fundraising event

Witney Play & Activity Day

Visit to Churchfields Care Home

Witney Round Table 70<sup>th</sup> Charter celebration

Speaker at Rotary Club lunch meeting

Buttercross Club business lunch – attended on two occasions

Official opening of new building at Wood Green School

Official opening of Kids Planet baby house – Thorney Leys

Witney Lions new defibrillator installation – Taphouse Ave

Witney in Pink judging and support

Witney squadron RAF Cadets drag bingo – Masonic Hall

Visit to Witney Shed

Visit to Witney Knitting Group

WODC and Cottsway refurbishment with Well Child charity new home for resident

Arnold Hearing Specialists – 90 years of trading celebration

Joint RAF and Army Cadets open day – also attended by Deputy Mayor

## **Representing and Promoting Witney**

An evening of music by the Band and Bugles of the Rifles – Radley College

Witney & District Twinning Association committee meeting

Charity Quiz night Vale of White Horse Chair hosting – Deputy Mayor attended

Thame Mayor's civic service

HM Lord Lieutenant Oxfordshire & SE Reserve Forces & Cadets Assoc Awards Ceremony

## **Key Events and Council Activity**

Volunteers picnic and Town Band concert – attended by Deputy Mayor

Merchant Navy flag raising - attended by Deputy Mayor

Neighbourhood policing team E-bike grant photo

Civic service for Witney Feast – St Mary's Church – also attended by Deputy Mayor

Golden Gallopers Fairground service – The Leys – also attended by Deputy Mayor

Presenting Schools In Bloom awards to Blake School, Windrush Primary and Batt School

WTC Eco Fair – also attended by Deputy Mayor

## **Raising Funds -Mayor's Charities 2026-27:**

Mayor's charities: Oxfordshire Autistic Society for Information and Support (OASIS) and Witney Day Centre

Fundraising Bingo event 31 July 2026                      raised £1,700

Fundraising Quiz event 19 September 2026              raised £850

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

## FULL COUNCIL



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|                         |                                    |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <b>Agenda Item:</b>     | Health and Safety Report           |
| <b>Meeting Date:</b>    | Monday 12 October 2026             |
| <b>Contact Officer:</b> | Compliance and Environment Officer |

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

### Background

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

### Current Situation

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

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

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

The Council's health and safety consultants, Opus Safety Ltd provide additional specialist support to the Council.

## Compliance Table

| <b>Compliance Inspection, Testing and Servicing Status</b> | <b>Town Hall</b> | <b>Corn Exchange</b> | <b>Burwell Hall</b> | <b>Windrush Depot</b> | <b>Works Depot</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Fire Risk Assessment</b>                                | Completed        | Completed            | Completed           | Completed             | Completed          |
| <b>Fire Alarm Testing</b>                                  | Completed        | Completed            | Completed           | Completed             | Scheduled          |
| <b>Fire Extinguishers</b>                                  | Completed        | Completed            | Completed           | Completed             | Completed          |
| <b>Steel fire exit staircase</b>                           | N/A              | Completed            | N/A                 | N/A                   | N/A                |
| <b>Emergency Lighting</b>                                  | Completed        | Completed            | Completed           | Scheduled             | Completed          |
| <b>Security</b>                                            | Completed        | Completed            | Completed           | Completed             | Completed          |
| <b>Lift</b>                                                | N/A              | Completed            | N/A                 | N/A                   | N/A                |
| <b>Gas Safety</b>                                          | N/A              | Completed            | Completed           | N/A                   | N/A                |
| <b>Electrical Periodic Inspection</b>                      | Completed        | Completed            | Completed           | Completed             | Completed          |
| <b>PAT Testing</b>                                         | Completed        | Completed            | Completed           | Completed             | Completed          |
| <b>Legionella Risk Assessment</b>                          | Completed        | Completed            | Completed           | Completed             | Completed          |
| <b>Asbestos</b>                                            | Completed        | Completed            | Review              | Completed             | N/A                |
| <b>Air Handling Unit</b>                                   | N/A              | Scheduled            | N/A                 | N/A                   | N/A                |
| <b>Air conditioning</b>                                    | N/A              | N/A                  | Completed           | N/A                   | N/A                |

Corn Exchange emergency lighting remedial works: Two lights being replaced in the gentleman's toilet and backstage corridor.

Burwell Hall emergency lighting remedial works: Two lights being replaced in the entrance lobby and storeroom.

Stanley Court temporary Works Depot has now been vacated by the Operations Team in accordance with the lease agreement for the premises. The new Operations Depot at West Witney Sports Ground has been added to the Council's compliance inspection schedule.

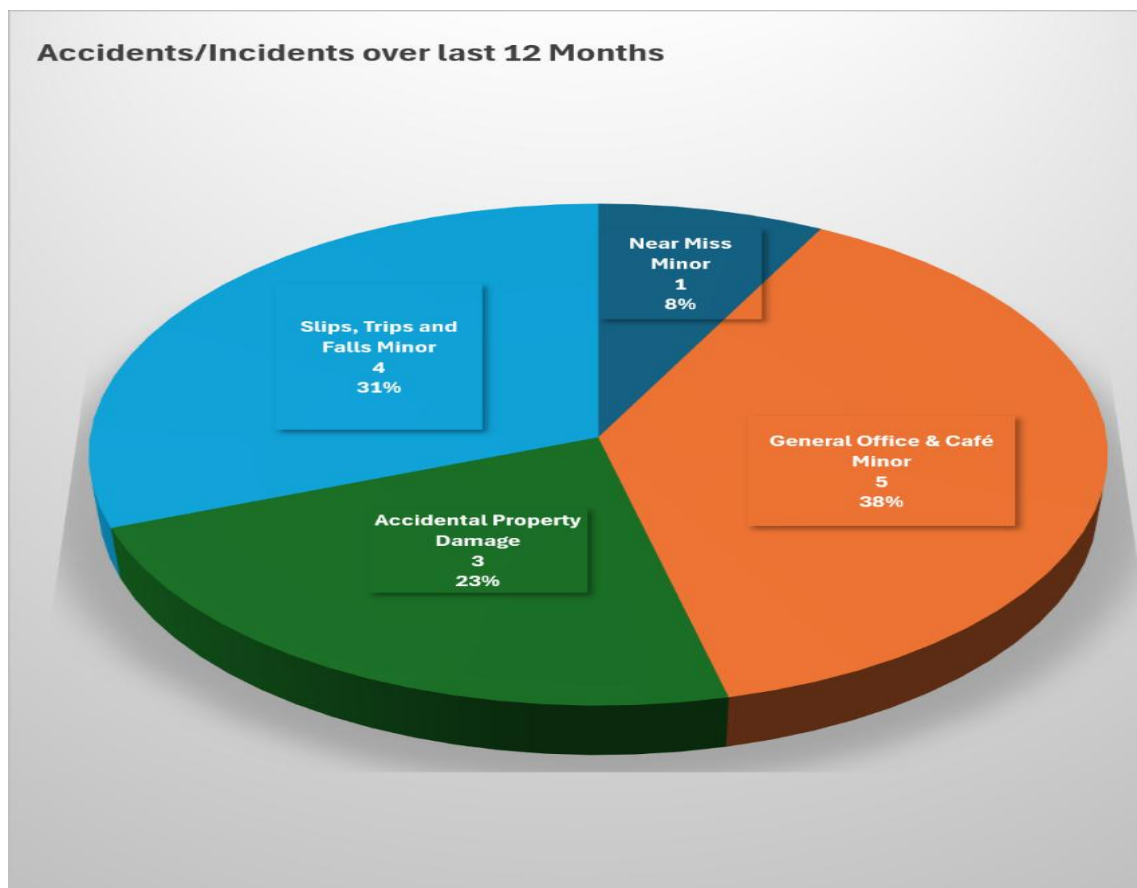
## The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025: Martyn's Law

The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 (Martyn's Law) received Royal Assent on 3 April 2025. While the Act is now law, the statutory requirements are subject to an implementation period of at least 24 months and are therefore not expected to come into force before April 2027.

Officers are monitoring the publication of supporting guidance and assessing the potential implications for Council-operated buildings, venues and events to ensure that appropriate policies, procedures, training and risk management arrangements are developed and aligned with the new legislative requirements.

## Health and Safety incidents

- RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations)
  - No reportable incidents since the last meeting.
- Accidents/Incident since the last meeting
  - There have been two reported accidents/incidents since the last meeting relating to members of the public using the Council's facilities.
    - Slips, trips and falls - Accidental
      - an attendee of the Brass on the Grass at the Leys
      - an audience member at a Jazz event in the Corn Exchange
- Near Miss
  - One reported when the lift failed in the Corn Exchange



## **Impact of Prolonged Dry Weather on Mature Trees**

On the very early morning hours of 23 September 2026, two large mature trees experienced significant branch failures at the council's Tower Hill cemetery, with substantial limbs falling onto footpaths below. Fortunately, no injuries or damage were reported. Both trees had been inspected within the preceding 18 months as part of the Council's routine tree safety inspection programme, and neither inspection identified any defects or conditions requiring remedial works.

Tree maintenance works were completed adjacent to the access lane linking Tower Hill and Fettiplace Road. Overhanging branches from mature trees were reduced to improve safety for residents and other users of the lane.

Following the prolonged period of hot and dry weather experienced during the summer months, officers have identified an elevated risk associated with large mature trees, particularly the phenomenon known as Sudden Branch Drop (SBD). This condition, which is most commonly associated with mature broadleaf species during or following periods of drought stress, high temperatures and increased humidity, can result in the unexpected failure of otherwise healthy-looking branches without obvious warning signs. Whilst the precise causes remain the subject of ongoing research, such failures have the potential to present risks to members of the public, staff, vehicles and property beneath the tree canopy.

In response to these incidents and the prevailing weather conditions, officers are reviewing the frequency of inspections for large mature trees in high-occupancy areas, including parks, public open spaces, cemeteries, footpaths and other locations with significant public use. Any trees identified as presenting an elevated level of risk will be referred for further arboricultural assessment and, where appropriate, managed through remedial pruning, temporary exclusion zones or other proportionate risk mitigation measures. This approach seeks to balance public safety with the retention of the significant environmental, ecological and amenity benefits provided by the Town Council's tree stock.

## **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) Ensuring equality in health and safety measures so that all individuals, regardless of their background, job role, or personal circumstances, have equal access to a safe and healthy environment.
- b) Biodiversity plays a crucial role in health and safety measures, influencing public health, workplace safety, and overall environmental well-being.
- c) Crime and disorder pose risks to health and safety in workplaces, public spaces, and healthcare settings. Issues such as violence, theft, and vandalism can compromise safety measures.
- d) The Environment & Climate Emergency is a critical issue that directly impacts health and safety measures in workplaces and communities. It is important to integrate environmental and climate considerations into the council's health and safety policies to protect workers, reduce environmental hazards, and build resilience against climate-related risks.

## **Risk**

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

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

## **Social Value**

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

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

## **Financial implications**

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

## **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report.

### Vandalism/Anti-Social Behaviour

| Date | Item/Location                                       | Date/Time/Who Reported     | Materials Cost | Staffing Costs | Action                          | Police Reference |
|------|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------|----------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| 14/8 | 2 Liferings removed from lake and hung at swim spot | 19:30pm<br>13/08<br>Public |                | £50            | Removed and returned by GS Team | 43260421284      |

Cost can include replacement purchase or an approximation of additional staffing costs.

**County Hall  
New Road  
Oxford  
OX1 1ND**

Councillor Ruth Smith  
Witney Town Council  
Market Square  
Witney  
OX28 6AG

Environment and Transport

**5 August 2026**

Dear Councillor Smith

**Re: Concerns about the Impact of the Works on Businesses and Bus Users.**

Thank you for your letter of 23 July, and for setting out the concerns raised unanimously by Full Council. While it is pleasing to hear that communication between the contractor and the Town Council has met expectations we take the other issues raised seriously and have set out our response below, together with the actions we are taking ahead of the second phase of works.

**Businesses**

We acknowledge that works of this nature inevitably affect businesses. Excavation, traffic management barriers and the phasing of works outside individual premises all create disruption, and we have sought to mitigate this where we can — including commencing works at night, for which the contractor has applied for the necessary licences with the District Council. We also recognise that night working, while reducing daytime disruption, can have an adverse effect on the night-time economy and on hospitality premises with guest accommodation. Where possible night works have avoided weekends and been conducted over specific shorter periods rather than continuously. Please note that further night works will be required as the scheme progresses but we will ensure that affected premises receive notification in advance.

We met with the Chamber of Commerce on the 16<sup>th</sup> July to discuss their concerns. We reviewed our own footfall data, which shows pedestrian numbers are up on the same period last year. We do not offer this to dismiss what businesses are reporting: takings and footfall are not the same thing, and we accept that traffic management, noise and altered pedestrian desire lines may well be changing customer behaviour in ways the footfall figures do not capture. The reasons behind reported reductions in spend are difficult to ascertain with confidence.

**Buses**

The bus situation has been genuinely complex. A number of services are affected at different times, and agreeing temporary stops and diversions with the operators has taken considerable coordination. We accept the criticism that the published information has not been detailed enough.

Ahead of the switch to phase 2 works on the opposite side of the road from 10th August, we have prepared a fuller set of bus diversion maps giving significantly more detail than is currently available. These maps have now been published on our Let's Talk platform but we will also work with the contractor to improve the on-street information.

On the new bus shelters to be installed in Market Square, these are expected around September. We appreciate residents' and bus users' patience while we deliver the best long-term outcome.

### **Engagement and Signage**

We have been engaging with the community during the works, including additional staff on site to ensure Witney Carnival proceeded without reported issues, and early discussions with the organisers of the forthcoming Witney In Pink procession. We accept, however, that our presence on site with individual businesses needs to improve. We are working with the contractor on how to strengthen day-to-day business engagement so that concerns about barrier placement and shop access can be responded to directly and quickly.

We produce a newsletter every two weeks, but we accept your point that published information does not reflect the real-time position on street. We will make clear who people should contact about live construction issues, and direct queries about the scheme design more generally to the County Council for response.

On positive signage, we agree. We are putting out additional signage to communicate that businesses remain open as usual and have already printed banners to be fixed to traffic barriers.

This remains an important investment that will deliver much-needed enhancement to Witney High Street, and we are grateful for the Town Council's continued engagement.

Yours sincerely,

Nick Howdle-Smith  
Infrastructure Delivery Project Manager

Email: [nick.howdle-smith@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:nick.howdle-smith@oxfordshire.gov.uk)  
**[www.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk)**

**From:** Darch, Tim - Oxfordshire County Council <[Tim.Darch@Oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Tim.Darch@Oxfordshire.gov.uk)>

**Sent:** 22 September 2026 5:17 PM

**To:** Darch, Tim - Oxfordshire County Council <[Tim.Darch@Oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Tim.Darch@Oxfordshire.gov.uk)>

**Cc:** Harrison, Dave - Oxfordshire County Council

<[Dave.Harrison@Oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:Dave.Harrison@Oxfordshire.gov.uk)>; [info@oxon4buses.org.uk](mailto:info@oxon4buses.org.uk)

<[info@oxon4buses.org.uk](mailto:info@oxon4buses.org.uk)>

**Subject:** Message from Oxon4Buses: OxBus2040

**TO ALL ADDRESSEES ON OXFORDSHIRE'S PARISH TRANSPORT  
REPRESENTATIVES' CONTACT LIST**

***Sent on behalf of Brenda Boardman, Chair, Oxon4Buses***

*"Dear Oxfordshire resident,*

*Oxfordshire County Council will be issuing a 4-week consultation on bus services in the county, called OxBus2040, on 13 October. This will propose how bus services in Oxfordshire should develop over the next 14 years. Oxon4Buses campaigns for bus users in Oxfordshire and we hope your community will use this opportunity to respond to the consultation when it comes out, especially if you feel that the bus services in your area could be improved.*

*To help your discussions, we have assembled a list of all the parishes in Oxfordshire and combined this with information about bus frequency. Please see the attached Excel file. There are notes in the file on how to use it: start with the sheet labelled 'population'.*

*In addition, the attached questionnaire is to help your debate, our research and possibly part of your response to the consultation. Please use these two pieces of information as prompts for discussions, so that the result is a good representation of the views in your village or parish.*

*O4B is part of an independent charity and are not in any way able to promise that the changes you would like to see will actually happen. We know that for many people, especially in rural areas, the bus is an essential lifeline and the only way they can access the activities and services they want. We also know that the County Council has a limited budget and can only subsidise a limited number of rural bus services: without sufficient patronage, a service will not be maintained. The more people in your community that realize this the better: if everyone uses the bus, then it is more likely to be there for those who depend on it."*

***Please note that completed questionnaires and any comments or queries should be sent to [info@oxon4buses.org.uk](mailto:info@oxon4buses.org.uk).***

Best wishes,

Tim

**Tim Darch**

Public Transport Planner

Economy & Place

Oxfordshire County Council | County Hall | Oxford | OX1 1ND

Mobile: 07759 311540

Email: [tim.darch@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:tim.darch@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

[www.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk)



Questionnaire for Oxfordshire parishes, from Oxon4Buses, September 2026

Parish name .....

Email and name of contact person, please .....

What was the population of your parish in the 2021 census (from the excel spreadsheet we sent you)? .....

What, approximately, is the population now, especially if extra housing has been built? .....

How frequently does your parish get buses at present? Broad categories are in the Excel spreadsheet.

.....

Would you like to see changes to the service and if so what are they?

.....

.....

For instance, would you most like to have (please indicate priorities):

Buses on Sundays .....

Late night services on Fridays and Saturdays .....

An early service (about 7.00 am?) on weekday mornings .....

Or, if you have no service now, where would you like to go, when?

.....

Other comments.....

What would be an effective way of encouraging your community to use the bus and provide the patronage necessary to limit the subsidy and maintain the service?

.....

.....

Are the bus stops in the best place?.....

Do you have adequate seating, lighting, weather protection at the bus stop? What would be the minimum improvement you would like to see? .....

If there is a bus shelter, is it provided by the parish? .....

**Please return this form to: [info@oxon4buses.org.uk](mailto:info@oxon4buses.org.uk)**

**THANK YOU**

**OXON4BUSES list of parishes in  
Oxfordshire, by population size, together  
with bus frequency**

If **column D** is empty, then the parish has a bus service that is hourly or better

4+ weekdays means that there are four or more return journeys, Monday-Friday

Occasional covers the range from once a day to once a week

None means that there are no bus services to this parish

To find your parish: go to the ribbon of icons at the top and find the magnifying glass (usually near the right hand side, as part of editing)

Make sure the cursor is on an empty cell  
Click on the magnifying glass, click on 'find'.  
In the box that comes up write the name of your parish.

click 'find next' in the box. You can use the same process with the other sheet, labelled 'bus frequency' at the bottom below this page.

| Name               | Status          | Population         |
|--------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
|                    |                 | Census<br>21/03/21 |
|                    | Unparished Area | 133,571            |
| Oxford             | Parish          | 54,335             |
| Banbury            | Parish          | 37,020             |
| Bicester           | Parish          | 33,175             |
| Abingdon on Thames | Parish          | 32,183             |
| Didcot             | Parish          | 29,632             |
| Witney             | Parish          | 15,680             |
| Carterton          | Parish          | 13,600             |
| Kidlington         | Parish          | 13,469             |
| Blackbird Leys     | Parish          | 13,273             |
| Thame              | Parish          | 13,106             |
| Wantage            | Parish          | 12,186             |
| Henley-on-Thames   | Parish          | 8,620              |
| Great Faringdon    | Parish          | 8,455              |
| Wallingford        | Parish          | 8,336              |
| Grove              | Parish          | 7,651              |
| Chinnor            | Parish          | 7,250              |
| Chipping Norton    | Parish          | 6,652              |
| Cumnor             | Parish          |                    |

|                                  |        |       |             |
|----------------------------------|--------|-------|-------------|
| Littlemore                       | Parish | 6,285 |             |
| North Hinksey                    | Parish | 5,569 |             |
| Harwell                          | Parish | 5,556 |             |
| Eynsham                          | Parish | 5,324 |             |
| Benson                           | Parish | 4,801 |             |
| Risinghurst and Sandhills        | Parish | 4,577 |             |
| Cholsey                          | Parish | 4,388 |             |
| Wheatley                         | Parish | 4,267 |             |
| Sonning Common                   | Parish | 4,138 |             |
| Old Marston                      | Parish | 4,136 |             |
| Kennington                       | Parish | 4,133 |             |
| Bloxham                          | Parish | 4,050 |             |
| Kingston Bagpuize with Southmoor | Parish | 3,903 |             |
| Woodstock                        | Parish | 3,521 |             |
| Hanborough                       | Parish | 3,503 |             |
| Goring-on-Thames                 | Parish | 3,436 |             |
| Adderbury                        | Parish | 3,316 |             |
| Yarnton                          | Parish | 3,227 |             |
| Drayton                          | Parish | 3,110 |             |
| Charlbury                        | Parish | 3,063 |             |
| Shrivenham                       | Parish | 3,061 |             |
| Sutton Courtenay                 | Parish | 3,056 |             |
| Bampton                          | Parish | 2,993 |             |
| Radley                           | Parish | 2,932 |             |
| Wootton                          | Parish | 2,858 |             |
| Chalgrove                        | Parish | 2,807 | 4+ weekdays |
| Berinsfield                      | Parish | 2,771 |             |
| Watlington                       | Parish | 2,697 | 4+ weekdays |
| St Helen Without                 | Parish | 2,696 |             |
| Woodcote                         | Parish | 2,618 |             |
| Brize Norton                     | Parish | 2,593 |             |
| Heyford Park                     | Parish | 2,475 |             |
| Bodicote                         | Parish | 2,459 |             |
| Hook Norton                      | Parish | 2,355 |             |
| Stanford in the Vale             | Parish | 2,302 |             |
| Deddington                       | Parish | 2,301 |             |
| Watchfield                       | Parish | 2,290 |             |
| Steventon                        | Parish | 2,209 |             |
| Marcham                          | Parish | 2,182 |             |
| Ambrosden                        | Parish | 2,131 |             |
| North Leigh                      | Parish | 2,126 |             |
| Shiplake                         | Parish | 1,994 |             |
| Caversfield                      | Parish | 1,939 |             |
| Milton-under-Wychwood            | Parish | 1,861 | 4+ weekdays |
| Rotherfield Peppard              | Parish | 1,731 | occasional  |
| Crowmarsh                        | Parish | 1,723 |             |
| Chilton                          | Parish | 1,720 |             |
| Blewbury                         | Parish | 1,709 |             |

|                                   |        |       |             |
|-----------------------------------|--------|-------|-------------|
| Stonesfield                       | Parish | 1,663 |             |
| Arncott                           | Parish | 1,660 |             |
| Milton                            | Parish | 1,632 |             |
| Garsington                        | Parish | 1,623 | 4+ weekdays |
| Brightwell-cum-Sotwell            | Parish | 1,594 |             |
| Ducklington                       | Parish | 1,585 |             |
| Steeple Barton                    | Parish | 1,546 | occasional  |
| Standlake                         | Parish | 1,529 |             |
| Burford                           | Parish | 1,522 |             |
| Freeland                          | Parish | 1,521 |             |
| Aston, Cote, Shifford and Chimney | Parish | 1,497 |             |
| Horspath                          | Parish | 1,467 |             |
| Shipton-under-Wychwood            | Parish | 1,446 | 4+ weekdays |
| Minster Lovell                    | Parish | 1,436 |             |
| Kidmore End                       | Parish | 1,396 |             |
| Gosford and Water Eaton           | Parish | 1,384 |             |
| Launton                           | Parish | 1,375 | 4+ weekdays |
| East Hendred                      | Parish | 1,369 |             |
| Goring Heath                      | Parish | 1,258 | occasional  |
| Enstone                           | Parish | 1,241 |             |
| East Hanney                       | Parish | 1,232 |             |
| Hailey                            | Parish | 1,228 |             |
| Tackley                           | Parish | 1,209 |             |
| Sandford-on-Thames                | Parish | 1,204 |             |
| East Hagbourne                    | Parish | 1,181 |             |
| Chesterton                        | Parish | 1,179 | occasional  |
| Stanton Harcourt                  | Parish | 1,134 | 4+ weekdays |
| Bletchington                      | Parish | 1,061 | 4+ weekdays |
| Ewelme                            | Parish | 1,044 |             |
| East Challow                      | Parish | 1,031 |             |
| Nuffield                          | Parish | 1,030 |             |
| Forest Hill with Shotover         | Parish | 1,004 |             |
| Stadhampton                       | Parish | 1,001 | 4+ weekdays |
| Dorchester (Dorchester on Thames) | Parish | 991   |             |
| Kirtlington                       | Parish | 986   | 4+ weekdays |
| Bladon                            | Parish | 977   |             |
| Steeple Aston                     | Parish | 972   |             |
| Kingham                           | Parish | 956   | occasional  |
| Warborough                        | Parish | 947   | occasional  |
| Appleton-with-Eaton               | Parish | 947   | 4+ weekdays |
| Clanfield                         | Parish | 937   |             |
| Leafield                          | Parish | 927   | 4+ weekdays |
| Sunningwell                       | Parish | 912   |             |
| Chadlington                       | Parish | 878   |             |
| Tetsworth                         | Parish | 856   | 4+ weekdays |
| Uffington                         | Parish | 851   | 4+ weekdays |
| Whitchurch-on-Thames              | Parish | 841   | occasional  |
| Curbridge                         | Parish | 834   | 4+ weekdays |

|                                  |        |     |             |
|----------------------------------|--------|-----|-------------|
| Long Wittenham                   | Parish | 822 | occasional  |
| Great Milton                     | Parish | 816 |             |
| Aston Rowant                     | Parish | 807 |             |
| Begbroke                         | Parish | 800 |             |
| Cassington                       | Parish | 794 |             |
| Nettlebed                        | Parish | 779 |             |
| Combe                            | Parish | 774 |             |
| Finstock                         | Parish | 758 |             |
| Bourton                          | Parish | 743 |             |
| Ardley                           | Parish | 740 | 4+ weekdays |
| Cropredy                         | Parish | 736 | occasional  |
| Milcombe                         | Parish | 734 |             |
| Fritwell                         | Parish | 711 | 4+ weekdays |
| Stoke Row                        | Parish | 704 | occasional  |
| Binfield Heath                   | Parish | 701 |             |
| Lewknor                          | Parish | 692 |             |
| Drayton                          | Parish | 692 | occasional  |
| Tiddington-with-Albury           | Parish | 683 |             |
| Islip                            | Parish | 668 |             |
| Letcombe Regis                   | Parish | 661 | 4+ weekdays |
| Clifton Hampden                  | Parish | 652 |             |
| Churchill                        | Parish | 647 | occasional  |
| Bix and Assendon                 | Parish | 628 |             |
| Longcot                          | Parish | 613 |             |
| Buckland                         | Parish | 611 |             |
| Blackthorn                       | Parish | 605 | occasional  |
| Wootton                          | Parish | 602 |             |
| West Hanney                      | Parish | 599 | occasional  |
| Fringford                        | Parish | 592 | 4+ weekdays |
| Shilton                          | Parish | 590 |             |
| Ashbury                          | Parish | 588 | 4+ weekdays |
| Beckley and Stowood              | Parish | 587 |             |
| Moulsford                        | Parish | 586 | occasional  |
| Fyfield and Tubney               | Parish | 583 |             |
| Wardington                       | Parish | 565 |             |
| Harpsden                         | Parish | 559 |             |
| Barford St. John and St. Michael | Parish | 554 | occasional  |
| Ascott-under-Wychwood            | Parish | 551 | 4+ weekdays |
| Great Haseley                    | Parish | 547 | occasional  |
| Longworth                        | Parish | 543 | 4+ weekdays |
| Wroxton                          | Parish | 541 | 4+ weekdays |
| Childrey                         | Parish | 527 | 4+ weekdays |
| Checkendon                       | Parish | 523 | occasional  |
| Tadmarton                        | Parish | 520 | 4+ weekdays |
| South Stoke                      | Parish | 518 |             |
| Sibford Gower                    | Parish | 518 | 4+ weekdays |
| Rollright                        | Parish | 511 |             |
| Cuddesdon and Denton             | Parish | 507 | occasional  |

|                                |        |     |             |
|--------------------------------|--------|-----|-------------|
| Weston-on-the-Green            | Parish | 505 | 4+ weekdays |
| Mollington                     | Parish | 502 | occasional  |
| Upper Heyford                  | Parish | 496 |             |
| Horton-cum-Studley             | Parish | 493 | 4+ weekdays |
| Over Norton                    | Parish | 490 |             |
| Finmere                        | Parish | 487 | 4+ weekdays |
| Duns Tew                       | Parish | 471 | occasional  |
| Culham                         | Parish | 467 |             |
| Stanton St. John               | Parish | 467 | 4+ weekdays |
| Alvescot                       | Parish | 467 |             |
| Little Milton                  | Parish | 465 | 4+ weekdays |
| Fulbrook                       | Parish | 457 | occasional  |
| Stratton Audley                | Parish | 456 | 4+ weekdays |
| Lower Heyford                  | Parish | 453 |             |
| Holton                         | Parish | 449 |             |
| Towersey                       | Parish | 435 |             |
| Charlton-on-Otmoor             | Parish | 435 |             |
| Northmoor                      | Parish | 426 | 4+ weekdays |
| Upton                          | Parish | 426 |             |
| Sydenham                       | Parish | 425 |             |
| Filkins and Broughton Poggs    | Parish | 425 | 4+ weekdays |
| Shenington with Alkerton       | Parish | 422 | 4+ weekdays |
| Eye and Dunsden                | Parish | 421 |             |
| South Hinksey                  | Parish | 420 |             |
| Shutford                       | Parish | 415 | none        |
| Sibford Ferris                 | Parish | 409 | 4+ weekdays |
| Wendlebury                     | Parish | 400 | 4+ weekdays |
| Souldern                       | Parish | 398 | 4+ weekdays |
| Shipton-on-Cherwell and Thrupp | Parish | 379 |             |
| Aston Tirrold                  | Parish | 375 | 4+ weekdays |
| Langford                       | Parish | 374 | occasional  |
| Drayton St. Leonard            | Parish | 368 | occasional  |
| South Moreton                  | Parish | 366 | 4+ weekdays |
| Ramsden                        | Parish | 363 |             |
| Bourton                        | Parish | 363 |             |
| Rotherfield Greys              | Parish | 360 | occasional  |
| Piddington                     | Parish | 358 | occasional  |
| West Hendred                   | Parish | 357 |             |
| Appleford-on-Thames            | Parish | 353 | none        |
| Mixbury                        | Parish | 352 | 4+ weekday  |
| Hinton Waldrist                | Parish | 345 | 4+ weekdays |
| Merton                         | Parish | 344 |             |
| North Newington                | Parish | 342 | none        |
| Ipsden                         | Parish | 341 |             |
| South Leigh                    | Parish | 340 | occasional  |
| Charney Bassett                | Parish | 339 | occasional  |
| Hornton                        | Parish | 334 | occasional  |
| North Moreton                  | Parish | 332 | occasional  |

|                         |        |     |            |
|-------------------------|--------|-----|------------|
| Salford                 | Parish | 331 |            |
| Pishill with Stonor     | Parish | 328 | none       |
| Horley                  | Parish | 326 | occasional |
| Claydon with Clattercot | Parish | 324 | occasional |
| Little Tew              | Parish | 321 | occasional |
| North Aston             | Parish | 319 |            |
| Great Coxwell           | Parish | 317 |            |
| Sparsholt               | Parish | 308 | 4+weekday  |
| Somerton                | Parish | 307 | 4+ weekday |
| Berrick Salome          | Parish | 306 | none       |
| Middleton Stoney        | Parish | 303 |            |
| Spelsbury               | Parish | 299 |            |
| Marsh Baldon            | Parish | 295 | occasional |
| Highmoor                | Parish | 291 | occasional |
| Ardington               | Parish | 288 |            |
| Bucknell                | Parish | 285 | 4+ weekday |
| Broughton               | Parish | 284 | 4+ weekday |
| Mapledurham             | Parish | 283 |            |
| Waterperry with Thomley | Parish | 283 | none       |
| Hethe                   | Parish | 277 | 4+ weekday |
| South Newington         | Parish | 274 | none       |
| Epwell                  | Parish | 273 | none       |
| Black Bourton           | Parish | 271 |            |
| Hanwell                 | Parish | 266 | occasional |
| West Hagbourne          | Parish | 263 |            |
| Swyncombe               | Parish | 261 | none       |
| Fifield                 | Parish | 256 | occasional |
| Fencott and Murcott     | Parish | 251 | occasional |
| Fernham                 | Parish | 248 | 4+ weekday |
| Frilford                | Parish | 248 |            |
| Littleworth             | Parish | 242 |            |
| Swalcliffe              | Parish | 239 | 4+weekday  |
| Stoke Lyne              | Parish | 238 | 4+ weekday |
| West Challow            | Parish | 233 | none       |
| Cottisford              | Parish | 231 | 4+ weekday |
| Kelmscott               | Parish | 227 | none       |
| Asthall                 | Parish | 224 |            |
| Woolstone               | Parish | 224 | 4+ weekday |
| Broadwell               | Parish | 220 | occasional |
| Westcot Barton          | Parish | 216 | occasional |
| Kingston Lisle          | Parish | 215 | 4+weekday  |
| Stoke Talmage           | Parish | 212 | none       |
| Sandford St. Martin     | Parish | 209 | occasional |
| Nuneham Courtenay       | Parish | 208 |            |
| Britwell Salome         | Parish | 206 | occasional |
| Brightwell Baldwin      | Parish | 205 | none       |
| Garford                 | Parish | 205 |            |
| Pyrton                  | Parish | 199 | occasional |

|                            |        |     |             |
|----------------------------|--------|-----|-------------|
| Wigginton                  | Parish | 198 | none        |
| Lockinge                   | Parish | 192 | occasional  |
| Aston Upthorpe             | Parish | 191 | 4+ weekdays |
| Elsfield                   | Parish | 191 | none        |
| Kiddington with Asterleigh | Parish | 186 |             |
| Besselsleigh               | Parish | 181 |             |
| Lyneham                    | Parish | 177 | occasional  |
| Hatford                    | Parish | 173 |             |
| Milton                     | Parish | 171 | none        |
| Crawley                    | Parish | 170 | 4+ weekday  |
| Buscot                     | Parish | 168 |             |
| Hampton Gay and Poyle      | Parish | 166 |             |
| Denchworth                 | Parish | 166 | occasional  |
| Letcombe Bassett           | Parish | 163 | 4+ weekdays |
| Great Tew                  | Parish | 162 | occasional  |
| Shellingford               | Parish | 159 |             |
| Little Coxwell             | Parish | 151 |             |
| Cuxham with Easington      | Parish | 149 | 4+ weekdays |
| Wytham                     | Parish | 149 |             |
| Chastleton                 | Parish | 145 | none        |
| Coleshill                  | Parish | 143 | none        |
| Little Wittenham           | Parish | 141 | none        |
| Toot Baldon                | Parish | 140 | occasional  |
| Goosey                     | Parish | 137 | occasional  |
| Swerford                   | Parish | 136 | none        |
| Noke                       | Parish | 135 | none        |
| Swinbrook and Widford      | Parish | 131 | occasional  |
| Idbury                     | Parish | 129 | occasional  |
| Chilson                    | Parish | 126 | none        |
| Baulking                   | Parish | 125 | none        |
| Oddington                  | Parish | 124 |             |
| Kencot                     | Parish | 110 | 4+ weekdays |
| Adwell                     | Parish | ... | none        |
| Crowell                    | Parish | ... |             |
| Newington                  | Parish | ... | none        |
| Shirburn                   | Parish | ... | occasional  |
| Waterstock                 | Parish | ... |             |
| Wheatfield                 | Parish | ... | none        |
| Woodeaton                  | Parish | ... | none        |
| Blenheim                   | Parish | ... |             |
| Buern                      | Parish | ... | occasional  |
| Cornbury and Wychwood      | Parish | ... | none        |
| Cornwell                   | Parish | ... | occasional  |
| Fawler                     | Parish | ... |             |
| Glympton                   | Parish | ... |             |
| Grafton and Radcot         | Parish | ... | occasional  |
| Hardwick-with-Yelford      | Parish | ... |             |
| Heythrop                   | Parish | ... | none        |

|                               |        |     |             |
|-------------------------------|--------|-----|-------------|
| Holwell                       | Parish | ... | none        |
| Lew                           | Parish | ... | occasional  |
| Little Faringdon              | Parish | ... | 4+ weekdays |
| Rousham                       | Parish | ... |             |
| Sarsden                       | Parish | ... | occasional  |
| Taynton                       | Parish | ... | occasional  |
| Westwell                      | Parish | ... | none        |
| Worton                        | Parish | ... | none        |
| Godington                     | Parish | ... | none        |
| Hardwick with Tusmore         | Parish | ... | none        |
| Middle Aston                  | Parish | ... | none        |
| Newton Purcell with Shelswell | Parish | ... | 4+ weekdays |
| Prescote                      | Parish | ... | none        |
| Compton Beauchamp             | Parish | ... | none        |
| Eaton Hastings                | Parish | ... | none        |
| Lyford                        | Parish | ... | occasional  |
| Pusey                         | Parish | ... | none        |

**Frequency of bus services**

From David Miles, 16.07.26

| Hourly or Better                  | Four or more return journeys Mon -Fri | Occasional ranging from once a day to once a week | No Services             |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| ABINGDON ON THAMES                | APPLETON-WITH-EATON                   | BARFORD ST JOHN AND ST MICHAEL                    | ADWELL                  |
| ADDERBURY                         | ARDLEY                                | BLACKTHORN                                        | APPLEFORD-ON-THAMES     |
| ALVESCOT                          | ASCOTT UNDER WYCHWOOD                 | BRITWELL SALOME                                   | BAULKING                |
| AMBROSDEN                         | ASHBURY                               | BROADWELL                                         | BERRICK SALOME          |
| ARDINGTON                         | ASTON TIRROLD                         | BRUERN                                            | BRIGHTWELL BALDWIN      |
| ARNCOTT                           | ASTON UPTHORPE                        | CHARNEY BASSETT                                   | CHASTLETON              |
| ASTHALL                           | BLETCHINGDON                          | CHECKENDON                                        | CHILSON                 |
| ASTON ROWANT                      | BROUGHTON                             | CHESTERTON                                        | COLESHILL               |
| ASTON, COTE, SHIFFORD AND CHIMNEY | BUCKNELL                              | CHURCHILL                                         | COMPTON BEAUCHAMP       |
| BAMPTON                           | CHALGROVE                             | CLAYDON WITH CLATTERCOT                           | CORNBURY AND WYCHWOOD   |
| BANBURY                           | CHILDREY                              | CORNWELL                                          | EATON HASTINGS          |
| BECKLEY AND STOWOOD               | COTTISFORD                            | CROPREDY                                          | ELSFIELD                |
| BEGBROKE                          | CRAWLEY                               | CUDDSDON AND DENTON                               | EPWELL                  |
| BENSON                            | CURBRIDGE                             | DENCHWORTH                                        | GODINGTON               |
| BERINSFIELD                       | CUXHAM WITH EASINGTON                 | DRAYTON                                           | HARDWICK WITH TUSMORE   |
| BESSELSLEIGH                      | FERNHAM                               | DRAYTON ST LEONARD                                | HATFORD                 |
| BICESTER                          | FILKINS AND BROUGHTON POGGS           | DUNS TEW                                          | HEYTHROP                |
| BINFIELD HEATH                    | FINMERE                               | FENCOTT AND MURCOTT                               | HOLWELL                 |
| BIX AND ASSENDEN                  | FRINGFORD                             | FIFIELD                                           | KELMSCOTT               |
| BLACK BOURTON                     | FRITWELL                              | FULBROOK                                          | LITTLE WITTENHAM        |
| BLACKBIRD LEYS                    | GARSINGTON                            | GOOSEY                                            | MIDDLE ASTON            |
| BLADON                            | HETHE                                 | GORING HEATH                                      | MILTON                  |
| BLENHEIM                          | HINTON WALDRIST                       | GRAFTON AND RADCOT                                | NEWINGTON               |
| BLEWBURY                          | HORTON CUM STUDLEY                    | GREAT HASELEY                                     | NOKE                    |
| BLOXHAM                           | KENCOT                                | GREAT TEW                                         | NORTH NEWINGTON         |
| BODICOTE                          | KINGSTON LISLE                        | HANWELL                                           | PISHILL WITH STONOR     |
| BOURTON                           | KIRTLINGTON                           | HIGHMOOR                                          | PRESCOTE                |
| BOURTON                           | LAUNTON                               | HORLEY                                            | PUSEY                   |
| BRIGHTWELL-CUM-SOTWELL            | LEAFIELD                              | HORNTON                                           | SHUTFORD                |
| BRIZE NORTON                      | LETCOMBE BASSETT                      | IDBURY                                            | SOUTH NEWINGTON         |
| BUCKLAND                          | LETCOMBE REGIS                        | KINGHAM                                           | STOKE TALMAGE           |
| BURFORD                           | LITTLE FARINGDON                      | LANGFORD                                          | SWERFORD                |
| BUSCOT                            | LITTLE MILTON                         | LEW                                               | SWYNCOMBE               |
| CARTERTON                         | LONGWORTH                             | LITTLE TEW                                        | WATERPERRY WITH THOMLEY |
| CASSINGTON                        | MILTON UNDER WYCHWOOD                 | LOCKINGE                                          | WEST CHALLOW            |
| CAVERSFIELD                       | MIXBURY                               | LONG WITTENHAM                                    | WESTWELL                |
| CHADLINGTON                       | NEWTON PURCELL WITH SHELSWELL         | LYFORD                                            | WHEATFIELD              |
| CHARLBURY                         | NORTHMOOR                             | LYNEHAM                                           | WIGGINTON               |
| CHARLTON-ON-OTMOOR                | SHENINGTON WITH ALKERTON              | MARSH BALDON                                      | WOODEATON               |
| CHILTON                           | SHIPTON UNDER WYCHWOOD                | MOLLINGTON                                        | WORTON                  |
| CHINNOR                           | SIBFORD FERRIS                        | MOULSFORD                                         |                         |
| CHIPPING NORTON                   | SIBFORD GOWER                         | NORTH MORETON                                     |                         |
| CHOLSEY                           | SOMERTON                              | PIDDINGTON                                        |                         |
| CLANFIELD                         | SOULDERN                              | PYRTON                                            |                         |
| CLIFTON HAMPDEN                   | SOUTH MORETON                         | ROTHERFIELD GREYS                                 |                         |
| COMBE                             | SPARSHOLT                             | ROTHERFIELD PEPPARD                               |                         |
| CROWELL                           | STADHAMPTON                           | SANDFORD ST MARTIN                                |                         |
| CROWMARSH                         | STANTON HARCOURT                      | SARSDEN                                           |                         |
| CULHAM                            | STANTON ST JOHN                       | SHIRBURN                                          |                         |
| CUMNOR                            | STOKE LYNE                            | SOUTH LEIGH                                       |                         |
| DEDDINGTON                        | STRATTON AUDLEY                       | STEEPLE BARTON                                    |                         |
| DIDCOT                            | SWALCLIFFE                            | STOKE ROW                                         |                         |
| DORCHESTER ON THAMES              | TADMARTON                             | SWINBROOK AND WIDFORD                             |                         |
| DRAYTON                           | TETSWORTH                             | TAYNTON                                           |                         |
| DUCKLINGTON                       | UFFINGTON                             | TOOT BALDON                                       |                         |
| EAST CHALLOW                      | WATLINGTON                            | WARBOROUGH                                        |                         |
| EAST HAGBOURNE                    | WENDLEBURY                            | WEST HANNEY                                       |                         |
| EAST HANNEY                       | WESTON-ON-THE-GREEN                   | WESTCOT BARTON                                    |                         |
| EAST HENDRED                      | WOOLSTONE                             | WHITCHURCH ON THAMES                              |                         |
| ENSTONE                           | WROXTON                               |                                                   |                         |
| EWELME                            |                                       |                                                   |                         |
| EYE AND DUNSDEN                   |                                       |                                                   |                         |
| EYNSHAM                           |                                       |                                                   |                         |
| FAWLER                            |                                       |                                                   |                         |
| FINSTOCK                          |                                       |                                                   |                         |
| FOREST HILL WITH SHOTOVER         |                                       |                                                   |                         |
| FREELAND                          |                                       |                                                   |                         |
| FRILFORD                          |                                       |                                                   |                         |
| FYFIELD AND TUBNEY                |                                       |                                                   |                         |
| GARFORD                           |                                       |                                                   |                         |
| GLYMPTON                          |                                       |                                                   |                         |
| GORING-ON-THAMES                  |                                       |                                                   |                         |
| GOSFORD AND WATER EATON           |                                       |                                                   |                         |
| GREAT COXWELL                     |                                       |                                                   |                         |
| GREAT FARINGDON                   |                                       |                                                   |                         |
| GREAT MILTON                      |                                       |                                                   |                         |
| GROVE                             |                                       |                                                   |                         |
| HAILEY                            |                                       |                                                   |                         |
| HAMPTON GAY AND POYLE             |                                       |                                                   |                         |
| HANBOROUGH                        |                                       |                                                   |                         |
| HARDWICK-WITH-YELFORD             |                                       |                                                   |                         |
| HARPSDEN                          |                                       |                                                   |                         |
| HARWELL                           |                                       |                                                   |                         |
| HENLEY ON THAMES                  |                                       |                                                   |                         |
| HEYFORD PARK                      |                                       |                                                   |                         |
| HOLTON                            |                                       |                                                   |                         |
| HOOK NORTON                       |                                       |                                                   |                         |
| HORSPATH                          |                                       |                                                   |                         |

IPSDEN  
ISLIP  
KENNINGTON  
KIDDINGTON WITH ASTERLEIGH  
KIDLINGTON  
KIDMORE END  
KINGSTON BAGPUIZE WITH SOUTHMOOR  
LEWKNOR  
LITTLE COXWELL  
LITTLEMORE  
LITTLEWORTH  
LONGCOT  
LOWER HEYFORD  
MAPLEDURHAM  
MARCHAM  
MERTON  
MIDDLETON STONEY  
MILCOMBE  
MILTON  
MINSTER LOVELL  
NETTLEBED  
NORTH ASTON  
NORTH HINKSEY  
NORTH LEIGH  
NUFFIELD  
NUNEHAM COURTENAY  
ODDINGTON  
OLD MARSTON  
OVER NORTON  
OXFORD  
RADLEY  
RAMSDEN  
RISINGHURST AND SANDHILLS  
ROLLRIGHT  
ROUSHAM  
SALFORD  
SANDFORD ON THAMES  
SHELLINGFORD  
SHILTON  
SHIPLAKE  
SHIPTON-ON-CHERWELL AND THRUPP  
SHRIVENHAM  
SONNING COMMON  
SOUTH HINKSEY  
SOUTH STOKE  
SPELSBURY  
ST HELEN WITHOUT  
STANDLAKE  
STANFORD IN THE VALE  
STEEPLE ASTON  
STONESFIELD  
STREVENTON  
SUNNINGWELL  
SUTTON COURTENAY  
SYDENHAM  
TACKLEY  
THAME  
TIDDINGTON-WITH-ALBURY  
TOWERSEY  
UPPER HEYFORD  
UPTON  
WALLINGFORD  
WANTAGE  
WARDINGTON  
WATCHFIELD  
WATERSTOCK  
WEST HAGBOURNE  
WEST HENDRED  
WHEATLEY  
WITNEY  
WOODCOTE  
WOODSTOCK  
WOOTTON  
WOOTTON  
WYTHAM

**From:** Democratic Services (WODC)  
**Sent:** 23 September 2026 11:33 AM  
**To:** Town Clerk  
**Subject:** Community Governance Review - Witney area

Dear Town Clerk, Witney Town Council

I write further to West Oxfordshire District Council ("The Council")'s meeting held on Wednesday 16 September 2026 at which it was resolved to undertake a Community Governance Review (CGR) focused on the civic boundaries of Carterton, Chipping Norton and Witney. The CGR will consider boundaries around these towns where development has taken place or is taking place outside of the town council boundaries. Resolution 7 on the paper was to initiate the first phase of the process, to invite proposals from the three Town Councils and their surrounding parishes and that is the purpose of this email to you.

The Terms of Reference agreed by Full Council for the review are attached to this email, and contain the rationale, scope, process and indicative timetable for the review. The full report to Council can be found on our website ([link here](#)) and may be useful to further elaborate on these points and provide useful background. It is important to note that the Council is currently in the process of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), though this is currently paused. Therefore, the timetable is subject to change as LGR will remain the overriding governance priority and draw on resources and officer time in the coming months and years.

This email is an invitation to submit your proposals for boundary changes for the Witney area. If you do not wish to see any changes to boundaries this should also be stated in writing along with your rationale for this position to ensure that your views are represented. In the case of Witney Town Council, we acknowledge that you have previously sent detailed proposals in your letter dated 5 January 2026. The proposals submitted were for the northern and western growth areas around Witney in the direction of Curbridge and Minster Lovell parishes to the west and Hailey and South Leigh and High Cogges parishes to the north. If these proposals for boundary changes remain your final position, we should be grateful if you would confirm that this is the case. If you wish to change your position, please submit your responses to this consultation by 31 December 2026.

We encourage your proposals to be evidence based and as previously submitted, they should include maps of the proposed changes. The report to Council detailed the key considerations for making any changes in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 ("The Act") and the supporting guidance issued by the Boundary Commission. Section 93 (4) of The Act states that any changes to boundaries should be made to secure community governance in the area under review. Securing community governance is defined as ensuring that boundaries reflect the identities and interests of the community and provide effective and convenient local governance for the residents. The report also stated that the Council considers it premature to consider unbuilt planned settlements on which planning permission has not been secured and building has not commenced, such as some of those allocated in the emerging Local Plan. However, the report notes that such areas may be considered in a future community governance

review. In accordance with section 93 (3), local government electors for the area under review will be consulted in a second stage once initial proposals have been established.

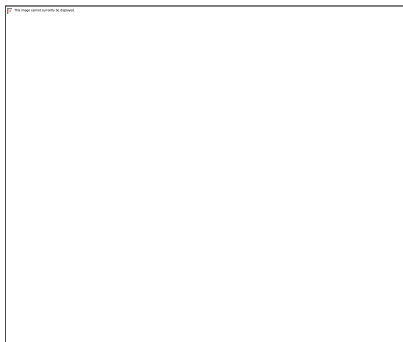
Should you need any assistance mapping your proposals please do let us know. The Ordnance Survey website allows existing parish boundaries to be overlaid on maps of the district: [Election Maps](#). We will be in touch shortly to provide current maps of parishes, councillor numbers and electorate data.

Should you have any questions please do contact our Democratic Services Team.

Otherwise, we look forward to hearing from you by 31 December 2026.

Yours sincerely,

Mathew Taylor – on behalf of West Oxfordshire District Council



## **Community Governance Review 2026/27:**

### **Terms of Reference**

#### **Introduction**

West Oxfordshire District Council (“The Council”) is carrying out a Community Governance Review (CGR) in accordance with Part 4, Chapter 3 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (LGPIHA 2007) to consider parish boundaries, parish ward boundaries and councillor representation in the areas Carterton, Chipping Norton and Witney.

As well as legislation, the Council is also required to have regard for the Guidance on CGRs issued by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. Both the legislation and the guidance have been considered in drawing up these terms of reference.

#### **Why is the West Oxfordshire District Council undertaking the review?**

A CGR provides an opportunity for a district council to review and make changes to community governance for the parishes within their area.

The Council is undertaking a CGR in response to a Council motion passed in January 2026 and a specific request from Witney Town Council. This review is taking place prior to local government reorganisation to ensure that any changes to civil parish boundaries can be agreed prior to an electoral review of the successor unitary council.

#### **Scope of the review**

The focus of this CGR is on the administrative boundaries and electoral arrangements for the parishes and town councils in the Carterton, Chipping Norton and Witney areas of the district only, as well as councillor numbers in all parishes within those areas. No other parish or town councils are being considered for administrative boundary changes as part of this review.

Given the scope outlined above, the CGR will initially involve an invitation to Carterton, Chipping Norton and Witney Town Councils and those parishes bordering the towns of Carterton, Chipping Norton and Witney to submit any proposals for boundary changes and councillor numbers.

The following town and parish councils will be notified of the review and invited to submit proposals:

Carterton Town Council and neighbouring parishes: Alvescot Parish Council, Black Bourton Parish Council, Brize Norton Parish Council, and Shilton Parish Council.

Chipping Norton Town Council and neighbouring parishes: Chadlington Parish Council, Churchill and Sarsden Parish Council, Cornwell Parish Meeting, Enstone Parish Council, Heythrop Parish Meeting, Over Norton Parish Council, Salford Parish Council, and Spelsbury Parish Council.

Witney Town Council and neighbouring parishes: Curbridge & Lew Parish Council, Ducklington Parish Council, Hailey Parish Council, Minster Lovell Parish Council and South Leigh & High Cogges Parish Council.

## Process

Following the invitation to submit proposals, options will be drawn up based on the proposals received in consultation with the Constitution Working Group and Ward Members. Full Council will be recommended to agree to consult on the options. Upon approval of the options for consultation, in accordance with the Council's statutory duties under Section 93 of LGPIHA 2007, the Council will undertake a public consultation with the electors for the areas effected and any other persons or bodies appearing to have an interest in the review.

In considering the responses to the consultation, the Council will have regard to Section 93 LGPIHA 2007 and will ensure that community governance within the areas under review reflect the identities and interests of the community in that area and is effective and convenient.

Any changes will follow the decision-making process in the indicative timetable below.

The Council has a statutory duty under Section 79 LGPIHA 2007 to notify Oxfordshire County Council ("OCC") of its intention to undertake a review and of the contents of these Terms of Reference.

It is also good practice to contact the Local Government Boundary Commission for England ("LGBCE") prior to undertaking a review, officers have corresponded with this body in advance of the agreement of the Terms of Reference.

## Indicative Timetable

| <b><u>Indicative dates</u></b>                                      | <b><u>Action</u></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 16 September 2026                                                   | Full Council considers whether to undertake a CGR                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| October 2026 – 31 December 2026 (3 months)                          | <b>Invitation to submit proposals (3 Months)</b><br>Invite proposals from affected town and parish councils for changes to boundaries of Carterton, Chipping Norton and Witney and seek responses from them on changes to councillor numbers |
| January 2027 – March 2027                                           | Officers review responses and work up options, in consultation with the Constitution Working Group and Ward Members                                                                                                                          |
| <i>Pre-election period, local elections, annual council meeting</i> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| July 2027                                                           | Council considers options and agrees to proceed to public consultation                                                                                                                                                                       |
| September - October 2027 (two months)                               | <b>Public consultation (2 months)</b><br>Public consultation on options                                                                                                                                                                      |
| November - January 2028                                             | Officers review responses and work up final recommendations in consultation with Constitution Working Group and Ward Members                                                                                                                 |

|                   |                                                 |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| Latest March 2028 | Recommendations published and considered/agreed |
| By October 2028   | Reorganisation Order made                       |
| TBC               | Commencement date                               |

(END)

**Reference:** A4/6/C

**Oxfordshire County Council  
County Hall  
Oxford  
OX1 1ND**

Sharon Groth  
Town Hall  
Market Square  
Witney  
OX28 6AG

**Paul Fermer  
Director of Environment,  
Highways & Transport**

**18 Sept 2026**

Dear Sharon

**Re: Witney Town 2026 Annual Residents' Satisfaction Survey**

Thank you for your letter of 24 August 2026 setting out the findings of Witney Town Council's Annual Residents' Satisfaction Survey. We welcome the opportunity to receive feedback from residents and appreciate the Town Council sharing the concerns that have been raised.

The survey highlights a number of important themes relating to highways, accessibility, traffic management and communication, all of which are areas that Oxfordshire County Council continues to prioritise as part of its wider transport and highway maintenance responsibilities.

**Highways and Potholes**

We recognise that the condition of roads and the impact of potholes remains a significant concern for residents. Across Oxfordshire, we continue to invest substantial funding into both reactive repairs and preventative maintenance programmes, including resurfacing, patching and surface treatment schemes designed to improve network condition and reduce the formation of future defects. Specific concerns relating to locations such as the Woodford Way and Welch Way junction have been reviewed we works recently carried out at this location.

**Pavements and Accessibility**

We acknowledge the importance of safe, accessible footways for all users, particularly those with mobility or visual impairments. The condition of footways is monitored through our inspection regime and safety defects are prioritised for repair in accordance with our maintenance policies. We also recognise the impact that street clutter and other obstructions can have on accessibility and will continue to work with relevant stakeholders to identify opportunities to improve the pedestrian environment where appropriate. We do have a decluttering policy in place and review sites on a regular basis while also picking these up via FixMyStreet.

**Town Centre Traffic and Disabled Access**

The feedback regarding traffic restrictions and access to the town centre reflects the range of views often expressed on transport measures. We remain committed to monitoring the performance of schemes in Witney and ensuring that the needs of all road users, including Blue Badge holders and those with disabilities, are considered as part of ongoing reviews. The differing views on the High Street arrangements are recognised and help inform future assessments of town centre transport measures.

## **Communication and Responsibilities**

We acknowledge that residents can often find it difficult to understand which tier of local government is responsible for particular services. We will continue to work with our district, town and parish council partners to improve communication wherever possible and provide clear information regarding planned works, service responsibilities and reporting routes. We agree that ensuring residents know where to direct enquiries is an important part of delivering effective local services.

We also recognise the importance of direct engagement with local communities and stakeholders. Our Highway Engagement Team has been working closely with town and parish councils across Oxfordshire to better understand local concerns and explain how highway maintenance and transport decisions are made. I understand that officers have already been in discussion with representatives from Witney Town Council regarding many of the issues raised, and we welcome those constructive conversations. We would be pleased to continue this engagement, including arranging further meetings or site visits where these would help provide additional context and support a shared understanding of local priorities.

Thank you again for bringing these matters to our attention. Feedback from residents is valuable in helping us understand local priorities and inform our service planning. We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with Witney Town Council to address local concerns and improve outcomes for residents.

Yours faithfully

Stephen Fitzgerald  
Ops Manager – Asset Management and Programmes

Email: [stephen.fitzgerald@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:stephen.fitzgerald@oxfordshire.gov.uk)  
[www.oxfordshire.gov.uk](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk)

**Council Offices**

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Tel: 01993 861000

[www.westoxon.gov.uk](http://www.westoxon.gov.uk)**WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Dear Sharon

Many thanks for sharing with us an overview of the feedback from your 2026 Annual Residents' Satisfaction Survey from earlier this year.

Further to your request for further details on the key themes highlighted in the survey responses, I have addressed these key points below:

***Car Parking***

West Oxfordshire District Council has a clear commitment to supporting the economy and businesses in Witney by protecting free parking where many councils across the country and Oxfordshire charge for parking. We currently provide over 1800 free parking spaces for people visiting the town centre for shopping, leisure and work. Our data shows occupancy levels across Witney vary during the week from between 55.14% to 82.70% at the busiest times showing we have capacity. We also provide a significant number of long stay spaces so that local workers can use our car parks aswell as visitors and shoppers.

Regarding proposals to develop on Woodford Way, as you may be aware there is a very high need for social rented homes for local people in West Oxfordshire and so we need to take a strategic view about how we can meet this incredibly important challenge with the land we own without detracting from existing provision and amenity. Any new development will of course be subject to a Planning Application and while we have not yet reached this stage with Woodford Way, this would provide the opportunity for the community to comment and to ensure that parking provision is considered as part of any future plan.

***Waste, Litter and Street Cleansing***

I appreciate the concerns raised by residents regarding litter bins, littering, and the condition of some street scene infrastructure. Maintaining a clean and attractive environment is important to us, and we recognise the impact that litter and poorly maintained assets can have on residents' perceptions of the area.

Litter bins across the district underwent a comprehensive review and rationalisation programme several years ago, during which the Town Council was consulted. More recently, West Oxfordshire District Council has introduced a digital monitoring system for litter bin servicing. Ubico teams now record bin fill levels during emptying rounds, providing valuable data on bin usage and helping us ensure that bins are emptied at the appropriate frequency. This information is reviewed regularly, and a further assessment from the summer will be undertaken in the coming months. At present, the available data indicates that the current number of litter bins is sufficient, and we have not received evidence of widespread increased littering in busy locations that would suggest a need for additional bins. It is also worth noting that simply installing more bins does not always lead to less littering, as littering behaviour is influenced by a range of factors beyond bin availability.

However, if the ongoing review identifies areas where additional capacity or changes to servicing frequencies are required, appropriate measures will be implemented.

With regard to dilapidated bins, outdated advertisements, or other poorly maintained street scene items, we encourage residents to report these issues directly to the Council. We are committed to addressing such concerns wherever possible and can investigate and arrange remedial action when issues are brought to our attention. While we strive to deliver a high quality service at all times, there are occasions when external factors such as weather conditions, seasonal demands, operational pressures, or misuse of public spaces can impact outcomes. In these situations, feedback from residents and local partners such as Witney Town Council is invaluable, as it helps us identify issues quickly and take corrective action where needed.

Regarding the specific concerns about litter accumulation around locations such as the path adjacent to the Premier Inn and Burford Road, I have passed these on for investigation and review.

### ***Grounds Maintenance***

We acknowledge the concerns raised regarding grass cutting and the maintenance of green spaces and public areas. It is encouraging to note that some residents have observed recent improvements, particularly within the Market Square area.

The survey period covered February to May, which coincides with the start of the grass cutting season. During this time, grass growth can be particularly rapid depending on weather conditions, and there can be variations in how sites appear between scheduled maintenance visits. Without specific locations or examples however, it is difficult to comment on individual concerns.

WODC remains committed to maintaining green spaces to an appropriate standard and continually monitor performance. As with other environmental services, there are occasions when resident expectations may not be fully met due to factors beyond our immediate control. Where residents identify areas that they believe require attention, we encourage them to notify the Council so that concerns can be investigated and addressed as appropriate.

### ***Town Centres***

We take great pride in maintaining regular and ongoing dialogue with businesses across Witney town centre and high street, ensuring we understand both the opportunities and challenges facing our business community.

We are pleased that Witney continues to experience very low levels of vacancy, reflecting the town's strong appeal to both independent and national businesses. The vibrancy of our high street, combined with a loyal customer base and attractive environment, means that many businesses are keen to establish themselves here. Alongside this, we are continuing to strengthen our partnership with Witney Chamber of Commerce to support the town's growth

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Woodgreen

WITNEY

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**WEST OXFORDSHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

and visitor experience. This includes an exciting programme of wayfinding improvements, featuring new signage, interactive digital maps and freestanding information points designed to help visitors navigate the town more easily, discover more of what Witney has to offer and encourage longer dwell times in the town centre.

We are also delighted to see our new market operator going from strength to strength in Market Square. The market plays a valuable role in enhancing the town centre offer, increasing footfall and supporting local traders, and we look forward to working with them to continue its development. In addition, public realm improvements are due to commence at Marriott's Walk, helping to create a more attractive and flexible space for visitors and businesses alike, complimenting the Witney High Street Works completing later this year. We also hope you will have noticed the impact of our dedicated marketing specialist for Marriotts, delivering an expanded programme of events, markets and activities that are further animating the area and attracting new visitors. Overall we have seen an impressive 28.6% year-on-year increase in footfall in Marriotts Walk.

We recognise the importance of popular restaurant and leisure operators, including the interest residents have expressed in brands such as Nando's. While we are unable to comment on any discussions that may take place with individual businesses, please be assured that we listen carefully to the views of residents and remain committed to supporting a diverse town centre offer that meets the needs of our community.

I trust this information is helpful to you and please do not hesitate to get in touch to clarify or discuss any of the above further. Looking ahead, we are excited to be working with Witney Town Council and other partners to establish a Witney Town Centre Forum. This will help coordinate activity, strengthen collaboration and develop a shared vision for the future of the town centre. Together, we want to ensure that Witney remains a thriving, welcoming and attractive place to live, visit, work and enjoy.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Martin'.

Phil Martin

**From:** Richard Pill <[richard.brta@gmail.com](mailto:richard.brta@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** 14 September 2026 16:36

**To:** [CEO@brtarail.com](mailto:CEO@brtarail.com)

**Subject:** Oxford-Witney local rail reopening calling, just the ticket on a nationwide basis!

Dear All,

Scroll up or down for best results, but here is the

link: [https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/26255160.hopes-witney-oxford-train-line-finished-](https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/26255160.hopes-witney-oxford-train-line-finished-2050/?cx_testId=4&cx_testVariant=cx_1&cx_artPos=7&ref=mostread_p_reco#cxrec_s_s)

[2050/?cx\\_testId=4&cx\\_testVariant=cx\\_1&cx\\_artPos=7&ref=mostread\\_p\\_reco#cxrec\\_s\\_s](https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/26255160.hopes-witney-oxford-train-line-finished-2050/?cx_testId=4&cx_testVariant=cx_1&cx_artPos=7&ref=mostread_p_reco#cxrec_s_s)

This is fantastic news. Please email your local MP in support of it: <https://members.parliament.uk/members/commons?sort=1>

We all need to be vigilant and keep the pressure up. Lulls send signals of indifferent, pro-affirma support breeds more pro-affirma support - it is contagious either way!

We need the government to get behind it and switch funding from roads to rails more, be it cancelling the waste of £11 billion Lower Thames Road Tunnels and choose local rail alternatives instead. Oxford-Milton Keynes has been bandied about at £7 billion, some 40 miles of reconstruction, so Witney and Carterton should be a snip of it!

It is about morals and priorities, rail creams off excess traffic loads like the A40 presents, it delivers sustainable footfall, spend and regeneration growth and give all ages and types, modal choices more than just endless development clogging up congested roads and car dependency lifestyles, which are unhealthy.

Rail is good value for money and a nationwide government supported programme is just the ticket to keep Britain moving.

Yours sincerely,

Richard Pill

BRTA CEO

Ps. Thanks John for this and better luck with the missing gap elsewhere on Stratford upon Avon to Long Marston for Oxford-Stratford upon Avon direct.

<https://brtarail.com/our-campaigns/>

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**Chief Executive Officer (CEO): Over all day-to-day Coordination with Executive Committee (EC), Media and Publications Coordinator, Delegating, BRTA Events**

**Support, Bedford Area Rep.; On-line engagement/Social Media links, Team Growth and Role Allocations.**

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**Useful Links:**

1. Website: <https://brtarail.com/>
2. Blogspot: <https://brtarailvolunteer.blogspot.com/>
3. Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BRTARichardPill>
4. <https://www.facebook.com/brtarail>
5. Linked In: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/richard-pill-brta/>
6. X: <https://x.com/BRTACampaigns>

**Disclaimer:** This email loop is open to everyone we deem fit to be on it and who genuinely are interested in the affairs of either BRTA, better public transport, Richard Pill or Bedford. We add on request subject to certain candidacy and delete on request providing original email is included. Please be patient with us as it is not unknown to delete an email only to find it has later been reinserted. ON GDPR, we are voluntary. We are an unincorporated association reliant on membership primarily for financial continuation. The straight-jacket of business versus charity status chokes community action to usher in the kind of improvements or benefits if our calls are heard by powers and authorities. As the news has revealed, a charity as an end in itself is no guarantee or panacea per se, campaigning is often forbidden, contracts can gag free speech and it takes all to make a world. If people want to be deleted, we always do that wherever possible i.e., if we have the right email provided. Otherwise, we assume people want to stay connected. As it is, we're getting new people asking to be linked with us and that is encouraging. If you want to unsubscribe, send the original email with a request. Please support and encourage others to join our loop and voice. We apologise for any inconvenience. Many of our team are on the autistic spectrum. Thank you.