Parks & Recreation
Committee Meeting of Witney Town Council

Monday, 2nd November, 2026 at 6.00 pm

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

To view the meeting please follow this link **Parks & Recreation Committee 02.11.2026**

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 **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.

Date of Publication 27 October 2026

3. **Minutes** (Pages 4 - 7)

a) To adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee held on 7 September 2026;

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

4. **Participation of the Public**

The meeting will adjourn for this item.

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

5. **Finance Report: Revised Revenue Budget 2026/27 and Draft Base Revenue Budget for 2027/28** (Pages 8 - 28)

To receive and consider the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and the Draft Revised Revenue Budget for 2026/27 and Draft Budget for 2027/28.

6. **Revenue Growth Items, Special Revenue Projects, and Capital Projects** (Pages 29 - 32)

To receive and consider the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) with an update on the current year's work programme relating to Capital and Special Revenue Projects; as well as projects identified during the course of the year for inclusion as Revenue Growth Items or Special Revenue Projects in the Council's Revenue Budget or Capital Projects for 2027/28 and beyond.

7. **Schedule of Proposed Fees & Charges 2026/27** (Pages 33 - 35)

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

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

Recreation

8. **Sports Pitches Update** (Pages 36 - 63)

To receive and consider the report of the Operation Manager.

9. **Major Projects** (Pages 64 - 70)

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



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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 & 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 Ralegh 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 Ralegh 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.

The meeting closed at: 6.55 pm

Chair

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

Agenda Item:	Finance Report: Revised Revenue Budget 2026/27 and Draft Base Revenue Budget for 2027/28
Meeting Date:	Monday 2 November 2026
Contact Officer:	Responsible Financial Officer

Should Members have any queries about this report advance notice would be appreciated, in writing, by 12 noon on Monday 2nd November to allow for a full response at the meeting.

The purpose of this report is report to Members in relation to income and expenditure revenue budgets for the year to date, present projections as to the revised revenue estimates for 2026-27 and to present the proposed revenue estimates for 2027-28.

Background

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

Consequently this report presents Members with the revised budget for 2026/27 and the first draft of the revenue budget for 2027/28 for the cost centres which are the responsibility of this Committee. Please see attached document.

The budget process is ongoing and there is further work to undertake. Therefore this report will be subject to updates when this Committee's estimates are presented to the meeting of the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee on 23 November and for reasons explained later in this report some of those changes may be material.

Current Situation

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

Cost centre	Service
201	Splash Park at the Leys Recreation Ground
202	The Leys Recreation Ground
203	West Witney Sports Ground
204	Burwell (Queen Elizabeth 2) Sports Ground
205	King George V/ Newland Recreation Ground
207	Moorland Road Play Area
208	Woodgreen/ Play Area
209	Eton Close Play Area
210	Oxlease Play Area
211	Fieldmere Play Area
212	Quarry Road Play Area
213	Ralegh Crescent Play Area/ Deer Park pitches
214	Park Road Play Area
215	Cedar Drive Play Area
216	Unterhaching Play Area
217	Waterford Lane Play Area
218	Windrush Place
220	Springfield Oval Play Area
230	Play Areas – Holding Budget

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

The format of this report is straightforward; the first two columns relate to the original budget from 2025/26 against the actual figures for last year. The middle columns relate to the current year's original budget, actual expenditure year to date, the projected budget to 31 March 2027, based on the latest estimates. The right-hand columns relate to the draft budget for 2027/28. Note that the financial software the Council uses shows this budget as "Agreed" when it should state "Proposed."

The Committee's revenue budget growth items for 2027/28, and its capital/special revenue projects programme for 2027/28 and beyond are dealt with as a separate budget item.

Budget parameters for 2027/28

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

1. <u>Fees and Charges</u>

   Fees and charges for recreation services need to be considered. The Council is subject to inflationary pressures and so it is reasonable that fees and charges are increased to cover these. It should be remembered that services run at a net cost to the Council taxpayer – which is the ultimate reason they are provided by a local

authority. Fees and charges are set at a level at which a reasonable amount is then recovered by those actually benefiting from the service which has been paid for by all Witney council taxpayers. The CPI (consumer prices index) as of September 2026 was 3.5%. However this is expected to rise to around 3.75% later this year and some forecasts are that it could rise to 4% early in 2027. All these forecasts will be affected by the geopolitical situation and global trade policy which remain highly volatile. The RFO has a reasonably low level of confidence in any forecasts.

The Bank of England CPI target is 2%.
The recommendation is to add 3.5% to fees and charges.

2. Staffing Costs

The national pay award for 2025-26 was agreed at 3.3%.

The agreed budget parameter for 2027-28 is an increase of 3.5%.

3. Utilities

There remains massive uncertainty regarding gas and electricity prices and these will change depending on the increasingly unstable international circumstances. At this stage the RFO's working assumption is 15% but this will be subject to change during the budget cycle.

In relation to **water and sewerage charges** there have been large increases in recent years but there is no information online in relation to 2027-28. Services are being assessed on a case-by-case basis with an increase of 5% allowed.

Regarding National Non-Domestic Rates the increase for 2027-28 this will be announced in the government's budget but is normally based on the CPI in the autumn, which will be around 3.75%.

4. Insurance

The Council's Long-Term Agreement (LTA) with Zurich Municipal will apply during 2027-28, as agreed by the Council on 30th March 2026. The Council did go through a tender process earlier this year but as anticipated premiums increased sharply, reflecting the fact that they had not increased in terms of rating for five years.

The new LTA guarantees the same rate (insurance charge per £1K insured) for three years from 1st April 2026 although premiums will rise to reflect increased sums insured e.g., due to buildings inflation. Increased insured risks will impact the budget e.g., in relation to the Windrush Place Pavilion ends as of 31 March 2026.

The budget will be based on current year's premiums, known additional perils and a 4% inflation uplift.

5. Other expenditure lines

When considering the estimates the RFO examines each individual budget line, looking at the historic trends and known future developments so a flat percentage is not applied uniformly across the estimates. There are likely to be some areas e.g. fuel, where a steep increase will be proposed. However where a cost-of-living increase is applied, 3.5% will be used for 2027-28, revised down from 3.75%.

BASE REVENUE BUDGETS

Members may wish to note the following general comments:

1. The actual year to date figures are for the first six months of the financial year, the period April to September 2026 and include the recharges from central budgets.

2. **Income** - note the seasonal nature of the income in relation to sports facilities, with cricket skewed to the April – September period when income from football is skewed to the period from September.

3. All codes 4047 – **play equipment and area maintenance**. As agreed during 2025-26 a new system was introduced to account for these budgets. Instead of having 15 separate budgets across the different play areas, these were consolidated into one budget held under cost centre (cc) 230. When money is then spent on a play area it is recorded against that play area. Budget is then vired (transferred) to that specific play area budget and the amount in cc230 is reduced accordingly. Consequently Members will see that the amount remaining for play area maintenance this year is £11,292 from an original allocation of £15,320.

   Note that there is a separate play area capital budget of £75,000 (current year), under the capital budget cost centre 800. Capital budgets, including the major West Witney Project, are the responsibility of the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee although the other spending committees have a significant role in formulating and spending these budgets and officers do take the opportunity to update Members regarding projects.

   The same approach is now being taken in relation to the **sports equipment budget** (code 4046); the holding budget in 2026-27 amounted to £5,000, having been vired from cost centres 202 to 204, and this is then vired back to the individual cost centres as required.

4. At this stage in the budget the committees are asked to consider their spending. The funding of this spending and the utilisation of earmarked reserves is a matter which will be considered by the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee later in the cycle.

5. Members are reminded that for the 2026-27 estimates there have also been a number of changes in relation to the treatment of **property budgets**. Previously where a property was leased out this was represented in the accounts against the site where the property was located.

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

   These costs are shown under cost centre 501, under PGF, which consolidates all rented property income and expenditure. Some further virements from cost centres 202 and 203 to 501 in relation to costs directly related to these properties have been made in the current year.

6. It should be noted that a significant proportion of expenditure in the Parks and Recreation budgets relates to recharges from **central budgets**. The latter will be considered by PGF at its next meeting but for now Members may wish to note the following:
   (i) Works team recharges for the year to 30 September 2026 are based on timesheet analysis. This means that there will often be significant variation against individual cost centre budgets depending on what works have taken place on individual sites.
   (ii) The revised 2026-27 estimates are included at the same level as the original budgets; it is considered at this stage that expenditure outturn will be within these budgets. Note that this approach means that there will be some budget lines in relation to works recharges where the year-to-date figure is showing higher than the revised 2026-27 and proposed 2027-28 estimates. An example is at cost centre 216 Unterhaching Park. This will be rectified after final estimates are agreed but because it is an allocation of cost it does not affect the bottom-line.

(iii) The 2027-28 estimates are based at this stage on an overall inflationary increase of 3.5% in relation to the central budgets, noting that there may be some changes between individual cost centres 601 (works team), 602 (central support) and 604 (works depot).

7. There are major inflationary pressures on the Council and so increases have been kept as low as possible. If additional funds are required in-year then increased use of virements is encouraged i.e. funding an overspend on one budget from underspends elsewhere.

Notes in relation to specific items

Time does not allow for a commentary on every item in the accounts but some items of interest are detailed below:

Page 1 – Splashpark. Water/ sewerage charges below but this year due to late season reduction in operating hours during drought. £15,000 budget retained for 2027-28 would allow for hours to return to those agreed in June 2026 and allow for some contingency.

Page 1 onwards – football fees and charges income at codes 1020. The estimates across the sites are based on the income for the period October 2025 to September 2026.

Page 1 – cricket income at the Leys and associated costs – no provision at this stage, pending further developments.

Page 1 – ground hire Leys (code 1051/202) includes fairs and circuses; ground hire not charged/grant (code 1055/202) is the notional cost of hires which are not charged – Witney Music Festival, the Carnival, Pride etc – and is matched by expenditure at 4110/202.

Page 2 – water/sewerage charges the Leys (4012/202) increased with opening of changing rooms.

Page 2 – street furniture (4200/202) amounting to £2,448 is funded from earmarked reserve (infrastructure).

Page 2 onwards – 4037 (ground maintenance) across various sites. Costs have increased over budget due to inflationary pressures and also because where possible costs are allocated directly to sites rather than through the works overhead. Where increases have been necessary there have been some reductions in other-related budgets where this reflects expenditure patterns and is realistic.

Page 3 – cricket fees and charges West Witney (1021/203) – reduced during 2026 for period when facility not available; resumes to previous levels for 2027.

Page 3 – grant received (1170/203) relates to a grant from the Football Foundation specifically for West Witney.

Page 10- play equipment and area maintenance, Unterhaching Park (code 4047/216) – this includes £2,016 expenditure in relation to new sensory equipment.

Revenue costs of new and/or enhanced facilities

There are a number of major projects which are either due to take place or are currently in progress. These will result in either new or enhanced facilities and will therefore have revenue implications. These are all capital projects and are the responsibility of the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee. However on completion they will provide services which will come under the Parks and Recreation Committee.

These facilities are as follows:

(i) Cost centre 202 – revenue costs in relation to the 3G facility at West Witney.
(ii) Cost centre 213 – revenue costs in relation to the MUGA facility at Ralegh Crescent.
(iii) Cost centre 218 – revenue costs in relation to the pavilion and pitches at Windrush Place.
(iv) Cost centre 215 – revenue costs in relation to Cedar Drive Play Area.
(v) Cost centre 217 – revenue costs in relation to Waterford Lane Play Area.
(vi) Cost centre 220 – revenue costs in relation to Springfield Oval Play Area.

With regard to (i) and (ii) - the 3G facility at West Witney and the MUGA facility at Ralegh Crescent - it is anticipated that these may have revenue consequences during 2027/28. At present there is no provision in the revenue budget. Your officers will advise on an estimate in the RFO's report to the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee at 23rd November 2026.

With regard to (iii), the pavilion and pitches at Windrush Place, this facility is due to transfer from the consortium during the current financial year. This is shown at cost centre 218. The net budget for 2026/27 is £32,150. However of this sum works team overheads account for £26,908 and there is a further £13,250 of income. These costs are based on the operating model agreed in December 2025. For now I have assumed the same budgets for 2027/28, with an uplift for inflation. However it is likely this budget will need to be increased. Your officers will advise on an updated estimate in the RFO's report to the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee at 23rd November 2026.

With regard to (iv), (v) and (vi) – Cedar Drive, Waterford Lane and Springfield Oval Play Areas. These facilities are due to be transferred to the Town Council and budgets are already allowed for engineering inspections of the play equipment as well as play risk assessments for the first two and have been added in for Springfield Oval for 2027/27. There will be additional revenue costs in relation to these areas during 2027/28 although these are

understood to be modest. Your officers will advise on updated estimates in the RFO's report to the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee at 23rd November 2026.

Note also that the West Witney Project, including both capital and revenue implications, is the responsibility of the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee, reporting to the Full Council and so is not considered in this report.

Overall the budget estimates show:

Original 2026-27 revenue budget: £491,446(adjusted for virements to property)

Revised 2026-27 revenue budget: £471,631

Proposed 2027-28 revenue budget: £502,210 (increase of 2.2% on 2026-27 original)

Note the above figures will likely change when the revenue costs of new and enhanced facilities and works/ central budgets are considered by the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee.

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

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 RFO has approached the budget with prudence so as accurate budget as possible can be set at this early stage, although there may be some opportunities to make savings if required to balance the budget. The budget must also be realistic; if adequate budgets are not set then service delivery is likely to be affected.

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

Social Value

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

Financial implications

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

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

Recommendations

Member are invited to note the report and

1. Consider the revised base revenue budget for 2026-27 and the estimated base revenue budgets for 2027-28, as detailed in the draft estimates.
2. Make a recommendation to the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee regarding the budget.

Witney Town Council Current Year

Annual Budget - By Committee (Actual YTD Month 6)

Note: Base revenue estimates - Parks & Recreation Committee 2nd November 2026

		2025-26 Final		2026-27				Estimate 2027-28		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
Parks & Recreation										
201	**SPLASHPARK**									
4012	WATER/SEWERAGE CHARGES	15,000	14,823	15,000	11,031	11,031	0	15,000	0	0
4016	CLEANING MATERIALS	305	197	300	92	92	0	250	0	0
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	5,100	1,733	3,500	1,050	400	0	2,500	0	0
4038	OTHER MAINTENANCE	0	0	0	540	540	0	1,250	0	0
4047	PLAY EQUIPMENT & AREA MAINT.	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	510	0	510	0	0	0	510	0	0
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	0	72	0	75	75	0	80	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	7,500	2,951	8,358	5,182	8,358	0	8,651	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	488	208	494	342	494	0	511	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	1,067	602	1,239	679	1,239	0	1,282	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	29,975	20,586	29,401	18,991	22,229	0	30,034	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(29,975)	(20,586)	(29,401)	(18,991)	(22,229)		(30,034)		
202	**THE LEYS RECREATION GROUND**									
1020	SPORTS - FOOTBALL	2,600	1,596	2,810	382	1,950	0	2,000	0	0
1043	GREEN FEES - WTBC	5,500	5,550	5,760	5,761	5,761	0	5,965	0	0
1051	GROUND HIRE	17,650	12,138	12,247	13,772	13,772	0	13,939	0	0
1052	EXPENSES RECOVERED	165	455	0	0	0	0	177	0	0
1054	EASEMENTS/WAYLEAVES	6	0	6	0	6	0	6	0	0
1055	GROUND HIRE - NOT CHARGD/GRANT	0	5,820	6,010	6,010	6,010	0	6,220	0	0
1058	WATER RECOVERED	0	0	0	0	0	0	209	0	0

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Witney Town Council Current Year

Annual Budget - By Committee (Actual YTD Month 6)

Note: Base revenue estimates - Parks & Recreation Committee 2nd November 2026

		2025-26 Final		2026-27				Estimate 2027-28		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
1170	GRANTS RECEIVED	0	1,236	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Income	25,921	26,794	26,833	25,925	27,499	0	28,516	0	0
4012	WATER/SEWERAGE CHARGES	1,350	3,918	0	649	3,000	0	3,500	0	0
4014	ELECTRICITY	3,600	3,769	3,737	1,349	3,400	0	3,900	0	0
4017	CONTRACT CLEAN/WASTE	425	841	665	655	655	0	690	0	0
4024	SUBSCRIPTIONS	0	430	446	447	447	0	462	0	0
4025	INSURANCE	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4028	I.T.	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	5,000	4,286	6,000	2,074	4,000	0	5,000	0	0
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	5,000	6,517	8,000	8,667	10,400	396	9,300	0	0
4046	SPORTS EQUIPMENT	2,000	1,833	150	0	0	115	0	0	0
4047	PLAY EQUIPMENT & AREA MAINT.	3,341	3,341	187	187	186	53	0	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	1,060	940	1,100	1,040	1,040	0	1,075	0	0
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	140	147	145	199	199	0	205	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	41	0	0	0	21	0	0	0
4110	LETTINGS - NO CHARGE/SUBSID'D	5,500	5,820	5,980	6,010	6,010	0	6,220	0	0
4200	STREET FURNITURE	0	0	0	2,448	2,488	0	0	0	0
4215	IN BLOOM - INC SCHOOLS CHALLEN	2,000	0	2,000	0	0	0	2,070	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	80,000	74,941	89,149	34,259	89,149	0	92,269	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	5,210	4,975	5,268	2,200	5,268	0	5,452	0	0
4892	C/S STAFF RCHG	21,358	16,800	7,619	3,745	7,619	0	21,030	0	0
4893	C/S O'HEAD RCHG	5,650	4,736	2,182	1,204	2,182	0	6,021	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	11,376	12,944	13,215	5,915	13,215	0	13,678	0	0

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		2025-26 Final		2026-27				Estimate 2027-28		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
	Overhead Expenditure	153,010	146,293	145,843	71,047	149,258	585	170,872	0	0
	202 Net Income over Expenditure	-127,089	-119,499	-119,010	-45,122	-121,759	-585	-142,356	0	0
6000	plus Transfer from EMR	0	1,875	0	3,685	0	0	0	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(127,089)	(117,624)	(119,010)	(41,437)	(121,759)		(142,356)		
203	**WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND**									
1020	SPORTS - FOOTBALL	8,050	10,907	10,300	3,129	11,500	0	11,900	0	0
1021	SPORTS - CRICKET	1,500	1,939	2,000	1,490	1,490	0	2,100	0	0
1023	SPORTS - TENNIS	0	10,725	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1044	GREEN FEES - WMBC	3,325	3,350	3,450	3,478	3,478	0	3,600	0	0
1045	GREEN FEES - WWBC	3,325	3,325	3,450	3,478	3,478	0	3,600	0	0
1054	EASEMENTS/WAYLEAVES	6	0	6	6	6	0	6	0	0
1060	INSURANCE RECOVERED	0	0	0	0	0	0	489	0	0
1170	GRANTS RECEIVED	0	6,986	0	0	6,986	0	6,986	0	0
	Total Income	16,206	37,232	19,206	11,580	26,938	0	28,681	0	0
4024	SUBSCRIPTIONS	0	430	445	447	447	0	460	0	0
4025	INSURANCE	695	704	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4028	I.T.	0	47	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	3,300	1,744	3,000	97	1,100	0	3,000	0	0
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	11,600	13,425	12,600	11,987	13,900	136	14,400	0	0
4046	SPORTS EQUIPMENT	1,000	665	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	210	376	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4059	OTHER PROF FEES	2,000	0	0	0	0	0	2,070	0	0

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		2025-26 Final		2026-27				Estimate 2027-28		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
4062	SPORTS PITCH MATS NOW P/O 4037	1,285	0	0	0	0	0	1,242	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	70,000	55,782	78,005	35,295	78,005	0	80,735	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	4,559	3,806	4,609	2,181	4,609	0	4,770	0	0
4892	C/S STAFF RCHG	0	1,922	7,620	3,745	7,620	0	0	0	0
4893	C/S O'HEAD RCHG	0	619	2,181	1,204	2,181	0	0	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	9,954	9,319	11,563	6,828	11,563	0	11,968	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	104,603	88,838	120,023	61,785	119,425	136	118,645	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(88,397)	(51,607)	(100,817)	(50,205)	(92,487)		(89,964)		
204	**BURWELL (QE2) SPORTS GROUND**									
1020	SPORTS - FOOTBALL	7,150	5,610	7,280	1,627	6,500	0	6,700	0	0
	Total Income	7,150	5,610	7,280	1,627	6,500	0	6,700	0	0
4024	SUBSCRIPTIONS	0	215	220	223	223	0	230	0	0
4028	I.T.	0	36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	1,000	728	1,038	0	500	0	1,000	0	0
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	9,950	10,609	10,328	9,268	11,000	0	11,385	0	0
4046	SPORTS EQUIPMENT	1,000	1,334	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4047	PLAY EQUIPMENT & AREA MAINT.	135	135	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	560	1,200	1,245	630	0	0	1,289	0	0
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	75	147	75	0	75	0	78	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	41	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	35,000	39,386	39,003	27,715	39,003	0	40,368	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	2,279	2,712	2,305	1,790	2,305	0	2,386	0	0

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		2025-26 Final		2026-27				Estimate 2027-28		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
4892	C/S STAFF RCHG	0	641	2,540	1,248	2,540	0	0	0	0
4893	C/S O'HEAD RCHG	0	206	727	402	727	0	0	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	4,977	6,716	5,782	4,629	5,782	0	5,984	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	54,976	64,106	63,263	45,906	62,155	0	62,720	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(47,826)	(58,496)	(55,983)	(44,280)	(55,655)		(56,020)		
205	**KING GEORGE V / NEWLAND**									
1020	SPORTS - FOOTBALL	1,750	1,596	1,665	538	1,665	0	1,725	0	0
	Total Income	1,750	1,596	1,665	538	1,665	0	1,725	0	0
4028	I.T.	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	5,700	2,895	5,917	4,022	4,500	0	4,500	0	0
4047	PLAY EQUIPMENT & AREA MAINT.	33	33	332	331	331	0	0	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	480	496	515	520	520	0	540	0	0
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	75	147	75	0	75	0	78	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	41	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4100	GRANTS GENERAL	500	0	500	0	0	0	0	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	20,000	14,188	22,287	10,775	22,287	0	23,067	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	1,303	1,005	1,317	653	1,317	0	1,363	0	0
4892	C/S STAFF RCHG	0	641	2,540	1,248	2,540	0	0	0	0
4893	C/S O'HEAD RCHG	0	206	727	402	727	0	0	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	2,844	2,263	3,304	1,819	3,304	0	3,420	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	30,935	21,922	37,514	19,771	35,601	0	32,968	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(29,185)	(20,326)	(35,849)	(19,233)	(33,936)		(31,243)		

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		2025-26 Final		2026-27				Estimate 2027-28		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
207	**MOORLAND ROAD PLAY AREA**									
4047	PLAY EQUIPMENT & AREA MAINT.	449	449	108	108	108	0	0	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	280	313	325	329	329	0	340	0	0
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	75	147	75	0	75	0	78	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	41	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	7,000	5,606	7,801	4,403	7,801	0	8,074	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	456	384	461	286	461	0	477	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	995	955	1,156	739	1,156	0	1,196	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	9,255	7,896	9,926	5,865	9,930	0	10,165	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(9,255)	(7,896)	(9,926)	(5,865)	(9,930)		(10,165)		
208	**WOOD GREEN/PLAY AREA**									
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	0	0	0	297	297	0	0	0	0
4047	PLAY EQUIPMENT & AREA MAINT.	63	63	405	108	405	0	0	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	305	313	325	329	329	0	340	0	0
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	75	147	75	0	0	0	78	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	41	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	5,000	6,464	5,572	6,284	5,572	0	5,767	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	326	450	329	408	329	0	341	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	711	1,083	826	1,144	826	0	855	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	6,480	8,561	7,532	8,570	7,758	0	7,381	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(6,480)	(8,561)	(7,532)	(8,570)	(7,758)		(7,381)		
209	**ETON CLOSE PLAY AREA**									

Continued on next page

		2025-26 Final		2026-27				Estimate 2027-28		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
4047	PLAY EQUIPMENT & AREA MAINT.	9	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	205	209	213	219	219	0	225	0	0
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	100	147	75	0	0	0	78	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	41	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4222	TINY FOREST EXPENSES	150	0	150	0	75	0	100	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	6,000	5,002	6,686	5,433	6,686	0	6,920	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	391	350	395	333	395	0	409	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	853	813	991	1,030	991	0	1,026	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	7,708	6,570	8,510	7,015	8,366	0	8,758	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(7,708)	(6,570)	(8,510)	(7,015)	(8,366)		(8,758)		
210	**OXLEASE PLAY AREA**									
4047	PLAY EQUIPMENT & AREA MAINT.	1,768	1,768	180	180	180	0	0	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	635	524	659	685	685	0	710	0	0
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	75	147	75	0	0	0	78	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	41	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	7,000	9,963	7,801	8,743	7,801	0	8,074	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	456	678	461	528	461	0	477	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	995	1,698	1,156	1,439	1,156	0	1,196	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	10,929	14,820	10,332	11,574	10,283	0	10,535	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(10,929)	(14,820)	(10,332)	(11,574)	(10,283)		(10,535)		
211	**FIELDMERE PLAY AREA**									

Continued on next page

		2025-26 Final		2026-27				Estimate 2027-28		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
4047	PLAY EQUIPMENT & AREA MAINT.	1,482	1,482	108	108	108	4	0	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	305	313	317	329	329	0	340	0	0
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	75	147	75	0	0	0	78	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	41	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	4,000	5,110	4,457	4,470	4,457	0	4,613	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	261	339	263	276	263	0	272	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	569	915	661	715	661	0	684	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	6,692	8,347	5,881	5,897	5,818	4	5,987	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(6,692)	(8,347)	(5,881)	(5,897)	(5,818)		(5,987)		
212	**QUARRY ROAD PLAY AREA**									
4047	PLAY EQUIPMENT & AREA MAINT.	91	91	108	108	108	0	0	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	250	339	260	356	356	0	370	0	0
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	75	147	75	0	0	0	78	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	41	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	4,000	1,396	4,457	4,361	4,457	0	4,613	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	261	43	263	276	263	0	272	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	569	262	661	772	661	0	684	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	5,246	2,319	5,824	5,873	5,845	0	6,017	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(5,246)	(2,319)	(5,824)	(5,873)	(5,845)		(6,017)		
213	**RALEGH/DEER PK- REV.PGF**									
4013	RENT PAID	5	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	9,250	0	9,602	0	4,500	0	9,250	0	0

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		2025-26 Final		2026-27				Estimate 2027-28		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
4047	PLAY EQUIPMENT & AREA MAINT.	77	77	315	91	315	53	0	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	500	0	519	0	519	0	537	0	0
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	75	147	78	0	78	0	81	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	41	0	224	0	0	0	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	20,000	4,711	22,287	7,031	22,287	0	23,067	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	1,302	328	1,317	467	213	0	1,363	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	2,844	777	3,304	1,138	3,304	0	3,420	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	34,053	6,082	37,427	8,950	31,216	53	37,718	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(34,053)	(6,082)	(37,427)	(8,950)	(31,216)		(37,718)		
214	**PARK ROAD PLAY AREA**									
4013	RENT PAID	125	0	125	0	125	0	125	0	0
4047	PLAY EQUIPMENT & AREA MAINT.	9	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	275	0	285	0	0	0	295	0	0
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	75	147	75	0	0	0	78	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	41	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	0	4,999	4,184	4,212	4,184	0	4,330	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	0	420	247	258	214	0	256	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	0	749	620	568	620	0	642	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	484	6,365	5,536	5,039	5,143	0	5,726	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(484)	(6,364)	(5,536)	(5,039)	(5,143)		(5,726)		
215	**CEDAR DRIVE PLAY- REV PGF**									
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	500	0	519	0	519	0	537	0	0

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		2025-26 Final		2026-27				Estimate 2027-28		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	100	0	104	0	104	0	108	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	0	0	0	24	0	0	0	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	600	0	623	24	623	0	645	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(600)	0	(623)	(24)	(623)		(645)		
216	**UNTERHACHING PLAY AREA**									
1170	GRANTS RECEIVED	0	0	0	350	350	0	0	0	0
	Total Income	0	0	0	350	350	0	0	0	0
4014	ELECTRICITY	2,100	891	1,500	370	1,000	0	1,150	0	0
4047	PLAY EQUIPMENT & AREA MAINT.	25	25	2,285	2,285	2,285	0	0	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	500	0	519	0	519	0	537	0	0
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	100	147	75	0	0	0	78	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	41	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	0	1,208	2,221	4,422	2,697	0	2,299	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	0	82	131	271	216	0	136	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	0	235	329	710	329	0	341	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	2,725	2,630	7,060	8,058	7,046	0	4,541	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(2,725)	(2,630)	(7,060)	(7,708)	(6,696)		(4,541)		
217	**WATERFORD LANE PLAY- REV PGF**									
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	510	0	529	0	529	0	548	0	0
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	102	0	106	0	106	0	110	0	0

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		2025-26 Final		2026-27				Estimate 2027-28		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
	Overhead Expenditure	612	0	635	0	635	0	658	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(612)	0	(635)	0	(635)		(658)		
218	**WINDRUSH PLACE - REV PGF**									
1050	RENT RECEIVED	0	0	4,000	0	2,650	0	4,140	0	0
1052	EXPENSES RECOVERED	0	0	9,250	0	6,150	0	9,574	0	0
	Total Income	0	0	13,250	0	8,800	0	13,714	0	0
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	9,250	0	18,852	0	18,852	0	18,852	0	0
4098	NET COSTS - PAVILION	50,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	20,000	0	22,287	0	22,287	0	23,067	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	1,303	0	1,317	0	1,317	0	1,363	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	2,844	0	3,304	0	3,304	0	3,420	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	83,397	0	45,760	0	45,760	0	46,702	0	0
	218 Net Income over Expenditure	-83,397	0	-32,510	0	-36,960	0	-32,988	0	0
6001	less Transfer to EMR	0	59,250	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(83,397)	(59,250)	(32,510)	0	(36,960)		(32,988)		
220	**SPRINGFIELD OVAL- REV PGF**									
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	0	0	0	0	0	0	540	0	0
4049	PLAY RISK ASSESSMENT	0	0	0	0	0	0	78	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	0	0	0	0	0	0	618	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	0	0	0	0	0		(618)		

Continued on next page

Witney Town Council Current Year

Annual Budget - By Committee (Actual YTD Month 6)

Note: Base revenue estimates - Parks & Recreation Committee 2nd November 2026

		2025-26 Final		2026-27				Estimate 2027-28		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
230	**P&R HOLDING BUDGETS**									
4046	SPORTS EQUIPMENT	0	0	4,850	0	5,000	0	5,000	0	0
4047	PLAY EQUIPMENT & AREA MAINT.	7,273	0	11,292	0	11,292	0	15,856	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	7,273	0	16,142	0	16,292	0	20,856	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(7,273)	0	(16,142)	0	(16,292)		(20,856)		
	Parks & Recreation - Income	51,027	71,232	68,234	40,019	71,752	0	79,336	0	0
	Expenditure	548,953	405,333	557,232	284,363	543,383	778	581,546	0	0
	Net Income over Expenditure	-497,926	-334,102	-488,998	-244,344	-471,631	-778	-502,210	0	0
	plus Transfer from EMR	0	1,875	0	3,685	0	0	0	0	0
	less Transfer to EMR	0	59,250	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(497,926)	(391,477)	(488,998)	(240,660)	(471,631)		(502,210)		
	Total Budget Income	51,027	71,232	68,234	40,019	71,752	0	79,336	0	0
	Expenditure	548,953	405,333	557,232	284,363	543,383	778	581,546	0	0
	Net Income over Expenditure	-497,926	-334,102	-488,998	-244,344	-471,631	-778	-502,210	0	0
	plus Transfer from EMR	0	1,875	0	3,685	0	0	0	0	0
	less Transfer to EMR	0	59,250	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(497,926)	(391,477)	(488,998)	(240,660)	(471,631)		(502,210)		

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMITTEE

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

Meeting Date: Monday 2 November 2026

Contact Officer: Responsible Financial Officer

The purpose of this report is to consider Revenue Growth Items, Special Revenue Projects, and Capital Projects in relation to this Committee's services for 2027-28 onwards.

Background

In line with the Council's Financial Regulations the purpose of this report is to enable Members to consider proposed works and projects discussed over the course of the year for potential inclusion in the budgets for 2027-28 and/or subsequent financial years.

Note that these matters are brought to this Committee for consideration, but that revenue growth and capital projects are matters for recommendation by the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee at its meeting on 23rd November 2026. It will be for the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee to prioritise projects and recommend funding to the full Council.

Current Situation

Revenue growth items current and future years

There are a number of major projects which are either due to take place or are currently in progress. These will result in either new or enhanced facilities and will therefore have revenue implications. These are all capital projects and are the responsibility of the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee. However, on completion they will provide services which will come under the Parks and Recreation Committee. These were detailed in the previous report in relation to revenue estimates however as they are growth items, they are also detailed here and Members will need to cross-reference to this report for further details.

These facilities are as follows:

(i) Cost centre 202 – revenue costs in relation to the 3G facility at West Witney. It is anticipated that these may have revenue consequences during 2027/28. At present there is no provision in the revenue budget. Your officers will advise on an estimate in the RFO's report to the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee at 23rd November 2026.

(ii) Cost centre 213 – revenue costs in relation to the MUGA facility at Ralegh Crescent. It is anticipated that these may have revenue consequences during 2027/28. At present there is no provision in the revenue budgets. Your officers will advise on an estimate in the RFO's report to the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee at 23rd November 2026.

(iii) Cost centre 218 – revenue costs in relation to the pavilion and pitches at Windrush Place. There is a budget in place and some earmarked reserves. Your officers will advise on a revised estimate in the RFO's report to the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee at 23rd November 2026.

(iv) Cost centre 215 – revenue costs in relation to Cedar Drive Play Area, Cost centre 217 – revenue costs in relation to Waterford Lane Play Area and Cost centre 220 – revenue costs in relation to Springfield Oval Play Area. These facilities are due to be transferred to the Town Council, and budgets are already allowed for engineering inspections of the play equipment as well as play risk assessments for the first two and have been added in for Springfield Oval for 2027/27. There will be additional revenue costs in relation to these areas during 2027/28 although these are understood to be modest. Your officers will advise on updated estimates in the RFO's report to the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee at 23rd November 2026.

Capital and special revenue projects

During 2026-27 the capital budgets affecting the work of Parks and Recreation Committee include the following and these will be reviewed by the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee when reviewing the capital programme.

(i) Code 4910/800 Play equipment replacement - £75,000.
(ii) Code 4930/800 Basketball King George V site - £15,000.
(iii) Code 4973/800 Contribution to earmarked reserve for new Splashpark - £19,250.

The agreed grant for the building of the Multi-Activity Hub, amounting £250,000 was transferred to Courtside CIC earlier this year and the Hub opened in June 2026.

The West Witney Project, including both capital and revenue implications, is the responsibility of the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee, reporting to the Full Council and so is not considered in this report.

The capital programme also includes the following items for which provision was made in previous financial years:

(a) Code 4943/800 Burwell Changing Rooms - £72,040.
(b) Code 4945/800 Leys Parking Restrictions - £5,000.
(c) Code 4953/800 Footpath at West Witney.

Clearly there is already a substantial number of revenue growth and capital works. The further suggestions made at the Parks and Recreation Committee in September 2026 (minute PR413) are modest and can be accommodated within existing budgets:

(i) 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. The budget for water and sewerage charges recommended by officers, which is at the same level as the original estimate for 2026-27 would allow for this.

(ii) 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 Ralegh Crescent Play Area and potential improvements to recreational facilities at West Witney.** It is anticipated that these items could be met from existing budgets/earmarked reserves.

(iii) In relation to the **possible installation of a stair rail feature at the skate park** it was reported to the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee that this was not feasible as there was insufficient space to accommodate such a feature.

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.

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

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

Risk

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

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

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates. Social value is no quantified in the financial reports but clearly the creation of social value is dependent on setting adequate budgets to meet the Council's objectives.

Financial implications

This report forms part of the Council's due diligence and a process in line with its Financial Regulations. There are likely to be financial implications in relation to the previously agreed revenue growth items in relation to new and enhanced facilities.

The additional items suggested at the September meeting of this Committee can be accommodated in existing budgets.

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

Recommendations

Member are invited to note the report.

It should be noted that the existing revenue growth items and special revenue/capital projects will be considered by the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee later in the budget cycle.

The Committee may wish to recommend that the additional items suggested at the September meeting of this Committee should be accommodated in existing budgets with the use of earmarked reserves as necessary.

Schedule of Public Halls Charges

Location	This Year (£)	Proposed for Next Year (£)
Corn Exchange (Vatable)		
The Main Hall - Weekday		
GROUP 1 - Charity or Local	168.00	174.00
GROUP 2 - Non-Charitable Events	247.00	255.00
GROUP 3 - Commercial and Sales	394.00	408.00
The Main Hall - Weekend		
GROUP 1 - Charity or Local	215.50	223.00
GROUP 2 - Non-Charitable Events	325.50	337.00
GROUP 3 - Commercial and Sales	514.50	532.50
The Gallery Room - Weekday		
GROUP 1 - Charity or Local	73.50	76.00
GROUP 2 - Non-Charitable Events	108.50	112.50
GROUP 3 - Commercial and Sales	168.00	174.00
The Gallery Room - Weekend		
GROUP 1 - Charity or Local	102.00	105.50
GROUP 2 - Non-Charitable Events	143.00	148.00
GROUP 3 - Commercial and Sales	189.00	195.50
Burwell Hall (Non Vatable)		
The Main Hall - Weekday		
GROUP 1 - Charity or Local	61.00	63.00
GROUP 2 - Non-Charitable Events	96.00	99.50
GROUP 3 - Commercial and Sales	122.00	126.50
The Main Hall - Weekend		
GROUP 1 - Charity or Local	88.50	91.50
GROUP 2 - Non-Charitable Events	136.50	141.50
GROUP 3 - Commercial and Sales	178.50	185.00
The Meeting Room - Weekday		
GROUP 1 - Charity or Local	41.00	42.50
GROUP 2 - Non-Charitable Events	55.00	57.00
GROUP 3 - Commercial and Sales	67.50	70.00
The Meeting Room - Weekend		
GROUP 1 - Charity or Local	55.00	57.00
GROUP 2 - Non-Charitable Events	75.00	77.50
GROUP 3 - Commercial and Sales	101.00	104.50

Refundable Damage Deposit from £50-£200

Wedding Charges - Corn Exchange Only

The Gallery Room (Ceremony - 2 hours)	310.00	321.00
The Main Hall (Ceremony - 2 hours)	425.50	440.50
The Galley Room (Exclusive Use of Building - 2 hours)	530.50	549.00
The Main Hall (Exclusive Use of Building - 2 hours)	530.50	549.00
Exclusive Use of the Building (All Day)	1,318.00	1,365.00

Equipment Hire - Per Session

Projector and Screen	15.00	15.50
Flipchart	7.50	8.00
Moving/Extending Stage	40.00	41.50
Additional Hire Charge for Running Over Session Time (Per Hour)	34.00	35.00

Corn Exchange (Vatable)

The Main Hall - Group 4 Show Charge

GROUP 4 - 1/2 Tech & Dress Rehearsal (Up to 5 hours)	163.00	169.00
GROUP 4 - Full Tech & Dress Rehearsal (Up to 12 hours)	325.50	337.00
GROUP 4 - 1/2 Performance (Up to 5 hours)	325.50	337.00
GROUP 4 - Full Performance (Up to 12 hours)	651.00	674.00

Schedule of proposed Recreational Charges

Location	2026-27	Proposed for Next Year +3.5%
Cricket		
Adults	£ 74.50	£ 77.00
Junior Teams (Under 16)	£ 38.50	£ 40.00
Bowls		
Green Fees Per Hour, Per Person	£ 6.00	£ 6.20
Woods - Hire of Pair Per Hour	£ 4.00	£ 4.15
Season Tickets	£ 99.00	£ 102.50
Changing Rooms	£ 40.50	£ 42.50
The Leys & Burwell		
Football		
Adults/Over 16s	£ 69.50	£ 72.00
Junior Teams (Under 16)	£ 35.00	£ 36.00
Mini Teams (Under 10) Small Pitches Only	£ 23.50	£ 24.50
Hardcourt Play Area - Burwell -Lighting Charge	£ 29.00	£ 30.00
Deposit for Hire of Equipment	£ 11.00	£ 11.50
Clubs and Commercial Use		
West Witney Bowls Club (3 Rinks)	£ 3,477.50	£ 3,600.00
Witney Mills Bowls Club (3 Rinks)	£ 3,477.50	£ 3,600.00
Projectile Range Consortium	£ 3,296.00	£ 3,410.00
Witney Town Bowls Club (5 Rinks)	£ 5,761.00	£ 5,965.00
Minor Fairs Circuses and Similar Performances Horse Shows and Gymkhanas Witney Feast	By Negotiation	
Community Group or Registered Charity - Park Hire Per Acre (Football Pitch Size)(Smaller Areas - Pro Rata)		
The Leys - Events	£ 208.00	£ 215.50
All Other Areas - Events	£ 93.50	£ 97.00
Fishing Rights		
Witney Lake (Witney Angling Society)	£ 1,272.00	£ 1,315.00

PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

Agenda Item: Sports Pitches

Meeting Date: Monday, 2 November 2026

Contact Officer: Operations Manager

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on sports pitches and associated facilities, including the findings of the recent Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI) advisory review, the future of the cricket square at The Leys Recreation Ground and progress towards the operational handover of the changing facilities at the Courtside Hub.

Background

On 23 September 2026, the Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI) undertook an advisory review of the Council's principal sports facilities, including West Witney Sports Ground, The Leys Recreation Ground, Windrush Place, Burwell Queen Elizabeth II Field and King George V Playing Field.

The review considered football pitches, bowling greens, cricket facilities, maintenance practices, machinery provision and future investment priorities. A copy of the full STRI Advisory Review Report is attached as **Appendix A.**

Members will also recall that at the meeting held on 7 September 2026, the Committee considered the future of the cricket square at The Leys Recreation Ground and recommended 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.

Current Situation

The STRI report was generally very positive regarding the condition and maintenance of the Council's sports facilities. The review concluded that the Council's sports facilities compare favourably with similar local authorities and rank among the best encountered by the assessor highlighting a number of strengths within the existing maintenance regime.

The bowling greens are performing exceptionally well, demonstrating excellent grass cover, strong root development, and impressive resilience throughout what has been a particularly demanding summer. They were highlighted as some of the best examples seen by the assessor at this stage of the season. Current maintenance practices are delivering excellent results, with only minor refinements recommended, including additional aeration in rink ends and perimeter areas, together with ongoing management of worm casting and tree root

intrusion. Annual organic matter testing would further support future renovation planning and continued high standards.

The report recognised the high standard of existing sports grounds management and highlighted opportunities to further strengthen maintenance recording, inspection regimes and long-term sports facility planning. Officers consider these recommendations align closely with work already being undertaken to enhance and formalise a structured, evidence-based approach to managing the Council's sports facilities.

The report identified The Leys Recreation Ground as the most challenging sports site within the Council's portfolio due to the competing demands of organised sport, community events, casual recreation and significant pedestrian use. Officers are actively considering a range of irrigation solutions to enhance the resilience of the grounds and maintain playing surface quality during increasingly hot and dry summer conditions.

As part of the review, STRI was specifically requested to assess the future of the cricket square at The Leys. The report notes that cricket demand at the site appears limited, that the square continues to require ongoing maintenance expenditure and that consideration should be given to incorporating the area into football provision where football demand exceeds cricket demand.

The expression of interest process regarding future cricket use remains ongoing and the deadline for submissions has been extended to 15 November 2026. Once the process has concluded, Officers will review any submissions received and determine the most appropriate way forward, having regard to the Committee's previous resolution and the findings of the STRI review.

Following completion of the Courtside Hub project, Officers continue to work with Courtside, sports clubs and other stakeholders to facilitate the operational handover of the changing facilities. Work remains ongoing to finalise documentation, maintenance arrangements, operational responsibilities and access arrangements. The changing facilities are not yet operational, and a further update will be provided once the handover process has been completed.

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 towards:

Protect and Enhance our Environment and Community Assets

through the effective management and long-term sustainability of the Council's sports and recreation facilities.

Impact Assessments

a) Equality - Well-maintained sports facilities support inclusive access to recreation and sporting opportunities.
b) Biodiversity - The report encourages sustainable grounds maintenance practices and consideration of long-term site management.
c) Crime & Disorder - No direct implications arising from this report.
d) Environment & Climate Emergency - The STRI report highlights the importance of drought resilience, soil health and sustainable maintenance practices.

Risk

Failure to maintain sports facilities appropriately could impact user satisfaction, playing quality and the long-term sustainability of Council assets.

The STRI review provides independent professional advice which will assist Officers in prioritising future maintenance, investment and risk management activities.

Social Value

The Council's sports facilities provide significant health, wellbeing and recreational benefits for residents, sports clubs and community groups. Continued investment in the management of these facilities supports wider community participation and physical activity.

Financial Implications

The STRI review has been completed within approved budgets.

Officers will review the report's recommendations and implement operational improvements where appropriate within existing delegated authority and approved budgets. Any proposals requiring additional expenditure or changes to approved budgets will be brought forward for Member consideration through the Council's normal budget-setting and committee processes.

Recommendations

Members are invited to:

1. Note the report.
2. Note the findings of the Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI) Advisory Review.
3. Note the update regarding The Leys Recreation Ground cricket square.
4. Note the progress towards the operational handover of the Courtside Hub changing facilities.

delivering inspirational environments

Witney Town Council

Advisory Report on West Witney, The Leys, Burwell QE2, Windrush Place & King George's Rec Grass Sports Surfaces

Report date: 22nd October 2026

Consultant: Stella Rixon

Date of visit:	23rd September 2026
Visit objective:	Agronomic inspection of the grass sports playing surfaces
Present:	Nicholas Brown – Operations Manager, Stella Rixon – STRI Senior Agronomist
Weather:	Sunny, some cloud, 22°C. 2026 has recorded the hottest and driest summer on record with a 6-month drought from April – early October and very low rainfall.

Visit summary

- **General** - Witney Town Council's grass sports facilities compare very favourably with similar local authority facilities and are some of the best I have seen, reflecting the good management currently in place and also a good soil type that both drains well and retains some moisture in drought. Overall condition is good on all surfaces, especially considering the extended drought this summer. Current maintenance programmes delivering strong results across bowling greens, football pitches and the West Witney cricket square.
- **Bowling greens** - are performing particularly well, showing excellent grass cover, rooting and resilience to the drought and are some of the best I have seen at the end of what has been a very difficult summer. Maintenance is working well and only fine-tuning of additional aeration of rink ends/perimeters and management of worm casting and tree root intrusion are recommended. Annual organic matter testing is recommended for bowling greens to inform renovation programmes.
- **Football pitches** - are generally in good condition, supported by effective aeration, topdressing, overseeding and fertiliser programmes enabling the pitches to have retained good grass cover compared to many sites. These practices should continue.
- However, climate change, wetter winters and worm casting are increasing pressures on natural turf, making drainage management and wear distribution more important. Priority should be given to spreading wear by rotating pitch locations, using mobile goals, encouraging off-pitch warm-ups and balancing usage across sites.
- West Witney is performing well overall, though cricket outfield areas would currently benefit from additional overseeding, nutrition, wetting agents. Irrigation might also be a consideration if improved quality is sought for future.
- Burwell has heavier soils, more weeds and some pitch undulations. Increased topdressing, continued aeration and targeted weed control are recommended when suitable to do so.
- Windrush Place is still establishing and requires ongoing overseeding, fertilisation, decompaction and enhanced topdressing to establish a denser grass cover.
- The Leys is the most problematic site, with event use, pedestrian traffic and compaction severely affecting pitch quality. Infrastructure improvements, enhanced renovations and better traffic management are required.
- **Cricket Squares** - West Witney cricket square is in good condition and should continue with current maintenance, supported by annual organic matter testing and rabbit control.
- The Leys cricket square is in poor condition and, given the small area for suitable sized outfield, the low cricket demand and high football demand, it should be considered for removal and conversion to additional football provision with an option to provide a roll out artificial pitch if cricket demand exists.
- **Future strategic investment** - Priorities should include ongoing mitigation for worm casting on all surfaces (consider robotic options) and for pitches improved wear management, additional football capacity at The Leys and the long-term provision of 3G/artificial pitches to improve resilience and playing capacity.

Site Observations

West Witney



Photo 1: West Mills BC – complete grass cover, even on rink ends. No sign of drought stress or dry patch.



Photo 2: Good rooting through main body of green with dense roots to 80-100mm.



Photo 3: Rink ends show compaction which restricts rooting depth to within the upper 50mm. Perimeters of the green would benefit from additional aeration through the season to decompact the profiles. Recommendations given below.



Photo 4: Pitch 5, 7v7 pitch – This is one of the most worn pitch areas on the site. It forms part of the cricket outfield and therefore was cut shorter through the hot, dry summer. Grass cover is patchy and only ryegrass clumps are left.



Photo 5: Pitch profiles throughout the West Witney pitches are surprisingly easy to core, friable soil with some moisture and turf showed good rooting.



Photo 6: Pitch 2 – the pitches on the west half of the ground (1,2,3 & 8) that are outside of the cricket outfield have good grass cover that has come through the drought very well.



Photo 7: West Witney Cricket Outfield is more drought stressed and worn due to the shorter cutting height and summer wear during the drought. Nevertheless, the soil profile is well structured and so should show reasonable recovery once rains return. Autumn overseeding would aid this and use of wetting agent next spring for the cricket outfield to aid with drought stress.



Photo 8: West Witney Cricket square - Rabbit scrapes and rabbit dung common on the wicket ends. End of season renovations are due to take place soon. Protection from rabbits will be needed to ensure good recovery. The cricket club maintain the square during the playing season and then hand back to the council for renovations and winter care.



Photo 9: Cricket square profile – suitable clay soil that is holding together in the upper profile and rooting is good.



Photo 10: Cricket Square – weeds present on the square (pictured) and outfield.

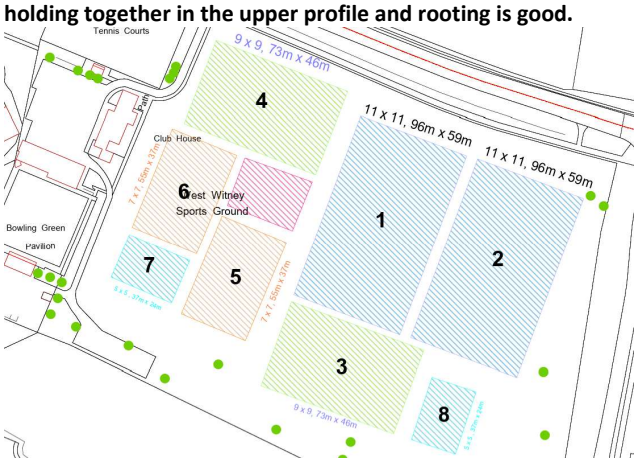


Figure A: West Witney Sports Ground – sports facilities layout. Cricket square shown in pink colour. The cricket and football clubs playing here are all amateur, grassroots levels.

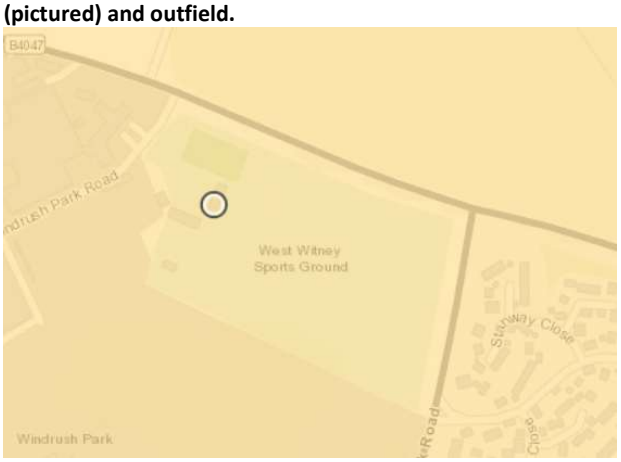


Figure B: West Witney Sports Ground – Soil type identified as Elmton 1: Shallow loamy soil over limestone. Well drained.



Figure C: West Witney Sports Ground – Google Earth image dated 21/4/26 shows some wear through the central thirds of the 11-a-side pitches 1 & 2 and also more wear noted on the 5v5 P7. The spectator area between pitches 5 and 6/7 is also notably worn and this is close to the cricket square. Pitches 3,4 & 8 appear to be less heavily used and have good grass cover.



Figure D: West Witney Sports Ground – Google Earth image dated 24/6/26 shows good recovery of grass cover on the pitch areas despite 3 months of very dry weather.



Figure E: West Witney Sports Ground – topography mapping shows the ground is somewhat level throughout and ideal for cricket outfield which should have a maximum fall of 1:100. Pitches can also be orientated in all directions and still comply with FA Playing Quality Standards (PQS) of max. 1:80 in direction of play and 1:50 across play. (Ref: Sport England Natural Turf for Sport 2025, Part D, p32).



Photo 1: View south over the pitches from top end of field.



Photo 2: Grass cover good but a bit weak/ lacking vigour. Plantain weeds common.



Photo 3: Typical soil profile – sand dressing evident in the surface, lower soil profile well-structured with reasonable rooting. Some compaction causing a partial horizontal break at ~40mm so ongoing decompaction aeration is important.



Photo 4: Pitch 2 Nth upper end - large scale undulations present. If funds were available, levelling within the topsoil would improve this pitch.



Photo 5: Burwell P3/P5 levels generally good, fewer and less obvious undulations. Small scale underfoot is good.

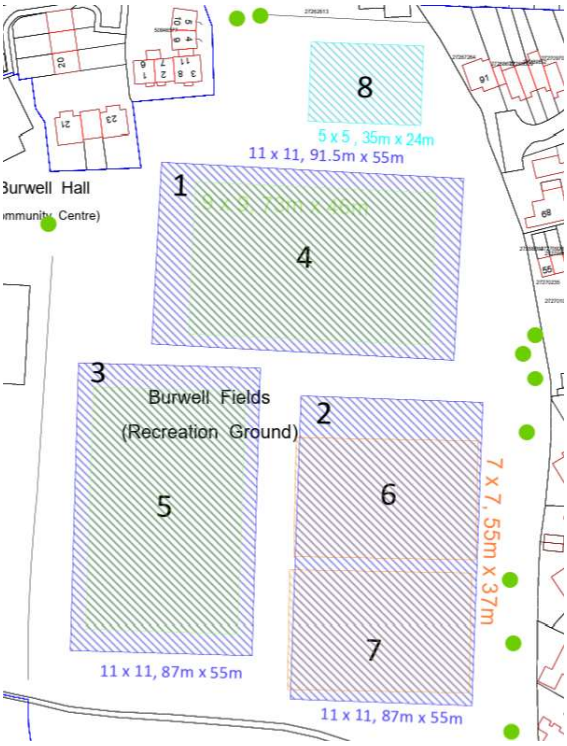


Figure F: Burwell Fields – pitch layout.



Figure G: Burwell Recreation Ground – Soil type identified (in the green colour) as Denchworth: Slowly permeable, seasonally waterlogged clayey and fine loamy soils over clay. This is the heaviest soil type within the council's pitches and would suggest less usage is possible here, although the strongly sloping ground and sand dressings may mitigate for the heavier soil type.

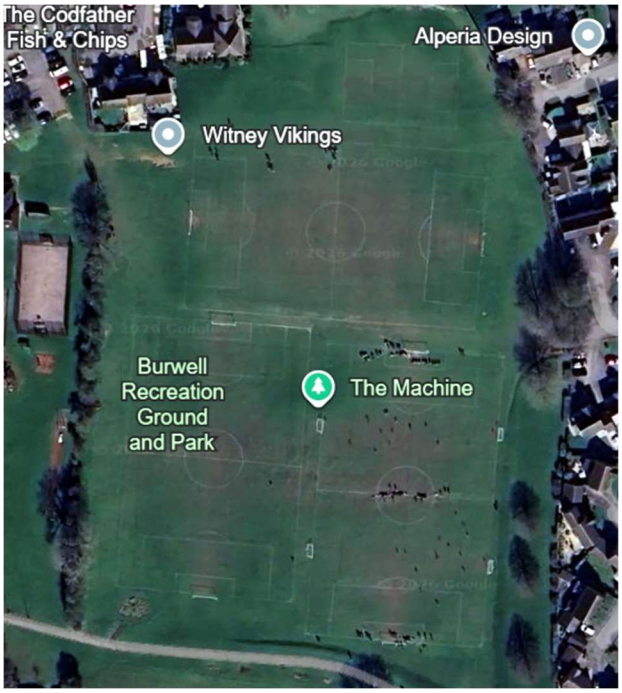


Figure H: Burwell Recreation Ground – Google Earth image from 29/3/25 after a wet winter. Pitches showing wear through much of the pitch area, concentrated through the middles. These pitches receive a total of 100 tonnes topdressing and 17 bags of seed split across the 3 x 11v11 and 5v5.



Figure I: Burwell Recreation Ground – 4m fall from north to south which is equivalent to ~1:50 (2%) gradient. Therefore, pitches orientated east-west would comply with FA guidelines of max. 1:80 in direction of play and 1:50 across play but pitches orientated N-S would not. (Ref: Sport England Natural Turf for Sport 2025, Part D, p32).

Windrush Place



Photo 1: View from southern end. Level platform with uniform slope and pipe drained at 5m. Construction and materials look suitable. Grass sward is rather patchy. This is a relatively newly constructed pitch area that is still establishing.



Photo 2: Soil profile – Surface has sand dressings evident with consolidated loamy soil below. Horizontal compaction break at ~40mm which is restricting rooting.



Photo 3: A single stone on surface was found but otherwise clean of debris. Only a very occasional weed.



Photo 4: New rye seedlings evident in recent drill overseeding lines.



Photo 5: Drains backfilled with gravel to ~200mm below the surface and topped with a sand layer and then 75-100mm soil to the surface.



Figure J: Windrush – pitch layout. A level platform has been created with a slight fall from the northern side to the southern side of 1:100 (1%) and level E-W. Therefore, pitches can be orientated in either direction and comply with FA guidance for slope.



Figure K: Windrush Place – Original soil type in this area identified as Elmton 1: Shallow loamy soil over limestone. Well drained. However, as these pitches have been newly created, it may be that the soil type differs from the original. Soil within the pitches was heavier in nature and less well drained than expected (but this will be overcome with the installed drainage). The original soils seen in the areas surrounding the pitches were notably more stony with white stones originating from limestone.

The Leys



Photo 1: Bowls green - View to SE corner. Worm casting starting as rains return.



Photo 2: Bowls green - Renovations have commenced with scarification undertaken. Sward is slightly thinned at this time as a result. Good percentage of desirable fescue and some bent in the sward indicating suitable management.



Photo 3: The Leys Bowls green - Excellent rooting in main body of green, achieving 80+mm.



Photo 4: Bowls green - Shorter rooting and compaction causing horizontal break at ~60mm on rink ends.



Photo 5: Bowls green - SE corner struggles to maintain grass cover due to competition with a large tree in close proximity reducing light availability but also likely that tree roots are invading the green.



Photo 6: The Leys Events Field (used for a variety of events through the year, including music, circus, food and fairground). – South corner vehicle entrance has caused compaction, hard, cracked ground and loss of grass cover. Similar noted on other corners of the field where vehicle access occurs.



Photo 7: Event Field - Pitch 1 – very poor grass cover. This pitch receives higher topdressing rate of 60t sand and 10 bags of seed at the end of the football season.



Photo 8: Event Field - Pitch 1 - soil profile was found to be heavily compacted throughout the pitch with horizontal breaks found close to the surface and minimal rooting.



Photo 9: The Leys Eastern half of the park – view from north end down P3. High foot traffic noted through this area where pedestrians/ school children use this as a cut through. May have also been worn as a result of events.



Photo 10: The Leys Pitch 3 view from southern end showing heavily worn traffic route through this pitch that does not look to be as a result of football use alone. Could pedestrian traffic be encouraged to use paths by appropriately placed fencing.



Photo 11: Cricket square is raised above the surrounding ground. Surface is uneven and has high weed content and patchy grass cover. The square has not been used for many years. Considering its removal and turning into football use.



Photo 12: Cricket Square profile well structured, no consolidation present as has not been prepared for cricket for several years.



Photo 13: Pitch 4 western end shows damage from circus use – 2 notable dips caused by heavy equipment for event set up. This will need lifting out by hand-forking and decompaction through vertidraining with heave.



Figure L: The Leys – sports surfaces layout. Pitch 1 received 60 tonnes topdressing and 10 bags of seed in 2026 renovations.



Figure M: The Leys – Soil type identified as Elmton 1: Shallow loamy soil over limestone. Well drained.



Figure N: The Leys – Google Earth image (9/4/17) of pitches at the end of the season. P1 in the Event field shows wear through the central third, especially in the goal and penalty areas but other pitches on the east side of the ground appear lightly used.



Figure O: The Leys – Google Earth image (20/5/18) showing busy nature of the Event Field shortly after the football season end. The northern outfield boundary is rather short meaning the top half of the square is only suited to junior cricket. Further details below.

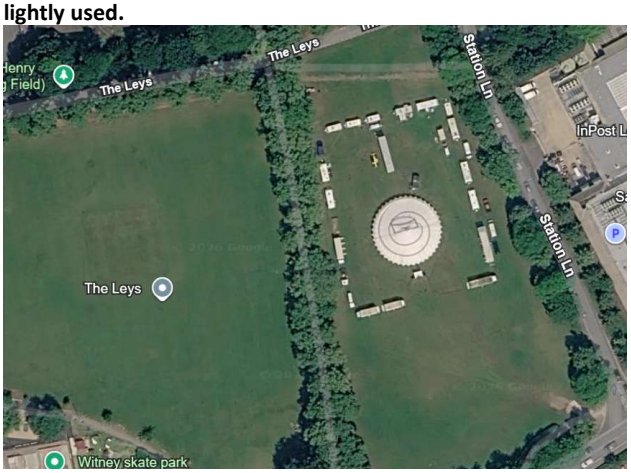


Figure P: The Leys – Google Earth image (24/6/26) showing a circus set up on the Event Field that would put both vehicle and foot traffic over (renovated) pitch high wear areas.



Figure Q: The Leys –2m fall across the cricket outfield which is a 1:50 slope or 2% gradient which is greater than desired (1:100 or 1% gradient is recommended). It should also be noted that FA guidelines recommend a 1:50 slope is only suitable for across play, whereas in the line of play (i.e. goal to goal) should be a maximum of 1:100. Therefore, pitches would be best aligned playing across the slope.



Photo 1: Worn NE goal with deep, loose sand layer that is unstable and will kick out. This goal receives more wear through casual play as the hard-court fence at the rear acts as a ball stop.



Photo 2: SW goal clearly gets much less casual use as further away from the playground.



Photo 3: Pitch profile – shallow sand layer at surface. Profile well structured and showing good rooting.



Photo 4: Undulating SE corner which could be levelled off within the topsoil if funds were available.



Figure R: King George Rec – pitch layout. Only the 11v11 pitch is currently marked out and in use. There is room to move this pitch to different positions to rest high wear areas e.g. to the south to allow the northern goal to recover.



Figure S: King George V – Soil type identified as Elmton 1: Shallow loamy soil over limestone. Well drained. This pitch received 40 tonnes topdressing and 7 bags of seed at the end of the season.



Figure T: King George V Rec – Ground has a ~1:100 fall from NE to SW and is relatively level across in NW-SE direction. Therefore, pitches can be orientated in either direction (space allowing) and comply with FA guidance for slope.

Recommendations

Bowling Greens

- **General** – The greens are in good health, dominated by desirable fescue/bent grasses and free of disease or drought stress/ dry patch (likely aided with wetting agent treatments), indicating a suitable irrigation regime. The maintenance programme in place is working well and therefore should continue with only some fine-tuning suggested below:-
- **Decompaction** – The green would benefit from deep tining to thoroughly decompact the surfaces at the end of the season and maintain good drainage.
- This could be carried out at the end of season at the same time as the usual scarification and coring work or later into the autumn, provided the surface is suitably firm to undertake a clean job with no obvious wheelmarking.
- Use 12-15mm diam. tines to a minimum of 150mm but 200-250mm would be preferable and 5-10% heave could be applied. This could be undertaken with a Procore aerator or small vertidrain.
- Undertake a double pass on the perimeter areas/ rink ends and if possible, find a time mid-season to pencil tine (8-10mm diam.) these same areas to ~100mm.
- **Organic Matter Testing** – Undertake lab testing of intact soil cores for organic matter content at 4 depths (0-20, 20-40, 40-60, 60-80mm) annually in late summer to inform the end of season requirements e.g. type of tining (solids/ hollow coring) and depth and intensity. If organic matter levels are maintained within target, then it may not be necessary to hollow core the greens, provided sufficient decompaction can be undertaken and sand worked into solid tine holes. STRI Labs can undertake this testing for you if required. 2026 cost is £73 ex VAT per green.
- **Topdressing** – Specify topdressing material more closely. Topdressing materials and quality can vary significantly, especially bought in bags as is typical for bowling greens. The ideal particle size range is as shown in the graph below and the material should have a minimum hydraulic conductivity rate of ~150mm/hr. There may be a need to reduce the amount of organic material it contains if organic matter levels are already higher than desirable (identified from lab test results). One manufacturer's 70/30 can be very different to another's, depending on sand and amendment sources. Once a suitable material is identified it is best to stick with the same material from the same sand pit source each year for consistency and to avoid layering.
- **Worm Casting** - The main concern noted on bowling greens was the prevalent worm casting that had already started. Although they are sandy in nature and easily dispersed whilst dry, this will become more difficult as we get into the wetter season.
- I note that sulphur is used in late Sept as a worm casting deterrent which can be effective bit needs careful monitoring to check that the pH drops to a suitable level to reduce casting (and autumn disease) but not too low so as to negatively affect turf health. Undertake pH testing of the upper soil profile in late autumn and again in early summer.
- Regular cast dispersal is essential to maintain levels and prevent smearing and small bare patches occurring. Worm cast dispersal is typically undertaken with brushing or a switch but you could also consider robotic mowers for this purpose fitted with a brush. They could have dual purpose by removing dew overnight to prevent disease, and dispersing the worm casts, and would also likely deter digging animals. They could also be used for maintaining the winter cutting height in wetter periods to avoid taking heavier mowers on greens when wet and softer. However, I would avoid too many clippings returned, therefore the robot mowing would only be applicable in times of slow growth (see note below).
- **PGR's** - Use of plant growth regulators is recommended through the main growing/ bowling season from late April and extending into the autumn whilst temperatures are still mild and some growth is occurring. PGR's are applied as a liquid and work well to maintain green speed where greens are not cut daily and also to reduce organic matter accumulation. They are useful into the autumn to reduce cutting requirements when the surfaces are too wet and to avoid smearing worm casts. Reduced cutting in autumn can be beneficial by extending the longevity of applied products such as dew prevention and fungicides, so they are not removed by mowing.
- **Disease Control** – Dew is the key instigator of disease and therefore the focus in the autumn/winter is to remove dew promptly or preferably prevent it from forming e.g. by regular use of chemical dew preventors such as Dewcure, Dewsmart or similar and/or robot removal through the night, as discussed above.

- **Tree Roots & Shade** - Consider tree root pruning (e.g. using a trencher blade/ digging down as deep as possible to remove surface rooting) within the bowling green ditch at The Leys around the SE corner if this is possible. Reducing the height of the hedge around the southern side would also be beneficial for the turf.

Winter Sports Pitches

- **General –** Maintenance is currently also at a good level for the council's winter sports pitches and this is reflected in their good condition relative to typical council sports facilities. Of particular importance are the decompaction operations (1x vertidraining and 1x Shockwave), topdressing and overseeding and fertilisation practices which are working well and should be continued. Some adjustments are recommended to improve results and also to address increasing difficulties with weather effects and demand for usage. The following advice is for all pitches and site specific advice is also given below:-

- **Pitch Usage** – STRI has previously conducted research into sustainable levels for pitch usage, as shown in Table 1 below. The sites reviewed in this document fall into the naturally well-drained category and should therefore be able to support ~3.5-4 hrs of adult use (ages 15yrs and above) per week in *average* winter conditions.
- However, two important changes have occurred since this research study was undertaken:-

    1. Climate change is now notably affecting UK weather, resulting in wetter winters with more intense and prolonged rainfall. This has been testing even the most free-draining sites, including those with installed drainage.
    2. Chemical worm controls were banned in 2017. Whilst worms are good for soil and plant health, their casting is a problem for sports surfaces such as pitches and can quickly render the surface muddy, slippery and result in increased loss of grass cover.

- Therefore, management of pitches needs to concentrate on the following priorities, which are discussed in more detail below:-

    - Spreading wear as much as possible, both within a site and between sites to maximise usage/ reduce wear
    - Maximise drainage potential through maintenance
    - Being flexible with maintenance timing depending on the weather
    - Mitigate for worm casting

- **Spreading Wear** – Look for possible improvements in football match scheduling to spread wear around the borough's facilities where possible. Sites with improved drainage or stronger sloping ground that can shed water quicker are more likely to be able to host games in the wettest periods.
- Move positions of pitches to rest high wear areas. Move pitches as far as possible at the end of the season so that their positioning is different from year to year to change the goalmouth areas.
- Use mobile goals, as opposed to static goals. This requires use of moveable goalposts with wheels. Smaller goals could be stored if storage space exists. For larger, 11-a-side goals, the nets are removed and stored and the posts can be secured to metal hoops set in concrete in a quiet area on the edge of the ground with chain and padlock. The code can be shared with team managers so they can deploy them and put them away.
- Encourage teams to warm up off pitch areas. It might be possible to mark out training grids on pitch surrounds to facilitate this.
- **Drainage Improvements** – Maximising natural drainage potential of the pitches will ensure they can withstand the wet weather as far as possible and enable maximum possible use. Since the soil type is typically well-drained, then focussing on deep decompaction with heave (i.e. vertidraining) as well as use of the Shockwave can work very well. The vertidrain tines should reach as deep as possible e.g. 250-300mm, aiming to reach underlying free-draining horizons. Aim to undertake an extra pass through the goalmouth/ penalty areas.

- On sloped ground, increase the effect of the Shockwave by running the machine from high to low ground on a slight diagonal to the slope. This helps to direct the water flow downhill more rapidly. The slits should end on an out of play area or to an outfall such as to a ditch or over a pipe drain.
- **Flexibility in Maintenance Timing** – Due to the unpredictability of the weather and the lack of irrigation on the pitches, it may be necessary to become more flexible with renovations and timings. For example, dry springs will reduce the effectiveness of weed control, as well as overseeding.
- To mitigate for this, try to renovate the most worn pitches earlier or even consider another seeding operation before the end of the season e.g. late Feb/Mar and/or Sept/Oct which might just be concentrated on thinner areas. Provided the seed is drilled in using a disc seeder e.g. Vredo or similar then it will have some protection from wear and only a small percentage will be lost through use.
- Similarly, it may be necessary to alter timing of decompaction work as the ground might be too hard and dry at the end of the season in late April/ May if the spring has been unseasonably dry. The Shockwave can be used successfully in hard, drier ground and can be used near the end of the football season provided the soil type is not prone to cracking. Vertidraining would then be undertaken in autumn with heave, once soils had remoistened sufficiently.
- Weed Control should only be done as necessary and may not be required every year if grass cover has been retained. Its timing might be best undertaken earlier in spring, before end of season renovations, if there is sufficient warmth and moisture for active growth to occur. Alternatively, it could be undertaken later in the summer or in Sept. Timing should also consider seeding operations; it is prudent to leave at least a 2 week gap before overseeding and 4-6weeks post seeding before applying herbicide but check specific product labels for details. Where possible, spot treatment should be considered to reduce the amount of pesticide used.
- **Worm Casting Mitigation** – A separate advisory note is enclosed for advice on how to mitigate for worm casting. Since the soil type and drainage level is already reasonable and pitches have received dressings for some years, then lower amounts of topdressing should suffice to offset the soil brought up by the worms e.g. 40t per hectare. Consider switching from a 70/30 topdressing (which may vary in quality and is more costly) to a straight medium to medium-fine sand as this will be ameliorated with soil through use and worm activity. It is important that the chosen material has a suitable particle size range, as shown below. Further advice and lab testing of proposed materials can be undertaken if needed.

Site specific notes for improvement: -

King George Rec

- **Pitch orientation** & **layout** - The minimal slope of the ground allows for pitches to be orientated in either direction (space allowing) and comply with FA guidance for slope. It might be possible to fit in more pitches in a NW-SE orientation if boundaries allow for suitable 3m run-offs and balls are not likely to be lost into neighbouring gardens.
- Ideally, the 7v7 pitch (if in use) would be located outside of the 11v11 and there is sufficient space to do this.
- There is room to move the 11v11 pitch to different positions to rest high wear areas e.g. move pitch to the south to allow the very weak northern goal to recover.
- **North goal** – This goal is particularly unstable due to high use and large amounts of sand applied. It is likely that it will need rotavating to mix the sand into the soil to provide a more consolidated base. Alternatively, remove excess, loose sand and replace with suitable topsoil. Firm the material into place by heeling in by foot or light rolling. Aim to leave the surface level or very slightly domed to shed water. Overseed at 60 g/m2 with a suitable winter sports rye mix and rake into the surface. Top with a 15mm layer of sand/ sandy rootzone. Move the pitch position to take this area out of play for a season and fence off the repaired goalmouth to keep people off whilst the grass establishes sufficiently.
- **Mobile goals** secured in a quiet area of the ground could work well here.
- **Level Improvement** – The undulating SE corner could be levelled off within the topsoil if funds were available. This would require, removal of the turf at the end of the season (typically cut short, sprayed with total herbicide and then after ~2weeks, once the grass has fully died off, cultivated and raked to a fine tilth, redistributing the soil to create a more even surface. Stones at the surface should be removed or stone buried. The relevelled area would then need to be seeded and topdressed as described for the North goal renovation above.

Burwell Rec

- **Shockwave Use** – As discussed above, run the machine diagonally down the slope on these pitches to help shed water off the surfaces more quickly.
- **Topdressing Rate** – If this site tends to be wetter/ more wormy and suffers more wear damage due to heavier soil type, then an increased topdressing rate is warranted e.g. 50-60t/ha.
- **Spring Herbicide** – This pitch had a notable number of plantains that might need treatment in spring if not treated already.
- **Pitch 2 N upper end** – Large-scale undulations present. If funds were available, levelling within the topsoil (as described for King George Rec) would improve this pitch. This would require taking the pitch out of use whilst work was undertaken and grass cover re-established.

The Leys

- **Shockwave Use** – As discussed above, run the machine diagonally down the slope on these pitches to help shed water off the surfaces more quickly.
- **Pitch 3** – Review pedestrian traffic routes cutting through this pitch and consider fencing to encourage use of existing paths.
- **Pitch 4** - western end shows damage from circus use. This will need lifting out by hand-forking and decompaction through vertidraining with heave. The entrance/ exit point at the southern end also needs consideration for extending hard standing/ turf protection to accommodate heavy plant in-out/turning and also material deliveries for renovations.
- **Event Field** – This area had poor grass cover and heavily compacted soils due to over-use and lack of recovery. Events are held close to the end of the football season which gives little time for effective recovery of the worn areas. In addition, the events are frequently placing high traffic over the high wear areas of Pitch 1, thereby increasing damage.
- I would consider reducing winter sports use e.g. switch this adult pitch into smaller junior pitches (<15yrs age group = lighter use) orientated E-W.
- In addition, look to renovate these pitches early to allow renovations in ~March. Ideally, limit use post renovations and allow an 8-week recovery time before any scheduled event if possible.
- Renovations should be more thorough here to include vertidraining at closer spacing and a higher overseeding rate e.g. 50-60 g/m2 through any bare areas.
- This field would warrant a 2nd overseeding in autumn if events have left the grass cover thinned.
- **Turf Protection** – Consider use of turf protection boards where event traffic is concentrated e.g. entry/exit and turning areas. This would protect the soil structure but if boards a re left in place for several weeks, grass cover will be lost and require reseeding once the events have finished.
- **Additional Pitch Area** – Given the higher demand for football here and the poor-quality cricket square and limited size of the outfield boundary, then it would make sense to remove the square and accommodate another 11v11 pitch area on the eastern half of the ground. Further discussion on cricket provision is given below.

Windrush Place

- **Overseeding** – If the sward is still visibly thin, undertake another Vredo/drill seeding operation in 2 directions using a suitable dwarf rye mix at 35 g/m2. This could be undertaken into November if the weather remains suitably warm at 5^{0}C or more at night. If colder weather or frosts start to occur, postpone until Feb/early March.
- **Nutrition** – This relatively new pitch will also require increased fertiliser whilst it is maturing and establishing a stronger, denser sward. Products to use are not critical and you could use up material in stock, purchase cost-effective, basic 9:7:7 or similar and treat on 4-6 occasions in a year depending on growth, or use a slow release for greater longevity if manpower is a concern and treat 3x.
- **Decompaction** – Introduce an additional decompaction operation to this pitch to help structure the soil profile and overcome compaction caused during construction. It will be particularly beneficial to use the Shockwave in a N-S direction, at an angle to the drains to aid with drainage. At a later date, once the pitches have been played for ~3-5years, if increased drainage is required then use of a Sandbander e.g. Blec Sandmaster or similar would improve

drainage efficiency again. The installed sand bands must be sufficiently deep (>100mm) to connect with the coarse sand or gravel backfill of the pipe drains.

- **Topdressing Rate** – This site should receive an increased topdressing rate is warranted e.g. 60t/ha at least for the next 3 -5 years combined with deep tining to work the sand into the holes. Topdressing here is important to preserve the efficiency of the installed drainage and create a deeper and improved rooting medium in the upper profile.

West Witney

- **Pitch Usage** - Pitches are generally in good condition and maintenance is working well here. There might be options to spread the wear and use the ground more evenly, particularly resting those within the cricket outfield in the weeks approaching the cricket season and using the outer pitches and areas more heavily instead. For example, there is space for marking out another 7v7 pitch in the southern corner around Pitch 8.
- **Cricket Outfield Area** – For the pitch areas that become cricket outfield, look to do mini-renovation(s) of decompaction and overseeding ahead of the end of the football season e.g. late Feb/Mar, which might just be concentrated on thinner areas. Provided the seed is drilled in using a disc seeder e.g. Vredo or similar then it will have some protection from wear and only a small percentage will be lost through use.
- Renovations should be more thorough here to include vertidraining at closer spacing and a higher overseeding rate e.g. 50-60 g/m2 through any bare areas.
- The outfield area would warrant a 2nd overseeding in autumn if cricket use has left the grass cover thinned.
- Increase the nutrition for the outfield also, applying an additional fertiliser application within the cricket season timed with rainfall.
- Wetting Agent – Application of 1-2 strong wetting agents early in the spring would help this area to cope with drought better. Suitable examples include GBR Technology Intensive wetter or Aqua-zorb liquid, Sherriff Amenity, both stronger, long-lasting wetting agents. Products must be applied with rainfall to wash in. Heavy rain is preferable 5+mm.
- Irrigation - Consider investing in irrigation provision for the outfield if a high-quality venue is required as this will enable better and more rapid grass cover to be regained after the football season. This would require a tank and pump and travelling sprinklers or automatic pop-ups. You would also need to consider water source. Mains is the simplest option but expensive and might be subject to a hosepipe ban (TUBS), although this would likely be someway though the cricket season and the early watering would still have ensured a good grass sward for the outfield. Other water supplies to reduce reliance on mains could include harvested rainwater or grey water from the sports building but this would need planning and water quality control.
- Height of Cut – Maintain as high a height of cut as possible for the outfield if drought conditions are prevailing e.g. 20-25mm. Irrigation would enable more desirable, shorter cutting heights to be maintained.

Artificial Pitches

- Regardless of the above recommendations, there will undoubtedly be times when grass pitch usage is likely to be disrupted by extreme wet weather with pitches becoming unplayable if intense rain occurs prior to matches. Future contingency would be to invest in all-weather artificial pitches for the borough.
- Below pitch water storage is an option that might be considered for irrigation purposes on the grounds.
- STRI can assist with further planning, design and construction if desired.

An STRI research study of pitch usage

Pitch	Location	Level of use (adult-equivalent hours of play per week)					
		Proposed		1988/89		1989/90	
		Ave.	Max.	Ave.	Max.	Ave.	Max.
Undrained	N	3.5-4.0	4	3.9	5.1	3.9	6
Pipe Drained	W	2	4	0.8	1.6	0.9	2.8
Slit Drained	N	4.5-5.0	6	4.4	6.1	4.4	6.8
Slit Drained	W	4.5-5.0	6	2.7	4.4	4.3	7.8
Sand Carpet	W	6	9	6.5	10.3	8.3	11.4
Suspended Water Table	N	6-8.5	12	8.4	13.8	5	6.3

It is calculated these usage figures can be doubled for users <15yrs. In addition, late spring to early autumn use may be higher when growth is good.
The research assumes a reasonable maintenance programme in place to include deep decompaction, fertiliser, overseeding and topdressing.

Ref: Gibb and Baker (1989b) Journal of STRI and also later Ref: Journal of STRI Vol 68 (1992) p20

N = a sandy loam soil wth good natural drainage
W = clay soil, poor drainage

Table 1: STRI Research study of sustainable usage for winter sports pitches. The research was conducted over 4 playing seasons and levels of play recorded against sporting body performance quality standards including retention of ~70% grass cover, maintaining surface levels, hardness, traction, and ball roll distance. This study shows how sites with different soil types have different carrying capacity. The 'N' pitches had a sandy loam soil type with good natural drainage (which is comparable to your sites) compared to the 'W' pitches, a site with clayey soil. N.B. More severe winter weather and lack of worm controls has negatively impacted these levels.

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Sport England: NTS **Part D** - Appendices

Table D4 Performance Quality Standards for football, rugby and natural turf playing fields in general [1]

Element	Requirements	Method of test
Ground cover	>70% for 25-30 mm grass height >80% for 30-35 mm grass height	BS 7370 : P3 A6
Broad-leaved weeds	<10%	BS 7370 : P3 A6
Grass height	20-60 mm for growing season 20-75 mm for non-growing season	BS 7370 : P3 A3
Thatch depth	<5 mm	BS 7370 : P3 A7
Hardness	35-200 gravities	2.25 kg Clegg impact hammer from a drop height of 0.45 m
Water infiltration rate [2]	>5 mm/h	BS 7370 : P3 A8
Evenness	<20 mm beneath a 2 m straight edge	BS 7370 : P3 A4
Slopes [3]	<1.25% (<1 in 80) in direction of play <2.0% (<1 in 50) across direction of play	BS 7370 : P3 A5
pH value	5.5-7.5	ISO 10390
Maximum stone size in upper 50 mm	<20 mm diameter	TBC

[1] The PQS information contained within this table constitutes selected key minimum criteria.

[2] It should be noted that infiltration test results from assessments conducted in dry conditions, particularly on clay-dominated soil, can produce spuriously high results due to the presence of shrinkage cracks. It is essential that test results are interpreted appropriately in the context of likely performance in winter.

[3] Slope values are expressed as maximums that will avoid the slope having an adverse effect on play, but should be regarded as the preferred values in terms of surface drainage. However, in some locations with heavy annual rainfall, these figures may need to be exceeded.

Table 2: Sport England Playing Quality Standards for Natural Turf Playing Fields. This serves as a good benchmark to maintain pitches to.

Cricket Squares

- **Witney Square** – This square is generally well-maintained and reported to play well. End of season renovations should include removal of surface organic matter/ thatch, spiking and overseeding and topdressing as required to restore levels to +/-10mm. In addition, thorough decompaction via deep tining (10-12mm mx.) through the autumn/winter is recommended once the soil profile has remoistened and softened sufficiently.
- Organic matter Testing - Undertake lab testing of intact soil cores for organic matter content at 3 depths (0-20, 20-40, 40-60mm) annually in late summer to inform the end of season requirements e.g. scarification depth and intensity or need for resurfacing (Koro work).
- Fencing should be placed around when the square is not use to deter rabbits and pedestrians.
- Standard cricket recommendations are enclosed with this report for further advice. Worm cast removal through the winter needs to be a priority to avoid losing surface levels.
- **The Leys Square** – The square is currently in poor condition with loss of levels, high weed content and patchy grass cover. It is likely that organic matter/ thatch levels are also higher than desirable (confirmation via lab testing) if it has not received any cricket renovations for some years.
- In order to bring it back into condition for play would require removal of the surface using a Koro FieldTopmaker, light cultivation, overseeding, topdressing and fertilisation and then dedicated and extensive pre-season rolling starting early in the year whilst the profile is still moist to reconsolidate the layers. Use of a heavy roller (1t+) would be needed to firm up the profile. Cost for this work would be in the region of £7-8K.
- Square Removal – Alternatively, the square might be best removed in this instance, particularly as the outfield boundary measures just 35-43.5m from the wicket ends of the 3 most northern pitches to the footpath, thereby restricting use of the upper half of the square to younger players of U11's (see Figures U and V below).
- As the square is raised above the surrounding ground its removal to turn it into pitch area would require some relevelling work. This could be undertaken by treating with total herbicide and once the sward has died off, cultivating to ~75-100mm depth, removing the excess soil*, raking, removing stones and regrading the remaining soil to form a level platform with the surrounds before seeding and re-establishing grass cover. If a water point exists for the square, this could be used to aid with grow-in of the area. If not interfering with pitch layout, it might be retained to enable goalmouth irrigation. * The excess soil from the upper profile might be stockpiled for reuse to form a cricket square in another location (some lab testing would be recommended to ascertain what depth the cricket loam is to carefully remove it). Alternatively, it could be used to fill in dips elsewhere on the ground.
- Temporary Cricket Pitches – Consideration could be given to use of temporary, roll out cricket pitches such as Flicx https://flicx.com which are popular for grass roots clubs and people learning the sport. https://flicx.com/resources/case-studies

3.6 Cricket

3.6.1 Pitch examples

Figure B23 Playing area for Senior Cricket (8 wicket) minimum pitch

Notes: See Part A Figure A2 for pitch orientation criteria.
All dimensions are in metres.

Key: Pitch area

Safety margin 3.00 m wide

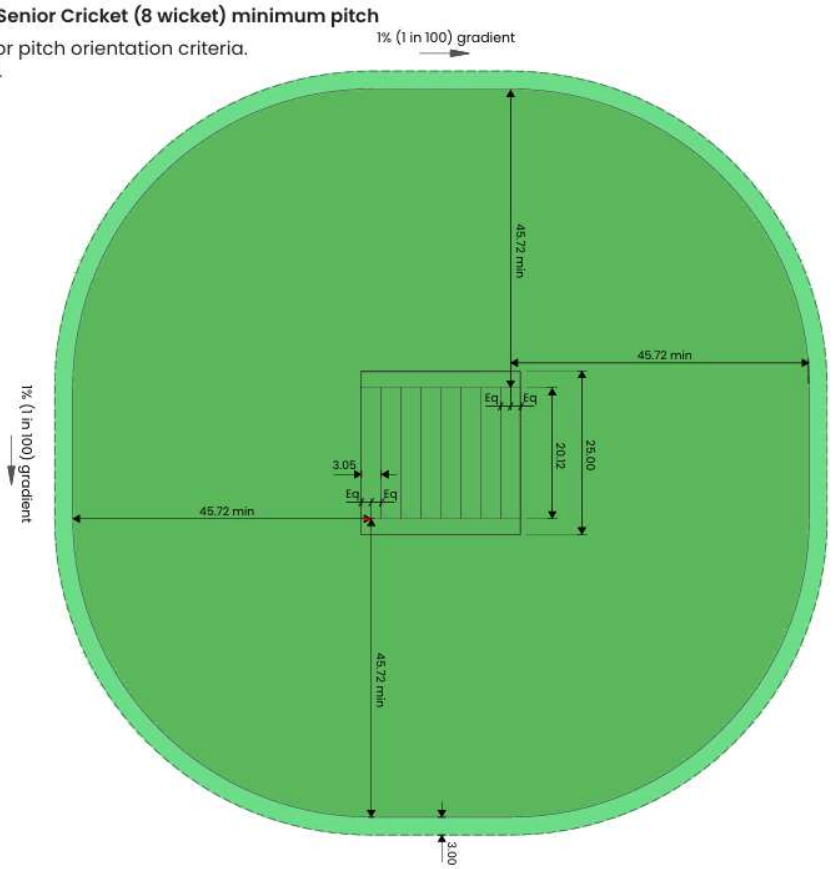


Figure U: Recommended outfield size and gradient for senior cricket. Ref: Sport England Natural Turf for Sport 2025, Part B, p58.

ECB Recommended Junior Formats and Boundary Sizes

Age Group	Pitch Length	Max Boundary Size	Ball Type / Weight
Under 9 (U9)	15 yards (13.7m)	30m	Light / soft rubber ball
Under 11 (U11)	17 yards (15.5m)	35m (Soft Ball) / 40m (Hard Ball)	4.75 oz. (135g)
Under 13 (U13)	19 yards	45m	4.75 oz. (135g)
Under 15 (U15)	20 yards	50m	5.0 oz. (142g)
Under 17 (U17)	22 yards (Regulation)	55m	5.0 oz. (142g)

Figure V: Recommended outfield sizes for youth cricket.

Summary

- **Bowling Green Maintenance** – Is very good with only fine-tuning is recommended, namely, to increase decompaction on rink ends and to address invasive tree roots and shading issues. The groundsman's expertise in golf green management (which is very similar) is evident in the quality of the greens produced.
- Organic matter testing annually is recommended as a measure of quality control and it would also be useful to check surface levels with a 2m straight edge which should be within +/-10mm.
- **Cricket Squares** – The maintenance undertaken by the team at West Witney appears to be working well. Organic matter testing annually is recommended as a measure of quality control and it would also be useful to check surface levels with a straight edge which should be within +/-10mm and +/- 5mm is preferable.
- The Leys square is probably best removed if the demand for cricket is low, but football is high. Consider supplying a roll out artificial pitch option for cricket. A ground with less slope would be preferable for cricket but may depend on where demand is.
- **Football Pitch Maintenance** - There is a good balance between outside contractor assistance (currently employed for end of the season renovations including topdressing and overseeding) and in-house staff operations (mowing, lining, fertiliser, 2 x passes with the SISIS Maxislit and 1 x pass with the Imants Shockwave). The quality of the playing fields shows this has been working well.
- Costs might be saved on switching to a straight sand dressing as discussed above.
- Acquisition of your own Vredo disc seeder might be considered which would enable seeding to be undertaken piecemeal in-house, as described in the recommendations above, allowing some early/ before end of season renovations or additional overseeding in early autumn if required. Flexibility of works is likely to become more important with changing weather patterns.
- The priorities for sports provision would be:-
    - Better spread of wear both around pitches and within pitches. Use the councils Playing Field Strategy (PFS) to identify users and demand around the borough but bear in mind that the usage levels recommended are not always achievable, especially with increased high rainfall events. Move pitch areas up and down/ side to side. Encourage teams to use off-pitch areas for warm-ups. Invest in mobile goals.
    - Provision of 3G pitch(es) to climate proof. Weather extremes will likely make grass pitches unsuitable for play for more of the time.
    - Event Field - dedicate to events only and consider investing in infrastructure such as hard-standing vehicle entry/exit points/ turning areas. Move current 11v11 pitch to eastern side of ground (requiring removal of the cricket square).
- **STRI Support** – This subscription visit was predominantly agronomic and to document current playing quality to guide maintenance and sustainable usage. STRI can assist the council with evaluating staffing level, training, machinery and capability, as well as producing a structured Sports Grounds Management System, including required inspections, documentation, performance indicators and records, but it outside of the scope of this report. We would be happy to provide a fee proposal for this work if desired.

Signed

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PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

Agenda Item: Major Capital Projects Update – Ralegh Crescent MUGA

Meeting Date: Monday 2 November 2026

Contact Officer: Project Officer

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

Background

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

This report aims to provide you with an update on the major capital project linked to Parks and Recreation, which is Ralegh Crescent MUGA

Ralegh Crescent MUGA



Current Situation

- West Oxfordshire District Council is both the landowner and the holder of the Section 106 funding associated with this project. Therefore, it is responsible for the contractual and financial management. The Town Council is responsible for the evaluation of contractors, public consultation and the day-to-day delivery of the project.
- The project has experienced several delays arising from the complexities associated with the Section 106 process, the consideration of alternative site locations and resource constraints within the District Council. These factors have impacted the overall programme and progress of the project.
- To support the successful delivery of the project, District Council officers are currently exploring legal mechanisms that would enable the transfer of contractual and financial responsibilities to the Town Council. This would allow Town Council officers to assume full control of the project, streamline decision-making processes and help expedite delivery.
- Town Council officers are currently awaiting further advice and guidance from District Council officers regarding the most appropriate way forward.

Impact Assessments

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

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

Risk

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

- Differences in Town Council and District Council protocol, processes and cultures could present challenges agreeing tender specifications and transferring ownership to Witney Town Council. We are managing risk by learning from previous experience with Play Park and effective comms through robust procurement process and project management.

- Officers recognise that concepts which were presented at public consultation last year will be different to what is being delivered due to S106 spending criteria. Officers are taking relevant feedback from consultation event to incorporate into new design scope.

Social Value

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

- A key objective of the park is to encourage exercise through fun activities, which attracts users from every segment of the community to encourage social, generational, cultural and physical integration.
- Another key objective is making a safe and fun area for girls to participate in sporting activities.
- The park will address a growing concern of anti-social behaviour in the existing park, due to its covered seating areas, which are poorly lit.

Financial implications

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

Recommendations

This is a project update however any feedback is always appreciated

PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

Agenda Item: West Witney Capital Projects Update

Meeting Date: Monday, 2 November 2026

Contact Officer: Project Officer

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

Background

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

This report aims to provide you with an update on the major capital project linked to Parks and Recreation, which is the 'West Witney Project'

West Witney Project

New Depot



West Witney Clubhouse



Current Situation

- The West Witney Project combines the construction of a new Works Depot alongside the refurbishment of the existing Clubhouse.
- The refurbishment works to the clubhouse were halted following the termination of the contract between the Council and the contractor in September 2026. Since that date, officers have assumed responsibility for the building and surrounding site and have worked closely with the Council's health and safety consultant to ensure that the site remains safe, secure, tidy and compliant with all relevant requirements. Additional security measures have also been implemented to protect the building, materials and equipment.
- Officers are working closely with the Council's construction consultant to assess the extent of the incomplete works, building regulation compliance, and to prepare an independent Quantity Surveyor's report setting out the anticipated costs and timescales required to complete the project. This report will be used to support the evaluation of quotations/tenders received from prospective contractors interested in undertaking the remaining works.
- Officers are also preparing a report for Council that will set out options for procuring a contractor to complete the refurbishment as quickly as possible while ensuring value for money and compliance with the Council's financial regulations and procurement requirements. It is anticipated that this report will be finalised shortly, following which a Special Meeting will be convened (if outside current Committee timeframes) to enable Members to consider the available options and determine the preferred course of action.
- Officers recognise the importance of keeping both Councillors and the wider community informed as the project progresses. A detailed timeline for the completion of the clubhouse refurbishment will be shared at the earliest opportunity once the remaining works have been fully assessed and a preferred procurement route has been agreed. Members should note, however, that previous communications relating to the project have, at times, contained limited information where matters have been deemed commercially sensitive. This approach has been necessary to protect the Council's legal, contractual and financial interests and may continue to influence the level of detail that can be shared publicly as the project moves forward. Nevertheless, every effort will be made to provide timely and meaningful updates whenever it is appropriate to do so.

Impact Assessments

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

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

Risk

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

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

Social Value

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

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

Financial implications

- Officers are currently reviewing the financial position of the project and assessing the implications arising from the termination of the contract. A detailed assessment of the financial impact, including any additional costs and associated risks, will be presented within the report to be considered at the forthcoming Extraordinary Council Meeting.

Recommendations

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