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Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments
Committee Meeting of Witney Town Council

Monday, 9th November, 2026 at 6.00 pm

To members of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee - R Crouch, J Robertshaw, O Collins, G Doughty, J Treloar, R Smith, J Doughty and D Enright (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.

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To view the meeting please follow this link **HCA Committee 09.11.2026**

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 Cle 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 replace ordinary Councillors at a meeting of a Committee if ordinary Councillors of the Committee ha 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 3 November 2026

3. **Minutes** (Pages 4 - 8)

a) To receive and consider the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries and Allotments Committee held on 14 September.

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

4. **Public Participation**

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

5. **Finance Report: Revised Revenue Budget 2026/27 and Draft Base Revenue Budget for 2027/28** (Pages 9 - 25)

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 26 - 29)

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 30 - 33)

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

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

Public Halls

8. **Public Halls Report** (Pages 34 - 36)

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

9. **Corn Exchange Business Report** (Pages 37 - 45)

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

10. **Public Halls Business Plan Review**

To receive a verbal update from Officers.

Cemeteries & Closed Churchyards

11. **Closed Churchyards Update** (Pages 46 - 49)

To receive and consider the report of the Head of Estates & Operations.

Town Clerk

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

Held on Monday, 14 September 2026

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

Present:

Councillor R Crouch (Chair)

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

H430 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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

H431 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

H432 **MINUTES**

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

Resolved:

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

H433 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Committee adjourned for this item.

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

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

The Committee reconvened.

H434 **PUBLIC HALLS REPORT**

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

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

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

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

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

Recommended:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Committee were unanimously in agreement.

Resolved:

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

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

H436 **FINANCE REPORT**

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

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

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

Recommended:

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

H437 **PUBLIC HALLS BUSINESS REPORT**

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

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

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

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

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

Resolved:

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

H438 **PUBLIC HALLS BUSINESS PLAN REVIEW**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

H439 **CEMETERY REGULATIONS REVIEW**

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

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

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

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

Recommended:

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

The meeting closed at: 7.29 pm

Chair

HALLS, CEMETERIES AND ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

Agenda Item: Finance Report: Revised Revenue Budget 2026/27 and Draft Base Revenue Budget for 2027/28

Meeting Date: 9th 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 9th 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 Halls, Cemeteries and Allotments 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
103	Bars
104	Corn Exchange
105	Burwell Hall
301	Tower Hill Cemetery
302	Windrush Cemetery
303	Closed churchyards – St Mary's/ Holy Trinity
305	Allotments

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. Fees and Charges

   Fees and charges for recreation services need to be considered. The Council is subject to inflationary pressures and so it is reasonable that fees and charges are increased to cover these. It should be remembered that services run at a net cost to the Council taxpayer – which is the ultimate reason they are provided by a local authority. Fees and charges are set at a level at which a reasonable amount is then recovered by those actually benefiting from the service which has been paid for by all Witney council taxpayers. 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 to budget for current levels of usage plus a price rise of 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, to reflect current usage, and then 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 went 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 3.5% inflation uplift, revised down from 4%.

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. 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.

3. 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**.

   For this Committee this affects the Langdale Hall and Madley Park Hall. These are leased to third parties and under the Committee terms of reference property matters in relation to leases etc are a matter for the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee (PGF).

4. It should be noted that a significant proportion of expenditure for this Committee's 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 simply included at the same level as the original budgets. Note that this approach means that there will be some budgets where the projected year end expenditure looks disproportionate to the spend to month 6 and example being the allotments where year to date allocation of outside staff time is £254 but the revised budget is £6,129. Note on this budget that the 2025-26 was £6,715. Note that overall, in relation to central budget costs it is considered at this stage that expenditure outturn will be within these budgets.
   (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).

5. There are major inflationary pressures on the Council and so increases have been kept as low as possible. Members will see that some budgets have been reduced or removed to avoid any over-provision. 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. It is also anticipated that more use of "holding budgets" will be introduced whereby a budget is established which can be used by a number of cost centres and whereby virements are made when there is an expenditure need.

Notes in relation to specific items

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

Page 1 – Café/ Bar income. This includes both the Corn Exchange/ 1863 and the Burwell Hall. Income has increased overall this year, original budget being £229,734, revised for 2026-27 to £239,675 and the initial estimate for 2027-28 being £251,440 (increase of 9.4% on 2026-27 original estimate and 4.9% on the revised estimate). A major driver of this increase has been sales related to the Music on the Square events during the summer months.

Page 1 – Direct costs (code 3000-3011) – these relate to purchases of stock and have increased as a result of sales. However the same margins have been retained in the revised 2026-27 and 2027-28 estimates compared with 2026-27.

Page 1 onwards- salaries and wages code 4001. These have increased across the halls services, with the overall revised figure showing an increase and the estimates for 2027-28 across the cost centres 103 to 105 amounting to £289,700 compared with the 2026-27 original budget £255,336, an increase of 13.5%. The causes of this include: increased staffing in relation to the café/bar, salary scale changes, increases in the Real Living Wage (+6.7% for 2026-27 and +4.8% for 2027-28) and legislative changes which include provision for sick pay in relation to casual hours staff. Cumulatively these changes are significant and have the result of increasing the halls running costs from £218,873 (2026-27 original) to £229,067 initial estimate for 2027-28.

Page 2 Income Corn Exchange – the 2026-27 projection is in line with the original estimates and an allowance of 3.5% increase is made for 2027-28 at this point.

Page 3 onwards – 4011 – National Non-Domestic rates – estimates reflect the announcements made in the Chancellor's budget on 28th October.

Page 3 onwards – 4014 electricity and 4015 gas. Estimates reflect usage for the period October 2025 to September 2026 and 15% has been applied for 2027-28. These estimates will be subject to further refinement during the coming weeks.

Page 4 – Burwell Hall income increase on projected 2026-27 budget from £33,350 to £35,850 reflects increased usage.

Page 6 – Tower Hill Cemetery income. Cemetery income is difficult to predict, it varying year on year to reflect the number of interments, the type of interments (including out of parish interments) and local changes (e.g. in relation to crematoria). During the year to date income for both cemeteries is lower than budget. In addition the Tower Hill cemetery now

only has interments for those who reserved spaces many years ago and so your officers have revised estimates down and decreased income for 2027-28 by 10%. The impact is to reduce budgeted income from £32,175 (original 2026-27) to £23,208 (revised) and £20,965 (2027-28), a reduction of £11,210.

Page 7- Windrush Cemetery income. This is now the main area for cemetery activity. However the estimates have been reduced in relation to budgeted income from £65,819 (original 2026-27) to £56,250 (revised) and £58,215 (2027-28), a reduction of £7,604.

The RFO will be re-visiting cemetery estimates in the coming few weeks. Current estimates are modest and there may well be an increase when they are re-examined.

Summary

Overall the budget estimates for this Committee show:

Original 2026-27 revenue budget: £577,237 (adjusted for virements)

Revised 2026-27 revenue budget: £588,918.

Proposed 2027-28 revenue budget: £615,909 (increase of 6.7% on 2026-27 original)

Note the above figures will likely change when the revenue costs of works/ central budgets are considered by the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee. Members will further wish to take in to account that 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 and 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 - Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee, 9th November 2026

		2025-26 Final		2026-27				Initial Estimate 2027-28		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments										
103	**BAR/ CAFE**									
1000	C/EX. 1863 - SALES ALCOHOL	37,500	34,976	41,075	25,181	45,000	0	47,250	0	0
1001	C/EX. 1863 SALES - FOOD	35,700	46,433	48,280	24,569	50,000	0	52,500	0	0
1002	C/EX. 1863 BAR HIRE CHARGE	1,055	805	1,254	798	1,500	0	1,575	0	0
1003	C/EX. 1863 SALES - SOFT DRINKS	9,030	10,893	13,550	7,762	15,000	0	15,750	0	0
1009	CORN EX.1863 CAFE- HOT DRINKS	96,000	114,841	121,975	61,455	121,975	0	128,000	0	0
1010	BOOK SALES	0	0	0	140	300	0	0	0	0
1014	EVENTS INCOME	0	0	0	-1	0	0	0	0	0
1090	BURWELL HALL BAR - ALL DRINKS	3,200	5,367	3,600	3,715	5,900	0	6,200	0	0
1091	BURWELL HALL BAR HIRE CHARGE	153	-50	0	0	0	0	165	0	0
1099	MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	0	166	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1171	DONATIONS RECEIVED	0	0	0	20	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Income	182,638	213,433	229,734	123,638	239,675	0	251,440	0	0
3000	BAR PURCHASES - DRINK	22,875	20,523	23,575	16,729	26,360	0	27,675	0	0
3001	BAR PURCHASES - FOOD	21,420	24,888	28,975	17,026	30,000	0	31,500	0	0
3009	CAFE PURCHASES - HOT BEVERAGES	24,000	25,682	30,500	12,588	30,500	0	32,025	0	0
3010	PROMOTIONS	4,450	5,143	6,400	3,978	6,400	0	6,720	0	0
3011	BOOKS PURCHASES	0	0	0	0	180	0	210	0	0
	Direct Expenditure	72,745	76,236	89,450	50,322	93,440	0	98,130	0	0
4001	SALARIES	107,000	116,238	124,745	69,540	135,000	0	142,700	0	0
4002	ER'S NIC	9,900	10,071	10,600	5,987	11,700	0	12,400	0	0

Continued on next page

		2025-26 Final		2026-27				Initial Estimate 2027-28		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
4003	ER'S SUPERANN	7,000	9,301	14,850	6,461	12,900	0	12,500	0	0
4007	PROTECTIVE CLOTHING	500	0	250	120	250	0	250	0	0
4016	CLEANING MATERIALS	100	236	160	115	230	0	230	0	0
4038	OTHER MAINTENANCE	500	451	250	0	125	0	200	0	0
4042	EQUIPMENT INC. FURNITURE	5,000	5,791	4,000	1,697	4,000	0	4,000	0	0
4059	OTHER PROF FEES	700	600	600	300	600	0	600	0	0
4064	HEALTH & SAFETY	0	0	15	15	15	0	0	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	1,000	615	300	19	150	0	300	0	0
4892	C/S STAFF RCHG	5,339	5,001	5,079	2,497	5,079	0	5,257	0	0
4893	C/S O'HEAD RCHG	1,410	1,444	1,454	802	1,454	0	1,505	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	138,449	149,748	162,303	87,552	171,503	0	179,942	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(28,556)	(12,552)	(22,019)	(14,236)	(25,268)		(26,632)		
104	**CORN EXCHANGE**									
1007	CORN EXCHNGE LETTING	68,000	61,826	68,000	31,965	68,000	0	70,380	0	0
1014	EVENTS INCOME	13,881	19,314	18,000	7,668	18,000	0	18,630	0	0
1015	TEA DANCE INCOME	2,400	3,091	3,300	1,358	3,300	0	3,416	0	0
1016	FUNCTION REFRESHMENT	0	50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1017	CORN EXCHANGE WEDDING LETTING	1,400	246	2,200	382	2,200	0	2,277	0	0
1052	EXPENSES RECOVERED	750	1,471	650	0	650	0	673	0	0
1099	MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	0	74	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Income	86,431	86,072	92,150	41,373	92,150	0	95,376	0	0
4001	SALARIES	65,544	75,882	82,632	43,200	88,000	0	91,000	0	0

Continued on next page

Note: Base revenue estimates - Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee, 9th November 2026

		2025-26 Final		2026-27				Initial Estimate 2027-28		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
4002	ER'S NIC	7,342	8,541	9,533	5,171	10,450	0	10,800	0	0
4003	ER'S SUPERANN	9,811	9,824	15,575	5,315	10,650	0	11,200	0	0
4007	PROTECTIVE CLOTHING	300	96	200	0	100	0	200	0	0
4008	TRAINING	1,020	1,339	1,020	660	660	0	1,056	0	0
4011	NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES	3,167	3,219	4,043	2,411	4,019	0	2,120	0	0
4012	WATER/SEWERAGE CHARGES	5,075	2,196	5,665	830	2,300	0	2,400	0	0
4014	ELECTRICITY	12,000	13,269	14,500	5,228	14,000	0	16,100	0	0
4015	GAS	8,000	5,297	8,900	1,327	6,100	0	7,015	0	0
4016	CLEANING MATERIALS	2,040	2,825	2,800	1,240	2,800	0	2,898	0	0
4017	CONTRACT CLEAN/WASTE	3,735	2,537	2,700	1,397	2,700	0	2,795	0	0
4018	PHOTOCOPIER COSTS	190	112	170	116	170	0	176	0	0
4021	TELEPHONE/FAX	1,260	1,420	1,600	529	1,075	0	1,110	0	0
4023	STATIONERY	0	0	0	92	92	0	0	0	0
4025	INSURANCE	950	977	1,350	2,048	2,048	0	1,397	0	0
4028	I.T.	1,500	2,087	2,100	1,265	2,100	0	2,174	0	0
4030	RECRUITMENT ADVT'G	1,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4032	PUBLICITY	3,000	1,704	2,000	1,163	2,000	0	2,070	0	0
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	12,000	8,956	12,000	4,962	12,000	0	12,420	0	0
4038	OTHER MAINTENANCE	4,000	6,002	4,000	2,322	4,000	0	4,140	0	0
4042	EQUIPMENT INC. FURNITURE	2,000	998	1,500	745	1,500	0	1,553	0	0
4043	SMALL TOOLS & EQUIPT	150	231	150	34	150	0	155	0	0
4045	LICENCES	2,900	2,628	2,800	2,943	2,943	0	3,050	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	370	473	490	401	401	0	415	0	0
4064	HEALTH & SAFETY	100	121	100	75	100	0	104	0	0

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		2025-26 Final		2026-27				Initial Estimate 2027-28		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
4141	EVENTS	10,000	18,816	15,500	6,554	15,500	0	16,043	0	0
4142	TEA DANCE COSTS	6,700	4,482	6,239	2,571	4,400	0	4,550	0	0
4144	FILM CLUB	4,600	3,067	1,940	2,520	3,350	0	3,450	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	5,000	4,674	5,572	1,399	5,572	0	5,767	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	326	324	329	85	329	0	341	0	0
4892	C/S STAFF RCHG	10,677	10,002	10,158	4,993	10,158	0	10,514	0	0
4893	C/S O'HEAD RCHG	2,820	2,884	2,908	1,605	2,908	0	3,010	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	711	783	826	251	826	0	855	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	188,288	195,764	219,300	103,449	213,401	0	220,878	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(101,857)	(109,692)	(127,150)	(62,076)	(121,251)		(125,502)		
105	**BURWELL HALL**									
1005	BURWELL HALL LETTING	31,200	29,431	33,000	16,654	34,500	0	35,750	0	0
1052	EXPENSES RECOVERED	750	829	350	0	350	0	362	0	0
	Total Income	31,950	30,260	33,350	16,654	34,850	0	36,112	0	0
4001	SALARIES	46,804	42,271	47,959	26,986	53,500	0	56,000	0	0
4002	ER'S NIC	4,925	4,952	5,651	3,017	6,000	0	6,300	0	0
4003	ER'S SUPERANN	5,744	6,963	8,875	3,784	7,600	0	7,950	0	0
4007	PROTECTIVE CLOTHING	300	0	150	0	150	0	155	0	0
4008	TRAINING	500	13	250	0	250	0	259	0	0
4011	NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES	2,150	2,156	2,708	1,772	2,956	0	3,335	0	0
4012	WATER/SEWERAGE CHARGES	825	589	680	331	680	0	704	0	0
4014	ELECTRICITY	2,500	2,224	2,900	1,028	2,900	0	3,300	0	0

Continued on next page

		2025-26 Final		2026-27				Initial Estimate 2027-28		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
4015	GAS	4,146	1,595	3,400	867	3,000	0	3,100	0	0
4016	CLEANING MATERIALS	2,050	2,351	2,000	1,159	2,000	0	2,070	0	0
4017	CONTRACT CLEAN/WASTE	2,800	3,905	3,725	2,306	4,300	0	4,450	0	0
4021	TELEPHONE/FAX	260	402	285	201	285	0	295	0	0
4025	INSURANCE	445	459	625	907	907	0	940	0	0
4028	I.T.	1,000	1,543	1,550	1,009	1,550	0	1,604	0	0
4032	PUBLICITY	1,000	0	500	0	500	0	518	0	0
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	5,000	2,603	5,000	973	2,700	0	4,000	0	0
4038	OTHER MAINTENANCE	1,825	2,351	1,000	2,256	2,500	0	2,580	0	0
4042	EQUIPMENT INC. FURNITURE	1,500	749	1,500	63	700	0	1,000	0	0
4045	LICENCES	485	512	530	502	502	0	520	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	1,825	335	350	238	238	0	245	0	0
4064	HEALTH & SAFETY	0	452	0	69	69	0	0	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	200	0	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
4142	TEA DANCE COSTS	0	0	61	61	61	0	0	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	5,000	4,427	5,572	1,766	5,572	0	5,767	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	326	346	329	157	329	0	341	0	0
4892	C/S STAFF RCHG	5,339	4,999	5,075	2,497	5,075	0	5,253	0	0
4893	C/S O'HEAD RCHG	1,410	1,444	1,453	802	1,453	0	1,504	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	711	335	826	255	826	0	855	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	99,070	87,977	103,054	53,004	106,603	0	113,045	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(67,120)	(57,717)	(69,704)	(36,350)	(71,753)		(76,933)		
301	**TOWER HILL CEMETERY**									

Continued on next page

Note: Base revenue estimates - Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee, 9th November 2026

		2025-26 Final		2026-27				Initial Estimate 2027-28		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
1099	MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	0	31	0	33	33	0	0	0	0
1100	BURIAL FEES	8,850	10,554	9,965	2,576	8,200	0	7,400	0	0
1101	GRANT OF RIGHTS	1,200	935	1,040	741	1,250	0	1,125	0	0
1102	INTERMENT OF ASHES	13,000	9,747	14,600	3,324	8,400	0	7,600	0	0
1105	MEMORIAL FEES	6,500	4,392	5,600	1,735	4,500	0	4,100	0	0
1106	MEMORIAL PLAQUES	500	419	520	137	425	0	380	0	0
1108	CHAPEL FEES	450	402	450	132	400	0	360	0	0
	Total Income	30,500	26,479	32,175	8,676	23,208	0	20,965	0	0
4001	SALARIES	15,602	13,965	15,548	7,985	15,548	0	16,092	0	0
4002	ER'S NIC	1,915	1,691	1,894	985	1,894	0	1,960	0	0
4003	ER'S SUPERANN	3,385	3,030	3,076	1,587	3,076	0	3,184	0	0
4011	NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES	3,850	3,792	3,936	2,334	3,890	0	3,934	0	0
4012	WATER/SEWERAGE CHARGES	850	609	1,800	107	650	0	700	0	0
4014	ELECTRICITY	900	517	900	231	600	0	690	0	0
4016	CLEANING MATERIALS	30	0	30	0	30	0	31	0	0
4017	CONTRACT CLEAN/WASTE	1,500	1,250	1,700	325	1,175	0	1,350	0	0
4025	INSURANCE	445	274	375	460	460	0	475	0	0
4028	I.T.	0	309	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	6,000	7,167	7,000	757	4,800	0	7,000	0	0
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	0	25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4038	OTHER MAINTENANCE	0	22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4040	ARBORICULTURE	0	1,588	2,150	2,150	2,150	0	0	0	0
4041	EQUIPMENT HIRE	400	200	400	0	200	0	300	0	0
4042	EQUIPMENT INC. FURNITURE	100	0	100	0	0	0	0	0	0

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		2025-26 Final		2026-27				Initial Estimate 2027-28		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
4059	OTHER PROF FEES	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4064	HEALTH & SAFETY	102	69	100	0	100	0	104	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	200	151	200	0	100	0	150	0	0
4110	LETTINGS - NO CHARGE/SUBSID'D	200	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4350	PLAQUES PURCHASED	605	387	400	87	400	0	414	0	0
4355	MEMORIAL MAINTENANCE	2,000	1,845	1,800	540	1,500	0	1,800	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	110,000	83,158	122,580	33,592	122,580	0	126,870	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	7,164	5,582	7,243	2,227	7,243	0	7,497	0	0
4892	C/S STAFF RCHG	16,017	15,005	15,239	7,490	15,239	0	15,772	0	0
4893	C/S O'HEAD RCHG	4,230	4,326	4,363	2,407	4,363	0	4,516	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	15,643	14,042	18,171	5,808	18,171	0	18,807	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	191,238	159,005	209,005	69,070	204,169	0	211,646	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(160,738)	(132,526)	(176,830)	(60,394)	(180,961)		(190,681)		
302	**WINDRUSH CEMETERY**									
1100	BURIAL FEES	22,785	23,530	23,651	8,843	19,785	0	20,475	0	0
1101	GRANT OF RIGHTS	27,633	27,972	28,683	10,039	25,000	0	25,875	0	0
1102	INTERMENT OF ASHES	5,394	5,522	5,599	1,391	4,300	0	4,450	0	0
1105	MEMORIAL FEES	7,597	6,096	7,886	3,131	7,000	0	7,245	0	0
1106	MEMORIAL PLAQUES	0	195	0	62	165	0	170	0	0
	Total Income	63,409	63,314	65,819	23,466	56,250	0	58,215	0	0
4001	SALARIES	14,932	13,965	15,548	7,984	15,548	0	16,092	0	0
4002	ER'S NIC	1,217	1,691	1,894	985	1,894	0	1,960	0	0

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Witney Town Council Current Year

Annual Budget - By Committee (Actual YTD Month 6)

Note: Base revenue estimates - Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee, 9th November 2026

		2025-26 Final		2026-27				Initial Estimate 2027-28		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
4003	ER'S SUPERANN	3,241	3,030	3,076	1,587	3,076	0	3,184	0	0
4011	NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES	8,689	7,984	8,287	4,706	7,845	0	7,934	0	0
4012	WATER/SEWERAGE CHARGES	242	329	360	138	360	0	373	0	0
4014	ELECTRICITY	2,750	2,000	2,100	531	2,000	0	2,300	0	0
4016	CLEANING MATERIALS	31	0	30	0	0	0	31	0	0
4017	CONTRACT CLEAN/WASTE	793	4,941	2,700	2,370	5,000	0	5,175	0	0
4021	TELEPHONE/FAX	273	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4025	INSURANCE	130	138	175	235	235	0	240	0	0
4028	I.T.	0	309	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	2,040	1,249	2,000	300	1,300	50	2,000	0	0
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	510	120	530	0	200	0	210	0	0
4038	OTHER MAINTENANCE	1,530	720	1,000	507	1,000	0	1,035	0	0
4042	EQUIPMENT INC. FURNITURE	1,530	600	1,000	0	500	0	750	0	0
4043	SMALL TOOLS & EQUIPT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4059	OTHER PROF FEES	1,020	0	1,059	0	0	0	0	0	0
4064	HEALTH & SAFETY	102	48	106	0	0	0	0	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4350	PLAQUES PURCHASED	102	264	235	0	235	0	243	0	0
4355	MEMORIAL MAINTENANCE	1,790	592	1,300	0	700	250	1,000	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	110,000	78,009	122,580	26,593	122,580	0	126,870	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	7,164	5,582	7,243	1,472	7,243	0	7,497	0	0
4892	C/S STAFF RCHG	16,017	15,006	15,241	7,490	15,241	0	15,774	0	0
4893	C/S O'HEAD RCHG	4,230	4,325	4,363	2,407	4,363	0	4,516	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	15,643	11,996	18,171	4,520	18,171	0	18,807	0	0

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Note: Base revenue estimates - Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee, 9th November 2026

		2025-26 Final		2026-27				Initial Estimate 2027-28		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
	Overhead Expenditure	193,976	152,909	208,998	61,826	207,491	300	215,991	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(130,567)	(89,595)	(143,179)	(38,361)	(151,241)		(157,776)		
303	**CLOSED CH'YARDS ST MARYS/HOLY**									
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	11,000	448	10,000	0	10,000	0	10,000	0	0
4040	ARBORICULTURE	1,000	0	1,000	500	1,000	0	1,035	0	0
4059	OTHER PROF FEES	1,000	0	1,000	0	500	0	500	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	0	7,802	9,801	8,745	9,801	0	10,144	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	0	594	579	528	579	0	599	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	0	1,270	1,453	795	1,453	0	1,504	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	13,000	10,115	23,833	10,567	23,333	0	23,782	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(13,000)	(10,115)	(23,833)	(10,567)	(23,333)		(23,782)		
305	**ALLOTMENTS**									
4013	RENT PAID	125	0	125	0	125	0	125	0	0
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	1,600	0	1,600	0	1,000	0	1,250	0	0
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	500	240	500	0	250	0	500	0	0
4038	OTHER MAINTENANCE	0	2,529	0	0	871	871	0	0	0
4069	ALLOTMENT SHEDS	0	0	0	568	568	0	0	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	5,500	6,715	6,129	254	6,129	0	6,344	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	358	515	362	16	362	0	375	0	0
4892	C/S STAFF RCHG	4,004	3,751	3,807	1,872	3,807	0	3,940	0	0
4893	C/S O'HEAD RCHG	1,058	1,082	1,090	602	1,090	0	1,128	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	782	1,095	909	98	909	0	941	0	0

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Note: Base revenue estimates - Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee, 9th November 2026

	2025-26 Final		2026-27				Initial Estimate 2027-28		
	Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
Overhead Expenditure	13,927	15,927	14,522	3,410	15,111	871	14,603	0	0
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(13,927)	(15,927)	(14,522)	(3,410)	(15,111)		(14,603)		
Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments - Income	394,928	419,557	453,228	213,807	446,133	0	462,108	0	0
Expenditure	910,693	847,681	1,030,465	439,200	1,035,051	1,171	1,078,017	0	0
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(515,765)	(428,124)	(577,237)	(225,394)	(588,918)		(615,909)		
Total Budget Income	394,928	419,557	453,228	213,807	446,133	0	462,108	0	0
Expenditure	910,693	847,681	1,030,465	439,200	1,035,051	1,171	1,078,017	0	0
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(515,765)	(428,124)	(577,237)	(225,394)	(588,918)		(615,909)		

HALLS, CEMETERIES AND ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

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

Meeting Date: 9th 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

2026-27 budget

During 2026-27 the capital budgets affecting the work of Halls, Cemeteries and Allotments Committee include the following and these will be reviewed by the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee when reviewing the capital programme:

(i) Corn Exchange refurbishment - £6,000. This was for hearing loops. Note that subsequently, based on received quotes, a budget of £12,000 was agreed with additional amount coming from the general reserve.

(ii) Public Halls Property - £50,000.

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

Corn Exchange lighting – main hall £15,000.

2027-28 budget items for consideration

The following budget items for 2027-28 were discussed at the Halls, Cemeteries and Allotments Committee in September 2026 for further consideration in the budget cycle:

(i) The Committee wished that consideration be given to maintaining an annual capital allocation of £50,000 for carbon reduction projects, together with the earmarking of funding for future improvements to facilities and equipment at the Corn Exchange and Burwell Hall. This would be in addition to the £50,000 already in the capital budget for the current (2026-27) set aside for this purpose (line 4949/800 – Halls Property.

The Climate & Biodiversity Committee of 8th September 2026 also recommended "That, a provisional request of £50,000 for carbon reduction projects be considered within the 2027/28 budget setting process, subject to future review." (Min CB425). This was not specifically linked to the public halls although the minutes reference the proposal as matching the previous years' budget. The RFO is assuming that these two proposals would result in one budget bid for £50,000 but this is a matter for the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee and then the Full Council, to consider. Clearly carbon reduction in the public halls is a major part of the Council's adopted Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan but not the only part so there will need to be a clarity in relation to the prioritisation and whether it would be earmarked specifically for the public halls or whether there would be other projects which would draw on this budget.

(ii) The Committee also identified potential kitchen and equipment improvements at both the Corn Exchange and Burwell Hall. Whilst recognising that officer capacity to deliver additional projects was currently limited, Members agreed that earmarking funding would enable such projects to be progressed when resources became available. For the 2027-28 your officers would be looking to make some improvements in relation to the existing kitchen configuration, for which a modest budget of £1,000 would be sufficient. Members may then wish to consider an additional £5,000 to be earmarked for improvements from 2028/29 onwards, in the capital budget. With regard to improvements the intention is that when proposals come forward these would be presented in the context of how much additional revenue could be generated if the improvements are made.

(iii) When the Committee considered the Corn Exchange Business Plan (minute H437), it received an update on marketing activities, including the introduction of a "What's On" brochure and a WhatsApp channel to promote events. In the ensuing discussion it was noted that the existing publicity budget of £3,000 was largely committed to printing and event promotion. Members supported further consideration of increased marketing resources, particularly to improve engagement with older audiences through wider poster distribution, including the use of noticeboards across the town, supermarkets and the library. The Venue and Events Officer has a

proposal within his report for an additional revenue budget to cover the cost of a new brochure, in the sum of £1,060 per annum from 2027/28 onwards and Members are referred to that report.

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 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. There are likely to be financial implications in relation to the previously agreed revenue growth items in relation to new and enhanced facilities.

With regard to the items suggested at the September meeting of this Committee the financial implications are:

(i) Halls capital – carbon reduction £50,000. The same amount was allowed for in the 2026-27 capital budget, funded from revenue and so, viewed in isolation, would not result in an additional sum in relation to the Council Tax. However note the comments above regarding the proposal from the September meeting of the Climate and Biodiversity Committee.

(ii) Improved kitchen facilities – sum of £1,000 for the 2027-28 and an additional £5,000 to be earmarked for improvements for the period 2028/29 onwards.

(iii) The proposals in relation to marketing would require an additional recurring revenue budget of £1,060 for 2028/29 onwards.

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 is requested to consider the items suggested at the September meeting of this Committee and whether they should be included in the budget for 2027-28.

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 Burial Charges
For Tower Hill and Windrush Cemetery

	This Year (£)	Proposed for Next Year (£)
Interments - Charges Apply to Late Cancellations		
Foetal Remains Pre 24 Weeks Gestation	No Charge	
Baby in Baby Plot	298.00	308.50
Under 18 yrs if using Child Size Grave Double Depth	441.00	456.50
Under 18 yrs Second Burial in Exsisting Double Depth Child Size Grave	278.50	288.50
Double Depth Grave Adult Size	875.50	906.00
Second Burial in Exsisting Double Depth Grave Adult Size	556.50	576.00
Interment of Ashes of Person	194.00	201.00
Burial in Single Depth Grave at Tower Hill Cemetery	644.00	666.50
Purchases of Exclusive Right of Burial (EROB) Lease Period: Adult 30 Years / Child 90 Years		
Exclusive Right of Burial for a Baby	261.50	270.50
Exclusive Right of Burial for a Child Under 18 Years of Age	385.00	398.50
Exclusive Right of Burial for Person Over Age of 18 Years	771.00	798.00
Exclusive Right of Burial for Family Ashes Plot (Tower Hill)	505.50	523.00
Exclusive Right of Burial for Ashes Plot	280.00	290.00
Use of Tower Hill Chapel (Includes VAT)	137.50	142.50
Memorials and Memorial Inscriptions		
For the Right to Erect an Approved Memorial - Baby	72.00	74.50
For the Right to Erect an Approved Memorial	208.00	215.50
For the Right to Place a Desk Tablet 18" x 18" (Windrush Cemetery)	179.00	185.50
For Each Additional Inscription (to Include Moving of Headstone if Required)	86.50	89.50
For the Replacement of an Exsiting Memorial	No Charge	
Memorial Plaques		
Reservation of Plaque Space (Subject to Approval)	32.50	33.50
Small/Large Plaque Including Fixing	64.50/87.50	
Transfer of Exclusive Right of Burial Deed		
Standard Transfer (Maximum 2 EROB's)	45.00	46.50
Complex or Historical Transfer of Purchased Graves	Contact WTC	

Charge for Late Arrival at Cemetery or Late Departure from the Cemetery	177.00	183.00
Per hour, charged in 15 minute increments		
Administration Charge for Burial Searches	32.50	33.50
Oversized Graves		
Single Depth	385.00	398.50
Double Depth	566.50	586.50
Removal of Spoil		
Single Depth	396.50	410.50
Double Depth	594.00	615.00
Weekend Charges		
Ashes Interment - Saturday (Subject to Agreement)	127.00	131.50

HALLS CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

Agenda Item: Public Halls Report

Meeting Date: 9th November 2026

Contact Officer: Venue & Events Officer

The purpose of this report is to provide operational updates regarding the management of Witney Town Council's venues and seek recommendations for operational actions.

Background

Current Situation

Assistive Listening Project

Following approval at the last Full Council meeting, officers are now liaising with the agreed supplier to arrange installation of the assistive listening solutions in the Main Hall and Gallery room of Corn Exchange.

Sanitary Bins in Men's Toilets

The decision to install Sanitary Bins in the Men's toilets in the council's public halls has been received well with lots of positive comments via social media.

Corn Exchange Volunteer Scheme

Officers propose the introduction of a volunteer scheme at the Corn Exchange to support the delivery of events and performances, whilst providing opportunities for members of the local community to become more involved with the venue.

Volunteers would primarily assist with front-of-house duties, including welcoming and checking in attendees, directing customers to their seats, distributing programmes and providing general assistance before, during and after performances. In return for their time, volunteers would be offered the opportunity to watch the performances they are supporting, subject to availability and operational requirements.

The scheme would operate in accordance with the Council's existing Volunteer Policy, ensuring appropriate recruitment, induction, training and supervision arrangements are in place. Volunteers would complement existing staff rather than replace paid roles, helping to improve the customer experience and support the efficient operation of events.

It is anticipated that the scheme would be particularly beneficial for theatre performances, concerts and other ticketed events, whilst helping to strengthen community engagement with the Corn Exchange.

Marketing Budget

Officers introduced a *What's On* brochure for the first time this year, made possible by the increasing number of confirmed events and performances at the Corn Exchange. Following its introduction, Officers propose producing the brochure on a quarterly basis, providing a consistent and professional marketing resource to promote the venue's programme of events and activities.

The estimated printing cost is £285 for 500 brochures per quarter, equating to an annual cost of £1,140. Whilst the introduction of quarterly brochures is expected to reduce the requirement for individual A5 promotional flyers, the venue will continue to produce A1 posters and other marketing materials for Council-organised events.

Officers therefore recommend allocating an additional £1,140 to the publicity budget for 2027/28 to support the production of quarterly brochures as part of the Corn Exchange's wider marketing strategy. This would allow the existing publicity budget to continue supporting other printing and promotional activities.

The introduction of a regular brochure would provide an opportunity to increase awareness of the venue's programme, encourage advance ticket sales and attract new audiences. Increased attendance could also generate additional secondary income through Café & Bar sales, helping to offset the cost of production.

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 – The proposed assistive listening technology will improve accessibility and participation for people with hearing loss or other hearing impairments, supporting their equal access to the Council's facilities and events.
   Providing sanitary bins in male toilets will support equal access to appropriate sanitary facilities for all users, including men and boys who require them, helping to ensure the facilities are inclusive and accessible.
b) Biodiversity - n/a

c) Crime & Disorder – n/a
d) Environment & Climate Emergency - Officers are proceeding with a cautionary quantity of brochure printing, ensuring there are not excess brochures printed.

Risk

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

Social Value

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

Financial implications

Recommendations

Member are invited to note the report and

1. Consider the proposed introduction of a volunteer scheme at the Corn Exchange, with Officers progressing its development in accordance with the Council's existing Volunteer Policy.
2. Consider an additional allocation of £1,140 to the 2027/28 publicity budget to support the quarterly production of the Corn Exchange What's On brochure.

HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

Agenda Item: Public Halls Business Report

Meeting Date: Monday 9 November 2026

Contact Officer: Venue & Events Officer

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the events that have taken place since the last committee meeting and report on forthcoming events in the diary. The report also provides an update on the recent business of 1863 Café & Bar.

Background

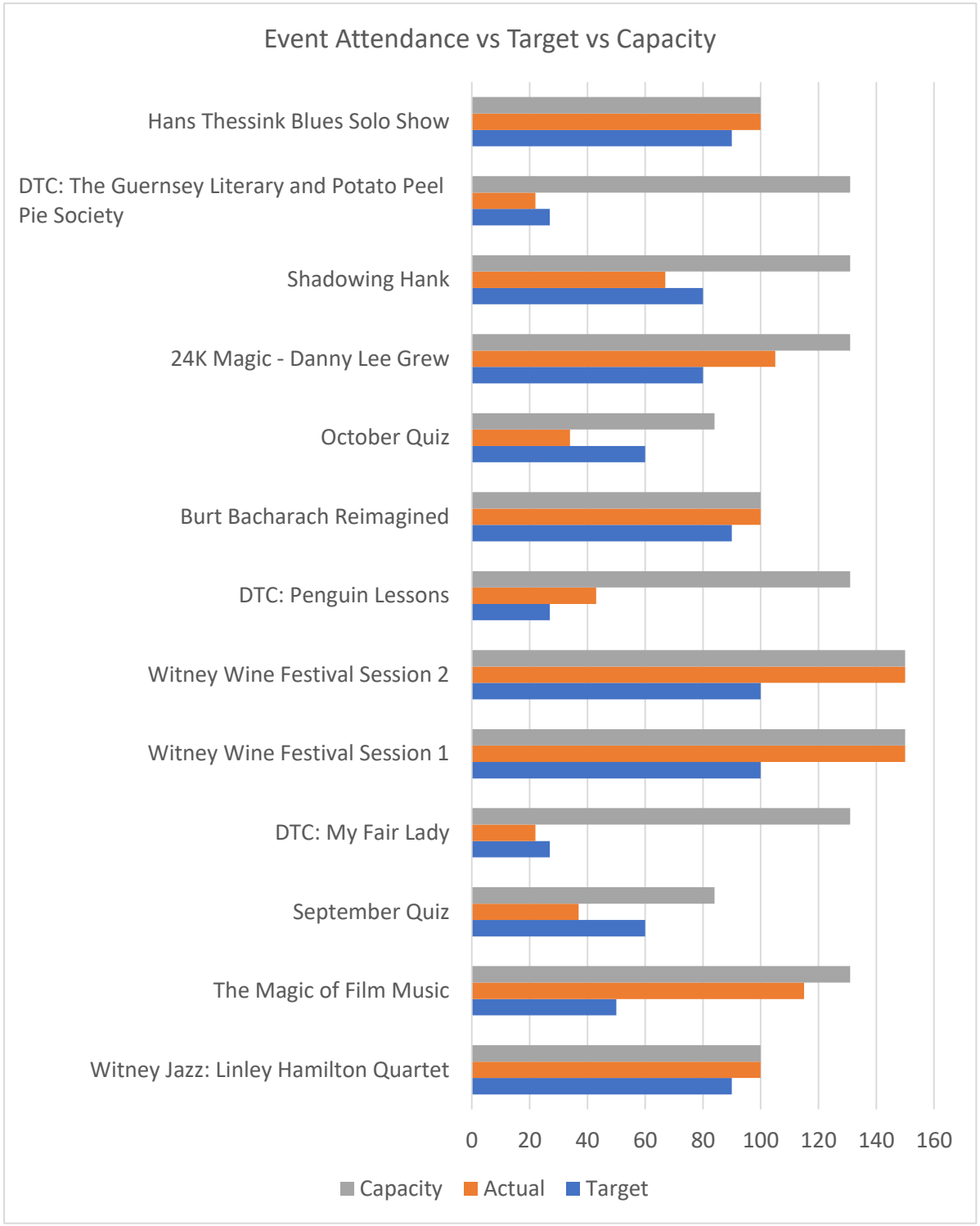
Witney Town Council aims to provide an affordable, sustainable, inclusive community arts facility that is valued and supported by the residents of Witney and West Oxfordshire. This objective is supported by funding from West Oxfordshire District Council for this purpose.

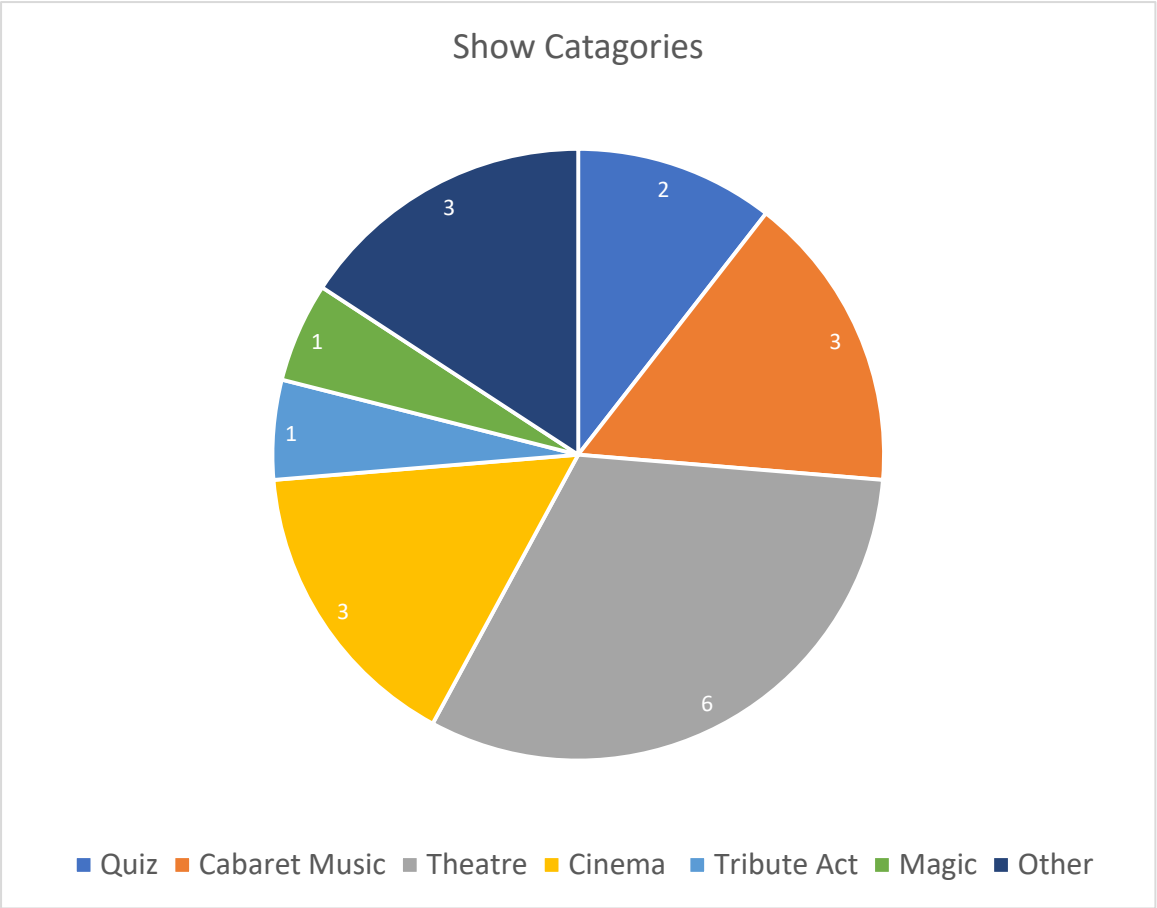
The Council seeks to make the Corn Exchange accessible to the whole community by encouraging participation and offering a diverse programme of music, arts and cultural events. In addition, the Council will provide a professional, well-maintained venue available to hire for private events such as parties, weddings, and conferences.

Current Situation

The Venue & Events team have continued to deliver a varied programme of in-house and third-party events, offering a wide range of opportunities for residents and visitors to engage with the Corn Exchange and Burwell Hall.

The graphs below show the number of ticketed events hosted by category, since the last report in June 2026, and attendance figures (where available) for each event at The Corn Exchange since the last report, alongside a target attendance to show how each event is performing in line with officers' goals and expectations. Each event capacity has also been included, upon request from members.


Event Attendance vs Target vs Capacity
Hans Thessink Blues Solo Show
DTC: The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society
Shadowing Hank
24K Magic - Danny Lee Grew
October Quiz
Burt Bacharach Reimagined
DTC: Penguin Lessons
Witney Wine Festival Session 2
Witney Wine Festival Session 1
DTC: My Fair Lady
September Quiz
The Magic of Film Music
Witney Jazz: Linley Hamilton Quartet
0
20
40
60
80
100
120
140
160
Capacity
Actual
Target



Recent Events

Witney Jazz & Blues

Witney Jazz & Blues events continue to be popular and successful, with the programme constantly achieving a near or full sell out.

These regular events are a staple of the Corn Exchange calendar, with tickets frequently requested during Box Office sessions.

Cinema

Recent daytime cinema screenings have included:

- My Fair Lady
- The Penguin Lessons
- The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society

The Daytime Cinema programme continues to grow and develop, with an average attendance of 25 people per screening since January. The Penguin lessons was a standout this cycle attracting 43 attendees.

Audiences have consistently expressed enthusiasm for the return of Daytime Cinema following the summer break. Officers are considering the potential to move to weekly screenings, which may make the programme easier to market to a wider audience and help establish a more consistent routine for customers.

Following audience feedback regarding public transport and bus times, the slightly later starts has been a welcome change among regular attendees with no evidence of a drop in numbers due to the change. Officers do need to consider the length of films going forward to avoid overly tight change overs for later bookings.

Officers are additionally in discussion about reintroducing evening cinema screenings to broaden the programme and reach new audiences.

Magic of Film Music

Magic of Film Music attracted a good audience and proved to be a successful addition to the programme, offering something a little different from the venue's usual events. The talk was relatively low-maintenance from the performer's perspective, although it did require some additional input from venue staff, particularly with assisting with audience check-in.

Audience feedback was positive, with attendees expressing their enjoyment of the performance and appreciation for the variety it brought to the programme.

The hirer also provided positive feedback about the venue and staff, particularly praising the theatre-style layout of the Main Hall and tiered seating. Staff were commended for their friendliness, communication and willingness to assist throughout the hire, with the performer describing this as the most welcoming and comfortable experience they had received at a venue.

The hirer did identify some areas for improvement, particularly the transition between backstage and stage areas, which can be restrictive due to the current curtain arrangement. The possibility of introducing more formal stage wings was suggested. They also highlighted the potential benefit of having an in-house technician available to hirers as an additional service.

Buttercross Theatre Productions: Cluedo

Although confirmed ticket sales figures have not yet been shared by the hirer, bar takings suggest that Cluedo achieved attendance in line with Buttercross Theatre Productions' usual audience figures of approximately 90–120 people.

Quiz Nights

Attendance at Quiz Nights has been lower than anticipated since their return following the summer break, despite an increase to the prize offering.

Officers will continue to monitor ticket sales and attendance over the November event before reviewing the financial viability of continuing the quizzes on Friday evenings. A decision on the future of the programme will be made in the new year, taking into consideration attendance, income and overall operational costs.

Witney Wine Festival

Now in its fourth year, Witney Wine Festival was once again a success, with both sessions selling out.

The festival continues to demonstrate the versatility of the Corn Exchange, providing an opportunity to host events outside our usual programme and attract audiences looking for something a little different. Its continued success highlights the potential for the venue to accommodate a diverse range of events and experiences.

Waterways Day

Despite some initial challenges with event marketing, Waterways Day was a success.

Following the event, we have recommended that organisers contact the venue earlier when planning future events. This will allow more time to the venue to display marketing materials.

24K Magic
24K Magic was very well attended and received positive feedback from audiences. The performance was clearly enjoyed by those attending, and the event proved to be a successful addition to the programme. This is an act we would be very happy to welcome back to the Corn Exchange in the future.

Shadowing Hank
Shadowing Hank was less well attended than in previous years, suggesting that audience demand for this particular event may have reached its limit.
Marketing undertaken by the artist was relatively limited, which is likely to have contributed to the lower ticket sales.

Witney Dramatic Society: The Hound of the Baskervilles
Audience figures for The Hound of the Baskervilles are still awaited. However, bar takings were lower than average for this type of production.
There were some logistical challenges with the changeover between daytime events and the evening performance. The production set was larger than originally anticipated, creating additional complications for the turnaround. Despite this, venue staff worked hard to accommodate the requirements and ensure the changeover was completed successfully.

Private Events and Venue Hire
The Corn Exchange and Burwell Hall have hosted a variety of private and community events during this period, including regular group meetings, private parties, presentations and other activities.
Recent hires have included:

- Birthday parties
- Parenting courses
- x2 Weddings (one ceremony hire, one full venue hire)
- A celebration of 90 year in business on Arnold Specialists
- Hybrid Meetings
- Job Fayre
- Jewellery buying events
- Choral workshops

Most hirers have completed feedback forms, providing valuable information on their experience of the venues and highlighting areas for continued development.

Upcoming Events

The Corn Exchange will continue to host a range of regular in-house and third-party events, including:

- Witney Jazz & Blues – First Friday of every month
- Tea Dance – Every Wednesday
- Buttercross Theatre Productions classes – Multiple classes every week
- Witney Speakers Club – Every other Wednesday
- Specsavers Coffee Morning – First Thursday of each month
- West Oxfordshire Art Society Lectures – Once a month
- St Mary's Art Group – Every Monday
- White Feather Spiritualist Church – Once a month

Several new groups have also been added for the upcoming term, including a support group and a teaching group.

Upcoming Public Ticketed Events

- Witney Jazz & Blues
  - Greg Abate Quartet – 6th November
  - Marvin Muoneke's Christmas Quartet – 11th December
- Daytime Cinema:
  - The Great Escaper – November 3rd
  - Evita – November 17th
  - White Christmas – December 1st
  - The Muppet Christmas Carol – December 21st
- The Wolf on Corn Street Book Launch – 6th November
- Break the Rules: A Tribute to the Music of Status Quo – 7th November
- Two Crosses – 7th November
- Rock & Roll Dance Party – 13th November
- November Quiz Night – 13th November
- Mynt Image Market
  - November 14th
  - December 5th
- BTP: A Night at The Musicals – 14th November
- Oxfordshire Festival of Speech and Drama – 21st November
- Sobell house Christmas Shopping Extravaganza – 28th November
- Advent fayre – 29th November
- Air Cadets Christmas Grotto – 6ht December
- Christmas Concert & Sing Along – 12th December
- BTP: Sleeping Beauty – 18th December to 30th December

Venue Usage

As well as hosting public events, The Corn Exchange and Burwell Hall are hireable spaces available for a wide variety of bookings. Both venues receive a range of regular hirers as well as one-off private hirers.

Venue usage has **increased overall by 3.5%** compared to the previous year. The Corn Exchange Main Hall experienced a 4.9% increase in usage, whilst Burwell Hall saw the largest growth at 7.3%. The Gallery Room experienced a slight reduction of 3.7%.
These figures demonstrate continued demand for the Council's venues, with increased usage across two of the three hireable spaces.

Week commencing	15th Sept	22nd Sept	29th Sept	6th Oct	13th Oct	20th Oct	27th Oct	3rd Nov	10th Nov		
CORN EX 2026											
Hours booked	44.00	40.00	42.00	44.00	35.00	44.00	53.00	43.00	37.00	**382.00**	**Total Hrs**
Usage Percentage	52.38	47.62	50.00	52.38	41.67	52.38	63.10	51.19	44.05	**32.48**	**Average %**
SAME PERIOD 2025 CORN EXCHANGE											
Hours booked	36.00	55.00	39.00	35.00	40.00	25.00	33.00	54.00	47.00	**364.00**	**Total Hrs**
Usage Percentage	42.86	65.48	46.43	41.67	47.62	29.76	39.29	64.29	55.95	**27.25**	**Average %**
GALLERY 2026											
Hours booked	16.50	41.00	39.00	24.00	21.00	45.00	15.00	22.00	23.00	**246.50**	**Total Hrs**
Usage Percentage	19.64	48.81	46.43	28.57	25.00	53.57	17.86	26.19	27.38	**20.96**	**Average %**
SAME PERIOD 2025 GALLERY											
Hours booked	29.00	38.00	43.00	20.00	26.00	42.00	8.00	18.00	32.00	**256.00**	**Total Hrs**
Usage Percentage	34.52	45.24	51.19	23.81	30.95	50.00	9.52	21.43	38.10	**21.77**	**Average %**
Burwell Hall											
MAIN HALL 2026											
Hours booked	33.00	37.00	46.00	49.00	45.00	39.00	21.00	56.00	43.00	**369.00**	**Total Hrs**
Usage Percentage	39.29	44.05	54.76	58.33	53.57	46.43	25.00	66.67	51.19	**31.38**	**Average %**
SAME PERIOD 2025 MAIN HALL											
Hours booked	40.00	44.00	36.00	41.00	48.00	38.00	19.00	38.00	40.00	**344.00**	**Total Hrs**
Usage Percentage	47.62	52.38	42.86	48.81	57.14	45.24	22.62	45.24	47.62	**29.25**	**Average %**

*based on x3 4-hour sessions per day; 12 hours total per day - 84 hours per week.

1863 Café & Bar

The 1863 Café & Bar continues to provide a valuable and well-loved community space for many local residents.

As reported at the end of the financial year March 2025, the 1863 Café and Bar revenue increased by around 20% in comparison to the previous year. So far this year, EPOS figures indicate that the revenue has increased a further 10.7% for the period April – October This is due to the continued increase in daily turnover in the café, as well as the huge success of Tunes on The Square during the summer months.

Salary expenditure has increased this year following the Real Living Wage increase implemented in April 2026. Officers continue to review pricing regularly, introducing modest and incremental increases where appropriate to help offset rising costs while ensuring products remain affordable and accessible to customers. Staffing levels are also kept under regular review to ensure resources are used efficiently whilst continuing to meet the demands of day-to-day operations and events.

Impact Assessments

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

a) Equality - The concept of equality when reporting on events is very important to the council, as it ensures fair and impartial coverage of all events and social groups within the community to reflect fairness, representation, and inclusivity.
b) Biodiversity – Officers focus on the broader context of their actions when organising events to maintain the Council's environmental and conservation efforts.
c) Crime & Disorder – Council policies and operational processes adhered to by Officers include a multi-faceted approach that integrates crowd control, prevention of criminal activity, security planning, and compliance with relevant laws and regulations. Officers assess the risks relating to events ensuring the necessary due diligence, reviews, sign off and monitoring is completed. Post event analysis data is sued to review opportunities for continuous improvement.
d) Environment & Climate Emergency – Careful consideration is given to the environmental and climate impacts to reduce negative effects and promote sustainability. Many aspects of event planning by the Council include venue location, transportation, recycling, local produce, and energy usage. By incorporating sustainable practices into every stage of event planning, the Council aims to reduce the environmental impact, create a positive attendee experience, and help lead the way for more responsible event management in the future.

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.

Managing risks for Council events is a crucial aspect of event planning and requires careful thought to ensure the safety and success of all events. The Council's risk management control measures for events covers legal considerations, safety protocols, insurance, and other key factors ensure these are delivered successfully.

Social Value

The Corn Exchange also hosts some events with a community focus, providing people with an opportunity to connect through shared experiences, reducing loneliness.

1863 Café provides affordable hot drinks and has enabled social connection for lots of elderly people. Sharing tables is encouraged which allows us to serve more customers and creates a warm and friendly atmosphere.

Financial implications

All events are evaluated from the planning stage to post event analysis to manage financial risk and maximise income.

Recommendations

Member are invited to note the report

HALLS, CEMETERIES AND ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

Agenda Item: Closed Churchyards Update

Meeting Date: Monday, 9th November 2026

Contact Officer: Head of Estates and Operations

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the management, maintenance and future works associated with the closed churchyards at St Mary's and Holy Trinity Churches following the Annual Planning Meeting held on 7th October 2026.

Background

On 7th October 2026, representatives of Witney Town Council and St Mary's and Holy Trinity Churches met to review the condition of both closed churchyards, discuss ongoing maintenance responsibilities, identify future works programmes and consider upcoming projects requiring support from both organisations.

The meeting was attended by Mark Lewis, Nick Brown and Cllr Rachel Crouch on behalf of Witney Town Council, and Ruth Smith and Charlotte Tremain representing the churches.

Current Situation

St Mary's Churchyard

Routine maintenance of the churchyard continues to be delivered by the Town Council.

Key updates:

- The churchyard footpath has been resurfaced and grass footpaths will continue to be maintained throughout the year.
- Memorial safety inspections are currently underway. Unsafe memorials are being identified, fenced and recorded. Upon completion, a detailed report will be provided to the church to determine appropriate remedial actions.
- The Eco Churchyard project has now been implemented with three designated biodiversity areas prepared and seeded by the Council's grounds maintenance team. Future management arrangements have been agreed.
- Lighting within the churchyard is operational with the timer being adjusted to suit the seasons. The archway light requires contractor attention.
- Planned wall repairs remain a priority, particularly along the western boundary where tree growth is impacting the structure.
- Several drainage covers have been identified and brought to the attention of the church as requiring repair or replacement.

- The church continues to progress proposals to improve accessibility through replacement entrance doors, subject to planning and faculty approvals.
- The church is developing proposals to achieve net zero carbon emissions, including consideration of solar photovoltaic panels and air source heat pumps.
- Work is progressing on the installation of an additional bell whilst preserving the existing carillon and clock mechanism.
- The church clock is currently undergoing servicing. The south-facing clock remains inoperable and will require scaffold access and associated maintenance works following completion of the bell project.

Holy Trinity Churchyard

The condition of Holy Trinity Churchyard remains good, with a number of maintenance matters identified for further review.

Key updates include:

- Tree maintenance works within the churchyard have been completed by the Town Council. Further discussions are ongoing regarding additional works to a mature yew tree on the north side of the church.
- Churchyard lighting is operational.
- The biodiversity and rewilding approach continues to be successful, although the outcomes achieved during the current year were affected by extreme weather conditions.
- The perimeter walls remain in good condition, with only minor vegetation clearance required.
- Officers will review the condition of approximately 250 metres of railings to determine future maintenance requirements and cyclical replacement needs. There is currently no earmarked reserve for these works.
- The grass cutting regime has been reviewed, with discussions held around mowing frequencies in different areas of the churchyard.
- Several landscape management actions have been identified, including the removal of grass arisings, inspection of an overgrown shrub, reduction of a mature laurel and inclusion of vegetation management around memorials within future maintenance schedules.
- A broken memorial lying flat within the churchyard is being investigated to determine its condition and any associated liability.
- One drainage cover requires replacement and further ground reinstatement works are required in an area affected by a Thames Water leak.

Community and Civic Events

The churches continue to play an important role in supporting civic events throughout the year.

Current arrangements include:

- Planning for Remembrance Sunday is underway, with the Town Council Events Officer and church representatives coordinating service arrangements.
- Discussions took place regarding church involvement in Witney Feast activities.

- Arrangements for the Mayor's Carol Service will be supported by early sharing of invitation lists to assist with operational planning and event set-up.

Faculties and Church Building Projects

The churches continue to utilise the Church of England's new faculty management portal to progress heritage and maintenance related applications.

A forthcoming faculty application is expected for the next phase of wall repairs at St Mary's.

Funding and Grants

St Mary's Church has received outline agreement from the Diocesan Advisory Committee to progress works to replace the front and rear doors to improve accessibility.

Additional fundraising will be required before the project can proceed.

Corporate Strategy

The Council's Strategic Plan 2025-2029 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:

A Respectful Community through maintaining safe, accessible and well-presented churchyards that provide opportunities for remembrance, biodiversity enhancement, heritage conservation and community engagement.

Impact Assessments

a) Equality - The proposed accessibility improvements at St Mary's Church will improve access for people with disabilities and reduced mobility.
b) Biodiversity - The establishment of dedicated wildflower and ecological management areas at St Mary's Churchyard, together with the continued rewilding programme at Holy Trinity Churchyard, positively contributes to local biodiversity objectives.
c) Crime & Disorder - There are no direct Crime and Disorder implications arising from this report. Continued maintenance of churchyards assists in ensuring that the sites remain safe and welcoming public spaces.
d) Environment & Climate Emergency - The Eco Churchyard initiatives support biodiversity and climate resilience. In addition, St Mary's Church is actively exploring renewable energy technologies and carbon reduction measures as part of its net zero ambitions.

Risk

The principal risks relate to:

- Unsafe memorials identified through the inspection programme.
- Deterioration of perimeter walls, railings and drainage infrastructure if maintenance works are not undertaken in a timely manner.
- Potential increases in future maintenance costs arising from ageing infrastructure and heritage assets.

These risks are being managed through regular inspections, planned maintenance programmes and ongoing liaison with church representatives**.**

Social Value

The closed churchyards provide important heritage, environmental and community assets for residents and visitors. Their continued maintenance supports opportunities for reflection, volunteering, biodiversity enhancement, civic ceremonies and community engagement.

Financial Implications

Existing maintenance activities are being met from approved operational budgets.

Future financial pressures may arise from:

- Perimeter wall repairs at St Mary's.
- Railing maintenance and replacement at Holy Trinity.
- Memorial safety works resulting from the ongoing inspection programme.

Any significant additional expenditure requirements will be the subject of future reports to Members where necessary.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the contents of this report.