

# Public Document Pack

## Witney Town Council

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Town Clerk

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Mayor of Witney



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24 June 2020

To: Members of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee - *M Jones, J Aitman, L Ashbourne, T Ashby, O Collins, L Duncan, V Gwatkin and J King (and all other Town Councillors for information)*

You are hereby summonsed to a Meeting of the **Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments** Committee to be held in the VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM - Virtual Meeting on **Monday, 29th June, 2020 at 6.00 pm** for the transaction of the business stated below. Login details of this meeting will be published on the Council's website prior to the meeting.

\*By virtue of The Local Authorities & Police & Crime Panels (Coronavirus)(Flexibility of Local Authority & Police & Crime Panels Meetings)(England & Wales) Regulations 2020.

### MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Members of the public wishing to address the Council on an agenda item below must contact the Town Clerk ([townclerk@witney-tc.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@witney-tc.gov.uk)) 24 hours before the meeting in order to arrange the necessary access to be able to speak at the meeting due to it being held virtually.

### RECORDING OF MEETINGS

Under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 the council's public meetings may be recorded, which includes filming, audio-recording as well as photography. As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record any part of the proceedings please let the Town Clerk or Democratic Services Officer know before the start of the meeting.

### AGENDA

*All Council Meetings are open to the public and press, unless otherwise stated.*

#### 1. Apologies for Absence

To consider apologies and reasons for absence.

Committee Members who are unable to attend the meeting should notify the Democratic Services Officer ([nicky.cayley@witney-tc.gov.uk](mailto:nicky.cayley@witney-tc.gov.uk)) **prior to the meeting**, stating the reason for absence.

**Standing Order 30(a)(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**

***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 42. Matters raised shall relate to the following items on the agenda.

3. **Election of Vice Chair**

To elect a Vice Chair for the municipal year.

4. **Minutes** (Pages 5 - 8)

- a) To adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Halls and Green Spaces Committee held on 9 March 2020;
- b) Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda (Questions on progress on any item)

5. **Public Participation**

**The meeting will adjourn for this item**

Members of the public may speak for a maximum of **five minutes** each during the period of public participation, in line with Standing Order 42. Matters raised shall relate to the following items on the agenda.

6. **Committee Terms of Reference, Vision and Objectives for the municipal year** (Pages 9 - 10)

To consider the revised Terms of Reference for the Committee as attached, and to also consider the Committee's vision and objectives for the remainder of the municipal year, taking into consideration projects already underway, and the day to day management of the Council facilities under its remit – balancing financial and human resources available.

7. **Operational Report - Progress on Improvements and Repairs since the Last Meeting** (Pages 11 - 12)

To receive and consider the report of the Operations and Estates Officer

8. **Public Halls - Covid 19 Lockdown** (Pages 13 - 14)

To receive and consider the report of the Office Manager updating the committee on the Public Halls throughout the Covid-19 Lockdown.

9. **Renewable Energy** (Pages 15 - 22)

To receive and consider the report of the Compliance & Environment Officer concerning renewable energy. This report was originally scheduled for the cancelled Climate & Biodiversity Sub-Committee meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020, since disbanded.

10. **Allotments** (Pages 23 - 26)

To receive and consider the report of the Operations & Estates Officer

11. **Windrush Cemetery Risk Assessments & Capacity** (Pages 27 - 28)

To receive and consider the report of the Operations & Estates Officer

12. **St Mary's Closed Church Yard - Cedar of Lebanon Tree Bat Survey** (Pages 29 - 50)

To note the contents of the report regarding the non- presence of bats in the tree - and continue with the already agreed works to the tree in the interests of public safety.



Town Clerk

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**HALLS & GREEN SPACES COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE  
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Held on Monday, 9 March 2020**

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

**Present:**

Councillor V Gwatkin (Chair)

Councillors:	L Duncan	D Enright
	T Ashby	M Jones
	D Butterfield	J King
	O Collins	
Officers:	Nicky Cayley	Democratic Services Officer
	Adam Clapton	Office Manager
	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	John Hickman	Operations & Estates Officer
	Tomas Smith	Venue Manager
Others:	none	

H77 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for her absence was received from Cllr Rosa Bolger.

H78 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest in matters to be discussed at the meeting.

H79 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no members of the public present for this item.

H80 **MINUTES**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the Halls & Green Spaces Committee meeting held 13 January 2020.

a) **RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2020 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

b) **MATTERS ARISING:**

1. The Town Clerk advised that in minute H7 the money to repair St, Mary's pillars would be from reserves, not rolling capital;

2. The Town Clerk advised that in minute H10, the earmarked allotment funding could not be distributed elsewhere.
3. A member asked if the letters regarding river pollution had been written to the County Public Health Department yet. The Office Manager confirmed that this had been done.

H81 **OPERATIONAL REPORT - PROGRESS ON IMPROVEMENTS AND REPAIRS SINCE LAST MEETING**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer, covering halls maintenance, summer sports preparation, play areas, footpath works, the lake and country park, cemeteries and Emma's Dyke.

**RECOMMENDED:** that the report be noted and that the remaining budget of £465 in 206/4042 be rolled over into the 2020/21 budget towards costs for fencing materials regarding Emma's Dyke at the Lake and Country Park.

H82 **PUBLIC HALLS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Venue Manager, which gave an update on both works that had taken place and booking. Hirers were happy with the new charges.

The Venue Manager was now the Designated Premises Supervisor for the Corn Exchange.

**RESOLVED:** that the report be noted.

H83 **CEMETERIES AND CLOSED CHURCHYARDS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer. This updated members on the need to add an additional section (number 3) for family ashes, the wildflower meadow plans for the Windrush Cemetery, and faculty applications for memorial testing. There were ongoing issues with the damaged St. Mary's Church pillars and the archway. The Operations and Estates officer also advised that the bat survey for the Cesar of Lebanon had been commissioned.

**RECOMMENDED:**

1. that the report be noted;
2. that Tower Hill section 3 for family ashes be prepared as detailed in the report;
3. that 1kg of yellow rattle seed be purchased for £180 for the Windrush Cemetery and Earthwatch be asked if they have any wildflower seed they would donate;
4. that Officers seek professional advice on the development of a plan for the future infrastructure and burials within Windrush Cemetery;
5. that provision of £9, 000 from the budget be made in order for the Town Council to carry out the required repairs to St Mary's churchyard pillars/arch and boundary wall from recent vehicular damage.

H84 **ALLOTMENT UPDATE**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer. He advised that he was awaiting retrospective applications for temporary structures such as poly tunnels but was yet to receive any. As the Allotment Association had agreed to look into composting, he had agreed to consider shredding any larger compostable material on site.

The Council was still waiting for soil tests on the new allotments at Windrush Place and could not proceed until it had been analysed to establish its suitability. This was obviously creating a delay in transfer.

**RESOLVED:** that the report be noted and the Operations and Estates Officer be given permission to consider possible assistance with the shredding of larger composting materials at allotment sites – any further requests for assistance would be brought back to Committee.

H85 **SPORTS AND RECREATION GROUNDS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer. Members were updated on cricket and the Spartans playing football at Woodgreen.

**RECOMMENDED:**

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the freehold transfer of the land at Woodgreen playing fields be requested;
3. that the additional cost of the current grounds contract for Woodgreen field be taken on at a cost of £1,922.88;
4. that the Town Clerk speaks to Giles Hughes at WODC about the amount that annual maintenance costs for Woodgreen field in order that the Town Council could work out the amount to request for a commuted sum from WODC to take on the field;
5. that the Town Council continues discussions with Woodgreen School regarding access to the changing rooms and who would be responsible for booking changing rooms etc;
6. that it be agreed that the Town Council should seek agreement from WODC to maintain Woodgreen Field area from 1st May 2020 in order to prepare football pitches for 2020/21 season until the area is transferred to the Town Council;
7. that the purchase of 8 x Goal Post sockets at approx. £400 be agreed.

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The meeting closed at: 6.40 pm

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Chair

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## **Draft Terms of Reference for the Halls, Cemeteries and Allotments Committee**

- a) To operate, maintain and control the Corn Exchange, Burwell Hall, Langdale Hall and Madley Park Hall in all matters relative to their use as public halls be it through direct management or via trusteeships;
- b) The operation of such other buildings as the Council may from time to time acquire if so instructed;
- c) To operate and maintain the Cemeteries, burial responsibilities and associated duties, consequential to Statutory or Council requirements, together with the War Memorials;
- d) To carry out the Council's obligations with regard to the Closed Churchyards of St Mary's and Holy Trinity.
- e) To maintain and supervise the Park Road Allotments and oversee the management of Hailey Road, Lakeside and Newland Allotments whilst leased to the Witney Allotment Association;
- j) The Membership of the Committee shall consist of 6 Members plus the Town Mayor and the Leader of the Council ex officio with voting rights;
- k) The quorum of the Committee shall be 4 Members.

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## HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

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**Date:** Monday 29 June 2020

**Title:** Progress on improvements & repairs since last meeting

**Contact Officer:** Operations and Estates Officer-John Hickman

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### **Background**

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the progress of improvements and repairs since the last meeting of the Halls & Green Spaces Committee.

### **Current Situation**

#### **Burwell Hall**

The senior maintenance operative has redecorated both of the changing rooms in Burwell Hall, has also carried out redecoration to all exterior woodwork and has renewed the anti-climb paint to the fascia boards and guttering.

#### **Tower Hill Cemetery**

The works team have cleaned and treated two benches, cleaned and weeded the area in front of the memorial wall in section 10, and dug up and replaced concrete pathways where they were causing trip hazards.

The works team are due to start clearing the area below section 9 in preparation for future ashes interments in this location. Equipment and spoil heap will be placed in other areas away from the current burial area as agreed by council.

#### **Windrush Cemetery**

A separate report will be provided regarding Windrush Cemetery.

#### **Closed Churchyards**

Two complaints have been received regarding the closed church yards, one from Holy trinity regarding some alleged damages to headstones by grounds contractors whilst carrying out grass cutting operations. The other complaint by a local resident regarding grass cutting in St Mary's church yard. Grounds Contractors have been spoken to regarding both complaints. The Operations and Estates Officer has also spoken with the local resident regarding their complaints re St Marys church yard and has agreed to meet with them on site once back from Shielding.

### **St Mary's T583 Cedar of Lebanon**

Bat Survey, the final visit of the Survey was due to be carried out in the early hours of the 16<sup>th</sup> June. It should be expected that the results will be provided soon.

### **St Mary's Church Survey Boundary Wall Survey**

The report for this survey has only recently been received, given its size and technical content it will take time for the Operations and Estates Officer to go through before bringing the recommendations to Council.

Repair works to boundary walls, pillars and arch caused by vehicles - the Operations and Estates Officer is seeking PCC approval and a faculty to carry these works out.

Memorial stability - the Operations and Estates Officer is seeking PCC approval and a faculty to carry these works out.

### **Environmental impact**

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

### **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.

Obviously, the Cemeteries are an area with several risk factors – particularly around memorial stability and trees. The Council has a programme of inspection for both these in order to mitigate or where mitigation is not possible, reduce the risk.

### **Financial implications**

Financial implications on these project have been reported previously or are contained within the Council's budgets.

### **Recommendations**

Member are invited to note the report of the Operations and Estates Officer.

## HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

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**Date:** 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020

**Title:** Public Halls – Covid-19 Lockdown

**Contact Officer:** Office Manager – Adam Clapton

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### **Current Situation**

Burwell Hall and the Corn Exchange remain closed to the public in line with Covid-19 guidance. The re-opening of the halls is a key target but can only take place once an announcement has been made by the Government, and when the Council has the necessary measures in place to protect staff and customers. At the time of writing, this is anticipated to be the end of July/beginning of August.

A comprehensive risk assessment on how this can be achieved safely has been undertaken by the Compliance and Environment Officer, while the Venue Manager is working through a process of engagement with our hirers and has drawn up a plan to facilitate their return.

### Community Use

For several weeks at the beginning of lockdown, Burwell Hall was utilised by Witney Land Army to prepare food parcels for delivery and in recent weeks Witney Community Fridge, assisted by the WLA has been working from the Corn Exchange due to social distancing concerns at their previous premises. It has been made clear that this is only a temporary arrangement until the Council is permitted to start re-admitting hirers and these actions were only allowed to take place following risk assessments and consultation with officers. This, along with Blood Donor sessions, were the only permissible uses of public buildings during lockdown in line with government guidelines.

### Operational Update

The Bookings Office has remained open throughout the lockdown via phone and email, covered by the Bookings Administrator and Venue Manager. The opportunity has been taken to undertake online training, plan future events, compile business plans etc, update charges and assist in chasing sales ledger debts etc.

The Town Clerk has provided a report to the Personnel Sub-Committee on the implications on staffing levels during lockdown, however given that the public halls service was closed where possible Caretakers carried out periodic building checks and some small maintenance works. One of the Caretakers was also redeployed to assist the works team with the daily play area checks ensuring they remained secure with the necessary signage in place.

### The Corn Exchange Bar project

Members will receive a verbal update from the Venue Manager following the Corn Exchange Working Party meeting held before this meeting.

### **Environmental impact**

Members are asked to have due regard for the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regards to its facilities and services it operates.

### **Risk**

The Council must keep the safety of its staff and customers as its primary concern moving forward but must also recognise the amount of income lost due to the pandemic. Officers will continue to try to balance these two things but in doing so may have to make difficult short-term decisions in terms of the number of hire sessions in a day and maximum numbers which may not be popular.

### **Financial implications**

The loss of income from cancelled bookings (only) at both Burwell Hall and the Corn Exchange between 15th March and 31st June totals £27,578.42. This does not include probable ad-hoc booking income such as party's which could equate up to approximately a further £2,000.00.

The only income received during this time was from the Blood Donors who used the hall on two occasions, providing an essential NHS service.

In addition to the loss of income, Members should also be mindful of the fixed overheads and running costs incurred as well as the costs of implementing the COVID-19 safety measures going forward. The Town Clerk will hopefully be able to provide a comprehensive report and budget update to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee in due course.

### **Recommendations**

Member are invited to note the report.

## CLIMATE & BIODIVERSITY SUB-COMMITTEE

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**Date:** Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020  
**Title:** Renewable Energy  
**Contact Officer:** Compliance and Environment Officer - Angus Whitburn

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### **BACKGROUND**

The purpose of this is to inform Councillors about potential projects that could help Witney Town Council to reach its goal of becoming carbon neutral by 2028. The projects have been initially researched to ensure the technology is available and are financially viable to ensure they are creditable proposals. The second aim of the report is to provide ideas that have not been thought of to help reach our goal.

### **CURRENT SITUATION**

Currently, Witney Town Council's buildings have no form of renewable energy except for Madley Park Hall, that has a solar PV water heating system. A solar feasibility study has been done on 5 buildings of which only 3 were judged as feasible sites for solar installations. The total estimated cost of these installations is £55,902.

- Langdale Hall, 12,256 KWh/Year, 23.0%
- Madley Park hall 12,410 KWh/Year, 22.8%
- Corn Exchange Witney 11,365KWh/Year 28.3%

Solar power is the fastest form of renewable energy being installed in a bid to cut carbon emissions. However, it is behind both Hydro and Wind Power for its efficiency. Both hydro and wind are often overlooked in areas they could be installed and both can provide more energy than that of solar. This report will cover both forms of energy and possible application for Witney Town council.

Renewable energy is only useful for electric supplied buildings and the use of gas should slowly be phased out and reduce where possible. Gas systems are installed in 4 of the council buildings Corn Exchange, Burwell Hall, Madley Park and Langdale Hall. 3 council buildings are entirely run on electricity the Town Hall, Leys Depot and Windrush Cemetery.

During the last gas service at Burwell Hall officers were informed parts for the boiler system cannot be sourced anymore. This would mean the system has to be replaced once the current system breaks down or efficiency drops below acceptable levels. Installing gas heating will be banned in new builds homes by 2025 but not businesses. For future environmental targets (phasing out fossil fuel

usage) The best form of future protection for the building would be to replace this system with electric alternatives. The heating in the building could be replaced with infra-red panel heaters and an electric water heater tank could be installed for the showers and taps.

### **MICRO HYDRO ELECTRICITY**

Hydroelectricity has been reserved only for that of high-cost large scale installations, involving the massive damming of rivers. However, companies that have been providing hydroelectric to off-grid communities are branching out to more small scale installations. There is the chance and it would require more research that we could install a small system on the stream leading from Cowell brook into the River Windrush. As there are no WTC buildings in the area, the system would work on a feed-in tariff to offset our carbon footprint.

### **WIND POWER**

The Leys Depot and Windrush cemetery is completely reliant on electricity. Both sites are not feasible sites for solar installations but are sites that in the near future could be running on 100% on renewable energy. The sites do not use excessive amounts of energy and should each be completely covered by a small 10m high wind turbine.

The sites would need a survey to see if they are feasible for wind turbine installations. Windrush in particular is open to the wind but also away from surrounding residents so the impact of the installation is notably minimal.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

### **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.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There is no financial implication arising directly from this report as of this time. However, there would be a possible financial implication to conduct initial feasibility studies, if the council members decide to commit officer hours to further research and develop the projects.

The council have set a budget of £10,000 for 2020/2021 financial year. From initial research, this budget is significantly inadequate even for low KW renewable energy solutions



proposed. Members would be encouraged to come up with a plan between 2020 and 2028 so that annual budgets can be set accordingly going forward.

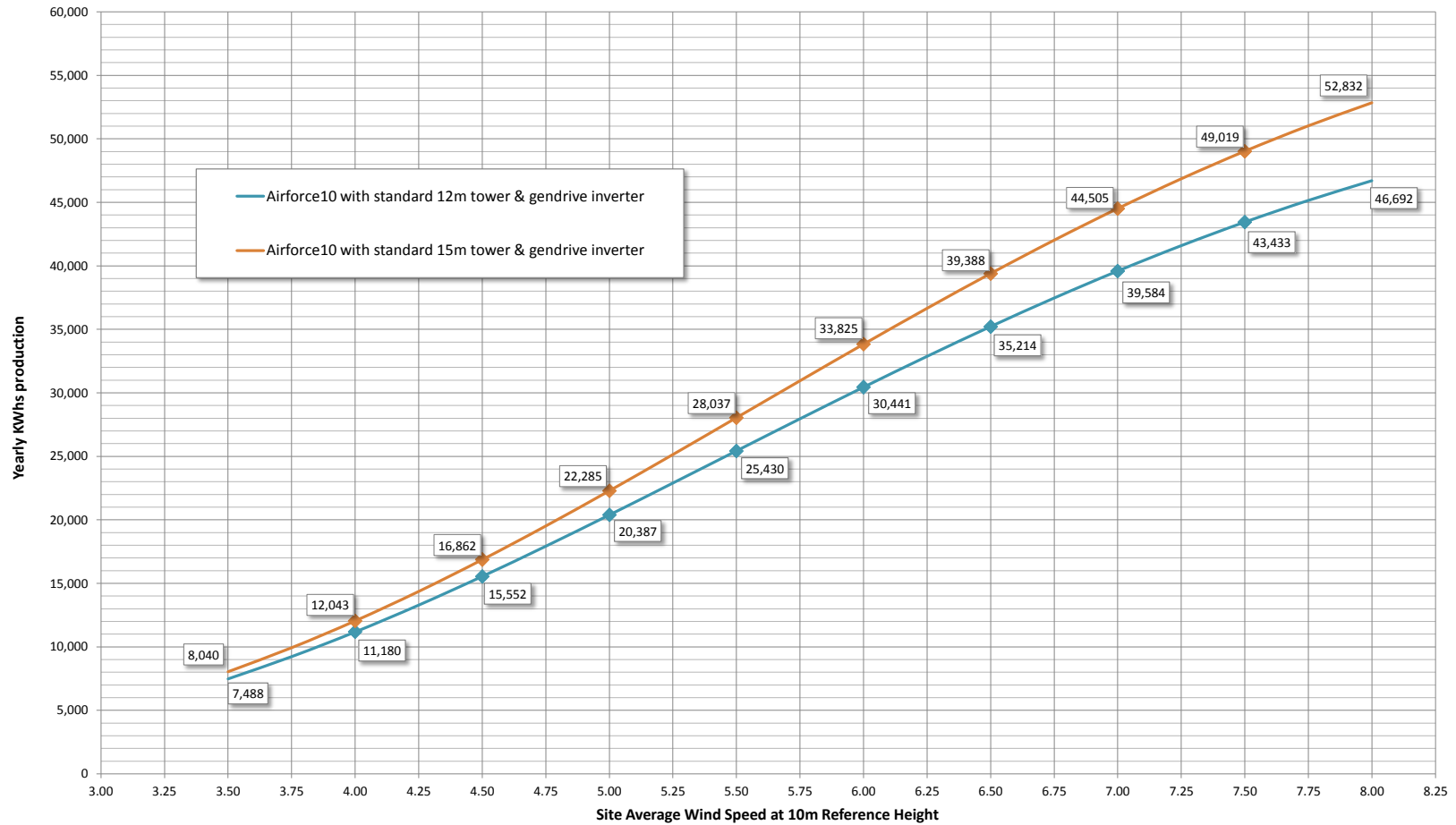
## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

1. Agree once the Burwell Hall gas system needs replacing it will be replaced only with an electric system.
2. Whether to commit officer hours to research the micro-hydroelectric project hours.
3. Whether to commit officer hours to research the wind power project.
4. Be mindful of the current budget and future annual budgets to ensure it is sufficient to meet the target of being carbon-neutral by 2028.

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### Airforce 10 - Predicted Energy Production.



Note! This information is intended as guide only and is not a guarantee of turbine performance.

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**SMART FREE STREAM**

This turbine is installed on the bed of the river or canal. Especially suitable for installation in canals or behind traditional hydro power plants.

- very compact
- reliable base load supply for locations with lower incidence of debris
- almost no maintenance required



**Base load power supply**



**Easy installation**



**Minimal space required**



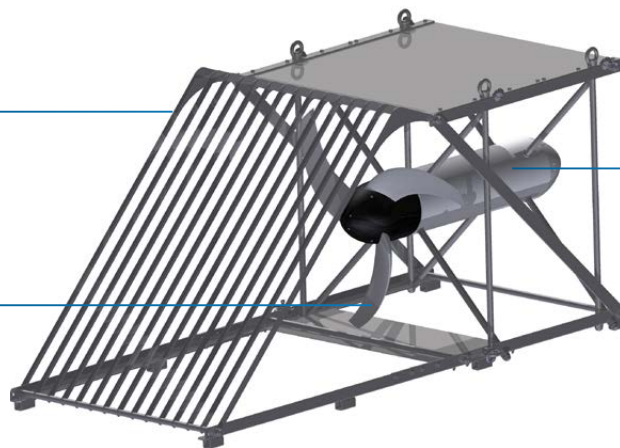
**Low infrastructure costs (no dams)**



**No environmental impact**



**Minimal audible disturbance**



**Debris protection**

stainless steel cables are carefully designed such that debris neither accumulates nor damages the blades

**Rotor**

slightly curved blades improve performance against debris

**5 kW underwater generator**

permanent-magnet generator provides three-phase AC power

<b>Output</b>	250 – 5000 W
<b>Dimensions</b>	Length: 2640 mm Width: 1120 mm Height: 1120 mm
<b>Rotational speed</b>	90 – 230 rpm
<b>Weight</b>	300 kg
<b>Number of rotor blades</b>	3
<b>Rotor <math>\varnothing</math></b>	1000 mm

**Specifications:**

- The permanent-magnet underwater generator provides AC power
- Expandable system with multiple turbines
- Available as an off-grid solution, grid-connected and hybrid version
- Scope of delivery and specifications can be adapted to special projects
- Max. power output 3.1 m/s
- The turbine placed on the bottom of the river/canal

**Anchorage dependent on:**

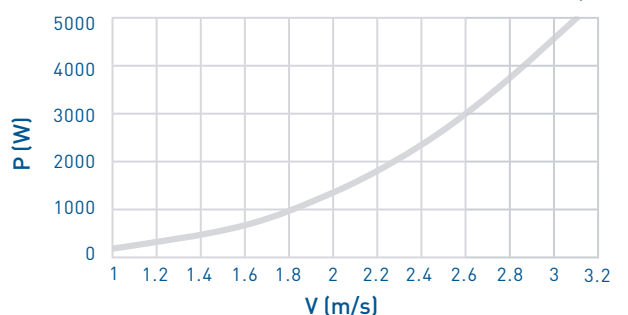
- Hydrological characteristics (e.g. riverbed type: rock, sand, etc.)
- Ship traffic/kayak/tourism
- Amount/type of flotsam/debris

**Requirements:**

- Min. river depth: 1.1 m
- Min. river width: 1.2 m
- Injection point: max. 500 meters distance from turbine

**Output curve of the generator**

Max. power output at 3.1 m/s



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## HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

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**Date:** Monday 29 June 2020  
**Title:** Allotments Update  
**Contact Officer:** Operations & Estates Officer

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### **Background**

The purpose of this report is to update members on the current position regarding Allotments.

### **Current Situation**

#### **Hailey Road Allotments**

I application for retrospect permission for a large poly tunnel in excess of the 2.5m x 3m agreed max size has been received, the Operations and Estates Officer has not been able to process due to shielding and dose require to visit site to access location etc. of poly tunnel before responding to the application.

#### **Lakeside Allotments**

A number of applications for retrospect permission have been received for structures in excess of the agreed 2.5m x 3m at this site, the Operation and Estates Officer does again need to visit this site to access these structures and their positions but is currently unable to do so whilst Shielding.

#### **Newland Allotments**

No retrospect applications for oversize structures have been received from this site.

#### **Allotment Association**

The Operations and estates Officer has not heard from the allotment association regarding composting since 18<sup>th</sup> November 19. When they were informed by the Operations and estates Officer they could compost on the sites using a T23 exemption certificate which they would need to apply for. To which they stated that they would look into they have not provided the Operations and Estates Officer any other information on this subject since.

The Operations and Estates Officer has requested today 17<sup>th</sup> June 20 an update on the current position on this matter.

A response was received on 17<sup>th</sup> June 20 after writing this report where the allotment association are recommending that at Hailey Road and Newland Mantis compost tumblers

are used to recycle the waste initially, these items cost £399 each along with 2 x composting Daleks available from WODC at a cost of £21.50 each.

For Lakeside Allotments they are recommending 2 or 3 composting bays concrete based with surrounding and dividing block walls. If these were installed, they would require WTC to assist with turning the compost using WTC's small tractor and front-loading shovel.

These bays would need to be designed and costed in order to give council an approximate cost.

The Allotment Association are also suggesting that this may also be suitable for the new West Witney Allotment site.

### **West Witney Allotments**

Plans for these allotments are progressing well with the Project Manager for Persimmons Homes, currently we are at the final design stage copy of intended design attached.

Provided on the site will be 55 allotments of 3 sizes approx. Large 250sqm, Medium 125sqm and small 83.3sqm + 2 x Disabled allotments with raised beds.

Pathways are on compacted stone. Central main path 1.400m wide to avoid vehicles driving right into the allotments and parking.

Hard Standing for recycling etc. and base for Community hub of concrete.

Fenced all around with a 6 foot high green paladin type fence.

Double vehicular access gate.

Pedestrian gate to far end on main footpath.

Access track and car parking Tarmac.

16 Car Parking space 2 of which will be disabled.

32mm water supply.

Electrical connection.

Outline plans have been provided to the allotment association at the end of April 2020 for comment. The allotment association said they would take it to their committee, I have had one response on the 5<sup>th</sup> May from the Secretary and Chair of the allotment association to say how good the designs were and how much thought had gone into them and that Geoff Branner would be contacting me regarding the parking and Water troughs but I have heard nothing else since that date in regards to these allotments.

WTC will need to purchase Water troughs once the site is complete and install connections are being left on the water main to allow for easy connection.



### **Environmental impact**

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

### **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.

### **Financial implications**

There is an associated cost to the Mantis compost tumblers of £399 x 2 = £798 + 4 x Dalek compost bins from WODC at £21.50 each x 4 = £86. The costs of these can be taken from the reduction in Grounds Contracts costs in no longer providing skips to site 2 x per annum.

### **Recommendations**

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

1. The provision of Mantis compost tumblers and Dalek compost bins for Hailey Road and Newland Allotments at a cost of £884.
2. The Operations and Estates Officer looking at a design and cost for composting bays at both Lakeside and West Witney allotments.
3. Council agreement that WTC would provide services in turning the compost at both Lakeside and West Witney Allotments as and when required.

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## HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

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**Date:** Monday 29 June 2020  
**Title:** Windrush Cemetery Risk Assessments & Capacity  
**Contact Officer:** Operations & Estates Officer-John Hickman

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### **Background**

Windrush Cemetery opened in 2004 but has never had an environmental Ground Water, or Pandemic Risk Assessment carried out. WTC had permission to carry out up to 50 burials per annum, within Windrush Cemetery from the environment agency but no risk assessment.

Covid 19 preparations within the cemetery were started early on with two new sections marked out and 3 graves pre dug in late March early April in preparation should they be required. This gave WTC 220 pre marked available graves if required however more could have easily been provided if required.

### **Current Situation**

It looked for a short time as if WTC may receive very high numbers of interments with burials going from less than one per week up to 5 in one week at one point, however numbers have since decline back to a much lower level nearer to normal.

All pre dug graves have been used and at this time it is not planned to pre dig any more unless the interment rate increase again.

Given WTC's limit off 50 graves per annum and the numbers interments being booked indicating we may have more than 100 burials this year, it became essential that WTC gained a risk assessment in order to ensure WTC did not pollute the local ground water. The Operations and Estates Officer commissioned an Environmental Ground Water Risk assessment to be carried out WTC did not currently have one at Windrush. The company providing this CDS also carried out a Pandemic risk assessment free of charge at the same time to see if the site was suitable for Pandemic Burial.

The Ground Water Risk Assessment has now been provided and states that the cemetery can take up to 150 burials per year if it were to be required. It also states the cemetery would be suitable for Pandemic burial should it be required in the future.

There are some areas of WTC's current burial procedures that may require minor change, the Operations and Estates Officer will look at these as soon as he is able to attend work to make any necessary adjustments.

**Environmental impact**

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

**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.

**Financial implications**

Ground Water Risk Assessment by CDS £4,200 + VAT.

**Recommendations**

Member are invited to note the report.

## Bats – Tree Inspection & Nocturnal Survey Report

Witney Town Council

St Mary's Church

Ref: 19-2677  
Version: 1  
Date: June 2020  
Author: Sophie Amphlett  
Position: Ecological Consultant



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## REVISION HISTORY

Rev	Description of change	Date	Initials
1	Final Report	17/06/2020	SA

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## DISCLAIMER

It should be noted that the information above provides details of the Site’s current ecological situation. In the event that the proposed development does not commence within 12 months of the date of this report, further advice should be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist as to whether the information provided requires updating in light of changing ecological conditions.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Terms of Instruction

- 1.1 This report has been commissioned by Witney Town Council. It provides further detail on the likely usage of a single tree with regard to roosting bats. The tree is a cedar of Lebanon *Cedrus libani* situated within the grounds of St Mary's Church, Witney.
- 1.2 A Tree Risk Assessment was undertaken by Lockhart Garratt on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018 (ref 18-1940). The assessment determined that the tree presents a high level risk of further failures from the canopy and concluded that remedial works are required to remove the tree's live growth, leaving the tree as a monolith.

### Report Limitations

- 1.3 This is an ecological report and as such no reliance should be given to comments relating to buildings, engineering or other unrelated matters.

### Site Description

- 1.4 The site is located at to the south of Witney Town Centre centred SP 35656 09224 (hereafter referred to as "the Site"). The assessment covered a mature cedar of Lebanon tree within the south-east of St Mary's Church grounds (hereafter referred to as "T1").
- 1.5 At the time of the assessment the Site comprised amenity grassland, buildings, scattered trees and hard standing.
- 1.6 The Site is adjacent to amenity playing fields lined by street trees to the south and bound by The Henry Box School to the west. Surroundings environs to the north and east were dominated by amenity grassland, street trees and built environment associated with residential and commercial buildings.
- 1.7 The Site location plan is provided below at **Figure 1**.
- 1.8 The approximate location of T1 is provided at **Figure 2**.
- 1.9 A photograph of T1 is provided at **Figure 3**.

### Aim of the Study

- 1.10 The purpose of this report is to provide an assessment of the suitability of the Site for bats and also to provide an assessment of whether or not T1 is being used by roosting bats. This study was preceded by a previous report which comprised of a tree risk assessment with an accompanying photographic record document (ref 18-1940).

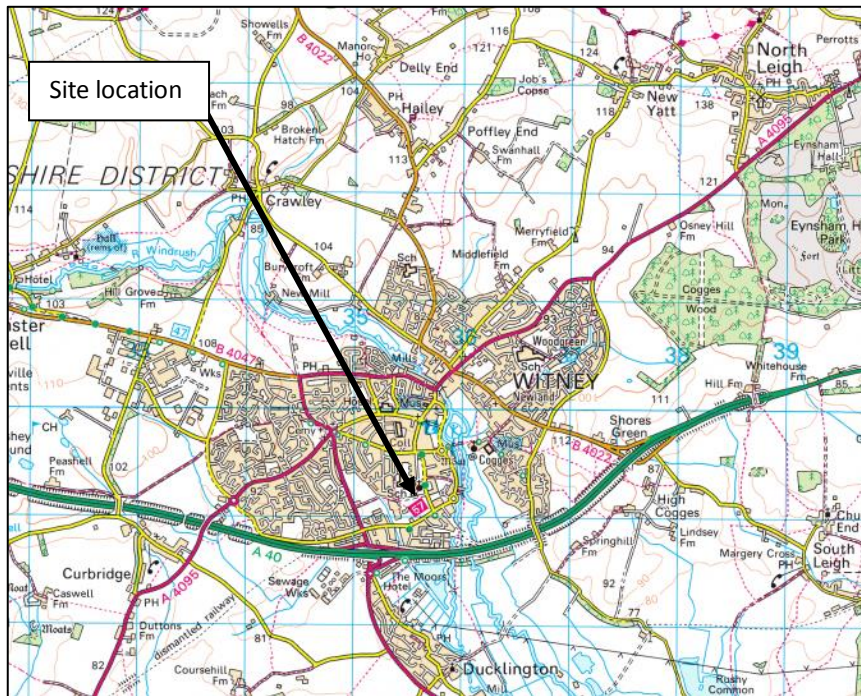


Figure 1: Site Location Plan

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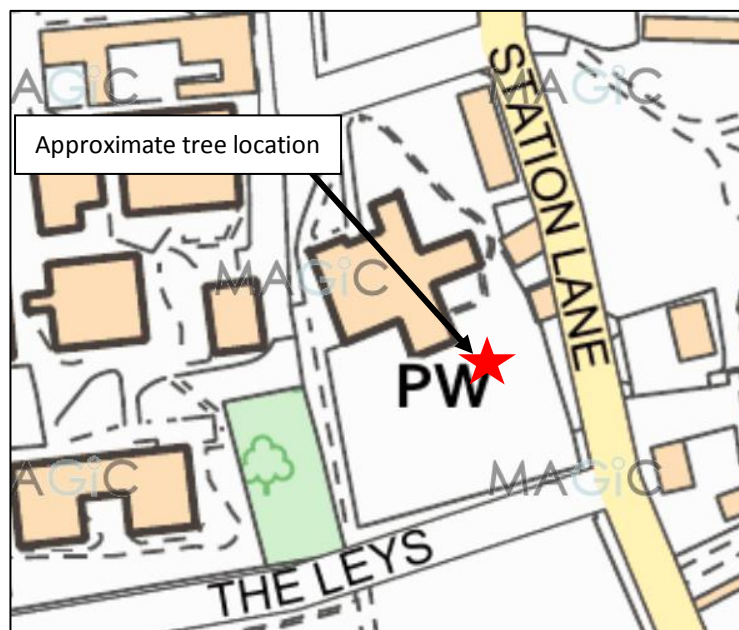


Figure 2: Tree Location Plan



Figure 3: T1 North Elevation

## 2. METHODOLOGY

### Daytime Tree Inspection

- 2.1 An assessment of T1 was undertaken to determine its potential to support roosting bats.
- 2.2 The survey was undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist and included a detailed check of all suitable features for bats. Features searched for and checked included woodpecker holes, flaking bark, fissures and wounds.
- 2.3 A high powered pair of binoculars (8x30mm), as well as a range of larger and smaller hand torches (e.g. 1 million candle power to 200 lumens) were used where appropriate.
- 2.4 As part of the survey, actual bats, and signs of their usage including droppings, feeding remains and urine staining were also searched for as part of the assessment.
- 2.5 Based on the findings of the assessment each building was rated as being of negligible, low, moderate or high bat potential to support roosting bats based on the type and number of suitable bat features present, in accordance with best practice guidance, Bat Conservation Trust (2016) Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines 3rd Edition.
  1. *High Potential – a structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat;*
  2. *Moderate Potential – a structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only – this assessment is irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).*
  3. *Low Potential - a structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and / or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation).*
  4. *Negligible Potential – negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.*

### Nocturnal Surveys

- 2.6 The emergence and dawn re-entry survey methods used were based on survey guidelines published by the Bat Conservation Trust (2016).
- 2.7 One emergence survey and one dawn re-entry survey was undertaken covering all potential roosting features present on T1.
- 2.8 The surveyor was equipped with an ultrasound detector to listen for bat calls. A combination of frequency division, or time-expansion bat detectors were used as part of the assessments. Recordings from these detectors were recorded to enable subsequent analysis.
- 2.9 The dusk emergence survey commenced 15 minutes before sunset and concluded at least 90 minutes afterwards. The dawn re-entry surveys commenced 120 minutes before sunrise and concluded 15 minutes after sunrise.

- 2.10 Analysis from the detectors was later Analoow (Anabat output). Sonograms from records were compared against the reference classifiers and example sonograms for different bat species presented in the book - British Bat Calls (Russ, 2013).
- 2.11 As part of the two assessments an infra-camera was used. A Sony HDR-SR10 with infrared illuminator was used to monitor the west elevation of T1.

### 3. LEGISLATION

#### Legislation

- 3.1 In the United Kingdom all bat species, their breeding sites and resting places are fully protected by law under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) and as a “European protected species” under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).
- 3.2 As a result it is against the law to:
- Deliberately capture, injure or kill bats.
  - Damage or destroy a breeding or resting place (bat ‘roost’).
  - Obstruct access to their resting or sheltering places (bat ‘roost’).
  - Possess, sell, control or transport live or dead bats, or parts of them.
  - Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it’s in a structure place of shelter or protection.
- 3.3 For the purposes of the legislation a ‘roost’ is any structure or place which any wild bat uses for shelter or protection. Roosts are protected irrespective of whether bats are present or not at a specific time, due to the seasonal nature of many roosting sites.

## 4. SURVEY RESULTS

### Daytime Inspection

- 4.1 The Inspection was undertaken on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020 in good weather conditions (20°C, 10% cloud cover, Beaufort scale 0).
- 4.2 T1 is a veteran cedar of Lebanon approximately 18m high with a stem diameter of 210cm at 1.5m above ground level.
- 4.3 Four failed limbs were present at the north and east aspects of the tree at a height of approximately 13m and 15m from ground level.
- 4.4 At the north aspect of T1 two of the three co-dominant stems featured woodpecker holes at approximately 8m and 9m above ground level respectively.
- 4.5 A large wound was present at the west aspect of T1 at approximately 5m above ground level.
- 4.6 A split was observed on one of the three co-dominant stems at the west aspect of T1 at approximately 6m above ground level.
- 4.7 Based on the surrounding habitats and the aforementioned features present T1 was considered to be of Moderate Suitability to roosting bats. No features were present that could support any higher conservation status roosts such as maternity or hibernation roosts.



Figure4-6 (top-bottom, left-right): failed limbs, woodpecker hole, wounds & split

### Nocturnal Surveys

- 4.8 **Table 1** provides a summary of the survey effort for the nocturnal surveys within the Site.
- 4.9 The nocturnal bat surveys were conducted on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2020 and 16<sup>th</sup> June 2020 in good weather conditions (see **Table 1** for more detail).

### Field Survey Limitations

- 4.10 There were no limitations associated with these surveys and therefore a robust assessment was carried out.



**Table 1: Summary of Survey Effort**

Tree	Date	Type of Survey	Number of Surveyors	Equipment Used	Number of Infra-Red Cameras	Timings	Atmospheric Conditions
<b>T1 (Moderate Potential)</b>	20 <sup>th</sup> May 2020	Dusk emergence survey	1	Echometer Touch Pro, Sony HDR-SR10 with infrared light	1	20:46 (start) 22:31 (finish) Sunset (21:01)	BFT 0, 20-18°C, 1/8th cloud cover
	16 <sup>th</sup> June 2020	Dawn re-entry survey	1	Echometer Touch Pro	0	03.16 (start) 05.01 (finish) Sunrise (04.46)	BFT 0, 12-13°C, 7/8th cloud cover

#### **Dusk Emergence Survey 20.05.2020**

- 4.11 The raw data for this survey is set out at **Appendix 1**.
- 4.12 No confirmed emergences were recorded from T1 during the survey.
- 4.13 Levels of bat activity were low across the Site with the occasional bat commuting. A total of 16 calls were registered during the survey.
- 4.14 No bats were recorded by the camera monitoring west elevation of T1.
- 4.15 Three species were encountered during the survey. These included common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, serotine *Eptesicus serotinus* and Leisler's *Nyctalus leisleri*.
- 4.16 There was foraging and commuting activity observed during the survey, with the first bat recorded at 21.41 and the last bat recorded at 22.42.
- 4.17 The first bat recorded was a common pipistrelle (unobserved) at 21:30, approximately 29 minutes after sunset.
- 4.18 The remainder of the survey was dominated by common pipistrelle activity with several individuals observed commuting north and south through the Site.
- 4.19 The last bat recorded was a Leisler's (unobserved) north of T1 at 22:19.

#### **Dawn Re-Entry Survey 16.06.2020**

- 4.20 The raw data for this survey is set out at **Appendix 1**.
- 4.21 No confirmed re-entries were recorded at T1 during the survey.
- 4.22 Levels of bat activity were low across the site with a single commuting bat and two individuals foraging. A total of eight calls were registered during the survey.
- 4.23 Two species were encountered during the survey. These included common pipistrelle and noctule *Nyctalus noctula*.
- 4.24 The first bat recorded was a common pipistrelle (unobserved) at 03:28, approximately an hour and 18 minutes before sunrise.
- 4.25 Seven of the eight calls recorded were of common pipistrelle with one call recorded from an unobserved noctule.
- 4.26 The last bat was recorded was a common pipistrelle foraging to the south of T1 flying west at 04:09.

## 5. CONCLUSION

### Overview

- 5.1 The daytime inspection undertaken in May 2020 concluded that a cedar of Lebanon within the grounds of St Mary's Church, Witney was of value to roosting bats and was assessed as being of Moderate Suitability. As such, further survey effort in the form of nocturnal surveys was recommended.
- 5.2 Overall the Site was subject to low levels of bat activity.
- 5.3 Four bat species in total were recorded across the two surveys, namely common pipistrelle, serotine, Leisler's and noctule.
- 5.4 No confirmed emergences or re-entries were recorded at T1.
- 5.5 It is concluded that the proposed removal of T1 will not result in the disturbance of bats which are likely absent from T1.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

### Mitigation – Negligible Impacts

- 6.1 The proposed works to T1 are considered to pose a negligible risk to roosting bats.
- 6.2 As bats are considered likely to be absent, and no roosts are to be effected, the proposed works are considered able to proceed without the requirement for a European Protected Species Mitigation Licence (EPSM), further assessment or ecological supervision (e.g. direct supervision by Suitably Qualified Ecologist (SQE)).
- 6.3 The Method Statement presented in **Appendix 2** is to be followed if bats are discovered and a suitably qualified Ecologist is not present.
- 6.4 As bats are a highly mobile species, the proposed works should be completed with care.

### Construction and External Lighting

- 6.5 Bats regularly forage and commute past and around the tree assessed as part of this study. All work lighting is to be focused on the proposed works areas only with baffles and cowling used to minimise light throw around the fringes of these areas.
- 6.6 No work lighting is to be directed on T1. Work lighting (including that associated with any site compound, or welfare facilities) is to be switched-off at the end of the working day.

### Enhancement

- 6.7 To provide additional roosting opportunities for birds and bats the following wildlife boxes should be installed during the works phase on retained trees within the Site as per the manufacturer's instructions:
  - One Schwegler 1B bird box (32mm hole).
  - One Schwegler 1B bird box (26mm hole).
  - One Schwegler 2F bat box.
  - One Schwegler 1FF bat box.

### General

- 6.8 If in the event any bats (or other protected species e.g. nesting birds) are encountered, works are to stop immediately with advice sought from ourselves (Lockhart Garratt – 01608 648657).

## 7. REFERENCE AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bat Conservation Trust (2016) Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines 3rd Edition

Russ, J. (2012) British Bat Calls: A guide to species identification 1st Edition Pelagic

## 8. APPENDICES

## Appendix 1: Raw Data from Nocturnal Survey

Ref: 20-3125

**Dusk 20.05.2020**

Time	Species	Observations
<i>Surveyor 1 – North of T1</i>		
21:30	Common pipistrelle	Heard not seen
21:33	Common pipistrelle	Heard not seen
21:36	Common pipistrelle	Commuting south around church building
21:38	Common pipistrelle	Commuting north over church building
21:39	Common pipistrelle	Commuting north over church building
21:40	Common pipistrelle	Heard not seen
21:41	Common pipistrelle	Heard not seen
21:43	Serotine	Heard not seen
21:44	Common pipistrelle	Commuting east over churchyard
21:46	Leisler's	Heard not seen
21:48	Common pipistrelle	Commuting east over churchyard
21:50	Common pipistrelle	Commuting southwest over churchyard
22:06	Common pipistrelle	Heard not seen
22:08	Leisler's	Heard not seen
22:11	Leisler's	Heard not seen
22:19	Leisler's	Heard not seen
<i>Camera – West of T1</i>		
No bats recorded		

**Dawn 16.06.2020**

Time	Species	Observations
<i>Surveyor 1 – West of T1</i>		
03:28	Common pipistrelle	Heard not seen
03:37	Common pipistrelle	Heard not seen
03:40	Common pipistrelle	Commuting west to the south of church building
03:58	Common pipistrelle	Heard not seen
04:02	Noctule	Heard not seen
04:04	Common pipistrelle	Heard not seen
04:05	Common pipistrelle	Foraging to the south of church building flying west
04:09	Common pipistrelle	Foraging to the south of T1 flying west



## Appendix 2: Bat Method Statement

### **Procedure to Be Followed Should Bats Be Found and an Ecologist Is Not Present**

If at any point in the works, bats are discovered, contractors should stop works immediately and telephone Lockhart Garratt on 01608 648657.

Lockhart Garratt will either provide an appropriately licensed bat worker or member of staff to the site.

Should it transpire that the operation being carried out is of risk to bats, works will be stopped until a licence can be sort from Natural England.

Bats are a protected species and there should be no attempt to handle a bat if discovered.

The bat should be covered with a light material (e.g. cloth) and a licensed bat worker or bat care worker called out to carry out the rescue.

If a bat is found under a tile or any other aperture, works will stop immediately (as above).

If the bat does not voluntarily fly out, then the aperture will be carefully covered over to protect the bat from the elements, leaving a small gap for the bat to escape from voluntarily.

Any covering should be free from grease or other contaminants and should not be of a fibreglass-based material.

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