

Public Document Pack

Witney Town Council

Mrs Sharon Groth FSLCC fCMgr
Town Clerk

Cllr Joy Aitman
Mayor of Witney



Town Hall, Market Square
Witney, Oxon
OX28 6AG
Tel: 01993 704379
Fax: 01993 771893
E-mail: info@witney-tc.gov.uk
www.witney-tc.gov.uk

21 July 2020

To: Members of the Full Council - J Aitman, L Duncan, D Enright, L Ashbourne, T Ashby, R Bolger, D Butterfield, O Collins, H Eaglestone, V Gwatkin, A D Harvey, M Jones, J King, A McMahon, A Prosser, R Smith and D Temple (and all other Town Councillors for information)

You are hereby summonsed to a Meeting of the **Full Council** to be held virtually* on **Monday, 27th July, 2020 at 7.00 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) 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) prior to the meeting, stating the reason for absence.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

Members are reminded to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests in any of the items under consideration at this meeting in accordance with the Town Council's code of conduct.

3. **Minutes** (Pages 5 - 12)

To approve and adopt the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 8 June 2020 in accordance with Standing Order 18 including questions on the minutes as to the progress of any item.

4. **Public Participation**

The meeting will adjourn for this item.

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

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

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

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

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

7. **Minutes of Committees and Sub Committees**

To receive and NOTE the RESOLUTIONS in the minutes of the meetings held between 15 June 2020 and 21 July 2020, and agree the RECOMMENDATIONS contained therein:

7.1 **Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee - 16 June, 30 June & 21 July 2020** (Pages 13 - 22)

7.2 **Sport & Play Committee - 22 June 2020** (Pages 23 - 26)

7.3 **Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee - 29 June 2020** (Pages 27 - 30)

7.4 **Stronger Communities Committee - 6 July 2020** (Pages 31 - 36)

7.5 **Policy, Governance & Finance Committee - 13 July 2020** (Pages 37 - 44)

7.6 **Corn Exchange Working Party - 29 June 2020** (Pages 45 - 46)

8. **Civic Announcements** (Pages 47 - 48)

To receive the Mayor's report.

9. **Annual Governance & Accountability Return [AGAR] 2019/20** (Pages 49 - 86)

Following the review by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee at its meeting on 13 July 2020 – minute no. F199 refers.

In line with The Accounts & Audit (England) Regulations 2015 and The Accounts & Audit (Coronavirus)(Amendment) Regulations 2020 - To formally agree and adopt the Annual Governance & Accountability Return and the Unaudited Financial Statements for the year ending 31 March 2020.

10. **Witney Town Council Image & Rebranding** (Pages 87 - 94)

Deferred from the Stronger Communities Committee meeting held on 6 July 2020 – To consider rebranding the Council, updating and having a 'uniformed/corporate' identity throughout with a new Council logo, letterhead and newsletter template.

11. **Consultation on Model Member Code of Conduct** (Pages 95 - 124)

To receive and consider the Draft Member Code of Conduct and provide a response to the consultation questionnaire – Deadline 17 August 2020.

Members are also encouraged to submit their own response using the following link (https://research.local.gov.uk/jfe/form/SV_blupYNXmiJ0xECV) as well as formulating a collective response on behalf of the Council.

12. **Position of Town Crier** (Pages 125 - 128)

To receive and consider the report of the Office Manager concerning the position of Town Crier.

13. **Health and Safety**

To receive a verbal report from the Town Clerk if appropriate.

14. **Motion**

To consider the following motion proposed by Cllr Luci Ashbourne and seconded by Cllr Vicky Gwatkin

Witney Town Council Notes:

- That the grassroots response to the Covid19 pandemic during lockdown was a lifeline to so many residents in the town, and provided meaningful support for Local Authorities and organisations who otherwise may have been overwhelmed.
- This demonstrates the power and mutual benefits of collaboration and shared responsibility.
- Support is most impactful when it is joined up and the experience of lockdown has shone a light on gaps in provision, barriers faced by residents and opportunities for a more integrated approach.

Therefore Witney Town Council commits to:

- Convene a 'Build Back Better' partnership group - extending invites to local authorities and the voluntary sector to ensure a joined up and holistic approach to supporting residents in the future and developing community resilience. The aim of this group will be to identify opportunities for creative approaches to meeting the needs of our community, addressing barriers and developing a local approach which ensures all residents have the knowledge and confidence to seek and access help when they need it.

15. **Communication from the Leader**

To receive such communications as the Leader of the Council may wish to bring before the Council and to consider the recommendation of the Leader on how such communications should be dealt with.

16. **Correspondence**

To receive correspondence from the Town Clerk for information (if applicable).

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

Questions to the Leader of the Council concerning the business of the Council in accordance w Standing Order 15.

18. **Sealing of Documents**

To **RESOLVE** that the seal of the Council be affixed to any documents arising from decisions taken by this meeting of the Council.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'S. J. - K'.

Town Clerk

**MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 8 June 2020

At 7.00 pm in the VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM - Virtual Meeting

Present:

Councillor J Aitman (Chair)

Councillors:	L Ashbourne	V Gwatkin
	T Ashby	M Jones
	R Bolger	J King
	D Butterfield	A McMahon
	L Duncan	A Prosser
	D Enright	R Smith
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Office Manager
Others:	6 members of the public.	

113 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies of absence were received from Cllrs O Collins, H Eaglestone, D Harvey and D Temple.

114 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no interests declared by Members at the meeting.

115 MINUTES

a) Members received the minutes of the ordinary Council meeting held on 10 February 2020.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the ordinary Council meeting held on 10 February 2020 be agreed as a correct record.

b) Members received the minutes of the Extra-Ordinary Council meeting held on 20 March 2020.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Extra-Ordinary Council meeting held on 20 March 2020 be agreed as a correct record.

- c) There were no matters arising from the minutes of the Council meetings held on 10 February and 20 March 2020.

116 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None of the members of public present spoke under public participation.

117 **MINUTES OF THE HALLS & GREEN SPACES COMMITTEE**

Members received and considered the minutes of the Halls and Green Spaces Committee held on 9 March 2020.

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the Halls & Green Spaces Committee of 9 March 2020 as detailed, be received and any recommendations therein approved.

118 **MINUTES OF THE STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE**

Members received and considered the minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee held on 16 March 2020.

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee of 16 March 2020 as detailed, be received and any recommendations therein approved.

119 **MINUTES OF THE PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

Members received and considered the minutes of Planning & Development Committee held on 18 February and 10 March 2020.

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the Planning & Development Committee of 18 February and 10 March 2020 as detailed, be received and any recommendations therein approved.

120 **PLANNING RESPONSES SUBMITTED TO THE PLANNING AUTHORITY BETWEEN 25TH MARCH - 27TH MAY 2020**

Members received the planning responses submitted to West Oxfordshire District Council between 25 March – 27 May 2020. These having been delegated to the Planning & Development Committee during the Covid-19 lockdown.

RESOLVED:

that the planning application responses between 25 March and 27 May as detailed, be received and any observations therein approved.

121 **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING**

Members received and considered the minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 13 May 2020.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 13 May 2020 as detailed, be received and any recommendations therein approved.
- b) There were no matters arising from the minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 13 May 2020.

122 **APPOINTMENT OF ANY NEW STANDING COMMITTEES IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDER 30**

Members considered the appointment of new standing committees in accordance with standing Order 30. Members agreed the committee structure, as presented at the Annual Council Meeting be correct. Following a suggestion from a member, the estates and amenities committee was named 'Halls, Cemeteries and Allotments'.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Standing Committees of Witney Town Council, as outlined at the Annual Council Meeting on 13 May 2020 be agreed; and,
2. That the committee concerned with the Council's estate be named, The Halls, cemeteries & Allotments Committee.

123 **CALENDAR OF MEETINGS FOR MUNICIPAL YEAR 2020/21**

Members received the draft calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2020/21. There was one fewer committee cycle due to the Covid-19 pandemic which had also led to the forthcoming one being held by virtual means. A review on how to hold meetings in subsequent cycles would be led by Government guidance nearer the time.

RESOLVED:

That the calendar of meetings for the municipal year 2020/21 as presented, be agreed and published.

124 **APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO STANDING COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING PARTIES, AND THE ELECTION OF CHAIRS**

Members considered the appointment of standing committees and sub committees and proposed the following:

Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee

Cllr J Aitman
Cllr M Jones

Cllr L Ashbourne
Cllr A McMahon

Cllr R Bolger
Cllr A Prosser

Cllr V Gwatkin
Cllr R Smith

Chair of Committee Cllr R Smith

Sport & Play Committee

Cllr T Ashby	Cllr J Aitman	Cllr L Ashbourne	Cllr D Butterfield
Cllr L Duncan	Cllr V Gwatkin	Cllr A Prosser	Cllr R Smith

Chair of Committee Cllr V Gwatkin

Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee

Cllr T Ashby	Cllr J Aitman	Cllr L Ashbourne	Cllr O Collins
Cllr L Duncan	Cllr V Gwatkin	Cllr M Jones	Cllr J King

Chair of Committee Cllr M Jones

Stronger Communities Committee

Cllr J Aitman	Cllr L Ashbourne	Cllr T Ashby	Cllr D Butterfield
Cllr O Collins	Cllr H Eaglestone	Cllr D Enright	Cllr V Gwatkin

Chair of Committee Cllr O Collins

Policy, Governance & Finance Committee

Cllr J Aitman	Cllr L Ashbourne	Cllr O Collins	Cllr H Eaglestone
Cllr V Gwatkin	Cllr D Harvey	Cllr M Jones	Cllr R Smith

Chair of Committee Cllr L Ashbourne

Personnel Sub-Committee

Cllr J Aitman	Cllr L Ashbourne	Cllr O Collins	Cllr V Gwatkin
Cllr M Jones	Cllr R Smith		

Chair of Sub-Committee Cllr V Gwatkin

Corn Exchange Working Party

Cllr J Aitman	Cllr L Ashbourne	Cllr O Collins	Cllr L Duncan
Cllr D Harvey	Cllr J King		

Chair of Working Party Cllr O Collins

RESOLVED:

That the membership of the standing committees, sub committees and working parties and their Chairs be agreed as detailed above.

125 **APPOINTMENT TO ADVISORY COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

Members considered appointment to advisory committees and outside organisations and proposed the following positions.

<i>CCTV Management Group</i>	-	<i>Cllr Owen Collins</i>
<i>Friends of the Cemeteries</i>	-	<i>Cllr Owen Collins Cllr Mel Jones Cllr Duncan Enright</i>
<i>Home Start (Champions)</i>	-	<i>Cllr Joy Aitman Cllr Ruth Smith</i>
<i>Lower Windrush Valley Project</i>	-	<i>Cllr Rosa Bolger</i>
<i>Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils (Executive)</i>	-	<i>Cllr Rosa Bolger</i>
<i>Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils (Larger Councils)</i>	-	<i>Leader</i>
<i>R.A.F Brize Norton – Local Consultation Working Group</i>	-	<i>Cllr Rosa Bolger</i>
<i>St Mary’s Church Preservation Trust</i>	-	<i>Cllr Joy Aitman (as Mayor)</i>
<i>Vice President of no. 2120 (Witney) Squadron Air Training Corps†</i>	-	<i>Cllr Joy Aitman (as Mayor)</i>
<i>Volunteer Link-Up</i>	-	<i>Cllr Liz Duncan</i>
<i>West Oxfordshire Community Transport</i>	-	<i>Cllr Joy Aitman</i>
<i>West Oxfordshire Museum Service</i>	-	<i>Cllr Liz Duncan</i>
<i>West Witney Sports & Social Club</i>	-	<i>Cllr Joy Aitman Cllr Vicky Gwatkin</i>
<i>Witney Allotment Association</i>	-	<i>Cllr Ruth Smith</i>
<i>Witney & District Twinning Association</i>	-	<i>Cllr Joy Aitman (as Mayor) Cllr Owen Collins Cllr Liz Duncan</i>
<i>Witney Fair Trade Action Group (Champion)</i>	-	<i>Cllr Duncan Enright</i>
<i>Witney Traffic Advisory Committee</i>	-	<i>Cllr Joy Aitman Cllr Liz Duncan Cllr Duncan Enright Cllr Jim King</i>

Witney Town Band

-

Cllr Ruth Smith

Witney Youth Council (Mentors)

-

**Cllr Thomas Ashby
Cllr Rosa Bolger
Cllr Vicky Gwatkin**

† This position is by invitation from The Squadron.

NB. The Mayor, Cllr Joy Aitman serves as ex-officio on St Mary's Preservation Trust, Witney 2120 Air Cadets and Witney & District Twinning Association during her term.

RESOLVED:

That the appointment to advisory committees and outside organisations be agreed as detailed above.

126 WORLD REFUGEE DAY - 20 JUNE 2020

Members were advised that the World Refugee Flag had been flown from the Town Hall in 2019 to mark World Refugee Day and a further request had been made to fly it in 2020.

RESOLVED:

- a) that Witney Town Council flies the World Refugee Flag from the Town Hall on 20 June 2020
- b) that this occasion be added to the annual Council's flag flying calendar.

127 HEALTH AND SAFETY - COVID-19

The Committee received a verbal report from the Town Clerk updating members on the current situation in respect of Council run services.

The Senior Management team were working strategically, considering restrictions for varying sites under the Council's control, implementing the risk assessments and equipment needed to re-open them. The Operations & Estates Officer and Compliance & Environment Officer were looking at cleaning regimes, social distancing safety measure which could be implemented and working with the Public Halls team to work with hirers moving forward all of which would take time so they would be correct.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

128 COMMUNICATION FROM THE LEADER

There were no communications from the Leader. However, Cllr Ashbourne thanked officers and members for the extra-ordinary effort made in terms of capacity and support to the residents of Witney during such an unprecedented time with the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown.

129 MOTION

The committee received and considered the following motion submitted by Cllr R Smith and seconded by Cllr A Prosser.

Witney Town Council notes that a consortium of councillors, residents and social enterprises in the town worked together to compose 'Witney Reallocating Road Space Proposals' – termed 'Witney's Big Green Plan' – which was submitted to Oxfordshire County Council on 18 May. The measures were drafted in relation to travel in the town whilst public transport capacity is limited and social distancing is required due to COVID-19. They were informed by a wealth of detailed local knowledge, including from Windrush Bike Project.

We note that the main recommendations of Witney's plan, which was tailored to the government's proposals, match OCC's stated priorities:

- School Streets
- 20 mph speed limits
- Reallocation of road space in favour of pedestrians and cyclists

We express commitment to Witney's Big Green Plan throughout and beyond the pandemic by

- working with Witney's Traffic Advisory Committee to implement the plan alongside representatives from all councils, transport providers and user groups
- setting out the contents of the plan formally in a WTC Active Travel Infrastructure Development Plan
- communicating with residents as we work together to improve safety, public health, air quality and sustainability.

RESOLVED:

1. That Witney Town Council supports Oxfordshire County Council's Big Green Plan for Witney throughout and beyond the Covid-19 pandemic by:
 - a) Working with Witney Traffic Advisory Committee to implement the plan alongside representatives from all Council's transport providers and user groups,
 - b) Setting out the contents of the plan formally in a Town Council Active Travel Infrastructure Development Plan,
 - c) Communicating with residents as the Town Council works together to improve safety, public health, air quality and sustainability.

130 **CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence brought before the Council by the Town Clerk.

131 **QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

There were no questions submitted to the Leader at the meeting.

132 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

The Town Clerk advised that the lease with The I.C.E Centre for Langdale Hall, Witney had been signed by herself and the Mayor/Chair on behalf of the Council. The Town Clerk added that although signed and delivered by Witney Town Council, the lease transfer had not been officially completed.

RESOLVED:

that the Council notes Seal no. 82 dated 9 March 2020 for the lease with Inclusive Care & Education Ltd for Langdale Hall, this being a ten year lease from March 2018.

The meeting closed at: 8.50 pm

Chair

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

Held on Tuesday, 16 June 2020

At 6.00 pm in the VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM - Virtual Meeting

Present:

Councillor R Smith (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	M Jones
	L Ashbourne	A McMahon
	V Gwatkin	A Prosser
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Office Manager
	Angus Whitburn	Compliance and Environment Officer
Others:	none.	

P132 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for her absence was received from Cllr Bolger.

P133 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

P134 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public wishing to make representation.

P135 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

The Chair invited nominations for the position of Vice Chair of the Committee.

RESOLVED: that Councillor Andrew Prosser be elected Vice Chair for the Municipal year.

P136 PLANNING MINUTES

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the Planning & Development Committee meeting held on 10 March 2020.

RESOLVED: that minutes be noted

P137 PLANNING RESPONSES 25 MARCH - 27 MAY 2020

The Committee received and considered the Planning Responses submitted during the Covid-19 lockdown between 25 March and 27 May 2020.

RESOLVED: that the consultee planning responses submitted to West Oxfordshire District Council during the Covid-19 lockdown between 25 March – 27 May 2020 be noted (this delegation having been resolved at the Extra-Ordinary Meeting of the Council held on 20 March 2020, minute no. 112(3)).

P138 **WITNEY TRAFFIC ADVISORY MINUTES**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee held on 14 January 2020 and also the notes from a Special Witney Traffic Advisory Committee held on 5 June 2020.

In relation to the meeting held on 5 June on the Covid-19 related traffic measures being implemented by WODC, a member commented on confusion that had arisen as it was presented as if it would come into action on 15 June and it hadn't – there had been a lack of proper communication. The Town Council had only heard that WODC had been involved at the special Traffic Advisory meeting. They clearly hadn't had time to get things in place. It was clear that the Town Council would like active travel measures but had no power to take it forward. It could only advocate for the people of the town although there was a split between those in favour and those not in favour. There followed a discussion about what had happened.

RESOLVED:

1) that the minutes of the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee meeting held on 14 January 2020 and the notes of a Special Witney Traffic Advisory Committee Meeting held on 5 June 2020 be noted;

2) that Cllr Ashbourne as Leader would write to WODC expressing disappointment with the communication on the introduction of a COVID-19 related active travel plan and asking for better communication going forward.

P139 **COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Members received and considered the draft Terms of Reference for the new Committee. A member felt that the council should firm up the concept of being carbon neutral by 2028. She felt that this should state that the Council is looking to be carbon neutral in its operations by 2028 and will encourage residents to be more environmentally conscious. She wanted this to be clear that it was not realistic to expect the whole town to be carbon neutral by 2028.

The Chair agreed. Events held on our land should also work towards being carbon neutral.

The Town Clerk commented that she was pleased to hear that members wanted this to be a very clear element in the Terms of Reference, as she had been led to believe initially it was something quite different when the motion was originally presented to Council last year.

A member referred to scope 1 – all use of fossil fuels and scope 2 – use of electricity, and this would be incorporated into the wording.

RESOLVED: that the Terms of Reference for the Committee as presented be agreed with the addition of some wording explicitly on the Council's commitment to Carbon neutrality by 2028 – Cllr Ashbourne would work on these with the Chair and they would be circulated to the Committee for approval.

P140 **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The Committee received and considered a list of Planning Applications from West Oxfordshire District Council.

RESOLVED: that the comments, as per the attached schedule, be forwarded to West Oxfordshire District Council.

P141 **CORN STREET BUS SHELTER**

Members discussed a request from the resident to move the bus shelter outside their new build property on Corn Street so that they could put in an entrance to a driveway. The bus shelter had originally been covering one window of the property and extensive negotiation had taken place between the developers and the Town Council, spanning two years, to agree a new siting for it. Oxfordshire County Council, Thames Valley Police and Stagecoach bus company had also been involved.

The Committee all agreed that it would not be possible to relocate it again.

RESOLVED: the Town Clerk sends a response to the resident explaining that a lot of work, consideration and negotiation had gone into agreeing the position of the bus shelter with the developer and that it would not be possible to move it.

P142 **CLIMATE & BIODIVERSITY SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the meeting held on 6 November 2019.

RESOLVED: that the minutes be noted.

P143 **WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL - HOUSING STOCK CORRESPONDENCE**

The Committee received and considered a letter from the portfolio holder for the Environment at West Oxfordshire District Council.

RESOLVED: that the correspondence be noted and that the Chair and Vice Chair write back to the portfolio holder for the environment pushing for specific measures for the District to lead on post lockdown.

P144 **LAKE & COUNTRY PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN**

Members received and considered the report of the Town Clerk.

The Town Clerk gave a brief background to the item, which stretched back to 2016. She advised that advice would be needed how to manage the land successfully. The Committee discussed how to move this issue forward, with members concerned that they did not have enough knowledge to make decisions on how the land might be managed. Members also discussed who the Council could reach out to assist with this.

A member referred to the Park Ranger who had been employed in the past and wondered if this might be a way forward. The Town Clerk conformed that a qualified Park Ranger had been

employed to maintain the area some time ago. Members felt that a full-time post might be too much.

A member was very keen to utilise the Wychwood Project as she said that they already had a plan that encompassed not only the lake and country park but additional adjoining land owned by the District and County Councils.

The Town Clerk advised that the Town Council should probably work with the Lower Windrush Valley project who had helped in the past and proposed that the Council needed a vision for the lake and country park before a management plan could be thought about. The LWVP sat under the County Council's umbrella. She felt that they would be keen to help.

Members then proceeded to discuss the vision for the lake and country park.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted and :

- 1) that the vision for the lake and country park was for it to be actively managed for biodiversity and for access for residents to enjoy safely;
- 2) that Council explores active management and decides if that takes the form of a ranger or whether Community groups will offer that sort of service;
- 3) that the Wychwood Project is approached as the Council understands that they have plans for the whole Windrush area in Witney – Cllrs Smith and Prosser would meet with them and Olivia Thornton who had previously contacted the Council about tree planting;
- 4) that the Compliance and Environment Officer engages with the Oxford City Council Team for some local input.

P145 **ACTIVE TRAVEL**

The Chair advised that ideas had been put to Oxfordshire County Council in mid-May. She proposed that she and the Vice Chair worked on an Active Travel Infrastructure Plan to bring back to the Committee within the next few meetings.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Chair and Vice Chair work on an Active Travel Infrastructure Plan to bring back to the Committee within the next few meetings;
2. That the Committee writes to the District Council asking it to initiate a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

The meeting closed at: 8.00 pm

Chair

9

9- 3	WTC/088/20	Plot Ref :-20/01117/S73	Type :-	VARIATION
Applicant Name :- CLARE, MISS RACHEL		Date Received :-	04/06/2020	
Location :- LAND NORTH OF BURFORD ROAD BURFORD ROAD WITNEY		Date Returned :-	18/06/2020	
<p>Proposal : Variation of condition 5 of outline planning permission 14/1215/P/OP to allow for the development to be constructed on site in line with the description of development and amend the restriction of numbers from 260 dwellings and increase to 270 dwellings.</p>				
<p>Observations : Witney Town Council objects to this application on the following grounds:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the Secretary of State limited the development to 260 houses based on advice from the HSE in relation to the Flo Gas site. We cannot see what has changed since then to warrant 270 houses. - the Local Plan is now in place, which identifies suitable sites for building, and this site is not one of them. These houses are not needed here. - the documents submitted with this application are unclear and appear to show 				

the playground being moved nearer to the Flo Gas site than in the approved plans. This would not be acceptable.

9- 4	WTC/089/20	Plot Ref :-20/01274/HHD	Type :-	HOUSEHOLDE
	Applicant Name :-	WALLER, MR DAVE	Date Received :-	08/06/2020
	Location :-	6 BARRINGTON CLOSE BARRINGTON CLOSE WITNEY OX28 5FL	Date Returned :-	18/06/2020
	Proposal :	Erection of first floor extension above existing garage and new porch. (Part retrospective)		
	Observations :	Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application		

9- 5	WTC/090/20	Plot Ref :-20/01118/S73	Type :-	VARIATION
	Applicant Name :-	CLARE, MISS RACHEL	Date Received :-	15/06/2020
	Location :-	LAND NORTH OF BURFORD ROAD BURFORD ROAD WITNEY	Date Returned :-	16/06/2020
	Proposal :	Variation of condition 2 of planning permission 17/03338/RES to introduce new approved plans to reflect additional 10 dwellings on site.		
	Observations :	Witney Town Council objects to this application on the following grounds:- - the plans for the 43 houses (up from 33 in that road layout) place a higher density of houses in the Flo Gas impact zone; - increasing the number of properties will cause strain on Witney's traffic, schools, medical practices and sewerage infrastructure; - these plans do not show the playground as part of the area submitted for redesign - the Town Council asks for clarity on the intentions for the playground.		

The Meeting closed at : _____

Signed : _____ Chairman Date: _____

On behalf of :- Witney Town Council

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

Held on Tuesday, 30 June 2020

At 6.00 pm in the VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM - Virtual Meeting

Present:

Councillor R Smith (Chair)

Councillors:	L Ashbourne	M Jones
	V Gwatkin	A Prosser
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
Others:	0 members of the public.	

P167 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

P168 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

P169 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

P170 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

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

RESOLVED: that the comments, as per the attached schedule, be forwarded to West Oxfordshire District Council.

The meeting closed at: 6.30 pm

Chair

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Proposal : Erection of two storey and single storey side extension.

Observations : Witney Town Council shares the concerns of the neighbour at number 27 that maintenance of both properties against damp, vermin and debris will be impossible with a 20 cm gap between the walls and 10 cm between the roofs. However, it is difficult to object when number 27 is already built right up to the boundary. The Town Council only comments on a note of caution and suggest to planners that all properties are dissuaded from building right up to the boundary in future, to avoid such situations.

Proposal : Alterations and erection of single storey rear extension.

Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application

Proposal : Two-storey side extension, rear extension and new front door.

Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application

Proposal : Erection of single storey rear extension.

Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application

The Meeting closed at : 18.30

Signed : _____ Chairman Date: _____

On behalf of :- _____ Witney Town Council

**SPORT AND PLAY COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 22 June 2020

At 6.00 pm in the VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM - Virtual Meeting

Present:

Councillor V Gwatkin (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	L Duncan
	L Ashbourne	A Prosser
	T Ashby	R Smith
	D Butterfield	
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Office Manager
	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
Others:	4 members of the public	

SP146 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

SP147 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

SP148 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

RESOLVED: that Cllr Butterfield be elected as Vice Chair of the Committee for the ensuing municipal year.

SP149 MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Halls & Green Spaces Committee meeting held on 9 March 2020 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

SP150 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Committee adjourned to receive public participation from Punam Owens and Fraser Howard who spoke about Parkrun and its' desire for a "winterproof" hoggin path at West Witney Sports Ground.

Following the Public Participation, the Committee reconvened.

SP151 REQUEST FOR HOGGING PATH FROM WITNEY PARKRUN

With the express permission of the Chair, this item was moved up the agenda so that the members of the public could hear the debate.

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer. A member said that if there was to be groundwork done he would like drainage to be looked into at the same time.

The Chair emphasised that there was little capacity for officer involvement. The Parkrun representatives indicated that they would be happy to approach local firms to donate aggregate for the paths and also even to use volunteers to dig out the path if they could access Town Council Machinery under guidance.

During the presentation the Town Clerk had asked parkrun about funding streams, as there was no funding available in the current years budget for these works. Parkrun said they could point the Council in the direction of funding or would be happy to be involved in making the application but as an organisation parkrun could not make grant applications itself. The Town Clerk reiterated this point and the current capacity issues.

RESOLVED: that the Town Council would facilitate the installation of a path subject to the Operations and Estates officer being satisfied at all stages and on provision that no Town Council funding or labour would be required.

SP152 COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE, VISION AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR

The Committee received and considered the draft Terms of reference for the Committee. The Chair asked if the word “supervised” in relation to football pitches could be replaced by something else. The Town Clerk would change this. A member commented that she thought third party events should be included. Members agreed that this should be added in. The Town Clerk would ensure this was added from the Stronger Communities Committee.

RESOLVED: that the Terms of Reference as circulated be agreed subject to the word “supervised” (in relation to football pitches) being replaced with something suitable and the addition of third-party events.

SP153 OPERATIONAL REPORT - PROGRESS ON IMPROVEMENTS AND REPAIRS SINCE THE LAST MEETING

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer. A member asked a question about football clubs returning and the Chair replied that it was a question of checking if they were insured to play – this was dealt with by the F.A. The Operations and Estates Officer was trying to ascertain what the situation was.

The Chair asked if Woodgreen would be ready for the Spartans. The Town Clerk advised that it had been delayed as District Council Officers had been redeployed dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic.

A member asked about recycling water from the splash park to water the cricket pitch at The Leys. The Town Clerk replied that a limited amount of water was already retained in a tank but it only held a certain amount of water. Water recycling units had been looked into but were very expensive. This could be something for the Council to look into as a bigger project in the future.

The Committee briefly discussed the possibility that the water pressure had been turned down and whether a question could be asked about it.

The Chair asked why the Town Council had not reopened public toilets on The Leys when the District Council had reopened its toilets. The Town Clerk explained that it was a logistical/social distancing issue, whilst the District Council's public toilet was one unit with clear accessibility, the Town Council's facilities were accessed via a narrow walkway with no visibility to enable social distancing, however Officers were actively looking for a solution.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

SP154 **WITNEY SPORTS FACILITIES - OPTIONS PAPER**

The Committee received and considered the Witney Sports Facilities Options Paper as previously circulated.

There was a discussion about some of the data in the report particularly the Town's predicted expansion and the fact that using data for the whole of West Oxfordshire had skewed some of the assumptions. Some of the smaller sports sites had been missed out, including school facilities.

There was also discussion about the 4G pitch and whether the Town Council should wait for West Oxfordshire District Council to engage or whether to push ahead with things that the Town Council could do independently. Following a member's question, the Town Clerk confirmed that S106 developer funding was due to be received via the District Council for West Witney Sports Ground (£259,349) and the Corn Exchange (£103,740) imminently – this equated to three quarters of the funding due.

A member felt that it was really important for the Town Council to set out its vision. Other Committee members agreed. The Chair commented that it was important to sort the leases out on the West Witney site so that the sports clubs could access grants.

RECOMMENDED: that the consultant be requested to assist the Council with putting together a vision for its sports facilities.

The meeting closed at: 7.00 pm

Chair

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

Held on Monday, 29 June 2020

At 6.00 pm in the VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM - Virtual Meeting

Present:

Councillor M Jones (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	L Duncan
	L Ashbourne	V Gwatkin
	T Ashby	J King
	O Collins	
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Office Manager
	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	John Hickman	Operations & Estates Officer
	Tomas Smith	Venue Manager
Others:	None.	

H155 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

H156 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

H157 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

RESOLVED: that Cllr Gwatkin be elected Vice Chair for the municipal year.

H158 MINUTES

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Halls & Green Spaces Committee meeting held on 9 March 2020 be agreed and signed by the Chair as a correct record, alongside the Chair of the Sport & Play Committee as the work for the municipal year had been split over two new Committees accordingly.

There were no matters arising.

H159 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

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

H160 **COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE, VISION AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

Members received and considered draft terms of reference for the Committee. A member asked if Windrush Place Allotments could be included.

RESOLVED: that the terms of reference as presented be accepted with the addition of Windrush Place allotments.

H161 **OPERATIONAL REPORT - PROGRESS ON IMPROVEMENTS AND REPAIRS SINCE THE LAST MEETING**

Members received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer. He advised that there was no evidence of bats in the cedar of Lebanon tree according to the survey and the tree surgeon was now resurveying the tree with a view to it being removed in the near future.

A member asked how far the Council had got with rebuilding the arch and the wall at St. Mary's Churchyard. The Officer advised that the faculties had now been applied for and the PCC had given permission. He was awaiting additional information from the stone mason to add to the faculty applications.

A member asked for communication to be put out before the tree was finally taken down. The Communications and Events Officer would be asked to do so.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

H162 **RENEWABLE ENERGY**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Compliance and Environment Officer. A member commended the report and the fact that it looked into the most modern ways of mitigating the Council's carbon footprint.

Another member wondered whether it would be worth commissioning for example the Energy Saving Trust to offer detailed advice. The Leader agreed with this and wondered if the Trust might do a project looking across the Council, including vehicles etc. She thought this might help with future budget setting.

RESOLVED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the Energy Saving Trust be asked to look into energy saving across the Council.

H163 **ALLOTMENTS**

The Operations and Estates Officer reported that he had not been able to complete Planning applications for oversized polytunnels as he had been shielding. He would be able to go out soon. The Allotment Association had now come back with recommendations for siting some composting tumblers and daleks and the type it favoured. The Association had also asked for concrete block bases and block walls at Lakeside and the new West Witney Allotments and had requested that the Town Council "turns" the amount of green waste on both of those sites for a

year. These recommendations from the Association had only just been received. The Council had agreed to provide some assistance as it no longer provided skips. The costs of the requested items were less than the skips would have cost.

A member expressed concerns that the items might fill up quickly and then the Association would be asking for more.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. to agree to the Allotment Association's requests for the tumblers, daleks and Town Council assistance at Lakeside and West Witney on the condition that the exact requirements and services offered by the Town Council were specified in writing;
3. that the Operations and Estates Officer does further research into the cost of hard standing bases at Lakeside and West Witney Allotments and this is brought back to a future meeting.

H164 WINDRUSH CEMETERY RISK ASSESSMENTS & CAPACITY

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer. The Council had been expecting high numbers of burials due to the pandemic and although numbers had spiked initially, they had dropped to a normal level again. The Environment Agency permitted 50 burials per year and there was a requirement for a groundwater risk assessment. This had been done alongside a pandemic risk assessment which the Council should also have had. The results had shown that the Windrush Cemetery could have 100 burials per year without causing any adverse effects. 150 burials per year might also be possible and the cemetery had been approved as suitable for a pandemic burial site if needed in future. There was still some work to be done on a procedural level.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

H165 ST MARY'S CLOSED CHURCH YARD - CEDAR OF LEBANON TREE BAT SURVEY

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer. As the subject had been discussed earlier, there was no further debate.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

H166 PUBLIC HALLS - COVID 19 LOCKDOWN

The Committee received and considered the report of the Office Manager. The report was for information and an update on how much income the public halls had lost due to lockdown. A member asked if the drop in income would affect the budget for the Corn Exchange upgrade. The Office Manager advised that it would not as the majority of the money was from Section 106 contributions.

Another member asked how the loss would be made up, the Town Clerk having confirmed that the income would have been spent on running costs. The Town Clerk would revise the budget later in the year to reflect the pandemic's impact.

The Chair of the Corn exchange Working Party gave an update on the meeting held earlier that evening. He updated on the 1863 bar, retractable seating and bench seating. The Working Party had also discussed furniture for the bar/café. There would also be a new logo.

A member asked about opening times. The Venue Manager advised that he envisaged Monday – Saturday, 10am – 3pm. The bar would be a bonus for use in the evening for hirers or in-house events.

A member thanked the Venue Manager for welcoming the Community Fridge into the Corn Exchange and another member thanked Officers for the use of Burwell Hall by the Land Army early in the lockdown.

The Office Manager advised that the halls would not be open from 4 July as Officers were still working to achieve government guidelines.

RESOLVED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the verbal update from the Corn Exchange Working Party meeting held prior to this meeting be noted and the recommendations contained therein be agreed.

The meeting closed at: 6.56 pm

Chair

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

Held on Monday, 6 July 2020

At 6.00 pm in the VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM - Virtual Meeting

Present:

Councillor O Collins (Chair)

Councillors:	L Ashbourne	H Eaglestone
	J Aitman	V Gwatkin
	T Ashby	L Duncan (sub D Enright)
	D Butterfield	
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	John Hickman	Operations & Estates Officer
	Adam Clapton	Office Manager
	Polly Inness	Communications & Events Officer
Others:	None.	

SC189 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for his absence was received from Cllr Enright. Cllr Duncan was attending as a substitute. Cllr Smith was also in attendance to offer advice on the item on cycle racks.

SC190 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

SC191 ELECTION OF VICE CHAIR

RESOLVED: that Cllr Ashbourne be elected as Vice Chair of the Committee for the municipal year.

SC192 MINUTES

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2020.

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2020 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

There were no matters arising.

SC193 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

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

SC194 **COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE, VISION AND OBJECTIVES FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

The Committee received and considered the draft terms of reference for the Committee as circulated with the agenda.

RESOLVED: that the terms of reference as circulated be agreed with the addition of "Recognising the value and benefit of voluntary groups and endeavours within our community, supporting and helping to facilitate where possible" as the first Term of Reference.

SC195 **OPERATIONAL REPORT - PROGRESS SINCE THE LAST MEETING**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer. He advised that the hanging basket extenders had gone missing in delivery transit. He had visited St. Mary's Churchyard earlier that day with the Tree Surgeon looking at tree T583. The Tree Surgeon would requote for this tree as it looked to be quite difficult to get down due to its size.

Witney Feast was still due to go ahead in September.

He advised that Tower Hill Football Club were looking to get the defibrillator back to A1 condition before they formally asked the Town Council to take it on.

A member asked if the Council would be guided by Government as to whether the fair could take place. The Operations and Estates Officer replied that they were allowed to take place now. The member asked if this changed would it be due to Government guidance and not the Town Council. It was confirmed that this was correct. Officers would check nearer to the time that the fair would comply with Government Guidance.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

SC196 **MEMORIAL BENCH REQUEST - TOWER HILL F.C**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer.

RESOLVED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the negotiation for the bench and its siting be delegated to the Operations and Estates Officer.

SC197 **COVID-19 COMMEMORATIONS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations and Estates Officer and correspondence from the Rotary Club. The Chair said that members had informally discussed an idea of a memorial for Covid-19 Victims and the volunteers.

Members proceeded to debate a suitable location. The Officers pointed out that the Council would inherit the ongoing maintenance cost of such a memorial. A member commented that she felt that the Committee was talking about two different things – a memorial to those who had lost their lives and a thank you to volunteers. She felt that the two didn't need to be together and that a memorial bench could happen quite quickly.

There was also some discussion about convening a working party. The Town Clerk advised that as it had been agreed not to have working parties, perhaps a group of councillors could work together and then bring back a proposal to a future meeting.

RECOMENDED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the siting for a bench, tree and planting in conjunction with Rotary be delegated to the Operations and Estates Officer to progress;
3. that the Town Council Offers £1,000 match funding to Rotary (bearing in mind the ongoing maintenance costs);
4. that a group of councillors discuss ideas for a tribute to volunteers and bring them back to a future meeting.

SC198 CYCLE RACKS - WINDRUSH & TOWER HILL CEMETERIES

Members received a verbal update from Cllr Smith regarding the installation of cycle racks at Tower Hill and Windrush cemeteries along with correspondence concerning potential funding by Oxfordshire County Council for further ones in the town.

The Committee was in agreement that cycle racks should be installed at the two cemeteries and were advised that County Cllr Suzanne Bartington had indicated the cost of these could be covered from her Councillor Priority Fund.

The County Council funding for additional cycle racks was in response to the wider Covid-19 pandemic transport scheme and the Town Council had been asked to identify potential sites for these as soon as possible. It was suggested that the racks at the cemeteries could be funded through this project, along with cycle racks for the proposed Tower Hill Bus Shelter and a list of sites should be submitted.

RESOLVED: that the verbal update be noted and:

1. that cycle racks should be installed at Tower Hill and Windrush cemeteries; and that this be funded from the Covid-19 cycle rack fund if possible. If not, this should be funded from Cllr Bartington's Councillor Priority Fund;
2. that a list of potential cycle rack locations across the town be delegated to Cllr Smith and the Office Manager for submission to Oxfordshire County Council, and this should include the Tower Hill Bus Shelter site.

SC199 BUS STOP IMPROVEMENTS

The Committee received and considered the report of the Office Manager concerning £10,000 of S106 funding for bus stop infrastructure on Tower Hill. There had already been a site meeting with ward Councillors. A proposal had been put together by OCC which was significantly over the funds allocated to this project. The Town Council had previously purchased some bus shelters which were under £3,000. OCC had agreed that the Town Council could choose the supplier. County Councillor Price was very interested to know costings and to see if she could help source additional finance.

Members debated how to proceed. It was felt better to choose a stop on the side of Tower Hill on which buses went into town.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted and the final decision on design and add-ons for a bus shelter on the town centre bound side of Tower Hill be delegated to the Chair, Cllr R Smith and the Office Manager.

SC200 COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

The Committee received and considered the report of the Communications and Events Officer which included details on the annual resident's satisfaction survey. Members were concerned that young people weren't responding but the Communications and Events Officer explained that many ways including direct engagement had been tried but they were not interested. She would continue to explore options for this.

A member suggested asking the Youth Council and the Communications and Events Officer agreed to ask them to get involved.

RESOLVED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the Communications and Events Officer produces in depth analysis from the annual resident's satisfaction survey results to help inform the Council's plans for the next year.

SC201 WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL IMAGE & REBRANDING

The Chair had circulated some designs for the rebranding of the Town Council prior to the meeting. Cllr Gwatkin spoke to the Committee about her design. Another member commented that he liked the banner but didn't actually feel that the current branding was outdated, especially compared to other parish councils. He was also unsure how it would work at the bottom of a letter. Another member liked the fact that it illustrated what the Council did. Other members thought that it would work at the bottom of a letter. Members continued to debate this.

RECOMMENDED: that the design as circulated is put forward as a proposal to Full Council.

SC202 **INCLUSION PANEL**

The Committee received and considered a verbal report from the Chair on forming an 'Inclusion Panel' made up of members of the community's various minorities, who could advise the Council on various matters to take greater account of the impact on all sections of the community. The Leader also added some detail. She proposed that the Council should reach out to people who were under represented by the Council, and get expressions of interest. Her idea was that Committee Chairs could meet with the people and get their views on upcoming agendas so that they could be represented, therefore requiring no Officer input.

Members agreed that this would be a step forward.

RECOMMENDED: that the verbal report be noted and that an Inclusion Panel is created, to be made up of Chairs of the Committees and minority members of the community. This would be supported by appropriate communications from the Communications and Events Officer.

SC203 **CHRISTMAS LIGHTS DISPLAY & COMPETITIONS 2020**

The Committee received and considered the verbal report of the Operations and Estates Officer updating Members on this year's Christmas lights display along with the report of the Cemeteries Officer regarding the children's Christmas competitions.

Members discussed other ideas such as putting lights in window, and the impact on the night time economy. The Town Clerk commented that previously it had been difficult to get the retailers to support the event, and to her knowledge Rotary had nothing planned due to the difficulties brought about from COVID-19.

The Operations and Estates Officer explained that he was not happy with the idea of rushing out a tender because if it was not right the Council would be stuck with it for 3 and 4 years. He would be happier arranging a very small display just for this year.

RESOLVED:

1. that the report be noted;
2. that a small lights display should be arranged for this year only;
3. the Mayor's Christmas Card competition should be run, via social media rather than through schools;
4. that consideration be given to a Christmas poem initiative at the next meeting.

SC204 **CIVIC EVENTS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Communications and Events Officer.

RESOLVED:

1. that the report be noted;

2. that commemorations for VJ Day be delegated to the Mayor and the Office Manager to progress;
3. that for Remembrance Day, the Communications & Events Officer progresses an event along the lines as detailed in her report but ensuring it is COVID-19 safe;
4. that a press release is prepared to explain the change in the event;
5. that plans may be subject to change depending on the situation nearer to the time.

SC205 **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS**

As the meeting had now reached over 2 hours in length, the Committee agreed to suspend standing order 48 in order to allow the meeting to continue for a further 10 minutes.

SC206 **YOUTH SERVICES**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Office Manager, which recapped previous decisions. Members discussed grant criteria and an accompanying application form.

RECOMMENDED:

1. that the report be noted.
2. that the proposed grant criteria and application form be accepted;
3. that Youth Services Signposting takes the form of a dedicated webpage, with an interactive map on the Council's website as a starting point which would list the services commissioned by the Town Council and then evolve, embedding links to the other resources;
4. that the applicants are affiliated with Oxfordshire Youth or a similar organisation.

The meeting closed at: 8.05 pm

Chair

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**CORN EXCHANGE WORKING PARTY MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 29 June 2020

At 5.00 pm in the VIRTUAL MEETING VIA ZOOM - Virtual Meeting

Present:

Councillor O Collins (Chair)

Councillors:	L Ashbourne J Aitman	L Duncan J King
Officers:	Adam Clapton Tomas Smith	Office Manager Venue Manager
Others:	None.	

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR

Members received nominations for the Chair of this Working Party for the ensuing municipal year.

RESOLVED:

That Cllr O Collins be elected Chair of this Working Party for the ensuing municipal year.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4 MINUTES

Members received and considered the minutes of the Corn Exchange Working Party held on 10 March 2020.

RESOLVED:

a) CORN EXCHANGE WORKING PARTY MINUTES - 10 MARCH 2020

That the minutes of the Corn Exchange Working Party meeting held on 10 March 2020 are an accurate account and should be signed by the Chair.

b) CORN EXCHANGE WORKING PARTY MINUTES 10 MARCH 2020 - MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the Corn Exchange Working Party held on 10 March 2020.

5 **CORN EXCHANGE PHASE TWO UPDATE**

Members received and considered the report of the Venue Manager offering an update on the phase two refurbishment of the Corn Exchange.

The Committee was briefed on the progress of the café/bar and was asked to consider updated quotes for furniture and possible decoration; the installation of retractable seating in the Main Hall was also discussed. The seating could require possible building alterations so the Operations & Estates Officer should be consulted on its feasibility. The possibility of installing a sprung floor in the Main Hall to attract performers before seating was installed was also mooted.

The progress on audio and lighting had been delayed due to the Covid-19 lockdown but progress had been made in terms of website and visual identity. Members considered several preliminary designs and offered comments which could be fed back to the supplier.

RECOMMENDED: That the report be noted; and,

1. That the Council while wanting to support local business, also recognises the need for best value in purchasing of the café/bar furniture. The supply of furniture be delegated to the Venue Manager and Chair,
2. That the decoration for the bar be entrusted to the Venue Manager along the lines of the vision the Working Party had agreed on at its meeting in March,
3. That the Working Party preliminary endorses the first visual identity design as proposed by its supplier and awaits further designs before making a final decision,
4. That the Venue Manager contacts the preferred seating supplier to enquire about the possibility of bench seating instead of chairs and reports back to the Working Party

The meeting closed at: 5.52 pm

Chair

FULL COUNCIL

Date: 27 July 2020

Title: Mayor's Report

Contact Officer: Democratic Services Officer – Nichola Cayley

MARCH 2020 – JULY 2020

The role of mayor involves chairing the Town Council, sitting as an ex officio voting member on council committees, representing and promoting Witney, organizing key events in the town in partnership with others, raising funds for local charities, and supporting community activities which contribute to the life of the town and the objectives of the Witney Town Council. The Mayor is supported by the Deputy Mayor, whose attendance in place of or alongside the Mayor is noted in the report below.

This is a regular report to each full council meeting, detailing the activities of the mayor since the last meeting.

SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY

4th June Visited Guideposts Well-being Centre

15th June Rotary Volunteers Evening – remote event

20th June Witney Community Fridge – meeting volunteers and delivering to the community

22nd June Witney Baby Bank – delivering to the community

9th July Got2Be trustee evening – remote event

REPRESENTING AND PROMOTING WITNEY

No events due to Covid-19

KEY EVENTS AND COUNCIL ACTIVITY

No events due to Covid-19

RAISING FUNDS

No events due to Covid-19

Mayor's Charities 2020 - 21:

- Homestart Witney
- Guideposts Witney
- Got2Be

Events in discussion at the moment: -

- two events at the Corn Exchange – Covid-19 permitting

Some of these events will generate publicity for local businesses, and generate raffle prizes for other opportunities.

Prepared by:

Cllrs Joy Aitman & Liz Duncan

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019-20 Addendum – Coronavirus Emergency Regulation changes

The Accounts and Audit (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020

Owing to the increasing impact of COVID19 MHCLG has made amended Regulations which **extend the statutory audit deadlines for 2019-20** only for all Category 2 smaller authorities (town and parish councils, parish meetings, internal drainage boards and other authorities).

- The requirement for the public inspection period to include the **first 10 working days of July has been removed**
- Instead, smaller authorities must commence the public inspection period **on or before 1 September 2020**
- The AGAR must be approved and published by **31 August 2020 at the latest** or may be approved earlier, wherever possible.

This means that the period for the exercise of public rights can now be held any time after the approval of the accounts and AGAR as long as it is commenced on 1 September at the latest.

Authorities should publish the dates of their public inspection period. If this is significantly earlier or later than in previous years they should inform the public through their websites (where available) of the reasons why they are departing from normal practice for 2020.

- The publication date for final, audited, accounts will move from **30 September to 30 November 2020** for all local authorities.

This is the date by which the Part 3 AGAR Sections 1, 2 and 3 including the completed External Auditor Report and Certificate must be published.

This does not apply to an authority that has certified itself as exempt and submitted a Certificate of Exemption to the external auditor.

The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020

In relation to the meetings needed to approve the accounts and AGAR, MHCLG has made separate Regulations to enable meetings to be held remotely, and to hold and alter the frequency and occurrence of meetings without the need for further notice.

The provisions for remote meetings apply to all authorities **EXCEPT** Parish Meetings who must hold a public meeting and approve the AGAR before 31 August.

Separate changes to allow remote meetings apply to Internal Drainage Boards.

Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/20 Part 3

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

- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or
- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:
 - are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or
 - have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)

Guidance notes on completing Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/20

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
 - The **Annual Internal Audit Report** is completed by the authority's internal auditor.
 - **Sections 1 and 2** are to be completed and approved by the authority.
 - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published **before 1 July 2020**.
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2020**. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
 - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
 - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2020
 - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
 - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
 - Annual Internal Audit Report 2019/20

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

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

Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on a publicly accessible website:

Before 1 July 2020 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2019/20**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2019/20**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2020 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review.

It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

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

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

Guidance notes on completing Part 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2019/20

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this Annual Governance and Accountability Return. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty), and is properly signed and dated. Where amendments are made by the authority to the AGAR after it has been approved by the authority and before it has been reviewed by the external auditor, the Chairman and RFO should initial the amendments and if necessary republish the amended AGAR and recommence the period for the exercise of public rights. If the AGAR contains unapproved or unexplained amendments, it may be returned and additional costs will be incurred.
- The authority **should** receive and note the annual internal audit report if possible before approving the annual governance statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2020.
- Do not send the external auditor any information not specifically requested. However, **you must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chairman, and provide relevant email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the Annual Governance and Accountability Return covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (**Section 2, page 5**). An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the external auditor has to review unsolicited information, or receives an incomplete bank reconciliation, or variances are not fully explained, additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2019) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2020).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the period for the exercise of public rights. From the commencement date for a single period of 30 consecutive working days, the approved accounts and accounting records can be inspected. Whatever period the RFO sets it **must** include a common inspection period – during which the accounts and accounting records of all smaller authorities must be available for public inspection – of the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2020**.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?	✓	
	Has all additional information requested, including the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights , been provided for the external auditor?	✓	
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?	✓	
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?	✓	
Section 2	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chairman of the approval meeting?	✓	
	Has an explanation of significant variations from last year to this year been published?	✓	
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2020 been reconciled to Box 8?	✓	
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?	✓	
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? NB: do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.		

**Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices*, can be downloaded from www.nalc.gov.uk or from www.ada.org.uk

Annual Internal Audit Report 2019/20

Witney Town Council

This authority's internal auditor, acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with relevant procedures and controls to be in operation **during** the financial year ended 31 March 2020.

The internal audit for 2019/20 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Agreed? Please choose one of the following		
	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.		✓	
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic and year-end bank account reconciliations were properly carried out.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. IF the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2018/19, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2018/19 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority has demonstrated that during summer 2019 it correctly provided for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		
M. (For local councils only)			
Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	Yes	No	Not applicable
			✓

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

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

19/11/19

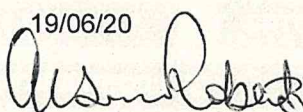
22/23/01/20

19/06/20

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

A Shepherd-Roberts
For Auditing Solutions Ltd

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit



Date

19/06/20

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

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

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2019/20

We acknowledge as the members of:

WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2020, that:

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

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

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

DD/MM/YY

and recorded as minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

Chairman

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Clerk

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Other information required by the Transparency Codes (not part of Annual Governance Statement)

Authority web address

WWW.WITNEY-TC.GOV.UK AUTHORITY WEBSITE ADDRESS

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2019/20 for

WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2019 £	31 March 2020 £	
1. Balances brought forward	1,369,704	1,638,270	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	1,381,937	1,435,067	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	407,240	322,525	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	-560,641	-607,537	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	0	0	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	-959,970	-851,411	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cash-book less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	1,638,270	1,936,914	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	1,949,136	2,267,293	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	6,505,983	6,543,664	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	0	0	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).
11. (For Local Councils Only) Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	Yes	No	The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee for and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
		✓	N.B. The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2020 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

09/06/2020

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

27/07/2020

as recorded in minute reference:

MINUTE REFERENCE

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

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate 2019/20

In respect of

WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

1 Respective responsibilities of the body and the auditor

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

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2020; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

Our responsibility is to review Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with guidance issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General (see note below). Our work **does not** constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would do.

2 External auditor report 2019/20

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

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

3 External auditor certificate 2019/20

We certify/do not certify* that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2020.

*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name

ENTER NAME OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

External Auditor Signature

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

DD/MM/YY

*Note: the NAO issued guidance applicable to external auditors' work on limited assurance reviews in Auditor Guidance Note AGN/02. The AGN is available from the NAO website (www.nao.org.uk)

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Witney Town Council

Unaudited Financial Statements

For the year ended 31 March 2020

Witney Town Council

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31 March 2020

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Witney Town Council

Council Information

31 March 2020

(Information current at 13th July 2020)

Town Mayor

Cllr J. Aitman

Councillors

Cllr L. Duncan (Deputy Town Mayor)

Cllr L. Ashbourne

Cllr T. Ashby

Cllr R. Bolger

Cllr D. Butterfield

Cllr O. Collins

Cllr H. B. Eaglestone

Cllr D. S. T. Enright

Cllr V. Gwatkin

Cllr A. D. Harvey

Cllr M. Jones

Cllr J. S. King

Cllr A. McMahon

Cllr A. Prosser

Cllr R. Smith

Cllr D. Temple

Town Clerk

Mrs Sharon Groth PSLCC ACMI

Auditors

Moore Stephens (East Midlands)

Rutland House

Minerva Business Park

Lynch Wood

Peterborough

PE2 6PZ

Internal Auditors

Auditing Solutions Limited

Clackerbrook Farm

46 The Common

Bromham

Chippenham

Wiltshire

SN15 2JJ

Witney Town Council
Statement of Responsibilities
31 March 2020

The Council's Responsibilities

The council is required:

- to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs
- to secure that one of its officers (R.F.O.) has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. At this council that officer is the Finance Officer, and
- to manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of resources and safeguard its assets.

The Responsible Financial Officer's Responsibilities

The R.F.O. is responsible for the preparation of the council's Unaudited Financial Statements in accordance with Part 4 of the "Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – A Practitioners Guide (England) (as amended)" (the guide), so far as is applicable to this council, to present a true and fair view of the financial position of the council at 31 March 2020 and its income and expenditure for the year then ended.

In preparing the Unaudited Financial Statements, the R.F.O. has:

- selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently
- made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent, and
- complied with the guide.

The R.F.O. has also:

- kept proper accounting records, which were up to date, and
- taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Responsible Financial Officer's Certificate

I further certify that the Unaudited Financial Statements present a true and fair view of the financial position of Witney Town Council at 31 March 2020, and its income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2020.

Signed:

Mrs Sharon Groth

Date:

Witney Town Council
Statement of Accounting Policies
31 March 2020

Auditors

The name and address of the External Auditors is provided for information only.

These Statements are not subject to audit and the External Auditors have no responsibility for them.

Accounting Convention

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008) (FRSSE) issued by the Accounting Standards Board, as applied to Local Councils by part 4 of Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – A Practitioners Guide (England) (the guide). Comparative figures have been restated to conform to the revised formats where appropriate. Certain requirements have been omitted for clarity and simplicity as these statements are not subject to audit. They are produced in support of the council's audited Statement of Accounts contained within the Annual Return Statement of Accounts.

These accounts have been prepared having regard to the fundamental accounting concepts of: Going Concern, Prudence, Accruals, Relevance, Consistency, Reliability, Comparability, Understandability and Materiality.

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention.

Fixed Assets

All expenditure in excess of £1000 (on any one item or group of similar items) on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of fixed assets is capitalised on an accruals basis in the accounts. Expenditure on fixed assets is capitalised, provided that the fixed asset yields benefits to the authority and the services it provides, for a period of more than one year. Fixed assets are valued on the basis recommended by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and in accordance with the statements of asset valuation principles and guidance notes issued by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS). The closing balances are stated on the following basis:

land and buildings are included in the balance sheet at Depreciated Replacement Cost (DRC). The DRC basis of valuation requires an estimate of the value of the land in its existing use, together with the current replacement cost of the building and its external works, from which appropriate deductions have been made to reflect the age, condition, economic, functional and environmental obsolescence and other locational factors which might result in the existing building being worth less than a new replacement building,

all other assets are included in the balance sheet at the lower of cost (estimated where not known) or estimated realisable value, except that,

certain community assets are the subject of restrictive covenants as to their use and/or future disposal. Such assets are therefore considered to have no appreciable realisable value and are included at nominal value only.

The surplus or deficit arising on periodic revaluations of fixed assets has been credited or debited to the Revaluation Reserve. Subsequent revaluations of fixed assets are planned at five yearly intervals, although material changes to asset valuations will be adjusted in the interim period, should they occur.

In accordance with Financial Reporting Standard (FRS) 15, depreciation is provided on all operational buildings (but not land), as well as other assets.

Witney Town Council
Statement of Accounting Policies
31 March 2020

Depreciation Policy

Buildings and leasehold land are depreciated over the shorter of 50 years or the anticipated remaining useful lives on a straight line basis.

Freehold land is not depreciated.

Non Operational Assets (including Investment Properties) are not depreciated.

Vehicles, plant, equipment and furniture are depreciated over 5 to 20 years on a straight line basis.

Play equipment is depreciated over 15 years at 6.67% per annum straight line.

Infrastructure assets are depreciated over 20 years at 5% per annum straight line.

Community assets are not depreciated, because they are of either intrinsic or purely nominal value.

Depreciation is accounted for as a Balance Sheet movement only, not through the Income and Expenditure Account.

Grants or Contributions from Government or Related Bodies

Capital Grants

Where a fixed asset has been acquired or improved with the financing either wholly or in part by a grant or contribution from government or a related body, e.g. Sports Council, the amount of the grant has been credited to Deferred Grants Account and carried forward. Grants so credited are released back to revenue over the life of the asset to match, and thereby offset wholly or in part, depreciation charged.

Revenue Grants

Revenue grants are credited to income when conditions attached thereto have been fulfilled and/or equivalent expenditure has been incurred. Grants received in respect of which the conditions have not been fulfilled, or expenditure incurred, are carried forward as deferred revenue grants.

Investments

Investments are included in the balance sheet at historic cost and realised gains or losses are taken into the income and expenditure account as realised. Details are given at notes 13 and 15.

Debtors and Creditors

The revenue accounts of the council are maintained on an accruals basis in accordance with the regulations. That is sums due to or from the council during the year are included whether or not the cash has actually been received or paid in the year. Exceptions to this are payment of regular quarterly and other accounts (e.g. telephones, electricity). This policy is applied consistently each year. Therefore, it will not have a material effect on the year's accounts or on the council's annual budget.

The council reviews the level of its commercial debtors on a regular basis and provisions are made, as required, where the likelihood of amounts proving ultimately collectable is in doubt.

Value Added Tax

Income and Expenditure excludes any amounts related to VAT, as all VAT suffered/collected is recoverable from or payable to HM Revenue and Customs. Any amounts not so recoverable are treated as a separate expense.

Witney Town Council
Statement of Accounting Policies
31 March 2020

External Loan Repayments

The council has no long term borrowing. Consequently, there were no external loan repayments made in the year.

Leases

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged to revenue on an accruals basis. Details of the council's obligations under operating leases are shown at note 17.

Reserves

The council maintains certain reserves to meet general and specific future expenditure. The purpose of the council's reserves is explained in notes 19 to 20.

Certain reserves are maintained to manage the accounting processes for tangible fixed assets, available for sale investments and retirement benefits. They do not represent usable resources for the council:

Capital Financing Account – represent the council's investment of resources in such assets already made.

Interest Income

All interest receipts are credited initially to general funds.

Cost of Support Services

The costs of management and administration have been apportioned to services on an appropriate and consistent basis.

Pensions

The pension costs that are charged against precept in the council's accounts, in respect of its employees, are equal to the contributions paid to the funded pension scheme for those employees.

These contributions are determined by the fund's actuary on a triennial basis and are set to meet 100% of the liabilities of the pension fund, in accordance with relevant government regulations.

The next actuarial valuation is due at 31st March 2022 and any change in contribution rates as a result of that valuation will take effect from 1st April 2023.

Witney Town Council
Income and Expenditure Account
31 March 2020

	Notes	2020 £	2019 £
Income			
Precept on Principal Authority		1,435,067	1,381,937
Grants Receivable		29,763	34,199
Rents Receivable, Interest & Investment Income		11,827	10,310
Charges made for Services		250,754	253,190
Other Income		21,376	34,202
Total Income		<u>1,748,787</u>	<u>1,713,838</u>
Expenditure			
Direct Service Costs:			
Salaries & Wages		(142,206)	(91,090)
Grant-aid Expenditure		(12,231)	(27,073)
Other Costs	1	(605,116)	(656,708)
Democratic, Management & Civic Costs:			
Salaries & Wages		(465,331)	(469,551)
Other Costs	1	(186,327)	(179,010)
Total Expenditure		<u>(1,411,211)</u>	<u>(1,423,432)</u>
Excess of Income over Expenditure for the year.		337,576	290,406
Exceptional Items			
(Loss) on the disposal of fixed assets		(1,288)	(8,828)
Net Operating Surplus for Year		336,288	281,578
STATUTORY CHARGES & REVERSALS			
Capital Expenditure charged to revenue	11	(42,532)	(23,640)
Reverse profit on asset disposals		1,288	8,828
Reverse Losses on investment disposals		-	-
Transfer (to) Earmarked Reserves	20	(279,877)	(244,819)
Surplus for the Year to General Fund		15,167	21,947
Net Surplus for the Year		295,044	266,766
The above Surplus for the Year has been applied for the Year to as follows:			
Transfer (to) Earmarked Reserves	20	279,877	244,819
Surplus for the Year to General Fund		15,167	21,947
		<u>295,044</u>	<u>266,766</u>

The council had no other recognisable gains and/or losses during the year.

The notes on pages 12 to 21 form part of these unaudited statements.

Witney Town Council
Statement of Movement in Reserves
31 March 2020

Reserve	Purpose of Reserve	Notes	2020 £	Net Movement in Year £	2019 £
Capital Financing Account	Store of capital resources set aside to purchase fixed assets	19	3,723,200	(63,998)	3,787,198
Earmarked Reserves	Amounts set aside from revenue to meet general and specific future expenditure	20	1,465,482	279,877	1,185,605
General Fund	Resources available to meet future running costs		535,501	15,167	520,334
Total			<u>5,724,183</u>	<u>231,046</u>	<u>5,493,137</u>

The notes on pages 12 to 21 form part of these unaudited statements.

Witney Town Council

Balance Sheet

31 March 2020

	Notes	2020 £	2020 £	2019 £
Fixed Assets				
Tangible Fixed Assets	10		4,725,686	4,834,684
Long Term Assets				
Investments Other Than Loans	13		60,469	60,469
Long Term Debtors			3,600	7,200
Current Assets				
Debtors and prepayments	14	246,402		318,801
Investments	15	1,041,173		1,033,537
Cash at bank and in hand		<u>1,226,120</u>		<u>915,599</u>
		2,513,695		2,267,937
Current Liabilities				
Creditors and income in advance	16	<u>(99,063)</u>		<u>(155,244)</u>
Net Current Assets			2,414,632	2,112,693
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities			7,204,387	7,015,046
Deferred Grants	18		(1,480,204)	(1,521,909)
Total Assets Less Liabilities			<u>5,724,183</u>	<u>5,493,137</u>
Capital and Reserves				
Capital Financing Reserve	19		3,723,200	3,787,198
Earmarked Reserves	20		1,465,482	1,185,605
General Reserve			<u>535,501</u>	<u>520,334</u>
			<u>5,724,183</u>	<u>5,493,137</u>

The Unaudited Financial Statements represent a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council as at 31 March 2020, and of its Income and Expenditure for the year.

These accounts were approved by the Council on 13th July 2020 .

Signed:

Cllr J. Aitman
Town Mayor

.....

Mrs Sharon Groth PSLCC ACMI
Responsible Financial Officer

Date:

.....

The notes on pages 12 to 21 form part of these unaudited statements.

Witney Town Council

Cash Flow Statement

31 March 2020

	Notes	2020 £	2020 £	2019 £
REVENUE ACTIVITIES				
<i>Cash outflows</i>				
Paid to and on behalf of employees		(626,231)		(560,000)
Other operating payments		<u>(795,514)</u>		<u>(914,733)</u>
			(1,421,745)	(1,474,733)
<i>Cash inflows</i>				
Precept on Principal Authority		1,435,067		1,381,937
Cash received for services		318,567		241,974
Revenue grants received		<u>29,763</u>		<u>34,199</u>
			1,783,397	1,658,110
Net cash inflow from Revenue Activities	23		361,652	183,377
SERVICING OF FINANCE				
<i>Cash inflows</i>				
Interest received		<u>11,840</u>		<u>10,289</u>
Net cash inflow from Servicing of Finance			11,840	10,289
CAPITAL ACTIVITIES				
<i>Cash outflows</i>				
Purchase of fixed assets		(67,435)		(98,034)
<i>Cash inflows</i>				
Sale of fixed assets		-		700
Capital grant received		<u>8,500</u>		<u>1,090</u>
Net cash (outflow) from Capital Activities			(58,935)	(96,244)
Net cash inflow before Financing			<u>314,557</u>	<u>97,422</u>
FINANCING AND LIQUID RESOURCES				
(Increase) in money on call			(7,636)	(6,507)
Loan repayments received			<u>3,600</u>	<u>1,800</u>
Net cash (outflow) from financing and liquid resources			<u>(4,036)</u>	<u>(4,707)</u>
Increase in cash	24		<u><u>310,521</u></u>	<u><u>92,715</u></u>

The notes on pages 12 to 21 form part of these unaudited statements.

Witney Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

31 March 2020

1 Other Costs Analysis

Other Costs reported in the council's Income and Expenditure Account comprise the following:

Direct Service Costs

	2020	2019
	£	£
Public Halls	50,733	89,684
Parks & Recreation Grounds & Play Areas	443,929	415,702
Allotments	4,222	379
Cemeteries & Closed Churchyards	19,943	22,877
Closed Churchyards	356	530
Community Support	64,241	68,433
Community Infrastructure	33,923	86,176
Less: Grant-aid Expenditure	(12,231)	(27,073)
Total	605,116	656,708

Democratic, Management & Civic Costs

	2020	2019
	£	£
Corporate Management	144,633	164,470
Democratic Representation & Management	39,121	9,976
Civic Expenses	930	1,873
Mayors Allowance	1,643	2,691
Interest Payable	0	0
Total	186,327	179,010

As reported in the Statement of Accounting Policies, apportionment of central costs is not reflected in the above analysis.

2 Interest and Investment Income

	2020	2019
	£	£
Interest Income - General Funds	11,827	10,310
	11,827	10,310

Witney Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

31 March 2020

3 Related Party Transactions

The council is required to disclose material transactions with related parties – bodies that have the potential to control or influence the council or to be controlled or influenced by the council. Disclosure of these transactions allows readers to assess the extent to which the council might have been constrained in its ability to operate independently or might have secured the ability to limit another party's freedom to bargain with the council at arms length.

Related parties include:

Central Government

The council's operations are controlled by statutes passed by Central Government. All transactions with Central Government arise as a result of some of those statutes but do not, in the opinion of the council, require to be disclosed here.

Principal Authorities

The District Council collects this council's Precept and remits the same to the council under statutory provisions. The Precept is disclosed separately elsewhere in these accounts.

The County Council administers the Pension Fund of which certain of the council's staff are members. Details of amounts payable to the fund are disclosed at note 9.

Members of the council

Members have direct control over the council's financial and operating policies. During the year no members have undertaken any declarable, material transactions with the council, nor the council with any member. Details of such transactions (if any) are recorded in the Register of Members' Interests, open to public inspection at the council's offices.

Members represent the council on various organisations. Appointments are reviewed annually, unless a specific termination date applies to the term of office. None of these appointments places a Member in a position to exert undue influence or control.

Officers of the Council

Other than their contracts of employment, no material transactions have been made during the year between the council and any officer.

Other Organisations

The council awards grants to support a number of voluntary or charitable bodies. It does not attempt to exert control or influence as a result of such grants.

Witney Town Hall Charity has 5 Trustees, 2 of whom are members of the town council.

The council had the following transactions with Witney Town Hall Charity:

		2020	2019
		£	£
Receipts	None	-	-
Payments	Rent paid for Town Hall, Town House and the Buttercross	13,750	13,750

4 General Power of Competence

With effect from 23rd March 2016 Witney Town Council acquired the right to exercise the General Power of Competence extended to Town and Parish Councils under the Localism Act 2011 by S.I. 2012 No 965 (The Parish Councils (General Power of Competence) (Prescribed Conditions) Order 2012). Therefore, with effect from 23rd March 2016 the council no longer exercises the powers conveyed by Section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

Witney Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

31 March 2020

5 Audit Fees

The council is required to report and disclose the cost of services provided by its external auditors.

These may be summarised as follows:

	2020 £	2019 £
Fees for statutory audit services	2,000	2,000
Total fees	2,000	2,000

6 Members' Allowances

Members of Council have been paid the following allowances for the year:
Mayors Allowance

	2020 £	2019 £
	1,643	2,691
	1,643	2,691

The council has resolved that, other than the Town Mayor, no members allowances will be paid.

7 Employees

The average weekly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2020 Number	2019 Number
Full-time	16	15
Part-time	5	5
Temporary	-	-
	21	20

All staff are paid in accordance with nationally agreed pay scales.

8 Trust Funds

The council acts as sole trustee for the Mayors Charity Fund, the transactions of which do not represent activities of the council, and are not included in these accounts.

9 Pension Costs

The council participates in the Oxfordshire County Council Pension Fund. The Oxfordshire County Council Pension Fund is a defined benefit scheme, but the council is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities because all town and parish councils in the scheme pay a common contribution rate.

The cost to the council for the year ended 31 March 2020 was £94,925 (31 March 2019 - £85,095).

The most recent actuarial valuation was carried out as at 31st March 2019, and the council's contribution rate is confirmed as being 21.70% of employees' pensionable pay, plus a lump sum of £0 with effect from 1st April 2020 (year ended 31 March 2020 – 21.70%, , plus a lump sum of £0).

Financial Reporting Standard 17 (FRS17): "Retirement Benefits" sets out accounting requirements for pension costs. For schemes such as Oxfordshire County Council Pension Fund, paragraph 9(b) of FRS17 requires the council to account for pension costs on the basis of contributions actually payable to the scheme during the year.

Witney Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

31 March 2020

10 Tangible Fixed Assets

	Operational Freehold Land and Buildings	Vehicles and Equipment	Infra-structure Assets	Community Assets	Total
Cost	£	£	£	£	£
At 31 March 2019	4,423,595	1,064,604	715,368	234,747	6,438,314
Additions	-	24,401	23,336	-	47,737
Disposals	-	-	(6,456)	-	(6,456)
At 31 March 2020	4,423,595	1,089,005	732,248	234,747	6,479,595
Depreciation					
At 31 March 2019	(574,918)	(754,990)	(273,722)	-	(1,603,630)
Charged for the year	(70,682)	(48,094)	(36,671)	-	(155,447)
Eliminated on disposal	-	-	5,168	-	5,168
At 31 March 2020	(645,600)	(803,084)	(305,225)	-	(1,753,909)
Net Book Value					
At 31 March 2020	3,777,995	285,921	427,023	234,747	4,725,686
At 31 March 2019	3,848,677	309,614	441,646	234,747	4,834,684

Although classified as capital expenditure, certain minor equipment purchases are not included in the above as they are not material in overall value.

Fixed Asset Valuation

The freehold and leasehold properties that comprise the council's properties have been valued as at 31st March 2009 by external independent valuers, Messrs Wilsons Commercial, Incorporated Valuers. Valuations have been made on the basis set out in the Statement of Accounting Policies, except that not all properties were inspected. This was neither practical nor considered by the valuer to be necessary for the purpose of valuation. Plant and machinery that form fixtures to the building are included in the valuation of the building.

11 Financing of Capital Expenditure

	2020 £	2019 £
The following capital expenditure during the year:		
Fixed Assets Purchased	47,737	97,179
	47,737	97,179
was financed by:		
Capital Receipts	-	700
Capital Grants	5,205	72,839
Revenue:		
Capital Projects Reserve	36,357	16,645
Equipment Replacement Reserve	-	6,995
Precept and Revenue Income	6,175	-
	47,737	97,179

Witney Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

31 March 2020

12 Information on Assets Held

Fixed assets owned by the council include the following:

Operational Land and Buildings

The Corn Exchange
Langdale Hall
Burwell Hall
Madley Park Community Centre
West Witney Sports Ground
The Leys Recreation Ground
Allotment Sites – 3
Cemetery Lodge
Windrush Cemetery

Vehicles and Equipment

Light Vans – 4
Playground Equipment
Sundry works department equipment
Sundry public halls and office furniture and equipment

Infrastructure Assets

Car park
Footpaths and footpath lighting
Bus shelters
Other street furniture
The Leys Splashpark

Community Assets

Lake and Country Park
Cemeteries – 2
War Memorials - 2
Various play and amenity areas
Childrens' play areas
Council regalia and artefacts

Witney Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

31 March 2020

13 Investments

	Investments Other Than Loans
	£
Cost	
At 01 April 2019	60,469
At 31 March 2020	<u>60,469</u>
Amounts Written Off	
At 31 March 2020	<u>-</u>
Net Book Value	
At 31 March 2020	60,469
Deferred Debtors - Loans	<u>3,600</u>
	<u>64,069</u>
At 01 April 2019	60,469
Deferred Debtors - Loans	<u>7,200</u>
	<u>67,669</u>

At 31 March 2020 the investments included above at a cost of £60,469 had a market value of £61,493 (31 March 2019 - £63,772).

14 Debtors

	2020	2019
	£	£
Debtors - General	30,056	32,636
Debtors - Bookings	12,249	12,167
Provision for Doubtful Debts	(536)	(3,067)
Trade Debtors	<u>41,769</u>	<u>41,736</u>
VAT Recoverable	42,808	41,164
Other Debtors	-	19,503
Prepayments	17,265	37,709
Accrued Income	-	34,116
Accrued Interest Income	676	689
Capital Grant Debtors	<u>143,884</u>	<u>143,884</u>
	<u>246,402</u>	<u>318,801</u>

15 Current Asset Investments

	2020	2019
	£	£
Public Sector Deposit Fund (CCLA)	<u>1,041,173</u>	<u>1,033,537</u>
	<u>1,041,173</u>	<u>1,033,537</u>

Witney Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

31 March 2020

16 Creditors and Accrued Expenses

	2020	2019
	£	£
Trade Creditors	65,231	51,266
Other Creditors	-	22,344
Superannuation Payable	-	9,069
Payroll Taxes and Social Security	-	9,627
Accruals	19,334	21,593
Income in Advance	14,498	21,647
Capital Creditors	-	19,698
	<u>99,063</u>	<u>155,244</u>

17 Financial Commitments under Operating Leases

The council had annual commitments under non-cancellable operating leases of property as follows:

	2020	2019
	£	£
Obligations expiring within one year	-	-
Obligations expiring between two and five years	-	-
Obligations expiring after five years	13,750	13,750
	<u>13,750</u>	<u>16,545</u>

The council had annual commitments under non-cancellable operating leases of equipment as follows:

	2020	2019
	£	£
Obligations expiring within one year	2,795	2,795
Obligations expiring between two and five years	5,120	5,120
Obligations expiring after five years	-	-
	<u>7,915</u>	<u>7,915</u>

Witney Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

31 March 2020

18 Deferred Grants

	2020	2019
	£	£
Capital Grants Unapplied		
At 01 April	474,423	478,921
Grants received in the year	8,500	68,341
Applied to finance capital investment	(5,205)	(72,839)
At 31 March	477,718	474,423
Capital Grants Applied		
At 01 April	1,047,486	1,025,785
Grants Applied in the year	5,205	72,839
Released to offset depreciation	(50,205)	(51,138)
Extinguished and/or transferred	-	-
At 31 March	1,002,486	1,047,486
Total Deferred Grants		
At 31 March	1,480,204	1,521,909
At 01 April	1,521,909	1,504,706

Capital Grants are accounted for on an accruals basis and grants received have been credited to Deferred Grants Account. Amounts are released from the Deferred Grants Account to offset any provision for depreciation charged to revenue accounts in respect of assets that were originally acquired with the assistance of such grants.

19 Capital Financing Account

	2020	2019
	£	£
Balance at 01 April	3,787,198	3,878,244
Financing capital expenditure in the year		
Additions - using capital receipts	-	700
Additions - using revenue balances	42,532	23,640
Disposal of fixed assets	(6,456)	(28,343)
Depreciation eliminated on disposals	5,168	18,815
Reversal of depreciation	(155,447)	(156,996)
Deferred grants released	50,205	51,138
Balance at 31 March	3,723,200	3,787,198

The Capital Financing Account represents revenue and capital resources applied to finance capital expenditure or for the repayment of external loans. It also includes the reversal of depreciation to ensure it does not impact upon the amount to be met from precept. It does not represent a reserve that the council can use to support future expenditure.

Witney Town Council

Notes to the Accounts

31 March 2020

20 Earmarked Reserves

	Balance at 01/04/2019	Contribution to reserve	Contribution from reserve	Balance at 31/03/2020
	£	£	£	£
Capital Projects Reserves	719,414	140,191	(53,596)	806,009
Asset Renewal Reserves	122,132	6,711	-	128,843
Other Earmarked Reserves	344,059	246,506	(59,935)	530,630
Total Earmarked Reserves	1,185,605	393,408	(113,531)	1,465,482

The Capital Projects Reserves are credited with amounts set aside from revenue to part finance specific projects which are part of the council's capital programme.

The Other Earmarked Reserves are credited with amounts set aside from revenue to fund specific known commitments of the council.

The Other Earmarked Reserves at 31 March 2020 are set out in detail at Appendix A.

21 Capital Commitments

The council had no other capital commitments at 31 March 2020 not otherwise provided for in these accounts.

22 Contingent Liabilities

The council is not aware of any contingent liabilities at the date of these accounts.

23 Reconciliation of Revenue Cash Flow

	2020	2019
	£	£
Net Operating Surplus for the year	337,576	290,406
Add/(Deduct)		
Interest and Investment Income	(11,840)	(10,289)
Decrease/(Increase) in debtors	72,399	(27,741)
(Decrease) in creditors	(36,483)	(68,999)
Revenue activities net cash inflow	361,652	183,377

Witney Town Council

Internal Audit Report 2019-20: Final update

Adrian Shepherd-Roberts

*For and on behalf of
Auditing Solutions Ltd*

Background

All town and parish councils are required by statute to make arrangements for an independent internal audit examination of their accounting records and system of internal control and for the conclusions to be reported each year in the Annual Return. Auditing Solutions Ltd has provided this service to Witney Town Council since 2003.

This report sets out the work undertaken in relation to the 2019-20 financial year, during our visits to the Council, which took place on 19th November 2019 and 22nd and 23rd January 2020. Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, we have undertaken our final review for the year remotely: we wish to thank the Clerk and the Office Manager in assisting the process, providing all necessary additional (to that examined at our interim visit) documentation in electronic format to facilitate completion of our review for the year and sign off of the Internal Audit Certificate in the year's AGAR. We have, obviously in the circumstances, reduced the volume of transactions examined, whilst still ensuring governance and financial controls remain effective.

Internal Audit Approach

In undertaking our review for the year, we have had regard to the materiality of transactions and their susceptibility to potential mis-recording or misrepresentation in the year-end Statement of Accounts/Annual Return. We have employed a combination of selective sampling techniques (where appropriate) and 100% detailed checks in a number of key areas in order to gain sufficient assurance that the Council's financial and regulatory systems and controls are appropriate and fit for the purposes intended.

Our programme of cover has been designed to afford appropriate assurance that the Council's financial systems are robust and operate in a manner to ensure effective probity of transactions and to afford a reasonable probability of identifying any material errors or possible abuse of the Council's own and the national statutory regulatory framework. The programme is also designed to facilitate our completion of the 'Annual Internal Audit Report' in the Council's Annual Return, which requires independent assurance over a number of internal control objectives.

Overall Conclusion

We have concluded that, on the basis of the programme of work we have undertaken, the Council has maintained adequate and effective internal control arrangements during the year.

We are also pleased to record that, in the areas examined, no major issues or concerns have been identified and that we consider the Clerk and her staff continue to operate generally effective control procedures in each relevant area. We ask that members consider the content of this report and acknowledge that the report has been reviewed by Council.

We have completed and signed the 'Annual Internal Audit Report' in the year's Annual Governance and Accountability Return, having concluded that, in all significant respects, the control objectives set out in that report were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of the Council.

This report has been prepared for the sole use of Witney Town Council. To the fullest extent permitted by law, no responsibility or liability is accepted by Auditing Solutions Ltd to any third party who purports to use or rely, for any reason whatsoever, on this report, its contents or conclusions.

Detailed Report

Review of Accounting Arrangements & Bank Reconciliations

The Council maintains its accounting records using Omega software and continues to operate three bank accounts with Barclays, the Current account being used for the receipt of income and processing of high value payments, with the second Imprest account used for all routine payments and the third for retention of surplus funds and to provide funding for the former two accounts.

Our objective here is to ensure that the accounting records are being maintained accurately and currently and that no anomalous entries appear in cashbooks or financial ledgers. To that end, we have:

- Ensured that the ledger remains in balance at the current date;
- Verified the opening trial balance detail with that reported in the 2018-19 Accounts and Annual Return;
- Checked and agreed transactions in the three bank account cashbooks to the relevant bank statements for September, December 2019 and March 2020 noting that these records continue to be maintained in a timely and accurate manner;
- Checked and agreed all inter account “sweep” transactions between the Imprest and premium accounts, to retain a daily balance on the former of £1,000, for the same months; and
- Checked detail on bank reconciliations as at 30th September & 31st December 2019 and 31st March 2020 for each account to ensure that no long-standing uncleared cheques or other potentially anomalous balancing entries exist.

Conclusions

We are pleased to record that no issues have been identified from work completed in this area for the financial year.

Review of Corporate Governance

Our objective here is to ensure that the Council has robust corporate governance arrangements in place; that Council and Committee meetings are conducted in accordance with the adopted Standing Orders and that, as far as we are able to ascertain, no actions of a potentially unlawful nature have been or are being considered for implementation. We: -

- Noted previously that the Standing Orders and Financial Regulations were reviewed and formally approved at the Full Annual Council meeting in March and September 2016;
- Noted previously that General Powers of Competence were adopted at the May 2019 Full Council meeting; and
- Have completed our review of the Council’s minutes and consideration of other governance issues for the year to identify whether or not any issues exist that may have

an adverse effect, through litigation or other causes, on the Council's future financial stability.

Conclusions

We are pleased to record that no issues have been identified from work currently in this area. We have, however, discussed previously with the Clerk the requirement to review the Standing Orders and the Financial Regulations in conjunction with the latest model documents issued by NALC.

Review of Expenditure

Our aim here is to ensure that: -

- Council resources are released in accordance with the Council's approved procedures and budgets;
- Payments are supported by appropriate records, either in the form of an original trade invoice or other appropriate form of document confirming the payment as due and/or an acknowledgement of receipt, where no other form of invoice is available;
- An official order has been raised for the acquisition of goods or service delivery, where one would be anticipated;
- All discounts due on goods and services supplied are identified and appropriate action taken to secure the discount;
- The correct expense codes have been applied to invoices when processed; and
- VAT has been appropriately identified and coded to the control account for periodic recovery.

We have completed our testing in this area, examining an extended sample of payments including those individually in excess of £4,000 on the current and imprest accounts, together with a more random sample of every 40th cashbook transaction irrespective of value processed in the financial year. Our test sample totals £442,091 and represents 66% by value of all non-pay related expenditure for the year.

We also note that VAT returns continue to be completed in a timely and accurate manner, with electronic "on-line" submission now in place, in line with HMRC requirements. We have examined the quarterly reclaim to March 2020 confirming that the detail correlates to that in the Omega VAT control account.

Conclusions

No matters arise in this area warranting formal comment or recommendation.

Assessment and Management of Risk

Our aim here is to ensure that the Council has put in place appropriate arrangements to identify all potential areas of risk of both a financial and health and safety nature, whilst also ensuring that appropriate arrangements exist to monitor and manage those risks identified in order to minimise the opportunity for their coming to fruition.

We note that the LCRS based risk assessment documentation was formally re-adopted by Council at its March 2019 meeting and would have been completed for this financial year however due to the Clerk being unable to fulfil some duties due to poor health this assessment was not adopted by the Council before the financial year end.

We have also examined the Council's insurance policy schedule for 2019-20, with cover again provided by Zurich Municipal, noting that Fidelity Guarantee cover is in place at £5 million, Public Liability at £15 million & Employer's Liability at £10 million.

Conclusions

No issues arise in this area warranting formal comment or recommendation. We would remind the Clerk and the Council that the Corporate and Financial Risk review should have been undertaken for this financial year but due to adverse circumstances this meant that the review was delayed and will subsequently be approved during the 2020-21 financial year.

Precept Determination and Budgetary Control

We aim in this area of our work to ensure that the Council has appropriate procedures in place to determine its future financial requirements leading to the adoption of an approved budget and formal determination of the amount of the precept placed on the Unitary Authority, that effective arrangements are in place to monitor budgetary performance throughout the financial year and that the Council has identified and retains appropriate reserve funds to meet future spending plans. We are pleased to note that members continue to receive regular budget monitoring reports with over/under-spends and the level of earmarked reserves the subject of regular review.

We note that the precept of £1,628,699 for 2020-21 was formally approved by Full Council at its meeting on 16th December 2019.

We also note that members continue to receive regular budget monitoring reports with over/under-spends and the level of earmarked reserves the subject of regular review.

Conclusions

There are no matters requiring formal comment or recommendation in this area of our review process.

Review of Income

The Council receives income from a plethora of sources in addition to the annual precept including allotments, cemeteries, sports pitches and the Corn Exchange. We have previously agreed a five-year strategic plan of cover of these areas with the Town Clerk and Council, which is subject to ongoing review and update, where necessary, following any changes in service provision. We have:-

At the interim update visit we reviewed the management controls and processes for the bookings at the Corn Exchange and the Burwell Hall. We were pleased to report that the

bookings system utilising the RBS software operates in a satisfactory manner the issuing of invoices and the collection of fees being banked in a timely manner, also noting that several fees are paid by BACS directly in to the bank account.

Also examined the controls in place over the identification and recovery of income due to the Council from the two cemeteries together with the invoicing, tracing detail from the source documents and the burial records to the subsequent receipt and banking of the fees.

Also reviewed the unpaid invoices relating to the sales ledgers and note that there remain a number of long-term debts. We discussed these with the Office Manager earlier in the year and noted that whilst there was a delay in the review of these debts, we are now pleased to report that a significant amount of additional work has been undertaken by the Office Manager and the debtor position has continued to improve.

Conclusions

We are pleased to report that there are no issues in the areas reviewed. The Council have continued to address the outstanding sales invoices together with the processes and procedures for the collection of debtor balances.

Petty Cash Account

We are required, as part of the annual Internal Audit Certification process on the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, to indicate the soundness of controls in this area of the Council's financial activities and note that there is an Imprest style petty cash scheme with a holding of £500 and a small float at the Corn Exchange for £30. We have reviewed the Petty Cash files at this visit to ensure that the system continues to operate effectively, also checking the physical cash held against the control records maintained.

At the first interim visit we reviewed the Fuel Card payments, statements and processes relating to the Council vehicles ensuring that the forecourt receipts are being reviewed to the statement detail and the subsequent payment corresponding to the collection by direct debit from the bank account.

Conclusions

No matters have arisen warranting formal comment or recommendation in this area.

Salaries and Wages

In examining the Council's payroll function, we aim to confirm that extant legislation is being appropriately observed as regards adherence to the Employee Rights Act 1998 and the requirements of HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) legislation as regards the deduction and payment over of income tax and NI contributions, together with meeting the requirements of the local government pension scheme, as further revised from 1st April 2018 in relation to employee percentage bandings. To meet that objective, we have checked detail of payroll transactions in October 2019, ensuring that: -

- Gross salaries are paid in accord with the approved NJC scale points;
- The correct PAYE codes and NIC tables were being applied;

- Appropriate rates of superannuation deductions are being applied;
- Timesheets are prepared, signed by the employee and certified as correct for payment by their supervising officer; and
- Net salary payments, via the BACS banking process, were in accord with staff payslips for the month.

Conclusions

We are pleased to record that no issues have been identified in this area of our review.

Fixed Asset Registers

The Governance and Accountability Manual requires all councils to maintain a record of all assets owned. We have checked and agreed the principles used in the detail, as recorded in the Council's Asset Register following the review by DCK Accounting Solutions Limited (DCK), noting that it is prepared using purchase cost values or where that value is unknown at the previous year's return level or uplifted or decreased to reflect the acquisition or disposal of assets or a proxy cost as detailed in the Governance and Accountability Manual (March 2020)

Conclusion

No issues require formal comment or recommendation.

Investments and Loans

Our objectives here are to ensure that the Council is "investing" surplus funds, be they held temporarily or on a longer term basis in appropriate banking and investment institutions, that an appropriate investment policy is in place, that the Council is obtaining the best rate of return on any such investments made, that interest earned is brought to account correctly and appropriately in the accounting records. We also aim to ensure that any loan repayments due to or payable by the Council are transacted in accordance with appropriate loan agreements.

The Council has two specific investments with CCLA Investment Management Limited, a deposit account and a long-term investment in the CCLA Property Fund, with the remaining surplus funds being held in the Barclays Business Premium account.

We also note that the Council have provided a loan to the Witney Town Bowls Club repayable over a ten-year term.

Conclusions

We are pleased to report that no issues have been identified in this area of our review.

Annual Governance and Accountability Return

The Accounts and Audit Regulations required that all Councils prepare a detailed Statement of Accounts, together with supporting statements identifying other aspects of the Council's financial affairs.

As part of our year-end review we have checked the March 2020 cash books and nominal ledgers. We have completed our review of the final accounts provided by DCK Accounting Solutions without any issues to report.

We have also examined the Council's procedures in relation to the preparation of the year-end detailed Annual Governance and Accountability Return data, also reviewing the accounts for the identification of year-end debtors and creditors with no issues arising.

Conclusions

No issues have arisen in this review area and, on the basis of work undertaken during the year, we have duly signed off the Internal Audit Report of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, assigning positive assurances in each relevant area.

Smaller authority name: WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

NOTICE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS AND PUBLICATION OF UNAUDITED ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN

ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

**Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 Sections 26 and 27
The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234)**

NOTICE	NOTES
<p>1. Date of announcement <u>31 July 2020</u> (a)</p> <p>2. Each year the smaller authority's Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) needs to be reviewed by an external auditor appointed by Smaller Authorities' Audit Appointments Ltd. The unaudited AGAR has been published with this notice. As it has yet to be reviewed by the appointed auditor, it is subject to change as a result of that review.</p> <p>Any person interested has the right to inspect and make copies of the accounting records for the financial year to which the audit relates and all books, deeds, contracts, bills, vouchers, receipts and other documents relating to those records must be made available for inspection by any person interested. For the year ended 31 March 2020, these documents will be available on reasonable notice by application to:</p> <p>(b) MRS SHARON GROTH - TOWN CLERK/RFO TOWN HALL, MARKET SQUARE, WITNEY, OXON, OX28 6AG townclerk@witney-tc.gov.uk (01993) 704379</p> <p>commencing on (c) <u>Monday 3 August 2020</u></p> <p>and ending on (d) <u>Monday 14 September 2020</u></p> <p>3. Local government electors and their representatives also have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The opportunity to question the appointed auditor about the accounting records; and The right to make an objection which concerns a matter in respect of which the appointed auditor could either make a public interest report or apply to the court for a declaration that an item of account is unlawful. Written notice of an objection must first be given to the auditor and a copy sent to the smaller authority. <p>The appointed auditor can be contacted at the address in paragraph 4 below for this purpose between the above dates only.</p> <p>4. The smaller authority's AGAR is subject to review by the appointed auditor under the provisions of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the NAO's Code of Audit Practice 2015. The appointed auditor is:</p> <p>Moore (Ref RD/hd) Rutland House, Minerva Business Park, Lynch Wood, Peterborough PE2 6PZ</p> <p>5. This announcement is made by (e) Mrs Sharon Groth, Town Clerk/RFO</p>	<p>(a) Insert date of placing of the notice which must be not less than 1 day before the date in (c) below</p> <p>(b) Insert name, position and address/telephone number/ email address, as appropriate, of the Clerk or other person to which any person may apply to inspect the accounts</p> <p>(c) Insert date, which must be at least 1 day after the date of announcement in (a) above and at least 30 working days before the date appointed in (d) below</p> <p>(d) The inspection period between (c) and (d) must be 30 consecutive working days starting at (c).</p> <p>(e) Insert name and position of person placing the notice – this person must be the responsible financial officer for the smaller authority</p>

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Mrs Sharon Groth
FLSCC fcMgr
Town Clerk

Cllr Joy Aitman
Mayor of Witney

Town Hall, Market Square
Witney, Oxon
OX28 6AG
T: 01993 704379
F: 01993 771893
info@witney-tc.gov.uk
www.witney-tc.gov.uk



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TYCHWOOD FOREST

THE UK'S FIRST EVER TINY FOREST

Having an internal company newsletter is a great way to address employee engagement, communication, and collaboration, but it comes with one catch: you need a wide readership.

While you can include important articles in a newsletter, getting your employees motivated enough to read it is the extra leap you'll need to take. The key to this challenge is to make sure you organize your newsletter.

WILSON COMPANY NEWSLETTER

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Best Employees • P. 5

ACTIVE TRAVEL IN OUR TOWN

CLLRS PRESENT
VISION

This newsletter is a great space to talk about your employees' genuine concerns, such as company updates, events, and perks that they regularly look forward to.

With this layout's easy-to-follow structure and design, creating content for your employees will be as easy as ever. Make sure you use the space wisely by using pictures and captions, too. In creating this newsletter, it'll be helpful to keep in mind that the focus should be on the employees more than anything. While it's an opportunity for employees to hear from their higher-ups, it's also a chance to create.

WITNEY'S BIG GREEN PLAN

Identifying safe walking and cycling possibilities across our town



20MPH SPEED LIMIT

A 20 mph blanket from all urban approaches to the town.



ONE WAY STREETS - CONTRAFLOW FOR CYCLES

'Whole-route' approaches to create corridors for buses, cycles and access only on key routes into town and city centres.



WIDEN FOOTWAYS

Using cones and barriers to provide more space at bus stops to allow people to queue and socially distance; to widen pedestrian refuges and crossings to enable people to cross roads safely and at a distance.



SCHOOL STREETS

Pioneered in London, these are areas around schools where motor traffic is restricted at pick-up and drop-off times, during term-time.



INTRODUCING PEDESTRIAN & CYCLE ZONES

Restricting access for motor vehicles at certain times to specific streets, or networks of streets, particularly town centres and high streets.



INSTALLING 'POP-UP' CYCLE FACILITIES

Mandatory cycle lanes, using light segregation features; or quickly converting traffic lanes into temporary cycle lanes; widening existing cycle lanes to enable cyclists to maintain distancing.



WORLD REFUGEE DAY

IN SOLIDARITY

With this layout's easy-to-follow structure and design, creating content for your employees will be as easy as ever. Make sure you use the space wisely by using pictures and captions.

"GREAT SPACE TO TALK ABOUT YOUR EMPLOYEES' GENUINE CONCERNS SUCH AS COMPANY UPDATES, EVENTS AND PERKS"

In creating this newsletter, it'll be helpful to keep in mind that the focus should be on the employees more than anything. While it's an opportunity for employees to hear from their higher-ups, it's also a chance to create.



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Code of conduct consultation 2020

The onset of COVID-19 and the measures that have been introduced to curb its spread have changed the workings of local government. Remote meetings and decision-making processes have been introduced, but these have not diluted the importance of high standards of conduct of local government elected members.

With more communication taking place remotely and online between members and residents, particularly through social media, there may be more difficult and heated discussions as some seek to express the fear, frustration and heightened emotions they are experiencing at this time. However, abuse, threatening and intimidatory communications continue to be unacceptable, and we have sought to address these issues in the draft code.

The LGA has committed to reviewing the current model member code of conduct, as recommended by the Committee on Standards in Public Life's report into **Local Government Ethical Standards**. The LGA held an event on **Civility in Public Life** with a range of stakeholders at the end of last year and three consultation workshops at the beginning of this year. Our consultants have also examined examples of good practice, both in local government and other professions. The LGA **consultation draft model member code of conduct** is the result of this initial work. It is the intention to create additional guidance, working examples and explanatory text. We very much welcome comment on the consultation draft. We would particularly like to know if it stands up to the new ways of working that have been introduced and gives enough of a steer on social media and online activity.

Next steps

The consultation on the draft member code of conduct will run for 10 weeks from **Monday 8 June** until **Monday 17 August**. We hope this will provide officers and members with enough time to reflect on the draft model member code of conduct and provide the LGA with feedback whilst they continue to respond to the COVID-19 crisis.

To facilitate the consultation we have produced an **online consultation questionnaire**. The questionnaire is designed for both members and officers.

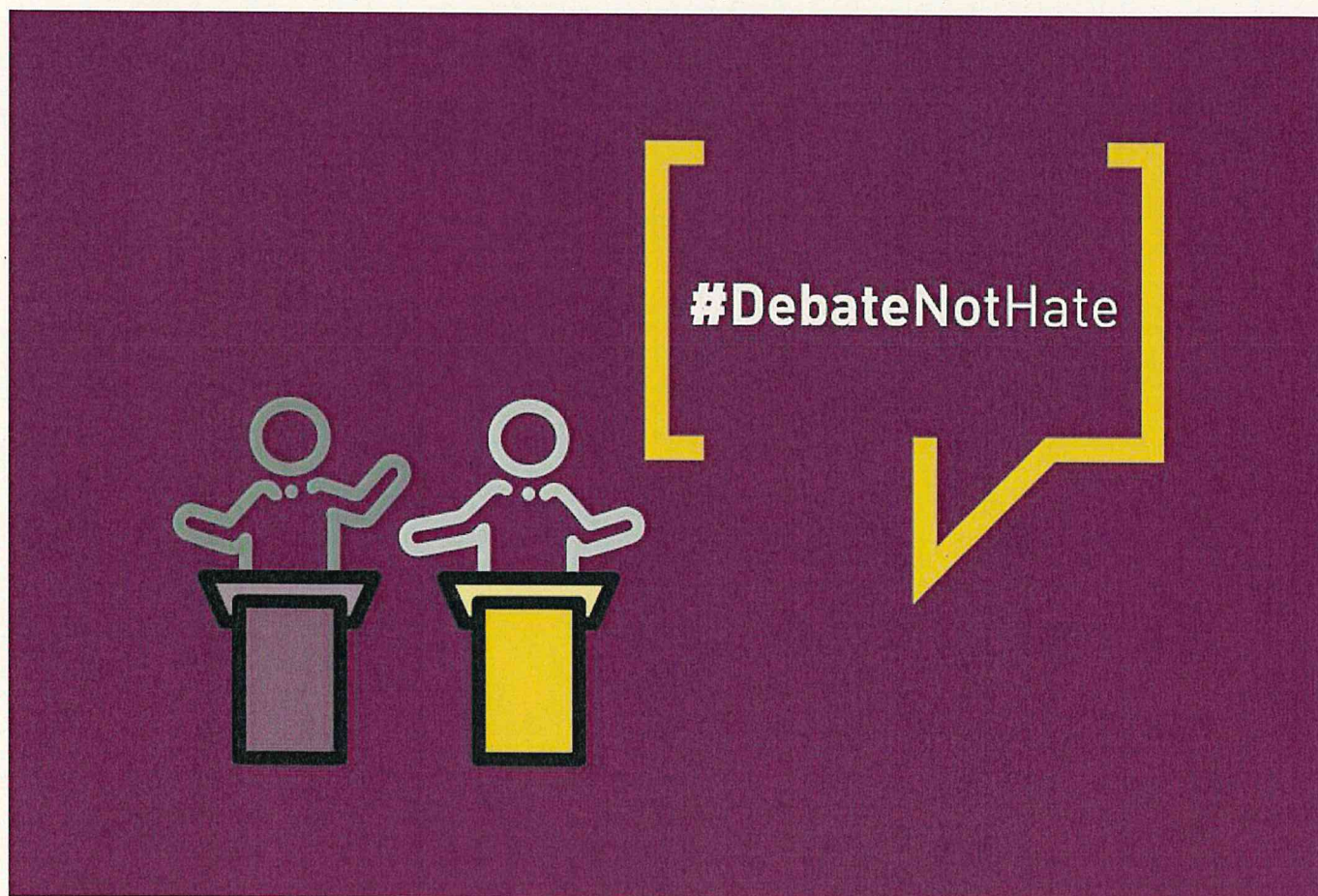
We are also happy to receive narrative responses from councils or stakeholder groups via email **ModelCode@local.gov.uk**. Please also email here if you have any questions regarding the consultation and/or code of conduct work.

If you are interested in discussing the draft code in more detail, we will be holding a number of webinars over the Summer. The details will be on our **LGA events page**.

The feedback from the consultation will help us develop a final draft, which will be reviewed by the LGA's Executive Advisory Board before being presented to the next LGA General Assembly, which we hope will be held in the Autumn of 2020.

Local Government Association Model Member Code of Conduct Consultation

The Local Government Association (LGA) is providing this Model Member Code of Conduct for consultation as part of its work on supporting the sector to continue to aspire to high standards of leadership and performance.



Civility in public life

Increasing intimidation of politicians and increasing toxicity of public debate is having an impact on the democracy of our country.

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Political groups



18 Smith Square, Westminster, London SW1P 3HZ

info@local.gov.uk | 020 7664 3000

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Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government company number 03675577

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Local Government Association Model Member Code of Conduct

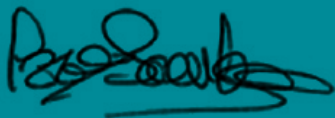
Introduction

The Local Government Association (LGA) is providing this Model Member Code of Conduct as part of its work on supporting the sector to continue to aspire to high standards of leadership and performance.

The role of councillor in all tiers of local government is a vital part of our country's system of democracy. In voting for a local councillor, the public is imbuing that person and position with their trust. As such, it is important that as councillors we can be held accountable and all adopt the behaviours and responsibilities associated with the role. The conduct of an individual councillor affects the reputation of all councillors. We want the role of councillor to be one that people aspire to and want to participate with. We want to continue to attract individuals from a range of backgrounds and circumstances who understand the responsibility they take on and are motivated to make a positive difference to their local communities.

All councils are required to have a local Member Code of Conduct. This Model Member Code of Conduct has been developed in consultation with the sector and is offered as a template for councils to adopt in whole and/or with local amendments. The LGA will undertake an annual review of the Code to ensure it continues to be fit-for-purpose, particularly with respect to advances in technology, social media and any relevant changes in legislation. The LGA can also offer support, training and mediation to councils and councillors on the application of the Code, whilst the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the county associations of local councils can offer advice and support to town and parish councils.

As a councillor we all represent local residents, work to develop better services and deliver local change. The public have high expectations of us and entrust us to represent everyone (in our ward/town/parish), taking decisions fairly, openly, transparently and with civility. Councillors should also be treated with civility by members of the public, other councillors and council employees. Members have both individual and collective responsibility to maintain these standards, support expected behaviour and challenge behaviour which falls below expectations. This Code, therefore, has been designed to protect our democratic role, encourage good conduct and safeguard the public's trust in local government.



Councillor Izzi Seccombe OBE
Leader, LGA Conservative Group



Councillor Nick Forbes CBE
Leader, LGA Labour Group



Councillor Howard Sykes MBE
Leader, LGA Liberal Democrats Group



Councillor Marianne Overton MBE
Leader, LGA independent Group

Purpose

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist councillors in modelling the behaviour that is expected of them, to provide a personal check and balance, and to set out the type of conduct against which appropriate action may be taken. It is also to protect yourself, the public, fellow councillors, council officers and the reputation of local government. It sets out the conduct expected of all members and a minimum set of obligations relating to conduct. The overarching aim is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of member and local government.

Application of the Code

The Code of Conduct applies to you when you are acting [or claiming or giving the impression that you are acting]¹ in [public or in]² your capacity as a member or representative of your council, although you are expected to uphold high standards of conduct and show leadership at all times. The Code applies to all forms of member communication and interaction, including written, verbal, non-verbal, electronic and via social media, [including where you could be deemed to be representing your council or if there are potential implications for the council's reputation.] Model conduct and expectations is for guidance only, whereas the specific obligations set out instances where action will be taken.

The seven principles of public life

Everyone in public office at all levels – ministers, civil servants, members, council officers – all who serve the public or deliver public services should uphold the seven principles of public life. This Code has been developed in line with these seven principles of public life, which are set out in appendix A.

Model member conduct

In accordance with the public trust placed in me, on all occasions I will:

- act with integrity and honesty
- act lawfully
- treat all persons with civility; and
- lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the office of councillor

In undertaking my role, I will:

- impartially exercise my responsibilities in the interests of the local community
- not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person
- avoid conflicts of interest
- exercise reasonable care and diligence; and
- ensure that public resources are used prudently and in the public interest

Specific obligations of general conduct

This section sets out the minimum requirements of member conduct. Guidance is included to help explain the reasons for the obligations and how they should be followed. These obligations must be observed in all situations where you act [or claim or give the impression that you are acting] as a councillor [or in public], including representing your council on official business and when using social media.

Civility

- 1. Treating other councillors and members of the public with civility.**
- 2. Treating council employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the councils with civility and respecting the role that they play.**

Civility means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word. Debate and having different views are all part of a healthy democracy. As a councillor you can express, challenge, criticise and disagree with views, ideas, opinions and policies in a civil manner. You should not subject individuals, groups of people or organisations to unreasonable or excessive personal attack.

In your contact with the public you should treat them courteously. Rude and offensive behaviour lowers the public's expectations and confidence in its elected representatives.

In return you have a right to expect courtesy from the public. If members of the public are being abusive, threatening or intimidatory you are entitled to close down any conversation in person or online, refer them to the council, any social media provider or if necessary, the police. This also applies to members, where action could then be taken under the Member Code of Conduct.

Bullying and harassment

- 3. Not bullying or harassing any person.**

Bullying may be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. The bullying might be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident, happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or phone calls, happen in the workplace or at work social events and not always be obvious or noticed by others.

The Equality Act 2010 defines harassment as 'unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual'. The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

Impartiality of officers of the council

- 4. Not compromising, or attempting to compromise, the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the council.**

Officers work for the council as a whole and must be politically neutral (unless they are political assistants). They should not be coerced or persuaded to act in a way that would undermine their neutrality. Although you can question officers in order to understand, for example, their reasons for proposing to act in a particular way, or the content of a report that they have written, you must not try and force them to act differently, change their advice, or alter the content of that report, if doing so would prejudice their professional integrity.

Confidentiality and access to information

- 5. Not disclosing information given to me in confidence or disclosing information acquired by me which I believe is of a confidential nature, unless I have received the consent of a person authorised to give it or I am required by law to do so.**
- 6. Not preventing anyone getting information that they are entitled to by law.**

Local authorities must work openly and transparently, and their proceedings and

printed materials are open to the public except in certain circumstances. You should work on this basis but there will be times when it is required by law that discussions, documents and other information relating to or held by the council are treated in a confidential manner. Examples include personal data relating to individuals or information relating to ongoing negotiations.

Disrepute

7. Not bringing my role or council into disrepute.

Behaviour that is considered dishonest and/or deceitful can bring your council into disrepute. As a member you have been entrusted to make decisions on behalf of your community and your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. You should be aware that your actions might have an adverse impact on other councillors and/or your council.

Your position

8. Not using, or attempting to use, my position improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of myself or anyone else.

Your position as a member of the council provides you with certain opportunities, responsibilities and privileges. However, you should not take advantage of these opportunities to further private interests.

Use of council resources and facilities

9. Not misusing council resources.

You may be provided with resources and facilities by the council to assist you in carrying out your duties as a councillor. Examples include office support, stationery and equipment such as phones, and computers and transport. These are given

to you to help you carry out your role as a councillor more effectively and not to benefit you personally.

Interests

10. Registering and declaring my interests.

You need to register your interests so that the public, council employees and fellow members know which of your interests might give rise to a conflict of interest. The register is a document that can be consulted when (or before) an issue arises, and so allows others to know what interests you have, and whether they might give rise to a possible conflict of interest. The register also protects you. You are responsible for deciding whether or not you should declare an interest in a meeting, but it can be helpful for you to know early on if others think that a potential conflict might arise.

It is also important that the public know about any interest that might have to be declared by you or other members, so that decision making is seen by the public as open and honest. This helps to ensure that public confidence in the integrity of local governance is maintained. Discuss the registering and declaration of interests with your Monitoring Officer/Town or Parish Clerk and more detail is set out in appendix B.

Gifts and hospitality

11. Not accepting significant gifts or hospitality from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the council or from persons who may apply to the council for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.

12. Registering with the monitoring officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25 within 28 days of its receipt.

You should exercise caution in accepting any gifts or hospitality which are (or which you reasonably believe to be) offered to you

because you are a member. However, you do not need to register gifts and hospitality which are not related to your role as a member, such as Christmas gifts from your friends and family, or gifts which you do not accept. However, you may wish to notify your monitoring officer of any significant gifts you are offered but refuse which you think may have been offered to influence you.

Note – items in square brackets [x] refer to recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life and may be part of a future Government consultation. This includes possible future sanctions and appeals processes.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct

Most councillors conduct themselves appropriately and in accordance with these standards. Members have both individual and collective responsibility to maintain these standards, support expected behaviour and challenge behaviour which falls below expectations.

Section 27 of the Localism Act 2011 requires relevant authorities to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the authority. Each local authority must publish a code of conduct, and it must cover the registration of pecuniary interests, the role of an 'independent person', and sanctions to be imposed on any councillors who breach the Code.

The 2011 Act also requires local authorities to have mechanisms in place to investigate allegations that a member has not complied with the Code of Conduct, and arrangements under which decisions on allegation may be made.

Failure to comply with the requirements to register or declare disclosable pecuniary interests is a criminal offence. Taking part in a meeting or voting, when prevented from doing so by a conflict caused by disclosable pecuniary interests, is also a criminal offence.

Political parties may have its own internal standards and resolution procedures in addition to the Member Code of Conduct that members should be aware of.

Example

LGA guidance and recommendations

Internal resolution procedure

Councils must have in place an internal resolution procedure to address conduct that is in breach of the Member Code of Conduct. The internal resolution process should make it clear how allegations of breaches of the Code of Conduct are to be handled, including the role of an Independent Person, the appeals process and can also include a local standards committee. The internal resolution procedure should be proportionate, allow for members to appeal allegations and decisions, and allow for an escalating scale of intervention. The procedure should be voted on by the council as a whole.

In the case of a non-criminal breach of the Code, the following escalating approach can be undertaken.

If the breach is confirmed and of a serious nature, action can be automatically escalated.

1. an informal discussion with the monitoring officer or appropriate senior officer
2. an informal opportunity to speak with the affected party/ies
3. a written apology
4. mediation
5. peer support
6. requirement to attend relevant training
7. where of a serious nature, a bar on chairing advisory or special committees for up to two months
8. where of a serious nature, a bar on attending committees for up to two months.

Where serious misconduct affects an employee, a member may be barred from contact with that individual; or if it relates to a specific responsibility of the council, barred from participating in decisions or information relating to that responsibility.

Endnotes

1. CSPL recommend that “Section 27(2) of the Localism Act 2011 should be amended to state that a local authority’s code of conduct applies to a member when they claim to act, or give the impression they are acting, in their capacity as a member or as a representative of the local authority”.
2. CSPL recommend that “councillors should be presumed to be acting in an official capacity in their public conduct, including statements on publicly accessible social media. Section 27(2) of the Localism Act 2011 should be amended to permit local authorities to presume so when deciding upon code of conduct breaches.”
3. Subject to footnotes 1 and 2 above
4. See CSPL website for further details www.gov.uk/government/news/the-principles-of-public-life-25-years
5. ACAS’s definition of bullying

Appendices

Code Appendix A

The principles are :

Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

Code Appendix B

Registering interests

1. Within 28 days of this Code of Conduct being adopted by the council or your election or appointment to office (where that is later) you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) and Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests).
2. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest in Table 1 or 2, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.

Declaring interests

3. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to an interest in Table 1, you must declare the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to declare the nature of the interest.
4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to an interest in Table 2, you must declare the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to declare the nature of the interest.

5. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must declare the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to declare the nature of the interest.
6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which affects –
 - a. your own financial interest or well-being;
 - b. a financial interest or well-being of a friend, relative, close associate; or
 - c. a body covered by table 1 below

you must disclose the interest.

7. Where the matter affects the financial interest or well-being to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest you must declare the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to declare the nature of the interest.

Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain. [Any unpaid directorship.]
Sponsorship	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 .
Contracts	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council — (a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and (b) which has not been fully discharged.
Land and Property	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council. ‘Land’ excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	Any tenancy where (to the councillor’s knowledge)— (a) the landlord is the council; and (b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.
Securities	Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where— (a) that body (to the councillor’s knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and (b) either— (i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or (ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.

*'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

*'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

Table 2: Other Registerable Interests

Any Body of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by the council;	
Any Body—	(a) exercising functions of a public nature;
	(b) directed to charitable purposes; or
	(c) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)
of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management.	



Local Government Association

18 Smith Square
London SW1P 3HZ

Telephone 020 7664 3000

Fax 020 7664 3030

Email info@local.gov.uk

www.local.gov.uk

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please contact us on 020 7664 3000.
We consider requests on an individual basis.

LGA Consultation on Draft Model Member Code of Conduct

Thank you for taking the time to complete this consultation. This Model Member Code of Conduct [[Model Member Code of Conduct.pdf](#)] aims to be concise, written in plain English and be understandable to members, officers and the public. The Model Member Code is designed to aid members in all tiers of local government model the behaviours and high standards that anyone would expect from a person holding public office. Equally, it articulates behaviour which falls below the standards that would be expected of council members. It is designed to help set a framework for public and councillor interaction, emphasising the importance of civility and that councillors should be protected from bullying, intimidation and abuse.

The LGA has reviewed the existing Model Member Code of Conduct and updated it here incorporating the recommendations from the Committee on Standard's in Public Life's recommendations on Local Government Ethical Standards and the representation from its membership. Part of the Committee's recommendations were the introduction of sanctions for breaches of the code, alongside an appeals process. This aspect is out of scope of this consultation, as it requires legislative changes by Government, but the LGA has sought to reflect some of the possible changes by using square brackets where legal changes would be necessary. The LGA is continuing to take soundings from the sector on the issue of sanctions in anticipation of a Government response to the Committee's recommendations.

This consultation addresses key areas that the LGA would like a view on to help finalise the Code. It is aimed at councillors and officers from all tiers of local government. If you would like a wider discussion about the code, please do sign up to one of the forthcoming Webinars the LGA are holding as part of this consultation. Details will be posted on our [LGA events website](#).

Instructions and privacy notice

You can navigate through the questions using the buttons at the bottom of each page. Use the 'previous' button at the bottom of the page if you wish to amend your response to an earlier question.

All responses will be treated confidentially. Information will be aggregated, and no individual or authority will be identified in any publications without your consent. Identifiable information may be used internally within the LGA but will only be held and processed in accordance with our [privacy policy](#). We are undertaking this consultation to aid the legitimate interests of the LGA in supporting and representing authorities.

Please complete your response in one go - if you exit before submitting your response your answers may be lost. If you would like to see an overview of the questions before completing the consultation online, you can access a PDF [here](#).

About you

Your name _____

Are you...

- ☐ A councillor
- ☐ An officer
- ☐ Answering on behalf of a whole council (Please provide council name below)
- _____
- ☐ Other (please specify below)
- _____

Please indicate your council type

- ☐ Community/Neighbourhood/Parish/Town
- ☐ District/Borough
- ☐ County
- ☐ Metropolitan/Unitary/London Borough
- ☐ Other (please specify below)
- _____

Application of the Code

Under the Localism Act 2012, the Code of Conduct applies to councillors only when they are acting in their capacity as a member. The LGA believes that because councillors are elected by the public and widely recognised by the public, it makes sense for them to continue to model these behaviours when they are making public comment, are identifying as a councillor and when it would be reasonable for the public to identify them as acting or speaking as a councillor. The Committee on Standards in Public Life supported this approach in their report into Local Government Ethical Standards. Whilst the LGA is waiting for Government's response to these recommendations the option has been added in square brackets as it would need changes in legislation.

Q1. To what extent do you support the proposal that councillors demonstrate the behaviours set out in the Code when they are publicly acting as, identifying as, and/or giving the impression that they are acting as a councillor, including when representing their council on official business and when using social media?

- ☐ To a great extent
- ☐ To a moderate extent
- ☐ To a small extent
- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Don't know/prefer not to say

Q1a. If you would like to elaborate on your answer please do so here:

Q2. Is it sufficiently clear which parts of the Model Code are legal requirements, which are obligations, and which are guidance?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Q3. Do you prefer the use of the personal tense, as used in the Code, or would you prefer the passive tense?

- ☐ Personal tense ("I will")
- ☐ Passive tense ("Councillors should")
- ☐ No preference

Specific obligations

The Code lists 12 specific obligations – these set out a minimum standard councillors are asked to adhere to.

Each obligation or group of obligations is put into a wider context to explain why that particular obligation is important.

Q4. To what extent to you support the 12 specific obligations?

	To a great extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Don't know / Prefer not to say
1. Treating other councillors and members of the public with civility.					
2. Treating council employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the councils with civility and respecting the role that they play.					
3. Not bullying or harassing any person.					
4. Not compromising, or attempting to compromise, the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the council.					
5. Not disclosing information given to me in confidence or disclosing information acquired by me which I believe is of a confidential nature, unless I have received the consent of a person authorised to give it or I am required by law to do so.					
6. Not preventing anyone getting information that they are entitled to by law.					
7. Not bringing my role or council into disrepute.					
8. Not using, or attempting to use, my position improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of myself or anyone else.					

9. Not misusing council resources.					
10. Registering and declaring my interests.					
11. Not accepting significant gifts or hospitality from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the council or from persons who may apply to the council for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.					
12. Registering with the monitoring officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25 within 28 days of its receipt.					

Q5. If you would like to propose additional or alternative obligations, or would like to provide more comment on a specific obligation, please do so here:

Q6. Would you prefer to see the obligations as a long list followed by the guidance, or as it is set out in the current draft, with the guidance after each obligation?

- ☐ As a list
- ☐ Each specific obligation followed by its relevant guidance
- ☐ No preference

Q7. To what extent to you think the concept of 'acting with civility' is sufficiently clear?

- ☐ To a great extent
- ☐ To a moderate extent
- ☐ To a small extent
- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Don't know/prefer not to say

Q7a. If you would like to suggest an alternative phrase that captures the same meaning, or would like to provide a comment on this concept, please do so here:

Q8. To what extent do you think the concept of 'bringing the council into disrepute' is sufficiently clear?

- ☐ To a great extent
- ☐ To a moderate extent
- ☐ To a small extent
- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Don't know/prefer not to say

Q8a. If you would like to suggest an alternative phrase that captures the same meaning, or would like to provide a comment on this concept, please do so here:

Q9. To what extent do you support the definition of bullying and harassment used in the code in a local government context?

- ☐ To a great extent
- ☐ To a moderate extent
- ☐ To a small extent
- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Don't know/prefer not to say

Q9a. If there are other definitions you would like to recommend, please provide them here.

Q10. Is there sufficient reference to the use of social media?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know/prefer not to say

Q10a. Should social media be covered in a separate code or integrated into the overall code of conduct?

- ☐ Separate code
- ☐ Integrated into the code
- ☐ Don't know/prefer not to say

Q10b. If you would like to make any comments or suggestions in relation to how the use of social media is covered in the code please do so here:

Registration and declarations of interests

The law at present requires, as a minimum, registration and declaration of 'Disclosable Pecuniary Interests' - that is matters which directly relate to the councillor and their partner if applicable.

The LGA is proposing that all councillors are required to declare interests where matters also relate to or affect other family members or associates. The LGA has broadened the requirement to declare interests beyond this current statutory minimum in line with a recommendation from the Committee on Standards in Public Life. These specific provisions are set out in **Appendix B** of the Code.

Q11. To what extent to you support the code going beyond the current requirement to declare interests of the councillor and their partner?

- ☐ To a great extent
- ☐ To a moderate extent
- ☐ To a small extent
- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Don't know/prefer not to say

Q11a. If you would like to elaborate on your answer please do so here:

Q12. Should the requirement to declare interests be in the main body of the code or in the appendix where the draft model code currently references it?

- ☐ In the main body of the code
- ☐ In the appendix
- ☐ Other (please specify below)
- ☐ Don't know/prefer not to say

Q12a. If you would like to make any comments or suggestions in relation to how the requirement to declare interests is covered in the code please do so here:

It is also suggested that more outside interests should be registered than is the current statutory minimum. These are set out in **Table 2 of the Appendix** and are designed to demonstrate to the community transparency about other bodies with which the councillor is engaged.

Q13. To what extent do you support the inclusion of these additional categories for registration?

	To a great extent	To a moderate extent	To a small extent	Not at all	Don't know / Prefer not to say
Any organisation, association, society or party of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management and to which you are appointed or nominated by the council					
Any organisation, association, society or party that exercises functions of a public nature of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management					
Any organisation, association, society or party directed to charitable purposes					
Any organisation, association, society or party of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)					

Q13a. If you would like to propose additional or alternative **categories** for registration, please provide them here:

Q14. To what extent to you support the proposed requirement that councillors do not accept significant gifts as set out in Obligation 11?

- ☐ To a great extent
- ☐ To a moderate extent
- ☐ To a small extent
- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Don't know/prefer not to say

Q14a. If you would like to elaborate on your answer please do so here:

Q15. The draft code proposes £25 as the threshold for registering gifts and hospitality. Is this an appropriate threshold?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ Yes, but the amount should be reviewed annually with the code's review
- ☐ No, it should be lower (please specify amount) _____
- ☐ No, it should be higher (please specify amount) _____
- ☐ Don't know/prefer not to say

Q16. The LGA will be producing accompanying guidance to the code. Which of the following types of guidance would you find most useful? Please rank 1-5, with 1 being the most useful.

- _____ Regularly updated examples of case law
- _____ Explanatory guidance on the code
- _____ Case studies and examples of good practice
- _____ Supplementary guidance that focuses on specific areas, e.g., social media
- _____ Improvement support materials, such as training and e-learning packages

Q16a. If you would like to suggest any other accompanying guidance please do so here:

Q17. If you would like to make any further comments about the code please do so here:

Once you press the 'Submit' button below, you will have completed your response.

Many thanks for taking the time to respond to this consultation. You are in control of any personal data that you have provided to us in your response. You can contact us at all times to have your information changed or deleted. You can find our full privacy policy here: [click here to see our privacy policy](#)

For information only - Do not complete

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FULL COUNCIL

Date: 27 July 2020

Title: Position of Town Crier

Contact Officer: Office Manager – Adam Clapton

Background

Members may recall the Town Council held an informal competition at the Witney Carnival in July 2019 for a Town Crier led by Cllr D Enright in his Mayoral year. The informality of the volunteer position to help promote Witney was confirmed to the Council on 29th July 2019, minute number 375(b) refers,

The Council received and considered the report of the Mayor. A Town Crier and a Deputy had been chosen at the Carnival as a bit of fun, and it had not been meant to cause complications. The lady selected was going to buy her own outfit and the Mayor/Council would invite her along to suitable events, such as the Witney Carnival, Witney Christmas Lights Switch-on and Town Council's Advent Fayre.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted

Current Situation

The Town Council has a new Mayor for 2020/21 so it is a good opportunity to review and clarify the position of Town Crier, a year after the above decision.

Witney has not previously had an official Town Crier as historically the Mayor/Chair of Witney Town Council, by nature of the role as civic figurehead of the town (and first citizen) fulfils this purpose; he/she is elected to represent the residents of Witney and the Town Council at civic engagements in the town.

There are currently no Town Criers registered to Oxfordshire towns on the Ancient & Honourable Guild of Town Crier's (AHGTC) website <http://www.ahgtc.org.uk/towns/> although several Council's in Oxfordshire have employed the services of Town Criers in the past. It is understood that Town Criers are usually sought by contacting one from the registered list, one exception to this is Abingdon-upon-Thames Town Council who have separate arrangements.

In order for the position to be officially recognised, per the 'How to Recruit a Town Crier' guidance from the Ancient & Honourable Guild of Town Crier's Website, a job description, official application and trial cry would need to be advertised and take place - the holder of the title would be a representative of the Town Council and hold a privileged position in the community. If the Council resolves to 'employ' a Town Crier, members should also consider whether the administration of this position should be through the Town Council (a potential draft job description is attached as **Appendix A** to this report for information).

The current volunteer position is held by Jean Postlethwaite-Dixon, who it should be noted has carried out engagements with enthusiasm and gusto in the town during 2019-20 and has been a committed advocate/promoter of local community events and businesses.

Environmental impact

Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make regarding its facilities and services it operates.

Risk

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

As a representative of the Council it would need to ensure that the Town Crier would conduct themselves appropriately and not bring the Council into disrepute, and not mis-use their position for their own gains. Consideration should probably be given to DBS checking.

Financial implications

- There is no budget set for a Town Crier
- There is no budget/resource for the Town Council administering the Town Crier position

Recommendations

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

1. Consider the role of Town Crier in Witney and whether the Town Council would like to make this a formal role affiliated to the Town Council; and,
2. If yes, consider the application process for this role; and,
3. Consider how the position will be administered.

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: Town Crier

RESPONSIBLE TO: tbc

LINE MANAGER: Town Clerk

Period of Appointment

The post of Witney Town Crier (Deputy) runs parallel to the term of office of the Mayor, after which there will be the option for renewal on an annual basis subject to The Town Council being satisfied with the performance of the appointee.

Responsibility

The appointee represents Witney and its residents and will be expected to maintain a high standard of appropriate behaviour and courtesy at all times whilst on duty and is required to be clean, smart, sober, polite and jovial.

Costume

Any costumes provided by the Town Crier will remain their property

All cries must commence with 'Oyez, Oyez, Oyez' and following proclamations must be approved by the town clerk

All cries must be non-political and non-religious and must be in good taste and in the spirit of the role.

Duties

The appointee will be required to act as announcer and or toast-master Town Council events including, but not limited to civic functions and town celebrations. The town crier must only attend events in role that are official town council business and be invited to do so through the town clerk.

Where the Town Crier is present in a private capacity, or other than as Town Crier, he/she will not form part of the Civic Parade.

Voluntary position

The post of Town Crier (Deputy) is voluntary.

Expenses

All travel and other expenses will be the responsibility of the Town Crier (Deputy).

Insurance

The Council agrees to include positions of Town Crier and Deputy Town Crier within its Public Liability Insurance.

Guild of Town Criers

The Town Crier (Deputy) are encouraged to join the nationwide Ancient and Honourable Guild of Town Criers and the annual membership fee will be reimbursed by The Town Council. Attendance at any competitions must be agreed in advance by the Town Council.

Please note:

Any person found by the Town Council to be in serious breach of any of the above conditions, or otherwise be considered as having bought the position into disrepute, will be immediately removed from the role of Witney (Deputy) Town Crier.

Any person who has been dismissed by the Town Council from the post of Witney (Deputy) Town Crier, for bringing the position into disrepute, will not be eligible to hold the post at any other time in the future.