

## Full Council

# Committee Meeting of Witney Town Council



**Monday, 12th April, 2021 at 7.00 pm**

To members of the Full Council Committee - J Aitman, L Duncan, L Ashbourne, T Ashby, R Bolger, D Butterfield, O Collins, H Eaglestone, D Enright, 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 the above meeting to be held in the **Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom** for the transaction of the business stated in the agenda below.

### Admission to Meetings

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

Admission to this meeting will be online by virtue of The Local Authorities & Police & Crime Panels (Coronavirus)(Flexibility of Local Authority & Police & Crime Panels Meetings)(England & Wales) Regulations 2020.

Zoom login details of this meeting will be published on the Council's website prior to the meeting.

### 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

#### 1. Apologies for Absence

To consider apologies and reasons for absence.

Committee members who are unable to attend the meeting should notify the Deputy Town Clerk ([adam.clapton@witney-tc.gov.uk](mailto:adam.clapton@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 - 10)

To approve and adopt the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 15 February 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 16 February and 30 March 2021, and agree the RECOMMENDATIONS contained therein:

- a) Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee meetings held on 16 February, 9 March & 30 March 2021 (Pages 11 - 30)
- b) Sport & Play Committee meeting held on 1 March 2021 (Pages 31 - 34)
- c) Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 8 March 2021 (Pages 35 - 40)
- d) Stronger Communities Committee meeting held on 15 March 2021 (Pages 41 - 46)
- e) Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 22 March 2021 (Pages 47 - 56)

8. **Civic Announcements** (Pages 57 - 58)

To receive the report of the Mayor.

9. **To Agree A Mayor Elect**

To agree the Mayor-Elect for the Municipal Year 2021/22.

10. **Future Council & Committee Meetings and Lawful Decision Making**

a) **Annual Council Meeting** (Pages 59 - 62)

To agree to change the advertised date of the Annual Council Meeting from 12 May 2021 to a date before 6 May 2021 for the meeting to be held virtually under The Local Authorities & Police & Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority & Police & Crime Panels Meetings) (England & Wales) Regulations 2020.

b) **Contingency Plan & Delegations** (Pages 63 - 74)

To receive and consider the report of the Town Clerk taking into account correspondence and information provided at agenda items 12a and 12c.

c) **Local Authority Remote Meetings - Call for Evidence/Consultation** (Pages 75 - 86)

Central Government are seeking views on the advantages/disadvantages of virtual meetings for parish councils.

All too often MHCLG ignores or fails to appreciate the impact of its decisions on our level of local government choosing to concentrate on principal councils.

The link to the call is here <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-authority-remote-meetings-call-for-evidence/local-authority-remote-meetings-call-for-evidence>

11. **Members Code of Conduct** (Pages 87 - 94)

To receive and consider the report of the Town Clerk to reaffirm the adoption of the Oxfordshire Code of Conduct Members signed up to following elections in May 2019 and the by-election in August 2019.

12. **Standing Orders & Financial Regulations - Review** (Pages 95 - 116)

To note that the Town Clerk is in the process of reviewing the Council's Standing Orders.

To consider and adopt the Council's revised Financial Regulations incorporating changes in legislation, regulations and personnel.

13. **CPRE Survey on Sewage, Flooding & Water issues in Witney** (Pages 117 - 124)

To consider the attached correspondence from the CPRE and either complete or delegate the completion of the survey in Witney Town Council's name as appropriate.

14. **Witney Community Activation** (Pages 125 - 130)

Josh Lenthall of Active Oxfordshire is coordinating the roll out of Community Activation measures in Witney as part of the DfT Emergency Active Travel Funding.

"This is an exciting opportunity to support members of the community to walk and cycle more and to change travel habits in Witney."

Background Information attached - Cllrs Liz Duncan & Ruth Smith will give a verbal update at the meeting and seek approval or delegation to Council Officers to progress this project further.

15. **Town Council Rebranding** (Pages 131 - 144)

To form a task a finish group of 3 Councillors for the Communications & Community Engagement Officer to consult with whilst the rebranding is rolled out across the Council.

16. **Great British Spring Clean** (Pages 145 - 148)

To consider the correspondence and decide if and how the Council should promote this initiative.

This could coincide with the Council's entry into the Thames & Chiltern In Bloom competition.

The Council may wish to incorporate this initiative into its emerging Open Spaces Strategy.

17. **Project Update** (Pages 149 - 152)

To receive and consider the report of the Project Officer updating Members on the various projects currently in progress.

18. **Property Matters - Town Hall, Town House/51 Market Square** (Pages 153 - 154)

For information only – update on the situation relating to the structural issues in the Town Hall/Town House.

19. **Health, Safety & Vandalism Report** (Pages 155 - 156)

To receive and consider the update report on Health, Safety & Vandalism from the Maintenance & Environmental Services Officer.

20. **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.

21. **Correspondence**

a) **Letter from Robert Courts MP** (Pages 157 - 158)

To receive a response from Robert Courts MP concerning minute number of 7<sup>th</sup> December concerning County Lines

b) **RAF Brize Norton - Proposed Radar Tower** (Pages 159 - 162)

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

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

23. **Sealing of Documents**

To authorise the sealing of documents arising from Council resolutions.

Town Clerk



**MEETING OF THE  
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

**Held on Monday, 15 February 2021**

**At 7.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom**

**Present:**

Councillor J Aitman (Chair)

Councillors:	L Duncan	A D Harvey
	L Ashbourne	M Jones
	T Ashby	J King
	R Bolger	A McMahon
	D Butterfield	A Prosser
	O Collins	R Smith
	H Eaglestone	D Temple
	D Enright	
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
Others:	1 member of the public.	

73     **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for her absence was received from Cllr Gwatkin.

74     **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

75     **MINUTES**

The Council received and considered the minutes of the Council meeting held on 7 December 2020 and 14 December 2020 and the Extra Ordinary meeting held on 12 January 2021. There were no matters arising from the minutes to be discussed.

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meetings held on minutes of the Council Meetings held on 7 December 2020 and 14 December 2020 and the Extra Ordinary meeting held on 12 January 2021 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

76     **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The member of the public present did not wish to address the Council.

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

Cllr Harvey reported that a successful meeting of the Climate Action Group had been held and that matters were progressing. The District Council had appointed a Biodiversity and Land Management Specialist to help ensure that the move towards biodiversity and land management was moving ahead.

**RESOLVED:** that the update from Cllr Harvey be noted.

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

There were no reports back from Councillors working with external bodies where they served as the Council's nominated representative.

79 **MINUTES OF COMMITTEES AND SUB COMMITTEES**

a) **CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY AND PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON 15 DECEMBER 2020, 5 JANUARY 2021 AND 26 JANUARY 2021.**

The Chair presented the minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2020, 5 January 2021 and 26 January 2021 and moved their acceptance.

**Matters Arising – 26 January 2020**

A member commented on the Active Travel Proposals that concerned Corn Street and Holloway Road. He said that residents had a great deal of antipathy for the scheme and that the consultation period had been too short in order for the County Council to be able to spend the money. He felt that the scheme had not been thought through.

Another member added that he had spoken to the County Officer who had told him that most responses received were negative.

A member welcomed the idea of an active travel corridor in the town. Most comments on the area he represented – East Witney – had been positive. He asked the Chair of the Committee if she knew when the consultation would be concluded and when things would be announced.

The Chair replied that she had made investigations and that the consultation had been done within the statutory timeframe. However, due to the time constraints of spending the funding there would not be a second round of consultations. She was under the impression that the comments surrounding the Corn Street area had been robustly made and were being heard.

A member pointed out that the County had said that the work would be started in February and therefore he was unsure as to how much time would be spent checking the correspondence received in connection with the consultation.

The Office Manager drew members attention to minute P58 – Flooding. Members had raised the issue of how the Town Council could get the District Council to take notice of any concerns on flooding and had asked if there was a policy in place. He

explained that following the meeting, he had established that there was a policy – EH 7 - Flood Risk - which he believed that the Climate, Planning and Biodiversity Committee would be utilising in its responses when considering flooding in the future.

A member commented that he thought that the Town Council would be asked to come up with an emergency plan in the next few months. The Town Clerk advised that this had been agreed by the Stronger Communities Committee as part of the Communications Strategy so it would be coming forward in the next few months.

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meetings of the Climate, Biodiversity and Planning Committee of 15 December 2020, 5 January 2021 and 26 January 2021, be received and any recommendations therein approved.

b) SPORT AND PLAY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11 JANUARY 2021

The Vice Chair presented the minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2021 and moved their acceptance.

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2021 be received and any recommendation therein approved.

c) HALLS, CEMETERIES AND ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 JANUARY 2021

The Chair presented the minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2021 and moved their acceptance.

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2021 be received and any recommendation therein approved.

d) STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2021

The Chair presented the minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2021 and moved their acceptance.

Matters Arising

A member commented on page 3 item 11 – Zero Waste Roadshow, suggesting that the relevant Officer should speak to the Waste Department at the District Council as it would also be carrying out promotional work during that week and it would be an opportunity for both Councils and possibly even the County Council to work together to produce something. The Chair replied that he would ensure that the Town Council liaised with them.

A member commented about the Planters for the High street on P4. She understood that it had gone through as an action but felt that it was audacious that the Town Council was expected to pay for something that was essentially a highways closure. The Town Clerk replied that the District would be funding the planters themselves via the Government funding for Covid Secure measures.

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2021 be

received and any recommendation therein approved.

e) POLICY, GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 1 FEBRUARY 2021

The Chair presented the minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2021 and moved their acceptance.

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2021 be received and any recommendation therein approved.

80 **COUNCIL REVENUE BUDGET: REVISED BUDGET 2020/21 AND ESTIMATE 2021/22**

The Council received and considered the report of the Town Clerk, as circulated. She had previously given a full presentation to Council.

A member said that the Conservative Group would support the 3% increase and were happy to see the moderation in the budget considering that there would be a rise in unemployment. He also hoped that earmarked reserves would be restored over the coming years.

The Leader of the Council thanked the Conservative Group Leader for his comments. She added that considering the past year and the loss of the Council Tax support grant she was very proud of the Town Council for bringing the precept in with just a 3% increase.

A member commented about the Blue Plaque budget and the fact that he thought this project would not come on stream until 2022/23 – he felt it might be worth noting. The Town Clerk advised that she was aware of this and the money would roll forward to the following year.

**RESOLVED:** that the report be noted and:-

1. that the revised budget for 2020/2021 as presented be adopted;
2. that the estimated budget for 2021/22 as presented be adopted.

81 **TO FORMALLY DECLARE THE PRECEPT FOR 2021/22**

The Council received and considered the report of the Town Clerk.

The proposal was to increase the precept by 3% which equated to £159.04 per annum for a band D property.

A member asked if information could be shared to illustrate how many play areas the Town Council was responsible for. The Town Clerk confirmed that a newsletter would be sent to every household explaining the budget and how it was spent. She would ensure that the number of play areas maintained was included.

**RESOLVED:** that the report be noted and that the Town Clerk be authorised to sign and serve a precept on the West Oxfordshire District Council, in accordance with the appropriate provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), requiring the District Council to pay the Town Council the sum of £1, 691, 877 in respect of Council Tax for the town during the financial year 2021/22.

82 **CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN**

The Leader of the Council gave a verbal update, explaining that the current staff restructure that was taking place was a huge part of the corporate plan and priorities for each committee had been identified for the forthcoming year and budgeted them in. In addition there was the open spaces strategy also going on which would be a huge part of the corporate strategy. This would bring something very comprehensive in the coming months.

**RESOLVED:** that the verbal update be noted.

83 **CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Council received and considered the report of the Mayor.

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

84 **VANDALISM**

The Council received and considered an update on vandalism in the town.

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

85 **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

There was no update at the present time.

86 **COMMUNICATION FROM THE LEADER**

There was no communication from the Leader.

87 **CORRESPONDENCE**

The Council received and considered a letter from the Chair of NALC, Cllr Sue Baxter, concerning three pledges:

- **Rethink relations** – more respect, commit to training, Local Council Award Scheme, better links with principal authorities
- **Rethink ambitions**, work with your community to shape place, Climate Change
- **Rethink engagement**, encourage more people to be councillors and engage more with your community

The Leader of the Council commented that she had liked the tone and sentiment of the proposals and felt that they fitted well with the Town Council. She thought it might be helpful to have the pledges in mind when considering the strategic plan.

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

88 **QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

There were no questions to the Leader of the Council.

89     **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

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

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The meeting closed at: 8.11 pm

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Chair

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

**Held on Tuesday, 16 February 2021**

**At 6.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom**

**Present:**

Councillor R Smith (Chair)

Councillors:	A Prosser	M Jones
	J Aitman	A McMahon
	L Ashbourne	L Duncan (In place of V Gwatkin)
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Office Manager
Others:	no members of the public.	

**P90 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr R Bolger and Cllr V Gwatkin.

**P91 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr M Jones declared a non-pecuniary interest concerning planning application WTC/018/21 as the applicants were known to her.

Cllr R Smith declared a non-pecuniary interest concerning agenda item 6 as an employee of Henry Box School, which it was hoped would be linked to this scheme.

**P92 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.**

There were no members of public present.

**P93 PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

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

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

P94 **LICENSING APPLICATION CONSULTATION W/21/00053/PRMA - 53 MARKET SQUARE, WITNEY**

The Committee received and considered a new premises licence application from T & C Kitchens, 56 Market Square, Witney.

**RESOLVED:** that Witney Town Council has no objection to this application.

P95 **OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL: INITIAL CONSULTATION – BICESTER, OXFORD & WITNEY - PROPOSED SCHOOL STREETS**

The committee received and considered consultation documents from Oxfordshire County Council proposing the introduction of a 'School Street' at Church Green, Witney.

Members were whole-heartedly supportive of this proposal and were hopeful this would be welcomed by the residents as it would result in less parking and damage to the grass verge. It would also make school travel safer for children who attend St Mary's C of E Infant School. The committee questioned whether the Farmhouse Nursery on this stretch of Church Green had also been consulted and wondered whether Henry Box School could be included in the experimental traffic regulation order.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That Witney Town Council supports the proposal by Oxfordshire County Council to introduce Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (ETRO's) to facilitate the introduction of School Streets at Church Green Witney. This scheme supports the Town Council's vision of providing a safe route for children to attend school across the town, and;
2. That Witney Town Council asks if the Farmhouse Nursery and Henry Box School have been consulted on this proposal, it is understood that Henry Box School is considering this initiative. A joint ETRO may be beneficial, and;
3. That these comments be forwarded to Oxfordshire County Council in response to the School Streets Initial Consultation.

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The meeting closed at: 6.53 pm

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Chair



## Planning Minutes - 16 February 2021

P93- 1	WTC/015/21	Plot Ref :-20/03577/FUL	Type :-	FULL
	Applicant Name :- WITNEY BUTTERCROSS SCOUT GROUP		Date Received :-	22/01/2021
	Location :- THE OLD COACH HOUSE MARLBOROUGH LANE WITNEY		Date Returned :-	17/02/2021
	Proposal : Erection of a side extension and first floor rear extensions.			
	Observations : Witney Town Council welcomes this application and looks forward to the completed upgrade, subject to an updated bat and bird survey as requested by the Biodiversity Officer.			

P93- 2	WTC/018/21	Plot Ref :-20/03531/FUL	Type :-	FULL
	Applicant Name :-	WINSTONE, MR A & DUNSTONE, MS	Date Received :-	22/01/2021
	Location :-	WITNEY HOTEL, 7 CHURCH GREEN 7 CHURCH GREEN WITNEY	Date Returned :-	17/02/2021
	Proposal :	Change of use from hotel (C1) to part HMO and part short term holiday let.		
	Observations :	Witney Town Council does not object to change of use from a hotel to part short term holiday let but does object to the part change to a HMO. The proposal as it is still results in the loss of a hotel and it does not take into account the previous comments from the Planning Policy Officer. It conflicts with the overall aims of Policies WIT5, E4 and E6 of the Local Plan as well as the overall objectives of the NPPF, by resulting in the loss of a visitor facility in a central, accessible and sustainable, mixed-use location on the fringe of the Town Centre.		

P93- 3	WTC/019/21	Plot Ref :-21/00279/HHD	Type :-	HOUSEHOLDE
	Applicant Name :-	HICKMAN, MRS SYLVIA	Date Received :-	29/01/2021
	Location :-	5 SWINGBURN PLACE SWINGBURN PLACE WITNEY	Date Returned :-	17/02/2021
	Proposal :	Erection of a single storey side extension along with conversion of garage.		
	Observations :	While Witney Town Council does not object to this application in terms of material concerns, it notes the loss of permeable drainage and would ask that mitigating measures are considered to help decrease the possibility of surface water flooding in this area, in accordance with policy EH7 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.		

P93- 4	WTC/020/21	Plot Ref :-21/00003/HHD	Type :-	HOUSEHOLDE
	Applicant Name :-	CLARK, JAMES	Date Received :-	29/01/2021
	Location :-	34 CAMPION WAY CAMPION WAY WITNEY	Date Returned :-	17/02/2021

Proposal : Erection of single storey side extension.

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

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Proposal : Erection of single storey side extension.

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

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P93- 5	WTC/022/21	Plot Ref :-21/00005/HHD	Type :-	HOUSEHOLDE
	Applicant Name :-	LONGDEN, MR JONATHAN	Date Received :-	05/02/2021
	Location :-	16 CHURCH GREEN CHURCH GREEN WITNEY	Date Returned :-	17/02/2021

Proposal : Alterations to include the conversion of an existing outside toilet to an internal toilet with shower and insertion of a window at first floor level (retrospective).

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

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P93- 6	WTC/023/21	Plot Ref :-21/00006/LBC	Type :-	LISTED BUI
	Applicant Name :-	LONGDEN, MR JAMES	Date Received :-	05/02/2021
	Location :-	16 CHURCH GREEN CHURCH GREEN WITNEY	Date Returned :-	17/02/2021

Proposal : Internal and external alterations to convert an existing outside toilet to an internal toilet with shower, formation of an opening at ground floor for a door and insertion of a 1st floor window (retrospective).

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

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P93- 7	WTC/024/21	Plot Ref :-21/00130/HHD	Type :-	HOUSEHOLDE
	Applicant Name :-	GATES, MR SIMON	Date Received :-	09/02/2021
	Location :-	21 CURBRIDGE ROAD CURBRIDGE ROAD WITNEY	Date Returned :-	17/02/2021

Proposal : Conversion of loft space to create extra living space with the addition of a dormer window to the front and rear.

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

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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, 9 March 2021**

**At 6.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom**

**Present:**

Councillor R Smith (Chair)

Councillors:	A Prosser	V Gwatkin
	J Aitman	M Jones
	L Ashbourne	A McMahon
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
Others:	1 member of the public.	

**P118 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Cllr R Bolger.

**P119 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no interests declared by members at the meeting.

**P120 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Committee adjourned for this item.

A member of the public addressed the Committee on agenda item 6, request to purchase Town Council land adjacent to 67 Thorney Leys, Witney,

*The Committee reconvened following public participation.*

**P121 PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

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

**RESOLVED:**

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

**P122 WITNEY TRAFFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The Committee received the minutes of the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee meeting held on 12 January 2021.

Members discussed the items debated at the meeting and enquired on the progress of talks on the issues raised, particularly in relation to the bus service at West Witney.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the minutes of the Witney Traffic advisory Committee meeting held on 12 January 2021 be noted; and,
2. That Officers enquire on the progress of talks between Oxfordshire County Council and the Parish Transport Representative regarding a bus service at West Witney.

**P123 REQUEST TO PURCHASE TOWN COUNCIL LAND - 67 THORNEY LEYS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations & Estates Advisor regarding a request by a resident to purchase land at the rear of 67 Thorney Leys, Witney.

Members were concerned of the impact on biodiversity in this area should the land be incorporated into a garden and highlighted the value of this green corridor along the edge of a busy road in the town. The Committee, although understanding of the request, could not agree for the land to be sold as it worked against the climate initiatives of the Council.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the report be noted; and,
2. That the request to purchase land at the rear of 67 Thorney Leys, Witney be refused for the reasons listed above.

**P124 SALT CROSS GARDEN VILLAGE AREA ACTION PLAN (AAP)**

The Committee received and considered the Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan from West Oxfordshire District Council.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Salt Cross Garden Village Area Action Plan (AAP) be noted.

**P125 OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL TRANSPORT AND CONNECTIVITY PLAN - VISION CONSULTATION**

The Committee received consultation documents from Oxfordshire County Council concerning a Local Transport & Connectivity Plan.

This was a key document which would shape the County's plans until 2050 and members agreed the Town Council should offer a comprehensive response on behalf of Witney, as a service centre and largest town in the west of the County.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Town Clerk formulates and submits a response on behalf of the Council based on the comments made at the meeting.

P126 **NEW STREET NAME - ACCESS ROAD FOR NEW SCHOOL - WEST WITNEY**

The committee received and considered a request to name a new school access road at the West Witney development.

Members felt that the suggestions of School Road and School Lane were too generic and an alternative suggestion by the River Learning Trust of River Road did not fit in with the development's naming style.

The Committee suggested an alternative name of Isabelle Spencer Way. Isabelle Spencer was a key figure within education in Witney from 1946 teaching and becoming the School Mistress/Deputy Head at Henry Box. She bequeathed a considerable amount of money to continue to support young people and education via the Witney Educational Foundation. The committee also thought it was in keeping with the other road names in the vicinity – Alice Batt and Mary Box.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Street naming request at Windrush Place be noted; and,
2. That Witney Town Council suggests the alternative name of 'Isabelle Spencer Way'; and,
3. That this suggestion be forwarded to the Address management Office at West Oxfordshire District Council for consideration.

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The meeting closed at: 7.26 pm

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Chair

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## 124 Planning Applications

124- 4	WTC/028/21	Plot Ref :-21/00033/HHD	Type :-	HOUSEHOLDE
	Applicant Name :-	JONES, MRS SARAH	Date Received :-	23/02/2021
	Location :-	12 THE CRESCENT THE CRESCENT WITNEY	Date Returned :-	09/03/2021
	Proposal :	Erection of a single storey flat rear extension.		
	Observations :	Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.		

124- 5	WTC/029/21	Plot Ref :-21/00028/FUL	Type :-	FULL
	Applicant Name :-	DURICI, MR CHRIS	Date Received :-	23/02/2021
	Location :-	2 SPRINGFIELD PARK SPRINGFIELD PARK WITNEY	Date Returned :-	15/03/2021
	Proposal :	Construction of detached dwelling and formation of new access onto Burford Road.		
	Observations :	Witney Town Council does not object to this planning application in terms of material concerns, however it supports the condition of the District Council's Drainage Engineer, and would ask that mitigating measures are considered to help decrease the possibility of surface water flooding in this area, in accordance with policy EH7 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031. Witney Town Council also has safety concerns with the access onto the main road - and would request that comments are sought from Oxfordshire County Council Highways.		
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124- 6	WTC/030/21	Plot Ref :-21/00179/FUL	Type :-	FULL
	Applicant Name :-	DOMINIKOWSKI, MR K	Date Received :-	01/03/2021
	Location :-	35 TAPHOUSE AVENUE TAPHOUSE AVENUE OXON	Date Returned :-	15/03/2021
	Proposal :	Conversion of existing garden outbuilding to create self contained living accommodation.		
	Observations :	Witney Town Council objects to this planning application as it concerns regarding the number of people living in the dwelling already, as the HMO register is not up to date on the WODC website. It considers that this would be a loss of storage space for the property. It would also put pressure on residential parking in the cul-de-sac. There is no information on parking or cycle storage facility plans.		
<hr/>				
124- 7	WTC/031/21	Plot Ref :-21/00164/HHD	Type :-	HOUSEHOLDE
	Applicant Name :-	WALTON, MR IAN	Date Received :-	01/03/2021
	Location :-	1 HARVEST WAY HARVEST WAY WITNEY	Date Returned :-	09/03/2021
	Proposal :	Widening of existing gateway to driveway and to create an additional opening to allow access for two vehicles.		
	Observations :	Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.		
<hr/>				
124- 8	WTC/032/32	Plot Ref :-21/00321/HHD	Type :-	HOUSEHOLDE
	Applicant Name :-	GINDRE, MR JOAQUIN	Date Received :-	01/03/2021
	Location :-	MILL VIEW 13 CRAWLEY ROAD WITNEY	Date Returned :-	15/03/2021
	Proposal :	Erection of single and two storey rear extensions to provide additional living space at both lower ground and ground floor levels. Alterations to include the enlargement of exsiting dropped kerb.		
	Observations :	Witney Town Council does not object to this application in terms of material concerns, but given the sensitivity of the area to flooding it would ask that mitigating measures are considered to help decrease the possibility of surface		



The Meeting closed at : 7.26pm

On behalf of :- Witney Town Council

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

**Held on Tuesday, 30 March 2021**

**At 6.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom**

**Present:**

Councillor R Smith (Chair)

Councillors:	A Prosser	M Jones
	J Aitman	A McMahon
	V Gwatkin	L Duncan (In place of L Ashbourne)
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
Others:	None.	

**P163 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs L Ashbourne and R Bolger. Cllr Aitman advised she would need to leave the meeting early.

**P164 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr A Prosser declared an interest in planning application WTC/039/21 as the address was in close proximity to his own.

**P165 TO ADOPT AND SIGN AS CORRECT THE MINUTES OF 26 JANUARY, 16 FEBRUARY & 9 MARCH 2021**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee meetings held on 26 January, 16 February and 9 March 2021 were a true and accurate record and should be signed by the Chair.

**P166 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF 26 JANUARY, 16 FEBRUARY AND 9 MARCH 2021.**

P95 – The Deputy Town Clerk advised that Oxfordshire County Council were no longer proceeding with Experimental Traffic Regulation Order to facilitate the introduction of a School Street for St Mary's Infant School in Witney. Other options for Henry Box and Tower Hill schools were being investigated.

P125 – In response to a member, the Deputy Town Clerk advised a response had been formulated by the Town Clerk to the County Council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan Vision Consultation based on comments at the last meeting, which had been submitted before the deadline.

P167 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

P168 **PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

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

**RESOLVED:**

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

**Minute note: Due to comments made by a member of the public questioning the need for applicant names to be listed with planning applications on the Town Council's agenda, it was agreed outside of the meeting that applicant names should no longer be published for safeguarding purposes.**

**There is no legal requirement to advertise names as applications are considered on material planning concerns only. Officers would provide a separate list to members who should still declare non-pecuniary interests if the applicants were known to them.**

P169 **PLANNING DECISIONS**

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

**RESOLVED:**

That the list circulated advising of District Council planning decisions be noted.

*Cllr J Aitman left the meeting at 6.30pm.*

P170 **PAVEMENT LICENSE APPLICATION - 35 HIGH STREET, WITNEY**

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

Members were concerned that the attached drawings did not accurately depict the street scene and encroachment of the seating area onto the paved area could work against social distancing. There was, however, agreement that the applicant had successfully operated an outdoor area in this vicinity during the last summer which seemed to have worked well. There was a further concern regarding the positioning of advertising boards, which were questionable as advertising barriers were already being erected.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That Witney Town Council notes the Pavement Licence application; and,

2. Has no objections to the application providing it is for the same set-up previously used by the applicant. If not, it would like to ask that;
3. The seating area does not encroach on to the paved area. The drawing attached does not accurately depict the areas as the pavement narrows towards one end. The result of this encroachment would be a more constricted pedestrian area where social distancing will be much more difficult; and,
4. The Town Council would like to ensure that the advertising boards are not located to the front of the barriers and have confirmation that the double doors in the attached picture, effectively blocked off by the seating are not emergency doors.

**P171 STREET NAMING - 66 HIGH STREET, WITNEY**

The Committee received and considered a street naming suggestion for a development of flats and cottages at 66 High Street, Witney.

Members had no strong objections to the development being called Flats 1 – 5, Charlbury House, 66 High Street, Witney and the cottages being named 66A and 66B.

**RESOLVED:**

That Witney Town Council has no objections to the suggested naming of the development at 66 High Street, Witney.

**P172 CONSULTATION: WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL - AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

The Committee received notice of a public consultation on the revised draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) by West Oxfordshire District Council.

Members agreed that due to the technicalities on the subject matter, they were not able to comment on the plans and would trust its implementation to the Planning Authority.

**RESOLVED:**

That the public consultation on the revised draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) by West Oxfordshire District Council be noted.

**P173 NOTIFICATION OF PLANNING APPEAL - ASH CLOSE GLOUCESTER PLACE, WITNEY**

The Committee received notification of a planning appeal at Ash Close, Gloucester Place, Witney.

**RESOLVED:**

That the planning appeal notification for Ash Close, Gloucester Place be noted.

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The meeting closed at: 6.52 pm

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Chair

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## Planning Minutes - 30 March 2021

P168- 1	WTC/035/21	Plot Ref :-21/00281/HHD	Type :-	HOUSEHOLDE
	Applicant Name :-	LYEL, JACQUELINE	Date Received :-	04/03/2021
	Location :-	55 THE CROFTS THE CROFTS WITNEY	Date Returned :-	30/03/2021
	Proposal :	Erection of a single storey rear extension.		
	Observations :	Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.		

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

P168- 2	WTC/036/21	Plot Ref :-21/00387/HHD	Type :-	HOUSEHOLDE
	Applicant Name :- MANSON, MR ADAM		Date Received :-	09/03/2021
	Location :- 59 COGGES HILL ROAD COGGES HILL ROAD WITNEY		Date Returned :-	30/03/2021
	Proposal : Erection of an enclosed porch.			
	Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.			

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

P168- 3	WTC/037/21	Plot Ref :-21/00667/FUL	Type :-	FULL
	Applicant Name :-	PIOTROWSKI, MR JAROSLAW	Date Received :-	09/03/2021
	Location :-	147 BURWELL DRIVE BURWELL DRIVE WITNEY	Date Returned :-	30/03/2021
	Proposal :	Single and two storey extensions and the subdivision of dwelling to form two semi-detached dwellings and associated works.		
	Observations :	While Witney Town Council does not object to this application in terms of material concerns, it notes the loss of permeable drainage and would ask that mitigating measures are considered to help decrease the possibility of surface water flooding in this area, in accordance with policy EH7 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.		
		The Council would also like to add that on-street parking is already a concern along this road, so would like assurance that the development will not exacerbate this problem.		

The Council would also like to add that on-street parking is already a concern along this road, so would like assurance that the development will not exacerbate this problem.

P168- 4	WTC/038/21	Plot Ref :-21/00434/HHD	Type :-	HOUSEHOLDE
	Applicant Name :-	YATES, MR & MRS I	Date Received :-	11/03/2021
	Location :-	103 NEWLAND MILL NEWLAND MILL WITNEY	Date Returned :-	30/03/2021
	Proposal :	Removal of single storey rear extension and replacement with larger single storey extension to form family room.		
	Observations :	Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.		

Applicant Name :-	TILLSON, MR JOHN	Date Received :-	11/03/2021
Location :-	77 NEWLAND NEWLAND WITNEY	Date Returned :-	30/03/2021

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

Applicant Name :-	PRINGLE, MR	Date Received :-	15/03/2021
Location :-	1 PUCK LANE PUCK LANE WITNEY	Date Returned :-	30/03/2021

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

Applicant Name :-	FERREIRA, MRS	Date Received :-	16/03/2021
Location :-	1 DONNINGTON CLOSE DONNINGTON CLOSE WITNEY	Date Returned :-	30/03/2021

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

Applicant Name :-	MORRIS, CHRISTOPHER	Date Received :-	16/03/2021
Location :-	4A DUCKLINGTON LANE DUCKLINGTON LANE WITNEY	Date Returned :-	30/03/2021

Observations : Witney Town Council is not in a position to comment on this application due to its technical and historical context.

Applicant Name :-	HARRIS, SHAUN	Date Received :-	16/03/2021
Location :-	41 NEW YATT ROAD NEW YATT ROAD WITNEY	Date Returned :-	30/03/2021

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



Type :- FULL

Date Received :- 23/03/2021

Date Returned :- 30/03/2021

Proposal : Change of use of workshop yard and associated buildings (Use Class B1) to community bus yard with associated office and storage (Sui Generis Use).

Observations : Witney Town Council grant funds the Community Bus and therefore welcomes this application. As such there is no formal comment on the material planning considerations.

Type :- HOUSEHOLDE

Date Received :- 15/03/2021

Date Returned :- 30/03/2021

Proposal : Erection of single storey extension and conversion of attic space to create extra living space with the insertion of a dormer window to rear elevation.

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

The Meeting closed at : 6.52pm

Signed :

Chairman Date:

Date:

Witney Town Council

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

**Held on Monday, 1 March 2021**

**At 6.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom**

**Present:**

Councillor V Gwatkin (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	L Duncan
	L Ashbourne	A Prosser
	D Butterfield	R Smith
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	John Hickman	Operations & Estates Advisor
Others:	1 member of the public.	

**SP96 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Cllr T Ashby.

**SP97 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr V Gwatkin and Cllr L Ashbourne declared non-pecuniary interests for agenda item 5 where a community hub facility were to be discussed as they had involvement with Witney Community Fridge.

**SP98 MINUTES**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the Sport & Play Committee meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

**RESOLVED:**

- a) That the minutes of the Sport & Play Committee meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021 are a true and correct record and should be signed by the Chair.
- b) There were no matters arising from the minutes of the meeting, which were not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

**SP99 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Committee adjourned for this item.

Punam Owens addressed the committee supporting the provision of space for a Community Hub on the Town Council's estate.

*The Committee reconvened following public participation.*

**SP100 CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN/OPEN SPACES STRATEGY UPDATE**

The Committee received and considered a verbal update from the Town Clerk regarding the Corporate Strategic Plan and Open Spaces Strategy.

A draft Corporate Strategic Plan would hopefully be presented to members during the next cycle of meetings, from May 2021. It had regrettably been delayed due to the staffing restructure and the transition of officers into new roles.

Members were advised that consultation on the Open Spaces Strategy had begun and a report, based on the feedback was expected towards the end of April. The Chair raised the prospect of a community hub on Council owned land which could form part of the strategy and members agreed, while this was building on open space, the Town Council should support local organisations in locating suitable land for a community hub. There was discussion on what form this assistance should take, what rental charge should be applied and what funding might be available to groups but at this stage it would simply be an affirmation in principle in the emerging strategy.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the verbal update be noted; and
2. That Witney Town Council supports in principle proposals from community groups and organisations looking to secure land to place a community hub on; and
3. Agrees to include a suitable referent to this in the Town Council's draft Open Spaces Strategy.

**SP101 OPERATIONAL REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations & Estates Advisor concerning updates on play areas, the Splash park annual maintenance, third party events, football and pedestrian access and the provision of toilets at West Witney Sports Ground.

Members heard that temporary toilet facilities would be delivered to West Witney Sports Ground during the next three weeks and understood the necessity on remedial works at the Leys Play Area.

With the express permission of the Chair, members received an additional update regarding football, and particularly the extension of the season until June as agreed by the FA due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. This would result in competing demands on the Council's sports pitches over the summer including cricket, additional training, events and annual renovation works. Members agreed this was a complicated issue, a delicate balancing act was needed with no simple answer likely. There was a possibility of less favourable sites being used as well as facilities outside of the Council's control; if these were required there would need to be further discussion on what assistance the Town Council could offer. The issue would have to be investigated further by Officers with a report brought back to a future meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the report be noted; and,
2. That the creation of a flexible plan to accommodate the competing demands on the Town Council's sports pitches during this summer be delegated to Officers and brought back to the next meeting of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee. If all demands are unable to be met, this could include the subsidised use of other facilities.

**SP102 LEYS SKATE PARK - UPDATE**

The Committee received a verbal update from Cllr Butterfield on the Leys Skate park upgrade.

This project had been branded as 'Ramp up the Leys' and the community group formed to spearhead fundraising were keen to progress. There were several grant pots available, as well as the funds earmarked by the Town Council, but a design and specification would be needed before the tender process began and these could be applied for.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the report be noted; and
2. That Officers provide project management details and specification for the previous Skatepark refurbishment; and
3. That the Vice Chair, Cllr D Butterfield holds meetings with the 'Ramp Up the Leys' group and the Town Clerk to understand the fundraising procedures, in line with the Council's financial regulations, and potential timeline around the project.

**SP103 BOWLS IRRIGATION SYSTEM**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations & Estates Advisor concerning transfer of the bowls club's irrigation systems.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the report be noted.

**SP104 OLD BOWLS BUILDING - THE LEYS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations & Estates Advisor concerning the future of the old bowls building at the Leys.

Given that the building was structurally sound, and its use was currently an addition to the Leys Depot storage area, members agreed that the building should remain in situ. However, members noted its unsightly appearance directly opposite the bowls club and agreed that the area around it should be tidied and planted with shrubs and climbing plants. It would also be an opportunity to erect bird boxes and bee habitats if appropriate.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the report be noted; and
2. That the old bowls building be left as it is structurally, but the immediate area be tidied and planted with shrubs and climbing plants. Consideration should also be given to biodiversity, including bird boxes and bee habitats if possible.

SP105 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:**

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

SP106 **WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND - UPDATE**

The Committee received a confidential verbal update from the Town Clerk concerning West Witney Sports Ground.

There was concern from members that the current Covid-19 lockdown would be ending in the forthcoming months and due to the compliance issues at the Sports & Social Club, temporary facilities for clubs would imminently be needed.

Quotes for several temporary sports facilities were provided but members were mindful that these would need to be FA compliant, and they would be a large outlay for the Town Council. A firm plan was needed on the future of the site and the Town Clerk had held conversations with consultants on this very issue.

As previously delegated, officers would continue to hold dialogue with the clubs and consultants to try and find a solution as soon as possible. In the meantime, an earmarked reserve for sports improvements could be given over for the temporary facilities, subject to approval by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee.

**RECOMMENDED:**

1. That the confidential verbal update be noted; and
2. That the Town Council's earmarked reserve (EMR) for Sports Improvement be allocated towards temporary measures and facilities at West Witney Sports Ground, subject to approval by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee.

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The meeting closed at: 7.07 pm

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Chair

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

**Held on Monday, 8 March 2021**

**At 6.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom**

**Present:**

Councillor M Jones (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	L Duncan
	L Ashbourne	V Gwatkin
	T Ashby	J King
	O Collins	
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	John Hickman	Operations & Estates Advisor
Others:	None.	

**H107 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence at the meeting.

**H108 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no interests declared by members at the meeting.

**H109 MINUTES - 18 JANUARY 2021**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments meeting held on 18 January 2021.

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 18 January 2021 were a true and correct of the meeting and should be signed by the Chair.

**H110 MATTERS ARISING - 18 JANUARY 2021**

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 18 January 2021.

**H111 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no members of public present at the meeting.

**H112 CORN EXCHANGE WORKING PARTY MINUTES**

Members received and considered the minutes of the Corn Exchange Working Party held on 1 March 2021.

The Chair of the Working Party, Cllr Collins drew particular attention to its request for a supplementary budget of £2,000 towards consultancy fees, towards the construction supervision of the Corn Exchange Main Hall refurbishment.

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the Corn Exchange Working Party held on 1 March 2021 and the recommendations contained therein be approved.

**H113 OPERATIONAL REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations & Estates Advisor which offered updates on the progress of improvements and repairs since the last meeting.

Members heard that there was an additional update on the Town Hall building. Surveyors had asked to inspect the beams and walls to understand the extent of any beetle infestation.

The Chair asked that it be noted that the Cemetery was looking cleaner, tidier and safer following some remedial work to the hedges. It was agreed that thanks should be sent to the works team and the contractors, Continental Landscapes.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

**H114 CEMETERIES UPDATE**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations & Estates Advisor concerning closed churchyards at St Mary's and Holy Trinity churches and imminent stability testing of graves.

Stability testing would be taking place shortly so officers advised exclusive right of burial owners would be notified in ample time. Previously, several methods had been used including, social media, the newspaper and an open day where the testing was carried out in front of grave owners. The Friends of the Cemeteries Group would be asked to also advertise on its platforms.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

**H115 TOWER HILL CEMETERY ACCESS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations & Estates Advisor concerning pedestrian and vehicular access at Tower Hill Cemetery.

Members heard that a consultation on the proposed pedestrian access at the top end of the cemetery would be opening in the following week. Exclusive Right of Burial owners with graves



in the vicinity would be written to before fliers were delivered to residents on Smith's Estate the following week. There had been no response from the Diocese of Oxford as to whether permission would be needed to go through the wall but if these two items affirmed the project, it would be able to proceed quite quickly.

Members also received the external report on DDA compliance and access at the Cemetery. The report was welcomed by the committee and there were no urgent items. However, future changes would be required along with those pointed out in the Town Council's risk assessment.

There was hope that the cemetery could be open for access every day of the year from 9am to 4pm, except Christmas Day which would provide a wider spread of visiting times. The bollard would remain for the time being, and booked out during the week, while any changes were adjusted to and because of concerns regarding the top loop arrangements.

It was recommended that vehicle access remained the same until the needs were costed, prioritised and sent to the Open Spaces Strategy for review.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the report be noted: and,
2. That the vehicular access at Tower Hill remains as it is at present until the recommendations in the audit can be implemented; and,
3. That the recommendations of the audit are reviewed as part of the Open Spaces Strategy; and,
4. That Officers evaluate the requirements to budget and prioritise them ahead of the next meeting of this committee; and,
5. That Officers obtain quotes for these works.

**RECOMMENDED:**

6. That an underspend of the maintenance budget 4036/301 be rolled over towards these works in 2021/22.

**H116 ALLOTMENTS UPDATE**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations & Estates Advisor advising of updates on Windrush Place and Lakeside allotments. There were also requests for equipment and maintenance at the Windrush Place, Newland and Farmers Close sites.

Members heard that the Windrush Place allotments should be handed over to the Allotment Association at the end of April. 55 sheds, including two disabled units, at a cost of £22,000 for delivery and installation would be erected soon along with 55 rainwater butts and 6 standpipes. Water troughs would not be provided and although the water butt could be filled from the standpipes, allotments would not be permitted to be watered in that way. A small Community-use building on the site would cost approximately £3,000.

A member noted that allotments sheds should not be used for anything other than to store allotment equipment. Previously, some allotment holders had used them as storage extension to their homes. It was noted that this should form part of their terms and conditions and could be reviewed as part of lease negotiations.

The Committee was advised that Windrush Place and Lakeside representatives had requested communal compost areas. The Council had hoped to utilise compost bins already bought but had costed these larger communal 3-bay areas, made from oak sleepers at approximately £3,000 each. Members agreed that providing the funding was available these seemed a reasonable request to help meet the Council's green initiatives.

A new boundary fence had been requested at the Hailey Road/Farmers Close site and members were advised that the current one was reviewed in 2019 and was in poor condition. It was agreed that Officers should obtain quotes for a 6ft green paladin fence, to provide new vehicle and pedestrian entrances.

Representatives from the Newland site had approached the Council, requesting the provision of a secure metal shed to store equipment for boundary maintenance they were obliged to carry out at the site, costing approximately £1,200. Members agreed this was a sensible suggestion, providing a budget could be sought.

The Town Clerk confirmed there was an earmarked reserve for providing new and improving existing allotments where these requests could be funded from. It was noted there were currently 160-170 names on the waiting list for allotments so further land should be considered from this funding if it became available.

Members also heard that flooding at Lakeside allotments, already an annual issue, appeared to be getting worse year on year. It was agreed that professional advice would be required on how this could be rectified, with the Environment Agency also being contacted.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the report be noted; and,
2. That the provision of sheds at Windrush Place allotments be noted; and
3. That the provision of 3 bay composting areas at both Lakeside and Windrush Place allotments be agreed; and,
4. That the request from Newland Allotments for a secure metal shed to store maintenance equipment be agreed; and,
5. That Officers present quotes for new boundary fencing at Farmer's Close allotments at the next meeting of the committee; and,
6. That Officers seek advice from professionals and the Environment Agency concerning flooding at Lakeside allotments.

H117 **LAKESIDE ALLOTMENTS ACCESS ROAD**

The Committee received correspondence from a resident concerning access to Lakeside allotments from Witney Road, Ducklington.

Members heard this had been an issue before and a sign was erected to avoid this happening many years ago. There were several historical points on the access made and it was noted that a number of those accessing the lake this way were residents of Ducklington coming to Witney, not just allotment holders. It was agreed that further investigation was needed before a final decision on actions could be made.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the correspondence be noted; and,
2. That the matter be delegated to the Town Clerk to formulate a solution based on consultation with others, including Ducklington Parish Council.

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The meeting closed at: 6.50 pm

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Chair

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

**Held on Monday, 15 March 2021**

**At 6.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom**

**Present:**

Councillor O Collins (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	H Eaglestone
	T Ashby	L Duncan (In place of L Ashbourne)
	D Enright	V Gwatkin
	D Butterfield	
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
Others:	3 members of the public.	

**SC127 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllr L Ashbourne advised she would be leaving the meeting early and was being substituted by Cllr L Duncan. Cllr D Enright would be joining the meeting later.

**SC128 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no interests declared by members at the meeting.

**SC129 MINUTES**

The Committee received and considered the minutes of the Stronger Communities meeting held on 25 January 2021.

**SC130 TO ADOPT AND SIGN AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2021**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2021 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**SC131 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES NOT COVERED IN THE SUBSEQUENT ITEMS**

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee meeting held on 25 January 2021.

SC132 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Committee adjourned for this item.

David Inman from the Rural/Market Group and Beth Sherlock from Witney Pride to address the committee on agenda items 5 and 12 respectively.

*The Committee reconvened following public participation.*

SC133 **WITNEY PRIDE**

The Committee received and considered requests from the Witney Pride Group concerning the international day of homophobia, transphobia on 17<sup>th</sup> May, as well as its planned event on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2021.

Members were supportive of both causes and welcomed the opportunity to be able to promote the events individually as well as through the Town Council's social media platforms.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That Witney Town Council supports the Witney Pride event on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2021 by promoting the event on its social media and by members sharing video messages or photos to help generate support and interest; and,
2. That Witney Town Council flies the Pride flag on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May instead of 1st June to coincide with the Witney Pride event; and,
3. That the Corn Exchange is lit up in LGBTQ colours to mark the international day against homophobia, transphobia and biphobia on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

SC134 **RURAL/MARKET TOWN GROUP**

The Committee had heard from the representative of the Rural/Market Town Group under public participation and were encouraged to hear of its increasing membership and the benefits membership would bring.

As the free membership had been extended until September 2021 due to the pandemic, members were happy to defer the decision on becoming a paying member until later in the summer.

**RESOLVED:**

That the decision to become a paid member of the Rural/Market Group be deferred until September 2021.

SC135 **INCLUSIVITY & DIVERSITY PANEL**

The Committee received and considered a verbal update from the Chair who presented recommendations from the panel following a recent meeting.

Members heard that a 'Belonging in Witney' page would be beneficial on the website which could include a form where people could share their experiences and stories anonymously. These forms would be passed onto and looked at by the panel directly, with issues being fed back to the Council.

The creation of an affiliated Town Council Facebook page, to create a forum area to discuss ideas and information was agreed. This would be specifically in relation to the Inclusivity & Diversity Panel and some of its members would be moderators.

Finally, it was agreed the Town Council would promote 'Belonging to work' webinars, offered for free by panel members among its network of local organisations.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee notes the recommendations of the Inclusivity & Diversity Panel; and,

1. Creates a 'Belonging in Witney' page on the Town Council website - this will have a statement about the endeavour, and a webform for people to share their experiences and stories with the Town Council anonymously; and,
2. Creates a group linked to the Town Council's Facebook page to establish a forum that people can join to talk and share information/posts/ideas.
3. Promotes through its networks, free 'Belonging at work' Webinars for local businesses to ensure as many local organisations have the opportunity to take part.

**SC136 OPERATIONS REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations & Estates Advisor which provided updates on the Christmas Lights Tender, floral displays and hedge maintenance at Curbridge Road/Thorney Leys.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Operations Report and its contents be noted.

**SC137 TREES - UPDATE**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations & Estates Advisor concerning Wychwood Project tree planting and required remedial work on trees at Pensclose and Cogges Hill Road.

Members heard that Wychwood Project had unfortunately not been able to complete their planting work so it would be finished in the next season. As such they had yet to draw down the budget of £500 awarded by the Council so this would be rolled over into the new financial year.

The Committee also discussed the remedial works suggested by the Landscape & Forestry Officer concerning trees T792 and T794. The Council's tree consultants had advised a pull test should be carried out at the cost of £1,926 to investigate their viability and safety. The results may provide time for replacements to be planted before their inevitable felling and it was unknown what impact Ash die-back might have on these trees in the meantime.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the report be noted; and,
2. That the suggested works to trees T792 and T794 be undertaken; and,
3. That replacement trees be planted this autumn in preparation for their future removal.

**SC138 BIN REQUESTS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Project Officer which concerned several new litter and dog bin requests across the town.

Members were sympathetic to the requests made by members of the public but were aware of the associated costs and the strain on the Council's budgets now and in the future. The collection of waste was being considered as part of the Council's Open Spaces Strategy so it was agreed these requests should be deferred until after its publication. The Committee was mindful that a policy would be required to ensure that any new bins were well situated and absolutely necessary in the area.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the report be noted; and,
2. That the requests for new litter and dog waste bins be deferred until after the publication of the Town Council's Open Spaces Strategy; and,
3. That a policy on the installation (and ongoing emptying) is created by Officers to inform residents and guide future requests.

**SC139 COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer concerning upcoming events and initiatives.

Members welcomed community engagement regarding In Bloom planting at the flowerbed near to Langdale Hall and a town-wide Heritage Open Day event post Covid-19. There was also agreement on running the Council's Christmas competitions this year and commemorating the Queen's Platinum Jubilee as a Town Council in 2022.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the report be noted; and,
2. That the Town Council allows the Witney Horticultural Society to plant the flowerbed adjacent to Langdale Hall; and,
3. That the Town Council wishes to run a community engagement event for Heritage Open Day this year promoting local eateries, breweries and food producers; and,



4. That the Town Council should run the usual three Christmas competitions: Civic Christmas Card, Christmas Light and Mayor's Carol Service song sheet. The first two of these being run online and the latter being offered to residents in the town's residential and care homes; and,
5. That the Town Council establishes a task and finish group to organise the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations in 2022, membership being confirmed at the Annual Council Meeting.

**SC140 WITNEY CARNIVAL**

The Committee received and considered a request from the Witney Carnival Committee for a grant of £4000 towards the 2021 event.

Members were supportive of the event and recognised that the community would be looking forward to such events this summer. There was, however, still uncertainty on the Covid-19 pandemic roadmap to normality. The Town Council had lost income in the last year and would not want to exacerbate that by pledging additional funding if the event may get cancelled.

It was possible individual elements of the Carnival could be funded or the Town Council could procure them directly but a budget would first need to be located and it was not possible to make a decision at this meeting without knowing where the funding could be budgeted from.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the grant request from the Witney Carnival Committee be noted; and,
2. That Witney Town Council supports the Carnival and refers this request to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee to see if a budget above the £1000 already committed can be found.

**SC141 NATIONAL AUTISM AWARENESS MONTH**

The Committee received and considered a request from Guideposts for the Town Council to support National Autism Awareness month in April.

Members welcomed the initiative and agreed the Council should support the Awareness month in April.

**RESOLVED:**

That Witney Town Council supports National Autism Awareness month in April by sharing a purpose made video on its communication platforms, provided by Guideposts.

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The meeting closed at: 7.04 pm

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Chair

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

**Held on Monday, 22 March 2021**

**At 6.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom**

**Present:**

Councillor L Ashbourne (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	V Gwatkin
	O Collins	M Jones
	H Eaglestone	R Smith
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
Others:	2 members of the public.	

**F142 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Cllr D Harvey.

**F143 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no interests declared by members at the meeting.

**F144 MINUTES**

The committee received the minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee held on 1 February 2021.

**F145 TO ADOPT AND SIGN AS CORRECT THE MINUTES OF 1ST FEBRUARY 2021**

That the minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 1 February 2021 were a correct record and should be signed by the Chair.

**F146 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF 1ST FEBRUARY 2021**

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 1 February 2021.

**F147 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Committee adjourned for this item.

Ron Spurs, Chair of the Witney Carnival Committee addressed the Committee on agenda item 7, regarding its financial request towards this year's Carnival.

Eric Marshall of the Witney Music Festival addressed the Committee on agenda item 12 (a), regarding its request for financial request towards an event this summer.

*The meeting reconvened following Public Participation*

**F148 FINANCE REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk concerning financial implications from the Council's spending committees in the previous cycle.

Members were in agreement that additional funds should be allocated to the Corn Exchange refurbishment project to ensure the best possible outcome of the project.

The Committee also discussed the request for £4000 from the Witney Carnival Committee towards this year's event, referred by the Stronger Communities Committee. Members were wholly supportive of the Carnival which would be a welcome relief for families this summer and an underspend in the discretionary grants budget for 2020-21 had been identified.

There were however still some concerns that the Council would risk losing funds should the lockdown roadmap vary, and the event be cancelled. The Carnival Committee had advised it would not enter into any contracts and would be willing to work with the Council to ensure there was minimal financial risk.

As there was another event also requesting funding it was agreed that the Carnival Committee be awarded 50% of its requested amount, totalling £2,000, this increasing to 65%, totalling £2,600 depending on the outcome of later grant applications. This seemed the fairest way of dispersing the underspend, superseding the original budgets for either event in 2021-22.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the report be noted; and,
2. That the recommendations from the spending committees be approved and specifically the request for an additional £2000.00 from the Corn Exchange Working Party to cover professional fees for the phase two refurbishment be agreed; and,
3. That Witney Town Council agrees to cover at least 50% (£2000.00) of the grant request from the Witney Carnival towards this year's event. This figure increased to £2,600 which was 65% following the dispersal of other grant requests later in the meeting; and,
4. That this be funded from an underspend of the discretionary grants budget 2020-21.

**F149 DISCRETIONARY GRANT APPLICATIONS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning discretionary grant applications from Oxfordshire Association of Blind, Life Education Wessex & Thames Valley and Carterton Gymnastics Club.

Members were supportive all three applications and were curious if Life Education Wessex would be delivering their training to other primary schools in Witney. While the Carterton Gymnastics Club would clearly be used by Witney residents, the maximum award of a grant was

£500 and could not be increased. Members agreed the policy will be looked at in the new financial year so a further application could be made at that time.

Having now made these additional grant awards the Officers were able to confirm the balance remaining in the discretionary grants budget – which had previously been agreed to roll over to the next financial year and would now be earmarked for the Witney Carnival and Witney Music Festival events if were able to go ahead COVID-19 permitting.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the report of the Deputy Town Clerk be noted; and,
2. That the Oxfordshire Association of Blind be awarded the sum of £500; and,
3. That Life Education Wessex be awarded the sum of £300; and,
4. That Carterton Gymnastics Club be awarded the sum of £500; and,
5. That these grants be awarded under the General Power of Competence; and;
6. That the request from Witney Educational Foundation to be linked to the Town Council's website be accepted; and
7. That the correspondence from Witney Pride and Dance for Life be noted.

**F150 GRANT REQUEST - WITNEY MUSIC FESTIVAL**

The Committee received a funding request from Witney Music Festival towards an event in Witney during the summer of 2021.

Members had heard that a venue for the event was proving problematic but were supportive and had identified an underspent budget where funds could be awarded from. As there were two events vying for the funding it was agreed that both would receive 65% of the amount requested.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the Town Council pledges 65% totalling £9,750 of the requested £15,000 towards this event; and,
2. That this is awarded from an underspend in the discretionary grants budget 2020-21.

**F151 EXTENSION TO FOOTBALL SEASON AND TRAINING - POLICY & FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations & Estates Advisor concerning the extension of the football season and requests for training pitches throughout the summer.

This issue had been referred from the Sport & Play Committee at its meeting on 1 March 2021 (minute SP101) and there was consensus that a delicate balancing act would be required. The initial proposals on how this could be accommodated had been forwarded to the Oxfordshire FA who had welcomed them and passed the information onto the clubs. There was agreement that

the proposals contained in the report offered the best compromise the Council could make to accommodate matches, training, cricket and pitch renovations.

Members noted these arrangements would only apply for the summer of 2020, in response to the pandemic and clubs should initially book the Witney ATP, as requested by the Oxfordshire F.A, before booking training on the Council's pitches.

There was some concern on the potential charge for training, but members understood that maintaining and marking out pitches for the extension would result in a significant, unbudgeted charge to the Council. It was agreed that a nominal fee of £15 per pitch for training, which equated to approximately half the cost of a junior pitch hire would off-set some of these costs; more than one team would also be able to use a pitch at a time. If a club could not afford the training costs, they could submit a grant form to the Council for consideration but there was still the opportunity that clubs could use King George's and Eton Close recreation areas free of charge.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the report be noted; and,
2. That Witney Town Council charges a nominal fee of £15 per training session on marked pitches at Burwell, the Leys and West Witney Recreation Grounds; and,
3. That Witney Town Council writes to West Oxfordshire District Council asking how it can assist with these issues, in particular regarding subsidised use of the Witney ATP for football clubs; and,
4. That Witney Town Council writes to the Oxfordshire Football Association and individual football clubs explaining the situation with pitches this summer, particularly highlighting the offer of free as well as chargeable training spaces; and,
5. That these arrangements are for the summer of 2021 only, in response to the issues arising from the Covid-19 Pandemic.

**F152 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk with associated payment schedules, bank statements and reconciliations.

**RESOLVED:**

1. that the report be noted;
2. that the bank reconciliations and bank statements be noted;
3. that the following schedules of payments be approved:

Cheque No's	In the sum of:	Account
DDs and Standing Orders	£3,824.76	General CB 1
Cheques 32950—32974, DDs and	£139,823.39	Imprest CB 2

Standing Orders		
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F153 **INTERIM AUDIT REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the Interim Audit Report for 2020-21 from the Council's internal auditors, Accounting Solutions.

Members heard that the audit had been carried out remotely and were satisfied with the findings given the difficult circumstances of the last year.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Interim Audit Report for 2020-21 prepared by the Councillors internal auditor be noted.

F154 **EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL CONTROL: CORPORATE & FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT 2020/21**

The Committee received and considered the Corporate & Financial Risk Assessment, policy and accompanying report of the Town Clerk.

Members were advised this was a requirement of the annual audit to ensure effective internal controls were in place. The Action Plan identified and flagged risks to the Council which would be circulated to current and newly appointed officers to ensure mitigating measures where possible.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Risk Management Policy and Corporate & Financial Risk Assessment for 2020-21 be noted and endorsed by Witney Town Council.

F155 **BANKING ARRANGEMENTS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk concerning the Council's banking arrangements.

Members agreed that the arrangements should be amended to reflect the new staffing changes at the Council. It was suggested that recommendations proposing members of this committee as signatories should be finalised at the Annual Meeting of the Council due to possible membership changes at that time.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the report be noted; and,
2. That the Deputy Town Clerk be listed as a cheque signatory on the Barclays Bank Imprest Account and being able to sign cheques up to £5,000;
3. That the Responsible Finance Officer and in their absence the Administrative Support Assistant: Policy, Governance & Finance, is set-up to be able to cash cheques up to £500 at the local Barclays Bank branch to replenish the Council's petty cash account;

**That the following items be agreed but finalised at the Annual Meeting of the Town Council on 12 May 2021.**

4. That the Members of the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee be authorised signatories on Barclays Bank mandates and if necessary two members be named to be able to act on behalf of the Council – in the absence of the Town Clerk, should the need arise;
5. That Members of the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee be authorised signatories on the CCLA Accounts and that in particular two are named to act on behalf of the Council – in the absence of the Town Clerk, should the need arise;
6. That the Town Clerk is also listed on the bank mandate for the Barclays Bank General and Business Premium Account as being able to deal with transfers between accounts as well as setting up direct debits;
7. The implementation of online banking with the Council's current banking provider, Barclays Bank PLC, be agreed subject to the amendments to the Council's Financial Regulations, which will be presented to a future meeting of this Committee.

**F156 INSURANCE RENEWAL 2021/22**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk concerning the Town Council's insurance renewal.

Members noted the longstanding service provided by Zurich but wanted to assure the best possible deal had been received to protect the Council's finances. There was discussion on whether to include terrorism cover and observations on the property details in the attached schedule.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the report be noted; and,
2. That the Town Council delegates the negotiation of the insurance renewal to the Town Clerk; and,
3. That the cover, including terrorism terms should be with Zurich Municipal for a period of three years.

**F157 YOUTH FUNDING GRANT 2020-21**

The Committee received update reports from Got2B CIC, Home-Start Oxford and Junior parkrun concerning projects funded by the Town Council's Youth Funding Award in 2020.

Members welcomed the updates, as part of the grants review and monitoring criteria, and were pleased to hear how the funds were making a difference to the youth of Witney.

**RESOLVED:**

That the update reports from Got2B CIC, Home-Start Oxford and Junior parkrun be noted.



**F158    ANNUAL TOWN MEETING**

The Committee received a verbal update from the Town Clerk on the possible date and format of this year's Annual Town Meeting.

This item had been deferred from the last meeting of this Committee held in February 2021, for further consideration in light of upcoming relaxation in COVID restrictions and the roadmap. A provisional date of 26<sup>th</sup> May had previously been set. Although a face-to-face meeting would be beneficial for the electorate, there were concerns that this would place attendees at risk and the numbers would be severely reduced due to ongoing pandemic lockdown restrictions. The Town Clerk offered to seek advice from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) on this issue and the legalities around holding it.

**RESOLVED:**

That the decision on the date and format of the 2021 Annual Town Meeting be delegated to the Town Clerk and Leader of the Town Council.

**F159    EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED:**

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

**F160    WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND**

The Committee received and considered the confidential report of the Project Officer concerning temporary facilities and the club house at West Witney Sports Ground.

Officers had reviewed this project and following a recommendation from the Sport & Play Committee that temporary changing facilities should be F.A Compliant, the cost and timeframe for delivery had made this option impossible to deliver before 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

Members were disappointed and agreed the only option available for sports clubs this summer would be for the compliance work detailed in previous meetings to be undertaken at the earliest opportunity. There was agreement that detailed elements could be shared, carried out and paid for by each party before 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021. This would result in the facilities being compliant until further funding could be sourced in the next two years.

It was agreed that rental charges up until 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021 should be subsidised by the Town Council and further dialogue would be needed as soon as possible on the above course of action.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the confidential report be noted; and,
2. That Witney Town Council works with West Witney Sports & Social Club to share the outstanding compliance issues to bring the club back and changing facilities into use in time

for 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021, on the proviso that the clubhouse will be closed in 2 years and during that time the Town Council will work with other agencies and partners to secure funding for a new facility; and,

3. That each party pays for their identified works as detailed; and,
4. That Witney Town Council subsidises the rent at West Witney Sports & Social Club until 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021; and,
5. That the Town Clerk contacts the Club at the earliest opportunity to discuss these matters.

*Cllr M Jones left the meeting at 8.07pm.*

**F161 PROPERTY AND LEGAL MATTERS**

The Committee received and considered the confidential report of the Town Clerk concerning the Town House in Market Square, Windrush Cemetery access, Park Road Play Area and Park Road Allotments.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the confidential report of the Town Clerk be noted; and,
2. That the Town Clerk continues negotiations with Cottsway Housing on the lease for Park Road Play Area; and,
3. That the tenure on allotment land at Park Road be given back to Cottsway Housing as owners, with a request that a biodiversity space is created.

*The Committee adjourned at 8.26pm to hold a meeting of the Personnel Sub-Committee.*

*The Committee reconvened at 8.58pm.*

**F162 STAFFING MATTERS**

The Committee received and considered the verbal of update from the Chair of the Personnel Sub-Committee following its earlier meeting.

Members also received the minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meetings held on 1, 3, 10, 17 & 24 February 2021 and 18 March 2021.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the verbal update from the Chair of the Personnel Sub-Committee be noted.
2. That minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meetings held on 1, 3, 10, 17 & 24 February 2021 and 18 March 2021, and recommendations therein be agreed.

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The meeting closed at: 9.00 pm

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Chair

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## FULL COUNCIL

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**Date:** 12 April 2021

**Title:** Mayor's Report

**Contact Officer:** Deputy Town Clerk – Adam Clapton

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### FEBRUARY 2021 – APRIL 2021

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

Rotary End Polio Now event – crocuses  
Opening of Community Larder

### REPRESENTING and PROMOTING WITNEY

Oxford European Association reception with Lord Mayor of Oxford

### KEY EVENTS AND COUNCIL ACTIVITY

Commonwealth Day = Flag raising  
National Day of Reflection

### RAISING FUNDS

Promoting fundraising for Homestart and Guideposts  
Promoting Witney Baby Bank

Mayor's Charities 2020-21:

- Homestart
- Got2B
- Guideposts - Witney

Prepared by:

*Cllrs Joy Aitman & Liz Duncan*



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

**Luke Hall MP**

*Minister of State for Regional Growth and Local  
Government*

**Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local  
Government**

Fry Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

Council Leaders  
Principal Councils in England

Tel: 0303 444 3440

Email: [luke.hall@communities.gov.uk](mailto:luke.hall@communities.gov.uk)

[www.gov.uk/mhclg](http://www.gov.uk/mhclg)

25 March 2021

Dear Colleague,

## **LOCAL AUTHORITY MEETINGS**

It is just over a year to the day since the Prime Minister asked us all to stay at home, and local authorities across England have risen magnificently to the challenges of this period. There has been a dramatic shift in your day-to-day operations, alongside new difficulties and demands, and I commend the efforts of all councillors and officers in supporting your communities and ensuring vital business continues during these unprecedented times.

As you will be aware, The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 do not apply to meetings on or after 7 May 2021.

Extending the regulations to meetings beyond May 7 would require primary legislation. The Government has considered the case for legislation very carefully, including the significant impact it would have on the Government's legislative programme which is already under severe pressure in these unprecedented times. We are also mindful of the excellent progress that has been made on our vaccination programme and the announcement of the Government's roadmap for lifting Covid-19 restrictions. Given this context, the Government has concluded that it is not possible to bring forward emergency legislation on this issue at this time.

As outlined in the Government's Spring 2021 Covid-19 Response, our aim is for everyone aged 50 and over and people with underlying health conditions to have been offered a first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine by 15 April, and a second dose by mid-July. While local authorities have been able to hold meetings in person at any time during the pandemic with appropriate measures in place, the successful rollout of the vaccine and the reduction in cases of Covid-19 should result in a significant reduction in risk for local authority members meeting in person from May 7, as reflected in the Government's plan to ease Covid-19 restrictions over the coming months.

I recognise there may be concerns about holding face-to-face meetings. Ultimately it is for local authorities to apply the Covid-19 guidance to ensure meetings take place safely, but we have updated our guidance on the safe use of council buildings to highlight ways in which you can, if necessary, minimise the risk of face-to-face meetings, and we will work with

sector representative bodies to ensure that local authorities understand the guidance and are aware of the full range of options available to them.

You can find the updated guidance here: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-council-buildings/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-council-buildings](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-council-buildings/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-council-buildings).

These options would include use of your existing powers to delegate decision making to key individuals such as the Head of Paid Service, as these could be used these to minimise the number of meetings you need to hold if deemed necessary. Additionally, some of you will be able to rely on single member decision making without the need for cabinet meetings if your constitution allows.

While I appreciate that a greater number of authorities will be subject to elections this year due to the postponement of the 2020 elections, those councils who are not subject to elections could also consider conducting their annual meetings prior to 7 May, and therefore do so remotely while the express provision in current regulations apply. As you will know, councils who are subject to elections are statutorily required to hold their annual meeting within 21 days of the elections. The Government's roadmap proposes that organised indoor meetings (e.g. performances, conferences) are permitted from 17 May, subject to Covid secure guidelines and capacity rules. On this basis, councils should consider the extent to which their annual meetings (and any other meetings) can operate on the same basis as other local institutions in their area, taking into account their individual circumstances and requirements.

If your council is concerned about holding physical meetings you may want to consider resuming these after 17 May, at which point it is anticipated that a much greater range of indoor activity can resume in line with the Roadmap, such as allowing up to 1,000 people to attend performances or sporting events in indoor venues, or up to half-capacity (whichever is lower).

Finally, while you do have a legal obligation to ensure that the members of the public can access most of your meetings, I would encourage you to continue to provide remote access to minimise the need for the public to attend meetings physically until at least 21 June, at which point it is anticipated that all restrictions on indoor gatherings will have been lifted in line with the Roadmap. However, it is for individual local authorities to satisfy themselves that they have met the requirements for public access.

I am grateful for the efforts that local authorities have made to allow remote meetings in their area and recognise that there has been a considerable investment of time, training and technology to enable these meetings to take place, and I am aware that some authorities, though by no means all, have made calls for the Government to make express provision for remote meetings beyond the scope of the pandemic. I am today launching a call for evidence on the use of current arrangements and to gather views on the question of whether there should be permanent arrangements and if so, for which meetings. There are many issues to consider and opinions on the detailed questions vary considerably. This will establish a clearer evidence base of opinion and enable all the areas to be considered before further decisions are made. The Government will consider all responses carefully before deciding to how to proceed on this issue.



I am copying this letter to the Mayor of London, the chairs of the Local Government Association and the National Association of Local Councils, as well as the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in respect of other authorities covered by the current meetings regulations, including fire and rescue authorities, police and crime panels, national park authorities, the Broads Authority, and conservation boards.

Yours sincerely,



**LUKE HALL MP**

**Cc.** Rt Hon Priti Patel MP, Home Secretary  
Rt. Hon. George Eustice MP, Environment Secretary  
Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London  
Cllr. James Jamieson, LGA Chairman  
Cllr. Sue Baxter, NALC Chairman

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## FULL COUNCIL COMMITTEE

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**Date:** Monday, 12 April 2021

**Title:** Contingency Plan & Delegations – Post May 7<sup>th</sup> – Lawful Decision Making

**Contact Officer:** Town Clerk - Sharon Groth

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### Background

The purpose of this report is to

1. Consider alternatives to virtual meetings and/or face to face meetings but ensuring the Council's decision making is lawful;
2. In the likelihood of not being able to hold safe face to face meetings - to reaffirm the Town Clerk/Proper Officer's delegations as set out in statute, and within the Council's Standing Orders (SO 26 applies) for dealing with urgent and routine matters, along with the delegations previously agreed;
3. agree a process for continuing dealing with planning and licensing applications in the Council's role of consultee; and
4. if appropriate, agree to set up an emergency committee with delegated responsibility to deal with any urgent matters generally dealt with by Committees and Full Council, which cannot be dealt with under Standing Order 26.

### Current Position

From recent email communications and earlier agenda items Members will be aware of the uncertainty around meetings of the Council being held safely after 7 May. As legislation and guidance currently stands there is an expectation that meetings will return to be held face to face.

Officers continue to follow Government Guidance - *the Roadmap out of Lockdown* and the advice of Council advisors – NALC/OALC and other credible information providers.

Attached is information from OALC.

### Virtual Council Meetings – discontinued

Central Government did not extend the ability for Parish and Town Councils to hold virtual meetings under the Local Authorities & Police & Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority & Police & Crime Panels Meetings) (England & Wales) Regulations 2020. See the attached statement from the LGA.

The continuation of the Town Council meetings is subject to being able to prepare the administration as well as having enough Councillors to ensure the lawful decision-making processes of the Town Council can continue.

It is a legal requirement that all Council and committee meetings must be open to the public (except for discussion of sensitive matters). Therefore, either the meeting takes place with members of the public attending if they wish, or it is cancelled.

Obviously, Councillors can choose not to attend. Full Council meetings do obviously take place in the Corn Exchange where arguably there is sufficient distance between the public and the Council members to reduce the risk of infection, however at this point in time not all age brackets have received their first vaccination and therefore the Council does have a duty of care to its staff as well as the members of the public and themselves as Councillors.

There currently is a High Court challenge being considered on 19 April 2021 by the Lawyers in Local Government, Association of Democratic Services and Hertfordshire County Council who declare that the Councils already have the powers needed to hold online meetings. The timescales for an outcome and whether there would still be a requirement for an act of parliament to enact any further changes is unknown.

### **Dealing with Planning Applications**

Members will be aware that the Council is a consultee on planning and licensing applications, and due to tight timescales in the planning process the Committee meetings 3 weekly. Under the first lockdown prior to the virtual meetings being agreed as lawful planning applications were dealt with by the same committee by email. The Town Clerk would suggest that this process is re-implemented until meetings can safely return to face to face or virtual.

### **Year End Accounts and the adoption of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return**

AGAR/Year end accounts ending 31 March 2021 the deadline for the adoption of this year's accounts has returned to 30 June 2021 (temporary extended last year to 29 September 2020). This requires a formal Council meeting to adopt it. There is a meeting scheduled for 28 June 2021 and it is hoped that this meeting will be able to proceed if only to agree and adopt the year end accounts.

### **Delegations to the Town Clerk/Proper Officer**

As the Town Clerk/Proper Officer of the Council there are already delegations within her job description and in statute, however given the uncertainty of future meetings at this stage, in order for the Council to function going forward it is necessary to have a contingency and agree at this Council Meeting the formation of an emergency committee with delegated powers to deal with urgent matters that are beyond the remit of the Town Clerk and simply can't wait until face to face meetings can resume safely or there is a ruling that virtual meetings can continue.

All Members should be reassured that this is not an opportunity to vote through any 'pet' projects without scrutiny – it is simply a mechanism to be put in place to support the Town

Clerk and ensure that urgent decisions can be made accordingly so that the Council's routine business can continue to operate.

In the first instance the provision within the Council's Standing Orders should be invoked accordingly:

## **26. DELEGATION OF URGENT AND ROUTINE MATTERS**

(a) There shall be delegated to the Town Clerk the authority to act in respect of any function of the council on a matter, which in his or her opinion does not admit of delay. This delegated authority shall only be exercised in consultation with the Leader or Deputy Leader.

(b) There shall be delegated to the Town Clerk the authority to act in respect of any function of a committee or sub-committee, which in his or her opinion either does not admit of delay or is routine. This delegated authority shall only be exercised in consultation with the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the committee or sub-committee within whose terms of reference the particular function lies.

(c) Each exercise of delegated authority under this standing order shall be reported for information to the next meeting of the committee or subcommittee within whose terms of reference the particular function lies and to Council.

(d) The Town Clerk shall notify all members of any action taken under this standing order.

(e) The delegations in this standing order are in addition to and without prejudice to the powers of the council or its committees to arrange for the discharge of any of its functions by a sub-committee or an officer.

Furthermore, the Scheme of delegation agreed in June 2019 states:

### **2. Proper Officer**

2.1 The Town Clerk shall be the Proper Officer of the Council and as such is specifically authorised to:

- (1) To receive declarations of acceptance of office.
- (2) To receive and record notices disclosing personal and prejudicial interests.
- (3) To receive and retain plans and documents.
- (4) To sign notices or other documents on behalf of the Council.
- (5) To receive copies of by-laws made by the unitary authority.
- (6) To certify copies of by-laws made by the Council.

(7) To sign summonses to attend meetings of the Council.

2.2 In addition, the Town Clerk has the delegated authority to undertake the following matters on behalf of the Council:

- (1) The day to day administration of services, together with routine inspection and control.
- (2) Day to day supervision and control of all staff employed by the Council, including recruitment.
- (3) Authorisation of routine expenditure within the agreed budget.
- (4) Emergency expenditure up to £20,000 outside the agreed budget.

2.3 Delegated actions of the Town Clerk shall be in accordance with Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and this Scheme of Delegation and with directions given by the Council from time to time.

### **Environmental impact**

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

### **Risk**

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

Without a contingency plan for urgent decision making in lieu of not being able to hold meetings of the Council and its Committees this may impede the continuation of Council business in a timely manner. Having a documented structure for delegations to the Town Clerk and an Emergency Committee ensures that the urgent decision making is lawful.

### **Financial implications**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

### **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note this report and consider the following as temporary measures until the Council and its Committees can return to safe face to face meetings or other methods of being able to meet and make decisions lawfully:

1. agree emergency measures that if it is not possible to convene a meeting of the Council or Committee in reasonable time or where restrictions are in place, the Town Clerk (or in her absence the Deputy Town Clerk) shall have delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of the Council where such decision cannot be reasonably deferred and must be made in order to comply with a commercial or statutory deadline. The delegation does not extend to matters expressly reserved to the council in legislation or in its Standing Orders or Financial Regulations. Any decision made

under this delegation must be recorded in writing and must be published in accordance with the relevant regulations.

2. reaffirm the Town Clerk/Proper Officer's delegations as set out in statute, and within the Council's Standing Orders (SO 26 applies) for dealing with urgent and routine matters, along with the delegations agreed last year;
3. agree the process for continuing dealing with planning and licensing applications in the Council's role of consultee as detailed in the above report;
4. if appropriate, agree to set up an emergency committee with delegated responsibility to deal with any urgent matters generally dealt with by Committees and Full Council, which cannot be dealt with under recommendation 1 above;

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**From:** info@oalc.org.uk <info@oalc.org.uk>  
**Sent:** 11 March 2021 13:50  
**To:** Sharon Groth <sharon.groth@witney-tc.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** Council Meetings post 7th May

Dear Sharon Groth,

We know you are probably increasingly concerned about the lack of clarity about how to hold meetings after 7th May when the Regulations [https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/392/pdfs/uksi\\_20200392\\_en.pdf](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/392/pdfs/uksi_20200392_en.pdf) allowing virtual meetings come to an end.

We share that concern and uncertainty and have lobbied all the Oxfordshire MP's to allow virtual meetings to continue. We would prefer them to continue for at least for one more year until life is more certain, a greater percentage of the population is vaccinated and confidence in gathering in an enclosed space with strangers returns.

The lobbying continues, please see attached a letter from the LGA to Rt Hon Robert Jenrick, Secretary of State, MHCLG which NALC partnered with. In addition Lawyers in Local Government have joined with the Association of Democratic Services Officers to seek a court declaration that virtual meetings be allowed to continue under existing legislation.

[https://www.lawyersinlocalgovernment.org.uk/news\\_articles/lhg-adso-serve-pre-action-letter-on-secretary-of-state](https://www.lawyersinlocalgovernment.org.uk/news_articles/lhg-adso-serve-pre-action-letter-on-secretary-of-state)

The government's case being that there wasn't sufficient parliamentary time to introduce new primary legislation.

In the continuing absence of a solid statement from central government it would seem sensible to start planning for a possible return to physical meetings but in the hope that it won't be necessary. Hold the Annual Meeting of the Parish Council and the Annual Parish Meeting virtually (if you don't have elections this year) by the 6th May. It is difficult to try and bring items or projects forward such is the reactive nature of much of the work of parish councils. We suggest you have one eye on the horizon and try to be prepared but hope that your planning won't be needed.

NALC has general advice on its website here <https://www.nalc.gov.uk/coronavirus#preparing-for-the-possible-return-of-face-to-face-meetings> but you know your village hall or usual meeting place better than NALC. Whether the 2m rule will still apply after 7th May is uncertain but natural caution would suggest if a return to physical meetings is necessary you will need to apply sensible covid safety measures:

- Providing hand sanitiser to those entering the meeting room and making sure hand sanitiser is readily available in the room itself
- Staggering arrival and exit times for staff, councillors and members of the public
- Placing seating at least 2-metres apart
- Ensuring everyone wears face masks
- Holding paperless meetings
- If papers are provided, people should be discouraged from sharing with others and asked to take the papers with them at the end of the meeting to minimise how many people handle the papers
- Arranging seating so people are not facing each other directly

- Choosing a venue with good ventilation, including opening windows and doors where possible
- Choosing a large enough venue to allow distancing – this may mean choosing a different venue to what the council used before.
- The council (or venue owner/operator) will need to identify the venue's maximum capacity in their risk assessment, taking into account the need for social distancing. Consider how the council will ensure this capacity is not exceeded and how it will manage the situation if more people wish to attend than capacity allows. For example, could meetings be live-streamed or could members of the public submit questions via email?
- If the venue has an NHS QR code to support test and trace then all attendees should register using that app, for those without access to the app they should register attendance in line with the venue's test and trace procedure. NB all venues in hospitality, the tourism and leisure industry, close contact services, community centres and village halls must have a [test and trace procedure](#)
- Venues must conform with the government guidance for [multi-purpose community facilities](#) and for [council buildings](#). If the venue is run by the council then the council must take responsibility for this, otherwise, the council can ask the venue to provide confirmation that they do conform to this guidance
- The council must understand and ensure it is acting in compliance with the latest government [safer workplaces guidance](#)

Kind regards

Christine

County Officer

Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils

Town Hall, Market Place, Wallingford, OX10 0EG

Email – [info@oalc.org.uk](mailto:info@oalc.org.uk)

Your query may be answered by looking at our website [www.oalc.org.uk](http://www.oalc.org.uk)



From the Chairman of the Association  
Cllr James Jamieson

Partners to this letter:

The Centre for Governance and Scrutiny  
The National Association of Local Councils  
The Society for Innovation, Technology and Modernisation

Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP  
Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government  
4th floor, Fry Building  
2 Marsham Street  
London  
SW1P 4DF

4 March 2021

Dear Robert

### **Extending the ability for councils to hold meetings remotely**

We are writing further to our letter of 12 October 2020 to reiterate the clear case for extending the ability for councils to hold meetings flexibly beyond May 2021 while we continue to manage the COVID-19 pandemic and to make this a permanent power open to councils to utilise.

This letter is also written in support of the 'letter before claim' jointly penned by Hertfordshire County Council, Lawyers in Local Government and the Association of Democratic Services Officers advising you of their intention of issuing a claim for declarations that local authorities already have the power to hold member meetings remotely, either wholly or partly. The declaration would be a way of addressing this issue without the need for legislative change. Without this primary or secondary legislation will be needed and this is time critical as the temporary powers lapse on 7 May.

Councils have used the vital powers granted by the Remote Meetings Regulations made under the Coronavirus Act 2020 to continue to do business while Covid lockdown restrictions have been in place. As restrictions on meeting indoors are likely to continue in some form beyond May 7 it is imperative that the powers are extended, particularly as full council meetings will need to be held following the May local elections.

However, in using the flexibility to hold meetings remotely to continue to operate at a time of national crisis, many councils report considerable advantages in retaining the option for councillors to hold or join meetings remotely in the long term to:

- Allow access to the role of councillor for a wider range of people, for example those with childcare or caring responsibilities and those with mobility issues and disabilities;
- Promote attendance and access to meetings in predominantly rural areas where public transport may be poor or difficult, where time taken travelling to a meeting is a big overhead on councillors and members of the public;
- Reduce the environmental impact of travel to meetings;
- Allow for more effective decision making for urgent matters;
- Retain the flexibility to continue to transact business in times of emergency in the future such as adverse weather, flooding transport disruption; and

- Retain the benefits that many councils have experienced of significantly more participation by the public in virtual meetings. The ability to record, archive and post meetings online is considered by many councils to increase transparency and openness of council decision making for the public.

While not all councils will wish to continue to hold remote meetings once COVID restrictions are removed, we support the continuance of flexibility for councils to hold remote meetings in the future. This should include the option of hybrid, in-person and remote meetings to encourage participation by a wider number of councillors and members of the public in council business and allow council business to continue in times of emergency.

We hope the government will support the application as it provides an option to allow for the continuation of remote meeting without the need for further legislation. However, if primary or secondary legislation is needed, we would ask that it should be brought forward in time to extend the power to meet remotely beyond 7 May. If you think it would be helpful to meet to discuss the way forward please contact Cheryll Gardiner ([cheryll.gardiner@local.gov.uk](mailto:cheryll.gardiner@local.gov.uk)/07789 512173) to arrange a convenient time and date.

Yours sincerely,



Cllr James Jamieson  
Chairman

cc: Chloe Smith MP, Minister of State for the Constitution and Devolution, Cabinet Office





# LGA statement on virtual council meeting powers not being extended

"Holding face to face council meetings, with supporting staff, could easily involve up to 200 people in one room even before adding in members of the public and reporters. This is likely to be a significant challenge with councils, for example, having to source larger venues in order to be able to host meetings with social distancing measures in place, such as full council meetings which will need to be held following the May local elections."

25 Mar 2021



Responding to the announcement that emergency legislation allowing virtual council meetings will not be extended, Cllr James Jamieson, Chairman of the Local Government Association, said:

“This decision is extremely disappointing. The Government’s own roadmap out of lockdown states that indoor gatherings or events - organised by a business, charity, public body or similar organisation - cannot be organised until May 17 at the earliest. Yet councils will be unable to hold remote meetings from May 7. MPs will retain the right to participate remotely until at least June 21 but the powers-that-be in the House of Commons will not make time available to legislate for councillors to do the same.

“The case is clear for the ability for councils to continue to be able to hold meetings flexibly. We urge the Government to reverse this decision and not force councils to have to hold COVID-19 secure face-to-face council meetings until all restrictions are lifted.

“Holding face to face council meetings, with supporting staff, could easily involve up to 200 people in one room even before adding in members of the public and reporters. This is likely to be a significant challenge with councils, for example, having to source larger venues in order to be able to host meetings with social distancing measures in place, such as full council meetings which will need to be held following the May local elections.

“This also risks damaging the gains seen in public participation in remote council meetings during the pandemic and our vital local democratic process.

“Left with no choice, Lawyers in Local Government, the Association of Democratic Services and Hertfordshire County Council have made an application to the Courts to declare that councils already have the powers needed to hold online meetings. The LGA will be providing support in these proceedings as the representative body for councils.”

## Media office contact

Greg Burns

02076643333

[greg.burns@local.gov.uk](mailto:greg.burns@local.gov.uk) [<mailto:greg.burns@local.gov.uk>]



1. Home (<https://www.gov.uk/>)
  2. Regional and local government (<https://www.gov.uk/regional-and-local-government>)
  3. Local government (<https://www.gov.uk/regional-and-local-government/local-government>)
  4. Local authority remote meetings: call for evidence  
(<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-authority-remote-meetings-call-for-evidence>)
- Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-housing-communities-and-local-government>)

Open consultation

# Local authority remote meetings: call for evidence

Published 25 March 2021

## Contents

Scope of the consultation  
Purpose of this call for evidence  
Terminology  
Background  
Questions  
About this consultation  
Personal data

Print this page



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## Scope of the consultation

**Topic of this consultation:** This call for evidence seeks views on the use of the current arrangements which have provided express provision for local authorities to hold meetings remotely or in a hybrid format during the coronavirus pandemic.

**Scope of this consultation:** This call for evidence seeks to understand the experience of local authorities in the whole of the UK regarding remote meetings. This includes authorities in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Scottish authorities had express provision to meet remotely prior to the pandemic, and this call for evidence seeks to understand their experience of remote meetings since their arrangements came into force.

For England, Wales and Northern Ireland, this call for evidence refers to the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/392/contents>) (and the equivalent regulations for Wales and Northern Ireland) under powers granted by section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020. The regulations come into force on 4 April 2020 and apply to meetings taking place before 7 May 2021.

In respect of these regulations, 'local authority' means:

- a county council
- a district council
- a London borough council
- the Common Council of the City of London
- the Greater London Authority
- the Council of the Isles of Scilly
- a parish council
- a joint board continued in being by virtue of section 263(1) of the 1972 Act
- a port health authority constituted under section 2 of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984
- an authority established under section 10 of the Local Government Act 1985
- a joint authority established under Part 4 of the Local Government Act 1985
- a joint committee constituted to be a local planning authority under section 29 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004
- a combined authority established under section 103 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009
- a fire and rescue authority constituted by a scheme under section 2 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 or a scheme to which section 4 of that Act applies, or created by an order under section 4A of that Act
- a National Park authority established under section 63 of the Environment Act 1995
- the Broads Authority established by section 1 of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads Act 1988
- a conservation board established under section 86 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000
- a Mayoral development corporation established under section 198 of the Localism Act 2011

- an urban development corporation established under section 135 of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980
- a parish meeting constituted under section 13 of the Local Government Act 1972
- Transport for London
- Police and crime panels

**Geographical scope:** This call for evidence seeks to understand the experience of local authorities in the whole of the UK regarding remote meetings. This includes authorities in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

Section 78 of the Coronavirus Act applies to local authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland only. After it came into force, each of these administrations used the powers within section 78 to introduce regulations to make express provision for their local authorities to meet remotely before 7 May.

The Welsh Government has since passed the Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021 which comes into force on 1 May and makes express provision for Welsh local authorities to meet remotely.

Scottish local authorities had express provision to meet remotely prior to the pandemic.

If any changes to legislation are made as a result of this call for evidence, they would apply to England only.

**Impact assessment:** If any policy changes are made following this call for evidence they will be subject to appropriate assessment. No impact assessment has been conducted at this time.

## Basic Information

**Body/bodies responsible for the consultation:** The Local Government Stewardship Division in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is responsible for conducting this call for evidence.

**Duration:** This call for evidence will last for 12 weeks from 25 March 2021.

**Enquiries:** For any enquiries about this call for evidence please contact:  
Megan.McKibbin@communities.gov.uk.

**How to respond:** You can only respond to this call for evidence through our online consultation platform, Citizen Space (<https://consult.communities.gov.uk/local-government-stewardship/local-authority-remote-meetings-call-for-evidence>).

## Purpose of this call for evidence

The government would like to gather evidence about the use of the current arrangements for local authorities to meet remotely or in hybrid format, as set out in the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2020/392/contents>) (and the equivalent regulations for Wales and Northern Ireland) under powers granted by section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020.

These regulations came into force on 4 April 2020 and apply to meetings taking place before 7 May 2021. Local authorities in Scotland had express provision to meet remotely prior to the pandemic, and we are also interested to understand their experience of remote meetings since their

arrangements came into force.

The powers in section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020 were brought in specifically to make express provision for local authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to deal with the challenges of holding physical meetings during the coronavirus pandemic. They have helped local authorities to redeploy resources to deal with the pandemic and ensure that essential business continues whilst protecting the health and safety of their members, officers and the public.

We are aware that experience of remote meetings has been varied, and that while the experience of managing and participating in remote meetings has grown considerably during the period since the remote meetings regulations came into force, there have been examples of the difficulties this format has posed for some authorities.

We have received representations from individual local authorities and sector representative organisations making the case for permanent express provision for remote meetings. The government would like to hear from interested parties about the pros and cons of making such arrangements permanent in England and the use of the arrangements to date.

We are particularly interested to receive any quantitative data that can be included to substantiate the responses you make.

## Terminology

Throughout this call for evidence the phrases 'remote meetings' and 'remote meetings arrangements' will be used interchangeably to refer to the express provisions for local authorities to meet remotely or in hybrid format, as set out in the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2020/392/contents>) (and the equivalent regulations for Wales and Northern Ireland) under powers granted by section 78 of the Coronavirus Act 2020.

As Scottish authorities had express provision to meet remotely prior to the pandemic, 'remote meetings' and 'remote meetings arrangements' refers to the equivalent Scottish legislation.

The regulations make express provisions for local authorities to hold meetings remotely, for example through typical digital conference software (e.g. Zoom, Skype, Teams) or telephone conference calls. However, they do not require them to be held remotely or even in a single format. This means, for example, that local authorities can hold 'hybrid' meetings (where some members attend virtually and other members attend in person) and they are also still able to hold fully 'in-person' physical meetings.

You can therefore assume that any reference to 'remote meetings' or 'remote meetings arrangements' also refers to hybrid meetings.

The term 'member' will be used to refer to any elected local authority members covered by the regulations above (and the equivalent legislation for Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland). This includes councillors, directly elected mayors, and police and crime commissioners, and any other relevant local authority members as defined by the legislation.

## Background

While local authorities in Scotland had express provision to meet remotely prior to the coronavirus pandemic, there was no express provision for remote meetings for local authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In 2017, the government consulted on proposals to allow joint committees and combined authorities to hold meetings by video conference

(<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/allowing-joint-committees-and-combined-authorities-to-hold-meetings-by-video-conference>), given the long distances that individual councillors often need to travel in order to attend these meetings.

The government concluded that, with appropriate safeguards to maintain town hall transparency, there are clear benefits to giving local authorities operating joint committees and combined authorities the ability to hold formal meetings by video conference.

These safeguards included not extending the provisions to cover other types of councils, and that remote access should only be permissible from sites suitable for holding a meeting with public access (i.e. from a town hall, not from private dwellings), as there was a risk of undermining visible democratic scrutiny and public debate. However, the government also noted views that remote meetings would also benefit other councils, particularly large rural authorities, and committed to further engage with the sector to understand these views.

Since regulations came into force following the introduction of the Coronavirus Act 2020, express provision was made for local authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to hold meetings before 7 May 2021 remotely (such as through digital conferencing software or telephone conference) so that they can protect their members and comply with public health guidance.

As local authorities have now had extensive experience of conducting remote meetings over the past year, this call for evidence is an opportunity to understand these experiences and inform a decision about whether to make these arrangements permanent. Any permanent change would require primary legislation, and such passage would depend on agreement of Parliament and the timetabling and pressures of Parliamentary business.

## Questions

The government would like to gather evidence about the use of the arrangements that make express provision for local authorities to meet remotely or in hybrid format during the coronavirus pandemic, including the arrangements that existed for Scottish Authorities prior to the pandemic.

Q1. Generally speaking, how well do you feel the current remote meetings arrangements work?

- Very Well
- Well
- Neither well nor poorly
- Poorly
- Very Poorly
- Unsure

While the powers in section 78 of the Coronavirus Act were brought in specifically to help local authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland deal with the challenges of holding meetings during the coronavirus pandemic, the government would also like to hear from interested parties about the pros and cons of making permanent express provision, in whole or in part, for local authorities in England.

Q2. Generally speaking, do you think local authorities in England should have the express ability to hold at least some meetings remotely on a permanent basis?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Beyond having express provision to avoid face-to-face meetings during the coronavirus pandemic, we are aware of feedback from local authorities about additional benefits of being able to hold remote meetings including, but not limited to, the environmental and cost benefits of reduced travel, increased participation from local residents, and the potential to attract more diverse local authority members. We are keen to obtain representative views on the benefits of remote meetings and would particularly welcome any quantitative evidence to support these views.

Q3. What do you think are some of the benefits of the remote meetings arrangements? Please select all that apply.

- More accessible for local authority members
- Reduction in travel time for councillors
- Meetings more easily accessed by local residents
- Greater transparency for local authority meetings
- Documents (e.g. minutes, agendas, supporting papers) are more accessible to local residents and others online
- Easier to chair meetings in an orderly fashion
- A virtual format promotes greater equality in speaking time during meetings
- I do not think there are any benefits to remote meetings
- Other (please specify)

In their representations to us, many local authorities have referenced the cost savings they have achieved through implementing remote meetings, particularly regarding a reduction in travel expenses and accommodation costs.

For example, one upper tier authority has reported that running meetings remotely has enabled them to save in the order of £6,000 per month through reduced travel expenses. We would be interested to receive more quantitative data about the cost savings that have been achieved, including any estimates of the comparative cost of running a remote meeting versus a face-to-face meeting.

Q4. (For local authorities only) Have you seen a reduction in costs since implementing remote meetings in your authority?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Some local authorities have also made reference to the difficulty that some members have had with the remote meeting format, particularly in relation to the difficulties in managing misconduct, the challenges of working with unfamiliar software, and technological issues caused by a poor internet connection. We are keen to obtain representative views on the disadvantages of remote meetings and would particularly welcome any quantitative evidence to support these views.

Q5. What do you think are some of the disadvantages of the remote meetings arrangements, and do you have any suggestions for how they could be mitigated/overcome? Please select all that apply.

- It is harder for members to talk to one another informally
- Meetings are less accessible for local authority members or local residents who have a poor-quality internet connection
- Meetings are less accessible for local authority members or local residents who are unfamiliar with video conferencing/technology
- There is less opportunity for local residents to speak or ask questions
- Some find it more difficult to read documents online than in a physical format
- Debate is restricted by the remote format
- It is more difficult to provide effective opposition or scrutiny in a remote format
- It is more difficult to chair meetings in an orderly fashion
- Virtual meetings can be more easily dominated by individual speakers
- It might enable democratically elected members to live and perform their duties outside their local area on a permanent basis, therefore detaching them from the communities they serve
- It may create too substantial a division between the way national democracy (e.g. in the House of Commons) and local democracy is conducted
- I do not think there are any disadvantages to remote meetings
- Other (please specify)

The government considers that there are also many advantages of holding meetings face-to-face. For example, physical meetings provide numerous opportunities for local authority members to speak with one another informally and build alliances, as well as to encounter local residents in the flesh and listen to their concerns in person.

Additionally, some members have referenced the vast improvement in the quality of debate when there is a lively atmosphere and they are able to make full use of their oratory skills to persuade and influence others. Some may consider remote meetings stifling and that physical meetings are essential to effective democracy and scrutiny.

Q6. What do you think are some of the main advantages of holding face-to-face meetings, as opposed to remote meetings?

If express provision for remote meetings were made permanent, it might be preferable for the government to constrain the meetings or circumstances in which remote meetings can be held to ensure that effective democracy and scrutiny can still take place.

There are some occasions, for example, where a remote meeting format may be seen as more appropriate, such as for smaller sub-committees, meetings convened at short notice, or for meetings where attendees are drawn from a large geographical area i.e. for some joint committees, combined authorities and large rural authorities. On the other hand, there are occasions where a remote meeting format may be viewed as less appropriate, for example larger meetings involving Full Council or an authority's Annual Meeting.

Q7. If permanent arrangements were to be made for local authorities in England, for which meetings do you think they should have the option to hold remote meetings?

- For all meetings
- For most meetings with a few exceptions (please specify)
- Only for some meetings (please specify)
- I think local should be able to decide for themselves which meetings they should have the option to meet remotely
- I do not think local authorities should have the option to hold remote meetings for any meetings
- Unsure

Q8. If permanent arrangements were to be made for local authorities in England, in which circumstances do you think local authorities should have the option to hold remote meetings?

- In any circumstances
- Only in extenuating circumstances where a meeting cannot be held face-to-face or some members would be unable to attend (e.g. severe weather events, coronavirus restrictions)
- I think local authorities should be able to decide for themselves which circumstances they should have the option to meet remotely
- I do not think local authorities should have the option to hold remote meetings under any circumstances
- Other (please specify)
- Unsure

While local authorities have risen magnificently to the challenge of ensuring vital council business continues by conducting meetings remotely during these unprecedented times, there may be concerns that, if the arrangements were to be made permanent, a situation could arise where remote meetings arrangements were used by a ruling party to avoid effective scrutiny or abuse the power in some other way.

Q9. Would you have any concerns if local authorities in England were given the power to decide for themselves which meetings, and in what circumstances, they have the option to hold remote meetings?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Q10. If yes, do you have any suggestions for how your concerns could be mitigated/overcome?

In deciding whether and how remote meetings arrangements may be made permanent for local authorities in England, the government needs to ensure that it has due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty. In particular, the government would need to avoid unlawfully discriminating (either directly or indirectly) against individuals with a protected characteristic, and also consider whether the arrangements advance equality of opportunity or help to foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Many local authorities have spoken of the potential benefits that remote meetings could have for members or potential members with disabilities or young families. However, there are also those for whom remote meetings could pose additional difficulties, for example those with hearing or visual impairments or those more likely to struggle with the technology.

We are keen to consider views on these aspects of remote meetings and would particularly welcome any quantitative evidence to support views provided.

Q11. In your view, would making express provision for English local authorities to meet remotely particularly benefit or disadvantage any individuals with protected characteristics e.g. those with disabilities or caring responsibilities?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

## About this consultation

This call for evidence document and call for evidence process have been planned to adhere to the Consultation Principles issued by the Cabinet Office.

Representative groups are asked to give a summary of the people and organisations they represent, and where relevant who else they have consulted in reaching their conclusions when they respond.

Information provided in response to this call for evidence, including personal data, may be published or disclosed in accordance with the access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA), the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA), the UK General Data Protection



Regulation, and the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

If you want the information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, as a public authority, the Department is bound by the Freedom of Information Act and may therefore be obliged to disclose all or some of the information you provide. In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of the information we will take full account of your explanation, but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, of itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will process your personal data in accordance with the law and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties. A full privacy notice is included below.

Individual responses will not be acknowledged unless specifically requested.

Your opinions are valuable to us. Thank you for taking the time to read this document and respond.

Are you satisfied that this call for evidence has followed the Consultation Principles? If not or you have any other observations about how we can improve the process please contact us via the complaints procedure (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/departments-for-communities-and-local-government/about/complaints-procedure>).

## **Personal data**

The following is to explain your rights and give you the information you are entitled to under the Data Protection Act 2018.

Note that this section only refers to your personal data (your name address and anything that could be used to identify you personally) not the content of your response to the call for evidence.

### **1. The identity of the data controller and contact details of our Data Protection Officer.**

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) is the data controller. The Data Protection Officer can be contacted at [dataprotection@communities.gov.uk](mailto:dataprotection@communities.gov.uk).

### **2. Why we are collecting your personal data.**

Your personal data is being collected as an essential part of the call for evidence process, so that we can contact you regarding your response and for statistical purposes. We may also use it to contact you about related matters.

### **3. Our legal basis for processing your personal data.**

The Data Protection Act 2018 states that, as a government department, MHCLG may process personal data as necessary for the effective performance of a task carried out in the public interest. i.e. a call for evidence.

### **3. With whom we will be sharing your personal data.**

We use a third-party platform, Citizen Space, to collect consultation responses. In the first instance, your personal data will be stored on their secure UK-based servers.

#### **4. For how long we will keep your personal data, or criteria used to determine the retention period.**

Your personal data will be held for two years from the closure of the call for evidence.

#### **5. Your rights, e.g. access, rectification, erasure.**

The data we are collecting is your personal data, and you have considerable say over what happens to it. You have the right:

- a. to see what data we have about you
- b. to ask us to stop using your data, but keep it on record
- c. to ask to have all or some of your data deleted or corrected
- d. to lodge a complaint with the independent Information Commissioner (ICO) if you think we are not handling your data fairly or in accordance with the law. You can contact the ICO at <https://ico.org.uk/> (https://ico.org.uk), or telephone 0303 123 1113.

#### **6. Your personal data will not be sent overseas.**

#### **7. Your personal data will not be used for any automated decision making.**

#### **8. Your personal data will be stored on a secure government IT system.**

Your data will be transferred to our secure government IT system as soon as possible after the consultation has closed, and it will be stored there for the standard two years of retention before it is deleted.

Print this page

## FULL COUNCIL COMMITTEE

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**Date:** Monday, 12 April 2021

**Title:** Members Code of Conduct

**Contact Officer:** Town Clerk - Sharon Groth

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### Background

The External Audit report for 2019/20 identified that that the Council has not reviewed the Code of Conduct for several years – and suggested that an authority of this size should be doing this on an annual basis.

### Current Situation

All parish and town Council's in Oxfordshire have adopted the same Code of Conduct – and this is in order that the Monitoring Officers at the District Council's operate off the same codes for simplicity. Therefore locally there have been no amendments to the code and for that reason the Town Clerk has not felt it necessary to 'rubber stamp' the code each year.

Members will be aware that there have been several consultations on the Code of Conduct and in fact a national code has been drafted for adoption. However, at this stage the Monitoring Officers of the Oxfordshire Districts are waiting on clarification and therefore will not be in a position to adopt the new code until 2022.

In order to comply with the recommendations of the External Auditor the purpose of this report is for the Town Clerk to present to Council the current Oxfordshire Code of Conduct which you all signed up to on election in May 2019 and the by-election in August 2019, for reaffirmation of acceptance and adoption.

### Environmental impact

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

### Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability. Failure to adopt the Oxfordshire Code of Conduct could result in the Council receiving a qualified audit for the year 2020/21.

**Financial implications**

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

**Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and reaffirm the adoption of the Code of Conduct – being the Oxfordshire Code adopted in May 2019.



## **WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

1. This code of conduct is adopted pursuant to the council's duty to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the council.
2. This code applies to you as a member or co-opted member of this council when you act in that role and it is your responsibility to comply with the provisions of this code.

### **Selflessness**

3. You must serve only the public interest and must never improperly confer an advantage or disadvantage on any person including yourself.

### **Objectivity**

4. In carrying out public business you must make decisions on merit, including when making appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards or benefits.

### **Accountability**

5. You are accountable for your decisions and actions to the public and must submit yourself to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to your office.

### **Openness**

6. You must be as open as possible about your actions and those of your council, and must be prepared to give reasons for those actions.

### **Honesty and integrity**

7. You must not place yourself in situations where your honesty and integrity may be questioned, must not behave improperly and must on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour.

### **Leadership**

8. You must promote and support high standards of conduct when serving in your public post, in particular as characterised by the above requirements, by leadership and example in a way that secures or preserves public confidence.

## **General Obligations**

9. You must treat others with respect and ensure that you are aware of and comply with all legal obligations that apply to you as a member or co-opted member of the council and act within the law;
10. You must not bully any person.
11. You must not do anything that compromises or is likely to compromise the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of the council.
12. You must not disclose information given to you in confidence by anyone, or information acquired by you of which you are aware, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature except where:
  - (i) you have the consent of a person authorised to give it;
  - (ii) you are required by law to do so;
  - (iii) the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person, or
  - (iv) the disclosure is:
    - a) reasonable and in the public interest;
    - b) made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the council.
13. You must not improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of your role as a member for your own personal advantage.
14. When making decisions on behalf of or as part of the council you must have regard to any professional advice provided to you by the council's officers.
15. When using or authorising the use by others of the resources of the council:
  - (i) you must act in accordance with the council's reasonable requirements;
  - (ii) you must make sure that you do not use resources improperly for political purposes and do not use them at all for party political purposes.
16. You must, within 28 days of taking office as a member or co-opted member, notify the council's monitoring officer of any disclosable pecuniary interest as defined by regulations made by the Secretary of State, where the pecuniary interest is yours, your spouse's or civil partner's, or is the pecuniary interest of somebody with whom you are living as a husband or wife, or as if you were civil partners.
17. You must disclose the interest at any meeting of the council at which you are present, where you have a disclosable interest in any matter being considered and where the matter is not a 'sensitive interest'.
18. Following any disclosure of an interest not on the council's register or the subject of pending notification, you must notify the monitoring officer of the interest within 28 days beginning with the date of disclosure.

19. Unless dispensation has been granted, you may not participate in any discussion of, vote on, or discharge any function related to any matter in which you have a pecuniary interest as defined by regulations made by the Secretary of State. You must withdraw from the room or chamber when the meeting discusses and votes on the matter.

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1 A “co-opted member” for the purpose of this code is, as defined in the Localism Act section 27 (4) “a person who is not a member of the council but who

a) is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the council, or

b) is a member of, and represents the council on, any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the council;

and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee”.

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2 A “sensitive interest” is described in the Localism Act 2011 as a member or co-opted member of a council having an interest, and the nature of the interest being such that the member or co-opted member, and the council’s monitoring officer, consider that disclosure of the details of the interest could lead to the member or co-opted member, or a person connected with the member or co-opted member, being subject to violence or intimidation.

**Registering and declaring interests**

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## 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 and 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 matter 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 the Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

(\*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:

The council has not reviewed Financial Regulations or Standing Orders during the year and has not reviewed the Code of Conduct for several years. The JPAG Practitioners' Guide Section 1.14 states these should be reviewed frequently which is often considered to be on an Annual Basis for an authority of this size. In particular, whilst the Code of Conduct is based on a model set that has not been updated since last adopted by the Council, this should nonetheless still be reviewed to consider whether it remains appropriate to this authority.

As indicated in the Annual Internal Audit Report and on the Annual Governance Statement, the Council did not perform a full risk assessment during the year. We note this was in part due to unique circumstances in the period under review and also that measures have already been taken to complete the review and avoid a recurrence in the future.

### 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



External Auditor Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Moore'.

Date

19/11/2020

\*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](http://www.nao.org.uk))

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# **WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

## **FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

**Updated March 2021**

### **INDEX**

1. General	2
2. Accounting and audit (internal and external)	4
3. Annual estimates (budget) and forward planning	6
4. Budgetary control and authority to spend	6
5. Banking arrangements and authorisation of payments	8
6. Instructions for the making of payments	11
7. Payment of salaries	14
8. Loans and investments	15
9. Income	15
10. Orders for work, goods and services	16
11. Contracts	17
12. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works	19
13. Stores and equipment	19
14. Assets, properties and estates	19
15. Security	19
16. Insurance	20
17. Risk management	21
18. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations	21

## 1. General

- 1.1. These financial regulations govern the conduct of financial management by the council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the council. Financial regulations are one of the council's three governing policy documents providing procedural guidance for members and officers. Financial regulations must be observed in conjunction with the council's standing orders and any individual financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 1.2. The council is responsible in law for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that the council has a sound system of internal control which facilitates the effective exercise of the council's functions, including arrangements for the management of risk.
- 1.3. The council's accounting control systems must include measures:
  - for the timely production of accounts;
  - that provide for the safe and efficient safeguarding of public money;
  - to prevent and detect inaccuracy and fraud; and
  - identifying the duties of officers.
- 1.4. These financial regulations demonstrate how the council meets these responsibilities and requirements.
- 1.5. At least once a year, prior to approving the Annual Governance Statement, the council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control which shall be in accordance with proper practices.
- 1.6. Deliberate or wilful breach of these Regulations by an employee may give rise to disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.7. Members of council are expected to follow the instructions within these Regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow instructions within these Regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.
- 1.8. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office to be appointed by the council. *[An RFO has been appointed for this council and these regulations will apply accordingly. In the absence of an Officer designated RFO the Town Clerk/Proper Officer will resume the role as appropriate.]*
- 1.9. The RFO together with the Proper Officer of the Council;
  - acts under the policy direction of the council;
  - administers the council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;

- determines on behalf of the council its accounting records and accounting control systems;
  - ensures the accounting control systems are observed;
  - maintains the accounting records of the council up to date in accordance with proper practices;
  - assists the council to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of its resources; and
  - produces financial management information as required by the council.
- 1.10. The accounting records determined by the RFO shall be sufficient to show and explain the council's transactions and to enable the RFO to ensure that any income and expenditure account and statement of balances, or record of receipts and payments and additional information, as the case may be, or management information prepared for the council from time to time comply with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 1.11. The accounting records determined by the RFO shall in particular contain:
- entries from day to day of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which the income and expenditure or receipts and payments account relate;
  - a record of the assets and liabilities of the council; and
  - wherever relevant, a record of the council's income and expenditure in relation to claims made, or to be made, for any contribution, grant or subsidy.
- 1.12. The accounting control systems determined by the RFO shall include:
- procedures to ensure that the financial transactions of the council are recorded as soon as reasonably practicable and as accurately and reasonably as possible;
  - procedures to enable the prevention and detection of inaccuracies and fraud and the ability to reconstruct any lost records;
  - identification of the duties of officers dealing with financial transactions and division of responsibilities of those officers in relation to significant transactions;
  - procedures to ensure that uncollectable amounts, including any bad debts are not submitted to the council for approval to be written off except with the approval of the RFO and that the approvals are shown in the accounting records; and
  - measures to ensure that risk is properly managed.
- 1.13. The council is not empowered by these Regulations or otherwise to delegate certain specified decisions. In particular any decision regarding:

- setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement);
- approving accounting statements;
- approving an annual governance statement;
- borrowing;
- writing off bad debts;
- declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and
- addressing recommendations in any report from the internal or external auditors, shall be a matter for the full council only.

1.14. In addition, the council must through its Policy, Governance & Finance Committee:

- determine and keep under regular review the bank mandate for all council bank accounts;
- approve any grant or a single commitment in excess of £5,000; and
- in respect of the annual salary for any employee have regard to recommendations about annual salaries of employees made by the relevant committee in accordance with its terms of reference.

1.15. In these financial regulations, references to the Accounts and Audit Regulations or 'the regulations shall mean the regulations issued under the provisions of section 27 of the Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and then in force unless otherwise specified.

In these financial regulations the term 'proper practice' or 'proper practices' shall refer to guidance issued in *Governance and Accountability for Local Councils – a Practitioners' Guide (England)* issued by the Joint Practitioners Advisory Group (JPAG), available from the websites of NALC and the Society for Local Council Clerks (SLCC)

## **2. Accounting and audit (internal and external)**

- 2.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations, appropriate guidance and proper practices.
- 2.2. On a regular basis, at least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, Bank Reconciliations shall be made available and presented at the meeting of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee for formal review as part of the Council's internal control process.
- 2.3. The RFO shall complete the annual statement of accounts, annual report, and any related documents of the council contained in the Annual Return (as specified in proper practices) as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year and having

certified the accounts shall submit them and report thereon to the council within the timescales set by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

- 2.4. The council shall ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records, and of its system of internal control in accordance with proper practices. Any officer or member of the council shall make available such documents and records as appear to the council to be necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall, as directed by the council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary for that purpose.
- 2.5. The internal auditor shall be appointed by and shall carry out the work in relation to internal controls required by the council in accordance with proper practices.
- 2.6. The internal auditor shall:
  - be competent and independent of the financial operations of the council;
  - report to council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one annual written report during each financial year;
  - to demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, be free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
  - have no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the council
- 2.7. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:
  - perform any operational duties for the council;
  - initiate or approve accounting transactions; or
  - direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor.
- 2.8. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as is described in proper practices.
- 2.9. The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts including the opportunity to inspect the accounts, books, and vouchers and display or publish any notices and statements of account required by Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 2.10. The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee any correspondence or report from internal or external



auditors, excluding regular correspondence that does not involve statements on the finances of the Council.

### **3. Annual estimates (budget) and forward planning**

- 3.1. Each September the RFO shall meet with the Town Clerk and each Head of Service/Budget Holder to consider revenue and capital proposal for the following year.
- 3.2. Each committee shall through the actions of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee, review its three-year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments. Having regard to the forecast, it shall thereafter formulate and submit proposals for the following financial year to the council not later than the end of November each year including any proposals for revising the forecast.
- 3.3. The RFO must each year, prepare detailed estimates of all receipts and payments including the use of reserves and all sources of funding for the following financial year in the form of a budget to be considered by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee and the Council.
- 3.4. The council shall consider annual budget proposals in relation to the council's three year forecast of revenue and capital receipts and payments including recommendations for the use of reserves and sources of funding and update the forecast accordingly.
- 3.5. The council shall fix the precept (council tax requirement), and relevant basic amount of council tax to be levied for the ensuing financial year not later than by the middle of February each year. The RFO shall issue the precept to the billing authority and shall supply each member with a copy of the approved annual budget.
- 3.6. The approved annual budget shall form the basis of financial control for the ensuing year.

### **4. Budgetary control and authority to spend**

- 4.1. Expenditure on revenue items may be incurred up to the amounts included in the approved budget. Approved budgets may only be used for the purpose agreed by Council unless otherwise agreed in accordance with these regulations.
- 4.2. No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget for that class of expenditure other than by resolution of the council, or duly delegated committee. During the budget year and with the approval of council having considered fully the implications for public services, unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget headings or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate ('virement'). Conditions regarding these are as follows:-



(a) Within the same cost centre a departmental head may recommend to the RFO transfers between budget lines provided that this does not distort Council policy, and that the RFO may authorise such transfers provided that this does not distort Council policy.

(b) A committee may authorise a reallocation of resources between its departments/cost centres.

(c) A reallocation of resources between committees will require the approval of the Council, acting on the advice of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee and the committees concerned.

(d) A reallocation of resources between capital projects will require the approval of the Council, acting on the advice of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee and the committees concerned.

4.3. The Town Clerk may incur expenditure on behalf of the Council which is necessary to carry out any repair, replacement or other work which is of such extreme urgency that it must be done immediately, whether or not there is any budgetary provision for the expenditure, subject to a limit of either £5,000 or any amount which is reserved for that purpose in the repairs and renewals fund (or other relevant Earmarked Reserve), whichever is higher. The Town Clerk shall report the action to the appropriate committee as soon as practicable thereafter.

4.4. Where expenditure is incurred in accordance with regulation 4.3, above and the sum required cannot be met from savings made elsewhere within that department's/Committee's approved budget, it shall be subject to the provisions of the supplementary estimate approved by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee or the Council.

4.5. Unspent provisions in the revenue budget shall not be carried forward to a subsequent year unless placed in an earmarked reserve by resolution of the Council on the advice of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee.

The estimated cost of any capital project for which one off budgetary provision has been made, which has not commenced by 31<sup>st</sup> March in any year, may be carried forward as slippage, subject to: -

(a) the approval of the RFO, or in the absence of the RFO, the Town Clerk;

(b) the approval of the Council, acting on the advice of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee and the appropriate spending committee.

In making this decision the Council should have regard to the net expenditure budget relating to the relevant cost centre or capital programme.

- 4.6. Supplementary estimates for revenue and capital expenditure will only be granted when it is considered that such estimates are important in order that the Council may achieve its service objectives, and when such expenditure cannot be financed from existing budgets. Such requests shall be made by the relevant committee and the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee, and subject to the approval of the Council.
- 4.7. No expenditure shall be incurred in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving expenditure on the capital account unless the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee is satisfied that it is contained in the rolling capital programme and that the necessary capital funds are available, or the requisite borrowing approval can be obtained.
- 4.8. All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the Council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.
- 4.9. Any capital expenditure below £1,000 is to be treated as revenue expenditure.
- 4.10. The salary budgets are to be reviewed at least annually in October for the following financial year and such review shall be evidenced by a hard copy schedule signed by the Town Clerk on behalf of the Personnel Sub-Committee. The RFO will inform committees of any changes impacting on their budget requirement for the coming year in good time.
- 4.11. The RFO shall regularly provide each spending committee with a statement of receipts and payments to date under each head of the budgets, comparing actual expenditure to the appropriate date against that planned as shown in the budget and shall provide the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee with periodic statements of income and expenditure relating to the whole of the Council's approved revenue and capital budgets on the same basis. These statements are to be prepared at least at the end of each financial quarter and shall show explanations of material variances. For this purpose "material" shall be in excess of £2,000 or 15% of the budget.
- 4.12. Changes in earmarked reserves shall be approved by council as part of the budgetary control process

## **5. Banking arrangements and authorisation of payments**

- 5.1. The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO in consultation with the Town Clerk, and approved by the council following a recommendation from the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee. They shall be regularly reviewed for safety and efficiency. Two current accounts shall be maintained at the bank, a general account and an imprest account. Banking arrangements may include online access to bank accounts subject to the scheme being approved by the Council and in accordance with these regulations and good practice.

- 5.2. Cheques less than £5,000 shall be drawn on the imprest account and shall be signed by the Town Clerk (or RFO/Deputy Town Clerk if appropriate permissions are in place by Council resolution). The Cashbook/payment schedule will be authorised by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee and recorded in the minutes referred to in 5.4 below.
- 5.3. Cheques of £5,000 or more shall be drawn on the Council's general account and shall be signed by two members of the Council. To indicate agreement of the details shown on the cheque or order for payment with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil.
- 5.4. The RFO shall prepare a schedule of payments requiring authorisation, forming part of the Agenda for the Meeting and, together with the relevant description of goods/services, present the schedule to Policy, Governance & Finance Committee. The committee shall review the schedule for compliance and, having satisfied itself shall authorise payment by a resolution of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee. The approved schedule shall be cross referenced in the minutes. A detailed list of all payments shall be disclosed within or as an attachment to the minutes of the meeting at which payment was authorised. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of a contract of employment) may be summarised to remove public access to any personal information.
- 5.5. All purchase invoices shall be authorised by the appropriate Head of Service or officer prior to them being passed to Finance for payment. Each initial purchase invoice shall be supported by a purchase order which is attached to the invoice. Subsequent invoices for the same goods or service do not require additional purchase orders. Each purchase invoice shall be coded to a cost centre / account code for which the authoriser has authority to charge to and which has sufficient budget available.
- 5.6. All invoices for payment shall be examined, verified and certified by the Head of Service or officer/budget holder to confirm that the work, goods or services to which each invoice relates has been received, carried out, examined and represents expenditure previously approved by the council through its budget setting process. All invoices shall be coded by the Head of Service or Officer to a budget area appropriate to the nature of the invoice.
- 5.7. Employees authorised to sign off purchase invoices [and purchase orders within agreed limits up to £1,000 without requiring authorisation by the Town Clerk] are:
  - (a) Town Clerk
  - (b) Deputy Town Clerk
  - (c) Responsible Financial Officer
  - (d) Operations & Estates Advisor

- (e) Maintenance & Environmental Services Officer
  - (f) Venue & Events Officer
  - (g) Project Officer
  - (h) Cemeteries, Contracts & Compliance Officer
  - (i) PA to Town Clerk
  - (j) Democratic & Legal Services Officer
  - (k) Communications & Community Engagement Officer
- 5.8. The RFO shall examine invoices for arithmetical accuracy and analyse them to the appropriate expenditure heading. The RFO shall take all steps to pay all invoices submitted, and which are in order, at the next available payment run as appropriate.
- 5.9. The Town Clerk and RFO shall have delegated authority to authorise the payment of items only in the following circumstances:
- a) If a payment is necessary to avoid a charge to interest under the Late Payment of Commercial Debts (Interest) Act 1998, and the due date for payment is before the next scheduled Meeting of council, where the Town Clerk and RFO certify that there is no dispute or other reason to delay payment, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of council [or finance committee];
  - b) An expenditure item authorised under 5.8 below (continuing contracts and obligations) provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Policy, Governance & Finance Committee ; or
  - c) fund transfers within the councils banking arrangements up to the sum of £10,000, provided that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Policy, Governance & Finance Committee .
- 5.10. For each financial year the Town Clerk and RFO shall draw up a list of due payments which arise on a regular basis as the result of a continuing contract, statutory duty, or obligation (such as but not exclusively) Salaries, PAYE and NI, Superannuation Fund and regular maintenance contracts and the like for which Policy, Governance & Finance Committee may authorise payment for the year provided that the requirements of regulation 4.1 (Budgetary Controls) are adhered to, provided also that a list of such payments shall be submitted to the next appropriate meeting of Policy, Governance & Finance Committee .
- 5.11. A record of regular payments made under 5.8 above shall be drawn up and be signed by two members on each and every occasion when payment is authorised - thus controlling the risk of duplicated payments being authorised and / or made.
- 5.12. In respect of grants the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee shall approve expenditure within any limits set by council and in accordance with any policy

statement approved by council. Any Revenue or Capital Grant in excess of £5,000 shall before payment, be subject to ratification by resolution of the council.

- 5.13. Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the council and shall comply with the Code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest, unless a dispensation has been granted.
- 5.14. The council will aim to rotate the duties of members in these Regulations so that onerous duties are shared out as evenly as possible over time.
- 5.15. Any changes in the recorded details of suppliers, such as bank account records, shall be approved in writing by a Member.

## **6. Instructions for the making of payments**

- 6.1. The council will make safe and efficient arrangements for the making of its payments.
- 6.2. Following authorisation under Financial Regulation 5 above, the council, a duly delegated committee or, if so delegated, the Town Clerk or RFO shall give instruction that a payment shall be made.
- 6.3. All payments shall be affected by cheque or other instructions to the council's bankers, or otherwise, in accordance with a resolution of Policy, Governance & Finance Committee .
- 6.4. Cheques or orders for payment drawn on the bank account in accordance with the schedule as presented to council or committee shall be signed by two members of council and countersigned by the Town Clerk, in accordance with a resolution instructing that payment. A member who is a bank signatory, having a connection by virtue of family or business relationships with the beneficiary of a payment, should not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to the payment in question.
- 6.5. To indicate agreement of the details shown on the cheque or order for payment with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall each also initial the cheque counterfoil or by authorisation on the Bank system.
- 6.6. Cheques or orders for payment shall not normally be presented for signature other than at a council or committee meeting (including immediately before or after such a meeting). Any signatures obtained away from such meetings shall be reported to the council [or Finance Committee] at the next convenient meeting.
- 6.7. If thought appropriate by the council, payment for utility supplies (energy, telephone and water) and any National Non-Domestic Rates may be made by variable direct debit provided that the instructions are signed by two members and any payments

are reported to council as made. The approval of the use of a variable direct debit shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.

- 6.8. If thought appropriate by the council, payment for certain items (principally salaries) may be made by banker's standing order provided that the instructions are signed, or otherwise evidenced by two members are retained and any payments are reported to council as made. The approval of the use of a banker's standing order shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.
- 6.9. If thought appropriate by the council, payment for certain items may be made by BACS or CHAPS methods provided that the instructions for each payment are signed, or otherwise evidenced, by two authorised bank signatories, are retained and any payments are reported to council as made. The approval of the use of BACS or CHAPS shall be renewed by resolution of the council at least every two years.
- 6.10. If thought appropriate by the council payment for certain items may be made by internet banking transfer provided evidence is retained showing which members approved the payment.
- 6.11. Where a computer requires use of a personal identification number (PIN) or other password(s), for access to the council's records on that computer, a note shall be made of the PIN and Passwords and shall be handed to and retained by the Chairman of Council in a sealed dated envelope. This envelope may not be opened other than in the presence of two other councillors. After the envelope has been opened, in any circumstances, the PIN and / or passwords shall be changed as soon as practicable. The fact that the sealed envelope has been opened, in whatever circumstances, shall be reported to all members immediately and formally to the next available meeting of the council. This will not be required for a member's personal computer used only for remote authorisation of bank payments.
- 6.12. No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the working of the council or its bank accounts, to any person not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.
- 6.13. Regular back-up copies of the records on any computer shall be made and shall be stored securely away from the computer in question, and preferably off site.
- 6.14. The council, and any members using computers for the council's financial business, shall ensure that anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software with automatic updates, together with a high level of security, is used.
- 6.15. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Town Clerk [RFO] shall be appointed as the Service Administrator. The bank mandate approved by the council shall identify a number of councillors who will be authorised to approve

transactions on those accounts. The bank mandate will state clearly the amounts of payments that can be instructed by the use of the Service Administrator alone, or by the Service Administrator with a stated number of approvals.

- 6.16. Access to any internet banking accounts will be directly to the access page (which may be saved under “favourites”), and not through a search engine or e-mail link. Remembered or saved passwords facilities must not be used on any computer used for council banking work. Breach of this Regulation will be treated as a very serious matter under these regulations.
- 6.17. Changes to account details for suppliers, which are used for internet banking may only be changed on written hard copy notification by the supplier and supported by hard copy authority for change signed by [two of] the Town Clerk [the RFO] [a member]. A programme of regular checks of standing data with suppliers will be followed.
- 6.18. Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Town Clerk [and the RFO] and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of [£500] unless authorised by council or finance committee in writing before any order is placed.
- 6.19. A pre-paid debit card may be issued to employees with varying limits. These limits will be set by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee . Transactions and purchases made will be reported to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee and authority for topping-up shall be at the discretion of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee .
- 6.20. Any corporate credit card or trade card account opened by the council will be specifically restricted to use by the Clerk [and RFO] and shall be subject to automatic payment in full at each month-end. Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used under any circumstances.
- 6.21. The RFO may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made shall be forwarded to the RFO with a claim for reimbursement.
  - a) The RFO shall maintain a petty cash float of £500 for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept to substantiate the payment.
  - b) Income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these regulations.
  - c) Payments to maintain the petty cash float shall be shown separately on the schedule of payments presented to council under 5.4 above.

## **7. Payment of salaries**

- 7.1. As an employer, the council shall make arrangements to meet fully the statutory requirements placed on all employers by PAYE and National Insurance legislation. The payment of all salaries shall be made in accordance with payroll records and the rules of PAYE and National Insurance currently operating, and salary rates shall be as agreed by council, or duly delegated committee.
- 7.2. Payment of salaries and payment of deductions from salary such as may be required to be made for tax, national insurance and pension contributions, or similar statutory or discretionary deductions must be made in accordance with the payroll records and on the appropriate dates stipulated in employment contracts, provided that each payment is reported to the next available ordinary of Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting, as set out in these regulations above.
- 7.3. No changes shall be made to any employee's pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the Personnel Sub-Committee, Policy, Governance & Finance Committee or full Council.
- 7.4. Each and every payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a separate confidential record (confidential cash book). This confidential record is not open to inspection or review (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 or otherwise) other than:
  - a) by any councillor who can demonstrate a need to know;
  - b) by the internal auditor;
  - c) by the external auditor; or
  - d) by any person authorised under Audit Commission Act 1998, or any superseding legislation.
- 7.5. The total of such payments in each calendar month shall be reported with all other payments as made as may be required under these Financial Regulations, to ensure that only payments due for the period have actually been paid.
- 7.6. An effective system of personal performance management should be maintained for the senior officers.
- 7.7. Any termination payments shall be supported by a clear business case and reported to the council. Termination payments shall only be authorised by council.
- 7.8. Before employing interim staff, the council must consider a full business case.



## **8. Loans and investments**

- 8.1. All borrowings shall be affected in the name of the council and negotiated by the RFO after obtaining any necessary borrowing approval. Any application for borrowing approval shall be approved by Council as to terms and purpose. The application for borrowing approval, and subsequent arrangements for the loan shall only be approved by full council and shall be for a set period of time in accordance with Council's Investment Policy (appended to the Standing Orders). Changes to loans and investments should be reported to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee at the earliest opportunity.
- 8.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State (such as Hire Purchase or Leasing of tangible assets) shall be subject to approval by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee . In each case a report in writing shall be provided to Policy, Governance & Finance Committee in respect of value for money for the proposed transaction.
- 8.3. At each meeting of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee all bank statements along with the bank reconciliations will be examined as part of the internal controls, and minuted accordingly.
- 8.4. All loans and investments shall be negotiated in the name of the council and shall be for a set period in accordance with council policy.
- 8.5. The council shall consider the need for an Investment Strategy and Policy which, if drawn up, shall be in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. Any Strategy and Policy shall be reviewed by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee at least annually.
- 8.6. All investments of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.
- 8.7. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.
- 8.8. Payments in respect of short term or long-term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, or branch, shall be made in accordance with Regulation 5 (Authorisation of payments) and Regulation 6 (Instructions for payments).

## **9. Income**

- 9.1. The collection of all sums due to the council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.

- 9.2. Particulars of all charges to be made for work done, services rendered or goods supplied shall be agreed annually by the council, notified to the RFO and the RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all accounts due to the council.
- 9.3. The council will review all fees and charges at least annually, following a report of the RFO to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee.
- 9.4. Any sums found to be irrecoverable and any bad debts shall be reported to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee and shall be written off in the year.
- 9.5. All sums received on behalf of the council shall be banked intact as directed by the RFO. In all cases, all receipts shall be deposited with the council's bankers with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary.
- 9.6. The origin of each receipt shall be entered on the paying-in slip.
- 9.7. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.
- 9.8. The RFO shall promptly complete any VAT Return that is required. Any repayment claim due in accordance with VAT Act 1994 section 33 shall be made at least annually coinciding with the financial year end.
- 9.9. Where any significant sums of cash are regularly received by the council, the RFO shall take such steps as are agreed by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee to ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken in the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.

#### **10. Orders for work, goods and services**

- 10.1. An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained by the Officer and a copy passed to the RFO at the time the order is placed.
- 10.2. Order books shall be controlled by the RFO.
- 10.3. All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any de minimis provisions in Regulation 11 below.
- 10.4. A member may not issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the council.

- 10.5. The RFO shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order, and in the case of new or infrequent purchases or payments, the RFO shall ensure that the statutory authority shall be reported to the meeting at which the order is approved so that the minutes can record the power being used.

## **11. Contracts**

- 11.1. Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:

a) Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that this regulation need not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (vi) below:

- i. for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;
- ii. for specialist services such as are provided by legal professionals acting in disputes;
- iii. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;
- iv. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the council;
- v. for additional audit work of the external auditor up to an estimated value of £2000 (in excess of this sum the Town Clerk and RFO shall act after consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of council); and
- vi. for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and / or are only sold at a fixed price.

b) Where it is intended to enter into a contract exceeding £25,000 as specified by the Public Contract Regulations 2015, the council must comply with the requirements of those regulations and must advertise the tender on the appropriate platforms.

c) The full requirements of The Regulations, as applicable, shall be followed in respect of the tendering and award of a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract which exceed thresholds in The Regulations set by the Public Contracts Directive 2014/24/EU (which may change from time to time).

d) When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee.

e) Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Town Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a

specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Town Clerk in the ordinary course of post. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.

f) All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Town Clerk in the presence of at least one member of council.

g) If less than three tenders are received for contracts above £25,000 or if all the tenders are identical the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee may make such arrangements as it thinks fit for procuring the goods or materials or executing works.

Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Orders, and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.

(h) A notice issued under the regulations shall contain a statement of the effect of the following.

- If a supplier/tenderer of any goods/services is to his/her knowledge related to any member of or the holder of any office under the Council, he/she and the person to whom he/she is related shall disclose the relationship in writing to the Town Clerk. A person who fails so to do shall be disqualified for such contract and, if engaged, the contract may be withdrawn without further notice. The Town Clerk shall report to the Council or to the appropriate Committee any such disclosure.
- Canvassing of members or of any Committee, directly or indirectly, for any work/service under the Council shall disqualify the supplier/tenderer. The Town Clerk shall make known the purport of this sub-paragraph to every supplier/tenderer.
- A member of the Council shall not solicit for any person any work under the Council or recommend any person for such work; but, nevertheless, a member may give a written testimonial of a supplier's ability, experience or character for submission to the Council.

i) When it is to enter into a contract of less than £65,000 in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk or RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below £5,000 the Town Clerk or duly authorised officer shall have executive power, and shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 10.3 above shall apply.

j) The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.; however satisfactory justification shall be required and recorded in the minutes of the Council having disregarded the financial regulations relating to contracts.

k) Should it occur that the council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the council requires further pricing, provided that the specification does not change, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision-making process was being undertaken.

## **12. Payment under Contracts for Building or Other Construction Works**

- 12.1. Payments on account of the contract sum shall be made within the time specified in the contract by the RFO upon authorised certificates of the architect or other consultants engaged to supervise the contract (subject to any percentage withholding as may be agreed in the particular contract).
- 12.2. Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments. In any case where it is estimated that the total cost of work carried out under a contract, excluding agreed variations, will exceed the contract sum by 5% or more a report shall be submitted to the Council.
- 12.3. Any variation to a contract or addition to or omission from a contract must be approved by the Council and Town Clerk to the Contractor in writing, the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the financial provision.

## **13. Stores and equipment**

- 13.1. The officer in charge of each section shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section.
- 13.2. Delivery notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 13.3. Stocks shall be kept at the minimum levels consistent with operational requirements.
- 13.4. The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores at least annually.

## **14. Assets, Properties and Estates**

- 14.1. The Town Clerk shall make appropriate arrangements for the custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council. The RFO shall ensure a record is maintained of all properties owned by the Council, recording the location,

extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.

- 14.2. No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the Policy and Finance, together with any other consents required by law.
- 14.3. No real property (interests in land) shall be sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 14.4. No real property (interests in land) shall be purchased or acquired without the authority of the full council. In each case a report in writing shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate).
- 14.5. The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.
- 14.6. Inventories shall be maintained by all departments and therein shall be recorded an adequate description of furniture, fittings and equipment, plant and machinery. All inventories shall be in a form approved by the RFO, who in consultation with the Town Clerk may agree that certain items may be excluded from the records.
- 14.7. Each departmental head shall be responsible for maintaining an annual check of all items on the inventory, for taking action in relation to surpluses or deficiencies and noting the inventory accordingly, and possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.

## **15. Security**

- 15.1. Each officer is responsible for maintaining proper security at all times for all buildings, stocks, stores, furniture, equipment, plant, machinery, cash, etc. under his or her control. Officers shall consult the Town Clerk in any case where security is thought to be defective or where it is considered that special security arrangements may be needed.
- 15.2. Maximum limits for cash holdings shall be agreed with the Town Clerk and shall not be exceeded without his/her express permission.

## **16. Insurance**

- 16.1. Following an annual risk assessment, the RFO shall effect all insurances and negotiate all claims on the Council's insurers in consultation with the Town Clerk.
- 16.2. Each officer shall give prompt notification to the RFO of all new risks, properties, plant or vehicles under their control, which require to be insured, and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.
- 16.3. Departmental heads shall forthwith notify the RFO in writing of any loss, liability or damage, or any event likely to lead to a claim.
- 16.4. All appropriate employees of the Council shall be included in a suitable fidelity guarantee insurance, which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined by the Council.
- 16.5. The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the Council and the property and risks covered thereby and shall annually, or at such other period as he/she may consider necessary, review all insurances in consultation with other chief departmental heads as appropriate.

## **17. Risk Management**

- 17.1. The Council is responsible for putting in place arrangements for the management of risk, and has a risk management policy in place. The Town Clerk with the RFO and/or other Officers shall prepare, for approval by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee, risk management policy statements in respect of all activities of the Council. Risk policy statements and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee/Council at least annually.
- 17.2. When considering any new activity, the Town Clerk and RFO and/or other Officers shall prepare a draft risk assessment addressing the legal and financial liabilities and risk management proposals for consideration and, if thought appropriate, adoption by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee/Council.
- 17.3. All reports prepared for a decision by the Town Council and its Committees/Sub-Committees and Working Parties shall include sections on "Financial Implications" and "Risk Assessment".

## **18. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations**

- 18.1. It shall be the duty of the Council to review the Financial Regulations of the council from time to time. The Town Clerk shall make arrangements to monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and shall advise the council of any requirement for a consequential amendment to these Financial Regulations.

- 18.2. The council may, by resolution of the council duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been drawn up and presented in advance to all members of council

*Approved by Minute No. .... at the Full Council meeting held on 12 April 2021.*



**From:** CPRE Oxon-Sustainable Water Campaign <pro@cpreoxon.org.uk>

**Sent:** 31 March 2021 11:13

**Subject:** Sewage, Flooding & Water issues in your parish

Dear Parish/Town Councils and Parish Meetings

CPRE Oxfordshire is currently campaigning for the water-related impacts of new development to be properly considered, and an end to the practice of discharging untreated sewage into our rivers. We are aware that many Oxfordshire parishes are struggling with issues including flooding and water pollution, but no-one seems to have a complete picture of the problems and we would like to map out the issues. To help us in planning our campaign strategy we would be extremely grateful if you could take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire (less than 20 questions, mostly multiple choice), save it with your Parish Council name and **return it by 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021**.

A hard copy of the questionnaire is available on request.

Kind regards

CPRE Oxfordshire



CPRE Oxfordshire, 20 High Street, Watlington, Oxon OX49 5PY

Tel: 01491 612079 [pro@cpreoxon.org.uk](mailto:pro@cpreoxon.org.uk)

[www.cpreoxon.org.uk](http://www.cpreoxon.org.uk) [facebook.com/CPREOxfordshire](https://facebook.com/CPREOxfordshire) | [Twitter@CPREOxfordshire](https://twitter.com/CPREOxfordshire)

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This email is confidential and may also be legally privileged. If you have received this email in error, please notify the sender immediately by reply and delete it from your system. Views expressed in this email are those of the sender and may not necessarily reflect the views of the Oxfordshire Branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE Oxfordshire) and are not legal advice upon which you can rely against CPRE Oxfordshire. CPRE Oxfordshire is registered as a charity (No. 1093081) and company (No. 4443278) in England.

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E: [pro@cpreoxon.org.uk](mailto:pro@cpreoxon.org.uk)

**NB** We have split this survey into two parts - if you only have very limited time, please complete Part A (just 11 quick questions). If you have a couple more minutes, we would value your answers to Part B (questions 12-19) as well.

**Your Name** Click or tap here to enter text.

**Contact Email** Click or tap here to enter text.

**Contact Number** Click or tap here to enter text.

**Name of Parish** Click or tap here to enter text.

## **PART A**

Q1: How would you rate flooding as a problem in your Parish?

- ☐ No problem
- ☐ Not Significant
- ☐ Moderate
- ☐ Serious
- ☐ Very Serious

If flooding is a problem, can you give a brief description of what the issues are:

Click or tap here to enter text.

Q2: How often is flooding a problem?

- ☐ Never (in living memory)
- ☐ Very occasionally (in living memory)
- ☐ Occasionally (every few years)
- ☐ Frequently (every year)
- ☐ Very frequently (more than once a year)

Q3: When flooding occurs what is usually the reason? You can tick more than one box.

- ☐ Inadequate or poorly maintained road drainage
- ☐ Poorly maintained ditch, stream or river
- ☐ New development without adequate soak aways, SuDS or other drainage
- ☐ New development on or close to the flood plain
- ☐ Increased rainfall due to climate change
- ☐ Sewerage infrastructure not able to meet capacity
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Don't know

Q4: How would you rate sewage/sewerage infrastructure as a problem in your Parish?

- ☐ No problem
- ☐ Not Significant
- ☐ Moderate
- ☐ Serious
- ☐ Very Serious

If sewage/sewerage infrastructure is a problem, please can you give a brief description of what the issues are?

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Q5: Are you aware of the Thames Water's legally permissible emergency use of storm overflows which allow untreated sewage to flow into water courses and rivers in emergency flood conditions?

- ☐ Yes I am aware
- ☐ No I was unaware

Q6: Do you think sewerage facilities in your area should be improved to cope with demand from development to stop the use of storm overflows?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Q7: Are you aware of any water-related risks (eg flooding, drainage, sewage) associated with your District/City Council's Local Plan for future development?

- ☐ Yes. If possible, please summarise very briefly [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Q8: If your Parish has a Neighbourhood Plan, does it have any policies on flooding or sewerage?

- ☐ Yes. If possible, please include a link: [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Q9: Have you objected to any planning applications for new housing or other development on grounds of water-related issues (flooding, drainage, sewerage)?

- ☐ Yes. If so, did the development go ahead? Have there been subsequent problems? [Click or tap here to enter text.](#)
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Q10: Do you have any photographs / film footage / case studies that would help us with our campaign?

- ☐ Yes *(please attach to the email if appropriate or we can contact you separately to discuss)*
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Q11: If there is anything else you would like to tell us in relation to these issues, please do so here:

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

**Thank you so much for filling in the first part of this questionnaire. If that's all you have time for, please save the file (ideally using your Parish Council name) and return it by 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021 to: [pro@cpreoxon.org.uk](mailto:pro@cpreoxon.org.uk)**

**However, if you could spare just a couple more minutes, we would be very grateful for your answers to Part B as well.....**

## PART B

Q12: If you have had a problem with flooding have you been satisfied with the response from a responsible body to stop it from happening again?

- ☐ Yes completely
- ☐ Yes somewhat
- ☐ Not really
- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Not applicable as we have had no flooding

Q13: Has a strategic flood assessment been undertaken for your parish and if so, would you be willing to share it with CPRE?

- ☐ Yes and willing to share it with CPRE
- ☐ Yes but not willing to share it with CPRE
- ☐ Not carried one out

Q14: As the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), Oxfordshire County Council has responsibility for local flood risks such as ground water flooding, surface water run-off and ordinary watercourses. They are also responsible for investigating flooding, making their findings public and keeping an up-to-date register. Please indicate any dealings you have had with the LLFA and your experience.

Click or tap here to enter text.

Q15: Do you think Oxfordshire County council is the appropriate body to be the Lead Local Flood Authority?

- ☐ Yes (*give reasons*) Click or tap here to enter text.
- ☐ No (*give reasons*) Click or tap here to enter text.
- ☐ Don't know

Q16: Have you read Oxfordshire County Council's policy guidance [Local Standard & Guidance for Surface Water Drainage on Major Development in Oxfordshire](#) (29 Nov 18)? Do you agree it is robust enough to ensure developers adhere to the construction and upkeep of SuDS and other flood defences during and post development?

- ☐ Yes (*give reasons*) Click or tap here to enter text.
- ☐ No (*give reasons*) Click or tap here to enter text.
- ☐ Don't know

Q17: Should there be National Standards to determine planning applications for drainage systems serving more than one property?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Q18: Have you seen CPRE Oxfordshire's [Technical Briefing on the Watch Points for Drainage](#) when assessing planning applications?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Don't know

Q19: If there is anything else you would like to tell us in relation to Part B questions, please do so here:

Click or tap here to enter text.

-----

Thank you so much for your help. Please save the file (ideally using your Parish Council name) and return it by 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021 to: [pro@cpreoxon.org.uk](mailto:pro@cpreoxon.org.uk)

Your responses will be used to inform our campaigning work on these issues, including mapping where problems are arising to provide a fuller picture of the situation across the county.



CPRE Oxfordshire promotes the beauty, tranquillity and diversity of rural Oxfordshire by encouraging the sustainable use of land and other natural resources in town and country. Established in 1931, the charity's members and volunteers have now been helping to protect and enhance our local countryside for 90 years. Find out more at:

[www.cpreoxon.org.uk](http://www.cpreoxon.org.uk)

Facebook.com/CPREOxfordshire    Twitter @CPREOxfordshire

CPRE Oxfordshire, 20 High Street, Watlington, Oxfordshire, OX49 5PY T: 01491 612079

CPRE Oxfordshire is registered as a charity (No. 1093081) and company (No.4443278) in England.  
Registered Office: 20 High Street, Watlington, OX49 5PY

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## **Witney Active Travel Community Ideas Fund**

Do you have an idea that can help people in your community to walk or cycle more?  
Could your idea help others to explore the local area? We want to hear your ideas  
and help to make them a reality.

### **About**

£25,000 is available for local community projects which aim to encourage residents to adopt more active travel behaviours in Witney. We are currently launching phase one of the fund which will provide £15,000 of support with a further £10,000 of funding to be released in phase two.

The aim of the fund is to support local residents to walk and cycle more to work, school and in their daily lives. It will work with local community groups to build long-lasting, healthy travel alternatives so that as many people as possible can enjoy active healthy lifestyles.

- Do you have an idea that builds on a local strength?
- Do you want to work with others locally to support neighbours to get out and about more?
- Can you help those who are less able to access walking and cycling to do so?
- Do you have an idea for how walking and cycling can support local business?

### **Then Get In Touch At**

[georgemeyer@activeoxfordshire.org](mailto:georgemeyer@activeoxfordshire.org)

So that we can match you up with the best support, please just let us know:

- First and Last Name
- Organisation (If Applicable)
- Brief Outline of Idea

Following this, we will be in touch to discuss in more detail.

### **Funding Available:**

- Up to £2,500 per idea

### **Deadline for submitting initial ideas:**

- 12<sup>th</sup> March

### **Contact Email:**

[georgemeyer@activeoxfordshire.org](mailto:georgemeyer@activeoxfordshire.org)



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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION – WITNEY COMMUNITY ACTIVATION

**From:** Liz Duncan <[Liz.Duncan@witney-tc.gov.uk](mailto:Liz.Duncan@witney-tc.gov.uk)>  
**Sent:** 25 March 2021 13:26  
**To:** Adam Clapton <[adam.clapton@witney-tc.gov.uk](mailto:adam.clapton@witney-tc.gov.uk)>  
**Cc:** Ruth Smith <[Ruth.Smith@witney-tc.gov.uk](mailto:Ruth.Smith@witney-tc.gov.uk)>; Luci Ashbourne <[Luci.Ashbourne@witney-tc.gov.uk](mailto:Luci.Ashbourne@witney-tc.gov.uk)>  
**Subject:** RE: Active Travel Oxfordshire

Hi Adam

I just had a really useful chat with Josh Lenthall. He has also been chatting to Windrush Bike Project who are wanting to set up a bike library.

### **Bike Repair Stands**

He says that the bike repair stands are an ideal use of the funding and should be eligible if we apply for funding. I said we would discuss it at the full council meeting on the 12 April and we could then get back to him. The application process itself is not onerous, with a quite simple application form, and at the moment there is no time limit on applications.

I explained that our officers would need to research the best place(s) for it/them to be sited (and related permissions) and to consider the installation costs and the ongoing maintenance which he says would probably not be part of the grant money. I would have thought that ongoing maintenance comes into a similar field as maintenance of play equipment. There is scope to apply for more than one (eg, maybe apply for 3 – one in town and two in residential areas?) The £2500 amount per idea is merely a guideline in order to prevent excessive large applications.

He says that these stands have proved popular and successful in Oxford and it is known that bike maintenance is one of the top 3 barriers to ongoing use of cycling. I'm very happy to bring this idea to full council in April and hopefully gain agreement to making an application.

### **Way signs for travel timings in Witney**

This is the second idea I mentioned to him – producing signs indicating travel times by foot and by cycle between different areas of town. He says this is also another very good idea and very effective in encouraging people to change from car use to other forms of transport. A colleague of his is at the moment in discussions with OCC Highways to agree a template for producing temporary signs which could be part of projects undertaken by local community groups, eg. Schools. They would be A3 size and 5/6mm thick and not designed to be permanent but to be part of campaigns (I thought car-free day perhaps?) He says once the template can be agreed they are planning to come out to community groups to suggest getting involved.

We left it that I will report back to him after 12 April regarding the bike repair stations, and we will take things from there.

Very exciting!

Liz

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## **Bike Repair Stations**

### **Locations**

I would recommend these are installed in close proximity to bike racks within an area of high footfall. This would hopefully deter vandalism, which the repair stands look as though they would be susceptible to. Possibly the leys play area and outside the new office with a 3<sup>rd</sup> location to be identified. Installing them in residential areas probably wouldn't see them used to their full potential. Installing them close to bike racks means we are targeting the intended user. Also, it's worth mentioning if installed in a residential area they will be hard to identify and people will be close to home wear they would already have the tools required.

### **Installation**

Installation should be simple for the works team, the models Cllr Liz Duncan has reference are fixed with ground anchors but extended legs wouldn't be an issue. With the town centre, we would just need to check underground utilities if we are concreting.

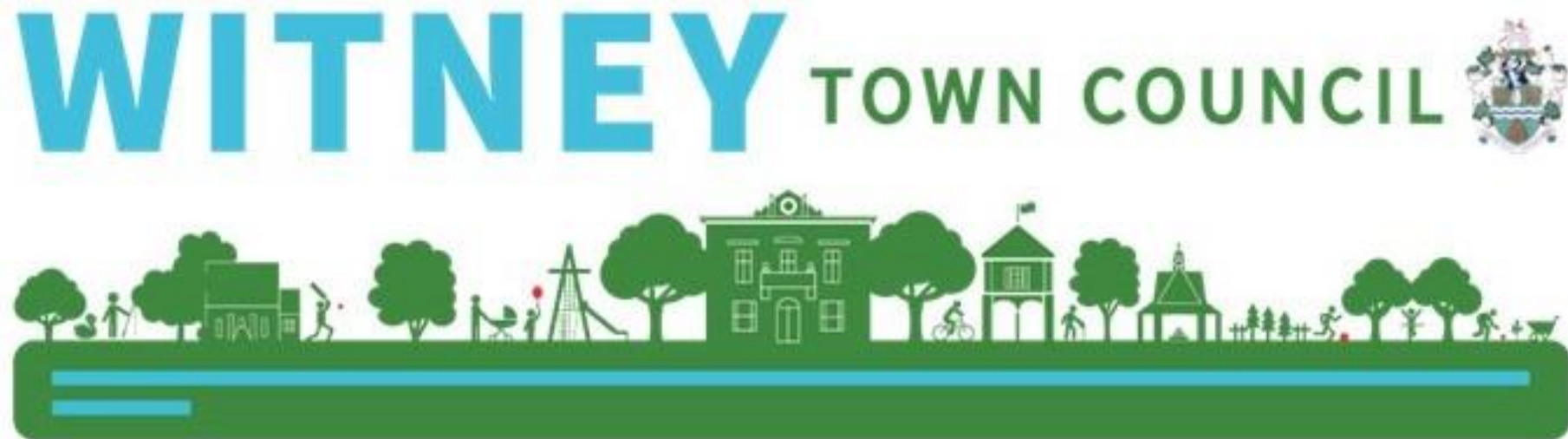
### **Ongoing maintenance**

I have researched other manufacturers of bike repair stands but all appear to be similar in design and functionality. The tools are all attached with plastic coated galvanised cables and crimped in loops with the tools attached. Turvec provides spares however this is expensive we could purchase similar tools and replace ourselves including the cabling. I would request the council set a yearly budget for maintenance of these at £300. This would include replacement pumps that are a custom part of most stands and standard-issue tools that we would replace.

Angus Whitburn  
Maintenance & Environment Officer  
Witney Town Council

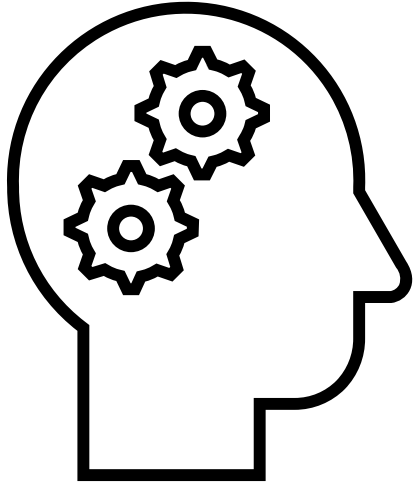
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# Branding Refresh 2021



Report by Communications & Community Engagement Officer  
Polly Inness March 2021

# Purpose



- To appeal to a broader audience/demographic
- Repositioning – acknowledging more widely what we do and tooting our flute more often
- Improving our reputation and perceptions of us as a council
- Staying relevant



# Scope- Digital Media



- Website
- App
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Mod Gov
- Email signatures
- Youth Council logo \*

Decision required

# Scope- Printed Media



- Invoices
- Letterheads
- Compliment slips
- Business cards
- Newsletter
- Brochures and flyers
- Posters and advertising
- Other stationery e.g. awards and certificates

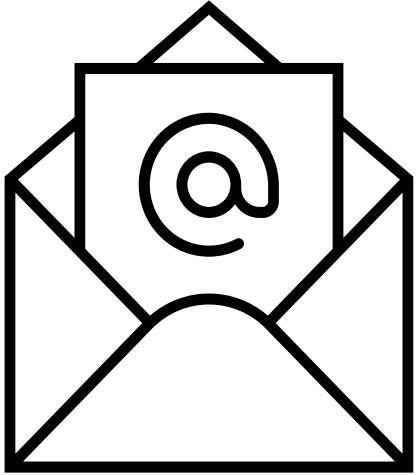
# Scope- Other items



1. Livery – vehicles \*
2. Uniforms \*
3. Building signage \*
4. Outdoor signage \* –
  - Parks large signs
  - Lake and country park
  - Cemeteries
  - Public noticeboard
5. Cllr Badges \*
6. Wreath centres \*

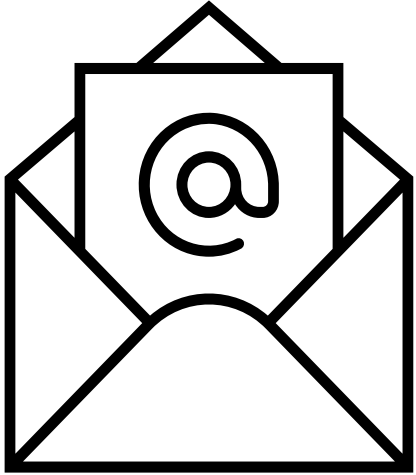
Decisions required

# Communication Plan



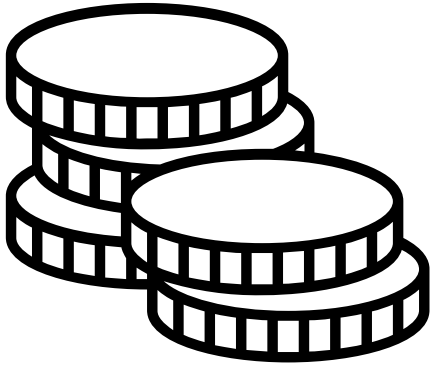
- What is the key message?
- About creating a standard for everything we do
- Recognisable
- Associated with probity, transparency, quality services and inclusion
- Ensure this is not seen as a vanity project

# Communication Plan



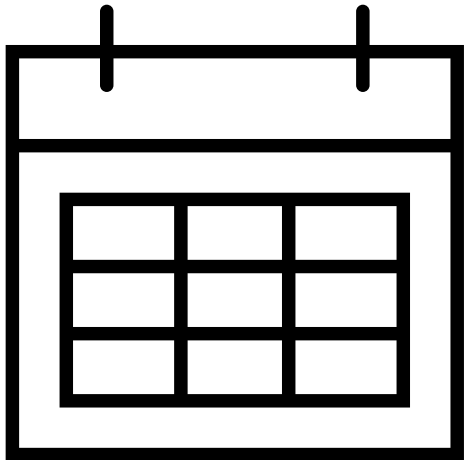
- Small low key social media and web posts talking about our new logo and what this means ahead of and during the process.
- PR once work has been done and all major rebranding achieved

# Costs



- Website work – internal
- Mod Gov may make a charge for new appearance
- App work - internal
- Social media - internal
- Printed media –stationery - internal
- Signage – quotes required

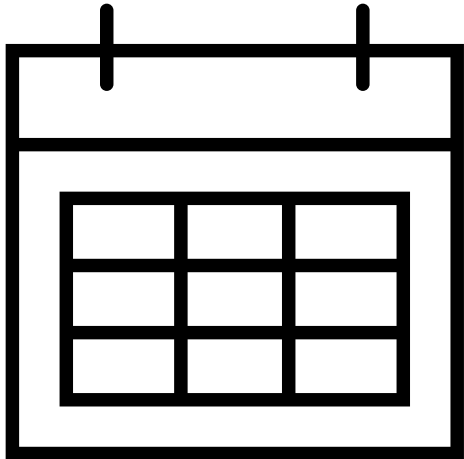
# Implementation timeline



- **Phase I - April 2021**
- Create additional hi res versions of logo to work across most spaces where rectangular is not always practical in .jpeg .png and print ready versions such as .pdf. First slide shows lo res impact
- Decide which versions will be used on which media
- Do councillors want a tagline? e.g. “An inclusive Council” \*

**Decision required**

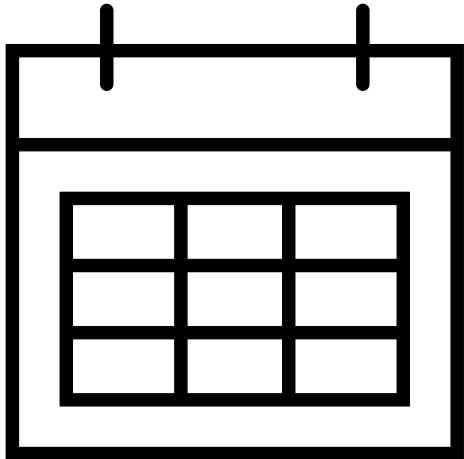
# Implementation timeline



- **Phase II - Late April 2021**
- Start rebranding stationery
- Order new signage
- Prepare website for rebrand – update php, SSL remove unused plugins, widgets and themes, remove old posts where possible

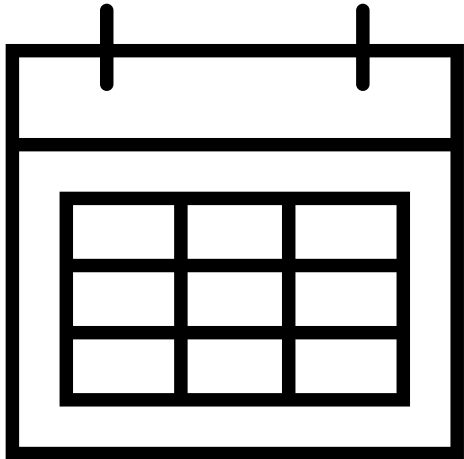


# Implementation timeline



- **Phase III - Early May 2021**
- Clone website for test implementation
- Agree new theme with councillors that fits the colour scheme and reflects values
- Contact Mod Gov to implement new logo/colours
- Implement changes on website ready to go live

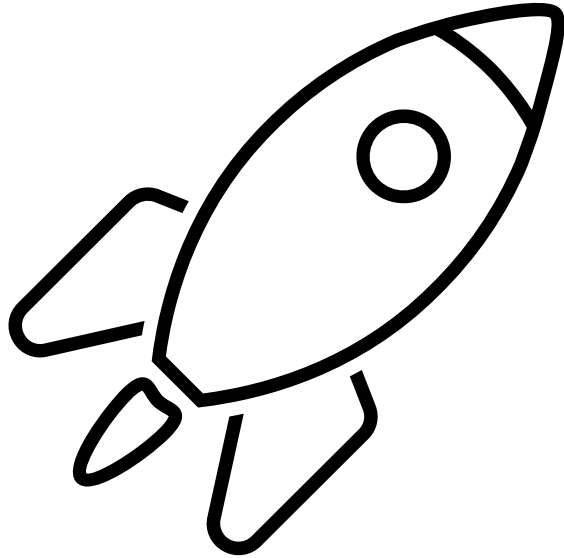
# Implementation timeline



- **Phase IV - Late May 2021**
- Rebrand the app and add update
- Now is a good time to discuss content for future of app\*

**Decision required**

# Launch



- June 2021
- Good to go

**WITNEY** TOWN COUNCIL 



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**From:** Keep Britain Tidy

**Sent:** 24 March 2021 19:48

**Subject:** It's time to engage your communities in the Great British Spring Clean

The Great British Spring Clean 2021 has launched

No images? [Click here](#)



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## THE GREAT BRITISH SPRING CLEAN 2021 HAS NOW LAUNCHED

Hello,

We are pleased to announce the launch of the **2021 Great British Spring Clean** campaign, which went live in the Daily Mail on Saturday.

This year, we want #LitterHeroes across the country to get outside and get active and help us on our mission to clean up a million miles of UK streets, coastline, parks, footpaths and neighborhoods.

And to do this, we need your help!

Please let us know if your Town or Parish Council will be joining us by filling in this short survey.

**LET US KNOW IF YOU WILL TAKE PART!**

### **Help us spread the word**

We have developed a handy pack of assets and resources to help you engage local communities in the campaign. This includes a press release, assets for social media and key messages.

**DOWNLOAD YOUR RESOURCES PACK NOW!**

### **Getting Involved**

This year, supporters can join us by again making a simple pledge and let us know how many minutes they'll clean-up for during the campaign (**28 May – 13 June 2021**).

We'll convert those minutes to miles with the hope that, come summer, we can all enjoy a cleaner, greener, litter-free environment.

People can pledge as an individual or as a group, ensuring they follow the latest Covid-19 guidance about group gatherings outdoors. On our site, we have all the latest safety advice and information.

**MAKE YOUR PLEDGE TODAY**

### **Keep Britain Tidy Charity Webshop**

We are delighted to announce the launch of our new charity webshop.

All our high-quality litter-picking equipment is made by our partner Helping Hand Environmental in Britain. Profits will go back towards supporting our charitable aims and, what's more, all our products are packaged in recyclable materials, so you can rest easy knowing you've made the best decision for the environment.

**BUY EQUIPMENT NOW!**

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Keep Britain Tidy is a registered Charity No. 1071737. Registered as a Company limited by guarantee in England & Wales No. 3496361. Registered office at Elizabeth House, The Pier, Wigan, WN3 4EX

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## FULL COUNCIL COMMITTEE

---

**Date:** Monday, 12 April 2021  
**Title:** Project Update  
**Contact Officer:** Project Officer - Nicky Cayley

---

### Background

The purpose of this report is to update the Council on the current status of projects falling under the remit of the Project Officer.

### Current Situation

#### Park Road

- Priority project
- Site visits made and measurements taken
- Some landscaping clearance has taken place
- Existing equipment has been identified but requires man hours to check that all pieces are present
- Maintenance and Environmental Officer has advised that the Works Team do not have the capacity to take on the job of installation of existing equipment
- Only one external contractor has confirmed willingness to fit equipment that they have not supplied
- Exploring the option of purchasing entirely new equipment from one of the Council's "preferred suppliers" – this could be supplemented with a few small pieces to be put in when the Work's Team has capacity.

#### *Risk*

- If the Council does not use external contractors it is unlikely that the park will be ready for this summer
- As only one contractor has confirmed they will fit equipment they have not supplied, Officers cannot ensure that any quote would be reasonable as there appears to be no alternative
- If the Council does use an external contractor to purchase entirely new equipment the budget would need to be increased.

### Windrush Place Allotments

- The Operations and Estates Advisor and Project Officer have undertaken several site visits, including a snagging visit, in preparation for handover from the building contractors
- A list of outstanding items has been sent to the developers to be addressed before the Council accepts the site
- The Project Officer is in the process of obtaining additional quotes for preparation and seeding of the grassed areas to ensure best value
- All equipment required for the allotments to be ready in June has now been ordered and Officers are awaiting delivery
- The sheds for the plots are being delivered and erected in 2 tranches – the Council will not pay for the second tranche until the first tranche is in situ and Officers are happy with the sheds and work
- The Community Hub will be ordered once the first sheds have been erected as the preferred option is from the same supplier
- The Communications and Community Engagement Officer has been in contact with the PR/marketing Agency for Bloor Homes about joint positive PR once the site is ready.

#### *Risk*

- That the developer fails to rectify snagging issues in a timely manner
- That the Council's suppliers do not deliver to timescale.

### Witney Witney Sports and Social Club

- The Club accepted the Council's proposal on 28 March.
- In the short term this will be under the responsibility of the Operations & Estates Advisor to commission contractors for specialised works of installing the fire alarm system; the Maintenance and Environmental Officer and his team to work with the Club to bring the building up to compliance ready for reopening on 17 May (restrictions permitting)
- Town Clerk/CEO is in the process of commissioning consultants in preparation to move forward with commissioning of a new facility.

#### *Risk*

- That work may not be complete in time for 17 May.
- The Club may not meet the compliance satisfactorily.

### Memorial Bench

- The Project Officer has been in touch with Rotary to see if it is still interested in going ahead with the idea of a Covid-19 memorial bench and is awaiting a response.

### Corn Exchange

- Phase 2 will commence after the Full Council meeting on 12 April – when the fee proposals are agreed and the additional budget to cover these fees.
- The Project Officer has been researching possible funding streams for a screen and projector suitable for live streaming NT productions; funding is severely limited due to the pandemic and is focusing on enabling existing venues to re-open rather than encouraging new start-ups. The quotes will need to be updated and further investigation undertaken into smaller grant streams.

### Leys Recreation Ground – Bowling Green Sewers/Splash Park Grey Water

- While this is not an immediate priority, officers will shortly begin working on the project to ensure that sufficient financial information is available to inform the budget setting process towards the end of this year.

### Tennis Courts – West Witney

- Will require the colour coating to be re done next year, between April and October
- Should be included in the budget for next year.

### Skatepark

- Cllr Butterfield, Ollie Pocket and the Town Clerk have had a virtual meeting in order to assist and advise on setting up a community group to fundraise. OCVA are also going to assist the community group sort their governance out.
- Officers will provide project management and specification from the skatepark's installation for the next Sport and Play meeting.

### **Environmental impact**

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates. There are no areas of environmental concern in the current project programme.

### **Risk**

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability. Any risks are described below each project for the purpose of this report.

### **Financial implications**

- Park Road Play area may require additional budget, depending on quotes received from contractors
- Estimates for other items such as colour coating of the tennis courts at West Witney Sports Ground and sewers will be brought to future meetings.

## **Recommendations**

Member are invited to note the report.

**From:** Sarah Iserman  
**Sent:** 07 April 2021 13:16  
**To:** Sharon Groth <sharon.groth@witney-tc.gov.uk>  
**Cc:** John Hickman <john.hickman@witney-tc.gov.uk>  
**Subject:** 51 Market Square and Lily's Attic

Dear Sharon

We attended site this morning, did quite a bit more digging around and it was very useful to have everyone there at the same time to work out the cause of the movement in the building, the defects in the timbers and a plan for the next stage including how to treat and repair the building.

Dave Woodard is a specialist in listed buildings with timber defects and, alongside John Tuddenham of Timberwise bring a wealth of experience of timber treatment works to the project. Mohammad is the Structural Engineer who is checking that the structure of the building will be appropriate once the repairs have been carried out.

Dave and Mohammad will be preparing a scope of the required works to treat the timbers affected by beetle attack but also areas of timber which have split from the changing load on beams and joists around the front wall area over time. I will be priming the Conservation Officer (CO) that these works are required and then issue him and liaise with him about the works once I have the report.

Subject to the CO agreeing the way forward, John Tuddenham will price the specialist timber treatment works for Timberwise and we will let you have this information as soon as possible, probably early May. Subject to agreement of the costs, which I have told them need to be reasonable, works could commence within two weeks and should take no more than a week. There will then be some making good to the plaster finishes and decoration which John mentioned we would get an external contractor (such as the one that did the work to the floor – Bamcorft Ltd) to do this.

The overall timescale is likely to be around 6 weeks subject to all going to plan.

We discussed the safety of the areas to work in this morning and it was confirmed that, as the temporary props are in place, the shop and office are OK to work in. Issues in respect of occupying the two rooms relate to the openings in the floor and ceiling and the small additional opening up works which John has been asked to arrange this month. This could represent a dust and trip hazard.

I would be pleased to provide you with any further information required and I will keep you advised as the above process evolves.

Kind regards

Sarah

**SARAH ISERMAN**  
**Partner**  
[www.alderking.com](http://www.alderking.com)

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## FULL COUNCIL COMMITTEE

---

**Date:** Monday, 12 April 2021

**Title:** Health, Safety & Vandalism Report

**Contact Officer:** Maintenance & Environmental Services Officer - Angus Whitburn

---

### Background

The purpose of this report is to inform councillors of vandalism. It will also update the current status of the council covid restrictions.

### Current Situation

#### Covid-19

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of March in line with government easing of restriction, both MUGA's at King Georges and Burwell have opened along with the skate park. Officers are currently researching the possibility of re-starting the splash pad. However, as the water is not chlorinated there is no clear guidance.

If England does stay on course with the roadmap, the splash pad could operate from the 21<sup>st</sup> of June to the 1<sup>st</sup> week of September. The financial cost to commission and run the splash pad for the season may outweigh the recreational benefit of its operational period.

#### Vandalism

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of March, it was reported that a sofa was dumped into queen Emma's dyke. The works team have removed the sofa and all parts and placed them in the council skip for correct disposal. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of February graffiti was reported on Newland Bus Shelter. High strength graffiti remover has been ordered to remove this and the graffiti on the stone pillars entering the leys recreation ground.

#### Environmental impact

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

#### Risk

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

**Financial implications**

- The cost to print the A2 correx sign on the skate park was £18.00 with the design completed by officers.
- High powered graffiti remover was £65.24 for 10ltr. This can be used in future for hard to remove spray paint.
- The cost to commission and decommission the splash pad is £ 2,360.88 including VAT. This does not include ongoing maintenance while running the pad and the water cost for the system is around £10,000 for the season.

**Recommendations**

Member are invited to note the report:





## HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mrs Sharon Groth  
Clerk, Witney Town Council  
Town Hall  
Market Square  
Witney  
Oxon OX28 6AG

Wednesday, 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021  
Ref: aw/RC35547

Dear Sharon,

Thank you for your letter on behalf of Witney Town Council. You raise the very serious issue of organised crime, drug dealing and county lines operations.

We must break the deadly cycle of violence that devastates the lives of individuals, families, and communities. This is why I welcome the Government's Serious Violence Strategy, which sets out its response to recent concerning increases in serious and organised crime. It outlines an ambitious programme working with a range of Government Departments and partnerships across a number of sectors such as education, health, social services, housing, youth services, and victim services.

The Strategy marks a major shift in the Government's response to these crimes. It strikes a balance between prevention and robust law enforcement. The strategy identifies the changing drugs market, in particular the devastating impact of crack cocaine as a key driver of the violence harming communities. The Strategy also announces a range of powerful actions to tackle the issue of 'county lines' and its implications for drugs, violence and exploitation of vulnerable people. As the Town Council is aware, county lines gangs are exploiting vulnerable individuals including many children and have a devastating impact on our communities. As your letter notes, this is not just an urban issue, but one that affects rural communities like our own too.

It is good news that the Government is investing £25 million to tackle county lines. You may be interested to hear that a recent drive in police action in September last year resulted in over 1,000 arrests, drugs worth more than £1m seized and over 1,500 vulnerable individuals safeguarded.

The strategy is not solely focused on law enforcement, but also depends on partnerships across a number of sectors. Early intervention can help catch young people before they go down the wrong path, encouraging them to make positive choices. The youth endowment fund and their National Centre of Excellence are both extremely welcome. The fund supports those young people most at risk of serious violence. By tackling the root causes of the problem, while also getting the most dangerous criminals off our streets, we will undoubtedly decrease the number of vulnerable children who fall into or are forced into county lines by criminals who would exploit them.

This strategy represents a step change in the way Government responds, and I welcome the focus on early intervention and prevention to help steer young people away from crime in the first place, while putting in place measures to tackle the root causes of the problem. I am also pleased that the Government is recruiting 20,000 additional police officers and providing the most substantial increase in police funding in ten years. You will be pleased to know that

*Member of Parliament for Witney & West Oxfordshire*

*Email: [robert.courts.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:robert.courts.mp@parliament.uk) Phone: 0207 219 5638*



Thames Valley Police has already been bolstered by 260 new officers in the last year alone.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me about this crucially important issue. I can assure you and the Town Council that I will continue to follow this issue closely.

Yours,

**Robert Courts MP**



## Royal Air Force Brize Norton

Carterton  
Oxfordshire  
OX18 3LX

[BZN-LCWG-MULTI@mod.gov.uk](mailto:BZN-LCWG-MULTI@mod.gov.uk)

Our Ref: BZN/LCWG/2021/02

31 March 2021

Dear Local Consultative Working Group,

Royal Air Force Brize Norton (BZN) would like to provide information regarding a proposed new radar tower. Due to the increasing fragility of Air Traffic Control (ATC) Navigation Aids, a Service-wide programme has begun to replace them. As current systems are over 40 years old, they require significant amounts of servicing, and the availability of spare components has decreased as modern systems have been introduced. A site has been selected in the North East corner of the Station, within the Tactical Medical Wing (TMW) compound, which is situated between Burford Road and Carterton Road in Brize Norton village. TMW was selected as it was the only site that complied with the necessary civilian and military regulations for the radar system.

Our contractor, Aquila, have been working with West Oxfordshire District Council and the Defence Infrastructure Organisation to determine how the Town and Country Planning Act 2015 applies to this structure. The Act is open to interpretation and in order to remain transparent, Aquila have taken the decision to apply for full planning permission rather than apply permitted development rights. This measure will allow an open review of the application and provides an opportunity for community members to comment on it. The application will be submitted within the coming weeks; at present we don't have an exact date of submission. The planning application may generate some interest amongst our neighbours in the local community, and as such we have taken some time to consider what information may be sought and have attempted to provide answers below.

**1. Why has this location been chosen, which is extremely close to public housing and public amenities, considering that RAF Brize Norton covers an area of 460 hectares (1.8 square miles)?** This will be covered within the planning application, but the TMW compound is the only area within RAF Brize Norton that fulfils all regulations.

**2. What are the civilian and military regulations that have been fulfilled?** The site must comply with Military Aviation Authority Regulatory Articles. These provide detail on new installations and their safe positioning within an airfield so as not to obstruct an aircraft's flight path. The site must also comply with Hazard of Electromagnetic Radiation to Ordnance (explosives) and High Intensity Radio Transmission Area regulations.

**3. Are alternative sites available that would not cause such a major impact on the skyline?** At contract award in 2014, the proposal was to use the original Secondary

Surveillance Radar (SSR) tower located at the western end of the airfield. When that tower was demolished to build the Air Despatch Hangar, the current SSR tower located to the South of ATC was proposed. The current SSR tower is required for continued use whilst the new tower is installed, to ensure ATC have sufficient radar availability and there is no reduction in coverage. Therefore, an alternate site had to be found. Additionally, any other location external to the Station would not have the adequate power, connectivity or security.

**4. What consideration has been given to the 700+ homes that will be constructed with an estate boundary just over 100m away from the proposed location?** In all of our discussions with the installation Contractor regarding the siting of the new radar, we have ensured that they are aware of the new housing and business developments planned for land between the site location and Monahan Way, Carterton. The radar site has been located to provide the least impact to the wider community whilst fulfilling military and civilian regulations.

**5. What consideration has been given to the new Country Park which runs adjacent to the north side of the TMW perimeter wire, and the proximity of the new allotments which will run down the west side of the TMW perimeter fence?** As above, the installation Contractor has been made aware of developments in surrounding areas. The installation should not affect the Country Park or enjoyment of that area.

**6. Are drawings available to assess the visual impact of the proposed installation?** As part of the Planning Application, Aquila will submit drawings and a 3-D CAD model of the radar. The radar turning gear and rotating antenna will sit on the top of a 25m lattice structure. The total height, including lightning protection, will be 33m above ground level. For Flight Safety reasons the tower will be red and white and the radar antenna itself will be red.

**7. Are local housing development agencies aware of the proposed installation?** The planning application being submitted by Aquila will be available to all local housing development agencies.

**8. With the high awareness of public safety in relation to high frequency electromagnetic fields (EMF), can you confirm that there will be no hazard to health? The Witney Gazette, dated 6 January 2021, noted that Brize Norton residents were extremely concerned about health risks regarding the erection of a 20m high 5G mast.** A full assessment of any Radiation Hazard will form part of the planning application. The Star-NG radar is an S-Band radar which will transmit on a frequency between 2.6-2.9 GHz, and this is the same frequency band as our current Watchman radar. Any source of Electromagnetic (EM) radiation (such as UV light from sun on human skin) can cause potential side effects if you get too close. The radar installation company have used the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP) guidelines for limiting exposure to EM Radiation and have identified that the safe distance is 13.3m from the centre of the antenna. The centre of the antenna will be 27.7m above ground level and as such, one would have to be stood directly in front of the antenna (at the same height), and within 13.3m, to be exposed to any risk.

**9. What frequency will the radar operate at and will it disrupt/interfere with other civilian services e.g. TV and mobile phones?** The radar operates in the S-Band and will use dedicated ATC Radar frequencies between 2.6-2.9 GHz. These frequencies are protected by OFCOM for use throughout the UK by ATC radars to ensure they are not interfered with by other EM emitters. As they are protected, the reverse is also true and there are no other services within the frequency band that they can affect. Television and mobile telephone signals, including wi-fi, will be unaffected.

**10. What type of construction will the tower be, and will there be any moving elements on the top that may cause additional noise pollution?** The radar tower will operate 24 hours a day and will consist of a red and white open lattice structure 25m high. On top of the tower will be the radar turning gear, the radar antenna itself and the lightning protection finials. The radar turning gear will generate a very small amount of noise. The Contractor has conducted a noise survey, with the full results included within the planning application. However, the Survey concluded<sup>1</sup>:

*The assessment of the sound level of the radar tower has been undertaken using the principles of BS 4142:2014+A1:2019. Noise emissions of the proposed radar tower have been calculated and compared with day and night-time background sound assessment levels.*

*Calculated daytime rating levels remain below representative background levels by at least 10 dB. Calculated night-time rating levels are at least 2 dB below night-time background levels at the worse-case receptor location. This is an indication that the proposed PSR [Primary Surveillance Radar] at the TWM is likely to have a low impact, depending on the context.*

*Assessment of absolute internal noise levels, assuming a partially open window, indicates that the radar system noise levels would be 16 dB LAeq,T at the worse-case receptor location. This is 14 dB below the WHO [World Health Organisation] night-time criterion level of 30 dB LAeq,T indoors indicating that negative effects upon sleep are unlikely.*

**11. Will this change aircraft flight paths?** Flight paths will remain the same. The radar tower will be located far enough away from the runway that it will not impact approaches to BZN from the east or west.

**12. Are the upgrades only happening at RAF Brize Norton?** The upgrades for ATC radar systems are being introduced across the Royal Air Force. For example, RAF Shawbury, in Shropshire, has already been upgraded and RAF Coningsby, in Lincolnshire, is in the process of being upgraded.

Yours sincerely,

*[signed electronically]*

J A Lawson  
Wing Commander  
Officer Commanding Operations Support Wing  
RAF Brize Norton

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<sup>1</sup> Taken from: Aquila Air Traffic Management Services RAF Brize Norton Proposed Radar Station BS 4142 Operational Sound Assessment March 2021 Draft Report 2396w-SEC-00001-01.

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