

Annual Council Meeting of Witney Town Council



Tuesday, 4th May, 2021 at 7.00 pm

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

You are hereby summonsed to 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. **Election of Town Mayor 2021/22**
2. **Election of Deputy Mayor 2021/22**
3. **Election of Leader of the Council 2021/22**
4. **Election of Deputy Leader of the Council 2021/22**

5. **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) prior to the meeting, stating the reason for absence.

6. **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.

7. **Minutes** (Pages 5 - 14)

To approve and adopt the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 12 April 2021 in accordance with Standing Order 18 including questions on the minutes as to the progress of any item.

8. **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.

9. **Future Meetings of the Council**

a) To receive a verbal update from the Town Clerk/CEO on the outcome of the High Court proceedings, and RESOLVE how future meetings of the Council will be held/what delegations need to be in place in order for the Council to be able to continue as business as usual as an interim solution.

b) To Agree a Timetable of Meetings for 2021/22 [subject to change in light of the above] (Pages 15 - 16)

10. **Appointment of any new Committees in accordance with Standing Order 30**

No changes to the current Committee structure are proposed and no new Committees identified – however the Stronger Communities Committee resolved on 15 March 2021 [Minute no SC139 refers] to appoint a Task & Finish Group for the Queens Platinum Jubilee celebrations in 2022. Membership of which will be agreed under agenda item 12.

Members are requested to note this addition to the Council's Committee structure.

11. **Review [Or Request the Town Clerk to Review] any of the Terms of Reference for Committees**

12. **Appointment of Members to Standing Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Parties, and the Election of Chairs** (Pages 17 - 18)

To receive and consider the report of the Town Clerk/CEO, and appoint Members to the Standing Committees, Sub-Committees, Working Parties, Task & Finish Groups and Elect the Chairs for the municipal year 2021-22.

13. **Appointment to Advisory Committees and External Bodies/Outside Organisations** (Pages 19 - 22)

To receive and consider the report of the Town Clerk/CEO.

a) **Witney Town Charity** (Pages 23 - 24)

To receive and consider correspondence from Witney Town Charity.

b) **Witney Educational Foundation** (Pages 25 - 26)

To receive and consider correspondence from Witney Educational Foundation.

14. **Windrush Valley Traffic Action Group** (Pages 27 - 32)

To consider supporting Windrush Valley Traffic Action Group (WiVTAG) in its campaign concerning the Burford Bridge 7.5t Experimental Traffic Regulation Order.

15. **Review of Council Policies**

a) **Amenity Land Sale Policy**

At the meeting of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee held on 20 April 2021 the following recommendation was made:

That Witney Town Council values all open spaces and amenity lands in its ownership across Witney. These areas, regardless of size or location contribute to the visible, recreational, and biodiverse landscape across the town. Grass areas in particular aid drainage and help mitigate against surface water flooding.

Therefore, the Town Council resolves to deny any requests from residents to purchase Town- Council land, to extend their household area.

16. **Banking Arrangements**

Deferment of Minute F155/PGF 22 March 2021 – the Council is asked to RESOLVE the following:

1. that having formed the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee the Council agrees the Members be designated as authorised cheque signatories on the Council's banking mandates (currently Barclays Bank and CCLA) [named for the minutes]; and
2. that if necessary two Members be named from the above resolution be appointed to act on behalf of the Council in the absence of the Town Clerk/CEO should the need arise.
3. that the Town Clerk/CEO, Mrs Sharon Groth, be listed on all the Council's bank mandates – particularly the Barclays Bank General and Business Premium Account and able to deal with transfers between accounts as well as setting up direct debits;
4. that having revised the Council's Financial Regulations and adopted at the Council meeting held on 12 April 2021, that the implementation of on-line banking with the Council's current banking provider, Barclays Bank Plc, be agreed.

17. **NALC - Local Council Award Scheme** (Pages 33 - 34)

To receive and consider the report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning the NALC Local Council Award Scheme.

18. **Councillor Attendance Register 2020/21**

To receive the annual register of Councillor attendance (to follow).

19. **Exclusion of Press & Public**

To consider and if appropriate, to pass the following resolution:

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

20. **Staffing Matters**

To receive and consider the confidential minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee held on 26th April 2021 and to agree the recommendations contained therein.



Town Clerk

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**MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 12 April 2021

At 7.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom

Present:

Councillor J Aitman (Chair)

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

174 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Cllr J King.

175 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no interests declared by members at the meeting.

176 **MINUTES**

The Council received and considered the minutes of the Council meeting held on 16 February 2021.

Matters Arising

A member was advised there had been no discussion with West Oxfordshire District Council on the Community Zero Waste Roadshow (minute number79(d)). It would take place following this meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 15 February 2021 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

177 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

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

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

There were no updates provided at the meeting from West Oxfordshire District and Oxfordshire County Council Councillors.

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

Witney Allotment Association

Cllr Smith advised there had been a new committee elected who were very active; ongoing projects were progressing well and the relationship with the Council was very positive.

Witney Fairtrade Action Group

Cllr Smith had attended the most recent meeting of this group in place of Cllr Enright and reported the group was appreciative that Fairtrade coffee was being sold in the 1863 Café Bar. Information like this was used as evidence when they had to re-apply for Witney's Fairtrade status. The group was also interested in carrying out more community work such as a local procurement workshop, once the Covid pandemic had abated.

180 **CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD ON 16 FEBRUARY, 9 MARCH & 30 MARCH 2021**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

Attention was drawn to minute number P168 from the meeting of 30 March and accompanying note concerning the publication of applicant names on the Councils Committee papers. The Committee had agreed that names should no longer be published due to safeguarding concerns.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee meetings held on 16 February, 9 March and 30 March 2021 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

181 **SPORT & PLAY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 1 MARCH 2021**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Sport & Play Committee meeting held on 1 March 2021 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

182 **HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8 MARCH 2021**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 8 March 2021 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

183 **STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15 MARCH 2021**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee meeting held on 15 March 2021 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

184 **POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 22 MARCH 2021**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

A member queried minute number F151, the resolution appeared to differ from the discussion at the earlier Sport & Play Committee meeting regarding King George's field and West Witney Sports Ground in August. The Town Clerk advised that this Committee had attempted to make the best-informed decision to accommodate the conflicting demands on the Council's pitches during the summer. The issue could be re-visited at the next meeting of the Sport & Play Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 22 March 2021 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

185 **CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Council received the report of the Mayor outlining the civic engagements which had taken place since the last meeting.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic it had regrettably been another quiet period, however the Witney Covid-19 Hero Awards were being well received and support had been given to the Rotary Club's End Polio Now Campaign. The Mayor had also attended the virtual inauguration of the High Sheriff of Oxford Imam Monawar Hussain, MBE, whose vision for the year was 'Celebrating Oxfordshire's Heroes' and nominations for groups and businesses had been highlighted.

RESOLVED:

That the Mayor's Civic Announcement report be noted.

186 **TO AGREE A MAYOR ELECT**

The Council reflected on the difficulties of the previous year due to the Covid-19 pandemic and agreed that the current Mayor and Deputy had done an excellent job in unprecedented circumstances. It was only right that they be offered another year to fulfil the roles as actively as possible.

A member proposed Cllr J Aitman as Mayor for the municipal year 2021/22. This was seconded and all were in favour.

RESOLVED:

That Cllr J Aitman be declared Mayor Elect for the municipal year 2021/22.

187 **ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING**

The Committee received a verbal update from the Town Clerk concerning the Annual Council Meeting.

The Meeting had been scheduled virtually for 12th May 2021 but The Local Authorities & Police & Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority & Police & Crime Panels Meetings) (England & Wales) Regulations 2020 was due to end on 7th May, meaning an in-person meeting would need to take place.

As it was unclear whether this legislation would be extended, Members agreed it was sensible to bring the Annual Council forward to ensure the statutory business of this meeting could take place. As local elections were taking place on Thursday 6th May, Tuesday 4th May was proposed as the new date and accepted by the Council.

RESOLVED:

That Witney Town Council's Annual Council meeting is re-scheduled from Wednesday 12th May to Tuesday 4th May 2021, to be held virtually.

188 **CONTINGENCY PLAN & DELEGATIONS**

The Council received and considered the report of the Town Clerk concerning contingency plans and delegations for the continuation of the Council's democratic process during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Members had already heard that legislation to continue virtual meetings was due to end at the beginning of May and were disappointed that this Council and others across the country had been left in this situation. The decision conflicted with guidance on indoor gatherings and virtual meetings had been hugely beneficial for the Council to continue its work. They had made meetings much more open and accessible to the disabled, working parents and women and they hoped that a High Court judgement, due on 21st April would allow them to continue. A future with the possibility of virtual meetings would be welcomed and the Council should continue to lobby NALC and consider investing in technology to allow this to happen should the legislation be amended.

The Town Clerk advised that the Council had a Duty of Care to Members, Officers and members of the public and although the Council may be able to facilitate a small, socially distanced in-person meeting, was it right to do so while Covid-19 was still in circulation.

The Town Clerk advised that there were delegations in statute which had been re-affirmed by the Council in March 2020, and they could be used again in the decision making process. It was envisaged they would be temporary if required and a fundamental meeting to agree the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) would have to be held in some way at the end of June. By this time, the Government roadmap out of lockdown would indicate in-person meetings should be held without restriction.

The Council agreed, that while in-person meetings were desirable, it was not the right time to implement them, so the delegations should be used in the short-term if they were required but the matter should be discussed at the Annual Council Meeting to offer a clear resolution.

RESOLVED:

1. That delegations in statute to the Town Clerk be re-affirmed as well as those per the Council's Delegations Policy; and,
2. That in principle, and depending on the outcome of the High Court decision on the continuation of virtual meetings, these delegations be used for a temporary period until in-person meetings can be held again; and,
3. That this issue be re-visited at the Annual Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday 4th May 2021.

189 **LOCAL AUTHORITY REMOTE MEETINGS - CALL FOR EVIDENCE/CONSULTATION**

The Committee received notice of an open Government consultation concerning the current provision for remote or hybrid local authority meetings.

Members agreed that town and parish Councils should have the right to choose how they hold their meetings and agreed that officers should enter a response for the Council. Councillors should also submit their own individual thoughts directly.

RESOLVED:

That the Town Council enters a response supporting the current provision to hold meetings remotely or in a hybrid format.

Cllr R Bolger left the meeting at 7.46pm

190 **MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Council received and considered the report of the Town Clerk concerning the Members Code of Conduct which had been adopted in 2019 following the last ordinary elections.

The Town Clerk pointed out that a new national Members Code of Conduct had been released, however the current code was the model which was still recommended and had been adopted by all Oxfordshire District and town/parish Councils for the time being.

RESOLVED:

That Witney Town Council re-affirms the adoption of the current Members Code of Conduct, as circulated.

191 **STANDING ORDERS & FINANCIAL REGULATIONS - REVIEW**

The Council received and considered the revised Financial Regulations provided by the Town Clerk and noted the intention to review Standing Orders in the near future.

Members were advised the new regulations incorporated changes in legislation, regulations and personnel and were based on the recognised model by the National Association of Local Council's (NALC). Once adopted they would assist new officers of the Council in meeting the Council's transparency and financial obligations.

As the Standing Orders contained many technical and statutory parts, they would require further time for review, but would be brought to the Council soon.

RESOLVED:

That the Financial Regulations, as proposed with the report be accepted by Witney Town Council.

192 **CPRE SURVEY ON SEWAGE, FLOODING & WATER ISSUES IN WITNEY**

The Council received correspondence and a survey from CPRE Oxfordshire concerning Sewage, Flooding and Water Issues in Witney.

Members agreed this was an important document which the Council should have an input to, given the recent and continuing problems with these issues in the town.

RESOLVED:

That the response to the survey be delegated to the Town Clerk, in conjunction with the Chair of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning, Cllr R Smith.

193 **WITNEY COMMUNITY ACTIVATION**

The Council received a verbal update from Cllr L Duncan concerning a fund provided by Oxfordshire County Council for community bike repair pumps and signs.

It was agreed that the signs would require some further investigation and would be a long-term project, but an application for funding should be made for the pumps. They would need to be robust and should be in an area away from residential housing to make them a worthwhile contribution to the active travel infrastructure.

RESOLVED:

1. That Witney Town Council supports Witney Community Activation and agrees that bike repair pumps be installed on land in its ownership; and,

2. That this initiative be delegated to the Deputy Town Clerk to progress in terms of siting and the application for funds from Oxfordshire County Council.

194 **TOWN COUNCIL REBRANDING**

The Council received a project plan for the re-branding, provided by the Communications & Community Engagement Officer. An informal presentation had also been offered to Members ahead of the meeting.

There was agreement that a task and finish group should be created to enable the expedient roll-out across the Council's administrative and operational services.

RESOLVED:

That a task and finish group to assist with roll-out of the Town Council's re-branding be established, the members being Cllrs L Ashbourne, V Gwatkin and O Collins.

195 **GREAT BRITISH SPRING CLEAN**

The Council received information concerning the national Great British Spring Clean campaign.

Members were enthusiastic in supporting the initiative as the community had been invigorated to undertake litter picks during the pandemic lockdowns of the last year. Promotion and awareness of this would continue to highlight the value of these in enhancing areas of the town.

RESOLVED:

That Witney Town Council promotes the Great British Spring Clean on its Website and Social Media platforms, the content being shared by Councillors on their own outlets.

196 **PROJECT UPDATE**

The Council received and considered the report of the Project Officer containing updates on projects at Windrush Place Allotments, West Witney Sports Ground, The Leys, Corn Exchange and Park Road Play Area.

Members were pleased the new Project Officer had hit the ground running and good progress was being made in these areas. There had been some frustration that some of the play equipment earmarked for the play area could not be re-assembled due to health and safety concerns, but new smaller scale schemes, within budget would be presented to the Sport & Play Committee and opening for some part of the summer was still plausible.

RESOLVED:

That the report of the Project Officer be noted.

197 **PROPERTY MATTERS - TOWN HALL, TOWN HOUSE/51 MARKET SQUARE**

The Council received a verbal update from the Town Clerk concerning the Town House and 51 Market Square.

While undertaking work to enable the ground floor of the Town House to be used as offices, the beams between the two floors had been found to be in a poor state of repair and infested with death watch beetles.

The Town Clerk was hopeful this would not be a time heavy project and solutions on how to repair and treat the beams were currently taking place with timber experts, the District Council's Conservation Officer and other professionals. At this stage, there was no indication of cost and although the Landlords of the premises, Witney Town Hall Charity had been made aware of the situation and had pledged some funding, the Town Council would need to meet the shortfall under its tenancy obligations.

RESOLVED:

That the verbal update of the Town Clerk be noted.

198 **HEALTH, SAFETY & VANDALISM REPORT**

The Council received and considered the report of the Maintenance & Environmental Services Officer.

Members were advised that there had been a small amount of vandalism since the last report and what plans were for the re-opening of services after the most recent pandemic lockdown.

RESOLVED:

That the report of the Maintenance & Environmental Services Officer be noted.

199 **COMMUNICATION FROM THE LEADER**

There was no communication from the Leader.

200 **LETTER FROM ROBERT COURTS MP**

The Council received correspondence from Robert Courts MP in response to a letter issued raising concerns on drug dealing and County Lines issues in Witney.

RESOLVED:

That the correspondence from Robert Courts MP, concerning drug dealing and Oxfordshire county lines be noted.

201 **RAF BRIZE NORTON - PROPOSED RADAR TOWER**

The Council received correspondence from RAF Brize Norton concerning a proposed radar tower.

RESOLVED:

That the correspondence from RAF Brize Norton concerning proposal for a new radar tower be noted.

202 **QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

There were no questions submitted to the Leader of the Council.

203 **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.

The meeting closed at: 8.12 pm

Chair

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Witney Town Council – Calendar of Meetings 2021-22

			All meetings held remotely via Zoom unless otherwise stated on the published Agenda						
CLIMATE, BIO-DIVERSITY & PLANNING	6pm	Tuesday	20 April 18 May† 8 June*	29 June† 20 July*	10 August† 31 August 21 September*	12 October† 2 November 23 November*	14 December† 4 January 25 January*	15 February† 8 March 29 March*	19 April† 10 May
SPORT & PLAY	6pm	Monday	17 May	5 July	6 September	1 November	10 January	7 March	
HALLS, CEMETERIES AND ALLOTMENTS	6pm		24 May	12 July	13 September	8 November	17 January	14 March	
STRONGER COMMUNITIES	6pm		7 June	19 July	20 September	15 November	24 January	21 March	
POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE (& Personnel sub-committee)	6pm		14 June	26 July	27 September	22 November	31 January	28 March	
COUNCIL	7pm		28 June***	2 August	11 October	6 December 13 December**	14 February	11 April	

Sub- Committees

Personnel (part of PG & F)		Mon	14 June	26 July	27 September	22 November	31 January	28 March	
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Working parties

Corn Exchange WP	5pm	Mon	17 May	5 July	6 September	1 November	10 January	7 March	
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Annual Council Meeting – Wednesday 11th May 2022

Annual Town Meeting – Wednesday 16th March 2022

NOTE: CHRISTMAS BREAK – Meetings will not be called between 13 December 2021 and 4 January 2022 unless deemed necessary

* Indicates full Planning Committee Meeting, including minutes

** Meeting on 13 December 2021 for budget purposes only

*** Meeting for adoption of AGAR

† Meeting to incorporate Environmental/Climate Items (first planning of each cycle)

Witney Traffic Advisory Committee at 2.30pm – 8th June 2021, 28th September 2021, 11th January 2022, 22nd March 2022

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Annual Council

Date: Tuesday 4 May 2021

Title: Appointment of Standing Committees, Sub-Committees and Working Parties, and the Election of Chairs

Contact Officer: Town Clerk/CEO – Sharon Groth

Background

Members will be aware of the Council's Committee Structure and how the membership works from previous Annual Council meetings.

For ease the Town Clerk has provided the following table with details of the membership required.

Committee/Sub-Committee	Membership required
a) Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee	6 Members + Ex-officio Town Mayor & Leader
b) Sport & Play Committee	6 Members + Ex-officio Town Mayor & Leader
c) Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee	6 Members + Ex-officio Town Mayor & Leader
d) Stronger Communities	6 Members + Ex-officio Town Mayor & Leader
e) Policy, Governance & Finance	2 Members + Chair of the above Standing Committees and Ex-officio Town Mayor & Leader
f) Personnel Sub-Committee <i>[this is a sub-committee of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee]</i>	Town Mayor, Leader, and Chair of above Standing Committees. Subject to inclusion of an elected Member with experience in this field maybe 1 additional Member
g) Disciplinary & Grievance Panel	3 Members* – must not be Chair or Members of Personnel/Policy Governance & Finance Committee

NOTE: The Vice-chair of these Committees/Sub-Committees will be appointed at the first meeting.

Working Parties	Membership required
Corn Exchange Working Party	6 Members - reports to Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee
Queens Platinum Jubilee	6 Members - reports to Stronger Communities Committee
Task & Finish Group	Membership required
Inclusivity & Diversity Panel	Chairs of Committees
Rebranding	Elected at Full Council 12 April 2021 – Cllrs Ashbourne, Collins & Gwatkin

NOTE: The Chair of the Working Parties will be appointed at the first meeting.

Recommended:

Members are invited to note the report and

1. that the membership to the Council's Standing Committees (a to d) be elected, and;
2. that the Chairs of those Standing Committees be elected, and;
3. that in order to form the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee at e – it be made up of the Committee Chairs (a to d) plus Ex-Officio Town Mayor and Leader, plus 2 additional Members to make the membership of 8 Members;
4. that the Personnel Sub-Committee is formed of the Town Mayor and Leader, plus the Chairs of the Standing Committees
5. that a Disciplinary & Grievance Panel is elected – *to be formed from Councillors not sitting on the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee* – membership is a minimum of 3.
6. that the membership to the Working Parties – Corn Exchange and Queens Platinum Jubilee be agreed;
7. that the membership of the Task & Finish Groups be reaffirmed.

Annual Council

Date: Tuesday 4 May 2021

Title: Appointments to Advisory Committees and Outside Organisations

Contact Officer: Town Clerk/CEO – Sharon Groth

Background

The Town Council appoints representatives to the following Advisory Committees/Outside Bodies and it is usually recommended that those appointed as per below should serve until the Annual Council Meeting following the next ordinary election of Councillors in 2023, although Members may wish to step down at this juncture if they so wish.

Witney Traffic Advisory Committee	-	4 Joy Aitman, Liz Duncan, Duncan Enright, Jim King
Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils [Larger Councils]	-	1 – Leader of the Council
West Witney Sports & Social Club	-	2 – Joy Aitman, Vicky Gwatkin
Witney Town Band	-	1 – Ruth Smith
Witney & District Twinning Association	-	3 (Mayor (Ex officio)) Joy Aitman, Owen Collins, Liz Duncan
West Oxfordshire Museum Centre	-	1 – Liz Duncan
St Mary's Church Preservation Trust	-	Mayor
CCTV Management Group	-	1 – Owen Collins
Volunteer Link Up	-	1 – Liz Duncan
RAF Brize Norton – Local Consultation Working Group	-	1 – Rosa Bolger
Witney Allotment Association	-	1 – Ruth Smith
Witney Youth Council Mentors	-	2 – Thomas Ashby, Rosa Bolger & Vicky Gwatkin
Friends of the Cemeteries	-	2 – Owen Collins, Duncan Enright & Mel Jones
	-	Joy Aitman & Ruth Smith

Home Start Champions

Lower Windrush Valley Project	-	Rosa Bolger
West Oxfordshire Community Transport	-	Joy Aitman
Witney Fair Trade Action Group Champion	-	Duncan Enright

NOMINEES

Listed below are the Town Council nominees serving on other outside bodies. The expiry dates of terms of office on these bodies are shown. The terms of office are set by the various bodies and Council appointments are made on the expiry of the term or vacancies caused by resignation, disqualification, etc.:

(* Denotes non-Member of Witney Town Council) Term of office expires

Witney Town Hall Charity – 4 year term of office

H B Eaglestone	..	..	..	..	June 2021
Ms Mandy Collicut* (Co-opted Trustee)	..	..	..	..	July 2024
Owen Collins	..	..	..	..	May 2023
Mr C Knowles*	..	..	..	..	May 2023
Mrs R Knowles*	..	..	..	..	June 2022
Mr D Semaine* (Co-opted Trustee)	..	..	..	..	October 2023
Mrs L J Semaine*	..	..	..	..	June 2022

(The Town Council does not nominate co-opted Trustees)

Witney Town Charity – 4 year term of office

L Ashbourne	..	..	..	..	June 2024
M Jones	..	..	..	..	June 2024
J S King	..	..	..	..	October 2022
C Brown*	..	..	..	..	June 2021
A McMahon	..	..	..	..	November 2022
C Woodward*	..	..	..	..	Feb 2022

Witney Educational Foundation – 4 year term of office

Mrs J Aitman	..	..	..	..	July 2023
Mrs C Reynolds*	..	..	..	..	May 2021
R W Barton*	..	..	..	..	May 2024
C K Woodward*	..	..	..	..	May 2022

Henry Box Collection – L Duncan May 2023

Cogges Welfare Trust Charity – 4 year term of office

Mrs J Aitman	July 2024
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D Enright		July 2024
H W Chirgwin*	July 2024

Madley Park Hall Trust - 4 year term of office

Mrs Joy Aitman	May 2023
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Arising from the above it will be seen that nominations are required as listed below:

a) Witney Town Hall Charity

The term of office of Cllr H Eaglestone is due to expire in June 2021.

b) Witney Town Charity

The term of office of Mr C Brown is due to end in June 2021 – see correspondence attached. The Clerk to the Trustees has indicated that Mr Brown would be happy to continue should the Council wish him to do so.

c) Witney Educational Foundation

The term of office of Mrs C Reynolds is due to expire in May 2021 – see correspondence attached. The Registrar has indicated that Mrs Reynolds would be happy to continue should the Council wish her to do so.

RECOMMENDED

Members are invited to note the report and consider the appointments to the outside bodies/organisations and make any changes as desired, but particularly with regard to the three organisations where trusteeships have or are due to expire this municipal year.

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From: Mark Baker
Sent: 22 January 2021 17:30
To: Sharon Groth
Subject: Witney Town Charity

Dear Sharon

Re Craig Brown, Nominative Trustee of the Witney Town Charity

I believe Craig's term of office expires at the end of May this year. At the General Meeting of Trustees on Tuesday last, he confirmed that he will be happy to continue as a Trustee for a further 4 year term, if that is Witney Town Council's wish.

No doubt the Council will consider this in due course.

Kind regards

Mark

Mark G. Baker
Clerk to the *Witney Town Charity*

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Registered Charity No. 309645
www.witneyeducationalfoundation.org.uk
Email:info@witneyeducationalfoundation.org.uk

The Town Clerk
Town Hall
Market Square
Witney
OX28 6AG

12 March 2021

Dear Sharon

Re: Witney Town Council Nominee – Carol Reynolds

As you may be aware, Carol Reynolds term of office as a Governor of WEF is due to end on 30 April 2021.

Carol has told our Chair that she would very much like to continue for another term if the Town Council will renew her nomination. Carol has been a knowledgeable and enthusiastic Governor and we would be sorry to lose her.

I understand this request will be put to the Town Council meeting in May and I look forward to hearing from you after that.

Yours sincerely

Neil Morrison
Registrar

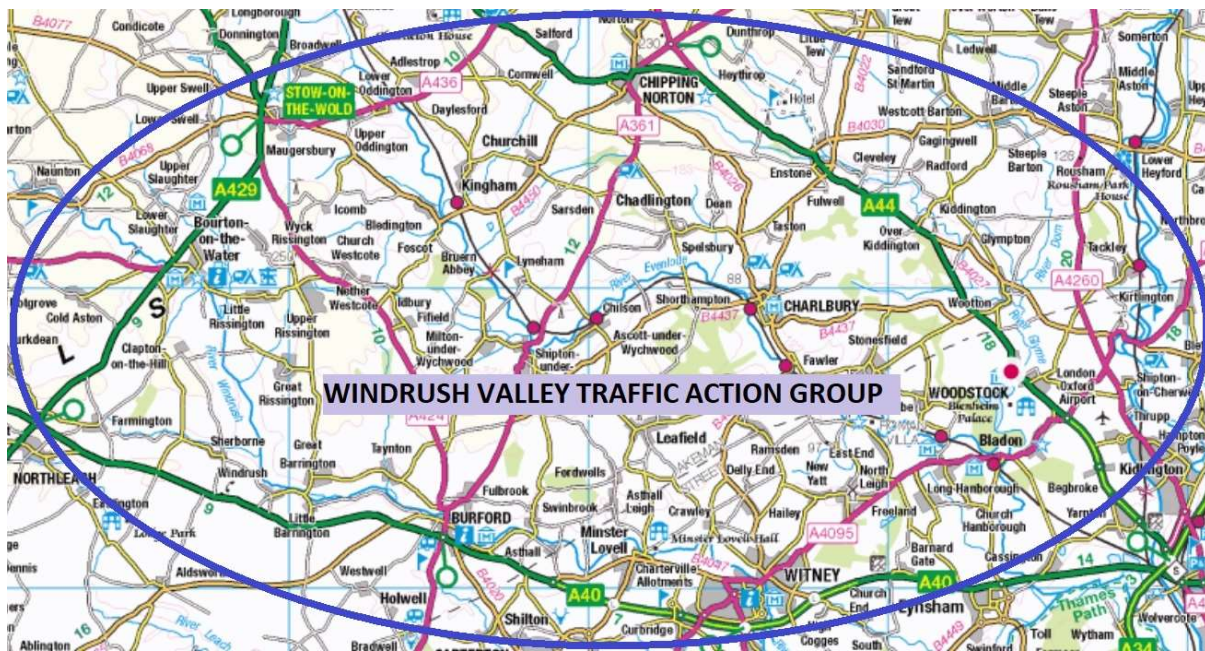
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Windrush Valley Traffic Action Group (WiVTAG)

Interim Findings Report to Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)

Burford Bridge 7.5t Experimental Traffic Regulation Order

Windrush Valley Traffic Action Group (WiVTAG) currently includes 15 Parish and Town Councils, 1 district council, and a growing number of farms and businesses in Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire. We represent the interests of local communities and businesses who have been affected by the displacement of HGV traffic due to the Burford TRO. This Action Group incorporates an area of over 100 square miles within a 30-mile radius of Burford:



WIVTAG challenges and seeks to constructively support both OCC and Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) to recognise the serious regional impact of this experimental weight limit. We urge OCC to revoke the Burford 7.5t restriction and strengthen the application of relevant policies and strategies in their Local Transport Plan.

Context and Research

WIVTAG's research and data collation has encompassed local communities, farming, and haulage and transport companies in order to establish a full and objective understanding of the current situation and its commercial, environmental, and financial impact. This supports our view that any national or regional freight management solution must allow a realistic, commercially viable flow of essential produce, and supplies to sustain demand within environmental constraints.

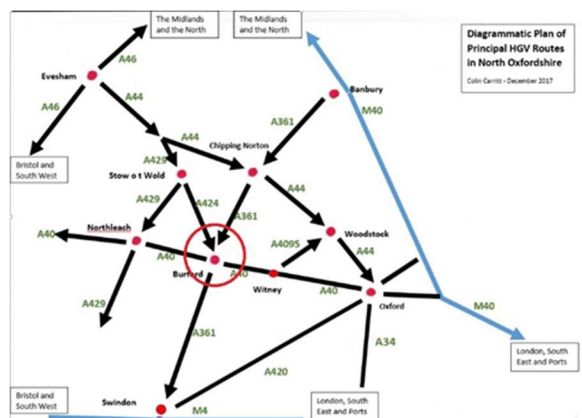
This interim report aims to highlight key, disturbing findings and data that will increasingly inform the full appeal document, that we will submit to the Council's Cabinet and our Members of Parliament in late June 2021. Recognising that cooperation and compromise will be critical, WIVTAG is confident that you will wish to be appraised of the following findings.

Overall detrimental effect of the scheme

The estimated 400-600 HGVs transiting through Burford daily, confronted by the experimental TRO weight limit since August 2020, have been forced to seek alternative routes.

The long-haul routes through Burford were the:

- **A361**, which carried freight movement between Daventry, Banbury, M40, Chipping Norton, Burford, and Swindon M4.
- **A424**, which feeds into the A361 at Burford, and is a substantial freight route for HGVs from the Evesham distribution centres to London and the south-east ports.

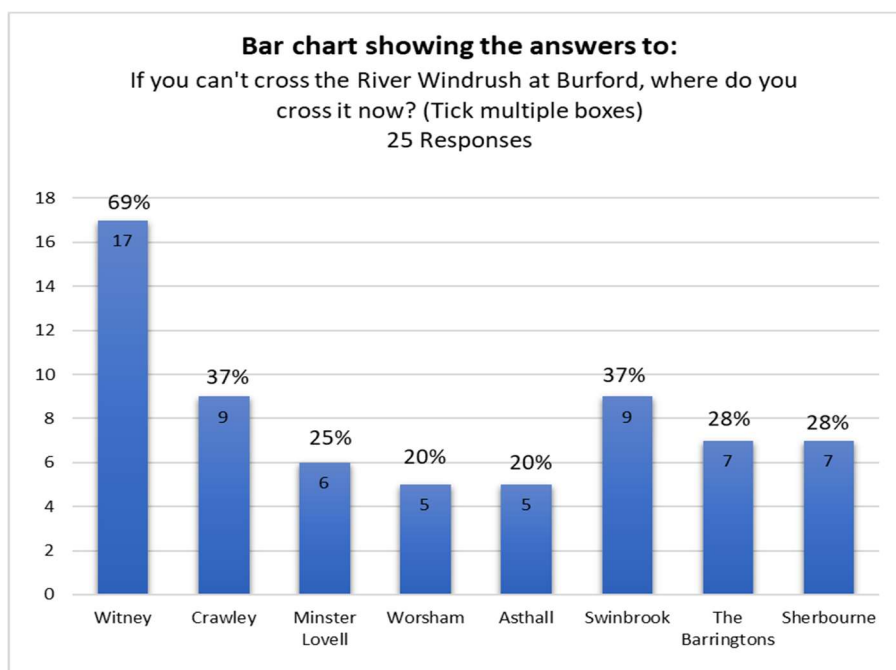


The restriction in Burford has:

- displaced almost all the Evesham traffic (fruit and industrial) to the A44 through Moreton-in-Marsh/Chipping Norton/Woodstock.
- offered alternative routes that are unworkable, time/cost consuming or indeed inefficient. These are the westbound A40 to Northleach route, with an impossibly tight roundabout, and the eastbound A40 to Oxford route, with frequently heavy congestion.
- caused drivers of international haulage and transport operators, often using Satnav, to select local alternatives that are often on very unsuitable roads.

Local company HGVs, with contracts in the farming, waste, building, or energy sectors were dependent on the Burford bridge for access to regional businesses and sites. Most of these businesses are not eligible for exemption permits in the scheme operated by Burford TC. The situation leaves them no option but to use the narrow lanes through neighbouring Witney, Minster Lovell, Crawley, Hailey, Leafield, Swinbrook, and the Barringtons to cross the River Windrush.

As part of our daily increasing contact with local and regional haulage and transport companies, WiVTAG has issued a short questionnaire. The data collated thus far reveal that some HGV drivers either contravene existing TROs or use minor roads in small villages to cross the River Windrush.





Local Farming Industry. WiVTAG's ongoing liaison with local farmers has exposed a substantial degree of concern, commercial impact, effective 'isolation' and operating challenges to their businesses. These large or contract farming estates are dependent on heavy haulage for supplies and, crucially, the movement of livestock, grain, straw, hay, and wood to clients or regional/national and international markets. The economics of scale and cost

dictate that all such movements are by three or more axle HGVs weighing well above 7.5t.

Crucial to our findings is that Burford's agreement to offer 'local permits' ignores the critical transport requirements of modern agricultural business. There are a number of regular **national** 'loops' that have effectively been broken by the weight restriction:

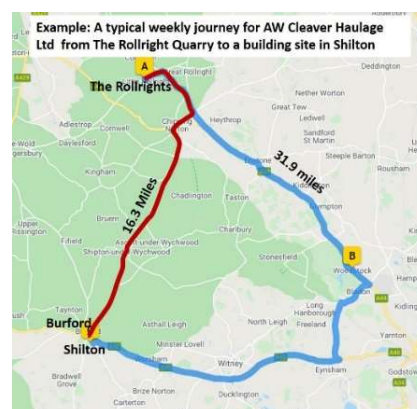
From	To	Load
Southampton/Avonmouth/Carmarthen	Ducklington	Aggregate
Ducklington/Gill Mill	Burford/Charlbury	Stone, Build materials
Burford/Charlbury	Southampton/Avonmouth/Carmarthen	Grain & Straw

Operation of national 'loops'

- Our local farmers join this 'loop' or national circuit as soon as they place/request a shipment
- The hauliers (many of whom run over 100 vehicles) allocate contracts to the fleet; permits for single vehicles (registration numbers) would be inappropriate or impossible to control.
- If individual hauliers cannot fulfil a contract due to availability, the job is sub-contracted through a network of driver-owned vehicles.

Burford TC do not issue permits to entire fleets of HGVs, and local farmers cannot apply for a single vehicle license as even the haulage contractor will not know the registration number until a maximum of 48hrs before delivery/collection. The likely consequence is that an HGV driver (who has possibly/probably never run this circuit or is a non-English speaking driver using Satnav) learns about the weight limit on arriving at Burford roundabout and, perhaps in desperation to fulfil the contract, will take or try any alternative route, even if that is breaking the law.

Haulage and Transport operators Local business (retail, building and construction, FMCG) is dependent on local, national, and international transport. Burford and its surrounding communities expect a dependable level of essential services (fuel, aggregate, sewage waste, skips) which are supplied most cost-effectively and efficiently by HGVs. The current situation is enforcing detours that are at best inefficient and (at an average 8mpg) most certainly in direct contradiction to any County AQMA or regional net zero environmental initiatives. See the example of route taken by AW Cleaver Haulage, requiring a journey of 31.9m (compared to a previous 16.3m) for a current weekly local delivery from The Rollrights to Shilton.



We take this opportunity to share just one of a variety of reports from a regional haulage Company, supporting our local agriculture:

We are a hay and straw business that bale straw, around Lechlade and Witney and we currently bale around 4000 acres, which is about 6000 ton and we cart this all back to our yard at Stow to store, this is approximately 200 loads and we are at present having to go to Northleach roundabout to get back, which is putting 20 extra miles on per trip. (4000 miles over the summer harvest) how can this be a green way of doing things and be better for the roads?

Gaden Logistics Ltd – Upper Oddington

Criteria for performance measurements

OCC's proposed method of measuring the success of the Burford restriction is to monitor traffic at six key points in the county and to compare the number of HGVs before and after the scheme came into operation. A reduction of more than 50% in Burford and an increase of no more than 50% elsewhere is seen as a success. However, the country has been living with radically different patterns of movement under Covid 19 restrictions. Consequently, it will prove exceedingly difficult to distinguish changes due to the Burford restriction from other much larger national impacts on traffic.

OCC has commissioned additional traffic counts, the results of which have not yet been shared. While WiVTAG is gathering live data where and whenever possible, we would welcome inclusion of HGV counts in the smaller communities that have been affected by the closure of the A361. These data would add to the traffic counts in the Burford scheme that are restricted to main (A Road) freight routes through Oxfordshire and do not include roads in local parishes.

In parallel and further to our serious concern about the apparent lack of a regional approach, WiVTAG has noted the absence of any similar or coordinated traffic sensor activity in Burford's neighbouring Gloucestershire villages.

Contradiction of Council Policy Commitments

In the first instance, WiVTAG sought direction, clarification, and justification for OCC's actions in the County's own Local Transport Plan (LPT4) and Freight Strategy documents. We were surprised to find the following policy statements that if applied by OCC, would have justified rejection, or at very least serious questioning of the TRO application submitted by Burford:

• OCC Local Transport Plan

- **Policy 05** Oxfordshire County Council will classify and number the roads in its control to direct traffic, particularly lorry traffic, onto the most suitable roads as far as is practicable.
- **Policy 24** Oxfordshire County Council will seek to avoid negative environmental impacts of transport and where possible provide environmental improvements, particularly in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Conservation Areas, and other areas of high environmental importance.

Proposed policy focus areas

In support of the key themes, we have identified the proposed policy focus we believe are required to achieve these outcomes. These are outlined below and include examples of what might be included under each area in the detailed LTCP.



Questions:

Do the key themes and policy focus areas identified reflect the wider priorities for Oxfordshire and the public and stakeholder engagement we have undertaken to date? If not, what is missing or needs changing?

One the key areas identified as needing careful consideration based on the engagement feedback is the future of Park and Ride? How do you think we should develop park and rides in order to support the vision and key themes?

- **Policy 29** Oxfordshire County Council will work with district and city councils to develop and implement affordable transport interventions to support Air Quality Action Plans, giving priority to measures which also contribute to other transport objectives.
- **Oxfordshire Freight Strategy** Our freight strategy aims to improve the transport of freight within and through Oxfordshire, ensuring it is made using suitable routes and with minimal environmental impact, while reducing the impact of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs) on communities. Where HGVs cause environmental damage, we will retain and, where resources allow, consider new environmental weight limits. These prohibit HGV through traffic but allow local access. Structural weight limits will be applied to protect the county's bridges where necessary. We will also seek to minimise environmental damage from HGVs using Routing Agreements, Construction Logistics Plans and Delivery and Servicing Plans, as part of the development control process.
- **Department for Transport (DfT) Direction** DfT has published the estimated external cost per lorry mile of using different categories of road. These vary from 82 pence for A class roads to 235 pence for other (lower classification) roads. This reflects various environmental costs, but the critical factor is infrastructure, that is to say road repairs and maintenance, where the costs per lorry mile are 7 pence for motorways, 24 pence for A roads and 171 pence for other roads. This illustrates the economic and environmental benefits of keeping lorries on the strategic road network as far as possible.

AQMA (Air Quality Management)

WivTAG, representing a largely rural resident community, shares West Oxfordshire's emphasis on AQMA. Approval of the Burford TRO directly contradicted the stated policy aims of OCC as set out in LTP4 (policy 29). Indeed, Burford is at 50% of the levels recorded in Witney and Chipping Norton (areas that breach Air Quality levels) to where much of the HGV traffic has been diverted:

Burford Decrease (2016-2019)

Site ID	Site Location	Site Type	No of valid results (total number) for 2018 ⁽¹⁾	Valid Data Capture 2018 (%) ⁽²⁾	NO ₂ Annual Mean Concentration (µg/m ³) ⁽³⁾				
					2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
NAS18	CN Co location	R	12 (12)	100	36.5	40.5	31.0	33.2	30.4
NAS19	CN Co location	R	12 (12)	100	32.5	38.2	30.6	31.7	29.5
NAS20	CN Co location	R	12 (12)	100	32.3	33.9	32.3	30.2	27.2
NAS18,19,20	TRIPLE.MEAN	R	12 (12)	100	33.7	37.5	31.3	31.7	29.0
NAS21	7 Horsefair	R	12 (12)	100	21.9	23.8	20.5	21.7	19.8
NAS22	Horsefair (opp 7)	R	11 (11)	91.7	53.6	53.8	48.1	47.3	43.9
NAS23	Lower High St, Burford	R	11 (12)	91.7	33.2	36	31.9	29.0	28.2
NAS24	93 High Street , Burford	R	12 (12)	100	29.8	29.0	22.5	23.2	21

Witney (above AQMA levels)

Site ID	Site location	Site Type	No of valid results (total number) for 2019 ⁽¹⁾	Valid Data Capture 2019 (%) ⁽²⁾	NO ₂ Annual Mean Concentration (µg/m ³) ⁽³⁾				
					2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
NAS1	25 Bridge Street	R	12 (12)	100	51.9	55.7	49.9	48.2	44.8
NAS2	10 Bridge Street	R	12 (12)	100	-	-	40.6	40.5	37.1
NAS3	20 Bridge Street	R	12 (12)	100	42.6	51.5	43.9	41.8	41.9
NAS4	Mill Street	R	12 (12)	100	35.5	33.8	34.4	31.9	33.9

Community attitudes to HGVs



Damage to local Rural Communities Damage to Burford High Street was one justification for the implementation of the weight limit. This takes no account of the resulting damage that is now being experienced in the neighbouring Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire villages. Verges, footpaths, bridges, and culverts are being damaged, while pedestrians, heavy commercial and car traffic attempt to find space on the narrow lanes.

Burford Town Council The WiVTAG community accepts completely that Burford Town Council has acted in the best interests of its resident community and historic property. At the same time, mindful of the experimental nature of the current TRO, we were most concerned to understand the attitude of the Town's Mayor, which at best reflects a lack of understanding of the situation and indeed degree of damage being caused:

There is no reason why smaller communities should be disadvantaged. The solution is simple. The Leafields and the Crawleys should apply for their own weight limit protection, as we did. Asthall, Charlbury, the Barringtons and Minster Lovell all have done so. Indeed, it is the Charlbury limit which has given Leafield its problems rather than us. So go to it, Leafield and Crawley, we will give you all the help you need. Here endeth the lesson!

John White – Mayor (Burford 'Bridge' March 2020)

Such an opinion does not address, nor will it resolve, the problems with essential local and regional traffic flow. You may be in no doubt of WiVTAG's responsible, objective, and constructive approach, that we will present in a more detailed appeal to Oxfordshire County Council in June 2021.

WiVTAG

Windrush Valley Traffic Action Group

Committee Members:

Deborah Triff – Leafield Resident

Gina Pearce – Chair of Leafield Parish Council

Graham Knaggs – Chair of Hailey Parish Council

Colin Carritt – Woodstock Resident

Mark McCappin – Crawley Parish Councillor

Jan de Haldevang – Chair of Barrington Parish Council

Jonathan Stowell – Minster Lovell Parish Councillor

Lisa Harrop – Swinbrook Parish Clerk

Annual Council

Date:	4 May 2021
Title:	Local Council Award Scheme
Contact Officer:	Deputy Town Clerk

Background

The National Association of Local Councils Award Scheme celebrates the best local councils and provides a framework to support them in improving and developing to meet their full potential. The scheme offers councils the opportunity to show that they meet the standards set by the sector and to put in place the conditions for continued improvement in terms of best practice in governance and transparency.

Current Status

The previous administration agreed to enter this award scheme but due to staff resources this has not been possible – it is envisaged that this can be achieved in the forthcoming year. In order to achieve this, the Council must first meet the criteria for the Foundation Award and resolve that it has the following and publishes them online:

- Standing Orders
- Financial Regulations
- Code of Conduct & link to Councillor's register of interests
- Publication Scheme
- Last Annual Return
- Transparent Information about Council Payments
- A calendar of meetings, including the annual meeting of electors
- Minutes for at least one year of full council, committee and sub-committee meetings
- Current Agendas
- The budget and precept information for the current or next financial year
- Complaints procedure
- Council Contact Details & Information
- Action Plan for the current year – Strategic Plan being worked on currently. A draft plan is in place following budget setting for 2021/22
- Evidence of consulting the community
- Publication of Council activities
- Evidence of participating in town and county planning

The Council must also resolve that it has:

- A Risk Management Policy

- A Register of Assets
- Contracts for all members of staff
- Up-to-date insurance policies that mitigate the risk to public money
- Disciplinary & Grievance procedures
- A policy for training new staff and councillors
- A record of all training undertaken by staff and councillors in the last year
- A Clerk who has achieved 12 CPD points in the last year

Financial Implications

The cost of applying for the Foundation Award of the Local Council Award Scheme is £50.00

Recommendations

- that the report is noted
- that the Town Council resolves that it has the necessary documents, policies and procedures as set out above and publishes them online where appropriate in order to apply for an award
- that the status is reviewed annually to confirm eligibility

Attached:

APPENDIX A – NALC Award Scheme Criteria