

Full Council

Committee Meeting of Witney Town Council

Monday, 14th February, 2022 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 **Main Hall, The Corn Exchange, Witney** for the transaction of the business stated in the agenda below.

Admission to Meetings

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

Numbers of the public will be limited, with priority given to those who have registered to speak on an item on the agenda. Any member of the public wishing to attend the meeting should contact the Democratic and Legal Services Officer (democracy@witney-tc.gov.uk) in advance to reserve a seat.

We will continue to observe social distancing and hand sanitiser will be available.

For further information or clarification regarding the meeting contact the Democratic and Legal Services Officer at democracy@witneytown-tc.gov.uk Tel: 01993 226071

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 & Legal 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 Democratic & Legal Services Officer (democracy@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 - 18)

To approve and adopt the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 6 December 2021 and the Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 5 January 2022 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. **Witney Community Policing Issues**

To receive an update from the Witney Police Team (if appropriate).

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

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

7. **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.

8. **Appointment to Witney TAC (Pages 19 - 20)**

To consider the report of the Democratic & Legal Services Officer.

9. **Minutes of Committees and Sub Committees**

To receive and Note the resolutions in the minutes of the meetings held between 10 and 31 January 2022 and agree the recommendations contained therein.

a) **Parks & Recreation Committee - 10 January 2022 (Pages 21 - 24)**

b) **Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee - 17 January 2022 (Pages 25 - 28)**

c) **Stronger Communities Committee - 24 January 2022 (Pages 29 - 32)**

d) **Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee - 25 January 2022 (Pages 33 - 40)**

Minute No. P45 – Council is requested to consider the draft response to the Planning Application submitted by Oxfordshire County Council in respect of the A40 HIF2 Smart Corridor ('HIF2 Project') A40 Between Witney and Wolvercote and approve a final response for submission.

e) **Policy Governance & Finance Committee - 31 January 2022 (Pages 41 - 46)**

f) **20MPH Speed Limit Working Party (Pages 47 - 50)**

To receive the minutes of the 20MPH Speed Limit Working Party held on 25 January 2022.

Council is requested to consider the recommendations regarding the implementation of the scheme for submission to Oxfordshire County Council.

10. **Future Meetings of the Council**

To consider whether the Council's cyclical Committee meetings should be held virtually from February 2022 onwards.

This would mean committees revert to being advisory and would re-affirm delegations in place to the Town Clerk on any other urgent matters.

11. **Civic Announcements** (Pages 51 - 52)

To receive the report of the Mayor.

12. **Vandalism**

To receive a verbal update (if applicable)

13. **Health and Safety**

To receive a verbal update, provided by the Maintenance & Environmental Services Officer.

14. **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.

15. **Correspondence** (Pages 53 - 100)

1. Burford Experimental Traffic Regulation Order update – To receive updates on this ETRO from Oxfordshire County Council & Windrush Valley Traffic Action Group
2. WODC Section 19 Report – To receive the report on flooding in Witney during 23-25th December 2020
3. Safer Streets – To consider a request from the Safer Streets partnership to allow the installation of lighting in the Town Council's town centre bus shelters; the lighting to be funded from this scheme, should a suitable and affordable recommendation be provided by officers.

16. **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.

17. **Sealing of Documents**

15 December 2021 86 SSE PLC - Deed of easement underground cables, land to east of Station Lane – in duplication

20 January 2022 87 HM Land Registry – Transfer Deed – land known as Unterhaching Park & Woodland, Woodford Way

20 January 2022 88 Deed of covenant between West Oxfordshire District Council ~ Witney Town Council ~ The Charities Aid Foundation relating to the Overage Clause on land known as Unterhaching Park & Woodland, Woodford Way – in triplicate



Town Clerk

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**MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 6 December 2021

At 7.00 pm in the Main Hall, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

L Duncan (Vice-Chair in the Chair)

Councillors:	T Ashby	M Jones
	R Bolger	A McMahon
	D Butterfield	A Prosser
	H Eaglestone	R Smith
	D Enright	
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
Others:	3 members of the public.	

612 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Aitman, L Ashbourne, O Collins, V Gwatkin, A D Harvey, J King and D Temple.

613 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from members & officers.

614 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 11 October 2021 were approved and adopted.

615 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Council adjourned for this item.

Ms. K Jerred representing residents of Riverside Gardens addressed the Council concerning flooding in Witney, as part of Agenda Item No. 19 – Emergency Plan.

Mr. H Mo addressed the Council regarding Agenda Item No. 18 – Consultation – High Street & Market Square (Witney) – Proposed Prohibition of Motor Vehicles & Parking Restrictions.

The Committee reconvened following this item.

The Chair indicated that, with the agreement of members, Agenda Item Nos. 19 & 18 would be taken before Agenda Item No. 5

616 **EMERGENCY PLAN**

Consideration was given to the report of the Maintenance & Environmental Services Officer.

Members considered the role of the Town Council in addressing emergencies and the importance of volunteers in dealing with emergency events. It was emphasised that joint working and information sharing with other groups and statutory authorities was vital.

Clarification was given that the District Council was the lead authority under the Civil Contingencies Act, with relevant plans in place, on these matters and welcomed the positive approach from Thames Valley Police and Oxfordshire Fire Service. It was agreed that the District Council be asked to share details of the emergency plan with the Town Council. The Town Clerk confirmed that emergency contact details would be included in the Town Council document.

It was reported that the Section 19 report from Oxfordshire County Council regarding flooding last year would be produced soon. The Council further noted correspondence that had been received from Oxfordshire County Council and CPRE regarding flooding that had been circulated under Agenda Item No. 15 – Correspondence.

Resolved:

1. That, the Town Council undertake a full review of watercourses of riparian ownership and set a program of works to ensure they are cleared and maintained;
2. That, the scope of the Town Council Emergency Plan as outlined in the report be approved; and
3. That, a letter be sent to West Oxfordshire District Council requesting details of their Emergency Plan.

617 **CONSULTATION – HIGH STREET & MARKET SQUARE (WITNEY) - PROPOSED PROHIBITION OF MOTOR VEHICLES & PARKING RESTRICTIONS**

The Council considered consultation documents from Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) regarding proposed prohibition of motor vehicles and parking restrictions in the High Street and Market Square in Witney.

Members considered the proposed restrictions and suggested that there should be flexibility in usage of marked areas to facilitate taxis, disabled parking and loading/unloading. Concern around the safety of the junction at Church Green, Corn Street and Market Square and exhaust emissions in that area were highlighted. It was considered that the disabled parking should be realigned to make access easier.

Members acknowledged the conflicting demands and considered that a wider development plan for the town centre was required from relevant authorities to meet the needs of all stakeholders. It was agreed that it should be easier to facilitate closure of areas for community events.

Resolved:

That the following response be submitted to Oxfordshire County Council in respect of the consultation:

Witney Town Council supports the permanent prohibition of motor vehicles covering High Street and Market Square with the following exemptions: buses, taxis, vehicles loading/unloading and those displaying a valid blue badge. However, it would like to see its potential introduction managed better, which includes effective and intuitive communications around the scheme and effective and simple road markings/signage to help with clarification on approaches to the area. It would ask that loading and unloading is made as easy as possible through sharing the parking areas between taxi bay, disabled parking and loading for traders and that all ideas to help traders along this stretch are considered.

The safety and air quality at the roundabout at the junction of Church Green, Corn Street & Market Square (including the area adjacent to the war memorial and the constricted entry into Corn Street) needs to be considered as a priority. Avoiding the conflict of all road users and pedestrians should be paramount, as listed in the Statement of Reasons. The current barrier of planters does not conform with that outcome because the roundabout does not function properly – opening both lanes for use by permitted traffic and restricting via signage and a change of road surface colouring may be less hazardous for entering the High Street and preventing gridlock and conflict on the roundabout.

The Town Council supports the changing of existing 30-minute parking bays to 3 hour disabled parking places, but not the road markings as the proposals stand. Traders need loading spaces. This area is not currently optimised for disabled parking as spaces are against a wall. Further thought needs to be given as to whether the spaces could be larger, have hatching all around or be slanted for ease of access.

As part of a wider aspiration, the Town Council would like to see a larger town centre development plan coming forward. The council requests that Market Square is made easier to close off for community use at the request of any Council.

618 **WITNEY COMMUNITY POLICING ISSUES**

Insp Chris Ball, Thames Valley Police, provided an update on policing issues.

It was reported that the 'Cut it Out' initiative where those involved in hairdressing and other beauty service providers were trained to spot domestic abuse was being pursued with the local college and other partners. There was also a wider domestic abuse awareness campaign focusing on rural areas.

A new project with schools on online safety covering a range of topics had been introduced. As part of the 'Safer Streets' campaign, funding had been secured that could provide mobile CCTV for identified problem areas and improve current CCTV provision. It was highlighted that the current system was outdated but plans for improvement were being considered.

In response to concerns regarding anti-social behaviour with motor vehicles on industrial areas it was explained that education and pre-emptive measures were key in addressing such issues. The demands on resources in the police area were highlighted.

Discussion ensued regarding problems in the vicinity of Church Green and licensed premises in that area.

The Council thanked Insp. Ball for his attendance.

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

Oxfordshire County Council (OCC)

Councillor Enright reported that the budget was being considered and areas such as demand on Social Care provision needed careful consideration.

West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC)

Councillor Prosser reported that WODC had undertaken a survey on sport facilities and a response was expected in January outlining proposals.

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

There were no updates from Councillors on external bodies.

621 **WITNEY TOWN CHARITY TRUSTEES**

Consideration was given to the report of the Town Clerk in respect of Town Council representation on the Witney Town Charity.

It was clarified that currently there were a total of 14 trustees including six from the Town Council. It was suggested that as the Town Council could appoint external professional representatives, they should retain the current level of six.

It was agreed that further clarification was needed before a decision could be made but that the continuation of Chris Woodward, as a former town councillor, as a trustee could be supported.

Resolved:

1. That, a decision on the request to reduce the number of Town Council nominations be deferred pending clarification regarding who can be nominated; and
2. That, the continuation of Chris Woodward as a Nominated Trustee be approved

Councillor M Jones left the meeting at this juncture

622 **CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING COMMITTEE - 12 OCTOBER, 2 NOVEMBER (ATTACHED) & 23 NOVEMBER 2021**

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

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Advisory Committee meetings held on 12 October and 2 & 23 November 2021 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

623 **PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE - 1 NOVEMBER 2021**

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

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 1 November 2021 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

624 **HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE - 8 NOVEMBER 2021**

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

It was reported that the new access to Tower Hill Cemetery had been completed.

Resolved:

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

625 **STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE - 15 NOVEMBER 2021**

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

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that OCC were to look at salt bin provision between Madley Park and Oxford Hill as part of the wider Active Travel scheme. In the interim the Town Council had ordered one bin to be sited in that area.

Resolved:

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

626 **POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE - 22 NOVEMBER 2021**

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

Resolved:

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

627 **CORN EXCHANGE WORKING PARTY - 2 DECEMBER 2021**

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

The Deputy Town Clerk clarified that Building Control Approval was being progressed with regard to the seating.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Corn Exchange Working Party held on 2 December 2021 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

628 **APPOINTMENTS TO TASK & FINISH GROUPS**

The Council considered appointments to two task & Finish groups.

It was reported that Councillors Aitman, Collins and Duncan had volunteered to serve on the Covid-19 Commemoration group. Councillors Aitman, Duncan and Smith were nominated for the In Bloom group.

Resolved:

1. That Councillors Aitman, Collins and Duncan be appointed to serve on the Covid Memorial Task & Finish Group; and
2. That Councillors Aitman, Duncan and Smith be appointed to serve on the In Bloom Task & Finish Group.

629 **CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The report of the Town Mayor was received.

The Deputy Mayor reported on her trip to Unterhaching where she had made a speech to a representatives from a number of towns twinned with Unterhaching.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

630 **VANDALISM REPORT**

Consideration was given to the report of the Maintenance & Environmental Services Officer updating on vandalism at Town Council owned property and land. It was noted that discussions with a street artist were ongoing to see if a project could be progressed.

The issue of the condition of Unterhaching Park was raised. It was clarified that discussions were ongoing with officers at the District Council regarding the transfer to the Town Council and works to be undertaken to improve the site.

Resolved:

That the update report be noted.

631 **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

There was no update to be presented.

632 **COMMUNICATION FROM THE LEADER**

There were no communications to be reported.

633 **CORRESPONDENCE**

It was noted that correspondence regarding flooding had been presented during discussion on the Emergency Plan earlier in the meeting.

Correspondence had been forwarded by Robert Courts MP regarding flying of the Union flag on the Town Hall. It was suggested that the constituent should be asked to contact the Town Council direct. Discussion ensued regarding dates that the flag should be flown. A holding response indicating that the Town Council flew the flag on specified days had been sent.

Resolved:

That, a response clarifying the Town Council policy on flying the flag be sent and the constituent be asked to contact the Town Council if they wished to discuss the matter further.

634 **QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

There were no questions submitted.

635 **COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS**

Consideration was given to the report of the Deputy Town Clerk.

Resolved:

That the report be noted

636 **PROJECT UPDATE REPORT**

The report of the Project Officer was considered.

Confirmation was given that funding for the blue plaque at Batt House was already allocated in the budget but a figure needed to be agreed. Members agreed a contribution of £300.

The Town Clerk updated that budget provision would be considered in due course for the skate park. Councillor Butterfield advised that further information would be forwarded in due course on the project.

Resolved:

1. That, a contribution of £300 towards the blue plaque in memory of Alice Batt be approved; and
2. That, a decision regarding funding of the skatepark be deferred to the budget presentation on 13 December.

637 **COUNCIL CONTRACTS & SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

Resolved:

To note that Corn Exchange – Contract for Specialist Theatre Systems– Sound & lighting with Henley Theatre Services Ltd. had been signed by The Mayor, Cllr J Aitman & the Town Clerk.

638 **FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL**

The Council considered future arrangements for committee meetings of the Council.

The Deputy Town Clerk reminded that virtual advisory meeting had been previously held and in light of the pandemic councillors were asked to consider the position.

The Town Clerk confirmed that an additional face to face meeting to consider the budget would be required in January. The issue of accommodation for meetings was also raised due to ongoing works in the Corn Exchange. It was explained that Town Hall could not be used for meetings.

Discussion ensued regarding delegations and options for decision making processes and a council decision in respect of alternative options was needed. Councillors considered the guidance that was available.

Members agreed that as a further Council meeting was required in January the decision be deferred.

Resolved:

That, a decision be deferred to the Extraordinary Council meeting in January 2022.

639 **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.

640 **PROPERTY & LEGAL MATTERS**

Consideration was given to the confidential report of the Town Clerk.

The Town Clerk updated on progress regarding a number of property and legal matters and negotiations that were being undertaken regarding a specific property. Links to the aspirations of the Council were discussed in respect of the property. Members considered the funding of a feasibility study.

The Council was asked to consider the freehold purchase land used as a play area and funding options were discussed.

Resolved:

1. That, approval be given for £2,600 to be allocated to progress discussions on the property identified in the report; and
2. That, approval be given for the freehold purchase of the play area and land identified in the report.

The meeting closed at: 9.00 pm

Chair

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**MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Wednesday, 5 January 2022

At 7.00 pm in the Main Hall, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor J Aitman (Chair)

Councillors:	L Duncan	A McMahon
	T Ashby	A Prosser
	O Collins	R Smith
	D Enright	D Temple
	A D Harvey	
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Simon Wright	Democratic & Legal Services Officer
Others:	No members of the public.	

5 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ashbourne, Bolger, Butterfield, Eaglestone, Gwatkin, Jones and King

6 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from members or officers.

7 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

8 BUDGET: REVISED BUDGET 2021/22 AND ESTIMATES 2022/23

Members received and considered the report of the Town Clerk.

In response to a question clarification was given on the budget allocation for the operation of the splash park at The Leys.

A member said that the Conservative Group would like to see a more detailed Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and thanked the Town Clerk for her hard work in preparing the budget.

In response a Labour member acknowledged the concern but emphasised the unique situation over the past 18 months that had meant income and expenditure was more difficult to predict.

It was proposed by Councillor Enright and seconded by Councillor Collins that the Precept increase should be in line with inflation and therefore be set at 4.9%.

It was highlighted that this would mean that further savings would be required and each committee would need to review priorities to meet the new budget parameters if adopted. Members indicated that the budget would need to be strictly adhered to and it was important to maintain a healthy reserve.

On being put to the vote the proposition was carried with six members voting for, one member voting against and three abstentions.

Resolved: that the report be noted and:-

1. that the revised budget for 2021/2022 as presented be adopted; and
2. that the estimated budget for 2022/23 be further scrutinised by the spending Committees during the next cycle of meetings in order to identify savings to fit the budget into the parameters now agreed on the level of Precept increase – limited to 4.9%.

9 **TO FORMALLY DECLARE THE PRECEPT FOR 2022/23**

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

The proposal was to increase the precept by 4.9% which equated to £167.01 per annum for a band D property.

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 £1,829,398 in respect of Council Tax for the town during the financial year 2022/23.

10 **CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING COMMITTEE - 14 DECEMBER 2021 AND 4 JANUARY 2022**

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

It was reported that, at a recent District Council planning meeting, the Town Council had been commended on the quality of its responses to planning consultations. Members thanked officers for their support at meetings and expertise in dealing with planning submissions.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Advisory Committee meetings held on 14 December 2021 and 4 January 2022 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

11 **FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL**

The Council considered whether committee meetings should be held virtually from January 2022 meaning they would revert to being advisory with delegations in place for urgent matters.

Members considered that this should be supported as it allowed members and others who could not attend 'in person' meetings to participate. It was suggested, and agreed, that the situation should be reviewed at each future Council meeting.

Resolved:

1. That, the Council's cyclical committee meetings be held virtually from January 2022 and be advisory with delegations to the Town Clerk on any other urgent matters; and
2. That, the situation regarding meetings be reviewed at each future Council meeting.

The meeting closed at: 7.31 pm

Chair

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FULL COUNCIL

Date: Monday, 14 February 2022

Title: Appointment to Witney Traffic Advisory Committee

Contact Officer: Democratic & Legal Services Officer - Simon Wright

Background

The Town Council appoints representatives to a number of Advisory Committees/Outside Bodies, and at the Council meeting held on 8 June 2020 appointments were made to these bodies for a period up to 2023.

Current Situation

The Council has been advised by Councillors King that he is no longer able to continue serving on the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee

The Council is therefore requested to consider making an alternative appointment to this advisory committee.

Environmental impact

There is no environmental impact.

Risk

None

Financial implications

There are no financial implications.

Recommendations

The Council is requested to appoint a member to serve on the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee for a period until the Annual Council Meeting following the next ordinary election of Councillors in 2023.

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**PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 10 January 2022

At 6.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom

Present:

Councillor V Gwatkin (Chair)

Councillors:	D Butterfield	L Duncan
	J Aitman	D Enright
	T Ashby	
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Simon Wright	Democratic & Legal Services Officer
Others:	No members of the public.	

With no legislation in place for the Town Council to hold virtual meetings, and because of the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic, the Parks & Recreation Committee formed virtually as an Advisory Committee. Any recommendations outside of the current work's programme, budget or policy will require ratification at the Full Council meeting held on 14 February 2022.

PR12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ashbourne & McMahon

PR13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from members or officers.

PR14 MINUTES

The minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee held on 1 November 2021 were received as a correct record.

There were no matters arising.

PR15 PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

There was no public participation.

PR16 FOOD TRADING AT RECREATION GROUNDS

Consideration was given to the report of the Deputy Town Clerk regarding food trading operations from Town Council recreation grounds in 2022.

Members noted that the current arrangement at West Witney had worked well during the trial period. Members agreed that this should be continued at the current rental until the end of March. In respect of renewal from 1 April it was proposed and agreed that a charge of £40 per day be implemented which was comparable to other local Council trading charges.

Discussion ensued regarding other sites, and it was noted that the previously agreed arrangements for The Leys during 2021 had not been pursued for licensing reasons. Members identified The Leys and Burwell as possible sites for food trading and it was noted that a consistent approach was needed. It was agreed that if expressions of interest were received they could be brought back to the committee for consideration.

Resolved:

1. That, the current arrangements at West Witney Sports Ground be continued, at the current fee, until 31 March 2022;
2. That, the agreement be renewed from 1 April 2022 at the new rate of £40 per day; and
3. That, in respect of The Leys and Burwell any expressions of interest be presented at the next meeting of the committee for determination.

PR17 KING GEORGE V – PROVISION OF TOILETS

The report of the Project Officer was received and considered.

Members noted the requirements of the Football Association regarding financial support and associated criteria. It was agreed that the original option for a converted container on site was not feasible.

Members discussed alternative options including the nearby Newland allotment site, providing portaloos or in the longer term an agreement with Woodgreen School or the Newland Church Centre.

Recommended:

1. That, the provision of toilet facilities as outlined in the report is not pursued; and
2. That, officers be requested to consider alternative provision on other neighbouring sites and report back to the committee.

PR18 QUARRY ROAD PLAY AREA – ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT

The report of the Project Officer was considered. The views of Councillor Prosser, as local member, were also reported to the committee.

Members considered the three options outlined in the report. Discussion ensued regarding the Open Spaces Strategy which provides a strategic overview on play equipment for the coming years. Members acknowledged that there may be occasions that works outside of the plan may be required but a long-term management plan on all play areas should take place.

It was proposed that Option 3 which would mean renewal of equipment at end of its life in approximately five years time be supported.

On being put to the vote the proposition was carried. It was however emphasised that if additional budget became available then works could be undertaken in the interim.

Recommended:

That, Option 3 in the report be supported.

PR19 LAND AT WITNEY ROAD DUCKLINGTON

The report of the Operations & Estates Advisor was received and considered.

The committee discussed the location of existing accesses, land ownership and the Rights of Way in the area. Members noted the potential housing development in the area.

After discussion it was agreed that a new access gate and associated fencing should be installed on the access road at the South-Eastern end of the allotments with the existing stile being retained on the footpath.

Members acknowledged that any changes to access would need to be properly communicated with the Allotment Association and that Ducklington Parish Council should be made aware.

Recommended:

1. That a new access gate and associated fencing should be installed on the access road at the South-Eastern end of the allotments with the existing stile being retained on the footpath; and
2. That, any changes should be properly communicated to relevant parties.

PR20 FINANCE/BUDGET REPORT

The committee considered the report of the Town Clerk updating on the budget decision taken by Council and seeking consideration of the budgets allocated to Parks & Recreation issues.

It was noted that, following the earlier recommendation, there was the potential for additional income from food trading at recreation sites. It was noted that this was not guaranteed. It was further stated that the £5k previously allocated for Quarry Road Play Area could be released back to general funds but members agreed to retain it in the play equipment budget.

In respect of allocated funds, it was reported that plans for the extension of facilities at Burwell were awaited and then a decision on the £70k that had been allocated could be made. It was noted that the cleaning contract at The Leys had been reviewed but there were no proposals at this stage. An update on developments at the West Witney Sports Ground was given.

Recommended:

That, the potential additional income from food trading be recommended to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee as an amendment to the 2022/23 budget estimates.

The meeting closed at: 6.47 pm

Chair

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

Held on Monday, 17 January 2022

At 6.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom

Present:

Councillor M Jones (Chair)

Councillors:	V Gwatkin	O Collins
	J Aitman	L Duncan
	T Ashby	R Smith
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Simon Wright	Democratic & Legal Services Officer
Others:	No members of the public.	

As there was no legislation in place for the Town Council to hold virtual meetings, and because of the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic, the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee formed virtually as an Advisory Committee. Any recommendations outside of the current work programme, budget or policy would require ratification at the Full Council meeting held on 14 February 2022.

H21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Ashbourne

H22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from members or officers.

H23 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 November 2021 were received.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that a response was yet to be received from Building Control regarding the new seating in the Corn Exchange. Once confirmation was received then the project could proceed but there was a likely lead time of 12 weeks.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee held on 8 November 2021 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

H24 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

H25 **PUBLIC HALLS USAGE REPORT**

The report of the Venue & Events Officer was considered.

Members noted the progress to date and it was anticipated that hall usage and income from the Café Bar would increase as restrictions eased and weather improved.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that a request had been received from the organisers of the Tea Dance for a change in the way it operated. This would entail the withdrawal of an entrance fee for attendees. It was clarified that it was Town Council event and tea/coffee was provided with the organiser being paid through the payroll system for providing the music. It was noted that other tea dance events in Oxfordshire charged amounts above the current level for the Corn Exchange.

After discussion it was agreed that the present system should be retained with an entrance fee of £2.50 being charged.

Recommended:

That, the current arrangements for the Tea Dance at the Corn Exchange be continued with an entrance fee of £2.50 being charged.

H26 **CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL GARDEN**

The report of the Project Officer was considered.

The Committee supported the principle of providing an area for a children's memorial garden and the potential location, design of the site and infrastructure required were discussed.

After discussion it was agreed that the garden be located at Windrush Cemetery with exact siting to be agreed. Members indicated that the garden should be relatively small, include benches for people to sit and reflect, have a willow arch entrance if possible and a planted area. It was agreed that this should be a Town Council project.

Recommended:

1. That, the provision of a Children's Memorial Garden at Windrush Cemetery be supported; and
2. That, officers be requested to develop the scheme on the basis outlined at the meeting.

H27 **FINANCE/BUDGET REPORT**

The committee considered the report of the Town Clerk updating on the budget decision taken by Council and seeking consideration of the budgets allocated to the committee.

In response to questions it was clarified that the building surveys, CCTV and energy surveys were allocated as earmarked reserves.

In respect of Windrush Cemetery it was asked if the £25k allocation was needed or could be reduced. In response it was explained that this was for the road infrastructure for the future development of the site. After discussion it was considered that costs for this could be significant in the future so it was sensible to allocate the funding as proposed.

Clarification was given that the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee would consider recommendations from the other committees when making a final decision on refining the budget. It was emphasised that committees needed to look at their budgets in isolation.

Discussion ensued regarding the potential for increased income from the Corn Exchange and it was noted that this could not be guaranteed and it was preferable to look at revenue savings instead. Different operating models were discussed and clarification was given that the Corn Exchange Working Party had looked at the business model and this would continue to be reviewed.

It was agreed that, at this stage, there did not appear to be any areas within the committees remit where further savings could be made and therefore it was not possible to make any such recommendation.

Recommended:

That, the current budget position be noted.

The meeting closed at: 7.15 pm

Chair

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

Held on Monday, 24 January 2022

At 6.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom

Present:

Councillor O Collins (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	V Gwatkin
	D Butterfield	
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Simon Wright	Democratic & Legal Services Officer
Others:	One member of the public.	

As there was no legislation in place for the Town Council to hold virtual meetings, and because of the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic, the Stronger Communities Committee formed virtually as an Advisory Committee. Any recommendations outside of the current work programme, budget or policy would require ratification at the Full Council meeting held on 14 February 2022.

SC28 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ashbourne, Eaglestone and Prosser.

SC29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Collins declared a pecuniary interest in Item No. 11 – Finance & Budget Report by virtue of being an employee of West Oxfordshire Community Transport who received funding from the Town Council. Councillor Collins indicated he would leave the meeting if there was any discussion regarding that part of the budget.

SC30 MINUTES

Councillor Collins clarified that his declaration of interest made at the meeting was pecuniary due to being employed by West Oxfordshire Community Transport.

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2021, as amended, were adopted and signed as a correct record by the Chair.

Minute SC573 – Public Benches - The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the District Council had responded regarding the provision of public benches in the town. Bench Types were to be agreed and it was noted that the siting of a bench outside 53 High Street was not being pursued.

It was further reported that funding was still available from the Welcome Back Fund and it had been suggested that a large-scale chess set could be installed on Market Square. Members, whilst supporting the principle, considered that there could be issues with storage of the chess pieces as this was already a problem for the Town Council. It was suggested, and agreed, not to support the suggestion as made but that alternative options should be looked at.

SC574 – Open Spaces Infrastructure - The Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that this was still being finalised by officers.

SC575 – Tower Hill Bus Stop – It was reported that a letter had been sent to Oxfordshire County Council confirming the Town Council position regarding a new bus stop.

SC31 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Committee adjourned for this item.

Mr. Jeff Hunter representing Courtside CIC who operate facilities at The Leys addressed the committee in respect of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations.

The Committee reconvened following public participation.

SC32 PLATINUM JUBILEE WORKING PARTY

The committee considered the minutes of the Platinum Jubilee Working Party held on 8 December 2021 and 18 January 2022.

Councillor Aitman, Chair of the Working Party, outlined discussion that had taken place and thanked Mr. Hunter for his offer to help the Town Council with the celebrations. Members concurred and it was agreed that Mr. Hunter be invited to a future meeting.

Resolved:

1. That, the minutes of the Platinum Jubilee Working Party be noted: and
2. That, Mr. Hunter be invited to attend a future meeting of the Working Party

SC33 COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

The Committee considered the report of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer.

Members thanked officers for the recently published newsletter which had been very informative and well received. A quote had been sought for the next publication and the committee was being asked to approve the costs within the existing budget allocation.

Recommended:

That, the cost of the design, print and distribution of the newsletter be approved providing it was in the agreed budget.

SC34 **COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT**

The report of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer was considered.

Members considered the content of the annual satisfaction survey and areas to focus on. It was agreed that the survey needed to have broad strategic aims, be within the remit of the Town Council and for it to be clear that not all ideas being put forward could be delivered. The Committee emphasised the need to promote the survey and there was a role for councillors in this regard. It was suggested an overview of Town Council services should be provided, including Youth Service Provision, Climate Emergency and Active Lifestyles and that residents be encouraged to comment on their top priorities from these.

In respect of the Newsletter covers it was considered that highlighting the recent reopening of the Park Play Area, previous play area improvements and future aims on these, as outlined in the new Open Spaces Strategy would be appropriate. In addition, it was suggested that promoting the Corn Exchange once works had been completed could be included.

The Committee looked at the previously constituted Youth Council and agreed that it would be a positive thing to reintroduce. Members noted that there were various operating models and that the links between the Youth Council and the Town council needed to be clear. It was agreed that officers be asked to look at the set-up, with the Youth Council mentors, and report back to the committee.

Recommended:

1. That, the satisfaction survey should focus on the wider strategic aims of the Council, and priorities on its services, with headings relating to Youth Provision, Climate Emergency and Active Lifestyles being included;
2. That, the reopening of Park Road Play Area and the aims of the Open Spaces Strategy together with the promotion of the Corn Exchange be used for the remaining space on the front and back covers of the newsletter; and
3. That, the refresh of the Youth Council be supported and officers be asked, in conjunction with the Youth Council Mentors, to look at the constitution and operating model and report back to the committee.

SC35 **DEFIBRILLATOR - LAKE & COUNTRY PARK**

The report of Operations & Estates Advisor was received.

Members thanked Mr. Taylor for his fundraising for the purchase of a defibrillator and cabinet at the Lake & Country Park. It was noted that Bouyges E&S Solutions UK Ltd had also undertaken installation work free of charge as part of its community spirit programme. The Committee expressed their gratitude to the company for this.

It was noted that the project had been delivered within the allocated budget.

Recommended:

1. That, the Town Council officially thanks Mr. Taylor and Bouyges Ltd for their work in providing a defibrillator and that the Mayor writes to both accordingly; and
2. That, both contributions are included in any publicity regarding the installation of the defibrillator.

SC36 CYCLE RACKS AND BIN AT BURWELL BUS SHELTER

The report of the Project Officer was considered.

The committee expressed their support for the installation of cycle racks and a bin at the Burwell bus shelter as it was considered that its proximity to the local shops and providing safe cycle parking for shop and bus users made it an ideal location.

The budgetary position was noted, together with the infrastructure requirements and discussion ensued regarding contractual arrangements for emptying the bin. It was agreed that WODC/Publica be requested to undertake the emptying.

Recommended:

1. That, the provision of cycle racks and a bin at the Burwell bus shelter be supported; and
2. That, WODC/Publica be requested to undertake the emptying of the bin.

SC37 WORLD WAR 2 PILLBOX

Consideration was given to the report of the Project Officer.

Members expressed their support for the installation of an information board and it was noted that the proposed cost was within budget and the plastic used was recycled. The committee agreed the proposed wording but it was requested that, if possible, some additional wording could be added regarding the bomb that was dropped on Church Green.

Recommended:

1. That, the provision of an information sign on Langel Common for the WW2 Pillbox be supported; and
2. That, the proposed wording be agreed and officers be requested to look at whether some additional information could be added.

SC38 FINANCE/BUDGET REPORT

Consideration was given to the report of the Town Clerk seeking a review of budgets allocated to the committee in light of decisions taken by the Council when setting its precept.

Members noted the present position and it was suggested that the £10k currently allocated in the revenue budget for CCTV could be removed as there was also an allocation within earmarked reserves towards the capital cost of cameras at the Leys and Burwell. However as a mobile camera had been sourced by WODC/TVP it was considered that this earmarked funding was no longer required. The money could therefore be reallocated from the revenue budget accordingly.

Recommended:

That the Committee makes the recommendations to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee that the allocation of £10k in the revenue budget for CCTV be removed, and the expenditure met from the Earmarked Reserve set aside for CCTV equipment no longer required.

The meeting closed at: 6.50 pm

Chair

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 9d

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

Held on Tuesday, 25 January 2022

At 6.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom

Present:

Councillor R Smith (Chair)

Councillors:	A Prosser	L Duncan
	J Aitman	V Gwatkin
	O Collins	M Jones
Officers:	Claire Green	Administration Support - Planning & Stronger Communities
	Simon Wright	Democratic & Legal Services Officer
Others:	No members of the public.	

As there was no legislation in place for the Town Council to hold virtual meetings, and because of the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic, the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee formed virtually as an Advisory Committee. Any recommendations outside of the current work programme, budget or policy would require ratification at the Full Council meeting held on 14 February 2022.

P39 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor McMahon

P40 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Collins declared a non-prejudicial interest in Application Nos. 22/00048/HHD & 22/00049/LBC by virtue of knowing the applicant.

Councillor Jones declared a non-prejudicial interest in Application No. 21/01703/HHD by virtue of knowing the applicant. Councillor Jones indicated that she would not participate or vote on the application.

P41 MINUTES

It was noted that the date on the schedule of application responses at the 14 December meeting was wrong and needed amendment.

A verbal update was given on discussions at the 20MPH Speed Limit Working Party held earlier in the day. It was clarified that the minutes of that meeting would be presented to the committee at the next meeting.

Resolved:

The minutes of the meetings of the committee held on 23 November & 14 December 2021 and 4 January 2022 were adopted as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

P42 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

At the request of the Chair the committee agreed to consider Agenda Item No. 7 – Finance & Budget Report before Agenda Item No. 5

P43 **FINANCE & BUDGET REPORT**

Consideration was given to the report of the Town Clerk seeking a review of budgets allocated to the committee in light of decisions taken by the Council when setting its precept.

In response to a question it was clarified that whilst the committee held an overall responsibility for climate and biodiversity issues a number of the projects were overseen by other committees who had been allocated budgets accordingly.

Members considered options for reducing budgets and it was noted that £15k had been allocated for the Climate Emergency Fund out of which previous years allocations remained unspent. It was acknowledged that this was mainly due to separate budgets being allocated for schemes.

Clarification was given that the recommendations of each committee would be considered by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee who would make final recommendations to Council.

After discussion it was proposed and agreed that the £15k currently allocated for the Climate Emergency Fund be removed with a proviso that if there was excess funding available when the budget was finalised then this should be allocated to the Climate Emergency fund.

Recommended:

That the £15k currently allocated for the Climate Emergency Fund be removed with a request being made that if there was excess funding available when the budget was finalised then this should be allocated back to the Climate Emergency fund.

P44 **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.

P45 **PLANNING APPLICATION: R3.0151/21 - A40 HIF2 SMART CORRIDOR ('HIF2 PROJECT') A40 CORRIDOR BETWEEN WITNEY AND WOLVERCOTE, OXFORDSHIRE**

The Committee considered an application received from Oxfordshire County Council. It was noted that the response would be a recommendation to the Council meeting on 14 February.

Members highlighted the need for any scheme to have connectivity in respect of accessing public transport and also cycle provision. In respect of witney it was suggested that any schemes were dependant on the delivery of the improved Shores Green junction and that it would be preferable for a Park & Ride hub to be located in Witney.

Recommended:

That the following response be submitted to Oxfordshire County Council:

Witney Town Council welcomes the opportunity to respond in respect of this application.

Members are keen to see improvements to the A40 corridor and consider that the implementation of the new four-way Shores Green junction should precede any other development. The introduction of a dual carriageway is noted but it is suggested that the route between Eynsham and Witney should include a dedicated bus lane in both directions.

In respect of Park & Ride facilities the Council would question whether drivers from Witney, and further afield, would terminate their journey at Eynsham to access public transport and not just continue their journeys in to Oxford by car. It is requested that the possibility of a Park & Ride hub in or close to Witney could be considered.

Witney Town Council is keen that any scheme has good connectivity to public transport and cycle routes. In particular it would like to see easier access to Oxford Parkway station and the A34 by road and public transport. In respect of cycling it is suggested that existing routes should be easily accessible and potential new routes, such as a safe cycleway between Eynsham and Botley should be explored.

Finally, if development is approved the Council hope that the construction plan would minimise disruption to residents and ensure the reinstatement of land affected by the scheme.

The meeting closed at: 7.25 pm

Chair

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692- 10 WTC/016/22 Plot Ref :-22/00025/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 18/01/22
Location :- 29 SNOWSHILL DRIVE Date Returned :- 26/01/22
SNOWSHILL DRIVE
Proposal : Single storey rear 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.

692- 11 WTC/017/22 Plot Ref :-21/03814/FUL Type :- FULL
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 18/01/22
Location :- LAND AT WEST WITNEY Date Returned :- 26/01/22
DOWNS ROAD
CURBRIDGE
Proposal : Erection of a dwelling (Installation of an aerial to the side elevation).
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

The Meeting closed at : 7:20pm

Signed : _____ Chairman Date: _____

On behalf of :- Witney Town Council

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

Held on Monday, 31 January 2022

At 6.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom

Present:

Councillor R Smith (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	M Jones
	O Collins	T Ashby (In place of H Eaglestone)
	V Gwatkin	
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
Others:	No members of the public.	

As there was no legislation in place for the Town Council to hold virtual meetings, and because of the ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic, the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee formed virtually as an Advisory Committee. Any recommendations outside of the current work programme, budget or policy would require ratification at the Full Council meeting held on 14 February 2022

F46 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for their absence were received from Cllrs L Ashbourne and H Eaglestone.

Councillor T Ashby was in attendance for Councillor H Eaglestone

F47 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from members or officers.

F48 MINUTES

The Committee received the minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2021.

Minute F586 – The Deputy Town Clerk advised that the agreed Open Spaces infrastructure policies would be implemented and published online soon.

Minute F588 – The Town Clerk advised actions concerning the Council's banking arrangements were ongoing.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

F49 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of the public present to address the committee.

F50 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Committee received the report of the Deputy Town Clerk outlining payment schedules, bank statements and bank reconciliations which are brought to the Policy, Governance & Finance committee as part of the Council's due diligence.

Resolved:

Members noted the report, the bank reconciliations and agreed the following schedule of payments be approved:

Cheque No's	In the sum of:	Account
DDs and Standing Orders October	£77,878.62	General CB 1
Cheques 33275-33323, DDs, and Standing Orders October	£151,809.45	Imprest CB 2
Cheques 101168-101169, DDs, and Standing Orders November	£1,039,781.45	General CB 1
Cheques 33324-33378, DDs, and Standing Orders November	£123,111.20	Imprest CB 2
DDs and Standing Orders December	£8,859.08	General CB 1
Cheques 33379-333408, DDs, and Standing Orders December	£86,258.61	Imprest CB 2

F51 FINANCIAL REPORT & ASSOCIATED MATTERS

The committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk.

It was confirmed the items listed would be funded within the current fiscal year, apart from where stated.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

F52 BUDGET - REVISED 2021/22 AND ESTIMATES 2022/23

The committee received and considered the report of the Town Clerk/RFO.

The report contained revised financial reports on the 2021-22 and proposed 2022-23 budgets. Reviews had taken place by each spending committee during the last Council cycle to balance their budgets in line with the formerly agreed precept increase of 4.9% for 2022-23.

Members scrutinised the budget and raised several questions on specific budget lines and earmarked reserves for deferred or potential projects and services. The committee was satisfied the budget, as presented would offer best value for the Council and residents in the forthcoming year.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted; and,
2. That, the earmarked reserves as detailed in the report fund some revenue and capital expenditure, including the repurposing the EMRs A/c 375 – CCTV Leys/Burwell to fund 4990/402 the annual contribution towards the CCTV Town Centre Scheme and,
3. That, the revised budget for 2021-22 as presented, be adopted and,
4. That, the Capital & Special Revenue Projects as listed, be approved and,
5. That, the recommendations from the Spending Committees to balance the budget be approved, therefore adopting the budget for 2022-23 as presented.

F53 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

The committee received and considered the report of the Democratic & Legal Services Officer.

Members noted that no Annual Town Meeting took place during 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic so an in-person meeting, later than the scheduled date of 16th March, but before 1st June would be favourable.

The committee agreed the format of the evening should be as in previous years, with the same local invitees, Committee Chairs providing reports for two years work ahead of the meeting, and round tables laid out for attendees.

Recommended:

1. That, the Annual Town Meeting for 2022 be held in-person at the end of April or beginning of May; and,
2. That, the format of the meeting be similar to that of previous years in the Corn Exchange.

F54 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

The Committee received the draft calendar of meetings for the forthcoming municipal year, as prepared by the Democratic & Legal Services Officer.

Recommended:

That, the calendar of meetings for the forthcoming municipal year as presented, be adopted by Witney Town Council.

F55 OFFICE 365/COMPUTER SOFTWARE

The committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk.

Members were advised that further information had been received since the report had been written and regrettably, the Town Council could not upgrade to Windows 11 as key software had not been tested with the programme and therefore, would not be supported.

The Council could however proceed with upgrades to Office 365, email migration and the creation of an intranet/extranet service to help facilitate the growing Council workforce and members. The Council's IT providers had offered a small, time sensitive discount on these services.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted; and,
2. That, the Council upgrades to Office 365 and creates an Intranet/Extranet, taking advantage of the terms offered by its IT provider.

F56 PROCUREMENT POLICY

The committee received and considered a draft Procurement Policy for the Town Council.

Members were advised this policy was previously submitted to the committee and amendments had been made to help realise the Council's aspirations concerning social values, not just financial ones.

As a small organisation, it was difficult to weight decision-making based on social values but with this policy, consideration would be given where possible. It was confirmed that the Council had financial regulations which included statutory requirements on the awarding of contracts which would still have to be adhered to.

Recommended:

1. That, the Procurement Policy as presented be adopted by Witney Town Council.

F57 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.

F58 PROPERTY & LEGAL MATTERS

The Committee received and considered the confidential report of the Town Clerk/CEO concerning property under the Council's ownership and ongoing legal or commercial communications.

Resolved:

1. That, the confidential report of the Town Clerk/CEO be noted.

F59 CORN EXCHANGE BUILDING REPAIRS & EXTERNAL DECORATION

The committee received and considered the confidential report of the Operations & Estates Advisor.

Members recognised the works were required to help solve a long-standing damp issue at the Corn Exchange but were disheartened so few quotes had been submitted for the work from qualified tradespeople.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted; and,
2. That, the required works be advertised on the national Contracts Finder website to see if any further quotes could be obtained ahead of the Full Council meeting on 14th February.

F60 TOWN HALL WINDOW REPAIRS AND EXTERNAL BUILDING DECORATION.

The committee received and considered the confidential report of the Operations & Estates Advisor.

Members were pleased to see the specification for these works and the quote comparison provided by officers to explain the differences in quotes which were in budget. There was however, some disparity in the quotes in terms of scaffolding costs and other work components which could not be discerned at the meeting.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted; and,
2. That, the decision on which contract award be delegated to Officers in conjunction with the Chair and Deputy Leader.

F61 FUTURE MAJOR/STRATEGIC PROJECTS

The Committee received and considered the confidential report of the Town Clerk/CEO concerning major and strategic projects.

Recommended:

1. That, the confidential report be noted; and,
2. That, the confidential appendix report of the Projects Officer be noted and,
3. That, architects be instructed to draft indicative layout plans of the property outlined in the report to visualise the space and help gauge public interest and,
4. That, a decision on 3G pitch feasibility on Town Council owned land is deferred until after a meeting with the Football Association.

F62 **STAFFING MATTERS**

The Committee received and considered the confidential minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meetings held on 12th, 19th, and 26th January 2022 previously circulated. Since the agenda had been published a further meeting had been held on 28th January 2022 and these minutes had also been circulated ahead of the meeting.

Resolved:

That, the confidential minutes of the Personnel Sub-committee held on 12th, 19th, 26th and 28th January 2022 be noted, and the recommendations contained therein approved.

The meeting closed at: 7.43 pm

Chair

**20 MPH SPEED LIMIT WORKING PARTY MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Tuesday, 25 January 2022

At 4.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting Room via Zoom

Present:

Councillors:	T Ashby L Duncan	A Prosser R Smith
Officers:	Adam Clapton Claire Green	Deputy Town Clerk Administration Support - Planning & Stronger Communities
Others:	No members of the public.	

1 ELECTION OF CHAIR

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor Duncan be elected Chair of the Working Party.

There being no other nominations it was:

Resolved:

That, Councillor L Duncan be elected Chair of the 20MPH Speed Limit Working Party.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Aitman and Coles.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from members or officers.

4 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Working Party considered the draft Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Working Party.

It was noted that the Working Party would be reporting to the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee and the TOR needed amendment to reflect this.

Resolved:

That, the Terms of Reference of the Working Party, as amended, be approved.

5 **20MPH ZONE SCHEME**

The Working Party considered the report of the Democratic & Legal Services Officer together with a plan showing existing speed limits in Witney.

Members welcomed Tim Shickle who was attending the meeting representing Oxfordshire County Council.

It was noted that the focus for the working party meeting was to discuss key roads in and around the town, consideration was given for risk and usage, proximity to schools and walking/cycling routes for children, likely driver compliance, local knowledge on routes and whether reductions in speed on specific roads might bring safer travel for all road users, looking at needs and constraints for individual roads.

Tim Shickle confirmed that this initiative would be a pilot project and nothing was irreversible. When the scheme was started OCC would be launching a county-wide marketing campaign to raise awareness, and additionally there would be some locally targeted advertising. It was recommended that any existing speed cameras are retained (which for Witney is just one camera on the Woodstock road).

A discussion ensued around the roads and areas. It was agreed that all housing estate roads should become 20mph at the point you turn into the estate.

Key routes were then discussed in turn, in the main it was agreed that existing 30mph roads would become 20mph, including Crawley Road, Hailey Road, Woodstock Road, Oxford Hill/Newland, Cogges Hill Road/Stanton Harcourt Road, Station Road (partly), Curbridge Road and Burford Road.

The point at which the 20mph restriction begins was debated, in particular Station Lane, Woodstock Road and Curbridge Road. It was mainly agreed that the start points would be where existing 30mph limits are introduced, some exceptions were applied. The agreed start points and zones would need to be mapped and circulated to members for final agreement before being referred to Full Council on 14th February, and onwards to OCC.

Additionally to the 30 > 20 amendments, it was agreed that a proposal would be put to OCC for reductions in speed limits on other roads. Including:

- Jubilee Way to be reduced to 40mph from current 50mph, with the possibility of this 40mph stretch being extended further East towards North Leigh, as indicated on the map.
- Deer Park Road to be reduced from 40mph to 30mph.
- Burford Road – Existing 40 mph reduced to 30mph and existing 30mph reduced to 20mph.

Following a discussion around driver compliance and the potential for speed to creep-up on long stretches, Tim Shickle introduced the possibility of installation of flashing signs that are a visual reminder to drivers of their travelling speed.

The design of these would need clarification and cost implications were not confirmed. OCC would be exploring procurement options and the three areas were to be mapped showing where potential VAS could be located.

Resolved:

That, the proposed speed limits and associated infrastructure as outlined at the meeting be mapped and circulated to Working Party members for approval prior to consideration by Full Council on 14 February 2022.

The meeting closed at: 5.30 pm

Chair

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FULL COUNCIL

Date: 14 February 2022

Title: Civic Announcements

Contact Officer: Secretary to the Mayor – Loraine Harwood

DECEMBER 2021 TO FEBRUARY 2022

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

- Christmas concert at Woodgreen School
- Meeting Naomi Godfrey from Millers Grange Care Home to discuss events in town for residents
- Got 2B music evening

REPRESENTING and PROMOTING WITNEY

- Meeting with Amanda Ponsonby (previous High Sheriff of Oxfordshire) – discussing matters including Tiny Forest
- High Sheriff of Oxfordshire Tree planting and community lunch in Oxford

KEY EVENTS AND COUNCIL ACTIVITY

- Flag raising – Her Majesty's Accession at Town Hall

RAISING FUNDS

- Mayor's Charities 2020-22:
- Homestart
- Got2B

- Guideposts - Witney

Prepared by:

Joy Aitman and Loraine Harwood

Burford Experimental Traffic Regulation Order
Email received from Oxfordshire County Council

From: Oxfordshire County Council

Sent: 02 February 2022

Subject: Burford Experimental Traffic Regulation Order

Dear Stakeholder,

The A361 Burford Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) expires at midnight on 4 February 2022, as it came into force on 5 August 2020 and lasts for a maximum of 18 months. OCC officers do not have the legal powers to extend the ETRO, nor the authority to make a permanent Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). Therefore, the ETRO will expire and any enforcement against it will cease in line with the dates above.

Should Oxfordshire County Council make any further decisions regarding a weight restriction at A361 Burford, the relevant Order will be made in line with that decision.

Kind Regards,

Cherwell and West Infrastructure Locality Team

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From: Windrush Valley Traffic Action Group

Sent: 21 January 2022

Subject: WiVTAG Update

Dear All,

We hope you are all keeping well. Firstly, we would like to thank you all for your continued support and would like to update you on the situation on the Burford ETRO. At the cabinet meeting that was held on the 5th of January, WiVTAG members Mark McCappin and Jan De Haldevang gave a presentation requesting that Cllr Enright revoke the Burford ETRO and implement a regional solution that meets the needs of all, there was also representation from the Road Haulage Association, Logistics UK, Chris Hayter, Smiths & Sons. If you wish to listen to the meeting this can be accessed on the following link: video link <https://oxon.cc/DDCMTDS05012022>

At the summing up Cllr Enright followed the Officers recommendations to develop a regional plan and revoked the Burford ETRO effective from the 5th of February. As expected by WiVTAG, the decision was called in by Cllr Nicholas Field-Johnson at the meeting and we now understand that he has the required 10 signatures for this to be called in and this will be heard by the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee at their next meeting to be held on the 2nd of February.

WiVTAG have requested to attend this meeting and speak, and we have also informed the Road Haulage Association, Logistics UK, Chris Hayter, Smiths & Sons. We have also emailed and sent hard copies of a letter to the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee attendees detailing our support of Cllr Enright's decision at the Cabinet meeting. I have attached a copy of the letter that has been sent and would encourage all Parish/Town Councils to send their own letter to the secretary of the Place Overview & Security Committee (Chris Reynolds chris.reynolds@oxfordshire.gov.uk) giving their support to the decision that was made by Cllr Enright. Details of the meeting can be found here: <https://mycouncil.oxfordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1173&MIId=6773&Ver=4>

Again, thank you for your support, we at WiVTAG believe that Cllr Enright made the right decision, and we hope that the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee also believe this to be true. We will keep you posted.

If you have any questions, then please do not hesitate to get in touch or contact a member of WiVTAG directly on the emails listed below.

Kind Regards

WiVTAG

Windrush Valley Traffic Action Group

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To all Members of the Place and Overview Scrutiny Committee

Dear Councillor

Call-In for Burford Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) 7.5 tonnes Weight Limit
Delegated Decisions by Cabinet Member for Travel & Development Strategy
Wednesday, 5 January 2022 10.00 am

You will be aware that the above decision by Cllr Duncan Enright has been called in. The Windrush Valley Traffic Action Group (WiVTAG) is making this submission to the Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee to record our support for Cllr Enright's decision. We wish also to comment on the reasons given for the call-in, by Cllr Field-Johnson and others, in such documents to which we have had access.

WiVTAG represents 15 communities in Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire as well as many local farmers and 51 local businesses. We have campaigned for the Burford ETRO to be revoked and for the development of a better regional solution to manage freight traffic in the West Oxfordshire area. We fully support the decisions made by Cllr Enright at the Cabinet Member Decision (CMD) Meeting on 5th January 2022.

Referring to the reasons for the Call-In as presented by Cllr Field-Johnson:

1. We believe that claims made in the Call-In letter of misrepresentation and pre-determination by Cllr Duncan Enright are entirely spurious and utterly without foundation. Indeed, it is the view of WiVTAG that Cllr Enright has, throughout the entire ETRO period, been scrupulously fair in listening to all sides of the debate and refraining from taking positions or taking decisions ahead of your officers detailed reports. In regard to the CMD meeting on 5th January, all statements were submitted in writing several days ahead to enable Cllr Enright to consider these in detail. The content of these statements, together with all the submissions and reports during the experimental period were taken into consideration by Cllr Enright in formulating his decisions.

We find the Cllr Field-Johnson's statements in this regard to be offensive.

2. Cllr Field-Johnson and the Burford Town Council have challenged the validity of the data on HGV traffic in Burford itself and the displaced traffic in the wider area, as presented by your Officers. WiVTAG acknowledges that there is considerable variability in the figures, as do your officers, and as expressed in their report (page 122/123 Table 3.10 Assessment of Success Criteria). Notwithstanding the variability of the data, it clearly indicates that the criteria for success of the ETRO were not met, and it is unacceptable for those seeking to undermine Cllr Enright's decision of 5th January to now attempt to redefine the criteria. Burford Town Council is not able to point to more reliable data from both before and after the introduction of the ETRO. In our view, there would need to be far more robust reasons to reject the considered conclusions that your Officers have reached in their comprehensive report to Cllr Enright. No such reasons have been identified.

Support for Cllr Enright's decisions:

1. **Displacement of HGV Traffic.** It is clear beyond reasonable doubt is that the ETRO caused widespread displacement of heavy traffic onto other, often minor, roads that are manifestly less suitable than the A361 in terms of environmental and structural characteristics. HGV traffic on legitimate business, delivering and collecting to or from communities north of the River Windrush, has been forced to make extensive diversions to cross the river, or use unclassified minor roads through Crawley, Minster Lovell, Swinbrook or the Barringtons. Quite apart from the adverse environmental and traffic-management effects that this caused, the ETRO has been seriously disadvantageous to farming businesses in the area, all of which require access to move livestock, collect, and distribute produce, and to obtain other essential materials.
2. **Burford's Permit Scheme was Unfit for Purpose.** The exemptions permit scheme operated by Burford TC was proven to be totally unfit for purpose. By their own admission Burford TC accept that the farming community had been all but forgotten in their deliberations, and their national logistic needs not taken into account. Equally, the radius of 4.8 miles that Burford identified as the limit of their permit scheme appears to have been entirely arbitrary with no relationship to the possible freight traffic displacement routes. Many local businesses have pointed out that the ETRO is effectively anti-competitive in that the permit scheme did not reflect the status and location of local supply and delivery points.
3. **Adverse Effects on Air Quality.** Air quality is an important priority and is now enshrined in law. Although figures for air quality have been distorted by a number of factors recently, notably changes to travel patterns due to the COVID pandemic, nevertheless, the air quality in Burford has never breached the approved national guidelines. By contrast, Witney has long been recognised as an Air Quality Management Area and yet much of the HGV displacement has been to Witney.
4. **OCC's Climate Change Agenda.** As part of its climate change agenda the County Council's commitment to transport related carbon reduction is important, and that means reducing emissions from HGVs as far as possible. HGVs typically do no more than 7 miles to the gallon of diesel and the Burford ETRO has introduced either long diversion routes requiring excessive additional distances and increased emissions, or extraordinary infrastructure damage to the minor road network. One highly respected and reputable local business reported at the Decisions Meeting that the Burford ETRO had resulted in an additional 41,800 km travelled by his fleet, an additional 57 tonnes of CO₂ as well as increased wages and fuel costs that have had to be passed on to customers.
5. **The Equality and Climate Impact Assessment (ECIA)** in the final Officer's Report (Appendix D) noted, as an alternative to the ETRO, that OCC *"Reconsider an Area Wide weight restriction and a more regional approach with neighbouring authorities"*. Their Recommendation was that this be *"considered within the emerging Local Transport and Connectivity Plan work"*. Recommendation (a) at the CMD meeting agreed with this alternative and Cllr Enright was correct to make a corresponding decision.

6. **Strength of Local Objection.** Well considered and independent objections to the Burford ETRO have been received by the County Council from:
- a. Thames Valley Police
 - b. Gloucestershire County Council
 - c. Cotswold District Council
 - d. OCC's own Trading Standards team
 - e. 15 town and parish councils
- as well as hundreds of objections from residents across Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire. By contrast very few letters of support for the ETRO were presented.
7. **WiVTAG's Constructive Approach.** WiVTAG has worked with local businesses, with the farming community and with OCC's officers to find constructive solutions to the problem. We acknowledge that HGVs are often unwelcome in the communities through which they travel. But we also recognise the essential need for freight traffic to support our local and national economic base. To that end we have offered a solution through a zonal weight restriction in the Windrush Valley area that provides a reasonable level of protection to Burford and local communities but does not unduly restrict the needs of local business or undermine the need to reduce emissions as part of OCC's commitment to the climate change agenda. Your officers' report to Cllr Enright reflects this opportunity where it recommends to "*Reconsider an Area Wide weight restriction and a more regional approach with neighbouring Authorities*".
8. **In summary, the continuation of the Burford Weight Limit is not justified.** It does not simply divert traffic from one area to other communities but causes a net increase in environmental and infrastructure damage; displacement of traffic to inappropriate and less safe routes; an increase of pollution in areas where air quality problems already exist; and damage to the local economy. While everyone acknowledges the challenges that HGV traffic poses to many local communities, the Burford Weight Limit is manifestly not the appropriate solution and Cllr Enright's considered decision is correct and should be confirmed.

For these reasons we urge you to support Cllr Enright's decision taken on 5th January

a) APPROVE officers to consider the costs and benefits of developing area wide restrictions across Oxfordshire including close working with neighbouring authorities, as part of the county wide freight strategy, as soon as practicable. Noting any future approval of area wide weight restrictions would likely see existing environmental weight restrictions revoked subject to consultation.

AND

b) REVOKE the Burford Experimental Traffic Regulation Order of 7.5t weight restriction. Therefore, not making a permanent order.

Kind regards

Windrush Valley Traffic Action Group

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WEST OXFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

www.westoxon.gov.uk

Witney Flood Investigation Report December 2020

Date: 26th January 2022

Version	Date	Details	Author	Checked	Approved
1	06/01/2022	Draft	Richard Bennett	Laurence King	
2	26/01/2022	Final Report	Richard Bennett	Laurence King	Frank Wilson

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) has undertaken a flood investigation into the Witney Christmas floods 2020 and shared this report with the Environment Agency and Oxfordshire County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority for comments. Wherever possible, given the time constraints, these comments have been included within this document. WODC works collaboratively through an informal agency agreement with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) to undertake flood investigations as well as drainage enforcement and consenting functions on behalf of the LLFA in West Oxfordshire. This is separate to the County Council's LLFA responsibility for the final approval and publication of the Section 19 report. In the interests of having this investigation report concluded in an appropriate timeframe WODC has procured additional support to produce this report for Witney and invited the County Council, the EA and other stakeholders including the Witney Flood Group and landowners for their comments.

December 2020 flood event

It was deemed necessary to complete a formal investigation into the flood incidents in Witney due to the number of properties that reported flooding internally.

At least 54 residential and business properties were confirmed as flooding internally on the 23rd and 24th December 2020. This included residents at Mill House Care Home, Riverside Gardens and Riverside House needing to be evacuated.

Surface water flooding of some roads first occurred during the 23rd December 2020 in a number of places in Witney (section 2.1 for more detail). The amount of rainfall and its intensity that fell on that day overwhelmed some parts of the highway drainage systems which are very reliant on outfalls to watercourses which had started to become compromised by the rising river level. This was followed on the 24th December 2020 by river flooding when the upstream catchment flows reached Witney and river levels peaked. The level peaked just after midnight on the 25th December 2020.

Not unusually in flood events, the causes are from multiple sources with no one cause and no one solution required to reduce risk of future events.

Conclusions

From reviewing the information provided regarding the December 2020 flood event, historic river data and modelling information, it is clear that the 2020 event was greater than the current EA modelled 1 in 100 year flood event with flows similar to the peak flow in the modelled 1 in 100 year plus 20% event.

From the level information obtained from the Lidar (Laser Imaging, detection and Ranging) data it is clear that there is an issue with flood plain connectivity downstream of the Aquarius site and through the raised footpath at Langel Common.

Levels in the field to the South of the Aquarius site and to the east of the eastern channel of the river Windrush seem to suggest that flood flows would not be able to fill and pass through to the flood plain further downstream as easily as the 2014

modelling suggests. The flood levels in the model are lower than the ground level in the field adjacent to the channel in the modelled 1 in 20 year event and at the 1 in 100 year flood level, not all flows would be able to spill back in to the river.

The level of the raised footpath further downstream varies between 79.72m and 80.1m AOD which is higher than the modelled 1 in 100 year flood level of 79.68m AOD, confirming that the embankment is not accurately reflected in the 2014 model. The river through this area and upstream of Bridge Street is in poor condition due to no significant maintenance being carried out for many years.

It has been confirmed that an updated flood risk model for the Windrush and its tributaries through the town is to be carried out by the EA which will include information gathered since 2014 and from the December 2020 floods.

The updated model will need to fully understand the issues around Bridge Street and through to Langel Common, and confirm the main causes affecting the flood levels upstream of Bridge Street.

There is currently minimal information on the private and highway drainage systems throughout Witney and further investigations need to be carried out throughout the affected areas to fully understand the existing drainage systems and any issues with them.

Main Actions

Action	Lead Stakeholders	Consulting stakeholders
Communicate the explanation for the previous problems with the flood warning system and explore what further improvements and enhancements could be made.	EA	WODC, LLFA and residents.
Re-establish the Agency flood group meetings to discuss problems and to look at strategies to combat flooding due to Climate Change. Have periodic meetings with the local flood group to discuss the issues and recommendations with representatives from key authorities.	LLFA	All Authorities
Update the 2014 model with updated level information, especially downstream of the Aquarius Bridge through to the footpath at Langel Common. Include main tributaries through Witney	EA	WODC, LLFA, WFMG
Increased EA / Riparian maintenance to be carried out along the river Windrush through and downstream of Witney. Proactive visits and	EA	Landowners

encouragement to ensure riparian owners carry out their duties.		
Investigate if the river could be modified to increase flow capacity during severe conditions, especially between New Bridge Street through to the footpath in Langel Common.	EA	Landowners ,LLFA and WODC.
Investigate if the perimeter ditch of the Aquarius site can be modified/ diverted to increase flow Capacity.	WODC	EA, Landowners, LLFA
Look at improving flows through Langel Common footpath to ensure flood plain connectivity is improved during all flood events.	EA	OCC, Landowners ,WODC
Install Gauge boards from Woodford Mill through to Langel Common and set up a Flood Warden network with local volunteers to record the levels during flood events.	EA	WFMG, LLFA
Look at opportunities for flood storage and increased flood plain capacity upstream of Witney and Crawley such as nature based solutions through partnership working.	EA	Landowners, LLFA, WODC
Look at opportunities for schemes to manage flows upstream of the Hailey Road drain such as nature based solutions through partnership working.	WODC	LLFA, EA Landowners, WFMG
Property flood resilience (PFR) measures which improve the resilience of the community before a flood occurs. Many properties have already carried out measures on their properties, but further funding and support may be available to help more people;	Homeowners	WODC, EA, OCC
Measures to improve the resilience of existing public or community-owned infrastructure;	All Local Government Bodies	
Local community volunteer approaches to improve the community's ability to plan, respond and recover from flooding; link to local community emergency plans; encourage affected Care Home to develop Business Continuity Plan and Evacuation Plan.	All	Communities and Residents

WODC to continue regular maintenance of their ordinary watercourse assets and use their powers under the Land Drainage Act 1991 to ensure Riparian owners carry out required maintenance.	WODC	Landowners
OCC to regularly check and maintain highway assets through Witney, in line with their current maintenance regimes. Any affected areas that haven't been checked after December 2020 should be prioritised.	OCC Highways	
Bridge Street bridge to be checked regularly and de-silting under the bridge to be carried out as and when required accepting that without de-silting being also undertaken on the upstream side of the bridge there would be little benefit to simply de-silting under the bridge.	OCC Highways	EA
Privately owned drainage systems to be checked for blockages and defects and remedial works to be carried out where necessary. Connectivity downstream to be confirmed.	Developers, Landowners	WODC, LLFA
Foul sewers to be checked for surface water connections, blockages and capacity issues. Remedial works to be carried out as necessary to minimise surface water entering the system and increase capacity.	TW	LLFA, WODC

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Appendix A – Further Photos

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) Investigation

Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act (F&WMA) states:

- 1) On becoming aware of a flood in its area, a Lead Local Flood Authority must, to the extent that it considers it necessary or appropriate, investigate:-
 - a. which risk management authorities have relevant flood risk management functions, and
 - b. whether each of those risk management authorities has exercised, or is proposing to exercise, those functions in response to the flood.
- 2) Where an authority carries out an investigation under subsection (1) it must:-
 - a. publish the results of its investigation, and
 - b. notify any relevant risk management authorities.

West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) is not the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), but does deliver a delegated Flood Risk Management Service for the LLFA through an informal arrangement.

The legal obligations of the LLFA cannot be delegated, but in the interests of having investigation reports concluded in a timeframe that will help reduce residents' concerns around speed of resolution WODC has produced this report for Witney, in conjunction with Oxfordshire County Council (OCC), which can be used by the LLFA and other RMA's for their own purposes.

The LLFA have a set criteria which determines when a S19 report is required. The criteria is set out below and WODC have decided to follow that criteria.

LLFA/OCC Criteria

- Internal flooding (excluding to basements) to five or more residential properties or businesses within an area of 1km².
- Internal flooding of a business premises employing more than 10 people within an area of 1km².
- Internal flooding (excluding to basements) of at least one property or business for one week or longer.
- Flooding of one or more items of critical infrastructure, which could include hospitals, health centres, clinics, surgeries, colleges, schools, day nurseries, nursing homes, emergency services (police, fire, ambulance) stations, utilities and substations.

Caused a transport link to be impassable:

- Motorways, trunk roads, Class A and B highway closures shall all be investigated.
- Class C highways – 10 hours or more unless the route is the only means of access, or is primary route for critical infrastructure then reduce to 4 hours.
- Class U highways – 24 hours or more unless the route is the only means of access, or is primary route for critical infrastructure then reduce to 4 hours.
- All rail link closures shall be investigated.

Any flooding event that a risk management authority deems significant but does not meet the agreed thresholds should be put forward to the Strategic Flooding Group Committee for consideration.

1.2. Site Location and context

Witney is a thriving market town on the edge of the Cotswolds, 12 miles west of Oxford and just north of the A40 road. Witney has over 25,000 residents in over 10,000 households, according to recent figures from Oxfordshire County Council, making it the largest town in West Oxfordshire.

Witney has developed along the banks of the River Windrush. The river is braided upstream and downstream of Witney but through the built up area, it has been straightened and it passes under two main road bridges, Bridge Street and New Bridge Street. In recent years, the town has expanded rapidly, with housing development at Madley Park, Millers Mews, Grangers Place, Woodford Mill and also post 2007, with the completion of the Aquarius Site and developments of notable size being built off Burford Road and West Witney.

Three main tributaries enter the River Windrush in the centre of Witney; Hailey Road Drain upstream of Bridge Street, the Madley Brook in Langel Common and the Colwell Brook/QED system that joins the river Windrush near Ducklington. The Hailey Road Drain is culverted under Eastfield Road and Hailey Road.

A further tributary of the River Windrush, the Queen Emma's Dyke, forms and flows through Witney before joining the Windrush south of Witney.

The Environment Agency (EA) has previously identified over 100 properties in Witney to be at high risk of fluvial flooding. The EA flood map, Risk of Flooding from Rivers and Seas, is shown in Figure 1 below.

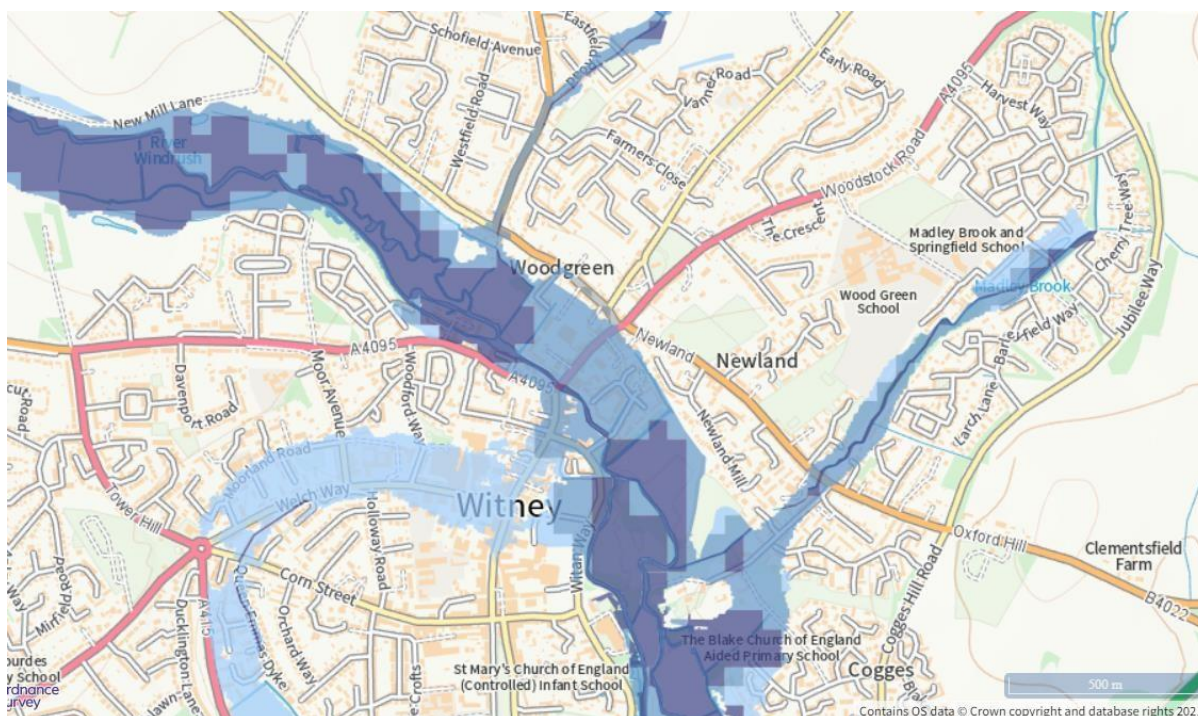


Figure 1 - EA flood map, Risk of Flooding from Rivers and Seas

1.3. Previous flood events

Approximately 235 properties in Witney were flooded during the events of July 2007. The flooding was from multiple sources due to the sheer the amount of rainfall that fell during within a 24 hour Period and the accumulation of rainfall from the weeks before.

The EA report “Witney Flood Review July 2007” stated *“On the 19 July 2007, 113mm of rain fell at Bourton-on-the-Water in 28 hours. This equates to more than twice the average monthly rainfall for July. Several rain gauges in the upper parts of the Windrush catchment recorded even greater totals: Sherbourne recorded 122mm, and Guiting 140mm. This extraordinary rain is what caused the majority of flooding in the town centre, from the River Windrush.”*

“Rainfall totals for Witney (from the rain gauge at the Thames Water Sewage Treatment Works) are more relevant when considering flooding that the town witnessed on Friday 20 July – the pluvial flooding. This rain gauge recorded 84mm in 17 hours.”

The EA report also confirmed that the peak flow recorded at the Worsham flow monitoring station during July 2007 was 29.26m³/s. The river flows during the July 2007 even are shown in figure 2 below.

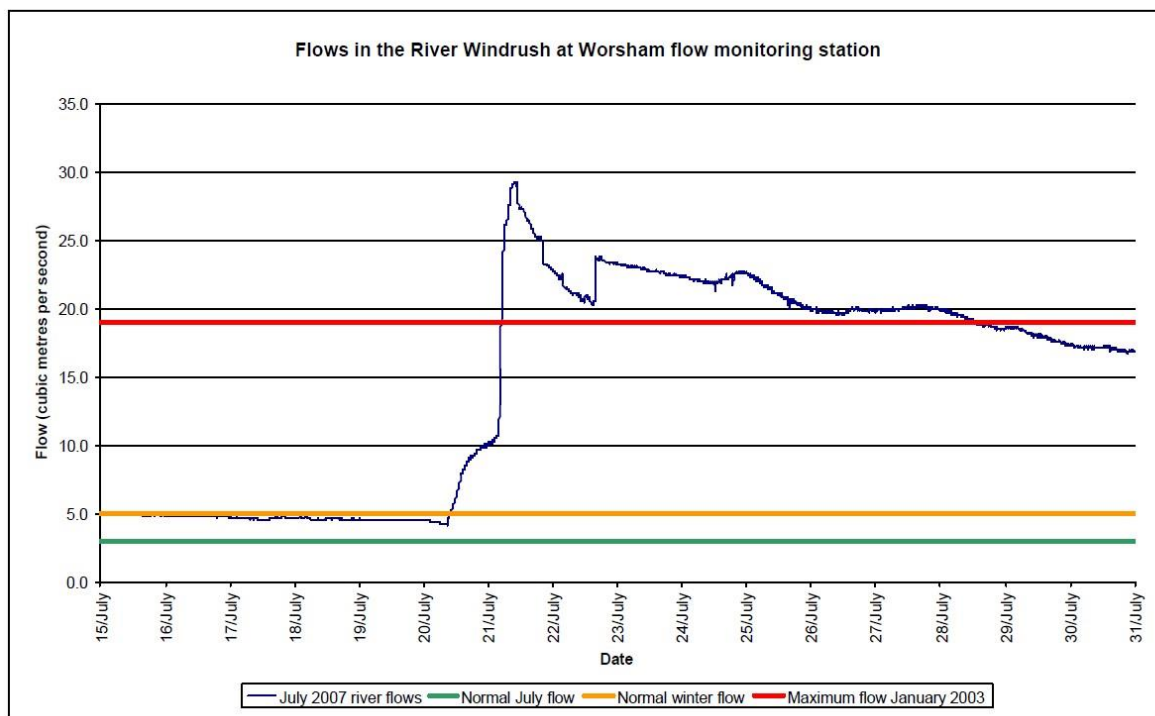


Figure 2 – July 2007 river flows for the River Windrush from EA Flood Review July 2007

The West Oxfordshire District Council Witney flood report stated that RAF Brize Norton recorded 125 millimetres of rain in a period of 12 hours.

In December 2013 - January 2014, flooding was also experienced in Witney. Internal flooding was reported in West End (including the industrial Estate), Bridge Street and Riverside gardens and also highway flooding in Eastfield Road and Hailey Road which was witnessed on the 23rd and 24th December. Flooding also occurred in February 2014. Rather than a significant rainfall event, the flooding in January and February was mainly down to continuous heavy rainfall which did not allow the river level to recover to its normal level.

2. RECENT FLOOD ISSUES AND INVESTIGATION

2.1. Summary of December 2020 Floods

It was deemed necessary to complete a formal investigation into the flood incidents in Witney due to the number of properties that reported flooding internally.

At least 54 residential and business properties were confirmed as flooding internally on the 23rd and 24th December 2020. This included residents at Mill House Care Home, Riverside Gardens and Riverside House needing to be evacuated.

The main areas affected with internal flooding were Woodford Mill, Riverside Gardens, Bridge Street, West End (including Industrial Estate), Millers Mews, Newland area (near the Madley Brook) and Eastfield Road. One property was also affected in New Yatt Road.

Highway flooding was also reported on Hailey Road linked to the Hailey Road Drain. Further external flooding was reported in Blakes Avenue, Park Road, Marriots Walk, Cherry Tree Way, Vanner Road and Woodford Way Car Park. There may have been internal flooding in these areas although no internal flooding was confirmed by WODC or OCC.

Surface water flooding first occurred on the 23rd December 2020 in a number of places in Witney, due to the sheer amount of rainfall and intensity that fell on that day which overwhelmed the existing drainage systems. This was followed on the 24th December 2020 by river flooding when the upstream catchment flows reached Witney and river levels peaked. The level peaked just after midnight on the 25th December 2020.

Not unusually in flood events, the causes are from multiple sources with no one cause and no one solution required to reduce risk of future events.

River levels were already high from the significant rainfall that fell at the beginning of October 2020 and river levels were unable to fall back to normal levels before the event on the 23rd December.

2.2. Rainfall and river data analysis

Data has been obtained from CEH, riverlevels.uk and Shoothill Gauge Map. The Rain gauge upstream of Witney at Worsham recorded 37.22mm of rainfall on the 23/12/2020 and a total of 64.5mm the 7 days up to 25/12/2020 when the river was still at its peak upstream of Bridge Street. The gauge in Bourton on the Water, which is located in the upper part of the Windrush catchment, record 56.1mm of rainfall on the 23/12/2020 and 89.7mm for the 7 days up to 25/12/2020.

The Worsham river gauge confirmed the peak flow in the Windrush was 30.348 m³/s on the 24/12/2020. This was more than the flow recorded in July 2007 which was 29.26m³/s.

The gauge at Riverside Gardens, recorded the flood level to peak at 81.45m AOD on the 25/12/2020. (Datum Level 79m + gauge reading 2.45m). The Hydrograph for December 2020 is shown below.

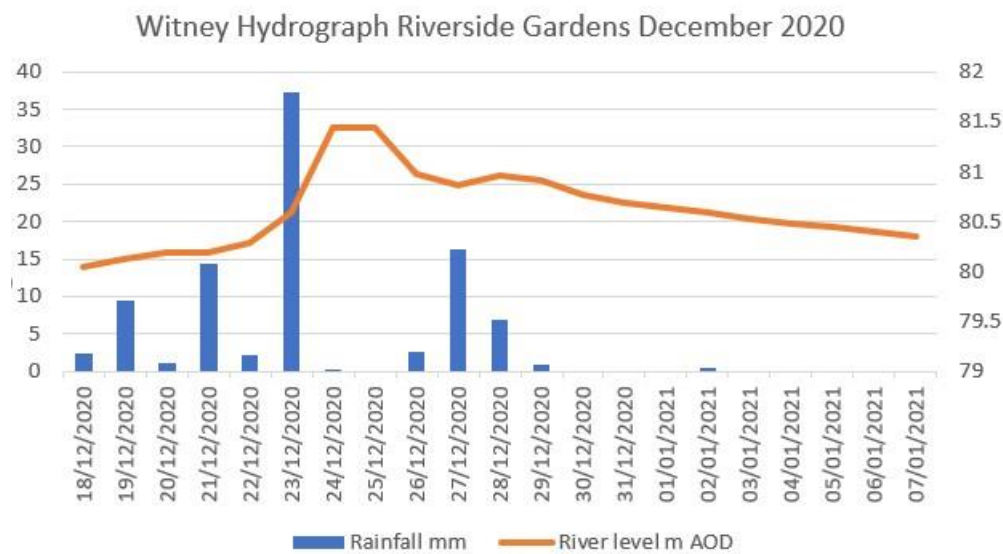


Figure 3 - Hydrograph for Riverside Gardens December 2020

Figure 4 below shows the hydrograph for Riverside gardens from December 2013 through to January 2014. Although the river peaked on the 8th January 2014 to over 81m AOD, the similar rainfall event to the 23rd December 2020, on the same day of December 2013, did not see a significant raise in levels at Riverside Gardens compared to the peak level in December 2020. Following the event in 2020, the river level increased by 1.69m from the river level on the previous day to its peak level within 24 hours of the initial event. In 2013, the river raised only 0.55m from the river level on the previous day to its peak level which took over 48 hours to reach its peak level following the 2013 event. This paragraph is a very simplified view of the different events but it is stating points for further explanation and exploration by the EA and partner RMA/ stakeholders.

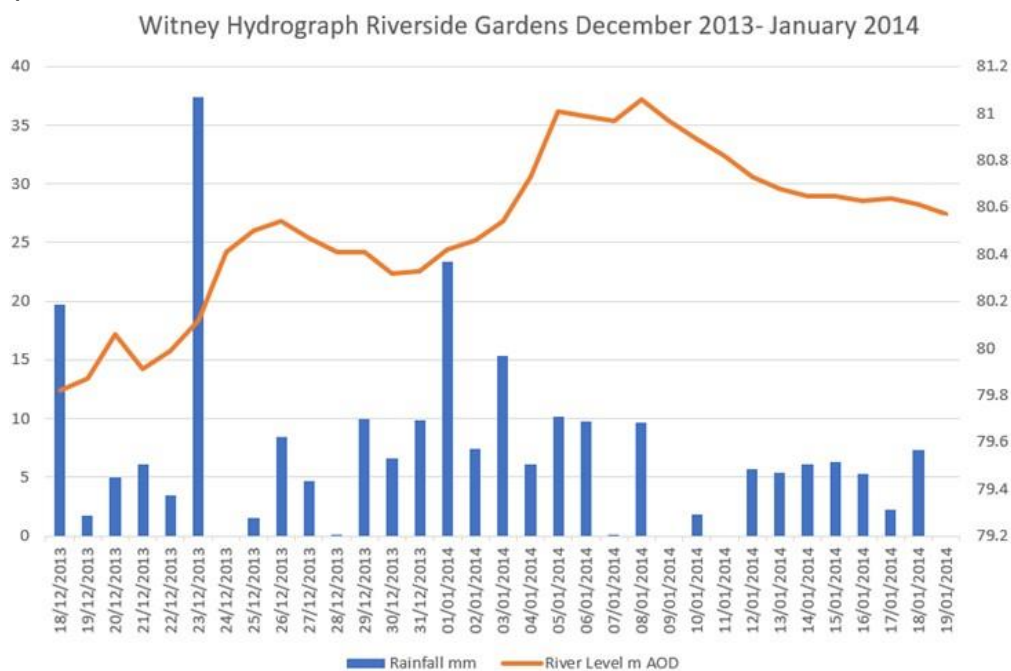


Figure 4 - Hydrograph for Riverside Gardens December 2013 to January 2014

2.3. Documents Reviewed

A list of the documents reviewed as part of this report are listed below;

- WODC Parish Flood Report for Witney (May 2008)
- EA report Witney Flood Review July 2007 (February 2008)
- Witney Flood Mitigation groups Report, River Windrush at Witney; Flooding in December 2020 (January 2021)
- Witney Flood Mitigation Group update to Members (September 2021)
- CH2M Hill Post 2007 ABD – Windrush: Worsham to Witney (A40) Modelling Report and updated model for the EA (April 2014)
- Cllr Enright's Witney Floods 2020, Notes of meeting with residents (January 2021)
- Oxfordshire County Council Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (April 2011)

2.4. Existing Level information

Lidar (Laser Imaging, detection and Ranging) data of the 2020 flown survey was obtained from the Environment Agency's data.gov.uk website. This has been reviewed and the levels in the field to the South of the Aquarius site, between the two channels and to the east of the eastern channel of the river Windrush seem to suggest that any out of bank flows will not be able to fill and pass through to the flood plain further downstream easily. The ground levels in the flood plain raise up in places in the field adjacent to the eastern channel and the flood plain is lower than the bank of the river further downstream before the confluence with the Madley Brook. Upon completion of the EA updated model, this situation can be looked at.

The Lidar data shows the level of the raised footpath in Langel Common varies between 79.72m and 80.1m AOD. It shows that this is a continuous raised structure which completely disconnects the flood plain upstream and downstream. It is important that this reported situation is included in the EA modelling to be carried out.

2.5. Site visits and observations

A meeting was held with the Witney flood Mitigation Group (WFMG) on the 10/12/2021. This involved a site walkover from Langel Common footpath up to Woodford Mill to look at and discuss the main issues and concerns of the flood group and residents of Witney.

The walkover followed the river up through Langel common, the Aquarius site, Bridge Street Mills, Bridge Street, Mill Street, Riverside Gardens and Woodford Mill. However, the other affected areas including West End, Hailey/Eastfield Road and Madley Brook were also discussed.

The main concerns raised were regarding lack of river maintenance which was evident throughout the site walkover. They understand that this is the responsibility of the riparian owners however, they are concerned at the lack of action by key authorities to ensure the necessary maintenance is carried out. Figure 5 below shows a fallen tree in the river at the rear of the Blanket Hall.



Figure 5 – Fallen Tree at the rear of Blanket Hall

The current gauge boards at Bridge Street were discussed and it was mentioned that they are submerged during floods. The WFMG would like to see further gauge boards installed on the Windrush, ideally from Woodford Mill down to Langel Common footbridge so the difference in levels throughout, upstream and downstream of the key structures, can be monitored and assessed.

Concerns were raised over the channel alignment and capacity of the bridge on Bridge Street. It was observed to be restricting peak flows and causing a bow wave effect when the river levels were high on the evening of the 24th December 2020. This is evident in Figure 6 below.



Figure 6 – Bridge Street Bridge upstream 24th December 2020 approximately 23:30PM. Photo provided by Witney Flood Mitigation Group

The raised footpath in Langel Common, shown in Figure 7 below, is a significant concern to the WFMG and affected residents as it has been observed impounding flood plain flows which is evident in Figure 7. The photograph also shows a noticeable difference in level upstream and downstream. WFMG would like to see this replaced with a continuous bridge to allow the flows to pass through unrestricted.



Figure 7 – Footpath in Langel Common, overtopping. Photograph provided by WFMG

Figure 8 below shows the risk of flooding from Surface Water. Although it doesn't take into account the river channel and bridge structures, it identifies the low lying areas through Langel Common and clearly shows the continuous raised footpath that could act as a barrier to flood waters.



Figure 8 – EA Risk of Flooding from Surface Water

Other information provided by WFMG are listed below;

- The flood warning was issued too late and after properties were flooding.
- Sewer flooding in Bridge Street Mills - One of the properties in this area had an overall insurance bill of £40,000. Total estimated insurance bill for all businesses affected is c£300,000. None claim they can get insured now.
- Riverside House/Gardens - 13 Residents were evacuated for 20 hours, 4 homes were flooded, with repairs taking on average 6 months, one resident is still not back in nearly 12 months
- Mill House Care Home - 9 Residents were evacuated.

The WFMG and affected residents in Witney felt there was a lack of action, communication and collaboration from all the key authorities.

The actions the WFMG see as quick wins are;

- Significant EA/Riparian maintenance carried out from Woodford Mill to downstream of the footbridge through Langel Common.
- New Gauge Boards installed from Woodford Mill to Langel Common footbridge
- Investigation into the replacement of the raised footpath to a continuous bridge.

2.6. Environment Agency Model Review

Modelling information has been provided by the Environment Agency (EA) which is based on the Windrush (Worsham to A40) 2014 model. The peak flow recorded at Worsham on the 24/12/2020 compares to the modelled 1 in 100 year plus 20% event and the recorded peak flood level at Riverside Gardens is greater than the 1 in 100 year flood event.

The 2014 model was an update of the existing model following the construction of the Fish bypass channel and replacement weir. It also was updated to better reflect the flows through Bridge Street.

The modelling shows all modelled flows including the modelled flows in the 1 in 100 year plus 70% climate change event to pass through the Bridge Street Bridge however, it shows the flood levels to increase significantly upstream, up to the 70% modelled event. The modelling does suggest a capacity issue further downstream where the river splits into two channels. The model outputs show flows reduce at the river split significantly by over $7\text{m}^3/\text{s}$. It is hoped that the model to be updated will help to clarify the situation.

It is not clear from the modelling if the increase in flood levels upstream of Bridge Street are caused by the Bridge itself or the capacity issues downstream.



Figure 9 – River Windrush split to two channels.

The model results suggests that all the excess flows will spill into the flood plain at this point and re-join the river further downstream before the raised footpath in Langel Common. It also suggests that the water will overspill the footpath in the 1 in 100 year event. The Flood level at the footpath is 79.68m AOD for the modelled 1 in 100 year event. The modelled 1 in 100 year flood extent is shown in Figure 10 below.



Figure 10 – EA modelled 1 in 100 year flood extent

The 2014 model doesn't include the tributaries through Witney.

2.7. Remedial Work Undertaken

Although site visits and meetings were carried out by the WODC Flood Engineer and the EA after the flooding to discuss the merit of several items of work, the EA have not yet carried out any significant works on or adjacent to the river Windrush although the EA have confirmed that it has carried out its annual maintenance programme along the Windrush, Colwell brook, QED and the Hailey Road drain. The EA also sent 2 crews in the immediate aftermath of the flood to check the river for blockages and spoke at length to affected residents to offer advice on flood protection.

The EA have carried out a review of the flood alarms serving Witney. The review prompted the EA to change the level for the 2 hour warning to be issued as well as to install an flow monitor alarm at Worsham to alert the EA duty officer.

The flooding of 2020 has also prompted the EA to carry out a review of its model for the area.

WODC have carried out the annual maintenance of the WODC owned watercourses to the rear of West End industrial estate and Millers mews.

WODC have given advice on PFR to those affected residents who have shown an inclination to acquire it.

WODC are currently reviewing their Emergency Response Plan.

The EA have acquired funding in the current (2021/22) financial year, to investigate flood risk in Witney. They will use this to improve their understanding of flood risk to the community in the area. This will include building on the understanding of the

2014 Initial Assessment, considering information gathered since 2014, including the December 2020 flooding, and developing an updated flood risk computer model for the Windrush and its tributaries through the town. This improved understanding will be key to future decisions regarding options to manage flood risk in Witney. Other benefits from the updated model will include: an updated Flood Map for Planning, an improved basis for Flood Warnings and improved data for use in assessing options and their benefits

After the EA issue a flood warning, they carry out a review to see whether any aspects of the flood warning process can be improved. As the flood warning at Witney was issued late, due to the river level rising so rapidly, they carried out this process for Witney during January 2021. They have since made two changes.

Firstly, they have revised the threshold at which they consider issuing the flood warning, which needs to provide two hours' notice of property flooding. They receive an alarm when this threshold is crossed and use model outputs to forecast this in advance. As river levels rose much more quickly than previously seen on the Witney gauge (installed in 2008) they have lowered that initial threshold. However, they do need to balance out the need for timeliness with the risk of false alarms which degrade customer confidence in the flood warning service.

Secondly, they have reviewed the data from our upstream gauge at Worsham, both level and flow. Following this they now believe that a flow rate of 20m³/s (cumecs, or cubic metres per second) at Worsham relates to flood warning levels being reached at Witney. They have therefore added an alarm to the flow at Worsham, and their duty officers will be notified when this flow is reached.

Residents can sign up to the Flood Warning Service to receive Flood Alerts and Flood Warnings using this link <https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings> or by calling Floodline on 0345 988 1188.

2.8. Current Maintenance

WODC carries out annual maintenance on WODC owned ordinary watercourses throughout Witney, which includes the ditches behind Millers Mews and West End Industrial Estate.

Figure 11 below shows an update of the EA's maintenance for this financial year and planned for the next financial year. Using its permissive powers the EA carry out annual maintenance on main rivers where it is needed, justified, funded and resourced.

Maintenance – 2021/22

- EA use permissive powers to undertake maintenance
- Does not absolve riparian landowners from their responsibilities

Location	2021/22 Programme Date
Madley Brook	June 2021
Emmas Dyke	June 2021 (spraying completed last week Oct 2021)
Windrush (West Branch)	July 2021
Colwell Brook	August 2021 (lower section south of A40 – delayed, clearance of overhanging vegetation will happen over the coming weeks)
Hailey Road Drain	October 2021

Maintenance – 2022/23

- Bids for government funding to carry out maintenance at locations above have been submitted
- Awaiting confirmation for 2022/23 funding allocation

Figure 11 – EA maintenance

3. CONCLUSIONS

From Reviewing the information provided regarding the December 2020 flood event, historic river data and modelling information, It is clear that the 2020 event was greater than the current EA modelled 1 in 100 year flood event with flows similar to the peak flow in the in the modelled 1 in 100 year plus 20% event.

From the Lidar level data it is clear that there is an issue with flood plain connectivity downstream of the Aquarius site and through the raised footpath at Langel Common.

Levels in the field to the south of the Aquarius site and to the east of the eastern channel of the river Windrush seem to suggest that flood flows would not be able to fill and pass through to the flood plain further downstream easily as the 2014 model suggests. The flood levels in the model are lower than the ground level in the field adjacent to the channel in the modelled 1 in 20 year event and at the 1 in 100 year flood level, only some flows would be able to spill back in to the river.

The level of the raised footpath further downstream varies between 79.72m and 80.1m AOD which is higher than the modelled 1 in 100 year flood level of 79.68m AOD, confirming that the embankment is not accurately reflected in the 2014 model.

The river through this area and upstream of Bridge Street is in poor condition due to no significant maintenance being carried out for many years.

An updated flood risk model for the Windrush and its tributaries through the town is to be carried out by the EA which will include information gathered since 2014 and from the December 2020 floods.

The updated model will need to fully understand the issues around Bridge Street and through to Langel Common, and confirm the main causes affecting the flood levels upstream of Bridge Street.

There is currently minimal information on the private and highway drainage systems throughout Witney and further investigations need to be carried out throughout the affected areas to fully understand the existing drainage systems and any issues with them.

4. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1. Communities and Residents

Communities may consist of the Town or Parish Council, Flood Forum, Community Group and affected residents, amongst others.

Communities and residents who are aware that they are at risk of flooding should take action to ensure that they and their properties are protected.

Community resilience is important in providing information and support to each other if flooding is anticipated. Actions taken can include [subscribing to MET Office email alerts](#) for weather warnings, nominating a Community Flood Warden, producing a community flood plan, implementing property level protection and moving valuable items to higher ground. Finally, individual households can create their own personal flood plans, such as collating important documents for quick removal from the property, torches, waterproof clothing etc.

Oxfordshire County Council has produced a number of flood guides covering various subjects, some of which relate to this type of flood incident. The relevant guides have been identified and are available at: www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com

4.2. Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)

As stated within the introduction section, OCC as the LLFA has a responsibility to investigate flood incidents under Section 19 of the F&WMA.

The LLFA also has a responsibility to maintain a register of assets which have a significant effect on flooding from surface runoff, groundwater or ordinary watercourses (non-Main River) as detailed within Section 21 of the F&WMA. The register must contain a record about each structure or feature, including the ownership and state of repair. OCC is also required to keep a record of flooding hotspots across the county.

OCC's practices relating to third party assets is to notify third party owners of their asset forming part of a flood risk system, and assist by advising those third party owners on the condition of their assets and their maintenance responsibilities.

As Lead Local Flood Authority, OCC will be looking for support from other risk management authorities, communities and individual home owners to ensure flood incidents are reported, and any assets which have a significant effect on flood risk are recorded on the asset register.

While OCC can suggest possible causes of flooding in Witney, and make recommendations to ensure flood risk is mitigated as far as possible, the F&WMA does not provide OCC with the mandate or funding to act on identified causes of flooding or force risk management authorities to undertake any recommended actions.

4.3. Highway Authority (Oxfordshire Highways)

Oxfordshire Highways have a duty to maintain the highway under Section 41 of the Highway Act 1980 but subject to the special defence in Section 58.

New highway drainage systems are designed to Highways England's Design Manual for Roads and Bridges (Volume 4, Section 2). They are only required to be constructed to drain surface water runoff from within the highway catchment rather than from the wider catchment.

There are historic drainage systems in historic highways which can become the responsibility of the Highway Authority due to dedication, as opposed to adoption. These drainage systems may not have been designed to any standard.

They undertake regular highway drainage cleansing. Identify and develop a detailed plan of their assets.

If flooding occurs OCC will assess the capacity of the highway assets and identify any areas with insufficient capacity for draining runoff from the highway. Where this leads to flood risk to properties improvement works should be considered.

Assess the suitability of third party drainage systems accepting discharge from Highway Drainage systems and report any unsatisfactory areas to the relevant Risk Management Authorities.

4.4. Water Authority - Thames Water Utilities (TW)

Water and sewerage companies are responsible for managing the risks of flooding from surface water, foul water or combined sewer systems. Public sewers are designed to protect properties from the risk of flooding in normal wet weather conditions. However, in extreme weather conditions there is a risk that sewer systems can become overwhelmed and result in sewer flooding.

Since October 2011, under the 'Private Sewer Transfer', AWS adopted piped systems on private land that serve more than one curtilage and were connected to a public sewer on 1st July 2011. Sewerage Undertakers have a duty, under Section 94 of the Water Industry Act 1991, to provide sewers for the drainage of buildings and associated paved areas within property boundaries.

Sewerage Undertakers are responsible for public sewers and lateral drains. A public sewer is a conduit, normally a pipe that is vested in a Water and Sewerage Company or predecessor, that drains two or more properties and conveys foul, surface water or combined sewage from one point to another, and discharges via a positive outfall.

There is no automatic right of connection for other sources of drainage to the public sewer network. Connection is therefore discretionary following an application to connect.

4.5. West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC)

District Councils have powers under Section 14 of the Land Drainage Act 1991 (LDA) to undertake flood risk management works on ordinary watercourses (non Main River) where deemed necessary.

Under Section 20 of the LDA, District Councils have the powers to (by agreement of any person and at that person's expense) carry out any drainage work which that person is entitled to carry out. Agreement may not be required in certain emergency or legally upheld situations.

The District Council also has delegated authority from OCC/LLFA to serve notice on persons requiring them to carry out necessary works to maintain the flow of ordinary watercourses under Section 25 of the LDA and receives funding from the LLFA to do this.

The District Council is the Planning Authority and has a role in Building Control and the Building Regulations.

4.6. Environment Agency (EA)

The EA is responsible for taking a strategic overview of the management of all sources of flooding and coastal erosion. This includes setting the direction for managing the risks through national and strategic plans; providing evidence and advice to inform Government policy and support others; working collaboratively to support the development of risk management skills and capacity; and providing a framework to support local delivery.

The EA also has operational responsibility for managing the risk of flooding from main rivers. Main rivers are usually larger river and streams and include all watercourses defined on the main river map which can be accessed at <https://environment.data.gov.uk/DefraDataDownload/?mapService=EA/StatutoryMainRiverMap&Mode=spatial>

The responsibility for maintenance and repair of rivers lies with the riparian owner, but the EA have permissive powers to carry out maintenance work on main rivers under Section 165 of the Water Resources Act 1991 (WRA).

The EA encourage third party asset owners to maintain their property in appropriate condition and may take enforcement action on a prioritised basis where it is appropriate. They may also consider undertaking maintenance or repair of third party assets only where it can be justified in order to safeguard the public interest and where other options are not appropriate.

Further remit of the EA includes;

- preparing preliminary flood risk assessments and flood risk management plans for flooding from main rivers, reservoirs and the sea (Flood Risk Regulations 2009)

- warning and informing (Ministerial Direction to the National Rivers Authority, 1996)
- regulating activities that may affect the risk of flooding from main rivers (Environmental Permitting Regulations (England and Wales) Regulations 2016)
- Carrying out surveys and mapping (Flood Risk Regulations 2009, Water Resources Act 1991)
- reporting to the minister on flood and coastal erosion risk and how the national and local strategies are being applied by all of the authorities involved (FWMA, 2010)
- acting as a statutory consultee for planning authorities providing advice on planning applications, local plans and environmental assessments regarding flood risk from main rivers and the sea (Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015)

4.7. Land Owners and Developers

Land owners are responsible for the drainage of their land and controlling any movement of sediment from their land. Legally, owners of lower-level ground have to accept natural land drainage from adjacent land at a higher level. The exception to this is where the owner of the higher level land has carried out “improvements” such that the runoff from the land cannot be considered “natural”.

Agricultural practices by land owners can be considered as “improvements” to the land, so that cultivation of crops or other land uses can take place. Mitigation works are required on improved land to account for the change in natural land drainage and changes to surface water runoff this can create.

Land owners and developers are responsible for working with the Local Planning Authority to ensure that their development is completed in accordance with the planning permission and all conditions that have been imposed.

Advice for developers is available on the Oxfordshire Flood Toolkit.

www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/planning/developers/

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. General

Listed below are the recommended course of actions emanating from this formal Flood Investigation Report. All the actions are simply initial recommendations that require discussing in detail to determine their true feasibility.

It is important to note that it is for the relevant responsible body or persons to assess each recommendation in terms of the legal obligation, resource implications, priority and cost/benefit analysis of undertaking such action.

The recommendations may be included within the Action Plan linked to the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy or in the relevant risk management authority's future work programmes, as appropriate.

Authorities should work together Look into funding opportunities to carry out the listed actions. There are multiple funding sources which could contribute to schemes and improvement works going forward. The majority schemes will require elements of partnership working and contributions to be successfully funded. They are likely to need to provide multiple benefits such as improving flood resilience whilst also managing water levels, reducing drought risks, helping nature recovery as well as climate adaptation.

There are several funding options available which can be explored through multi agency working groups such as,

- Flood & Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) ○ Flood Defence Grant in Aid (FDGiA)
 - Local Levy Regional Flood and Coastal Committee (RFCC)
- DEFRA Natural Flood Management Funding
- Woodland Creation Grants
- Agricultural & Environmental Schemes (Countryside Stewardship)
- Funding sources relating to development and regeneration, such as section 106 agreements, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and New homes bonus
- Non-government organisations and charitable trusts
- Community fundraising and events
- Lotteries (Heritage Lottery Fund, Big Lottery, Arts Council
- Volunteering
- Nature for Climate Fund
- Grants from other government departments, such as BEIS, MHCLG, DfT, DfE (for example, Flood Resilient Schools)
- UKRI – the research councils funding
- Business in the community
- Green recovery challenge fund

5.2. Main Actions

Action	Lead Stakeholders	Consulting stakeholders
Fully communicate the explanation for the previous problem with the alert system and consider what further improvements and enhancements could be made.	EA	WODC, LLFA and residents.
Re-establish the Agency flood group meetings to discuss problems and to look at strategies to combat flooding due to Climate Change. Have periodic meetings with the local flood group to discuss the issues and recommendations with representatives from key authorities.	LLFA	All Authorities
Update the 2014 model with updated level information, especially downstream of the Aquarius Bridge through to the footpath at Langel Common. Include main tributaries through Witney	EA	WODC, LLFA, WFMG
Increased EA / Riparian maintenance to be carried out along the river Windrush through and downstream of Witney. Proactive visits and encouragement to ensure riparian owners carry out their duties.	EA	Landowners
Investigate if the river could be modified to increase flow capacity during severe conditions, especially between New Bridge Street through to the footpath in Langel Common.	EA	Landowners, LLFA and WODC
Investigate if the perimeter ditch of the Aquarius site can be modified/ diverted to increase flow Capacity.	WODC	EA, Landowners, LLFA
Look at improving flows through Langel Common footpath to ensure flood plain connectivity is improved during all flood events.	EA	OCC, Landowners, WODC
Install Gauge boards from Woodford Mill through to Langel Common and set up a Flood Warden network with local volunteers to record the levels during flood events. Ensure this engages with broader Community Emergency Plans.	EA	WFMG, LLFA WODC
Look at opportunities for flood storage and increased flood plain capacity upstream of Witney and Crawley such as nature based solutions through partnership working.	EA	Landowners, LLFA, WODC, EA

Look at opportunities for schemes to manage flows upstream of the Hailey Road drain such as nature based solutions through partnership working.	WODC	LLFA, EA Landowners, WFMG
Property flood resilience (PFR) measures which improve the resilience of the community before a flood occurs. Many properties have already carried out measures on their properties, but further funding and support may be available to help more people;	Homeowners	WODC, EA, OCC
Measures to improve the resilience of existing public or community-owned infrastructure;	All Local Government Bodies	
Local community volunteer approaches to improve the community's ability to plan, respond and recover from flooding; link to local community emergency plans; encourage affected Care Home to develop Business Continuity Plan and Evacuation Plan.	All	Communities and Residents
WODC to continue regular maintenance of their ordinary watercourse assets and use their powers under the Land Drainage Act 1991 to ensure Riparian owners carry out required maintenance.	WODC	Landowners
OCC to regularly check and maintain highway assets through Witney, in line with their current maintenance regimes. Any affected areas that haven't been checked after December 2020 should be prioritised.	OCC Highways	
Bridge Street bridge to be checked regularly and de-silting under the bridge to be carried out as and when required, accepting that unless de-silting is also carried out upstream of the bridge there would be little benefit to simply carrying it out under the bridge.	OCC Highways	EA
Privately owned drainage systems to be checked for blockages and defects and remedial works to be carried out where necessary. Connectivity downstream to be confirmed.	Developers, Landowners	WODC, LLFA
Foul sewers to be checked for surface water connections, blockages and capacity issues. Remedial works to be carried out as necessary to minimise surface water entering the system and increase capacity.	TW	LLFA, WODC

5.3. Communities and Residents

(e.g. Town/Parish Council, Flood Forum, Community Group, land owners and affected residents)

Nominate a Community Flood Warden to help coordinate the following:
Preparing Household Emergency Plans for vulnerable properties in this area.
Regularly inspecting ditches and pipework in the area of flood risk. Report blockages or other issues to the land owner and the LLFA. Explore options for property level protection and implement any recommendations. This could include additional drainage at the rear of properties, self-sealing air bricks and flood barriers. Information on Flood Prevention measures for Home Owners, Communities and Businesses can be found on the Flood Toolkit:

www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/risk/prevention

Residents should check whether they are at risk of flooding by using the long term flood risk service www.gov.uk/check-long-term-flood-risk. If they are at risk of flooding they should sign up for flood warnings by visiting [sign up for flood warnings.gov.uk](http://sign-up-for-flood-warnings.gov.uk).

Permanent measures such as installing floodgates, raising electrical sockets and fitting non-return valves on pipes can also be considered. WODC, OCC and the EA can provide advice on these matters and more information can be found at:

www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/emergency/preparation

Explore community wide solutions (e.g. attenuation areas, overflow routes, tree planting). Use the Flood Toolkit Funding Tool to find sponsors who may be willing to help fund improvement projects: www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/risk/funding

Continue to report flood incidents to the Lead Local Flood Authority at: www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com/emergency/report-flood. Endeavour to obtain as much evidence of flood events as possible, such as photographic and video evidence.

Residents to explore obtaining Government subsidised flood insurance via Can Flood Re help me? Floodre.co.uk

5.4. Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA)

Work with the Oxfordshire County Council Emergency Planning Team and the Environment Agency to support the community based Flood Wardens.

Work with the Oxfordshire County Council Emergency Planning Team, the Environment Agency and other flood management authorities to support the

community in the production of a Community Flood Plan and provide advice to residents on how to explore options for property level protection.

Inform owners of the drainage systems and watercourses within the overall surface water catchment area of their legal responsibilities.

Re-establish the Agency flood group meetings to discuss problems and to look at strategies to combat flooding due to Climate Change. Have periodic meetings with the local flood group to discuss the issues and recommendations with representatives from key authorities.

Look at opportunities for schemes to manage flows upstream of the Hailey Road drain such as nature based solutions through partnership working.

5.5. Highway Authority (Oxfordshire Highways)

Regularly check and maintain highway assets through Witney in line with their current maintenance regimes. Add detailed information of the assets to the OCC Asset Register.

Assess the capacity of the highway assets in the affected areas and identify any areas with insufficient capacity for draining runoff from the highway. Where this leads to flood risk to properties improvement works must be considered.

Assess the suitability of third party drainage systems accepting discharge from Highway Drainage systems and report any unsatisfactory areas to the relevant Risk Management Authorities.

Work with the community and LLFA to clarify ownership and maintenance responsibilities for watercourses, particularly where these are located within or near to the highway.

Bridge Street Bridge to be checked regularly and se-silting to be carried out as and when required.

5.6. Water Authority Thames Water Utilities (TW)

Assess the sources of water entering the public sewerage system. Foul sewers to be checked for surface water connections, blockages and capacity issues. Remedial works to be carried out as necessary to minimise surface water entering the system and increase capacity.

Assess the capacity of their assets and identify any areas of insufficient capacity. Where this leads to flood risk to properties improvement work must be considered.

5.7. West Oxfordshire District Council

Continue to consult with the Environment Agency and Lead Local Flood Authority as required in respect of planning applications for new developments to reduce flood risk. Aim to ensure that all works are carried out in accordance with the approved plans and documents.

Review the planning policies relating to developments in the vicinity of the flooding incident, together with any flood risk assessments and drainage designs. Consider contacting the developers to take action in the event that any items relating to surface water drainage and flood risk are not evident or ineffective in the final developments or in the construction period.

Utilise their enforcement powers under Section 25 of the Land Drainage Act 1991 where it is considered that riparian owners are failing to maintain ordinary watercourses in their ownership.

Continue regular maintenance of their Ordinary watercourse Assets, in line with current maintenance regimes.

Endeavour to assist other flood risk management authorities and land owners in the preparation of a detailed plan of assets relating to drainage and flood risk, to share with the LLFA and the community.

Investigate if the perimeter ditch of the Aquarius site can be modified/ diverted to increase flow capacity.

Support developers and landowners to investigate private drainage and check for blockages and defects with remedial works to be carried out where necessary.

Continue to support homeowners and businesses in providing individual property level protection.

5.8. Environment Agency (EA)

Work with the Oxfordshire County Council Emergency Planning Team and the LLFA to support the community in the instatement of a community based Flood Wardens.

Fully understand and communicate the explanation for the previous issues with flood warnings for Witney. Consider what further improvements could be made to the alerts for Witney (and West Oxfordshire).

Update the 2014 model with updated level information, especially downstream of the Aquarius Bridge through to the footpath at Langel Common. Include main tributaries through Witney. Fully understand the issues affecting river levels upstream of Bridge Street.

Increased maintenance to be carried out along the river Windrush through and downstream of Witney. Proactive visits to riparian owners and encouragement of

riparian owners, also work with local groups to ensure regular maintenance is carried out.

Investigate if the river could be modified to increase flow capacity during severe conditions, especially between New Bridge Street through to the footpath in Langel Common.

Look at improving flows through Langel Common footpath to ensure flood plain connectivity is improved during all flood events.

Install gauge boards from Woodford Mill through to Langel Common and set up a network of flood wardens with local volunteers to record the levels during flood events.

Look at opportunities for flood storage and increased flood plain capacity upstream of Witney and Crawley such as nature based solutions through partnership working.

5.9. Land Owners and Developers

Developers should work with local authorities to ensure all development is completed in accordance with approved plans and documents, and planning policy.

Land owners should undertake regular inspection and maintenance of their drainage systems in accordance with a defined maintenance regime. Further, they should identify and develop a detailed plan of their assets to share with the LLFA, other flood risk management authorities and the community.

Land owners should assess the capacity of their drainage systems and identify any areas with insufficient capacity for the collection, conveyance, storage and disposal of surface water. Where this could lead to runoff to the public highway or nuisance to third party private property, improvement works should be considered.

Landowners who are riparian owners are responsible for carrying out work to maintain the natural flow of water in the relevant watercourse. Such work will include the removal of significant blockages and the removal of vegetation if it is causing premature flooding to third party land and or property.

Review the library of flood guides on the Oxfordshire Flood Toolkit.

Agricultural land owners should carry out works to their land to reduce surface water runoff. These include following principles of good soil husbandry and providing land drainage systems such as ditches. [The Single Payment Scheme, Cross Compliance Guidance for Soil Management, 2010 edition, should be referenced.](#)

These works help to retain the natural land drainage regime and provide the best soil conditions for the continued agricultural use of the land. Farmers in receipt of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) payments are required to carry out a Soil Protection Review which should identify any problems with soil erosion and runoff and help identify solutions to the problem.

Examples of good practice for reducing surface water runoff from agricultural land are:

Ploughing fields in a perpendicular direction to the slope of the land, reducing the effect of channelling of water over the land when it rains; Using techniques and machinery to limit compaction of soils; Growing crops that match the capability of the land, particularly in relation to the timings of activities and not overworking soils through the year; Providing new ditches, sub-soil drainage and outfalls, and reinstating and regularly maintaining existing ditches. Old existing ditches may be completely filled and difficult to see. The type of soil make-up, type of flora and overall lie of the land can help to determine the routes of filled in historic ditches; Preventing changes to the levels of the land that would cause channelling of surface water to a single point where this would not naturally occur. It should be noted that following good practice for managing surface water runoff cannot completely remove the risks of natural land drainage and the associated quantities and flow routes of runoff that can cause flooding.

6. DISCLAIMER

The findings of the report are based on a subjective assessment of the information available by those undertaking the investigation and therefore may not include all relevant information. As such it should not be considered as a definitive assessment of all factors that may have triggered or contributed to the flood event.

Any recommended actions outlined in this FIR will be for the relevant responsible body or persons to assess in terms of resource implications, priority and cost/benefit analysis of the proposal. Moving forward, these may be included in the Action Plan linked to the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy or in the relevant risk management authority's future work programme as appropriate.

The opinions, conclusions and any recommendations in this Report are based on information provided to West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council.

The opinions, conclusions and any recommendations in this report are based on conditions encountered and information reviewed at the time of preparation and West Oxfordshire District Council expressly disclaims responsibility for any error in, or omission from, this report arising from or in connection with those opinions, conclusions and any recommendations.

The implications for producing Flood Investigation Reports and any consequences of blight have been considered. The process of gaining insurance for a property and/or purchasing/selling a property and any flooding issues identified are considered a separate and legally binding process placed upon property owners and this is independent of and does not relate to the information in this report highlighting flooding to properties at a street level.

West Oxfordshire District Council do not accept any liability for the use of this report or its contents by any third party.

ACRONYMS

WODC West Oxfordshire District Council
OCC Oxfordshire County Council
EA Environment Agency
TWA Thames Water Authority
WFMG Witney Flood Mitigation Group
FIR Flood Investigation Report
F&WMA Flood and Water Management Act 2010
LDA Land Drainage Act 1991
LLFA Lead Local Flood Authority
WRA Water Resources Act 1991

USEFUL LINKS

Highways Act 1980:

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1980/66/contents **Water**

Resources Act 1991:

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1991/57/contents **Land**

Drainage Act 1991:

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1991/59/contents

EA - 'Living on the Edge' a guide to the rights and responsibilities of riverside occupation: www.gov.uk/government/publications/riverside-ownership-rights-and-responsibilities **EA - Prepare your Property for Flooding:**

How to reduce flood damage Flood protection products and services

www.gov.uk/government/publications/prepare-your-property-for-flooding

Oxfordshire County Council Flood and Water Management Web Pages:

www.oxfordshirefloodtoolkit.com

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/fire-and-public-safety/emergency-planning/community-resilience>

West Oxfordshire District Council Flood Reports and Reviews;

<https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/environment/flooding/flood-reports-and-reviews/>

Flood and Water Management Act 2010

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/29/contents>

USEFUL CONTACTS

Oxfordshire County Council Highways:

Tel: 0345 310 1111

Website: www.fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk

Environment Agency:

General Tel: 08708 506 506 (Mon-Fri 8-6) Call charges apply.

Incident Hotline: 0800 807060 (24 hrs)

Floodline: 0345 988 1188

Email: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

Thames Water

Emergency Tel: 0800 316 9800 (select option 1)

Website: www.thameswater.co.uk/help-and-advice/bursts-and-leaks/report-a-leak-orburst-pipe

Appendix A – Further Photos



Bridge at New Bridge Street, Aquarius Site access



River Windrush looking downstream from Bridge Street



Channel through Woodford Mill



Weir near Woodford Mill



Gauge at Blanket Hall in 2007. Photo provided by Witney Flood Mitigation Group



Flooding behind Eastfield Road backing up from Hailey Road Drain. Visible flow route from Vanner Road. Photo provided by Witney Flood Mitigation Group



Upstream of Bridge



Riverside Gardens 24th December 2020 approximately 23:10PM. Level recorded at 23:15pm by the river gauge was 81.443m AOD. Photo provided by Witney Flood Mitigation Group

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