

Public Document Pack

Extraordinary Full Council Committee Meeting of Witney Town Council



Wednesday, 16th March, 2022 at 6.30 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, A McMahon, A Prosser, R Smith, D Temple and Vacancy (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.

Standing Order 30(a)(v) permits the appointment of substitute Councillors to a Committee whose role is to replace ordinary Councillors at a meeting of a Committee if ordinary Councillors of the Committee have confirmed to the Proper Officer **before** the meeting that they are unable to attend.

2. Declarations of Interest

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. **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.

4. **West Witney Ward - Potential By-election** (Pages 3 - 4)

To consider potential arrangements for the election of a Town Councillor for the West Witney Ward including the provision of polling cards for electors.

5. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

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

That in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960, and 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.

6. **Grounds Maintenance Service**

To receive and consider the confidential report prepared by Reg Williams on behalf of LGRC Associates and the Town Clerk's confidential report – circulated under separate cover.

7. **Staffing Matters**

To receive and consider the confidential minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting held on the 2 March 2022 circulated under separate cover and agree the recommendations contained therein.



Town Clerk

EXTRA-ORDINARY FULL COUNCIL

Date:	Wednesday, 16 March 2022
Title:	West Witney Ward – Potential By-election
Contact Officer:	Deputy Town Clerk – Adam Clapton

Background

As members will be aware, a Town Councillor vacancy has arisen in the West ward of Witney.

At the time of writing, it is not known whether a by-election will be called for this vacancy.

This will be confirmed by West Oxfordshire District Council following 23rd March 2022. If an election is called, it will not take place later than 26th May 2022.

Current Situation

There are no other elections due in this ward in May so the Electoral Services office at West Oxfordshire District Council (which administers elections) has advised the costs incurred in facilitating a potential by-election would need to be solely covered by the Town Council. This includes the purchase of poll cards for the electorate should the Council decide they are required.

Environmental impact

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

The creation of several thousand single-use poll cards for a by-election.

Risk

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

This Council did provide poll cards for the by-election in North ward in 2019, but it should be noted that when a by-election was required during 2015 in the South ward, the administration at the time decided not to purchase them. Residents who did not have social media or who accessed the web were not aware there was an election.

Financial implications

- An exact cost for providing poll cards has not been provided by the District Council but the approximate cost will be £900-£1,100.

- There will be further costs towards a by-election as a whole which will need to be met by the Town Council including staffing and polling stations. These potential costs have not yet been provided but could be in the region of £2,000-£3,000.

- The Town Council holds an earmarked reserve election fund which is added to each year as a contingency. If a by-election is held, further funds will need to be budgeted for in 2023/24.

Recommendations

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

1. Whether to agree to the purchase and distribution of poll cards for the West witney Town Council ward, should a by-election be called.