

Stronger Communities Committee Meeting of Witney Town Council



Monday, 27th January, 2025 at 6.00 pm

To members of the Stronger Communities Committee - R Smith, G Meadows, O Collins, T Ashby, A Bailey, S Simpson, J Aitman and D Temple (and all other Town Councillors for information).

You are hereby summonsed to the above meeting to be held in the **Gallery Room, 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 Committee Clerk derek.mackenzie@witney-tc.gov.uk in advance.

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 Deputy Town Clerk or Committee Clerk 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 Committee Clerk derek.mackenzie@witney-tc.gov.uk **prior to the meeting**, stating the reason for absence.

Standing Order 30(d)(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 items under consideration at this meeting in accordance with the Town Council's Code of Conduct.

3. Minutes (Pages 4 - 10)

- a) To adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2024.
- b) Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda. (Questions on 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. **Finance Report** (Pages 11 - 17)

To receive and consider the report of the R.F.O concerning the financial position of items under the remit of this Committee in 2024/25 and the upcoming 2025/26 period.

Communications

6. **Communications Report** (Pages 18 - 24)

To receive and consider the report of the Communication & Community Engagement Officer.

Community Engagement

7. **Community Engagement Report** (Pages 25 - 28)

To receive and consider the report of the Communication & Community Engagement Officer.

8. **Youth Council** (Pages 29 - 32)

To note the draft minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2025 for information.

9. **Youth Services** (Pages 33 - 34)

To receive and consider the report of the Deputy Town Clerk.

Street Furniture & Infrastructure

10. **Salt Bin Requests** (Pages 35 - 36)

To receive and consider the report of the Operations Manager.

11. **Public Realm: Request to relocate the Buttercross Needle** (Pages 37 - 39)

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

Events

12. **Third Party Events**

To receive and consider the report of the Venue & Events Officer.

13. **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.

14. **Parish Transport Meeting Minutes - 19 November 2024** (Pages 40 - 46)

To note the minutes of the Parish Transport Meeting held on 19 November 2024 for information.

15. **Community Engagement Strategy - Draft**

To receive and consider the Draft Community Engagement Strategy.



Town Clerk

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

Held on Monday, 18 November 2024

At 6.00 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor R Smith (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)

Councillors:	G Meadows O Collins T Ashby A Bailey	J Aitman D Temple S Simpson
Officers:	Adam Clapton Derek Mackenzie Sharon Groth Nigel Warner	Deputy Town Clerk Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk Town Clerk Responsible Financial Officer
Others:	One members of the public. Councillor Rachel Crouch	

SC634 **ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Due to the resignation of the former member for Central Ward who had previously sat as Chair, Members discussed whether a replacement Chair should be appointed for the remainder of the municipal year.

It was proposed by Councillor O Collins and seconded by Councillor J Aitman that no election for Chair should occur and that the Vice Chair should continue to Chair the remaining meetings of the municipal Year.

A Vote was then called for. The proposal was carried, with voting as follows:

In Favour	6
Against	0
Abstentions	1

In response to a Members question, Officers confirmed that in the absence of the Vice Chair the Council Standing Orders would be followed with either the Mayor officiating if present, or the Committee appointing a Chair for those meetings.

Resolved:

That, the position of Chair remains vacant for the remainder of the municipal year, with the Vice-Chair, Cllr R Smith acting as Chair until that time.

SC635 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

SC636 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor R Smith declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 10 as she was a member of the church which provided the Detached Youth Service.

During the discussion of Agenda Item 10, Councillor O Collins declared a personal interest due to APCAM being one of the nominated charities for his current term as Mayor.

There were no other declarations from Members or Officers

SC637 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Stronger Communities committee held on 23 September 2024 were received.

SC528 – Officers advised that Witney Music Festival had only forwarded the requested financial statements within the past few days, therefore these would be presented to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee on 25 November 2024.

SC528 – The Chair encouraged Members to assist with the running of the Advent Fayre on 1 December as only a few Councillors had committed their support to the event.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee held on 23 September 2024 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

SC638 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

SC639 **FINANCE REPORT: REVISED REVENUE BUDGET 2024/25 AND DRAFT BASE REVENUE BUDGET FOR 2025/26**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) concerning the base revenue budget, draft estimates on budget parameters for 2024/25 and the revenue budget summary.

For the benefit of Members, the RFO outlined the contents of the report and explained that although monitoring took place throughout the year, this was the initial report of the Committee budget setting cycle and this would be refined ahead of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting on 25 November.

During this process, the Committee were advised the RFO scrutinised budget lines and looked at the inflationary rises. He also considered changes resulting from public sector pay increases and employer national insurance contributions. Due to uncertain energy prices, he suggested the

budget line should be held at the same level as 2024/25 however, water rates had outstripped inflation and therefore a 18% increase had been included in the budget forecast.

Members were pleased to receive confirmation that the Project Officer had agreed additional Christmas event sponsorships which would help to increase income revenue.

The Committee was also pleased to hear that the 2024/25 budget projections showed a surplus however, understood the cost rise impact for 2025/26.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the draft revised base revenue budget for 2024/25 and the estimated base revenue budgets for 2025/26, as detailed be agreed.

SC640 **REVENUE GROWTH ITEMS, SPECIAL REVENUE PROJECTS, AND CAPITAL PROJECTS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) along with a verbal explanation of its content which indicated the need for a £67,000 - £76,000 increase in support of Community projects.

Many of the proposals discussed at this point of the meeting were featured in the reports to the Committee later in the meeting.

Members were pleased to see the inclusion of improvements to the services provided to the community and discussed the impact of each of these. They were conscious that the budget needed to remain within sensible bounds as any increases would be met by the taxpayer.

A Member advised that in a report of the Institute of Fiscal Studies that every £1 saved by Councils in budget setting led to £8.25 in criminal justice costs and therefore careful consideration was necessary if decisions were made to reduce the proposed budget recommendations for youth services.

Members were in agreement that the payments to support both Home Start and The Station should be retained. In light of this, the Committee discussed the amount to be attributed to the Youth Services Grant budget line, a discussion was held as to the current budget of £40,000 and if that could be reduced however, Members were all in agreement that it remain and that the APCAM budget line be removed and that should an application from APCAM be received then it could be considered under the Youth Services Grant budget.

It was proposed by Councillor R Smith and seconded by Councillor J Aitman that the detached youth service be asked to budget for the provision of the Youth Café from their existing grant payment.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Station Detached Youth Project be asked to provide a Youth Café and,
3. That, the existing £40,000 Youth Service Grant budget remains unchanged, and
4. That, that the Revenue Growth and new Capital items be agreed by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee.

(Councillor G Meadows left the meeting at 6:40pm, returning at 6:43pm)

(The Member of the public left at 6:45pm during the discussion of Item 8 – Communication Report)

SC641 COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer concerning the progress of current and proposed communication projects.

Members were pleased to hear work assessing the Council's website in order to ensure that it was compliant and followed the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines was underway

The Committee discussed the paper-based communications that the council provided to residents. It was felt that an additional newsletter should be delivered to each household however, the existing £3,000 budget remain and therefore Officers should make the publication A5 in size and utilise QR codes so residents could obtain additional information on subjects.

In consideration of the proposed new residents' leaflet, it was felt by Members that this should be an electronic leaflet provided by estate agents or solicitors on completion of house purchases with a link to a page on the Council's website.

Members also asked that paper copies of the newsletter and residents' leaflet be made available via the Councils administration office; these would be printed in house and therefore avoid any additional printing cost.

The Committee considered the options for signage to direct visitors to the Lake & Country Park. Members understood the difficulties of the positioning of the signage. It was suggested that it could be placed close to the new café that was due to be built in the coming year. Members were keen to ensure that the material used meant that the signage was robust from vandalism attacks however, felt that wood should be a first choice with plastic, hopefully recycled, as a second choice. The Committee delegated to Officers to further explore options including having Witney Shed produce the signage however a purchased option may provide a more longer lasting option.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, a budget of £3,000 be set for the printing and delivery of two A5 newsletters in 2025 and,
3. That, a new Witney information leaflet be produced and,
4. That, a budget of £1,500 be set for the provision of signage for the Lake & Country Park to be met from the existing In Bloom underspend and,
5. That, the purchase of signage be delegated to Officers.

SC642 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer (C&CEO) concerning current and proposed Community activity.

Members were pleased to see the multitude of activities Officers were engaged in to promote and provide activity for the community. They received updates on Citizen of the Year, 50th

Anniversary events, support to Witney Town Band, proposals for In Bloom 2025 as well the engagement of Officers on behalf of the Council at a number of collaborative steering groups and forums.

The Committee were updated on arrangements for the evening of the Christmas light switch on. The Youth Council would also be in attendance on the evening, potentially selling hot chocolate and promoting themselves to residents. Acceptances received to the Council's invite to Young Carers and their families to make use of the Gallery Room were lower than hoped for and therefore the C&CEO would contact other local organisations to use some of the remaining space.

Members discussed the proposal of blub planting in Underhaching Park, it was agreed by all that this proceed as it would provide colour and improve what was a neglected area in the heart of the town.

The Committee also heard that the Community Engagement Strategy was currently being put together with an initial draft version to be presented at the January 2025 meeting of the Committee.

Members discussed the Council's resident's questionnaire and agreed questions should only relate to the services provided by Witney Town Council in order to obtain responses that can be acted upon. Also, as the Youth Council had reformed, then questions should be included that had been set by them.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the resident questionnaire should include three questions set by the Youth Council and that any further questions should relate directly to services provided by the Town Council and,
3. That, bulb planting in Underhaching Park take place utilising funds from the In Bloom underspend and,
4. That, additional support be provided to Witney Town Band by way of a summer concert programme and,
5. That, In Bloom vouchers for 2025 remain at the same level as the current year - £50 for schools and £40 for community gardeners and,
6. That, the minutes of the Witney Forum and Witney Community Insight Profile Steering Group be noted.

(Councillor Collins left the meeting at 7.06pm rejoining at 7.10pm during the item on Youth Services)

SC643 **YOUTH SERVICES**

The Committee received the report of the Deputy Town Clerk which provided details of youth service spending for 2024/25 and proposed amendments for 2025/26.

Members had earlier reviewed the proposals in the report and had agreed to:

- Continue the support of Home Start Oxford (£11,000) and The Station Detached Youth (£30,000) via the creation of new budget lines.

- That the Youth Services Grant fund should be reinstated with a budget of £40,000 and that mental health sessions to be provided by APCAM should be considered via that fund rather than a separate budget line be established.
- Members had also agreed that the Youth Café provision could be provided by The Station as an extension of the detached Youth Service, subject to further discussion with them.

The Committee reflected on the success of the VR Day which was run with grant support from the Town Hall Charity and had been well received, Members were in agreement that a similar event be run in 2025 and suggested that West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) be contacted to see if they would like to run it as a joint event.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, WODC be approached in respect of the running of a joint VR-day styled event in 2025 and,
3. That, a Youth Services budget remain at £40,000, re-opening for grants and,
4. That, further APCAM mental health drop-in sessions be considered via the Youth Services Budget and,
5. That, new budget lines of £30,000 and £11,000 be established for The Station Detached Youth Project and Home Start Oxford respectively and,
6. That, discussions take place with The Station over the possibility of providing a Youth Café and ,
7. That, the above financial support be awarded under the General Power of Competence.

SC644 **YOUTH COUNCIL**

The Committee received a verbal update from the Deputy Town Clerk following the inaugural meeting of the newly formed Youth Council that afternoon.

Ten of the Thirteen members had been in attendance and all Committee positions had been filled. The Council would now be working on a 12-month plan which would build on their positive ideas.

The next meeting was scheduled for January 2025 and the Mayor indicated that he would try and attend. Following this it was agreed that an invite should be extended to the Youth Council to attend a meeting of this Committee.

Resolved:

That, the verbal update be noted.

SC645 **THIRD PARTY EVENTS**

Due to time constraints, it had not been possible for this report to be submitted for discussion at the meeting.

Resolved:

That, the report be presented to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee on 25 November 2024.

SC646 **BLEED KIT REQUEST**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations Manager which outlined the proposal to introduce a Bleed Kit cabinet.

Members had mixed thoughts on the need for this; although the kit could be used for other serious injuries its primary function was to provide support in response to a stabbing incident. Members discussed that there was no evidence of knife related attacks in Witney and believed that the introduction of a bleed kit may increase anxiety within the community that there was a problem. The Chair also advised the Youth Council who had met earlier were in favour of the Council installing these.

The Committee also discussed the implications and social responsibility for the installation of the kits as it was recognised that knives were carried around the town and that steps should be taken to prevent the potential risk, therefore all members were in agreement to purchase and locate a bleed kit by the Town Hall.

Members asked that Officers explore further with Thames Valley Police, WODC and Oxfordshire County Council social and outreach workers as to the potential unseen risk of knife crime in and around the town. Also, Officers were asked to consider the funding opportunities such as future development Section 106 monies or OCC priority funding which could be utilised the roll out of bleed kits across the town in the same way defibrillators are considered.

Resolved:

1. That, a bleed kit be installed in the phone box along with the existing defibrillator on the corner of the Town Hall and,
2. That, it be delegated to Officers to research further the need for additional kits and explore funding options.

The meeting closed at: 7.40 pm

Chair

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Finance Report
Meeting Date: 27 January 2025
Contact Officer: Responsible Financial Officer

Should Members have any queries about this report advance notice would be appreciated, in writing, by 12 noon on Monday 27 January to allow for a full response at the meeting.

Background

Detailed income and expenditure statements for budgets which are the responsibility of this committee are enclosed. The period to which this report relates is 1 April to 30 November 2024.

Current Situation

For the Stronger Communities Committee the following cost centres are in place and these are shown in the report. Cost centres, comprising three digits, typically represent a discrete service entity, to which income and expenditure is allocated against previously agreed revenue budgets.

For the Stronger Communities Committee the following cost centres are in place:

Cost centre	Service
402	Community Infrastructure
408	Community Activities

Within each cost centre income and expenditure is then allocated to a four-digit nominal ledger code; these codes are common across the cost centres. Nominal ledger codes further define the costs associated with the cost centre and correspond to a specific type of account, such as materials or staffing costs. Codes commencing with “1” are income codes; codes commencing with “4” are expenditure codes.

The Council agreed both the revised estimates for 2024-25 and the estimates for 2025-26 at its meeting of 6 January 2025. These are shown in the report.

The format of this report is as follows: the first two columns relate to the original budget from 2023/24 against the actual figures for last year. The middle columns relate to the current year’s original budget, actual expenditure year to date, the projected budget to 31st March 2025. The right-hand columns relate to the draft budget for 2025/26.

REVENUE BUDGET SUMMARY

A full review of the budgetary position was undertaken during the budget cycle. Most areas of interest were raised at the last meeting of this committee and the subsequent Policy Governance and Finance Committee and full Council meetings. The RFO would refer members to the finance/ budget reports which were approved at those meetings for further details.

However there are a number of points worth making:

1. Current year budget: In terms of the report presented at this meeting, the current year (2024/25) budget is that which was projected when the estimates were revised and agreed by the Council at its meeting on 6 January 2025. It should be noted that the revised estimates were produced by your officers in the autumn of 2024. This means that, with the year end (31 March 2025) approaching, there will be some cases where the actual spend to date exceeds the revised estimates. Conversely there will be other lines where actuals will be year-end not reach the revised estimate figure and overall the impact on budget should be broadly when the year-end accounts are produced.
2. The actual year to date figures are for the period April to November 2024, subject to the comments in relation to recharges of overheads (point 3, below).
3. The treatment of overheads was previously reported to Members. During the final stage of the budget process all central support and works overheads were removed from the service cost centres. There was no impact on the Council's overall budget. The current position is:
 - i. Central support overheads (nominal ledger codes 4892 and 4893) have been allocated in the current year to 30 November 2024. Estimates are now shown for the revised 2024-25 budget and the 2025-26 budget.
 - ii. Works overheads (nominal ledger codes 4888, 4890 and 4899) have been allocated in the current year to 30 September 2024. Estimates are now shown for the revised 2024-25 budget and the 2025-26 budget, based on the original 2024-25 estimated allocation of these overheads to the two cost centres. These will in due course be recalculated with the intention is that the allocation to service cost centres will reflect more accurately where the overhead is being incurred based on the current year. As usual there is no impact on the Council's overall budget – the size of the overhead remains the same, it is simply how it is allocated.

Impact Assessments

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – no implications directly resulting from this report.
- b) Biodiversity - no implications directly resulting from this report.
- c) Crime & Disorder - no implications directly resulting from this report.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency - no implications directly resulting from this report.

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.

The provision of regular financial reports is part of the Council's risk management system.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates. Social value is not quantified in the financial reports but clearly the creation of social value is dependent on setting adequate budgets to meet the Council's objectives.

Financial implications

This report forms part of the Council's due diligence and a process in line with its Financial Regulations. The financial implications are detailed above and also in the attached appendices.

This report forms part of the Council's mechanisms for budgetary control, as it enables income and expenditure incurred to be reviewed and to be compared with the Council's budgets.

Recommendations

Members are invited to approve the report and the management accounts of the Committee's services to 30 November 2024.

Annual Budget - By Committee (Actual YTD Month 8)

Note: Stronger Communities Committee 27 January 2025 - Finance Report to 30 November 2024

		<u>Last Year 2023-24</u>		<u>Current Year 2024-25</u>				<u>Next Year 2025-26</u>		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
Stronger Communities										
402	<u>COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE</u>									
1052	EXPENSES RECOVERED	0	1,252	1,336	500	1,000	0	1,350	0	0
1099	MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	0	0	0	1,000	0	0	0	0	0
1170	GRANTS RECEIVED	0	4,020	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1171	DONATIONS RECEIVED	0	4,934	1,334	2,665	5,100	0	10,350	0	0
	Total Income	0	10,206	2,670	4,165	6,100	0	11,700	0	0
4014	ELECTRICITY	4,100	2,284	3,411	2,030	2,800	0	3,400	0	0
4017	CONTRACT CLEAN/WASTE	3,000	2,665	3,000	435	3,000	0	3,000	0	0
4025	INSURANCE	120	112	112	112	112	0	115	0	0
4035	BUS SHELTER MAINTENANCE	2,000	168	3,000	484	1,500	0	3,000	0	0
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	2,630	1,021	2,630	556	1,500	0	2,600	0	0
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	3,000	54	3,000	80	1,000	0	1,500	0	0
4039	HORTICULTURE	750	10,228	19,500	16,164	19,100	0	19,500	0	0
4040	ARBORICULTURE	20,000	20,380	20,000	6,385	15,000	0	20,000	0	0
4066	TREE REPLACEMENT	8,000	7,191	8,000	293	4,000	0	4,000	0	0
4067	Tree Survey	8,000	5,270	8,000	0	8,000	0	7,500	0	0
4105	XMAS LIGHTS, TREE & INFRASTRUC	44,000	39,512	55,000	38,553	48,500	0	48,500	0	0
4166	DEFIBRILLATOR EXPENDITURE	4,000	2,833	4,000	1,390	4,000	0	4,000	0	0
4200	STREET FURNITURE	1,000	5,114	5,000	7,047	5,000	0	5,000	1,000	0
4208	COVID-19 MEMORIAL	0	634	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4210	CHURCH CLOCK	1,500	0	1,500	0	1,500	0	1,500	0	0
4215	IN BLOOM - INC SCHOOLS CHALLENGE	7,250	1,624	7,250	2,401	7,250	0	3,500	0	0

Continued on next page

Appendix

Page 14

Annual Budget - By Committee (Actual YTD Month 8)

Note: Stronger Communities Committee 27 January 2025 - Finance Report to 30 November 2024

		<u>Last Year 2023-24</u>		<u>Current Year 2024-25</u>				<u>Next Year 2025-26</u>		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	0	0	161,845	37,643	140,643	0	182,561	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	0	0	43,819	3,059	31,243	0	37,509	0	0
4892	C/S STAFF RCHG	17,967	16,422	18,431	11,867	18,210	0	21,362	0	0
4893	C/S O'HEAD RCHG	5,176	6,491	5,214	4,090	5,522	0	5,642	0	0
4894	GROUNDS STAFF RECHARGE	70,697	32,957	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4895	GROUNDS O'HEAD RECHARGE	26,103	36,501	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4896	MTCE STAFF RECHARGE	87,913	88,734	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4897	MTCE O'HEAD RECHARGE	8,604	8,678	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	9,187	15,736	15,763	9,722	12,910	0	10,388	0	0
4990	CONTRN TO CCTV SCH.	10,000	10,000	10,000	0	10,000	0	11,267	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	344,997	314,608	398,475	142,311	340,790	0	395,844	1,000	0
	402 Net Income over Expenditure	-344,997	-304,403	-395,805	-138,146	-334,690	0	-384,144	-1,000	0
6000	plus Transfer from EMR	0	4,114	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(344,997)	(300,289)	(395,805)	(138,146)	(334,690)		(384,144)		
408	COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES									
1099	MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	0	0	0	26	0	0	0	0	0
1170	GRANTS RECEIVED	0	0	0	1,500	1,500	0	1,500	0	0
	Total Income	0	0	0	1,526	1,500	0	1,500	0	0
4001	SALARIES	4,778	4,581	4,888	3,162	4,742	0	15,118	0	0
4002	ER'S NIC	502	475	498	332	497	0	1,949	0	0
4003	ER'S SUPERANN	1,037	994	1,061	686	1,029	0	3,281	0	0
4103	GRANT YOUTH COUNCIL	500	0	1,350	15	1,350	0	1,350	0	0

Continued on next page

Page 15

Annual Budget - By Committee (Actual YTD Month 8)

Note: Stronger Communities Committee 27 January 2025 - Finance Report to 30 November 2024

	<u>Last Year 2023-24</u>		<u>Current Year 2024-25</u>				<u>Next Year 2025-26</u>		
	Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
4104 GRANT CARNIVAL/XMAS ROTARY CLB	4,500	4,200	4,500	4,900	4,900	0	4,900	0	0
4106 GRANT - PLAY DAY	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	0	1,000	0	0
4109 BLUE PLAQUES	0	193	0	525	525	0	0	0	0
4111 WATER SAFETY/EDUCATION	2,000	0	2,000	0	2,000	0	2,000	0	0
4112 GRANT - WITNEY TOWN BAND	750	660	660	660	660	0	660	0	0
4141 EVENTS	9,000	3,410	10,000	3,416	3,500	0	7,500	0	0
4145 HM QUEEN'S JUBILEE (2022)	0	744	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4146 HM KING'S CORONATION (2023)	3,000	2,591	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4147 50th Anniversary Grants	0	0	0	800	0	0	0	0	0
4148 D-Day 80th Anniversary comm'n	0	60	1,500	862	862	0	1,500	0	0
4149 WTC 50th ANNIVERSARY	0	0	5,000	3,332	4,000	0	0	0	0
4154 EXPERIENCE OXFORDSHIRE M'SHIP	0	0	1,200	0	1,200	0	1,200	0	0
4160 TOWN TWINNING	500	0	500	0	500	0	500	0	0
4161 TOWN TWINNING ROOM HIRE	500	0	500	0	500	0	500	0	0
4167 BUS SERVICE	21,000	21,000	21,000	16,500	23,500	0	23,500	0	0
4169 CHILDREN & YOUTH PROVISION	40,000	19,600	40,000	17,200	40,000	0	0	20,000	0
4170 ADVENT FAYRE	2,000	2,020	2,000	1,612	1,000	0	1,000	0	0
4172 GRANT - DETACHED YOUTH WORK	0	0	0	0	0	0	18,000	0	0
4173 GRANT - HOME START	0	0	0	0	0	0	11,000	0	0
4892 C/S STAFF RCHG	71,867	65,686	73,721	47,476	72,836	0	85,443	0	0
4893 C/S O'HEAD RCHG	20,704	25,962	20,857	16,357	22,088	0	22,567	0	0
Overhead Expenditure	183,638	153,175	192,235	118,833	186,689	0	202,968	20,000	0
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(183,638)	(153,175)	(192,235)	(117,307)	(185,189)		(201,468)		

Continued on next page

Annual Budget - By Committee (Actual YTD Month 8)

Note: Stronger Communities Committee 27 January 2025 - Finance Report to 30 November 2024

	<u>Last Year 2023-24</u>		<u>Current Year 2024-25</u>				<u>Next Year 2025-26</u>		
	Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
Stronger Communities - Income	0	10,206	2,670	5,691	7,600	0	13,200	0	0
Expenditure	528,635	467,784	590,710	261,145	527,479	0	598,812	21,000	0
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>-528,635</u>	<u>-457,578</u>	<u>-588,040</u>	<u>-255,453</u>	<u>-519,879</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>-585,612</u>	<u>-21,000</u>	<u>0</u>
plus Transfer from EMR	0	4,114	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>(528,635)</u>	<u>(453,464)</u>	<u>(588,040)</u>	<u>(255,453)</u>	<u>(519,879)</u>		<u>(585,612)</u>		
Total Budget Income	0	10,206	2,670	5,691	7,600	0	13,200	0	0
Expenditure	528,635	467,784	590,710	261,145	527,479	0	598,812	21,000	0
Net Income over Expenditure	<u>-528,635</u>	<u>-457,578</u>	<u>-588,040</u>	<u>-255,453</u>	<u>-519,879</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>-585,612</u>	<u>-21,000</u>	<u>0</u>
plus Transfer from EMR	0	4,114	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	<u>(528,635)</u>	<u>(453,464)</u>	<u>(588,040)</u>	<u>(255,453)</u>	<u>(519,879)</u>		<u>(585,612)</u>		

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE



Agenda Item:	Communications Report
Meeting Date:	Monday, 27 January 2025
Contact Officer:	Communications & Community Engagement Officer

Background

The purpose of this report is to update councillors on general communication matters and progress made since the last meeting of the Stronger Communities Committee.

Current Situation

Website & WCAG 2.2.AA progress

The Communications and Community Engagement officer and the Business Administration Assistant have made checks on the Witney Town Council website and much of it is already compliant. There are some home page issues caused by a third-party software plug in for the Facebook news feed. It isn't something officers could fix without removing the Facebook Widget. The news is available elsewhere on the site and a screen reader is likely to ignore the fault. Officers will continue to try to source a new widget when time permits.

There are further enhancements to pages on the Council's website underway which include adding a Play Areas page highlighting inclusive equipment, promoting the Council's statuses on Disability Confidence and Civility & Respect, a new residents page, FAQ's page and Why Become a Councillor page.

Annual Newsletter

As previously agreed, officers are progressing the annual newsletter as an 8-page A5 leaflet within budget and with the same local supplier as 2024. A delivery slot has been requested for the week commencing 3rd March 2025. This allows enough time for advertising the Annual Town Meeting on 19th March 2025.

An issue with postcodes delivered to by Royal Mail has been uncovered – if Windrush Place is included with the delivery, the newsletter would also be delivered to the Ducklington and Curbridge areas. Another source of hand delivery in this area is being explored.

Proposed content of this newsletter includes:

- Annual resident's survey
- 'Investing in a Better Witney' - Council Budget & Precept Information, what costs what
- Who does what graphic

- Annual Town Meeting Advert
- Corn Exchange What's On
- What's on at WTC venues – inc. VE Day Information
- You Said, We Did - link
- Land Responsibilities - link

If Members have any other items they feel should be included please advise the Lead officer as soon as possible.

Annual Report 2024-25

Officers are compiling a format for an Annual Town report that will be used at the Annual Town Meeting and will also form the basis for other documents that will use some of the same content. An annual report is a requirement of the NALC Local Council Award Scheme Silver award.

Social Media

The Communications & Community Engagement Officer has noted the Council gets very little engagement from anything posted on X. It generally gets liked or reposted by one or other of two or three followers. The Council remains very busy on Facebook and Instagram and there has been a request to expand what it does on Linked In. Staff last posted on X in November 2024 and will continue to post anything that needs to be promoted as widely as possible on there but would like to build on the Linked in Profile in the following way. As well as using it for recruitment officers would like to start with a review of Witney Town Council's year. The Council is a dynamic, trailblazing and pioneering council that has seen many exciting projects and initiatives take place.

Officers are aware that many other Councils follow what WTC does with interest and frequently contact us to discuss some of our projects and events, that they are considering undertaking for themselves.

Witney Annual Town Meeting

In response to changes being made to the Annual Town Meeting to make it more interactive and less being 'talked at'.

The Communications and Community Engagement Officer has been considering ways to use Slido or a similar App to ask questions of the audience which they can answer discreetly from a mobile phone. <https://www.slido.com/>

They are also able to answer questions which might help those who are a little more reserved to take an active part and get a question answered. The Council could set an interactive quiz/guessing game regarding the budget and our spending. How much do they think the Council spend v what they think the Council SHOULD spend, for example.

Press Coverage

Attached as appendices A and B are the summaries of press coverage compiled by the Business Administration Apprentice.

Impact Assessments

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – The newsletter is delivered to every household in paper format and published digitally online. The digital version is available to visually impaired to be read by a digital reader, can be made larger and the colours amended per the WCAG 2.2.AA legislation. The newsletter will advise to contact the Town Hall if another format is required. The fact it is delivered to every household ensures the hardest to reach residents are reached.
- b) Biodiversity – none
- c) Crime & Disorder – The Council continues to share information concerning crime and disorder on its social media pages.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – The Council has to balance the need to communicate effectively with all residents against harm to the environment. This year, officers have requested the newsletter is not printed on glossy paper.

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.

- There is a risk that if the Council moves away from the X platform it could be viewed negatively.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

Effective communication with residents enhances the relationship between local government and the community, fostering trust and engagement.

Financial implications

- The annual newsletter cost is within the agreed budget.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and,

1. Consider whether the Council should focus less on the underused X platform and develop an interesting profile with a look back at the year on Linked In.



Date	Story	Reported in	Positive	Negative	Neutral	PR Issued	Social Media Post	Enquiry Response
17.1.24	Announcement of the Mayors Quiz	Witney Gazette	Yes					
17.1.24	Return of Traffic Calming Planters Waste of Money	Witney Gazette		Yes				
17.1.24	Town Council Increases Precept by 6%	Witney Gazette	Yes					
17.1.24	Dean Temple's District Dossier	Witney Gazette			Yes			
24.1.24	Courtside - Approved Plans	Witney Gazette	Yes					
29.1.24	De-normalising smoking through partnerships	Local Government Association	Yes					
31.1.24	First Features Installed at Skate Park	Witney Gazette	Yes					
07.02.24	Duncan Enright associated with Community Communications Partnership	Witney Gazette		Yes				
28.02.24	Town Meeting Announced	Witney Gazette	Yes					
06.03.24	Editorial Feature: News from the Coffee Shed (at The Leys)	Witney Gazette	Yes					

Date	Story	Reported in	Positive	Negative	Neutral	PR Issued	Social Media Post	Enquiry Response
20.03.24	Firewalkers Hotfoot it for Favourite Charity Causes	Witney Gazette	Yes					
20.03.24	Citizen Awards for Making a Difference	Witney Gazette	Yes					
03.04.24	Skatepark Opens After £150k Boost	Witney Gazette	Yes					
24.04.24	134 Home-Development Appeal Approval is 'Tragic'	Witney Gazette		Yes				
08.05.24	Town 'Cry' to Mark Coronation Anniversary	Witney Gazette	Yes					
29.05.24	Town Celebrates Pride with Rainbow of Colours	Witney Gazette	Yes					
05.06.24	Youth Service Given £28k by Town Council	Witney Gazette	Yes					
12.06.24	Two New Community Buses Launched with Lottery Cash	Witney Gazette	Yes					
12.06.24	Youth Service on 'Own Ground'	Witney Gazette	Yes					
31.07.24	Town Council's Pledge to Community Groups	Witney Gazette	Yes					
31.07.24	Free Concert in Park (Witney Town Band)	Witney Gazette	Yes					
07.08.24	Crackdown on Dog Fouling after Surge in Complaints	Witney Gazette			Yes			
07.08.24	Complaints of Dog Fouling are Increasing	Witney Gazette			Yes			
04.09.24	Health Warning Over Water at Country Park	Witney Gazette			Yes			
04.09.24	Town Council Condemns 'Wanton Vandalism' After Fire	Witney Gazette			Yes			
18.09.24	Council Votes to Pay for New £1m Football Pitch	Witney Gazette	Yes					
18.09.24	Carousel Service Opens Witney Feast 2024	Witney Gazette	Yes					

Date	Story	Reported in	Positive	Negative	Neutral	PR Issued	Social Media Post	Enquiry Response
24.09.24	Street Artists to Transform Upgraded Oxfordshire Skate Park	Witney Gazette	Yes				Street artists to transform upgraded Oxfordshire skate park Oxford Mail	
25.09.24	Warning to 'Steer Clear of Lake That Turned Green'	Witney Gazette			Yes			
25.09.24	Bus Users Can Quiz Companies at First Meeting of its Kind	Witney Gazette	Yes					
09.10.24	Church Sees Restoration of Historic Wall Section	Witney Gazette	Yes					
30.10.24	Flood Warning Issued at Beauty Spot	Witney Gazette			Yes			
06.11.24	Fallen Will be Honoured in Remembrance Ceremony	Witney Gazette	Yes					
13.11.24	Town Council By-Election	Witney Gazette			Yes			
20.11.24	Christmas Carol Service	Witney Gazette	Yes					
20.11.24	Nominate Your Citizen Of the Year	Witney Gazette	Yes					
27.11.24	Funfair at Town Christmas Lights Switch-On	Witney Gazette	Yes					
11.12.24	Rec Ground Makeover Restarts Following Delays	Witney Gazette			Yes			

Date	Story	Reported in	Positive	Negative	Neutral	PR Issued	Social Media Post	Enquiry Response
1.1.25	Review of the Year: Storms and Car Park with no road	Witney Gazette	Yes					
1.1.25	Nearly 60kg of Items Donated to Foodbank	Witney Gazette	Yes					

Oxford Mail
Witney Gazette

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE



Agenda Item:	Community Engagement Report
Meeting Date:	27 January 2025
Contact Officer:	Communications & Community Engagement Officer

Background

The purpose of this report is to update councillors on the progress of Community Engagement projects and events.

Current Situation

Community Engagement Strategy

An early draft version is included in the pack as a confidential addendum later in the meeting. Please note any omissions, corrections, changes or suggestions and feed them back but this is a working document. The Communications & Community Engagement Officer will make changes before submitting a final version to this Committee in March.

The current structure, notes the aims and objectives and then lists:

- Who does the Council want to engage with?
- What it already does
- Barriers and challenges
- Exploring new ways and innovation
- Evaluating success and failure

Once this is complete and circulated, a review date should be set. This document should be considered alongside the Communication Strategy which will also be reviewed. The strategy is a requirement of the NALC Local Council Award Scheme silver award.

Annual Residents Survey

Will as usual, be included in the annual newsletter delivered to all households in March and published online. The survey will broadly be along similar lines as previous years with some minor amendments in response to comments last year. By sticking to the same questions similar data is captured which helps benchmark residents' satisfaction year on year.

The Youth Council have not had time to come up with any specific questions – one question could be, WTC now has a Youth Council – what would you like to see them working on?

Volunteers thank you picnic and Planting schemes- Community Orchard and Wildflowers.

The First volunteer picnic will happen at the community orchard planting day in Snipe Meadow in February.

Volunteers will be asked to join the Biodiversity and Green Spaces Officer and Green Spaces Operative, along with officers from the communications and administration team who will bring the gazebo and be providing hot soup and other refreshments at the first volunteer picnic of the year.

This will be an opportunity for community engagement and seeking feedback via surveys and also a time to recruit additional volunteers for the various wildflower planting areas due to be installed during April. The lake will be one of these areas.

Councillors are invited to join officers and take the opportunity to meet with volunteers and join in with the planting.

Other Community Thank-You Picnics.

There is a budget of £500 for three picnics in total throughout the year. The Communications & Community Engagement Officer is suggesting that some of the unsuccessful nominees for this year's Citizens of the Year who are volunteering in the community might be invited along to one of these (when the weather is a little warmer) as a small thank you for everything they do. There was a large number of entries this year (sixteen in total) and not everyone could win an award although they were all very deserving.

They do not need to know they were nominated so won't be disappointed, they will just receive a little recognition, and this will not preclude them from being nominated another time.

Local Film Maker Showcase

A local student media student has made his own full-length film called Los Bandidos of Ducklington Lake. Which will premiere at the Corn Exchange in June. It takes place entirely within Witney and features some very recognisable and iconic parts of the town.

In Bloom

The community Gardening and Schools In Bloom wheelbarrow initiatives will still be taking place whether or not the town makes an official entry or not. The Biodiversity and Green Spaces officer will update when he has spoken with the judges.

Unterhaching Park

The Biodiversity and Green Spaces officer is engaging with the In Bloom judges to determine whether the Council is close to getting a gold for the Lake and Country Park or if the level of work required means that this is a year or so off. If he is advised against entering this year then it is possible that along with the bulb planting that has already been agreed, the Council

might be able to use some of the In Bloom budget to install a story telling area, a low cost, low maintenance area with seating made from cut trees etc. This is likely to be a long-term rejuvenation project as significant cleaning and clearance work is required – a potential entry to In Bloom in 2026/27 as a community project.

Witney Town Band Summer Concert Programme

The Band have thanked the Town Council for suggesting this and are enthusiastic about holding three outdoor concerts in different areas of the town during the summer. Details tbc.

Witney Carnival 2025

After a public poll, the theme of this year's Carnival is 'Musicals'. After the outstanding contribution by Members in the parade last year, Members are asked if they would like to participate again. The Town Council will ask for a stand as this provides an excellent opportunity to promote the Council and for Councillors to engage with the community.

VE & VJ Day 80th Anniversaries

At the time of writing, a meeting of the task and finish group is planned for Thursday 23 January. Notes or a verbal update from this will be provided at the meeting to communicate current plans.

Impact Assessments

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – The Community Engagement Strategy is key to ensuring that all residents/customers are treated inclusively and fairly. By offering summer concert venues across the town, it makes it more likely residents unable to travel far can enjoy a summer concert.
- b) Biodiversity – The community orchard and wildflower planting days help communicate, educate and create interest in biodiversity as well as creating new sustainable and lasting habitats.
- c) Crime & Disorder – none.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – The planting of community orchards will help towards the Council's carbon neutrality objectives; this will be covered in reports on this subject by the lead officer.

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.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

- Inviting volunteers to a picnic creates social value by strengthening relationships, promoting inclusivity, enhancing well-being, and fostering a culture of appreciation and ongoing engagement.
- Community planting days create social value by fostering environmental sustainability, strengthening social bonds, improving health, and promoting a sense of collective ownership and responsibility. They offer long-term benefits that not only enhance the environment but also contribute to the well-being of the community as a whole.
- Engaging with others—whether through volunteering, attending planting days, participating in the carnival, creates a sense of belonging, builds trust, promotes inclusivity of the Council.

Financial implications

- There are no cost implications pertaining to this report that are not already covered in an existing budget

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and,

1. Consider the content of the Community Engagement Strategy.
2. Consider a Youth Council question for the annual survey.
3. Consider inviting Citizen of the Year nominees to Community Thank you picnics.
4. Consider using some of the balance of the unspent In Bloom budget if we do not enter an official entry this year to enliven Unterhaching Park.
5. To note updates on the Witney Town Band Summer Concert programme, local film maker showcase, and VE/VJ Day anniversaries.
6. To consider taking part in and engaging at the Witney Carnival.



WITNEY
TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Witney Youth Council held At 4.15 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney on Thursday 16th January 2025.

Youth Councillors Present:

Nine Youth Councillors (inc. Chair)

Witney Town Council Mentors Present:

Cllr J Aitman

Cllr G Meadows

Cllr R Smith (Witney Town Council Leader)

Cllr O Collins (Mayor of Witney)

Witney Town Council Officers' Present:

A Clapton – Deputy Town Clerk

A Hathaway – Business Administration Apprentice

P Inness – Communications & Community Engagement Officer

Three others were present at the meeting.

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr S Simpson and one Youth Council Member.

2. Declarations of Interest

The Youth Council were advised that if they knew anyone related to or had any involvement in any of the items being discussed at the meeting, they should say it at this point.

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes

Youth Councillors agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 18th November 2024 were a correct record.

4. Guest Participation

Participants at the meeting spoke with the Youth Council.

- Community First Oxfordshire – Discussion on living in Witney as a young person.
- PC K Giles – Introduction to Witney Police and how to contact them.
- The Mayor of Witney, Cllr Owen Collins – Information on the Mayor role and his involvement with the Youth Council.

A Youth Council Member left at 16.45pm

5. Noticeboards in Schools

Members discussed acquiring noticeboards and placing them in schools under the responsibility of the Youth Council as a means of communication with other young people. The school canteen was agreed to be a convenient location for surveys and posters introducing the Youth Council, ensuring that it would need to be clearly different to the school Youth Council. The noticeboard could also hold educational posters on issues the Witney Youth Council are enthusiastic about, such as racism and charities.

The Leader of the Witney Town Council questioned the space they would need for this noticeboard, and the youth council agreed on a poster for the digital signage for now.

Resolved: That, the media officers further discuss the contents of this poster and design it for use on digital signage.

6. Questions from the Venue & Events Officer, Witney Town Council

Questions for the Youth Council

- **Where do you go to see what is happening in Witney? e.g., Instagram/School Posters (Daily Slides)/Notice Boards**

Members answered that it was Facebook and the A-boards in town.

- **What films would you go to see at the Corn Exchange? e.g. (Not released within the last few years.) Nostalgic films, Studio Ghibli, must be PG or 15 age rated.**

The Youth Councillors mentioned Indiana Jones and other similar action films, Studio Ghibli films, and Fast and Furious films, although they may not be age appropriate. Members also added that they like to watch romantic comedies, however, they would feel uncomfortable watching them in cinema. High school-age based rom-coms were highlighted as fun to go to with friends. Johnny English was brought up to be a favourite too.

Members mentioned commercial cinema sweets were too expensive, so selling cheaper sweets could be some competition. One Youth Councillor liked the idea of a pyjama film night. The Chair spoke about the possibility of a family and friends discount as they agreed they liked going to the cinema with their friendship groups and families. Tickets of four or paired tickets could be cheaper/paired with sweets or popcorn.

- **What events would you go to the Corn Exchange for? e.g., Arcade days, book clubs, writing clubs, art clubs, etc.**

The Chair brought up retro game nights, such as arcade games, Mario Kart, and old board games to do with friends. They also discussed the possibility of sports in the main hall as many of the youth councillors enjoy various sports after school.

The Leader of the Witney Town Council talked about the possibility of an event for either families or groups of young people to do an activity paired with a film, working with the work experience students to advertise it. There were no ideas for an activity, but the Youth Councillors approved of the idea of working with the work experience students.

- **Would you be more likely to go to a regular event or a one-off?**

The Chair brought up the opinion that one-off events were easy to miss, however, in their opinion, an event that was too regular could also get boring. They spoke about Witney Music Festival and the anticipation of one or two events a year. The Youth Councillors enjoy looking forward to it and talking about it with their friends.

Resolved: 1. That, the information above be fed back to the Venue & Events Officer.
2. That, a meeting be set up to discuss events further.

Two Youth Council Members left at 17.15pm

7. **Annual Surveys**

The survey draft made by the Business Administration Apprentice was agreed to be printed for discussion in the next meeting. The questions for the spring newsletter from the Youth Council were deferred to next year due to lack of time.

8. **Sporting Events**

Sporting events were postponed to a future youth council meeting.

9. **Winter Festival & Cultural Festival**

Youth Councillors discussed asking residents of Witney about their cultures and inviting a variety of people to the Culture Day that will be hosted as part of the Witney Music Festival. The group considered inviting the festival manager and a youth leader from detached youth service, The Station.

Resolved: That, those listed above are invited to the next meeting.

10. **Defibrillator Training**

The Youth Councillors agreed to postpone defibrillator training to later in the year after fundraising events. All members agreed it would be useful, however unsure that it would be an effective use of their budget early on.

Resolved: That proper training be deferred, but a free video on defibrillator use be issued to Members.

11. **Youth Council Branded Clothing**

Badges were agreed to be a good way of identifying the youth council members at events. Lanyards were also brought up by the Youth Councillors as an option. Both are to be explored and priced when the new logo is developed.

Resolved: 1. That, badges and lanyard prices are explored
2. That, the Youth Council applies for a Town Council £50 for fifty grant to cover the costs

A Youth Council Member left at 5.25pm

12. Youth Council Logo

The Youth Council Media Officer agreed to develop designs for the next Youth Council meeting. An additional smaller meeting with the media officers was also agreed upon.

Resolved: That, a meeting on a new Youth Council logo takes place prior to the next meeting so designs could be considered.

13. Items brought to members attention by the Town Clerk or Public

No items were raised for discussion by members of the public or the Town Clerk.

14. Items for Future Agenda

No items were raised for a future agenda of the Youth Council.

15. Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Youth Council is due in March 2025. The date was agreed to be confirmed in a poll sent out after the meeting.

The meeting closed at 17.45pm

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Youth Services
Meeting Date: Monday, 27 January 2025
Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on Youth Services being funded by the Town Council.

Background

Following approval of the 2025/26 Budget the following items will be progressed by officers in the coming weeks and months.

Current Situation

Youth Café

Officers are in discussion with The Station concerning a café at the 1863 café bar during February half-term, Monday 17th -Thursday 20th February 5-8pm and are hopeful this will take place.

This will be funded from an underspend in the 2024/25 grant award to The Station and will be a trial to see how well it is received by young people.

Youth Services Grant

The grant scheme will return in 2025/26 as agreed during the budgeting cycle. Officers will provide a report to the March meeting to confirm how the Council wishes to proceed with the application for and allocation of the £20k budget, along with updated criteria.

School Holiday Mental Health Drop-in Sessions

Officers will contact the provider and ask that a proposal is made which could be funded from the above grant scheme.

The Station Detached Youth

The Station have updated their website with a fresh and vibrant look www.thestation.life/ They are hoping to work with the police regarding a further KICK event during the summer and will provide an end of year report to this Committee in March.

Impact Assessments

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – Access to well-funded, quality services can help mitigate the effects of social inequality. Ensuring that resources are directed toward the communities and individuals who need them most is a crucial step toward improving outcomes for young people, fostering social mobility, and promoting a more just and equal society.
- b) Biodiversity – none.
- c) Crime & Disorder –By offering young people the tools, opportunities, and support they need to thrive, youth services reduce the likelihood that they will engage in criminal behaviour, contribute to social disorder, or face long-term negative outcomes. These services not only benefit individuals but also promote the well-being and safety of entire communities.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – none.

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.

- Facilitating a Youth Café in the Corn Exchange comes with at moderate risk – from safeguarding, security and the precedent and expectation of a sustained service indefinitely.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

Investment in youth services can reduce the risk of negative outcomes, such as involvement in crime, substance abuse, or mental health crises. By offering structured activities and support systems, these programs help prevent young people from falling into harmful behaviours and provide alternatives to risky or destructive paths.

Funding youth services is a critical investment in the future of individuals and communities. It creates long-term social value by addressing the needs of young people, promoting positive development, reducing social inequalities, and fostering a more resilient and cohesive society. The benefits are far-reaching, influencing everything from personal well-being and mental health to economic stability and societal growth.

Financial implications

- There are no new financial implications from this report.

Recommendations

Member are invited to note the report and the current situation with agreed youth services provision.

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE



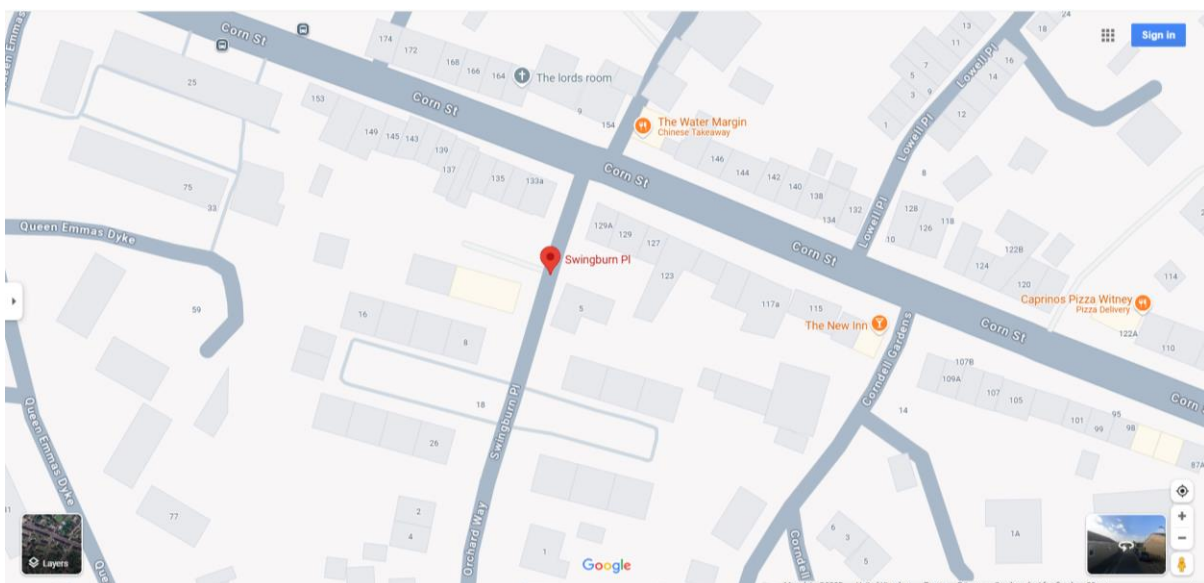
Agenda Item: Salt Bin Requests
Meeting Date: Monday, 27 January 2025
Contact Officer: Operations Manager

Background

Salt bins across Witney are purchased by the Town Council from Oxfordshire County Council (OCC). A request form is completed by the Town Council and issued to OCC who will assess the location and requirements for a salt bin. If approved, the Town Council will purchase and OCC will install and fill the bin, any subsequent refills required can be requested by the Town Council at no cost. If the bin is damaged and needs to be replaced the County Council will also cover this at no additional cost.

Current Situation

Residents at Swingburn Place have made a salt bin request to the Town Council. There is no salt bin along Corn Street and the next closest available are at Moorland Road and Ducklington Lane. Swingburn Place has multiple elderly residents and a salt bin in close proximity to their homes would be very beneficial. The salt bin would also serve residents on Corn Street and Orchard Way.



In communication with the County Council on salt bin installations, officers have learnt that the County has received multiple requests from residents on Windrush Place. Although the Town Council have not received a request from these residents, the county has advised that

they are imminent. The County has also advised that they would reject the request from the Town Council as none of the roads in Windrush Place are adopted highway land.

Impact Assessments

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – The inclusion of a salt bin in the area will benefit vulnerable residents.
- b) Biodiversity – none.
- c) Crime & Disorder – none.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – none.

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.

- In not approving a request it could generate a negative response towards Witney Town Council.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

- Provision provides a small element of safety for the local community.

Financial implications

- The County Council charge £300.00 ex VAT per salt bin
- The community infrastructure budget (4200/402) is £7,047, exceeding the £5,000 budget. The £3,292.25 cost for the bike rack installation on Welch Way will be offset by income from insurance, resulting in an underspend of £1,245.25.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and,

1. Consider the request for a salt bin installation at Swingburn Place.

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Public Realm: Request to relocate the Buttercross Needle

Meeting Date: Monday, 27th January 2025

Contact Officer: Town Clerk/CEO – Sharon Groth

The purpose of this report is to seek views on the relocation of the ‘Buttercross Needle’ currently located in Marriotts Walk opposite the Cinema, to Town Council owned land.

Background

The Buttercross Needle is a public contemporary art installation created by sculptor Michael Fairfax which was unveiled on 12th October 2009.



Source: <https://batch.artuk.org/discover/artworks/buttercross-needle-308003>

It is a narrow pyramidal obelisk mounted on a geometric steel base, made of stainless steel, glass and fibre optic lights; its unique characteristic is that at night internal fibre optic lights illuminate thin glass strips.

The sculpture intentionally references local landmarks, specifically the spire of St Mary’s Church and the roof of the Buttercross, and whilst modern it maintains the connection to Witney’s architectural heritage.

Current Situation

The District Council is undertaking public realm improvements at Marriotts Walk. As part of these improvements, it has identified the need to relocate the Buttercross Needle, currently situated within the shopping centre. While alternative locations in the vicinity are being considered, this report seeks the committee's agreement in principle to accommodate the Needle at Unterhaching Park.

Unterhaching Park has a circular plinth that was originally designed to accommodate a German maypole. More recently, the plinth was earmarked for a Jubilee Legacy Project commemorating Queen Elizabeth II. However, due to technical issues encountered during the installation of a sundial, the plinth currently remains vacant and available for use.

The relocation of the Buttercross Needle to Unterhaching Park represents an opportunity to enhance the park's amenities by making use of an existing, unused feature. The committee's decision is now required to proceed with discussions and planning.

Impact Assessments

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – the Council will need to ensure that the park remains accessible to all and would seek to get the District Council to add tactile information panels to make the monument's cultural significance accessible to visually impaired visitors. The historical referent to St Mary's Church and Buttercross helps maintain cultural heritage education for all community members.
- b) Biodiversity – given that a plinth is already in situ this would lead to minimal disruption to the area. The plan was to provide landscaping within a previous project – this could still be considered to help with the biodiversity of the area.
- c) Crime & Disorder – the illuminated feature and visibility from surrounding areas may deter antisocial behaviour – although it could also provide an area for congregating youths.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – the fibre optic lighting should be energy-efficient compared to traditional lighting systems. The re-utilisation of the plinth would minimise wastage and the disposal of rubble/building materials would therefore be minimal.

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.

Both Council's will need to ensure the plinth's structural integrity to support the obelisk's weight with it being anchored down sufficiently; and that the seals around electrical/fibre optic components are adequate and safe. A clear maintenance schedule would be needed for both the structure and lighting elements; and a safety assessment of any sharp edges or climbing potential given its location in a children's park. It is currently free standing in Marriotts Walk and not a fenced attraction.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

Accommodating the Buttercross Needle would create a unique day/night feature in a children's space, encouraging imagination and interest in local heritage. There would be an educational opportunity to connect children with local architectural history through a contemporary lens. It would add cultural value to a recreational space, creating a multi-purpose destination for all to use and enjoy.

Financial implications

The District Council has confirmed that all costs associated with the relocation of the Buttercross Needle, including transportation and installation, will be fully covered by them.

However, it is important to note that the Needle is illuminated and requires an electrical supply. This means the ongoing running costs associated with its lighting will need to be borne by the Town Council. Officers will seek a detailed assessment of these costs if the proposal is agreed in principle.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the report and

1. Consider the request to accommodate the Buttercross Needle at Unterhaching Park;
2. Agree in principle to accept the relocation, subject to further discussions on ongoing costs and any additional considerations.

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