

Full Council

Meeting of Witney Town Council

Monday, 14th April, 2025 at 7.00 pm



To members of the Full Council - O Collins, A Bailey, G Meadows, J Aitman, T Ashby, D Enright, R Smith, D Temple, A Mubin, R Crouch, G Doughty, J Doughty, D Edwards-Hughes, D Newcombe, J Robertshaw, S Simpson and J Treloar

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 of the items under consideration at this meeting in accordance with the Town Council's code of conduct.

3. Minutes (Pages 5 - 14)

To approve and adopt the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 17 February 2025 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. **Minutes of Committees and Sub Committees**

To receive and NOTE the RESOLUTIONS in the minutes of the meetings held between 18 February and 31 March 2025, and agree the RECOMMENDATIONS contained therein.

- a) **Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee - 4 March & 25 March** (Pages 15 - 24)
- b) **Parks & Recreation Committee - 10 March** (Pages 25 - 28)
- c) **Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee - 17 March** (Pages 29 - 33)
- d) **Stronger Communities Committee - 24 March** (Pages 34 - 40)
- e) **Policy, Governance & Finance Committee - 31 March** (Pages 41 - 48) **and to receive a verbal report from the meeting held earlier**

9. **Civic Announcements** (Pages 49 - 50)

To receive the report of the Mayor & Mayor's Secretary.

10. **Mayor Elect**

To agree the Mayor Elect for the 2025/26 Municipal Year in line with Standing Order 5.

11. **Health & Safety**

To receive an update from Officers on Health and Safety items.
(To Follow)

12. **Vandalism & Anti-Social Behaviour** (Page 51)

To receive an update showing the latest vandalism to Council property and reported Anti-Social Behaviour.

13. **Annual Town Meeting Minutes - 19 March 2025**

To receive the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 19 March 2025.
(To Follow)

14. **Civility & Respect Update** (Pages 52 - 55)

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

15. **Governance – Register of Interests, Hospitality & Data Protection**

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

(To Follow)

16. **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.

17. **Correspondence**

To receive any correspondence received (if applicable).

a) **Bronze NALC Local Council Award Scheme** (Pages 56 - 57)

To note the achievement of the Council in attaining the Bronze Award in the National Association of Local Councils award scheme.

b) **Courtside CIC** (Page 58)

To receive a confidential update from Courtside CIC on progress of The Leys Community Hub.

c) **Environment Agency - Flooding & Local Plan 2041** (Page 59)

To receive the response the Environment Agency to the letter submitted by the Town Clerk/CEO following the resolution of the Council. Minute no. 694, Full Council 9 December 2024 refers.

d) **PCC February & March Newsletters**

To receive the February & March newsletters from the Thames Valley Police, Police & Crime Commissioner:

[February 2025](#)

[March 2025](#)

e) **Oxfordshire County Council - Church Green & Corn Street Parking Restrictions** (Pages 60 - 62)

To receive correspondence of approval for Parking Restriction amendments to come into effect as of 7 April 2025.

f) **WODC Net Zero updates for Salt Cross Garden Village** (Pages 63 - 64)

To receive correspondence from West Oxfordshire District Council in respect of Net Zero updates for Salt Cross Garden Village.

18. **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.

19. **Sealing of Documents**

To receive details of documents sealed by the Council.

Date	No of Seal	Nature of Document
18 February 2025	93	Lease of Unit 29 Stanley Court in duplicate with HTF Holdings
18 February 2025	94	Rent Deposit Deed for Lease of Unit 29 Stanley Court in duplicate with HTF Holdings
11 March 2025	96	Declaration of Nature Reserve under the National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act 1949
18 March 2025	97	Renewal/Extension to the lease for Unit 3 Coseley Building, Windrush Industrial Estate, Witney with Welland Property Trustee Ltd. (Previous Seal ref 90 refers).

Note: Seal 95 was omitted from use.



Town Clerk

Members Interests & Registration Of Gifts & Hospitality

Members are reminded that any changes to the register of interests previously completed by them or any registration of Gifts or Hospitality received which exceed £50 should be reported to the Town Clerk **within 28 days** of the occurrence.

**MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 17 February 2025

At 7.00pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor O Collins (Chair)

Councillors:	A Bailey	D Newcombe
	G Meadows	J Robertshaw
	R Crouch	S Simpson
	G Doughty	J Treloar
	J Doughty	A Mubin
	D Edwards-Hughes	
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
Others:	Six members of the public.	
	Inspector C Ball (Thames Valley Police)	

94 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R Smith, J Aitman, D Enright, T Ashby & D Temple.

Prior to the meeting the Mayor welcomed two members of the Youth Council who were attending to observe the meeting.

95 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Members or officers.

96 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Council meetings held on 9 and 16 December 2024 & 6 January 2025 were received.

Minute number 5, 6 January 2025 – Councillor David Edwards-Hughes asked that the words “both current and outgoing” in the 2nd paragraph be removed as they were not necessary. All Members were in agreement.

Resolved:

1. That, “both current and outgoing” be removed from minute no. 5 on 6 January 2025 and,

2. That, the minutes of the Council meetings held on 9 December, 16 December 2024 & 6 January 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meetings and be signed by the Chair.

97 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

Three additional members of the Youth Council along with Inspector Ball joined the meeting at 7:04pm

98 **WITNEY COMMUNITY POLICING ISSUES**

Members received a verbal update from Inspector Chris Ball of Thames Valley Police (TVP).

Inspector Ball advised the Christmas period had been relatively quiet across Witney and local businesses had been co-operative in resolving any issues. They had dealt with a number of keyless car thefts and an offer of faraday pouches was made should any resident wish to receive one.

A Member raised the issue of travellers on the A40 and in particular, pony and trap racing which had taken place the previous weekend along that road. There were real safety concerns for those taking part and the wider public using the road. In response, it was advised the police had limited powers to stop such incidents as no law was being broken. Safety was a concern and it would continue to be monitored.

Further questions were raised on the presence of numbers of police at the Witney Travelodge Hotel, TVP's slow response to a recent street assault, individuals impersonating gas engineers and latest figures on domestic crime and what strategies were in place on this. In response, Insp Ball advised the presence of police at the Travelodge was related to the pony and trap racing but had not been made aware of any impersonation, which if correct, was concerning. The figures relating to domestic violence were not to hand, but he would forward them to the Town Clerk however, charge rates were up in this area. He would also look into the circumstances of the response to the street assault as Officers should always be in and around the Town.

Finally, Insp Ball advised that £1,000 had been provided to TVP by the Deputy Lord Lieutenant towards a further KICK event over the summer, run by The Station Detached Youth. Figures on anti-social behaviour last year showed Witney was lower than other areas, and the success of the venture had been credited to this.

Resolved:

That, the verbal updates be noted.

Inspector Ball left the meeting at 7:25pm

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

West Oxfordshire District Council

Cllr R Crouch advised a new Youth Development Officer had been appointed and there was ongoing discussion on budgets, which was at the forefront of all meetings.

Cllr J Doughty advised she and Cllr Crouch had been collaborating on assisting asylum seekers in Witney.

Resolved:

That, the updates be noted.

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

Witney Twinning Association

Cllr R Crouch advised there would be a large celebration in Witney over the weekend of 2-4 May to mark twinning anniversaries with Unterhaching and Le Touquet.

Witney Town Charity

Cllr R Crouch advised there hadn't been a recent meeting so there was no update to provide.

Resolved:

That, the verbal updates be noted.

101 **CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING COMMITTEE - 17 DECEMBER, 7 JANUARY, 28 JANUARY & 11 FEBRUARY**

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

P57 - The Committee Clerk advised Members of correspondence received earlier that day from Oxfordshire County Council advising that the proposals would be presented to the Cabinet Member for Transport Management at a public meeting on Thursday 27 February 2025. Details would be circulated to Members following the meeting

P88 – A response was yet to be submitted for the 25/00144/OUT Land at Peashell Farm, Downs Road, Curbridge. The response was due to be circulated to Members of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning for approval prior to submission to the local planning authority by the deadline of 27 February.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning meeting held on 17 December 2024, 7 January, 28 January & 11 February 2025 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

102 **PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE - 13 JANUARY**

The 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 13 January be received and any recommendations therein approved.

103 **HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE - 20 JANUARY**

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

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 20 January be received and any recommendations therein approved.

104 **STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE - 27 JANUARY**

In absence of the Chair and as no Vice Chair was appointed to the Committee, The Mayor presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee meeting held on 27 January be received and any recommendations therein approved.

Cllr J Treloar left the meeting at 7:33pm.

105 **POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE - 3 FEBRUARY**

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

F75 – The Deputy Town Clerk advised of two additional £50 for Fifty grant applications which had been received from Oxfordshire Girl Guides and ARCh, an organisation that supported reading in schools, both which had been presented to and recommended by the Chair of the Committee for approval. Members were also unanimous in agreement.

Resolved:

1. That, the two £50 for Fifty grants to Oxfordshire Girl Guiding and ARCh be provided under the General Power of Competence and the recipients be asked to acknowledge the Town Council in any promotional material and,
2. That the minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 3 February be received and any recommendations therein approved.

106 **VE & VJ DAY TASK & FINISH GROUP - 23 JANUARY**

In the absence of the Chair of the Task & Finish Group the Mayor presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the VE & VJ Day Task & Finish Group meeting held on 23 January be received and any event and financial recommendations therein approved.

Cllr J Treloar rejoined the meeting at 7:36pm.

107 **CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Council received the report of the Mayor and Mayor's Secretary which highlighted the civic engagements of the Mayor and Deputy since the last meeting.

The Mayor noted highlights and reminded Members he would be hosting the Mayors Gala Night on 25 April 2025 at the Corn Exchange.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

A member of the public left the meeting at 7:37pm

108 **ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY**

The Council received the Annual Investment Strategy from the Responsible Financial Officer (R.F.O) which had been recommended for adoption by the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee, subject to minor alterations which were included.

Resolved:

That, the Annual Investment Strategy as amended, be adopted by the Town Council.

109 **CALENDAR OF COMMITTEE MEETINGS 2025-26**

The Council received the Calendar of Committee meetings for the 2025/26 municipal year, as recommended for approval by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee.

Resolved:

That, the Calendar of Committee meetings for 2025/26 be adopted by the Council.

110 **APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

The Council received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning the appointment of a Council representative assigned to the Witney Flood Group.

The role of the position was outlined in the report and the appointed Member would act as a liaison between the Flood Group and Witney Town Council when certain issues needed discussing.

There were two recommendations for the appointment.

Cllr J Robertshaw was proposed by Cllr D Edwards-Hughes, seconded by Cllr J Treloar and, Cllr G Meadows was proposed herself, seconded by Cllr R Crouch.

A vote was taken:

Appointment of Cllr J Robertshaw	7
Appointment of Cllr G Meadows	5
Abstentions	0

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Cllr J Robertshaw be appointed as the Town Council's liaison with Witney Flood Group.

111 **HEALTH & SAFETY**

The Council received the report of the Head of Estates & Operations which provided an update to Members on health and safety matters.

Members were pleased to see the progress and actions being undertaken in this area.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

112 **VANDALISM & ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

The Council received an updated list of anti-social behaviour and vandalism incidents on its Estate since the last meeting.

Members thanked Officers for their work and in raising awareness of these issues via social media communications.

Resolved:

That, the updates on vandalism and anti-social behaviour be noted.

113 **SUMMARY OF TOWN CENTRE ISSUES RAISED BY THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE**

The Council received and considered the report of the Town Clerk & Chief Executive Officer which provided an update on a meeting held with the Witney Chamber of Commerce.

Members were encouraged to hear of a renewed partnership with the Chamber and the Town Council and welcomed the updates on items raised at the meeting.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

114 **MOTION - OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

The Council received the following Motion, proposed by Cllr J Doughty and seconded by Cllr D Edwards-Hughes.

‘Witney Town Council notes that Oxfordshire County Council in a statement published on 13 November 2024 said that it will consult with local communities on whether to switch off streetlights.

This council is concerned about the safety - and confidence - of women and vulnerable members of the public, particularly on a night out. It is not just the risk of crime that may increase but also the fear of crime, as many people cite poor lighting as one of the reasons, they can feel unsafe.

Witney Town Council resolves to write to Oxfordshire County Council requesting that no further consideration be given to turning the lights off in Witney - they must remain on to protect our residents.’

Members were in agreement that for resident safety, streetlighting should remain on throughout the night. There were some reflections on the harm lighting did to wildlife and that it would be ideal if lights could be set with motion detectors, but this would be a future conversation.

There was agreement the motion should be amended to include timings, per the original County Council thoughts and that the motion should refer to safety of all members of the public, not just females.

A Vote was then called for. The motion was passed, with voting as follows:

In Favour	10
Against	1
Abstentions	1

Resolved:

That, the motion be passed with the following amendments,

Witney Town Council notes that Oxfordshire County Council in a statement published on 13 November 2024 said that it will consult with local communities on whether to switch off streetlights between 11.30pm – 6.30am.

This council is concerned about the safety - and confidence - of members of the public, particularly on a night out. It is not just the risk of crime that may increase but also the fear of crime, as many people cite poor lighting as one of the reasons, they can feel unsafe.

Witney Town Council resolves to write to Oxfordshire County Council requesting that no further consideration be given to turning the lights off in Witney - they must remain on to protect our residents.

115 **STRENGTHENING THE STANDARDS AND CONDUCT FRAMEWORK FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN ENGLAND.**

The Council received notice of a government consultation concerning the strengthening of standards of Councillors for Local Authorities in England.

Members agreed with the sentiment of the consultation but felt there would be differing views on individual questions, and it would therefore be difficult to submit a 'corporate body' response. It would be more beneficial for Members and Officers to submit their own personal responses before the closing date.

Resolved:

1. That, Witney Town Council welcomes the consultation and its purpose and,
2. That, individual Councillors and Officers submit their own responses before the closing date.

116 **WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL FACEBOOK - META TERMS OF REFERENCE & STATEMENT**

The Council received and considered the report of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer which had been requested at the meeting of the Stronger Communities Committee in January.

The report highlighted global changes to the META terms of service, affecting platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Threads. The Council had several thousand followers on Facebook and it was recognised as a key tool for engagement with residents. The new terms of service, however, did not align with UK legislation and the ethos of the Town Council.

There was some thought that the Council should take no action on this issue however it was proposed by Cllr A Bailey, seconded by Cllr R Crouch that the following statement be added to the 'About' page of Facebook with immediate effect,

'Witney Town Council stands firmly against discrimination, and we fully support the LGBTQ+ community.

Hate has no place here, and we are committed to fostering an inclusive and respectful environment for all.'

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

In Favour	8
Against	3
Abstentions	1

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the above statement be added to the Town Council's Facebook about page.

The remaining Members of the youth Council and Member of the Public left the meeting at 8:23pm.

117 **COMMUNICATION FROM THE LEADER**

As the Council's Standing Orders did not dictate on whom should stand in for the Leader or Deputy Leader in their absence at Full Council meetings, the Mayor, as Chair of the Council confirmed no communications had been passed to him.

Resolved:

That, the update from the Chair be noted

118 **NALC - OPEN LETTER - COMMUNITY TIER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT RISING TO THE CHALLENGE**

The Council received an open letter from the Chair of the National Association of Local Council's entitled, Community Tier of Local Government Rising to the Challenge.

Members welcomed the letter, and the Town Clerk confirmed she was already in discussions and had submitted a paper on devolution to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee regarding the issue (Minute PGF 72 refers).

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted.

119 **RIVERSIDE GARDENS, WITNEY**

The Council received correspondence from the outgoing flood representative at Riverside Gardens thanking the Council for support in flooding events in previous years.

Members welcomed the response and recognised the thanks for those individually named.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted.

120 **WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL - FLOODING & LOCAL PLAN 2041**

The Council received correspondence from the Head of Planning at West Oxfordshire District Council in response to its letter about addressing flooding in the emerging Local Plan 2041.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted.

121 **OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL - WITNEY FOOTPATH NO. 32 (PART) MODIFICATION ORDER 2024**

The Council received correspondence from Oxfordshire County Council confirming a Modification Order to Witney Footpath no. 32 – Marlborough Lane.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted.

122 **OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL - NOTICE OF DEFINITIVE MAP AND STATEMENT LEGAL EVENT MODIFICATION ORDER 2025**

The Council received further correspondence from Oxfordshire County Council on a Legal Event Modification Order to the Definitive Map & Statement concerning footpath 44 at West Witney.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted.

123 **POLICE CRIME COMMISSIONER - NEWSLETTER**

The Council received notice of the Police & Crime Commissioner's December newsletter.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted.

124 **QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

Members were advised the Council's Standing Orders did not dictate on whom should stand in for the Leader or Deputy Leader in their absence. Therefore, the Mayor as Chair of the Council advised questions could be directed to him and if they could not be answered on the evening by officers, he would forward them to the Leader/Deputy at the first available opportunity to reply.

There were no questions asked of the Chair.

125 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

There were no items sealed since the last meeting.

Resolved:

That the seal of the Council be affixed to any documents arising from decisions taken by this meeting of the Council.

The meeting closed at: 8.30pm

Chair

Public Document Pack Agenda Item 8a

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

Held on Tuesday, 4 March 2025

At 6.02 pm in the Virtual Meeting via MS Teams - Virtual Meeting

Present:

Councillor G Meadows (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)

Councillors:	T Ashby	G Doughty
	J Aitman	J Doughty
	S Simpson	R Smith
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
Others:	No members of the public.	

P126 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

P127 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers.

P128 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

P129 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

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

Resolved:

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

P130 APPLICATION FOR MINOR VARIATION OF PREMISES LICENCE - FLEECE & FLAGON, 47 CORN STREET, WITNEY

The Committee noted the Application for Minor Variation from Fleece & Flagon, 47 Corn Street, Witney under the Licensing Act 2003.

Given the short statutory timescale for Witney Town Council to respond, by prior agreement of West Oxfordshire District Council, documents were circulated electronically to members of this Committee.

Resolved:

That, a no objection response was forwarded to the licencing team at West Oxfordshire District Council on 21 February 2025.

P131 WITNEY SHORES GREEN - CONDITIONS 11 (LANDSCAPE ECOLOGICAL MANAGEMENT PLAN) AND 18 (BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN REQUIREMENT) - PLANNING REF: R3.0096/24

The Committee received correspondence relating to the approval of Planning Application Ref: R3.0096/24 (Landscape Ecological Management Plan) and (Biodiversity Net Gain Requirement) at the Shores Green Junction of the A40.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted

P132 WITNEY SHORES GREEN - CONDITIONS 1 AND 18 TO REFER TO REVISED BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT - PLANNING REF: R3.0135/24

The Committee received correspondence relating to the approval of Planning Application Ref: R3.0135/24, Non-material amendment of conditions 1 and 18 (Biodiversity Net Gain) at the Shores Green Junction of the A40.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted

P133 WITNEY SHORES GREEN - CONDITION 10 (LANDSCAPING SCHEME) - PLANNING REF: R3.0105/24

The Committee received correspondence relating to the approval of Planning Application Ref: R3.0105/24 (Landscaping Scheme) at the Shores Green Junction of the A40.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted

P134 DISABLED PERSONS PARKING

The Committee received and considered the proposed introduction of a disabled parking space outside of 8 & 10 Farm Mill Lane.

Members welcomed the amendments and approved of the continued re-evaluation of disabled parking spaces to ensure that all residents needs are met.

Resolved:

That, a response be submitted to Oxfordshire County Council including the above comments.

The meeting closed at: 6.14 pm

Chair

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

Held on Tuesday, 25 March 2025

At 6.00 pm in the Virtual Meeting via MS Teams - Virtual Meeting

Present:

Councillor G Meadows (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)

Councillors:	A Bailey	G Doughty
	T Ashby	J Doughty
	J Aitman	R Smith
	S Simpson	
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Cara Murray	Admin Support Assistant - Communities & Planning
Others:	None.	

P174 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies of absence.

The Chair, Cllr A Bailey had advised he would have connectivity issues so relinquished the Chairship to the Vice-Chair, Cllr G Meadows ahead of the meeting.

P175 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr R Smith and Cllr T Ashby declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in application 25/00322/LBC as the applicant was known to them.

P176 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

P177 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

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

Resolved:

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

P178 **NOTIFICATION OF PLANNING APPEAL DECISION - 65 WINFIELD DRIVE, OX29 7AU - APP/D3125/D/24/3355711**

The Committee received and considered correspondence concerning the appeal decision APP/D3125/D/24/3355711 for 65 Winfield Drive, Witney.

Resolved:

That, the appeal decision be noted.

P179 **COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) DRAFT CHARGING SCHEDULE**

The Committee received correspondence regarding the West Oxfordshire District Council Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) draft charging schedule.

A Member advised this update was referring to the feasibility of developer contributions and what rates should be set to ensure developments took place, but that the community received adequate funds for infrastructure.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted.

The meeting closed at: 6.37 pm

Chair

Flood Risk, Drainage & Water Environment

There are concerns regarding the adequacy of the current drainage systems and the potential impact of the development on these systems. Specifically, Members have raised the issue of increased surface water runoff and the risk of exacerbating drainage problems on Dry Lane, Crawley and Bridget Street, Witney. It is imperative that a detailed drainage strategy is provided to demonstrate that the development will not negatively impact local infrastructure or increase flooding risks in the surrounding area. Standing water and flooding have been highlighted as significant concerns. Members request that the development plan thoroughly addresses how water runoff will be managed and that measures to prevent further standing water issues, which could worsen flooding in the area, are included. A comprehensive assessment of the potential flood risk, including an updated flood risk report, should be provided as part of the EIA.

Ground Conditions and Contamination

Members have expressed concerns regarding the potential for contamination, particularly following flooding events. Given the site's history and vulnerability to flooding, there is a need to assess how floodwaters might interact with the land and any associated contamination risks. A detailed flood risk assessment, including modelling and an environmental impact study, should be undertaken to evaluate this risk fully.

Additionally, there are concerns about the land's quality due to its previous agricultural use. The site has historically been used for agricultural purposes, which may have led to contamination from the use of pesticides, fertilizers, chemicals, and other industrial activities. Members are particularly concerned about the potential for soil contamination and its impact on the health and safety of future occupants. A comprehensive land quality survey should be conducted to assess any contamination, and if identified, appropriate remediation measures should be proposed.

Built Heritage and Archaeology

The Council acknowledges that the development site includes a historic barn. Therefore, scoping should be undertaken to assess and address the potential impacts of the proposed development on this important historical and cultural asset.

Socio Economics

Given the prospect of imminent local government devolution, this should be considered as part of any parish boundary changes that may result from an accompanying community governance review. The socio-economic impact of the development, including its potential effects on local health, quality of life, social cohesion, and well-being, should be assessed. In addition, the impact on access to essential services such as healthcare, education, and housing should be examined, with an evaluation of whether existing infrastructure and services can accommodate the anticipated demand.

In light of the concerns raised, Members strongly request that the applicant undertakes a comprehensive investigation into these matters as part of the EIA, with full consideration of the potential impacts on both land quality and local infrastructure. It is vital that these investigations are conducted in line with current environmental and planning policies to ensure a safe, sustainable, and well-planned development.

177- 9	WTC/038/25	Plot Ref :-25/00663/HHD	Type :-	HOUSEHOLDE
	Applicant Name :-		Date Received :-	20/03/2025
	Location :-	30 SCHOFIELD AVENUE SCHOFIELD AVENUE	Date Returned :-	26/03/2025
	Proposal :	Demolition of existing conservatory and construction of new single storey rear extension.		

Observations : Witney Town Council does not object to this application; however, Members note the increased footprint and would ask that mitigating measures are considered to help decrease the possibility of surface water flooding, in accordance with policy EH7 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.

The Meeting closed at : 6:37pm

Signed : _____ Chairman Date: _____

On behalf of :- Witney Town Council

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

Held on Monday, 10 March 2025

At 6.02 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor D Newcombe (Chair)

Councillors:	R Smith	J Doughty (In place of T Ashby)
	R Crouch	G Meadows (In place of O Collins)
	J Aitman	G Doughty (In place of J Treloar)
	S Simpson	
Officers:	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Mark Lewis	Head of Estates & Operations
Others:	No members of the public.	

PR135 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Treloar, O Collins & T Ashby, Councillors G Doughty, G Meadows & J Doughty attended respectively as substitutes.

PR136 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or officers.

PR137 MINUTES

The minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 13 January 2025 were received.

P23 – Members heard that the Chair of the Traffic Advisory Committee, Cllr A Coles had made representations to Oxfordshire County Council with respect to the Traffic Regulation Order for The Leys. Officers would report back on progress.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 13 January 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

PR138 PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

There was no public participation.

PR139 FINANCE REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) detailing income and expenditure for budgets which were the responsibility of the committee.

A Member expressed their appreciation for the report and how they were pleased to see all finances on track.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the management accounts of the Parks & Recreation Committee for the period up to 31 January 2025 be approved.

PR140 MAJOR PROJECTS UPDATE

The Committee received and considered the report of the Project Officer providing an update on the Council's Major Projects. The Head of Estates & Operations (HE&O) also provided a verbal update and response to Members' questions.

The Leys Community Hub

The Committee were pleased to hear of the completion of ground works and that the structure build was under way. Members also welcomed the additional confidential progress report from Courtside which they found informative.

Although initially disappointed to hear of the complaints regarding the height of the main building from residents of Fernleigh, Members were reassured by the confidential update from Courtside that contact had been made, and further updates would be provided to all Fernleigh residents in the preceding months.

Ralegh Crescent – Sports & Social Park

The Committee heard that the Project Officer and HE&O were due to meet with West Oxfordshire District Council later that week and final agreement was to be reached, and the tender published.

In response to a question from a Member, the HE&O acknowledged that at the same meeting the lack of working play equipment in the playpark would also be discussed. The Park would also be included in the playpark review that was currently being carried out by Officers to assess if further work was required.

Splashpad

Members were very pleased to hear that the work to rejuvenate the splashpad would commence in the week commencing 17 March with an anticipated completion date at the end of May ahead of the summer season.

Portaloo's at West Witney Sports & Social Club (WWS&SC)

The Committee considered points raised in the report and agreed that both Portaloo should be locked and that Officers should continue to work with Park Run and WWS&SC to try and find a

resolution until the completion of the refurbishment of the Social Club and replacement facilities were completed.

Members heard that the new changing room and toilet facilities would be under the control of the Town Council and this would make it easier for access to be granted to users of the recreational area.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Portaloo's at West Witney remain locked and,
3. That, Officers continue to assist Park Run in finding a workable solution for toilet provision.

PR141 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:

That in accordance with section (1(2) of the Public Bodies (admission 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.

PR142 PROPERTY MATTERS

The Committee received and considered the report of the Head of Estates & Operations regarding the progress of the lease arrangements for Witney Swifts Cricket Club.

Members heard that the Council and Witney Swifts had some differences regarding conditions to be included in the lease and that Officers were concerned about the impact on other sports user who utilised the West Witney Sports Ground.

The HE&O expressed his concerns that should the conditions within the lease not be followed it would create a risk to sports ground users both in respect of safety concerns and the protection of grounds maintenance. Members agreed that the Council needed to retain control of their facility and that the needs of Witney Swifts should not supersede those of other users.

Members considered the request from Witney Swifts to make use of the grounds for training at no cost, Members were aware of sessions which had taken place before; one of the purposes of any such fee being charged would be to compensate the Council for this additional impact. However, there would need to be a level of respect and honesty from all users, including football teams, for the additional use of the sports fields outside of booked arrangements for game days.

The Committee were unanimous in agreement with the draft lease, specifically point 1.2 which would address the season dates and specific conditions by which Witney Swifts would be required to adhere to should the season extend beyond those dates.

Additionally, The Committee received and considered the confidential report of the Town Clerk/CEO concerning the reformation of Witney Town Football Club and a mutually beneficial strategic partnership with Witney Town Council for the benefit of Witney and its residents.

Members were pleased to see the reformation had been successful, with the Club at the top of their league. Their community work and aspirations were to be commended, particularly

regarding health and wellbeing and should be supported. The benefits of a strategic partnership as set out in their business plan were clear, but due diligence was required to ensure the Council did not overcommit operationally at this stage without further financial analysis.

Recommended:

1. That, the confidential reports be noted and,
2. That, Officers proceed with the lease discussions with Witney Swifts CC and,
3. That, cricket training fees are not waived and
4. That, Witney Town FC be endorsed as a community partner of Witney Town Council, recognising its significant contribution to local sporting and community development and,
5. That, Witney Town FC be permitted to use the Corn Exchange to advertise published material, ensuring broader community engagement and accessibility and,
6. That, financial, operational and community benefits of a more extensive strategic partnership between Witney Town FC and Witney Town Council be undertaken and presented at a future meeting of the Council.

The meeting closed at: 7.24 pm

Chair

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

Held on Monday, 17 March 2025

At 6.02 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor R Crouch (Chair)

Councillors:	D Enright	R Smith
	D Edwards-Hughes	O Collins
	J Robertshaw	
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Zoe Henstridge	Administrative Support - Halls & Green Spaces
	Mark Lewis	Head of Estates & Operations
	Angus Whitburn	Operations Manager
Others:	Four members of the public.	

H143 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor J Aitman.

H144 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers.

H145 MINUTES

The minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 21 January 2025 were received.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 21 January 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meetings and be signed by the Chair.

H146 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Committee adjourned for this item.

The committee received representations from four members of the Witney Allotment Association who thanked the Council for their assistance with their recent Annual General Meeting.

The Committee reconvened.

All Members of the public left the meeting at 6:05pm.

H147 FINANCE REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) detailing income and expenditure for budgets which were the responsibility of the committee.

The RFO provided clarification to questions submitted before the meeting by a Member which related to cemetery income, target setting, and the application of staff costs. The Member thanked the RFO for the comprehensive responses.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the management accounts of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee for the period up to 31 January 2025 be approved.

H148 PUBLIC HALLS REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Venue & Events Officer.

Members were supportive of a Thames Valley Air Ambulance clothing bank being placed adjacent to Burwell Hall due to the mitigations in place by the charity. As the clothes were to be sold on, it was requested communications be conveyed that only clothing with future use should be deposited.

The Committee also welcomed updates on a local film screening, Gallery Room conferencing equipment, installation of an internal notice board, and flag poles. With the latter, a question was raised by a Member to see if they could fly twinned town flags during the anniversary weekend in May.

Finally, a Member asked if seat sponsorship in the Corn Exchange Main Hall could be re-tasked to officers per a previous resolution on the project.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, permission be granted to Thames Valley Air Ambulance Charity to locate a clothing bank adjacent to Burwell Hall.
3. That, seat sponsorship in the Main Hall of the Corn Exchange be re-explored by officers.

H149 CORN EXCHANGE BUSINESS REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Venue & Events Officer which outlined the recent events and hirings at the Corn Exchange.

Members were pleased to see a wider variety of successful events and associated ticket sales, including a decade's disco but asked if the hall capacity could be added to future reports for reference.

The Committee also considered the request to permit essential companion tickets and agreed a policy would bring the Corn Exchange in line with similar venues. The policy would be for town council run events and could provide a certain number, for example four or five. It would be difficult to insist hirers of the hall must do the same, but it should be included in the terms and conditions that Witney Town Council operates this policy and encourages event promoters to offer the same.

In addition, the report advised smoke/haze effected were being explored and a Member requested whether the Council could offer an O.A.P discount as well as the companion tickets, although understood this may result in the viability of events.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, maximum capacity is included with target attendance in future reports and,
3. That, an essential companion tickets policy be approved for town council run events in the Corn Exchange and;
4. That, an amendment be added to the terms and conditions for third party event hire in the Corn Exchange encouraging promoters to also offer essential companion tickets.

Cllr Edwards-Hughes left the meeting briefly during the following item between 6:40 and 6:42pm

H150 PUBLIC HALLS BUSINESS PLAN REVIEW

The Committee received and considered the updated Business Plan action plan provided by the Venue & Events Officer.

Members welcomed the updates to the action plan for the year which helped track progress and demonstrate this to others. They noted it was a live document and provided a moment in time for public hall improvements.

Resolved:

That, the updated action plan be noted.

H151 CEMETERY & BURIAL REGULATIONS REVIEW

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations Manager, with accompanying review of cemetery and burial regulations.

Members welcomed the review which would ensure compliance with legislation and offer clear guidance for residents and funeral directors on what was permissible. Key changes were highlighted by officers in the report and once agreed by the Council, they would be communicated to customers.

The Committee also noted officers had consulted the Friends of the Cemeteries forum on their thoughts which had been favourable to the changes.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,

2. That, the reviewed cemetery regulations be recommended for approval and;
3. That, delegation be provided to officers to complete any formatting changes before being published.

Cllr O Collins left the meeting briefly between 6:51 and 6:53pm

H152 CLOSED CHURCHYARDS UPDATE

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations Manager.

Members discussed the re-wilding areas at both Holy Trinity and St Mary's churchyards, noting the success of the former. With St. Mary's there was acknowledgement that this wildflower area had not been as successful; this was alongside a key right of Way and entrance to Witney Town centre and it would be more welcoming if the area was better kempt.

It was agreed officers should meet with the Churches eco group to discuss future options and a costed strategy based on the requirements to be an eco-churchyard while considering the cost to the Council for continuing maintenance.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, officers meet with the churches eco group to discuss re-wilding options for St Mary's churchyard.

H153 FRIENDS OF THE CEMETERIES

The Committee received the notes of the Friends of the Cemeteries meeting held on 5 March 2025.

Members welcomed the notes which showed a positive and productive meeting regarding a range of issues and projects in the cemeteries. They were particularly pleased to see funeral directors would be invited to future meetings.

Resolved:

That, the minutes be noted.

H154 ALLOTMENT SITE PROVISION

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning the provision of allotment sites.

Members were informed that this item had been included following a request from a member of the public to assess whether the Council's allotment provision was sufficient. The waiting list for allotments in Witney was notably high, and while there was no legislation specifying the required number of allotment plots an authority must provide, it was noted that there were varying figures, including best practice to mark them against. Based on the figures provided, the Council's current provision exceeded them in some areas but fell short in others, especially when calculated as full plot equivalents.

The Committee determined that its current strategy of waiting for land to be allocated or requested from large developments was appropriate, given the limited availability of affordable land within the parish and its surrounding areas. However, it acknowledged the need to adopt a more proactive approach in ensuring that the Witney Allotment Association (WAA) was effectively managing the existing plots and to stay vigilant for any new land opportunities which may arise.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the current Council strategy of obtaining allotment land from larger developments be continued and;
3. That, the Council should be vigilant to any suitable and affordable land opportunities and;
4. That, the town council requests the Witney Allotment Association updates their waiting list and takes action to free up unkempt or unused allotment sites. Following this it would be able to assess provision with more accurate figures.

H155 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:

That in accordance with section (1(2) of the Public Bodies (admission 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.

H156 WITNEY ALLOTMENT ASSOCIATION

The Committee received a verbal update from the Chair and Leader of the Council following the Witney Allotment Association (WAA) Annual General Meeting held on 16 March 2025.

Members were advised the WAA had agreed to retain an over-arching Committee with a joint treasurer and waiting list co-ordinator with two separate sub-committees. These would be named North and South; South would contain Lakeside and North would contain the current remaining allotment sites with each of these having their own Chair and Secretary. The main Committee would meet twice a year.

The Committee were hopeful this would resolve any administrative issues within the organisation and thanked Councillors and officers for their input. The WAA resolution re-affirmed the decision of the Council taken on 25 November 2024.

Recommended:

1. That, the verbal update be noted
2. That, the recommendations of the Witney Allotment Association, as set out by this committee on 25 November 2024 be re-affirmed, thereby creating North and South sub-committees.

The meeting closed at: 7.35 pm

Chair

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

Held on Monday, 24 March 2025

At 6.02 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor R Smith (Chair)

Councillors:	G Meadows	S Simpson
	O Collins	J Aitman
	T Ashby	J Doughty (In place of D Temple)
	A Bailey	
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
Others:	Two members of the public.	

SC157 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor D Temple with Cllr J Doughty attending as substitute.

SC158 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor R Smith declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 8 as she was a member of the church which provided the Detached Youth Service.

During the discussion of Agenda Item 8, 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.

SC159 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Stronger Communities Committee held on 27 January 2025 were received.

There were no matters arising from the minutes which were not covered in items on the agenda.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee held 27 January 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the chair.

SC160 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Committee adjourned for this item.

The committee received representations from The Station Detached Youth concerning Agenda Item 8. Representatives provided a report outlining the work of the group, funded by the Town Council, during the last year and answered questions from Members.

The Committee reconvened.

SC161 **YOUTH SERVICES**

With the permission of the Chair, the Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk next in the meeting concerning the provision of youth services by the town council.

As members of The Station were in attendance, Members thanked them for the service provided during the last year. The figures provided in their report were very helpful and were testament to why it was required. The Council had committed to funding for a second year which was less than previously anticipated, however The Station would need to forward a 3-5 year plan to a future meeting to agree further funding beyond 2025-26.

Members also discussed the re-establishment of the Youth Services Grant which had last run in 2022 and agreed amendments to the criteria for awarding. These included some minor word changes, removal of Covid-19 references, and bringing the time frame forward in the new fiscal year.

The Committee also considered correspondence from APCAM who were offering mental health drop-in sessions at the Corn Exchange during the school holidays. Members were favourable to what was proposed, funded from an underspend in other grant budgets in 2024-25.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and;
2. That, Council considers future funding for The Station on submission of a 3-5 year plan during 2025 and;
3. That, the Youth Services Grant opens for applications between April and June 2025 based on the agreed updated criteria and;
4. That, the Committee recommends that underspends in the discretionary grants budget fund APCAM drop-in sessions and;
5. That, these funds be granted under the General Power of Competence.

Cllr G Meadows left the meeting briefly during the following item, between 6.45 – 6.50pm

SC162 **QUEEN EMMA'S DYKE COMMUNITY GARDEN**

With the permission of the Chair, the Committee received and considered the report of the Operations Manager next in the meeting concerning a request to create a community garden at Queen Emma's Dyke amenity spaces.

A Member provided a verbal update on the request and advised a change of location to the one in the agenda pack which was less open to the general public. The suggestion was to install three raised beds, built by the Witney Shed, which the group would maintain themselves. The group requesting the garden had already spoken to neighbours who had no objections.

It was agreed no trees would be allowed and they would likely qualify for a community gardening voucher once installed. Therefore, the Committee welcomed and approved the request but there would need to be an agreement advising it would be cleared if the garden went into disrepair and that no tree planting was permitted.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and;
2. That, the request for a community garden at Queen Emma's Dyke be approved and;
3. That, the design of planters, detailing materials used in construction be subject to officer approval and;
4. That, the final location and number of planters be delegated to the Operations Manager and;
5. That, a basic agreement be provided outlining the above conditions.

Cllr R Crouch left the meeting at 6.53pm

Cllr A Bailey left the meeting briefly during the following item between 6.56 – 6.59pm

SC163 YOUTH COUNCIL MINUTES

With the permission of the Chair, the Committee received the minutes of the Youth Council meeting held on 10 March 2025 next in the meeting.

Members were pleased the group had become established, but agreed it needed to facilitate a successful event or project soon and that further training and confidence building was required.

With regard to events, it was suggested a cultural festival across Witney encompassing smaller events would be more achievable than a large stand-alone event at The Leys. This could mean potential free use of the Corn Exchange and or other venues, including Witney Carnival.

Resolved:

1. That, the minutes of the Youth Council meeting held on 10 March 2025 be noted and;
2. That, free use/subsidised hire of the Corn Exchange and attendance at the Carnival be considered as means to hold a cultural festival.

SC164 FINANCE REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) detailing income and expenditure for budgets which were the responsibility of the Committee.

Members welcomed the report and noted spending was within parameters and straight forward at this point in the year.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and;
2. That, the management accounts of the Stronger Communities Committee for the period up to 31 January 2025 be approved.

SC165 COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

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

Members received an update on the delivery of the Council's annual newsletter and were disappointed to learn there had been issues with delivery which could warrant a partial refund request. They were pleased to hear of a contrast checker to ensure WCAG AAA compliance on publications, on collaboration with the Witney Chamber of Commerce, and that a new corporate Social Media Policy was being prepared.

The Committee also viewed a Welcome to Witney guide document and asked if walks and/or trails could be included in the final document.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and;
2. That, officers consider the inclusion of trails and/or walks in the Welcome to Witney Guide.

SC166 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

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

Members were provided with updates on Great Big Green Week, the resident's satisfaction survey and Witney Carnival, the latter for which they were asked to consider a musical theme for this year's float entry.

The Committee was also provided with details of a Twinning Anniversary reception at the Corn Exchange on 2 May 2025 and were asked to consider who should be able to utilise the Gallery Room at the Corn Exchange for the Christmas Lights Switch-on event. Members agreed there was a need to allow as many residents as possible the opportunity and felt the Youth Council were excellent hosts in 2024.

Members also discussed further proposals from APCAM to hold WeGame sessions for young people in the Corn Exchange during the summer. There was no budget for this or any VR/Arcade day this year but there was an underspend in the £50 for fifty grants budget which could be carried forward to fund this opportunity which all agreed should not be missed.

Finally, the Committee agreed the Inclusivity and Diversity panel should be reformed under a temporary new name, and that the Council should enter Witney Lake & Country Park into the 2025 Thames & Chilterns In Bloom competition. A range of enhancements had taken place there in the last year and all of the suggested engagement ideas were worthy of taking forward.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and;
2. That, APCAM WeGame sessions should be held during the summer in the Corn Exchange, funded from an underspend in the £50 for fifty grants fund and;
3. That, these funds be granted under the General Power of Competence and;
4. That, a musical theme for this year's Carnival be agreed by Councillors ahead of Full Council on 14th April and;

5. That, Friday 28th November be noted as the Christmas Lights Switch-on date and;
6. That, officers contact care facilities to gauge interest in the use of the Gallery Room for the Christmas Lights Switch-on event before a decision on who to provide use to is considered and;
7. That, Big Green Week be marked by a book swap in the 1863 Café and publication of recipes for leftover food, these could include cultural recipes in conjunction with the Youth Council's cultural festival and;
8. That, the inclusivity and diversity panel be temporarily branded with the name Community Voices Forum and relaunched and;
9. That, the Council enters Witney Lake & Country Park into the Thames & Chilterns In Bloom competition for 2025 and;
10. That, the updates from the VE&VJ Day 80th Anniversary task and finish group and Witney Forum be noted.

SC167 VE & VJ DAY 80TH ANNIVERSARY TASK & FINISH GROUP NOTES

The Committee received the notes of the VE & VJ Day 80th Anniversary task and finish group meeting held on 13 March 2025.

Members were pleased plans had progressed and to hear the local BBC news team would be attending during the day. It promised to be another successful community event for the town.

Resolved:

1. That, the minutes of the VE & VJ Day 80th Anniversary Task and Finish Group meeting held on 13 March 2025 be noted.

SC168 WITNEY FORUM MINUTES

The Committee received the notes of the Witney Forum meeting held on 28 January 2025.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Witney Forum meeting held on 28 January be noted.

SC169 WITNEY CENTRAL COMMUNITY INSIGHT PROFILE REPORT

The Committee received notice of the Witney Central Community Insight Profile, produced by Community First Oxfordshire in association with Oxfordshire County & West Oxfordshire District Councils.

Members welcomed such a comprehensive report which clearly set out social issues, concerns and solutions in the Witney central ward. It was comforting to know The Station were already working in this area and other community initiatives were already taking place there.

The Chair asked Members to all read the document and to consider the contents in future Council discussions.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and;
2. That, the Council considers the subject matter in any future decision making.

SC170 **TOWN CENTRE ISSUES RAISED BY THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE: WAYFINDING, MAPPING, VISITORS, PUBLIC REALM AND TRAFFIC FLOWS**

The Committee received the report of the Town Clerk/C.E.O concerning items raised by Witney Chamber of Commerce during a meeting in February.

Members welcomed the collaboration with Witney Chamber of Commerce and that the majority of items were already being progressed by officers.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

SC171 **AMENITY LAND AREAS MIS-USE - INSTALLATION OF BOLLARDS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations Manager concerning misuse of amenity land in Manor Road.

Members were disappointed amenity land was being parked on in this area and discussed various ways to prevent it. A sign would likely be ineffective, leaving the suggestion of bollards, knee rail or metal fence. Each of the latter, however, was likely to be more expensive than wooden bollards.

The Committee agreed the most cost-effective solution should be trialled in the area to see whether it was a success before agreeing to installing at other areas with similar issues in the future.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and;
2. That, preventative measures be taken at this site with the most cost-effective solution being delegated to officers and;
3. That, the installation be reviewed and that similar sites are considered on a case-by-case basis in the meantime.

SC172 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Resolved:

That in accordance with section (1(2) of the Public Bodies (admission 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.

SC173 **THIRD PARTY EVENTS - WILSONS FUNFAIR LETTING AGREEMENT**

The Deputy Town Clerk provided a confidential verbal update concerning negotiations with Wilson's Funfairs on a renewal of their letting agreement.

Members welcomed the update and were pleased negotiations were proceeding well, recommending endorsement of the proposal presented which appeared to be acceptable to both parties.

Recommended:

1. That, the confidential verbal update be noted and;
2. That, the current proposal for the letting agreement between Witney Town Council and Bob Wilson's Funfairs be recommended for approval.

The meeting closed at: 8.00 pm

Chair

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

Held on Monday, 31 March 2025

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

Present:

Councillor J Aitman (Chair)

Councillors:	R Crouch O Collins R Smith	J Doughty D Newcombe
Officers:	Derek Mackenzie Adam Clapton Sharon Groth Nigel Warner	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk Deputy Town Clerk Town Clerk Responsible Financial Officer
Others:	None.	

F180 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor A Bailey.

F181 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or officers.

F182 MINUTES

The minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 3 February 2025 were received.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 3 February 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

F183 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

F184 NALC MODEL FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

The Committee received the report of the Responsible Financial Officer along with a verbal update.

Following the 2024 review by the National Association of Local Councils which had led to comprehensive amendments, the Council received a draft of the Council's financial regulations which had been updated to reflect its activities. The RFO welcomed comments prior to consideration of the final version at a future meeting of the Committee on 9th June 2025.

Resolved

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, the Members provide any comments on the draft financial regulations to the RFO prior to adoption at the meeting on 9th June 2025.

F185 CEMETERY REGULATIONS

The Committee received and considered the revised Cemetery Regulations.

Further to the approval of the Halls, Cemeteries and Allotments Committee on 17 March 2025, Members welcomed the review which would ensure compliance with legislation and offer clear guidance for residents and funeral directors on what was permissible.

The Committee heard that they would be communicated to all user of the cemeteries, funeral directors and memorial masons with immediate effect.

Resolved:

That, the revised cemetery regulations be adopted and applied with immediate effect.

F186 RECORDING OF MEETINGS POLICY REVIEW

The Committee received an updated Protocol for Recording of Public meetings which was overdue for review.

Members heard that although the legislation had not changed, the practice of individuals being able to record a meeting had and therefore the updated protocol was welcomed and unanimously agreed for adoption.

Resolved:

That, the updated Protocol for Recording at Public Meetings be adopted by Witney Town Council.

F187 PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Committee received the report of the Responsible Financial Officer with the accompanying payment schedules, bank statements and reconciliations.

In response to a Member's question, the RFO confirmed that the number of cheques now being issued had decreased as Officers phased in the use of electronic transfers and would continue to do so. This provided both a financial saving from reduced postage and also in Officers processing time.

Resolved:

That, the report, bank statements and reconciliations be noted, and the following schedule of payments be approved:

Payment reference/ Cheque Numbers	In the sum of:	Account
DDs, EPs (electronic payment) and Standing Orders December 2024	£43,716.91	General CB 1
Cheques 35043-35096; DDs, BACs and Standing Orders December 2024	£164,303.00	Imprest CB 2
Cheques 101272-101276, DDs, EPs and Standing Orders January 2025	£199,871.50	General CB 1
Cheques 35096-35115, various cancelled cheques, DDs and Standing Orders January 2025	£21,462.62	Imprest CB 2

F188 INTERNAL AUDIT

The Committee received and considered the interim update report of the Internal Auditor, Auditing Solutions for 2024/25 along with the January 2025 stocktake for liquor conducted by the Council's independent stock checker.

Members welcomed the report which provided reassurance as it highlighted no areas of concern.

It was also acknowledged by Members that the January 2025 stocktake showed improvements to the running costs for the Corn Exchange.

The Committee then considered the appointment of Auditing Solutions for an additional year. The RFO reiterated the recommendation in his report that a full review of providers would be carried out in March 2026 ahead of the 2026/27 audit appointment.

Resolved:

1. That, the Interim Audit Report 2024/25 from the Council's internal auditors be noted and,
2. That, the external stocktake report for January 2025 be noted and,
3. That, the appointment of Internal Auditor report be noted and,
4. That, Auditing Solutions are appointed as the Councils Internal Auditor for 2025-26 and,
5. That the appointment of Internal Auditor for 2026-27 be reviewed in March 2026 and,
6. That the Council review its internal audit service provision in 2026 ahead of the procurement of the internal audit service for 2027-28.

F189 EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL CONTROL: CORPORATE & FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer and provided a verbal update to explain the need for a robust corporate risk assessment to be in place.

The RFO answered questions from a Member concerning the assessment of the risks included in the documents as well as the structuring of action plans to deal with issues that arose. He advised that the responsibility sat with the RFO who in conjunction with Line Managers, worked to ensure that identified issues were actioned swiftly.

An error was noted in the Banking and Investments sheet, point 3 should show as a rating of 2 rather than 4.

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted and,
2. That, the Risk Management Policy & Corporate Risk Assessment for the financial year 2024-25 be endorsed and signed by the Chair.

F190 FINANCE REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) detailing income and expenditure for budgets which were the responsibility of the committee.

Members heard that although the accounts presented were to the 31 January, that with it being the last day of the financial year, the RFO did not expect any major changes to the revised 2024/25 budget projections.

The RFO provided a verbal update on the Council's insurance premium which had been renewed in the last year of a fixed agreement. In particular, officers had undertaken a review of motor insurance policy prices to ensure due diligence with regard to best value.

A Member raised a question as to the columns used in the reports that were provided, the RFO explained that after the budget setting period in December of each year the report columns did change however, he would review and consider how they are provided in the future.

The Committee were pleased to see good returns of interest, however it was explained that this was partly due to the capital sums for projects had been held longer than projected.

Members considered the continued membership of the Co-Operative Councils Innovation Network (CCIN); it was felt that it was a small membership fee for the potential opportunity of use for future grant funding. It was unanimously agreed that membership should continue for 2025/26.

The report also provided an update on the Witney Music Festival and their governance which had been discussed at previous meetings,

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,

2. That, the management accounts of the Committee's services to 31 January 2025 be approved and,
3. That, the investments report to the period of 28 February 2025 be approved and,
4. That, the Council continue its membership of CCIN for a further year.

F191 FINANCIAL MATTERS REFERRED FROM SPENDING COMMITTEES

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk. Members noted the financial implications from decisions taken by the Council's standing Committees during the last meetings cycle.

Resolved:

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, recommendations of the spending Committees as detailed be approved.

F192 GRANTS & SUBSIDISED LETTINGS

The Committee received the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) concerning grant activity to local organisations.

Members received a verbal update from the Deputy Town Clerk following the meeting held with Witney Dramatic Society (WDS) regarding their request for grant funding for replacement lighting. Both the District Councils West Hive scheme and Witney Town Charity were suggested as additional sources of funding that WDS may wish to explore. The Committee unanimously agreed a grant of £1,500 to kickstart their fundraising with a potential additional £500 if required to help them meet their goal. WDS should also be invited to apply for a subsidised let of the Corn Exchange for their 80th anniversary performance.

The Committee then discussed the ongoing issue of toilet provision at West Witney Sports & Social Club (WWSCC) for Witney Park Run, who were the only sport club user who have expressed an issue with the lack of provision. Members were all in an agreement with the award of a grant to fund the opening of the club for six months to support the free community event each week.

Subsidised lettings of The Leys Recreation ground were discussed and agreed by all Members for Witney Carnival, Witney Pride, Witney Music Festival; it was additionally agreed that as the budget line would be exhausted that £320 be vired from the discretionary grant budget underspend for 2024/25.

It was unanimously agreed by Members to support the recommendation of the Stronger Communities Committee that of the £1,300 underspend in the £50 for fifty grant scheme £1,000 be vired to support the WeGame sessions provided by APCAM and for the remaining £300 to be vired to support the expanding programme of VE Day 80th Anniversary Celebrations.

Members discussed the use of the remaining discretionary grants budget and again supported the recommendation of the Stronger Communities Committee to provide £2,600 to APCAM to provide mental health drop-in session in the Corn Exchange from the discretionary grants underspend for 2024/25.

The Committee reviewed the request from Witney Town Band for a grant to support its annual activities and a potential subsidised let later in the year; it was agreed that the band was an asset to the town and that their requests should be supported.

The request from Witney Youth Council to host a cultural event in the Corn Exchange was also supported and the Committee was unanimous in support of the subsidised use of the hall so this can take place.

Lastly, the Town Clerk/CEO provided a verbal update confirming the award to the Council of £5,000 from Cllr Enright's (OCC) Councillor priority funding to be used towards interpretation panels in the towns playgrounds and also to provide a bleed kit.

Resolved:

1. That, the report and verbal updates be noted and,
2. That, Witney Dramatic Society be invited to apply for a subsidised let of the Corn Exchange for their anniversary performance and,
3. That, a grant of £1,500 be awarded to Witney Dramatic Society with an additional £500 held in reserve and,
4. That, a grant of £1,040 be made available for the use of toilets at West Witney by Witney Parkrun and,
5. That, subsidised lettings of The Leys for Witney Pride (£730), Witney Carnival (£1,810) and Witney Music Festival (£3,280) be agreed and,
6. That, the additional £320 to fund the Leys recreation ground subsidised letting requests be vired from the discretionary grants budget (4100/407) and,
7. That, subsidised lettings of the Corn Exchange for Witney Town Band (£205) and Witney Youth Council (£205) be agreed and,
8. That, the annual grant of £660 be agreed for Witney Town Band and,
9. That, £1,000 of the underspend from the £50 for fifty grant scheme be utilised to provide the APCAM WeGame sessions in the 2025/26 financial year and,
10. That, £2,600 be provided from the discretionary grants budget to APCAM for the provision of drop-in sessions in the 2025/26 financial year and,
11. That, the remaining £300 from the £50 for fifty grant scheme be allocated to the VE Day 80th Anniversary celebrations and,
12. That, the above grants be provided under the General Power of Competence and recipients be asked to acknowledge the Town Council in any promotional material.

F193 WEST WITNEY PROJECT FUNDING

The Committee received the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) along with a verbal explanation in relation to the financial funding and project timetable of the West Witney Sports & Social Club redevelopment and new Works Depot.

Members heard the reasoning for the loan was to facilitate the works and how it would be structured to ensure that the burden is borne by future users of the facilities as well as current users as this was the prudent and proper way for the Council to act.

The Committee welcomed the period of consultation which was timetabled to take place in May and for its design and delivery to be delegated to the Town Clerk/CEO. They also welcomed that the outline consideration of the loan application be discussed at the 9th June meeting of the

Committee ahead of its submission. Members were unanimous in agreement of both these decisions and asked officers to consider communications as early as possible.

In response to a Members question regarding rising costs and if the cost should exceed the projections made. The RFO confirmed that although Value Engineering could be utilised it would be possible for the Council to discuss an increase to the loan amount, though this would hopefully not be necessary as Officers would strive to work to remain within the budget.

The RFO further confirmed that despite rising interest rates the projected interest payments that were budgeted for in the setting of the 2025/26 budget were still within the expected range.

Resolved:

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, the West Witney project timetable be approved and,
3. That, the design and delivery of the consultation be delegated to the Town Clerk/CEO.

F194 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved:

That in accordance with section (1(2) of the Public Bodies (admission 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.

F195 PROPERTY, LEGAL & INSURANCE MATTERS

The Committee received the confidential report of the Town Clerk/CEO which included updates on St Marys' Church Carillion, lease agreement with Bob Wilson Funfairs and progress of the Windrush Place Pavillion.

Members received and considered the report of the Diocese clock advisor and in respect of the St Marys' Church Carillion Members were in in favour of preserving the heritage of the church and its clock assets. The Town Clerk/CEO advised that funds had been set allocated in the 2025/26 budget to be used for any necessary repairs that were identified in the report of the clock custodians.

The Committee received and considered the recommendation of the Stronger Communities Committee in respect of a lease Agreement with Bob Wilson Funfairs. Members were unanimous in support of the current proposal.

Members heard from the Town Clerk/CEO on the progression of the Pavillion and it was agreed by Members that a Pavillion Task & Finish group be established so that this could be focused on bringing about the best resolution for the Council and community. It was agreed unanimously that the group be made up of Cllrs Crouch, Smith and Newcombe and that the Town Clerk/CEO circulate details collated so far to the group.

Lastly, the Deputy Town Clerk advised the Committee of a potential copyright issue which was being explored further by Officers, it was agreed that Officers speak with the National Association of Local Councils to gain their views.

Resolved:

1. That, the report and verbal update noted and,
2. That, a "Pavilion Task & Finish Group" be established and the membership be made up of Cllrs, Crouch, Smith & Newcombe and,
3. That, Officers contact NALC in relation to the copyright issue.

F196 STAFFING MATTERS

The Committee received the minutes of the Personnel Sub Committee meeting held on 13 February and 20 March 2025.

Resolved:

That, the confidential minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting held on 13 February and 20 March 2025, and the recommendations contained therein be approved.

The meeting closed at: 7.44 pm

Chair

FULL COUNCIL



Agenda Item: Civic Announcements

Meeting Date: Monday 14 April 2025

Contact Officer: Secretary to the Mayor

The role of Mayor involves chairing the Town Council, sitting as an ex officio voting member on Council Committees, representing and promoting Witney, organising 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 which detailing the activities of the Mayor since the last meeting of the Council.

Supporting the Community

Covid Day of Reflection video recorded at Covid Memorial

Blessing of Covid Memorial with Rev Dr Hester Jones

Bellringing with Witney Bell Ringers

Opening Hotters Shoes – Marriott's Walk Witney

Friday prayers at Elsharkawy Islamic Centre – Mayor and Deputy Mayor

Friday prayers at Witney Methodist Church – Mayor & Deputy Mayor attended separate Fridays

Witney Town Band AGM

Eid Celebration in Corn Exchange – Hosted by the Mayor

Representing and Promoting Witney

Oxfordshire Scout and Guide Show – Abingdon

Launch of Oxfordshire's affiliation with HMS Diamond & the re-signing of the Armed Forces Covenant at Blenheim Palace – attended by Mayor and Deputy Mayor

Lord Mayor of Oxford Charity Quiz – Town Hall Oxford

Banbury Town Mayor Civic Supper – Banbury Town Hall – attended by Deputy Mayor

Iftar - themed interfaith evening of 'Voices in Unity' Oxford Academy – attended by Mayor and Deputy Mayor

Thame Town Mayor's Charity Ball – attended by Deputy Mayor

Key Events and Council Activity

Witney Town Council and Windrush Radio Decades Disco – Corn Exchange

Meeting Mayor's Chaplain – Rev Dr Hester Jones

Annual Town Meeting – attended by Mayor and Deputy Mayor

Commonwealth Day Flag Raising

Civic Reception and Citizen of the Year – attended by Mayor and Deputy Mayor

The Wedding Singer opening night – Corn Exchange

Raising Funds -Mayor's Charities 2024-25:

Every Brilliant Thing play at Corn Exchange – proceeds for Mayor's charities

APCAM

Yellow Submarine

ABandOfBrothers

Any hospitality totalling £50 or more afforded to the Mayor whilst undertaking any event as Civic Leader of Witney Town Council will be declared as hospitality in line with the Councillor Code of Conduct & Localism Act 2011. The acceptance of any hospitality does not afford the provider any undue influence or favour in any Town Council business.

Vandalism

18/02/25 and 14/04/2025

Date	Item/Location	Date/Time/Who Reported	Cost if known	Action	Police Reference
10/03/2025	Superglue in Locks – Mill Meadow	B&GSO	£100+	Third time in 3 weeks – a recurrence of the same activity at this time last year.	43250117980
28/02/2025	Anti-Semitic Graffiti – Skatepark – On Temporary Board	Project Officer	N/A	Ops Team covered board, and this has now been resprayed by the Oxford Graffiti Crew	43250136564
24/03/2025	Skatepark users accessing Courtside Construction Site	Courtside Developer	N/A	Access made by climbing fence and attacking cameras – 5 Occurrences in 1 evening.	CS reported that TVP attended
24/03/2025	Graffiti on “The Leys” sign by COVID Memorial	Deputy Town Clerk	N/A	Cleaned by Operations Team	INC-20250408-1089
27/03/2025	Trees damaged at rear of 227 Manor Road	B&GSO	N/A	The Cherry trees had been cut at chest height, they were established and 10 and 17 cm diameter and 100 and 130 cm from the fence. The cut material was removed by Operations Team.	None

Revision – Cost of Replacement door for the Country Park Noticeboard was £600 rather than the £300 reported on 17/02/2025

FULL COUNCIL



Agenda Item: Civility & Respect

Meeting Date: Monday, 14 April 2025

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on Civility & Respect matters.

Background

The Town Council signed the National Association of Local Council's Civility & Respect pledge in October 2022 following a resolution at Council on 10th October 2022, minute no. 529 refers.

From the National Association of Local Councils,

'Now is the time to prioritise civility and respect and start a culture change in the parish and town council sector. We are introducing the Civility and Respect Pledge because there is no place for bullying, harassment, and intimidation within our sector. The pledge is easy for councils to sign up for, enabling them to demonstrate their commitment to addressing poor behaviour across and fostering positive changes that support civil and respectful conduct.'

In signing the pledge, Witney Town Council committed to:

1. Treat all councillors, clerks and all employees, members of the public, representatives of partner organisations and volunteers with civility and respect in their role.
2. Put in place a training programme for councillors and staff.
3. Sign up to the code of conduct for Councillors.
4. Have in place good governance arrangements including staff contracts, and Dignity at Work Policy
5. Commit to seek professional help at early stages should civility and respect issues arise.
6. Commit to calling out bullying and harassment if and when it happens.
7. Continue to learn from best practice in the sector and aspire to be a role model/champion Council e.g. via the Local Council Award Scheme
8. Support the continued lobbying for the change of legislation to support the Civility & Respect Pledge including sanctions for elected members where appropriate.

Current Situation

The current status on these pledges is listed below.

1. Ongoing.

Training is provided both internally and by external organisations for Councillors, such as the Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils (OALC), NALC, and Southeast Employers. A list of current training opportunities is attached as **Appendix A**. A budget is maintained annually for professional development.

More recently, the Leader of the Council has held Councillor workshops which have included items on civility & respect and Nolan principles, covered in the adopted code of conduct.

Staff have several mandatory training modules which must be completed during induction. A budget is maintained annually for professional development.

2. Witney Town Council signed up to the Oxfordshire Code of Conduct for Councillors in 2022; this was re-adopted on 17 May 2023 following ordinary elections.
3. Witney Town Council has staff contracts and a Dignity at Work Policy (the latter currently under review as part of a wider review of staff policies).
4. Ongoing.
5. Ongoing.
6. Witney Town Council has achieved a Bronze Award in the Local Council Awards Scheme and aspires to upgrade this to Silver within the next 12 months and Gold before 2027.
7. Most recently, the Council considered the Central Government consultation on 'Strengthening the Standards and Conduct Framework for Local Authorities in England' at its last meeting.

The Town Council is well placed to fulfil its obligations under the Civility & Respect Pledge.

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 direct implications.
- b) Biodiversity – no direct implications.
- c) Crime & Disorder – no direct implications.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – no direct implications.

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.

By not adhering to the Civility & Respect pledge, the Council, Members and Officers run the risk of bringing the Council into disrepute.

Social Value

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

Financial implications

- The budget set for Councillor training in 2025/26 is £1,500
- The budget set for staff training in 2025/26 is £10,000

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and;

1. The Civility & Respect pledge undertaken by the Council with the updates provided.

Councillor Training Opportunities (April 2025)

Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils

Title	Date	Venue	Time	Cost to Council	Event Link
Finance for Councillors	30 Apr 2025	Virtual (Zoom)	10-11.30am	£35	Event Details - OALC
Roles & Responsibilities	24 Jun 2025	Benson Parish Hall	9.30-4.00pm	£115	Event Details - OALC
Essentials of Employing People	08 Oct 2025	Virtual (Zoom)	10-11.30am	£35	Event Details - OALC
Councillor Fundamentals Online	09 Oct 2025	Virtual (Zoom)	6.30-9.00pm	£65	Event Details - OALC

Further communications training opportunities can be seen here [County Association Training | Breakthrough Communications](#)

Further training opportunities will be circulated when known to officers.

LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME — BRONZE AWARD ACHIEVEMENT

April 2025

Dear Sharon

As chair of the National Association of Local Councils (NALC), it is with great pleasure that I confirm that **Witney Town Council** has achieved the Bronze Award.

Receiving the Bronze Award is an excellent achievement showing that your local (parish and town) council achieves good practices in governance, community engagement and council improvement. Furthermore, this award shows that your council has gone above and beyond the legal obligations; you lead your community and continuously seek opportunities to improve and develop even further. Therefore, the council is to be congratulated immensely.

I want to express my sincere thanks to you **Sharon Groth**, for your hard work submitting the Bronze Award application and the additional work throughout the assessment process.

My expression of thanks is also given to **Witney Town Council**. Your service to your community and supporting your Local Council Award Scheme application are recognised and reflected in your achievement.

As your council has shown its commitment to continuous improvement and development, I very much look forward to **Witney Town Council** applying for the Silver Award and celebrating more achievements.

Yours sincerely,



NALC Chair



A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Keith Stewart". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

NALC Chair

start date

valid until

The Bronze Award demonstrates that a council meets the minimum requirements for operating lawfully and according to standard practice.



Document is Restricted

From: Enquiries_THM <enquiries_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk>
Sent: 20 March 2025 14:40
Subject: THM GE38603_AK : 250109/IL04 EA Flooding Letter Witney TC

Dear Sharon,

Our reference: THM GE38603

Thank you for your letter dated 06 January 2025. Apologies for the significant delay in responding to you.

The Environment Agency has a responsibility through the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 to manage flood risk from main rivers. In Witney town centre, the River Windrush, and the lower sections of the Hailey Road Drain and the Madley Brook are all classed as main rivers. Through our duties, we also work closely with partners and other risk management authorities, including Oxfordshire County Council and West Oxfordshire District Council. This will include feeding into the Section 19 flood investigation report and fulfilling our role as statutory consultee on the new Local Plan.

In your letter, you ask for our assistance in future flood mitigation in Witney. You may already be aware that we are currently updating our flood risk model for the River Windrush through Witney which will include the Hailey Road Drain. Our contractors have recently been carrying out survey work in Witney, to acquire updated measurements for the river channel and key structures to input to the model. The survey work could not be completed due to high water levels and fast flows causing a safety risk for work in the river but we plan to return to complete the site element of the work in early May when river conditions should allow safe working.

The improved understanding from the modelling work will be key to future decisions regarding options to manage flood risk in Witney. Once the flood risk model has been updated, a high-level economic assessment will follow. This will indicate whether there is a viable flood alleviation scheme to reduce flood risk in Witney.

It is also worth noting that the Town Council are already represented on the West Oxfordshire Flood Risk Partners group/meetings, which are attended by the Environment Agency, West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council and others. Therefore, this would also be an appropriate route to raise and discuss flood management issues in Witney. The Town Council was represented by Mark Lewis at the last meeting.

Alternatively, if you have any further questions, the most appropriate contact is Evie Kingsmill, Partnerships and Strategic Overview Team Leader. Evie can be contacted at evie.kingsmill@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Yours sincerely,

Customers & Engagement Team – Thames
Environment Agency | Red Kite House, Howbery Park, Wallingford, OX10 8BD

 enquiries_THM@environment-agency.gov.uk
 External: 0203 0259 804

From: Mauz, Christian - Oxfordshire County Council <Christian.Mauz@Oxfordshire.gov.uk>

Sent: 02 April 2025 10:31

Subject: Traffic Regulation Orders Made (WC: 24/03/2025 & 31/03/2025)

Re: Formal Consultations:

- **Asthall:** Village & A40/B4047 – Various speed limits (approved at decisions meetings: [14/11/2024](#) item no.169/24 & [12/12/2024](#) item no.207/24),
- **Goring-on-Thames** – Parking restrictions (approved at decisions meeting: [20/06/2024](#) item no.62/24),
- **Cholsey** – Parking restrictions (approved at decisions meeting: [25/01/2024](#) item no.221/25),
- **Witney:** Corn Street & Church Green – Parking restrictions (approved at decisions meeting: [23/01/2025](#) item no.220/25).

Dear Consultation Respondent,

I am writing to inform you that following approval of one of the proposals you contributed to (see details above), the traffic order(s) relating to the scheme have recently been 'made' – meaning they have, or soon will become legally enforceable subject to appropriate signs & lines being in place (works may have already taken place & been finalised, or yet to be completed). Please see the attached public notice for further information, which includes definitive dates. Do let me know if you would like a copy of the legal Traffic Regulation Order that govern these (documents will also be uploaded onto the online [Lets Talk](#) early next week).

Kind Regards,

christian

(Mr) Christian Mauz

Senior Officer (TRO and Schemes)

Email: christian.mauz@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Network Management|Highways & Operations|Environment & Place
Oxfordshire County Council|County Hall|New Road|Oxford|OX1 1ND

To report a problem: **Web:** <https://fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk>

For general highway enquiries: **Tel:** 0345 310 1111

For urgent 'out of hours' highways issues: **Tel:** 01223 849731

The Forward Plan of Cabinet Member Decisions meetings can be viewed [here](#)

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**OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
(VARIOUS ROADS - WEST OXFORDSHIRE) (PROHIBITION AND
RESTRICTION OF WAITING AND PERMITTED PARKING)
(VARIATION No.35) ORDER 2025**

NOTICE is given that on 31 March 2025 Oxfordshire County Council made the above orders under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The effect of Order, which comes into force on 7 April is to help manage the provision of residential and short-stay parking in parts of Witney town by introducing various restrictions as follows:

1. Parking places:

a) Shared use parking bays, 'Permit holders unlimited time or general 2 hours waiting no return within 2 hours, Mon-Sat 8am-6pm' introduced on the following roads, replacing the previous time limited & unrestricted parking bays:

- Church Green (eastern arm):
 - east side – four separate bays between its junctions with Market Square & Farm Mill Lane,
- Church Green – (southern arm):
 - south side – two separate bays adjacent to St Marys Church.
- Corn Street:
 - north side – a) two bays adjacent to Nos.58-76, b) three bays adjacent to Nos.88-110, and c) two bays adjacent to Nos.154-170,
 - south side – a) two bays adjacent to Nos.45-63, b) two bays adjacent to Nos.71-109, and c) two bays adjacent to Nos.117-129.
- Market Square (south of Buttercross):
 - east side – one bay between its junction with Langdale & Church Green,
 - west side – one bay between its junction with Langdale & Church Green.

b) 'Shared use parking bays, 'Permit holders unlimited time or 4 hours waiting no return within 1 hours, on all days 6am-10pm' introduced on the following road, replacing the previous time limited & unrestricted parking bays:

- Church Green (central arm): west side – three separate bays between its junction with Market Square & the southern arm of Church Green.

2. Eligible properties:

Residents will be able to apply for annual Residents and Visitors' Parking Permits and a local identifier of 'WY' will be shown on permits and on road signage for bays where restrictions apply. Properties eligible to apply will be residents of Nos.1 – 24 Charter Place; Church Green (even Nos.2-44, Odd Nos.1-29); Corn Street (Even Nos.36-172, Odd Nos.27-151), Market Square (even Nos.52-58 & odd Nos.29-39); all properties in Marlborough Lane; and 2-20 (even numbers) Station Lane.

3. Residents permits:

Will be limited to one per resident with a maximum of two permits per property. A resident may obtain a temporary permit for a replacement vehicle while their permanent vehicle is off the road.

4. Visitors permits:

Will be available for residents at the above eligible addresses, usually a maximum of 50 days' worth of permits will be issued per year and provided in blocks of 25. A temporary resident will be entitled to 25 visitors permits.

5. Charges:

a) for residents, per permit will be £65 per annum. Visitors permits for residents aged 70 or over will be free of charge, for all other residents the first block of 25 visitors permits will be free, and the second block will cost £25.

b) The charge for each Business Permit will be £50.50 for 3 months; £95.00 for 6 months; £145.00 for 9 months and £190.00 for 12 months.

c) Contractors may apply for a permit to use a resident's parking place at a charge of £31.50 for any period not exceeding a week.

6. Other Matters:

a) A permit may be withdrawn if found to be granted based on false information, or a permit has not been used in accordance with the provisions of the Order, where it has been abused, or where the agreed terms have not been complied with. This may result in suspension of eligibility for further permits.

b) Exemptions to the waiting restrictions and the restrictions on the use of parking places will include following exemptions: For disabled badge holders (maximum of three hours where there are 'No Waiting' restrictions are in force), Carers Permit holders, for loading and unloading, people boarding or alighting a vehicle, emergency services, universal service providers and vehicles being used in connection with road works and works to the utility services, and official funeral vehicles.

c) The Order further amends the Oxfordshire County Council (Various Roads – West Oxfordshire) (Prohibition and Restriction of Waiting and Permitted Parking) Order 2012 to bring the proposed measures into that base order.

d) Order 2. will amend the (Carers Permit) Order 2023 to include permission for eligible carers vehicles to park temporarily in the proposed new resident bays.

Documents giving more details of the proposals are available for public inspection online by visiting: <https://letstalk.oxfordshire.gov.uk> Copies may also be made available on request.

Objections to the proposals and other representations specifying the grounds on which they are made may be sent in writing to the address below by the end of 15 November 2024. The Council will consider objections and representations received in response to this Notice. They may be disseminated widely for these purposes and made available to the public.

Traffic Regulation Order & Schemes (Ref: CM/12.6.410/P0279) for the Director of Environment & Highways, Oxfordshire County Council, County Hall, New Road, Oxford, OX1 1ND. (Email: christian.mauz@oxfordshire.gov.uk Telephone: 0345 310 1111)

From: West Oxfordshire District Council Communications Team

[<communications@westoxon.gov.uk>](mailto:communications@westoxon.gov.uk)

Sent: 07 April 2025 14:00

To: Town Clerk [<townclerk@witney-tc.gov.uk>](mailto:townclerk@witney-tc.gov.uk)

Subject: Council submits Net Zero updates for Salt Cross Garden Village



07 Apr 2025

Council submits Net Zero updates for Salt Cross Garden Village

West Oxfordshire District Council has submitted a revised Net Zero policy for Salt Cross Area Action Plan (AAP) to the Planning Inspectorate to meet the Council's energy ambitions for the site which will be assessed by the Planning Inspector in the coming months.

Giles Hughes, Chief Executive for West Oxfordshire District Council, said, "Our initial plans for Salt Cross included a policy that would require the whole development to be net zero carbon in operation. These plans were refused by the Planning Inspector at the time, but last year Rights Community Action (RCA) had success in the High Court challenging this decision, and we were given permission to re-submit our policy for examination.

"We have carefully considered the best way forward and decided to continue to promote a net zero carbon approach. Our evidence demonstrates that it is not only financially viable and technically deliverable, but has a number of clear advantages over an alternative low carbon approach.

"Importantly, we are now seeing more and more proposals like ours approved in other areas of the country which is welcome news. We hope the Inspector agrees with our position so we can progress with the garden village."

The planning process requires the Planning Inspector to approve what is known as an Area Action Plan – essentially a blueprint for how the new development should be built.

Most of the Area Action Plan has been approved but the Net Zero policy must now be re-examined.

The Council wrote to the Planning Inspectorate asking to pause the planning process for the Salt Cross AAP in December 2024 while it sought further clarifications on the national policy position of the new Government.

An updated Net Zero policy has now been submitted to be examined, and the Planning Inspector will hold a hearing before deciding whether to approve or modify the policy later this year.

Once the Net Zero policy is approved by the Planning Inspectorate, West Oxfordshire District Council will be able to consider the Salt Cross Area Action Plan for formal adoption. Then planning applications can be submitted in line with the AAP with building on site to follow.

ENDS

Contact Information

West Oxfordshire District Council Communications Team

communications@westoxon.gov.uk

Notes to editors

More information on Salt Cross and the Council's submission to the Planning Inspectorate can be found here - <https://www.westoxon.gov.uk/planning-and-building/planning-policy/salt-cross-garden-village/>

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