

Public Document Pack

Policy, Governance & Finance

Committee Meeting of Witney Town Council



Monday, 9th June, 2025 at 6.00 pm

To members of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee - R Smith, J Aitman, R Crouch, A Bailey, J Doughty, T Ashby, G Doughty and S Simpson (and all other Town Councillors for information).

You are hereby summonsed to the above meeting to be held in the **Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney** for the transaction of the business stated in the agenda below.

Admission to Meetings

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

Numbers of the public will be limited, with priority given to those who have registered to speak on an item on the agenda. Any member of the public wishing to attend the meeting should contact the Committee Clerk derek.mackenzie@witney-tc.gov.uk in advance.

Recording of Meetings

Under the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 the council's public meetings may be recorded, which includes filming, audio-recording as well as photography.

As a matter of courtesy, if you intend to record any part of the proceedings, please let the Deputy Town Clerk or Committee Clerk know before the start of the meeting.

Agenda

1. Apologies for Absence

To consider apologies and reasons for absence.

Committee members who are unable to attend the meeting should notify the Committee Clerk derek.mackenzie@witney-tc.gov.uk **prior to the meeting**, stating the reason for absence.

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

2. Declarations of Interest

Members are reminded to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests in any of the items under consideration at this meeting in accordance with the Town Council's code of conduct.

3. Election of Vice-Chair

To elect a Vice-Chair of the Committee for the 2025/26 Municipal Year.

4. Minutes (Pages 4 - 13)

a) To adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee meeting held on 31 March & 14 April 2025.

b) Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda (Questions on the progress of any item).

5. **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.

6. **Committee Terms of Reference**

To review the Committee Terms of Reference (TOR) if appropriate. The current TOR's are attached.

7. **Committee Objectives & Work Programme for the Municipal Year**

To receive and consider the report of the Town Clerk/C.E.O concerning the priorities of this Committee during 2025/26.

Policy

8. **Financial Regulations Adoption**

To adopt the revised Financial Regulations. Adjourned from the meeting of the Council 7 May 2025. Minute 257 refers.

9. **Community Engagement Strategy** (Pages 14 - 35)

To review and consider the recommendations of the Stronger Communities Committee made 2 June 2025 to approve the final version of the Community Engagement Strategy.

10. **Volunteer Policy** (Pages 36 - 67)

To receive and consider the proposed Volunteer Policy from the Compliance and Environment Officer.

11. **Memorial Bench Policy** (Pages 68 - 74)

To re-adopt the Memorial Bench Policy.

Governance

12. **Payment of Accounts**

To receive and consider the schedule of accounts paid and bank reconciliations from the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO).

(To Follow)

Finance

13. **Financial Matters referred from Spending Committees** (Pages 75 - 76)

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

14. **Grants & Subsidised Lettings**

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

15. **Bridge Street Desilting** (Pages 77 - 79)

To receive and consider the report of the Operations Manager in respect of desilting at Bridge Street, Witney.

16. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

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

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

17. **Property, Legal & Insurance Matters**

To receive and consider the confidential report of the Town Clerk/C.E.O.

(To Follow)

a) **Witney Swifts Licence Agreement** (Pages 80 - 86)

To receive and consider the confidential report of the Head of Estates & Operations.

b) **West Witney Consultation & Project Update** (Pages 87 - 93)

To receive and consider the confidential report of the Project Officer.



Town Clerk

**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 it's 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, the recommendation of the Stronger Communities Committee concerning the commercial agreement with Bob Wilson Funfairs be approved and,
4. That, repairs to the St. Mary's Church clock & carillon be carried out in accordance with the Oxford Diocesan report and,
5. 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

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

Held on Monday, 14 April 2025

At 6.48 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor J Aitman (Chair)

Councillors:	O Collins R Smith A Bailey	J Doughty D Newcombe
Officers:	Sharon Groth Adam Clapton Derek Mackenzie	Town Clerk Deputy Town Clerk Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
Others:	Councillor Geoff Doughty	

F197 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor R Crouch.

F198 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers.

F199 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.

F200 IT/COMPUTER SERVICE PROCUREMENT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning computer provision at the Town Council.

Members welcomed the report and asked questions regarding the existing provision and the possibility of upgrading to a cloud-based server. The town council had undergone rapid growth in recent years and technology had grown within this time; this had led to a necessary piecemeal approach, but now was the time to assess the Council's requirements.

The Committee were advised budgets were in place for these changes, and plans were underway to undertake a seamless transfer.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, a change in IT provision and migration to a cloud-based server be approved and,
3. That, the decision on procurement be delegated to the Deputy Town Clerk in consultation with the Town Clerk/C.E.O and in line with financial regulations.

F201 STAFFING MATTERS

The Committee received a verbal update and recommendations from the Personnel Sub Committee meeting held earlier in the evening.

Resolved:

That, the recommendations of the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting held on 14 April 2025 be approved.

The meeting closed at: 6.58 pm

Chair

Witney Town Council



WITNEY
TOWN COUNCIL

**Community
Engagement Strategy
2025**

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Introduction

The purpose of Witney Town Council's Community Engagement Strategy is to assess and enhance the quality and effectiveness of our interactions with the local community. By seeking feedback and encouraging open dialogue, participation and inclusion we will build stronger trust-based relationships with our community, leading to an improved reputation and better understanding of what Witney Town Council does.

Actively engaging with and listening to the views and aspirations of our community members, ensures that the council's actions align with the genuine needs and concerns of those within our town. This approach enables the provision of appropriate activities, facilities, and services that effectively promote the overall well-being and priorities of all our residents.

We are starting from a strong position. As a council, we create lots of opportunities for community engagement, but we need to ensure that as a body and as individuals we are making the most of all of them. While we are looking at innovation and finding new ways to reach people, Witney was identified as an ageing town ([Oxfordshire Data Hub](#)) and this needs to be taken in to account to ensure that no one is 'left behind'.

What is Community Engagement?

Quite simply, Community Engagement is about getting to know the people in a community and building meaningful relationships and connections. It involves, sharing information in a two-way exchange and working together in different ways to bring about change. Good Community Engagement is an ongoing thing and needs to be flexible and agile to adapt in response to new initiatives and opportunities. It is the process by which we get people to have an active involvement in council business and encourage them to influence decision making and services.

There are five levels at which engagement occurs, from minimal involvement to substantial participation. These levels include: Informing, Consulting, Involving, Collaborating and Empowering.





Aims

This Community Engagement Strategy aims to equip Witney Town Council to better cater to the needs of local residents, the following objectives are essential:

- **Understand and respond** effectively to the needs of the community.
- **Increase accountability** to local residents.
- **Plan and deliver** improved services.
- **Use public resources** more efficiently.
- **Make transparent decisions** grounded in strong evidence.
- **Build strong, positive relationships** within and across local communities.
- **Test ideas** and explore emerging issues.

The strategy will also aim to measure the Council's performance in service delivery. The local community will benefit by:

- Having a **greater say** and more choices in designing and delivering services.
- Developing **new skills and expertise**.
- Becoming **better informed** about the Council's initiatives.
- Engaging in **accessible conversations** about important issues.
- Building **trust and confidence** with the Council.
- Understanding how their **participation** has influenced decision-making processes.

Objectives

The following objectives set out how we are going to make certain that our engagement activity is flexible, focused, and appropriate for the diverse needs of the community:

Together the council will:

1. **Plan and co-ordinate activities**, collaborate in partnerships whenever possible and make the most effective use of our resources.
2. **Encourage active participation involvement from all communities**, especially those from traditionally under-represented groups or areas.
3. **Be open and creative** in defining the most appropriate relevant, engaging and successful approaches to consultations.
4. **Promote transparency and build trust** by communicating results and ensuring they are used to inform the Council's policies, services and decision-making processes.
5. **Build relationships** with communities to establish and maintain sustained engagement.



Who Do We Want to Engage With?

Alongside maintaining the many successful channels of Community Engagement that we already have we also need to seek to hear from those in the community not already engaged and expand our reach still further.

Everything we do must be accessible and inclusive as far as possible. We must make particular efforts to engage those who may not usually get involved in dialogues with their local council.

To that end, we are fortunate to have councillors that are working in the community with refugees and asylum seekers.

Councillors should be at the forefront of our community engagement. They have a unique perspective and understanding of what it's like to live in their ward and this equips them with specialist knowledge and equips them to represent and amplify the voices of their community.

Our ambition is to engage successfully with all of the following:

- young people
- older people
- service users
- all residents including minority groups
- people of differing abilities
- schools and colleges
- tourists and visitors
- people of different or no religion
- LGBT groups
- itinerant visitors
- local businesses
- community groups and organisations
- tenants and residents' associations and groups
- volunteers and voluntary groups
- neighbourhoods and wards
- public and private sector including other local councils

If we look at the source of most of the data we gather in our Annual Resident's Satisfaction Survey, the average age of those attending the Annual Town Meeting, the clientele at 1863 café, and many of the people that attend our events there is a heavy bias on older people. It would seem we are doing well at reaching them, but actually they are also the people who claim that they don't know what we do or what is going on unless it is in the Witney Gazette or they get a letter about it.



Below are some extracts from a recent report by **Centre For Towns**, an independent non-partisan organisation dedicated to providing research and analysis of our towns highlights that many young people are moving in to cities and larger towns leaving smaller towns and villages as 'ageing towns'. This should be taken into account when considering what we do and how we want to improve.

- **The Office for National Statistics currently projects that by 2046 there will be seven million more people aged 65 and over in the United Kingdom.**
- **Around three-quarters of the increase in 45 to 64-year olds and over 65s between 1981 and 2011 took place in villages, communities, small and medium sized towns.**



Barriers and Challenges

We must consider the collection of data gathered and ensure that any stored information complies with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Often engagement opportunities are lost because of the difficulties of bringing people to our events. This could be due to the availability of people during the event times, such as working people (including volunteers) lack of transport to events or winter weather or shorter days affecting the willingness of some to travel or be out in poor weather or low light. This might also affect and those under or over a certain age.

Inaccessibility of buildings and some venues may highlight problems for those with physical or mental disabilities or mobility issues.

There may be technical barriers such as a lack of equipment or inability to purchase tickets using an online system. Affordability and financial constraints can be a problem, though most of our community and civic events are free.

Apathy or lack of awareness about the events themselves may reduce the numbers attending.

There may be preconceived ideas about what a 'council' led event might be like.

Social barriers may exist for those that might experience a sense of 'not belonging' perhaps being new to the town, itinerant visitors, cultural differences, language barriers or those that are otherwise socially isolated.

Community Engagement may be stifled if we only engage with the same 'easy' demographic and don't make the effort to find new ways to reach out to groups who are experiencing barriers and provide information that they can and want to connect with.

Our Strategy - Ideas and Approaches

If people are not coming to events and meetings, we should explore ways to take more information out to them. We have previously considered roadshows and making information more mobile. We have held meet and greets with the Biodiversity and Green Spaces Officer at the Lake and Country Park and there may be ways we can expand on this.

- Taking information about our events services and activities into council wards might reach additional people. Staff and relevant ward councillors could set up a small event in a local community centre or school. It would be along the lines of Councillors in the Café but with more leaflets, newsletters and general information that we want to share.
- Councillors in the Café, could also become more mobile with Councillors taking a ride on the local WOCT bus services. 'Councillors on the Bus' provides a perfect opportunity to chat about things that matter to small groups of bus users at a time. This might also serve as an opportunity to let them know that the service is something that the Town Council has been instrumental in funding. Since most (though not all) of the bus users are older people, this will go some way to addressing the report that identifies Witney as an ageing town.





- A member of the Customer services team has expressed a wish to learn sign language when communicating with hearing impaired customers. This would be a good opportunity for staff to learn and could form part of a training plan for those that would like to undertake it. These are small things for marginal groups, but vital to some.
- Suggestion Boxes are still a useful way to gather instant feedback at our various sites – Tell Us About Your Visit Today. It is worth considering extending this to strategic locations such as libraries, surgeries or community centres, allowing residents who may prefer not to engage digitally or in person, to submit comments or suggestions anonymously.
- Explore offering an interactive activity at the Annual Town Meeting, such as a budget setting exercise to make the meeting more engaging. The activity needs to be quick and simple but at the same time thought provoking and a conversation starter. We are also looking to increase our engagement with under 18-year-olds at the Annual Town Meeting. Voting apps are likely to be something they are familiar with and comfortable using. These and similar apps could encourage other less confident residents to ask questions and participate in polls.
- **Webinars and Workshops. Use our new conferencing system to host live interaction webinars that focus on topics of interest or concern. Discussions could include councillors, officers and visiting experts.**



WITNEY
TOWN COUNCIL

WELCOME TO



Witney



ST. MARY THE VIRGIN,
CHURCH GREEN, WITNEY

- The travelling community seldom responds to written information but do come in to see officers when they have particular concerns or issues. They also encounter works team staff in the cemeteries. This may be the best opportunity to make contact or discuss with them any major or extended work taking place in the cemetery such as memorial testing, creation of new areas or other matters that will be of interest to them. The chapel would be an ideal place to have staff in place for a few hours on days when the work is taking place. We could offer refreshments and ensure that office staff that are particularly informed regarding cemeteries and burials are available there.
- Talking news could record our spring newsletter to ensure that visually impaired people have access to an audio copy. We do give them a grant and many residents are used to getting news from the Witney Gazette in this way.
- The convenience of our Admin Office in the town centre means that we pick up a lot of calls and visits that should be fielded by other councils or organisations.
- **Although we are a small team, we aspire to be the benchmark for helpful and caring customer services. Officers have produced a flyer with useful contacts and other regularly asked for information, for customers. We have a reputation for being polite and helpful and that is something we should acknowledge and take pride in.**

- The Town Council previously sent out meeting agendas to the local press – this might be worth doing again, though they are available on social media and that is where the Gazette gleans much of its information. It would increase the amount of messaging they receive from us and hopefully strengthen their awareness of us as reporters come and go.
- Extend the mailing list for our press releases and pass relevant news on to schools, community groups, youth organisations and housing associations to share via their own newsletters. It would be worthwhile ensuring that a handful of printed issues of all our quarterly letters are delivered to care homes as these may not be included as residential addresses for the issue that is usually mailed out.
- Invest in additional noticeboards. We no longer have a noticeboard at the Leys while the Courtside Construction is taking place so officers will request a budget for three new noticeboards at the Leys to capture the different demographics at the splash/skatepark, the new Coffee shed and along the path that connects Station Lane businesses with Church Green
- Live stream the Mayor's Carols for all that cannot attend.
- Councillors have expressed a wish to include greater focus on young people and work on consulting with care homes to ensure they are communicated with. Continue to survey ask our Youth Councillors to find out how they discover what is going on in and around Town, what their sources of news and events are, and how best to engage with other young people.



Objectives	Actions
1. Plan and co-ordinate activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify engagement opportunities across the council's activities and committees through internal comms meetings. • Collaborate in partnerships whenever possible and make the most effective use of our resources • Consider any possible collaboration/partnership and make the most effective use of our resources
2. Encourage active participation involvement from all communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure accessibility and inclusion are considered for all events • Advertise events and other engagement in the areas where the target audience go • Hold appropriate events to encourage attendance from traditionally under-represented groups or areas
3. Be open and creative when consulting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tailor methods of consulting to meet the specific needs of communities – young people , seniors etc • Define the most appropriate relevant, engaging and successful approaches to consultations. • Go to where the target audience are and adopt their preferred platforms and formats.
4. Promote transparency and build trust.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate results from surveys and consultations and ensure they are used to inform the Council's policies, services and decision-making processes. • Find ways to demonstrate and communicate the impact of responses on the decision-making process and actions taken – such as You Said – We Did • Ensure our communications are truthful and the information we share is reliable
5. Build relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to partner and support our community organisations • Demonstrate support for local community and business where possible by using local suppliers and engaging in relevant forums. • Continue to organise and attend our own and other community events and be visible and approachable at both

Evaluating and Measuring Success

We need to continuously review our Community Engagement activities and be prepared to be flexible and find new solutions and methods to improve Witney Town Council's relationships with residents.

It can be difficult to evaluate what works well and what approaches are less effective, but we can measure some success through tracking:

- Attendance at meetings of the Council and the Annual Town Meeting.
- Number of responses received to surveys, the quality of those responses and diversity of the respondents – age, ethnicity etc.
- Metrics from the website and interactions on social media platforms
- Attendance at Witney Town Council events and meetings



What We Already Do



- Police attend our meetings for an exchange of information
- The communication of the importance of consideration of Social Value and Biodiversity in our decision making (as in committee reports)
- Development of a Welcome to Witney Page with local information for newcomers to the town
- Digital signage
- Clear sign posting about TC services and responsibilities (Who Does What?)
- Clear and accessible website with reliable and up to date information
- Printed information in the form of newsletters, posters and other publications available to all. Last year we made the newsletter available on tables in 1863 in A5 format. The newsletter this year will be 8 pages A5 format and will be placed on tables again.
- Maps and leaflets of lake trails and emergency equipment such as defibrillators and life preservers.
- The admin office has leaflets containing useful information and contact numbers that they have compiled to hand out to customers.
- Annual Town Meeting
- Transparency- freely available minutes, agendas, policies and financial documents
- Broad range of Communications
 - o Press releases
 - o Newsletters
 - o Surveys
 - o Social media
 - o Posters
 - o In person events
- Staff and cross team meetings – to keep everyone informed and up to date so that they can confidently field enquiries and publicise reliable information
- Corporate branding and a recognisable logo. Building trust by highlighting that information is coming from a trustworthy and reliable source
- Employment of a Town Crier
- Custodianship of some historic civic artefacts and documents - .e.g older copies of local newspaper On the back of a Heritage Open Day event that showcased these, a member of the public who set up the Witney Memories Facebook page has asked if he can digitally scan all our old copies of gazettes to share on the page and in return he will provide us with digital copies too.

- Councillors in the café
- Attending third party events such as the carnival and using this as an opportunity to consult
- As a council take part in other consultations on matters that affect the town
- The Town Council is a consultee on Town planning applications
- Annual Residents' satisfaction survey has FREEPOST return to make sure anyone can reply for free.
- Survey responses are anonymous, because of the need for the protection of a large amount of personal data, but we can acknowledge and reply by creating You Said, We Did reports and posts
- Youth Council
- Consultations at all levels including simple consultations where appropriate- easy to take part - project specific consultations using stickers so children can select options for play equipment etc
- The Voice of Witney – opt-in feedback database
- Feedback cards and web surveys for Lake and Country Park and 1863 Café
- Parents of Young People feedback forms and Young People feedback forms



To Involve

- Witney flood prevention group have fed back how valued they felt. With the investment in desilting and sandbags and support of personal contact from officers, councillors and the works team. Again, this is resource intensive for a relatively small group, but of exceptional value to them. This is the case with some of our community engagement that perhaps does not reach a large number of people but the quality of that reach is hugely important to that target group.

An extract from their letter with some of the comments they made to us about their experience.

- o I wanted to thank you so much for your support in helping to improve our lives here and for making us feel more valued as a community.
- o I have spoken at a full Town Council meeting and at two committee meetings and was always met with respect and friendliness. When you're out of your comfort zone and a little nervous, that means a lot!
- o The residents were thrilled.
- o Thank you for taking the time to do that as it makes residents feel seen and cared about. You're always welcome to visit us.
- o The Town Operations team has helped to build sandbag walls in times of flooding and removed them when necessary, making residents feel less anxious.
- o We're very fortunate!

- Friends of the cemeteries
- Promoting community groups -Community Window
- Inclusivity and diversity group
- Mayor representing at events, openings and civic events





- Town Councillors represent the Council on outside bodies
- Attend Stakeholder and partner meetings – e.g. museum
- Officers attend area community, business and health forums
- We have working parties, task and finish groups and forum groups which can include members of the public.
- Encourage members of the public to attend and take part in meetings
- Apprentice scheme
- Work experience
- Our Admin Office is also registered as a WODC Safe Space (one of only 29 in Witney) which means that it offers a Safe Place for vulnerable people (such as those with dementia, learning disabilities or mental health needs) when they feel lost, worried or threatened while they're out and about in the town. The safe space is used by a very small minority but is absolutely crucial to those that do use it. It isn't just the elderly that use it. There have been interactions with other age groups that have needed to make use of it.
- Volunteers -Offer volunteer opportunities for community members to engage actively in council-led projects or events, fostering a sense of ownership and involvement
- Fairtrade Town
- Citizen of the Year Awards, acknowledging all the hard work that others do that benefit the town.
- Seasonal competitions –Christmas, Wild Witney etc.
- Cross generational events such as the Switch on event in the gallery room and Schools In Bloom wheelbarrows.
- The potential for resource sharing- such as our thermal camera
- Twinning Association support and promotion
- Collaboration and partnership working – a list of our partners is available on the website. Partnership working also includes initiatives such as Witney in Bloom, Schools in Bloom and the Tiny Forest.
- Although we have no direct business development remit, we do maintain a healthy relationship with local businesses and benefit from sponsorship by local businesses e.g. Christmas Trees and Lights. We have been invited to attend Town Centre forums which we previously facilitated and have recently been invited to the Chamber of Commerce meeting to explore the different services offered by Town and District Councils.
- Our events
- Civic events
- Community events
- 50th Anniversary events



- Promote democratic elections- ensure equal opportunities for people wanting to stand as councillors
- Encourage participation in elections, and in particular, voting in local elections
- Have a web page about what councillors do and how to become one. Promote recruitment of councillors and provide information for candidates
- Support new councillors with training and information that enables them to confidently represent and serve their communities as their elected
- Supporting local groups and events by providing grants and subsidised lettings such as the Music Festival. There has been some interest from the Music Festival and Youth Council in working together to support a 'Day of Culture'. This is a nice example of Community Engagement paying it forward.
- Subsidised Youth Services such as APCAM and The Station - Youth Outreach work to engage with young people we seldom hear from.
- The Mayor's Charities





I think there should be more seating provided by the council in and around public areas, there are some but I think people would enjoy picnic benches etc around for lunches



Assistance from town councillors even for issues outside direct control and responsibility has been excellent in the past couple of years and the improved accessibility of councillors and communication methods are exemplary



I believe the streets of Witney town and close to could be cleaner, regular litter picking, more bins along Welch Way, and larger ones around the town.



Nice to have a paper update in the post :)



The paths on High street and around Burwell/Deer Park road are uneven and unsafe for those with mobility issues



WITNEY
TOWN COUNCIL

Witney Town Council

Community Engagement Strategy 2025

WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Policy Document

Volunteer



Adopted by: Policy. Governance & Finance Committee. Minute no:
Date: 9 June 2025 (tbc)
Review Date: 09 June 2026

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1. Volunteering in Context

1.1. The goal of Witney Town Council's Volunteering Policy is:

- To encourage those who live, work, or study in Witney to actively participate in their community through the development of specific projects and events.
- To provide an access point for people of all ages and abilities to get involved in opportunities with Witney Town Council, local community groups, and organisations.

1.2. Purpose of the Volunteer Policy

The purpose of the policy is to provide overall guidance and direction to volunteers and staff engaged in volunteer activity and volunteer management. The policy is intended for guidance only, and does not constitute, either implicitly or explicitly, a binding contractual or personnel agreement. Witney Town Council reserves the exclusive right to change any aspect of the policy at any time and to expect adherence to the changed policy.

1.3. Scope of the Volunteer Policy

Unless specifically stated, the policy applies to all volunteers registered with Witney Town Council.

1.4. Role of Witney Town Council staff

The involvement of volunteers requires a planned and organised effort. The function of the Witney Town Council's Volunteering team is:

- to provide a central co-ordinating point for effective volunteer opportunities and management for Witney Town Council Volunteers
- to provide appropriate support and training
- to maintain adequate and accessible records of volunteers, volunteering endeavours and achievements

1.5. Definition of a Volunteer

'A volunteer is any person who registers with Witney Town Council in order to perform a task or role with a community focus without compensation, or expectation of compensation beyond reimbursement of expenses incurred in the course of their duties. Volunteers are not considered to be employees of Witney Town Council or the organisations with which they have contact through Witney Town Council Volunteering.'

1.6. Discretion

The participation of volunteers in activities organised by or facilitated through Witney Town Council's Volunteering is at the discretion of Witney Town Council and other

organisations involved in the activity. Volunteers must be willing to submit to appropriate checks before commencing volunteering as listed in the role description.

1.7. Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

Volunteers are viewed as a valuable asset to Witney Town Council and its staff. As a volunteer with the Council, we will expect you to follow all of our policies and codes of practice. You will be given more details on these during your induction by your Supervisor.

2. Volunteer Management Procedures

2.1. Maintenance of Records

A system of records will be maintained on each volunteer, including initial registration details, copies of all written communication, a log of personal telephone contact, reports or correspondence received from other organisations related to the volunteer, risk assessment and any other relevant documentation. Any personal data will be collected, used, and held, lawfully and appropriately in accordance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

2.2. Photography and Videos

As part of our evaluation and future development we may wish to take photographs or videos of activities that involve volunteers.

The photographs and videos may be used on Witney Town Council's website, Facebook or Twitter pages and could be used for Witney Town Council press releases.

Before any photographs of volunteers can be printed, or videos be shown, the permission of the volunteer will be sought.

Photography or filming will only take place under appropriate supervision.

2.3. Representation of Witney Town Council

Prior to any action or statement that might significantly affect or obligate Witney Town Council, volunteers are requested to seek consultation and approval from the relevant Volunteer officer. These actions may include, but are not limited to, public statements to the press, collaborations or joint ventures, or any other agreements involving contractual or financial obligations. Volunteers are authorised to act as representatives of Witney Town Council if specifically indicated within their task and/or role description and only to the extent of such written specification.

2.4. Confidentiality

As a volunteer you may become aware of confidential information about Witney Town Council, its staff, users and suppliers. You must not disclose this information or use it

for your own (or another's) benefit without the consent of the party concerned. This does not prevent disclosure once the information is in the public domain.

2.5. Health and Safety

The Council has a duty of care to avoid exposing our volunteers to health and safety risks. All volunteers will be made aware of our Health and Safety Policy and any practical safety concerns as part of their induction. Volunteers are expected to comply with the Council's Health and Safety Policy.

All volunteer roles will be risk assessed, covering both the tasks involved and the environment in which they will be conducted. In addition, where a volunteer makes us aware of a pre-existing medical condition or disability, an individual risk assessment will be necessary.

The Council will provide you with the appropriate information, instruction, supervision and training required to enable you to work safely while volunteering at the Council.

2.6. Equal Opportunity

The Council is committed to the elimination of discrimination and promotion of equality of opportunity for all citizens and will work towards this goal, both in the provision of services and employment. We will do everything reasonably practical to make volunteering available to everybody and to conform to all relevant legislation. We want to create a good and harmonious working environment in which you should not feel threatened or intimidated.

3. Volunteer Recruitment and Selection

3.1. Role/Task Description

Volunteers require a clear, complete, and current description of the duties and responsibilities of their task or role. This role/task description should include a named supervisor and worksite. The Department Volunteer Coordinator is available to assist in the development of role/task descriptions.

3.2. Requests for Volunteers

Any organisation can volunteer with Witney Town Council. Any organisations wishing to offer opportunities through Witney Town Council Volunteering should be made initially through the member of Witney Town Council Volunteering. A partnership agreement for longer term volunteering with constituted groups will also be adapted for each group to outline the commitments on both sides and will be signed on behalf of the group and by the Council.

All parties should understand that the recruitment of volunteers is enhanced by creative and interesting tasks and roles and by well planned projects. The Department Volunteer Coordinator will direct appropriate volunteers to the opportunities but

holds no responsibility for the 'recruitment' of a volunteer into an opportunity. The organisation should apply their normal recruitment criteria to volunteers.

Witney Town Council reserve the right to refuse to promote an opportunity or place/recruit volunteers where they feel effective use will not be made of their skills and abilities or where it appears the placement may be unsafe or unsuitable.

3.3. Recruitment of Volunteers

Volunteers shall be recruited pro-actively through the medium of the Witney Town Council's Volunteering website (when established), posters, leaflets, internal press, events, and other means. Volunteers shall be recruited without regard to gender, disability, race, age, employment status or other distinction that may be viewed as discriminatory.

The sole qualification for volunteer recruitment shall be the suitability to perform a specified task or role on behalf of Witney Town Council or other organisation that has requested volunteers.

3.4. Selection

Witney Town Council will endeavour to offer guidance to help potential volunteers find a project that will best meet their skills, knowledge, and interests.

3.5. References and Disclosure and Barring Service Checks (DBS, formally CRB)

Volunteers will be required to submit to a disclosure and barring service check before being placed if the role may result in the volunteer being unaccompanied with a minor or a vulnerable adult. Failure to do so will result in all placements being refused. A criminal conviction would not automatically result in a placement being refused - each case will be looked at individually. All information obtained will be kept confidential in line with the Council's data protection obligations.

Some roles may require a set of two references. If this is the case this will be stated clearly on the role/task description. Failure to do so will result in some placements being refused. A negative outcome from a reference may again result in a placement being refused but each case will be looked at individually.

4. Volunteer Training and Development

4.1. Orientation and Induction

All volunteers will receive an introduction to Witney Town Council. Each community placement will be responsible for providing volunteers with an induction. Volunteers taking part in Witney Town Council projects and events will be trained as needed for the opportunity.

4.2. On-going Training and Support

All volunteers will be provided with any necessary learning and development opportunities, and the support to perform the role. Some roles will require further training such as shadowing Council staff, carrying out duties with the support of staff or experienced volunteers, and learning skills via practical sessions. Refresher and extra training will also be provided as appropriate.

5. Volunteer Supervision and Evaluation

5.1. Requirement of a Supervisor

Each volunteer who performs a task or role for an organisation should have a named supervisor who is responsible for their direct management. In addition, the Department Volunteer Leader is available for consultation, guidance and assistance, in confidence where appropriate.

5.2. Commitment and Absenteeism

Witney Town Council recognises that external factors can affect a volunteer's ability to commit to a role over a longer period of time. Volunteers should be honest and open about their availability and the organisation should respect volunteer priorities. The Department Volunteer Leader is available to advise on such issues if required.

Volunteers are responsible for informing placements as soon as possible if they are unable to attend a session due to illness.

5.3. Placement End

There may be times when a placement feels it is in its best interest to end their relationship with a volunteer, either because they no longer wish to have a volunteer perform the role or they have issues with the volunteer's performance.

In the first instance, the placement is encouraged to talk to their relevant Witney Town Council volunteer officer about redeployment. In the second, the placement is requested to advise Witney Town Council regarding its decision and the Department Volunteer Coordinator will be available to offer guidance and advice to either party at any stage.

5.4. Concerns and Problem Solving

Volunteers who feel they may have concerns about their placement are encouraged to speak to the relevant Witney Town Council officer who will advise them of the appropriate action to take and will offer support throughout the process.

Volunteers who have concerns or grievances about Witney Town Council or its staff, and do not wish to discuss these with the relevant volunteer officer, should contact

the department Head of Service, who will deal with the concern or grievance as appropriate and in confidence where possible.

5.5. Communication

Volunteers are entitled to all necessary information pertinent to the performance of their tasks. Accordingly, volunteers should be included in and have access to all appropriate information, memos, materials, and meetings.

Lines of communication should operate in both directions and should exist both formally and informally. Volunteers should be consulted regarding all decisions which would substantially affect the performance of their duties.

5.6. Evaluation

Volunteers shall receive periodic evaluation to review their work. The evaluation session will review the performance of the volunteer, the skills developed, training needs identified, and any issues of concern raised by the volunteer.

6. Volunteer Support and Recognition

6.1. Reimbursement of Expenses

The Council is committed to paying reasonable 'out of pocket' expenses ensuring that potential volunteers are not excluded due to financial reasons. However, these need to be agreed in advance with relevant managers before the volunteer commences their activity. Where expenses are not agreed, volunteers must be made aware of this at the first opportunity in the recruitment process.

6.2. Insurance

All volunteers who are individually registered with and managed by the Council to work in connection with council business are automatically covered by the Council's insurance policies. The Council's insurance policies include coverage for Public Liability exposures, which covers any damage or injuries to members of the public or their property caused by the negligent actions of our volunteers whilst under supervision of the Council. The policies will also protect the volunteers under the Council's Employers Liability coverage, should they suffer an injury in the course of their duties and where the council are found to have acted negligently. Personal Accident coverage does have some age related exclusions, and this will be discussed with the volunteer and included within the specific risk assessment for the volunteer.

Please note that constituted groups who register to volunteer as a group, or businesses, local organisations and educational establishments wishing to provide volunteers for a one-off event need to have their own public liability insurance.

The Council asks all of our volunteers not to bring valuable items to their volunteering site. If you do, please be aware that you do so at your own risk.

6.3. Recognition

Witney Town Council believes that the commitment and performance of volunteers should be recognised as widely as possible. All volunteers are eligible to win the Witney Town Council Volunteering Award and may be directed to other organisations or schemes, where appropriate, for additional accreditation.

6.4. Volunteer Career Paths

All volunteers are encouraged to develop their personal skills to enhance their opportunities. The Department Volunteer Co-ordinator is available to signpost the volunteers to receive support for progression within their chosen field who can help with CV writing to help volunteers promote their skills.

Witney Town Council is also able to offer a reference to volunteers who have worked with the programme for a minimum of six months. This will be provided by the direct supervisor of the volunteer.

7. Volunteer Registration

- 7.1 If you would like to register with Witney Town Council Volunteering, please complete the attached forms. If there are no suitable positions vacant, we will keep your details on file and contact you when a suitable activity arises.

8. Privacy Statement

- 8.1 Witney Town Council is committed to ensuring that the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 1998 are met. Our Data Protection Policy is available to view at: [Witney Town Council Data Protection Policy](#)

Who we are and what we do?

Witney Town Council is the 'Controller' of any personal data that you provide to us. We collect, process, and store your personal data in relation to your application as a volunteer.

What we need to process your application?

You must supply personal data including your name, address and contact details.

Why we need it?

We use your personal and sensitive data to enable us to process your application. If you do not provide this information we cannot process your application.

What we do with it?

We will store your personal data in the Council's secure database, and it will be accessed by authorised Council employees only. We will use your data to enable us to check compliance with your application and contact you about volunteering matters. We may

share your personal data with enforcement authorities for the purposes of investigation and with emergency services if either is required.

How long we keep it?

If your application is not successful, we will keep your data for three months from the date of the final decision on your application. If you are successful, we will keep your data for the period you volunteer with the Council and a further six years.

What are your rights?

Please refer to the Council's data protection policy and privacy notice here:

[Witney Town Council Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice](#)

Alternatively, if you have any Data Protection queries you can email or contact the Council's Data Protection Officer via the details provided on our website <https://www.witney-tc.gov.uk/>



Appendix A

Witney Town Council Community Services

Volunteering Forms Pack

DRAFT

Adopted by: Policy, Governance & Finance Committee. Minute no:
Date: 9 June 2025 (tbc)
Review Date: 09 June 2026



Example Role Description

Welcomer Volunteer

Service or Programme:

Witney Volunteer Rangers, become part of the team managing and improving this fantastic resource.

Role Description:

Carry out practical conservation management all through the country park.

This can include,

Brash work

Bank stabilisation

Bird and bat box installation

Visitor surveys

Wildlife surveying

Location:

Witney lake and Country Park and other locations around the town

Time Commitment:

Volunteering with us is flexible you can do a session a week, fortnight, or a month, or two sessions a day.

Normal working hours are between 08:30 and 17:00 (Friday to 16:30), and you can join anytime within the workday.

Skills and Experience:

- A friendly, welcoming, people person
- No formal skills as all training will be provided.
- Confident in communicating with a whole range of people from different backgrounds.
- Enthusiastic and excited to learn about the looking after Witneys green heritage
- Punctual and reliable, they let us know if they cannot make it
- Aware of health and safety

Training

List any training that the volunteer will need to undertake mandatory or optional

Supervision

Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer - Mobile: 07774 665340



Witney Town Council
Volunteer Role Description
(Role Name)

Service or Programme:

Give a brief overview of the role here, really try to sell it!

Role Description:

*Give details on what the volunteer will be doing, being specific about what actions they will take; who they will work with; use some descriptive words so they can picture it.
(Bullet points can make tasks easier to read)*

Location:

Where the volunteering will take place.

Time Commitment:

How much time per session/per week or time period? If there are specific session/opening times outline these.

Skills and Experience:

Broad or specific skills or knowledge; competencies; transferable skills the volunteer may need.

Training

List any training that the volunteer will need to undertake and if it is mandatory or optional.

Supervision

Who the volunteer will be reporting to (role will be adequate).

DBS check required?

Yes or No in this section if a DBS check will be required for this activity or not.



Volunteer Application Form

First Name:	Surname:
Home Address:	
Telephone No: (Day)	Telephone No: (Evening):
Email Address:	
Signed:	
I have read and agree with the Council's Volunteer Policy and Privacy Statement <input type="checkbox"/> Please tick	

We offer volunteering in the following areas. Please tick those that interest you.

Green Spaces	Nature reserves and parks upkeep	
Communities Team	Updating Notice Boards across the town	
Community Centres	Contributing to running the centres activities	

What would you like to achieve through your voluntary work at the organisation?

Do you have any support needs relevant to the volunteering? Please tell us what they are:

Relevant knowledge and skills:

Any other information relevant to the role:

Days/hours available:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday



How did you hear about our volunteering opportunities?

References where required by the role

We may request references for particular volunteering roles.

Please supply the names and contacts of two referees who know you well in the boxes below. This may be a previous or current employer, neighbour, head teacher or a previous volunteering project. Please note that a referee cannot be a relative.

Name:	Your relationship to Referee:
Position:	Phone number:
Address:	Email:

Name:	Your relationship to Referee:
Position:	Phone number:
Address:	Email:

Is there any other relevant information you would like to tell us? If you have a health condition that is relevant to doing this volunteer role, please tell us, and we can make reasonable adjustments if necessary to ensure you can do it safely.



Emergency Contact: Please tell us who to contact in the event of an emergency

Name:	Phone Number home:
Relationship:	Mobile:
Address:	Email:

Do you need a visa to volunteer in the UK?

Are you:

- ☐ A non-EU national (Volunteer Centre for referral to a charity)
- ☐ A student, non EU national, with a visa restriction of the number of hours allowed for volunteering?

Please return the completed form to Witney Town Council Town Hall, Market Square
Witney, OX28 6AG



**Witney Town Council
Volunteer Reference form**

Volunteer role title:

Reference for:

Name of referee:

Address of referee:

Please tell us how long you have known this person:

In what capacity did you know them?

Please give us constructive comments on this person's suitability to volunteer with us:



Please tell us if there are any reasons why this person should not volunteer in this role.
Please phone to discuss this if you prefer. We treat information received in line with Data
Protection guidelines and processes:

Any other comments

Your signature:

Date:

Please return this form to the Council Officer who requested it, or to Ranger@witney-tc.gov.uk



Equal Opportunities Form

To monitor our effectiveness and to comply with the obligations placed on us under equalities legislation, we collect and analyse the following information.

All volunteers are requested to complete this form which will be used for monitoring purposes only and will be stored securely.

We don't need your name – the information we need is anonymous.

Equal opportunities monitoring form			
Witney Town Council is committed to promoting equality and social inclusion. Filling in this form will help us to know which groups need to be included more in our activities and volunteer recruitment campaigns.			
Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>
Male	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Date of birth	__/__/__	Marital status	
Disability monitoring information – do you consider yourself to have a disability?			
No	<input type="checkbox"/>	If yes, please provide details	
Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Prefer not to say	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Ethnic monitoring information – our ethnic group describes how we think of ourselves			
Ethnic background is not necessarily the same as nationality or country of birth. Please tick which is closest to how you see yourself, or write a more specific group if you wish.			
Ethnic origin			
African <input type="checkbox"/>	Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/>	British <input type="checkbox"/>	Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/>
Chinese <input type="checkbox"/>	Indian <input type="checkbox"/>	Irish <input type="checkbox"/>	Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/>
White & Asian <input type="checkbox"/>	White & black African <input type="checkbox"/>	White & black caribbean <input type="checkbox"/>	Any other Asian background <input type="checkbox"/>
Any other mixed background <input type="checkbox"/>	Any other white background <input type="checkbox"/>	Any other black background <input type="checkbox"/>	Any other ethnic group <input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual Orientation			
Bisexual <input type="checkbox"/>		Heterosexual <input type="checkbox"/>	
Gay man <input type="checkbox"/>		Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>	
Gay woman/lesbian <input type="checkbox"/>			

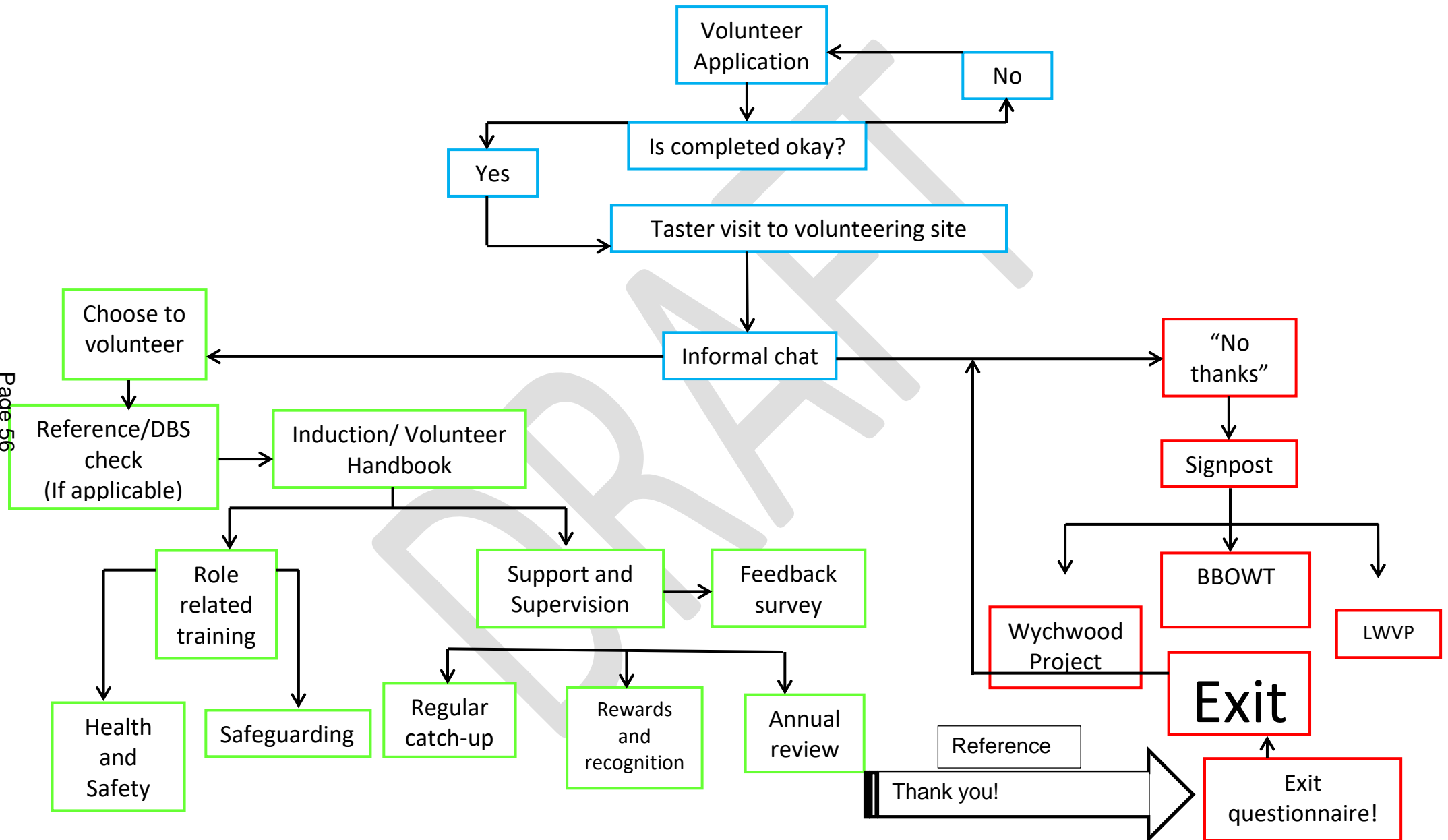


Religion/Belief			
Atheist/Humanist/no beliefs <input type="checkbox"/>	Buddhist <input type="checkbox"/>	Catholic <input type="checkbox"/>	Christian <input type="checkbox"/>
Hindu <input type="checkbox"/>	Jewish <input type="checkbox"/>	Muslim <input type="checkbox"/>	Sikh <input type="checkbox"/>
Other <input type="checkbox"/> (please specify if you wish)		Prefer not to say <input type="checkbox"/>	

Please return this form by email to info@witney-tc.gov.uk

Or by post by using the addressed envelope provided. You may also put it in a sealed envelope and hand it into our Reception on Market Square, opposite Barclays Bank.

Thank you.





Volunteer Induction Checklist

This list should be used when inducting a new volunteer with Witney Town Council. When the process is complete include it in the volunteer's personnel file. A copy should also be given to the volunteer.

The volunteer and supervisor must sign this form at the end of the induction session or role related training, as this will ensure the volunteer is covered by the Council's insurance. No activity can take place until the induction form is signed.

1. Volunteering Location/s

Tour of office/site introduction to key staff with organisational background

☐

Emergency Action Plan

☐

Introduction to other relevant staff/projects

☐

2. Witney Town Council policies

Health & Safety

☐

Confidentiality

☐

Environmental

☐

Equalities

☐

Volunteering

☐

3. Database (If Applicable)

Introduction to database (optional)

☐

Hard copy folders

☐

Introduction to and use of website

☐

4. Personal Development

Introduction to Volunteer Support

☐

Task Specific Training needs assessed

☐

Identify appropriate courses/access to training

☐

5. Task/role specific induction (to be completed by Volunteer Supervisor)

6. Personal

Risk Assessment (and reasonable adjustments)

☐



- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| Days/periods of volunteering | <input type="radio"/> |
| If you are unable to attend your session | <input type="radio"/> |
| Expenses claims | <input type="radio"/> |
| Insurance | <input type="radio"/> |
| Volunteering while receiving benefits | <input type="radio"/> |
| Personal file | <input type="radio"/> |

Office Procedures Induction Checklist

This list is helpful for volunteers who will be based in one of the Witney Town Council offices and likely to make use of office facilities.

7. Premises

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Kitchen | <input type="radio"/> |
| First aid and fire procedures | <input type="radio"/> |
| Information on building and other tenants | <input type="radio"/> |
| Toilets | <input type="radio"/> |
| Access/ID | <input type="radio"/> |

8. Office (if applicable to task)

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Outlook diary | <input type="radio"/> |
| E-mail account | <input type="radio"/> |
| Photocopier | <input type="radio"/> |
| Fax | <input type="radio"/> |
| Franking machine | <input type="radio"/> |
| What kept where (stationery etc) | <input type="radio"/> |
| Filing cabinets | <input type="radio"/> |
| Telephone | <input type="radio"/> |
| Safety protocols | <input type="radio"/> |
| Phone/post (personal use) | <input type="radio"/> |

By signing this induction form you are agreeing to comply with the Volunteer Agreement.

Signed by volunteer

Signed by volunteer supervisor

Date: _____



(Induction continued)

Role Related Training Log

Date of Training	Name of Training	Volunteers Signature



Volunteer Agreement

We appreciate your commitment to us and will do the best we can to make your volunteer experience with us enjoyable and rewarding. Our volunteers are important to us and we value your commitment, contribution and support.

To make sure you have the best possible experience we have created this agreement which sets out our commitment to you and what we hope you can contribute.

This agreement is not intended to be a legally binding contract between us and may be stopped at any time by either party.

What Witney Town Council offers its volunteers:

- A relaxed and friendly atmosphere
- An opportunity to meet like-minded and interesting people
- Opportunity to learn and develop new skills
- Opportunity to attend training sessions and talks
- Opportunities to discuss your ideas and suggestions
- A chance to gain role-related experience
- Take opportunities to enhance your CV
- A place to secure your belongings
- Refreshments and toilet facilities

We will ensure the following:

- All personal information provided to the staff will remain confidential
- All volunteers are covered by the Council's insurance and policies, relating to Health and Safety
- A written position description so you understand your role and the tasks you are authorised to perform
- A full induction, orientation and any training necessary for the volunteer role
- A safe environment in which to perform your role
- Respect for your privacy, including keeping your private information confidential.
- A supervisor, so that you have the opportunity to ask questions and get feedback.
- Reimbursement for any agreed reasonable expenses so you are not out-of-pocket as a result of volunteering for us.



What the Service hopes you will do as a volunteer:

- Support the Council's aims and objectives.
- Perform your role to the best of your ability.
- To treat information regarding the Council's finances, other volunteers and staff, in a confidential manner.
- To take part in as many of the offered training sessions as possible, particularly Health and Safety and knowledge of the activity on offer.
- To be polite and courteous demonstrating good customer care to everybody when representing the Council.
- Only undertake duties you are authorised to perform and always operate under the direction and supervision of nominated staff and obey reasonable directions and instructions.
- Notify your supervisor or another member of staff of any health and safety issues or potentially hazardous situations that may pose a risk to you or others and report any accidents or incidents relating to staff, volunteers, or the workplace.
- Use any property or equipment given to you in your role safely and only for purpose of the role and return it to the organisation when you finish your volunteer role.
- Let us know if you wish to change the nature of your contribution (e.g. hours, role) to the Town Council at any time.
- Be open and honest in your dealings with us and let us know if we can improve our volunteer program and the support that you receive.
- Be punctual.
- Call or email if you are unable to attend as arranged or if you are going to be late.
- To avoid actions which might reflect badly on Witney Town Council.
- To not accept gifts or other items on the Council's behalf.
- Inform immediately a member of staff of any problems or dangers, accidents, inappropriate or suspicious behaviour, violence or vandalism.
- Sign in and out when arriving and leaving the site for safety reasons.

Start date _____

You have indicated you will be available to volunteer for _____ hours per week on (circle relevant day/s).

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
--------	---------	-----------	----------	--------	----------	--------



Volunteer Log

Supervisors use this record for key milestones and exceptional events. File in the volunteer's folder. It will provide you with a summary of what stage they're at and any recent communication you've had with them. Depending on your process for getting volunteers started you may need to change the order.

Volunteer Name: _____

Step in Process	Date	Notes
Enquiry received		
Information Pack Sent		
Application Form Received		
Reference letter sent		
References received		
Informal Interview held		
Any agreed reasonable adjustments		
Disclosure check complete		
Induction completed and form signed by volunteer		
Start date		
Leaving date		

Log

Date	Notes



Volunteer Feedback Form

Witney Town Council is committed to continually improving the quality of what we offer, and this includes our volunteers. We are interested in how you are getting on in your role. Your honest feedback via this anonymous form will help us improve our support to you and other volunteers and acknowledge good practice by staff.

Thank you in advance for your comments.

Continue onto another piece of paper if you need to.

1. What team do you volunteer with?

2. How many hours per week do you volunteer on average?

3. How would you rate your overall volunteering experience, (1 = poor and 10 = excellent)?

1					5						10
---	--	--	--	--	---	--	--	--	--	--	----

4. Tell us the best thing about your volunteering experience.



5. If you could change anything about your volunteering experience, what would it be and why?

6. Do you have any suggestions on how volunteering with the Witney Town Council could be improved i.e. support, training, management, communication, the role?

Please return this form to your supervisor; or email to info@witney-tc.gov.uk



Volunteer Exit Questionnaire

Witney Town Council is committed to continually improving the quality of the service offered to volunteers. We are interested in hearing about your experience as a volunteer with the service. Completing this anonymous form will help us to continue improving support to volunteers and to recognise and encourage good practice by staff.

Thank you in advance for your comments.

1. How long have you been volunteering with the Witney Town Council? (place an 'x' in the box)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	6 months or less
<input type="checkbox"/>	Over 6 months- 2 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	Over 2 years – 5 years
<input type="checkbox"/>	Over 5 years

2. What volunteer role(s) were you doing with the Witney Town Council?	
---	--

3. For which of these reasons are you leaving the Witney Town Council as a volunteer? (mark <u>all</u> that apply)	
<input type="checkbox"/>	My ill health
<input type="checkbox"/>	Caring responsibilities i.e. family, friends
<input type="checkbox"/>	I gained employment
<input type="checkbox"/>	I am going to volunteer with another organisation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Changing home / work circumstances
<input type="checkbox"/>	I had a negative experience (please specify)
Other (please specify)	

	Definitely Agree	Tend to Agree	Tend to Disagree	Definitely Disagree
I met people and made friends through it				
I got satisfaction from seeing the results				
It gave me a sense of personal achievement				
It gave me a chance to do things I'm good at				
I really enjoyed sharing my skills/knowledge				
It helped me to build confidence in myself				
It gave me the chance to learn new skills				

Yes, definitely	Yes, I think so	No, I don't think so	No, definitely not
-----------------	-----------------	----------------------	--------------------

Very Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very Satisfied
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Template

Volunteer Exit Reference

Witney Town Council

(Below structure of reference of Volunteer Supervisors - to be offered to those who have volunteers who have volunteered with community Services for over six months on completion of volunteering.)

_____ (volunteers name) has volunteered in Witney Town Council
with the _____ (team name) for _____ (duration of placement) (number of times a
week/month).

Date

(Officers name)

(Officers role)



Witney Town Council

Memorial Bench Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Witney Town Council understands the wishes of anyone wishing to install a memorial bench. These benches also form part of Witney Town Council's Street furniture and benefit all the residents of Witney.
- 1.2. The policy does not cover the application for memorial benches in Tower Hill and Windrush Cemetery.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The purpose of this policy is to address the below three principles.
 - 2.1.1. To be respectful of those seeking to install a memorial bench.
 - 2.1.2. To ensure benches are maintained and kept functional.
 - 2.1.3. To keep benches in keeping within the areas they have been installed and benefit the wider community.

3. Review

- 3.1. The policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years.

4. Locations

- 4.1. Only suitable seating locations that benefit the wider community will be considered.
- 4.2. Only sites with space for additional benches will be considered. This is to avoid any site becoming overpopulated with street furniture including bike racks, bins, and picnic benches.
- 4.3. No one area can become overly populated with memorial benches to ensure that area does not become a memorial area. This is to avoid compromising the areas enjoyment for recreation purposes.

5. Bench Styles

- 5.1. Witney Town Council will only install Eastgate benches for memorial applications.
 - 5.1.1. The only exception to this is if an Eastgate Bench is not seen as in keeping within the area. In this instance, a suitable style bench will be identified by a council officer for installation.
- 5.2. All Eastgate Benches are manufactured with timber slats treated with clear or dark varnish.

- 5.2.1. The colour of the varnish selected will be based on the area of installation.
- 5.2.2. Recycled plastic slats are available for purchase but will only be supplied at an additional cost to the applicant. They will also need to be in keeping with the area of installation and other street furniture.
- 5.2.3. The council may adapt its standing on the purchase of recycled products, and this could include all-new benches to be installed with recycled plastic slats. In the case of this, the cost of recycled plastic slats will be included on all invoices and the choice of wooden slats will not be offered.
- 5.3. The cast iron ends of an Eastgate bench can be supplied in different colours and applicants are asked on the application form to identify if they want a specific colour that is not the standard Jet Black. Witney Town council will advise applicants if the colour is suitable.
- 5.4. The colour must be in keeping with the area, closely situated street furniture, play equipment and buildings.

6. Bespoke designs

- 6.1. In exceptional cases, it will be decided by the council if a bespoke design bench will be installed.
- 6.2. A case would have to be made by an applicant that an officer will take to the council for approval.
- 6.3. All other areas of this policy would still be applicable. If a location is not identified and agreed upon by an officer in line with this policy, then any application for a bespoke design will be rejected.
- 6.4. If it is agreed that a bespoke design bench is installed, then the council will not include this bench in its street furniture stock, and it will only receive basic maintenance typically limited to cleaning.
- 6.5. For all maintenance issues, the original applicant will be contacted to cover the cost of maintenance.
- 6.6. If a bespoke bench has significant health and safety risks and the applicant is unwilling to cover the cost, it will then be removed.

7. Installation

- 7.1. Benches will be installed on a concrete pad or grassed, in areas of low wear. Typically, benches will be installed by the same process as all other benches in one area.

8. Maintenance

- 8.1. Once a bench has been installed it will be included in Witney Town Council Street furniture stock and be maintained by the council.
- 8.2. Periodic maintenance will fall in line with all other benches and extra maintenance will not be supplied for memorial benches.
- 8.3. Benches are periodically refurbished which includes repairing/replacing broken slats, weather treating and re-painting the cast iron ends.
- 8.4. While a memorial bench is being refurbished, no bench will be installed in its place.
- 8.5. If a bench end has been painted in anything other than jet black, then there is no guarantee that the same colour will be re-applied. Witney town council will endeavour to colour match the original colour as best as possible.
- 8.6. Plaques will be cleaned and polished when a bench is being refurbished.
- 8.7. If the bench has graffiti or excessive bird guano over it will be sanded or jet washed down in its current location.

9. Memorial Plaque

- 9.1. Plaques can be no larger than 20cm x 4cm, this fits onto one timber slat.
- 9.2. All plaques are installed on the second from the top slat in the centre.
- 9.3. All text has to be contained within one plaque
- 9.4. Memorial plaques can be supplied in different materials, listed below. The material can be selected on the application form.
 - 9.4.1. Bronze
 - 9.4.2. Aluminium
 - 9.4.3. Stainless Steel
- 9.5. There may be the case when an applicant who purchases a bench wishes to install an additional plaque or replace the installed plaque with a new one.
 - 9.5.1. In the case of a replacement plaque, an officer would have to agree on any new wording, and it will be ordered and installed. The applicant will be invoiced accordingly including all resources required.
 - 9.5.1.1. Only the original applicant or, in the case of the applicant passing away, a first-degree relative can make such a request.
 - 9.5.1.2. The old plaque can be returned or disposed of.
 - 9.5.2. Additional plaques are not permitted to avoid a memorial bench becoming too cluttered and too personal, affecting the enjoyment of the area by other users.

10. Removal and Future Ownership

- 10.1. If the case arises that a memorial bench has to be removed it will be stored complete with plaque until a new location can be identified for its reinstallation.
 - 10.1.1. This includes the relocation based on a high level of complaints related to one bench. This could be that a bench location has brought anti-social behaviour to the area. Council officers will include this in the thought process of any bench location, but it cannot be completely avoided.
- 10.2. All efforts will be made to work with the original applicant to find a suitable new location.
- 10.3. Applicants must understand that officers will identify a new location in line with this policy so it may be the case that only one new location can be offered of which an applicant can accept or reject.
- 10.4. If rejected the bench will be installed in the new location without a memorial plaque. If a plaque is lost, stolen or damaged the council will not be liable for the cost of a replacement.
 - 10.4.1. The original applicant will be contacted to arrange the replacement of the plaque.
 - 10.4.2. If no contact can be made or no response received the bench will be returned into Witney Town Council standard street furniture stock after six months have passed since the initial contact.
 - 10.4.3. This could involve the future removal of the bench and a new memorial bench installed in the area.

11. Procedure for Application and Installation

- 11.1. Anyone wishing to make an application can source an application form online or at the Witney Town Council offices.
- 11.2. The application form must then be submitted via email to facilities@witney-tc.gov.uk or via post to Witney Town Council, 51b Market Square, Witney OX28 6AG.

- 11.3. The applicant will be advised if their application has been accepted or rejected. If rejected, this will normally be due to the location and/or the number of memorial items at the desired site.
- 11.4. If accepted we will agree with the applicant the final position of the memorial bench, colour, and memorial plaque detail.
- 11.5. The applicant is then invoiced for payment which includes the bench, plaque, work hours and materials required to install.
- 11.6. Only once Witney Town Council have received payment in full will the bench and plaque be ordered and the concrete base will be prepared if needed.
- 11.7. The applicant will be advised of the proposed install date. Please note delivery of benches from our supplier can take up to 10 weeks.
- 11.8. The location of memorial benches along with details will be stored on Witney Town Council Mapping Software.
- 12. Witney Town Council is committed to ensuring the security and protection of the personal information that we process, and to provide a compliant and consistent approach to data protection. The Town Council's Privacy Statement can be found here: www.witney-tc.gov.uk/privacy-policy/

Adopted by:

Date:

Minute Number:

Next Review Date: June 2028



Witney Town Council Memorial Bench Application Form

Witney Town Council recognises that residents may want to purchase a memorial bench to honour a loved one in an area of Witney which was special to them. Memorial bench requests are welcomed, and the Council will accommodate them where it is possible to do so.

This application form is to be used to apply for a memorial bench on land owned by Witney Town Council but not for the Tower Hill or Windrush Cemetery's. The application form covers memorial bench requests as well as requests made for any other reason. For further information please read Witney Town Council's Memorial Bench Policy.

Personal Details

Name	
Address	
Email Address	
Telephone Number	

Request Details

Reason for Request <i>This could be on behalf of a group, to be in memory of someone, fundraising, occasion etc.*</i>	
Preferred Location and reason <i>Please state an area such as Ley's Recreation Ground, West Witney Sports Ground, Burwell QE2 Field, King George's Field, Eton Close, Woodgreen rather than a specific location*</i>	

*Detailing the reason could help officers to find another suitable location's if the location is not Witney Town Council land or appropriate.

Would you accept an alternative location? Yes ☐ No ☐

Please note: If no and the preferred location is not acceptable the request will be rejected.

Cast End Colour Request	
Plaque Wording <i>Please refer to the Policy Document</i>	

Plaque Material Bronze ☐ Aluminium ☐ Stainless Steel ☐

Please note, for legal reasons we do not permit the burying or scattering of ashes at the bench location.

Declaration

Signed	Date
---------------	-------------

By signing this declaration, you are agreeing that you have read and understood the Town Council's Memorial Bench Policy and agree for your details to be held in relation to this application. Witney Town Council is committed to ensuring the security and protection of the personal information that it processes, and to provide a compliant and consistent approach to data protection. The Town Council's Privacy Statement can be found here: www.witney-tc.gov.uk/privacy-policy/

Application Process

Following receipt of a completed application form, your request will be reviewed by a Witney Town Council Officer and acknowledged within 28 days. A decision may sometimes take longer but we will acknowledge receipt of your application and advise on appropriate timescales.

Charges

If your application is successful, the Town Council will advise of you of any associated charges for the bench request/donation depending on the details of your request. The approximate cost for the purchase and installation of an Eastgate bench, without any additions is £850.00 (inc. VAT).

Please return this form to:

Facilities
Witney Town Council
51B Market Square
Witney OX28 6AG

Email: facilities@witney-tc.gov.uk

Office Use Only:	
Asset Number:	Location:
	Installation Date:
Cost:	Paid:

POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Financial Matters referred from Spending Committees

Meeting Date: Monday, 9 June 2025

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk

Background

It is the Council's usual practice that all matters discussed, and recommendations made by spending Committees which have financial implications, are reported to this committee. This Committee is responsible for the overall fiscal management of the Council.

Current Situation

Parks & Recreation Committee – 12 May 2025

PR273 Finance Report – The Committee recommended that the council engage professional assistance to advise on whether to opt-to-tax for the West Witney Clubhouse renovation from a budget set at £5,000 (general reserve).

Halls Cemeteries & Allotments Committee – 19 May 2025

There were no financial implications from decisions made at this meeting for the current fiscal year outside of existing provision.

Stronger Communities Committee – 2 June 2025

Youth Council – The Committee recommended that a budget be sought for hosting the Le Touquet Youth Council at the Corn Exchange on 8th July 2025. Please see Grants & Subsidised Lettings report for further details.

Climate & Biodiversity Committee – 20 May 2025

There were no financial implications from decisions made at this meeting for the current fiscal year outside of existing provision.

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 – Covered in specific project reports.
- b) Biodiversity – Covered in specific project reports.
- c) Crime & Disorder – Covered in specific project reports.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency - Covered in specific project reports.

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.

All the Council's Committees receive financial reports to conduct its checks and balances and consideration is given to budgets and funding availability when agreeing expenditure.

Social Value

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

The benefits of these items should be considered at the time of recommendation.

Financial implications

The report forms part of the Council's mechanisms for budgetary control. Specific financial implications are detailed.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider agreeing the recommendations of the spending committees as detailed above.

POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE



Agenda Item: Bridge Street – Desilting

Meeting Date: 9th June 2025

Contact Officer: Operations Manager

Background

The purpose of the report is to update Members on the increased costs of this extra-ordinary project previously approved by the Town Council. The work was agreed upon to benefit the community, beyond the statutory duties and remit of the Council.

In January 2024 Officers submitted a report to the Council on Riparian and Watercourse Works. The purpose of the report was to update the Council on its progress with the management of the watercourse that fell under its responsibility, riparian management. Council approved the purchase of a portable winch so that the Council's maintenance team could remove trees from the watercourses.

The report also explored the opportunity for Witney Town Council to organise the de-silting of the bridge street - bridge. The Council approved the allocation of funding so officers could instruct contractors to make assessments and proposals for the works.

Current Situation

Update on Bridge Street Bridge De-Silting

The assessment of the bridge had been delayed by the high river levels throughout 2024 and then the scheduling of companies over the summer of 2024. However, the assessment for the works has now been completed and a full programme of works has been received along with costings.

The traditional method of de-silting the bridge would have been to use floating barges with excavators on top. This method did present issues as access to the bridge is restricted through high banks and buildings. The other problem it presented was that they wouldn't have been able to reach under the bridge to fully remove the silt. Fortunately, a contractor has been found that has proposed completing the work in another method. This would involve using grab lorries from the bridge to remove the majority of the silt and then floating a pontoon beneath the bridge to remove the remaining silt by hand and then anything remaining would be jetted.

The cost of these works has come in higher than the funding allocated against the project by the Council. Additionally, the works would also require a road closure that has not been

quoted in these works by the contractor. Officers will still proceed with getting a final quote from companies that use excavators to fully understand if these companies can complete the project or not.

There is still a large amount of work to do before the works can get underway, an application for a permit will need to be made to the Environment Agency (EA), works need to be approved by Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) who own the bridge and approval for the road closure would need to be obtained.

Update on watercourse management

A portable winch has been purchased, and Members of the maintenance team have been trained in its use. As well as clearing the fallen tree at Riverside Gardens, the team have worked up the stretch of the Windrush from the leisure centre up to the Bishops Farm Mill flats. They also cleared the section of the Windrush on the west side of Mill Meadow up to the A40.

The purpose of this equipment and training was so that Town Council staff could remove fallen trees without the use of contractors and better fulfil its riparian responsibilities. To ensure Witney Town Council is seen as setting a good example we are clearing both sides of the river which is outside of our riparian responsibilities.

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) Biodiversity – The work would need a permit from the Environment Agency which would assess the risk posed to plants and animals.
- b) Environment & Climate Emergency - The areas surrounding Bridge Street are within the flood zone, with the changing climate these are may become more susceptible to increased flooding frequency.

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.

- Reputational risk if not completely resolved
- Delays and congestion caused by a road closure
- EA & OCC approval

Financial implications

- Witney Town Council have a fund of £8,000 to help cover the costs of the de-silting works.
- The works detailed in the report have been quoted £9,800 exVAT this does not include the disposal of the silt or the road closure costs.

- Officers have requested quotes from traffic management companies but are still awaiting final costing.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted

Document is Restricted