

Stronger Communities

Committee Meeting of Witney Town Council



Monday, 2nd June, 2025 at 6.00 pm

To members of the Stronger Communities Committee - T Ashby, R Smith, G Meadows, A Bailey, D Edwards-Hughes, D Enright, A Mubin and J Treloar (and all other Town Councillors for information).

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

Admission to Meetings

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

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

Recording of Meetings

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

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

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence

To consider apologies and reasons for absence.

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

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

2. Declarations of Interest

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

3. Minutes (Pages 4 - 10)

a) To adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee held on 24 March 2025;

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

4. **Public Participation**

The meeting will adjourn for this item.

Members of the public may speak for a maximum of **five minutes** each during the period of public participation, in line with Standing Order 42. Matters raised shall relate to the following items on the agenda.

5. **Election of Vice-Chair**

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

6. **Committee Terms of Reference** (Pages 11 - 13)

To review the report of the Deputy Town Clerk in respect of the Committee Terms of Reference (TOR).

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.

Communications & Community Engagement

8. **Communications Report**

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

9. **Community Engagement Report**

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

a) **Community Engagement Strategy**

To receive the final draft of a Community Engagement Strategy for the Town Council, prepared by the Communications & Community Engagement Officer.

b) **Annual Satisfaction Survey Results** (Pages 14 - 17)

To receive analysis of the 2025 resident's annual satisfaction survey, prepared by the Administrative Support Assistant – Communities & Planning.

c) **Witney Forum Notes** (Pages 18 - 21)

To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Witney Forum held on 25 March 2025.

10. **Youth Council** (Pages 22 - 23)

To receive and note the minutes of the Witney Youth Council meeting held on 28th April 2025.



Town Clerk

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

Held on Monday, 24 March 2025

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

Present:

Councillor R Smith (Chair)

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

SC157 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

SC158 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

During the discussion of Agenda Item 8, Councillor O Collins declared a personal interest due to APCAM being one of the nominated charities for his current term as Mayor.

There were no other declarations from Members or Officers.

SC159 MINUTES

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

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

Resolved:

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

SC160 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Committee adjourned for this item.

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

The Committee reconvened.

SC161 **YOUTH SERVICES**

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

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

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

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

Recommended:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Resolved:

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

Cllr R Crouch left the meeting at 6.53pm

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

SC163 YOUTH COUNCIL MINUTES

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

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

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

Resolved:

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

SC164 FINANCE REPORT

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

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

Resolved:

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

SC165 COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

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

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

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

Resolved:

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

SC166 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT REPORT

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

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

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

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

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

Recommended:

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

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

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

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

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

Resolved:

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

SC168 WITNEY FORUM MINUTES

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

Resolved:

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

SC169 WITNEY CENTRAL COMMUNITY INSIGHT PROFILE REPORT

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

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

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

Resolved:

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

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

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

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

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

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

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

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

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

Recommended:

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

SC172 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Resolved:

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

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

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

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

Recommended:

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

The meeting closed at: 8.00 pm

Chair

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE



Agenda Item:	Terms of Reference
Meeting Date:	Monday, 2 June 2025
Contact Officer:	Deputy Town Clerk

The purpose of this report is for Members to review and recommend terms of reference for the Committee for the forthcoming municipal year.

Background

At the Annual Council Meeting held on 7th May 2025, it was resolved that terms of reference for each Committee would be reviewed at each meeting in the current meeting cycle.

Current Situation

The current terms of reference for this Committee are:

- a) To recognise the value and benefit of voluntary groups and endeavours within our community, including provision of youth services, supporting and helping to facilitate where possible;
- b) To maintain infrastructure in the Town Council's ownership such as trees, floral displays, town centre street furniture (seats, litter bins), bus shelters, CCTV, noticeboards and Christmas Lights displays;
- c) To organise special events such as Freedom Parades, Remembrance Sunday and other Civic events within the programme and the budget agreed by the Council;
- d) To work in collaboration with other partnerships on town wide events such as the Christmas Lights switch-on and others that may arise from time to time;
- e) To oversee the Council's communication and publications – such as the website and quarterly newsletter;
- f) To oversee the local Schools in Bloom competition and the Council's entry into the regional In Bloom Competition;
- g) The Membership of the Committee shall consist of 6 Members plus the Town Mayor and The Leader of the Council ex officio with voting rights
- h) The quorum of the Committee shall be 4 Members.

The Committee is asked if it would like to make any amendments to the terms for the forthcoming municipal year. The Committee may like to consider the following changes/additions:

- (a) To acknowledge and promote the value and contributions of voluntary groups, local organisations, and community interest companies that deliver social value to our community—supporting and facilitating services, whether through partnerships or ad hoc arrangements, in accordance with relevant policies and legislation;
- (b) To oversee and maintain the infrastructure owned by the Town Council, including street furniture in the town centre (e.g. seating, litter bins, and salt bins), bus shelters, CCTV, noticeboards, and Christmas light displays.*;
- (c) To organise and deliver civic events, such as Remembrance, in line with the approved programme and within the budget set by the Council;
- To co-ordinate national commemorations, special community events, and initiatives in accordance with the Council's agreed programme and budget;
- To oversee the Council's communications and publications, including the website, newsletter, and social media platforms.

And,

- To recognise the importance of inclusivity by ensuring all voices in the community are heard and represented, advocating for underrepresented groups in line with equality legislation;
- To oversee community engagement with all residents of Witney, relevant stake holders and businesses, including, but not limited to conducting an annual resident satisfaction survey to gauge feedback;
- To engage proactively with young people, supporting and promoting youth services where possible, and to oversee the operations of the Witney Youth Council;
- To administer the Children & Young People Grant funds, considering applications and/or funding on an annual basis and making recommendations to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee;
- Within all its decision making ensure that the green environment and biodiversity is protected and enhanced in line with the Council's Climate Emergency aspirations.

*NB: trees, floral displays and hanging baskets are proposed to be under the remit of the new Climate & Biodiversity Committee.

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 – By explicitly incorporating inclusivity into its Terms of Reference, the Council would show its commitment to ensuring that all individuals feel valued, heard, and represented. It affirms that inclusivity is not an afterthought, but a guiding principle embedded in the Council’s decision-making.
- b) Biodiversity – see text above.
- c) Crime & Disorder – The Council’s work to provide a voice and positive activities for young people plays a crucial role in its efforts to prevent crime and disorder within the community. By engaging with youth through supportive services and initiatives—such as the Witney Youth Council—the Council offers meaningful alternatives to antisocial behaviour and helps build a sense of purpose and belonging. These efforts contribute to early intervention, promote positive peer relationships, and encourage young people to become active, responsible members of the community, thereby strengthening local safety and cohesion.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – see text above.

Risk

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

Social Value

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

The Council holds a unique position as a leading local organisation with the ability to fund and publicly support initiatives that deliver social value across all demographics of the community. It also has the capacity to lead in advocating for inclusivity and equality—both of which foster a stronger sense of belonging among residents.

Financial Implications

There are no direct implications from this report. Financial support and budgets for assistance will be considered on a case-by case basis if not already approved in the year.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and,

1. Review the terms of reference; and
2. Consider any changes to the terms of reference; and
3. Recommend such changes be made to Full Council on 23rd June 2025.

Summary Report for Committee

Prepared by: Administrative Support Assistant – Communities & Planning | Date: 22nd May 2025

Introduction

The 2025 Annual Satisfaction Survey gathered feedback from **344 residents**, including detailed age data and over 160 comments. The goal was to assess perceptions of services delivered by Witney Town Council, identify strengths, and inform areas for improvement.

Demographics: Who Responded?

Age Group Breakdown (334 responses):

Age Range	Count	Percentage
17 or younger	122	36.5%
60 or older	114	34.1%
50–59	33	9.9%
40–49	23	6.9%
30–39	26	7.8%
21–29	8	2.4%
18–20	8	2.4%

Key Insights:

The largest responding group was under 18, highlighting fantastically strong engagement from young people. There was also significant feedback from older residents (60+). Young adults (18–29) were underrepresented.

What the Council is Doing Well

Highest Rated Services:

Service	Avg. Score (out of 4)	Resident Feedback Highlights
Civic Events (e.g. Remembrance)	3.06	Praised as respectful and well-executed.
Corn Exchange	2.99	Community hub for music and activities.
Christmas Lights	2.92	Popular seasonal feature.
Community Events	2.80	Family-friendly and inclusive.
Recreation Grounds/Open Spaces	2.75	Enjoyed by families and walkers.

Positive Mentions in Comments:

- Floral displays continue to be appreciated.
- Witney Lake and the Country Park received praise for recent improvements.
- The printed newsletter was well received — residents requested a wider distribution.

Areas for Improvement

Area	Issue Type	Details
Communication	Awareness Gap	Residents reported being unaware of events and how to engage.
Street Furniture	Condition	Reports of poorly maintained benches, bins, and shelters.
Grass Cutting & Pitch Maintenance	Recreation Grounds	Multiple comments, including from youth sports participants and local football clubs, highlighted inconsistent or inadequate grass cutting on playing fields. Specific issues were raised about Burwell Field and The Leys, where long grass or poor conditions affected regular training and matches.
Youth Provision	Lack of structured spaces	High youth participation revealed a lack of safe, age-appropriate facilities.

Feedback Themes

Positive suggestions:

- More daytime events for older adults, including affordable meals, games, and community interaction.
- Affordable, regular evening events at the Corn Exchange (e.g. music, quizzes, bingo).
- Strong support for beautification efforts – (more flowers was a common request!)
- Desire to see more done with Marriotts Walk, such as creating a more of an evening culture. Note: *Marriotts Walk is the responsibility of WODC.*

Common concerns:

- Potholes and drainage issues were frequently mentioned. Although they are the responsibility of OCC, many residents still direct complaints to WTC, which highlights the need for clearer signposting on who is responsible for what.
- Confusion over council responsibilities remained a key theme with residents expressing frustration about issues that fall under WODC or OCC, such the High Street improvements, as well as public toilets being insufficient either in number or poorly maintained. They assume they are WTC matters and again reinforces the need for clearer public education on Council roles.
- Cleanliness and littering were also commonly mentioned and pointed to issues in both parks and public areas, with some expressing frustration at the perceived decline in tidiness, particularly in high-footfall areas.
- The pace of visible change or improvement was criticised, a few comments reflected the view that the Town Council is too slow to act on known issues, with some respondents feeling “consulted but not heard.”

Under 18 Feedback

With 122 youth respondents, common themes included:

- Calls for more youth spaces and places to meet.
- Requests for sports areas, music or entertainment venues, and food outlets.
- Feelings of being targeted or moved on unfairly by others when gathering socially.

The survey saw an impressive response from young people; their feedback offers a valuable window into how our younger residents experience Witney, both the opportunities and the limitations. A recurring theme in their comments was the need for more spaces to safely gather and socialise and many young people said they struggle to find places where they can simply “hang out” without having to spend money or feel unwelcome. Suggestions ranged from dedicated youth clubs and drop-in centres to ideas like under-16s events, indoor lounges, or even spaces for gaming and table sports. This desire for a social “third space” - somewhere that is neither home nor school, came through repeatedly.

Food and retail options featured prominently too. Fast food outlets were mentioned frequently, alongside requests for more teen-oriented retail outlets, but these aren’t just about consumption, they’re tied to a sense of independence, belonging, and participation in wider social life.

When it comes to activity and recreation, they were very clear: Witney’s current offering does not meet their needs. There were multiple requests for improved and more accessible sports facilities, particularly AstroTurf pitches, football goals with nets, and basketball courts, some also mentioned underused fields or poor maintenance of recreational grounds as barriers to participation. Larger ideas like an ice rink, bowling alley, and indoor leisure centre upgrades also appeared, showing an appetite for more ambitious, longer-term investment in youth infrastructure!

Several respondents also expressed frustration at being “moved on” or made to feel unwelcome in public spaces and expressed a desire for “people to be nicer to young people.” There were also concerns about the prevalence of litter, the lack of mental health support, and the easy access to energy drinks and vapes — which some suggested could be better controlled. A few responses revealed more awareness of community engagement and decision-making; one young person specifically called for the Youth Council to give teenagers a say in town matters.

Interestingly, there were also a few comments which also mentioned flowers, floral displays, and nice places around town, suggesting that they value aesthetics and would like more attractive public spaces — perhaps places they can be proud of, meet friends, or share on social media. This hints at a desire for visually engaging spots in Witney that help foster a sense of identity and belonging, particularly for teenagers who increasingly use digital spaces to connect with their surroundings.

Reflection and Next Steps

This feedback paints a clear picture: young people in Witney are looking for recognition, representation, and real spaces — both physical and social — in which they can thrive. They are asking to be seen as part of the community, not as an afterthought.

In response, there is a strong case for exploring the creation of a dedicated youth hub — a welcoming venue designed in collaboration with young people themselves. Finally, ongoing investment in all-weather sports pitches, creative programming for teenagers, and better communication around what is already available would go a long way in addressing the gaps they’ve identified.

Young people in Witney are asking for more than entertainment — they’re asking to be respected, included, and listened to. Their feedback highlights both immediate needs (safe, welcoming places to gather) and broader desires (to be taken seriously in decisions that affect them).

While certain requests — like high street shops etc — are outside the direct control of Witney Town Council, they still offer useful insight into how young people define a vibrant, youth-friendly town. What is within the Council’s remit is the potential to support inclusive community spaces, co-design youth events, and provide platforms for their voices — such as Witney Youth Council or regular youth forums.

Geographic Reach- Postcode Analysis

A total of 253 respondents (out of 344 total) provided postcodes. The purpose was to check geographic spread and ensure feedback was collected primarily from Witney residents.

Key Findings:

- The vast majority of respondents listed postcodes starting with OX28, which covers Witney town and its immediate neighbourhoods, and a small number of entries were from OX29 and OX18 postcodes.
- A few entries were clearly outside the Witney catchment (e.g. OX12, OX3) or were incomplete, and some participants wrote “I live in Witney but prefer not to say” or entered locations such as “Henry Box School” (suggesting student or family-based participation). Even one incredibly helpful response of “Ban scooter at SK8 park”.
- Approximately 85–90% of postcode responses appear to come from within Witney (OX28), and around 10–15% may be from adjacent areas or non-residents.

Recommendation:

- While responses from nearby areas still provide valuable context (many use Witney’s services), future communications could further clarify that the survey is intended for Witney town residents only.
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Conclusion

This year’s survey shows a positive public perception of core services, particularly events, venues, and green spaces. The response from under-18s was exceptionally high, showing that our younger population is eager to be heard. By improving communication, clarifying roles of each Council, and focusing on inclusivity, Witney Town Council can continue to build trust and engagement across all age groups.

Each Committee will receive detailed analysis and comments relating to their services during the next Committee meeting cycle.

Document is Restricted



WITNEY
TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Witney Youth Council held at 4pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney on Monday 28th April 2025.

Youth Councillors Present:

Six Youth Councillors

Witney Town Council Mentors Present:

Cllr R Smith (Witney Town Council Leader)

Witney Town Council Officers Present:

P Inness – Communications and Community Engagement Officer

A Hathaway – Admin Assistant for Communities and Engagement

Minutes

1. **Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from 1 Youth Council mentor.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

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

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **Minutes**

Members agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 10th March 2025 were correct.

4. **Guest Participation**

There were no participants at the meeting to speak with the Youth Council.

5. **Event Surveys**

The Youth Council viewed the amended draft made by the Witney Youth Council Administrator and confirmed the changes with one further amendment. This survey would be added as a QR code to the poster going to the schools for daily slides.

Resolved: That, the Witney Youth Council Administrator amends the survey and creates a daily slide example to be signed off.

6. **Youth-Led Cultural Festival**

Youth Councillors agreed to take part in the Witney Carnival (12th July) with bracelet making and rock painting. Materials for the crafts would be partly out of the Youth Council budget. Pre-made bracelet examples would be brought from previous activities carried out in school.

The Chair of the Youth Council added that the youth councillors could promote their stall by walking

around the carnival and talking to younger people. They encouraged youth councillors to spread the news to their younger siblings and families.

Youth Council members agreed to use the free 4-hour session at the Corn Exchange which had been agreed by the town council for use in their cultural event. Additionally, they asked whether this could be booked for Saturday 25 October instead of the Friday (United Nation's Day) as this may be more available for young people. Town Council Officers were to update whether this date is free.

For this 4-hour session, the youth councillors discussed either a Talent Show, a Disco, or a performance/production. Further details would be confirmed in future youth council meetings.

Resolved: That, the Youth Council join the Town Council at the Witney Carnival stall and help with crafts.

That, the Corn Exchange Main Hall be booked for a Youth Council Event in October and details be discussed in a future Youth Council meeting.

7. Youth Council Logo Survey

All attending Youth Councillors filled in the survey and the logo would be assembled by the Witney Youth Council Administrator based on their feedback.

Resolved: That, the logo made from the survey results be assembled by the Witney Youth Council Administrator and sent to all youth councillors.

8. 80th Anniversary of VE Day

Four youth councillors were interested in joining VE Day activities on the 8th of May 2025.

9. Big Green Week – Grandmother's Recipes

Youth Councillors were made aware of Big Green Week and invited to share recipes.

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

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

11. Items for Future Agenda

The Chair discussed contacting the nearest Youth Councils and inviting them to a meeting to build connections and ask questions. The Witney Youth Council Administrator was tasked with finding a list and bringing it to the next Youth Council meeting.

12. Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Youth Council was due in June 2025. The exact date and time would be conducted for a survey sent to all youth council members.



Town Clerk

The meeting closed at 17.12 pm.