

# Public Document Pack

## Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments

### Committee Meeting of Witney Town Council



**Monday, 7th July, 2025 at 6.00 pm**

To members of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee - R Crouch, J Robertshaw, R Smith, O Collins, A Bailey, G Doughty, D Temple 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](mailto: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](mailto:derek.mackenzie@witney-tc.gov.uk) **prior to the meeting**, stating the reason for absence.

**Standing Order 8(e)(v)** permits the appointment of substitute Councillors to a Committee whose role is replace ordinary Councillors at a meeting of a Committee if ordinary Councillors of the Committee have confirmed to the Proper Officer **before** the meeting that they are unable to attend.

##### **2. Declarations of Interest**

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

##### **3. Minutes (Pages 4 - 8)**

a) To receive and consider the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries and Allotments Minutes held on 19 May 2025;

b) Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda (Questions on the progress 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 25. Matters raised shall relate to the following items on the agenda.

5. **Annual Residents Survey Results** (Pages 9 - 13)

To receive and consider the report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning the results of the 2025 annual residents satisfaction survey for this Committee.

**Public Halls**

6. **Public Halls Report** (Pages 14 - 16)

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

7. **Corn Exchange Business Report** (Pages 17 - 22)

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

**Cemeteries & Closed Churchyards**

8. **Closed Churchyards**

To receive and consider the report of the Operations Manager.

**Report to Follow**

9. **Children's Memorial Garden** (Pages 23 - 24)

To receive and consider the report of the Project Officer.

**Allotments**

10. **Newlands Allotment - Request for Sheds**

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

**Report to Follow**



Town Clerk



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

**Held on Monday, 19 May 2025**

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

**Present:**

Councillor R Crouch (Chair)

Councillors:	J Treloar	G Doughty
	J Robertshaw	D Temple
	R Smith	G Meadows (In place of O Collins)
	A Bailey	
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Angus Whitburn	Operations Manager
	Thomas Davies	Deputy Venue & Events Officer
Others:	None.	

**H279 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor O Collins, Councillor G Meadows attended as a substitute.

**H280 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers.

**H281 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

The Chair called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Committee.

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor J Treloar or O Collins be elected. There being no other nominations a vote was taken. The result being unanimous in favour of Councillor Treloar.

**Resolved:**

That, Councillor J Treloar be elected Vice-Chair of the Committee for the 2025/26 municipal year.

**H282 MINUTES**

The minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 17 March 2025 were received.

H154 – The Town Clerk reported that Witney Allotment Association had been written to requesting that they update their waiting list. Whilst a response had been received from WAA North a response was awaited from the overarching WAA Committee detailing the full position of all allotment sites

**Resolved:**

1. That, the verbal update be noted and,
2. That, the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 17 March 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

**H283 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

*The Committee adjourned for this item.*

The Committee received representations from two members of Witney Allotment Association South Sub-Committee concerning Agenda Item 11.

The Town Clerk read a statement forwarded by the Site Representative of Lakeside Allotments which detailed their thoughts on the officer's report to be considered under agenda item 11.

Additionally, the allotment members present thanked the Committee for their consideration of the options regarding flooding at Lakeside allotments.

*The Committee reconvened.*

**H284 LAKESIDE FLOODING OPTIONS**

With the permission of the Chair, the item was moved up the agenda so that the members of public present could hear the discussion and outcome.

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations Manager as well as hearing earlier the words of the Site Representative for Lakeside Allotments and the two Members of WWA-South who were present.

Following on, Members discussed the specifics of the proposals with questions regarding the layout, ditch orientation and flow levels of the various water courses being answered by the Operations Manager.

Although the Committee sympathised with the allotment holders' frustration about flooding, potentially involving sewage water, it was mutually agreed by all present that the allotments were situated on a flood plain. There was no simple or inexpensive solution to the issue which had appeared to worsen in recent years. Some plots were unusable in the winter, and the viability of the soil and the longevity of any mitigation was unknown.

The Committee was unanimous in agreement to decline both recommendations in the report in favour of alternative proposals.

It was therefore proposed by Cllr A Bailey and seconded by Cllr J Treloar that the Council developed a strategy to engage with Thames Water and other interested parties to review the

issues being experienced. In particular a request be made to Windrush Against Sewage Pollution to provide the historical flow rates of Colwell Brook. Members were unanimous in support.

Additionally, Members further agreed to review an earlier topographical survey regarding hydrology movement. If any further survey work was found to be needed, then Officers should review and report back to the Committee.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the report and verbal contributions be noted and,
2. That, a strategy be developed to engage with Thames Water and interested parties and,
3. That, Officers investigate any additional hydrology survey work that may be required.

*The Members of the public left the meeting along with the Operations Manager at 6:45pm*

H285 **THE EQUALITY & HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (EHRC) CONSULTATION - TOILET PROVISION IN PUBLIC HALLS**

With the permission of the Chair, the item was moved up the agenda.

The Committee had been asked to note the intention that EHRC were imminently to issue a public consultation following the Supreme Court ruling on the definition of "sex" under the Equality Act 2010 and to consider any implications for the provision of single-sex and staff toilet facilities at the Corn Exchange and other public halls.

A Member raised that these changes were mandatory for public bodies however, felt that Witney Town Council should highlight its concerns with regards to the practicalities of introducing changes.

The Committee was concerned that it was overreach to include toilet provisions in the guidance however, a solution to change the use of the disabled toilet would meet the requirements of the court ruling but it was a person's right to choose their sex, and it should not be viewed as a disability.

Cllr G Meadows proposed, and Cllr R Smith seconded that the Council consult with LGBTQ & disabled communities, who would be affected by the additional use of the designated toilet, prior to submission of a response from Witney Town Council by the Mayor, Leader of the Council, Cllr Meadows and Town Clerk. The Committee were unanimous in agreement with the proposal.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the Council enter a submission to highlight their concerns the formation of which be delegated to the Mayor, Leader, Cllr Meadows and the Town Clerk; and
2. That, the Council consult with groups prior to help inform its response.

*Cllr A Bailey left the meeting at 7:05pm*

H286 **COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk.

It was proposed by Cllr R Smith, seconded by Cllr J Robertshaw that the following recommended changes to the current Terms of Reference be made.

- (e) To oversee the management of Hailey Road, Lakeside, Newland and Windrush Place Allotments whilst leased to the Witney Allotment Association.

And that additionally the following new Terms of Reference be included:

- To oversee the development and management of the Corn Exchange (including the 1863 café bar) as a community hub and arts centre in line with the Council's vision and long-term business plan for the venue.
- Within all its decision making ensure that the green environment and biodiversity of public open spaces is protected and enhanced in line with the Council's Climate Emergency aspirations.
- To oversee any development and investment in Council-owned public halls, and the supporting infrastructure, ensuring they meet the needs of the community, remain safe and compliant.

Members were unanimous in agreement of the proposed changes.

**Recommended:**

1. That, the changes as noted above be made to the Terms of Reference and,
2. That, those changes be approved at the meeting of the Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2025.

H287 **COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES & WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR**

The Committee received the detailed report of the Town Clerk/CEO along with a verbal update concerning the Committee Objectives & Work Plan for 2025/26.

No additional objectives or changes were request by Members.

**Resolved:**

That, the Committee Objectives & Work Plan for 2025/26 be noted.

H288 **PUBLIC HALLS REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of new Venue & Events Officer and offered him their best wishes.

The V&EO answered Members' questions which related to clarification of the maintenance of the charity clothes bank at Burwell Hall as well as outlining the need for changes to the Corn Exchange flag design to ensure these were more robust.

He further explained the importance of attendance from Councillors at the Advent Fayre on the 30 November in order that it could proceed without additional costs of staffing being incurred.

The Leader of the Council supported the V&EO comments and asked that all Councillor be written to highlight the importance of their support.

**Resolved:**

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, all Councillors are advised of the Advent Fayre date and their need to support the event and,
3. That, Officers proceed with the recommendations to alter the style of banner.

H289 **CORN EXCHANGE BUSINESS REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Venue & Events Officer which provided an update on the activity of the Corn Exchange events.

Members were pleased to receive the updated data on the attendance figures as requested by them previously and to hear of new events that were being established. including the summer outdoor music events which would return in conjunction with the fizzy Friday promotion.

The Committee expressed their thanks to the events staff for the hard work to ensure the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary VE Day celebrations were delivered smoothly.

**Resolved:**

That, the report and verbal update be noted.

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The meeting closed at: 7.25 pm

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Chair



## HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE



**Agenda Item:** Annual Resident's Survey 2025

**Meeting Date:** Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2025

**Contact Officer:** Deputy Town Clerk

The purpose of this report is to present Members with the results of the annual residents' satisfaction survey, conducted between February and May, regarding services overseen by this Committee.

### Background

The survey was sent to every household in the post and was promoted online via social media and in the local secondary schools; 344 responses were received in total.

While the number of responses is a very small percentage of the population, the results are still an important resource in advising the Council in which areas projects, communications, and future spending should be considered.

### Current Situation

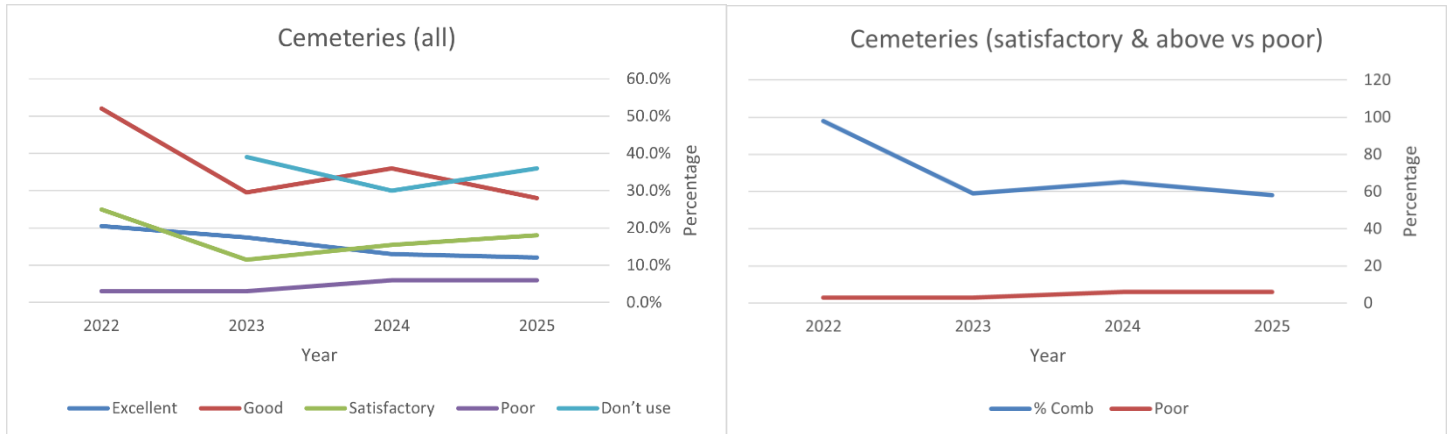
The following table shows how the services scored overall in the survey (with percentages rounded).

As a comparison, the figures/percentages from the previous three years surveys are included. It should be noted that in 2022 there was no n/a option available which is why the figures are vastly different from the last three years.

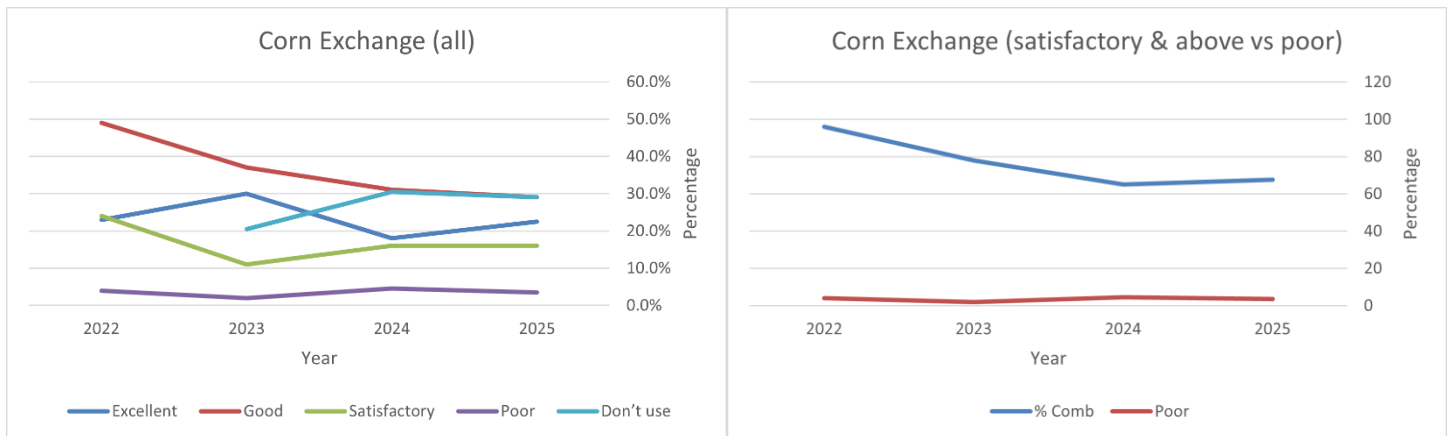
Service	Year	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	% comb	Poor	n/a	Resp
Cemeteries	2025	12% (40)	28% (95)	18% (61)	58.0%	6% (21)	36% (124)	341
	2024	13% (57)	36% (156)	15.5% (67)	64.5%	5.5% (24)	30% (129)	433
	2023	17.5% (37)	29.5% (63)	11.5% (25)	58.5%	2.5% (6)	39% (83)	214
	2022	20.5% (55)	52% (140)	25% (67)	97.5%	2.5% (7)	n/a	269
Public Halls Corn Exchange	2025	22.5% (77)	29% (97)	16% (55)	67.5%	3.5% (12)	29% (99)	340
	2024	18% (77)	31% (135)	16% (69)	65.0%	4.5% (20)	30.5% (133)	434
	2023	30% (63)	37% (78)	11% (23)	78.0%	2% (4)	20.5% (43)	211
	2022	23% (65)	49% (137)	24% (68)	96.0%	4% (11)	n/a	281
Public Halls Burwell Hall	2025	6% (20)	16% (54)	13% (45)	35.0%	4.5% (15)	60.5% (207)	341
	2024	5.5% (23)	22% (96)	13.5% (58)	41.0%	3.5% (15)	55.5% (242)	434
	2023	7.5% (16)	20.5% (43)	10.5% (22)	38.5%	4% (8)	57.5% (122)	211
	2022	10% (23)	49.5% (115)	34.5% (80)	94.0%	6% (14)	n/a	232

The following graphs track performance over the previous four years for these services and show the levels are broadly the same in the previous three years.

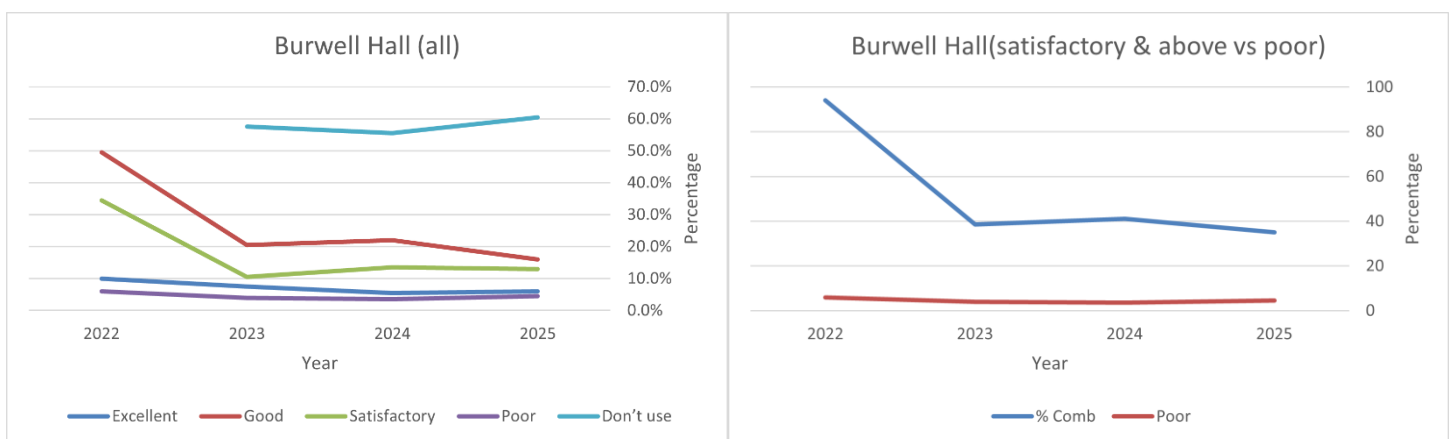
## Cemeteries infographics



## Corn Exchange infographics



## Burwell Hall infographics



In addition to the results above, the survey also welcomes specific comments, all of which relating to this Committee can be seen below:

**Please use this space to add more about your experience or feedback regarding any of our services, good or bad.**

Have to stop cemeteries being used as play areas for dogs. Dog mess is a huge issue at tower hill and youths using the area to smoking drugs. Need CCTV or lock the area up overnight.

Need more events at the Corn Exchange. Fun evenings around £10.

Make more of warm spaces and do a regular senior gathering where they can get a little meal and have some free entertainment for the afternoon.

We attend the jazz evenings at the Corn Exchange - which we really enjoy :)

I find it surprising that Witney no longer has a hall with a stage. The Corn Ex refurbishments have been a disaster for local drama and music groups

The 1863 cafe is superb and well run by the manager

I witness a lot of illegal activities under the Corn Exchange roof; drugs, sex, It needs to be fenced off plz

The Corn Exchange has been a great addition to the town.

We liked the classic cinema showings in the evening at the Corn Exchange but these films are now on during the day when we work.

The cemetery behind the church at church green make the gravestones more enclosed

Corn Ex. should not show film we could lose cinema

Tower Hill [cemetery] great. Windrush soul destroying & weedy but there are watering cans!

Burwell Hall had no council planting at all - left to locals. Disgraceful.

Cemeteries need to be reused

Stop cyclists in areas such as the churchyard

You have £190,703 in reserves/s106 monies for allotments. Why haven't you spent this on acquiring land and reducing the lengthy waiting list

Allotments?

## **Analysis**

### Corn Exchange

Shows a slight increase from 2024 in satisfactory & above and the positive comments outnumber the negative. The creation of the Corn Exchange business plan should help continue this increase. As seen in Public Halls Report, the new Venue & Events Co-ordinator will review the film club when they begin their employment.

### Burwell Hall

The only comment refers to planting outside the hall and the trend at the hall is aligned with the previous three years. The number of residents replying do not know/do not use has increased so a social media/poster campaign advertising the hall for private hire may be beneficial.

## Cemeteries

The trends show that scores of excellent and good are slightly decreasing but satisfactory has increased which has helped maintain a consistent combined score for 2024/25.

Comments concern dogs in the cemeteries and weeding, both of which were raised last year and action taken – the number of negative comments on these issues has reduced. ASB has also been raised consistently with the Neighbourhood policing team. New posters have been erected in the noticeboards advising residents to call 101.

Comments concerning closed churchyards include one about the churchyard at St Mary's and one about cycling through it. It is suggested a review of signage takes place by officers, in consultation with Oxfordshire County Council, to ensure the prohibition of cyclists on the route is highlighted.

## Allotments

A comment asks why allotments was not included on the survey as a town council service while another raises the question of purchasing land for further allotments. The latter was discussed by the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

## **Impact Assessments**

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

- a) Equality - The residents' survey helps identify service inequalities and amplify underrepresented voices, supporting fairer, more inclusive decision-making. It may also highlight items which need addressing under the Equality Act 2010.
- b) Biodiversity - The survey contains feedback on the cemeteries and closed churchyards, the latter of which are maintained as Eco Churchyards at their request. The Council must ensure any issues are dealt with in line with biodiversity legislation and its own policy.
- c) Crime & Disorder - The survey provides the ability to highlight concerns about safety and anti-social behaviour. The survey can inform targeted responses, resource allocation, and partnership working with police and community safety teams. It may help identify hotspots, vulnerable groups, and areas needing intervention such as the cemeteries.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – The survey supports the Council's climate emergency commitments by ensuring resident feedback can help shape relevant policies and actions.

## **Risk**

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

There is a reputational risk if the Council does not address comments received in its satisfaction survey as it will be seen as not listening to residents.

The Council's committees will have competing demands on the overall Council budget so any additional project funding has to be balanced and proportionate. Additions should be in line with Councils objectives and adopted policies/strategies.

## **Social Value**

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

Listening to residents' feedback on Council services delivers significant social value by showing empowerment, inclusion, trust, and community wellbeing; It affirms that their opinions matter and helps building a sense of respect and transparency. This is especially important for the Council, where inclusive decision-making ensures diverse needs are reflected in service design and delivery.

Internally, it supports continuous improvement across the Council's services and helps identify future objectives thereby demonstrating meaningful change.

## **Financial implications**

- There are no new implications from the contents of this report at this point. The Committee may like to consider further projects based on the feedback or increasing/creating budgets for any item.

## **Recommendations**

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

1. What action is required from the results of the survey for services under the remit of this Committee.

## HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE



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**Agenda Item:** Public Halls Report

**Meeting Date:** Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2025

**Contact Officer:** Venue & Events Officer

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The purpose of this report is to provide updates and seek direction for the operation and management of the two public halls under the ownership and management of Witney Town Council. These facilities serve as vital community spaces for events, meetings, and public activities, providing an accessible environment for residents and local organisations. It is important that these halls are maintained to a high standard, both in terms of physical condition and service delivery, to ensure that they meet the needs of the local community and support the Town Council's strategic objectives.

### Background

In line with the Witney Town Council's commitment to creating vibrant, inclusive public spaces, the operation of these halls must align with council policies and ensure that they remain accessible, well-maintained, and effectively managed. As part of its overarching mission, the Town Council has set forth several guidelines regarding the management, booking, maintenance, and use of these halls to ensure they are operated in accordance with the highest standards of safety, accessibility, and community engagement.

### Current Situation

A Venue and Events Co-ordinator vacancy in the team have been recruited with the successful applicant due to start at the beginning of August. The Venue & Events Officer has been focussing on maintaining the operational services expected across Public Halls and Events and can provide the following report.

#### TVAA Clothes Recycling Unit

An agreement has been signed with the Thames Valley Air Ambulance and Recycling Solutions for the placement of a clothes recycling unit outside Burwell Hall. This has now been delivered and installed outside the hall.



#### Seat Sponsorship

The Venue & Events Officer has reviewed the previously agreed seat sponsorship project, last visited in 2023 as detailed below. It has been determined an increased level of research is required to determine the viability, participation and likely outcome.

**The below was resolved on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2023:**

*It was proposed and seconded that a corporate membership be offered for £200 and the Individual for £100, each to last five years and provide two Cinema Tickets and Priority Booking. The Corporate membership would receive four free glasses of Prosecco and the Individual two glasses. A vote took place, and all members were in favour of the proposal.*

- 2. That, both a corporate and individual membership be offered for a 5-year term and,*
- 3. That, membership includes two Cinema Tickets and Priority Booking and Prosecco, four glasses for Corporate and two glasses for individual.*
- 4. That, the option to position plaques on the back of the seat is explored by the Project Officer.*

The financial implications were:

- *The cost of ten plaques is £100.*
- *The cost of sponsoring one seat is £150.*
- *There is a minimal cost for the administration of the scheme and the certificate; and the admin for advising sponsors of priority booking periods. There will also be the cost of the two glasses of prosecco – cost price is £2.34. Numbered vouchers will be given to ensure that the sponsor cannot use them more than once.*

## **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 – Providing a supportive environment for people to express themselves through creativity.
- b) Biodiversity – All matters relating to Biodiversity will be considered when making decisions for both halls – The recycling of clothing provides many benefits such as conserving water resources and minimizing waste and pollution, ultimately lessening the strain on natural habitats and ecosystems
- c) Crime & Disorder – The continued use of halls as a safe space
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – Recycling of clothing also reduces the demand for new raw materials and energy and avoids the release of methane from decomposing textiles

## **Risk**

- The **TVAA** recycling bin at Burwell, if not managed properly could look untidy and cause negative reaction to the local community. RS have stated that they will respond promptly to any reports of items being dumped in this location.

## **Social Value**

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

1. By allowing the **TVAA** clothes recycling bin to be installed at Burwell Hall, WTC will be supporting an accessible way for the community to reduce textile waste, support sustainable practices, and extend the life of usable clothing through reuse or responsible recycling.
2. The Seat Sponsorship initiative is an opportunity for community engagement with the Corn Exchange.

## **Financial implications**

- The cost of 10 plaques was quoted at £100 in 2023. A review of this will take place to determine an up-to-date cost with options and will be reported back in the next meeting cycle.

## **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and;

1. Comment on any changes or suggestions that can support the seat sponsorship project.



## HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE



**Agenda Item:** Corn Exchange Business Report

**Meeting Date:** Monday, 7<sup>th</sup> July 2025

**Contact Officer:** Venue & Events Officer

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the events that have taken place since the last committee meeting and report on forthcoming events in the diary.

### Background

Witney Town Council has an obligation and objectives to provide an affordable, sustainable, inclusive and community arts facility that is valued and supported by the people of Witney and West Oxfordshire.

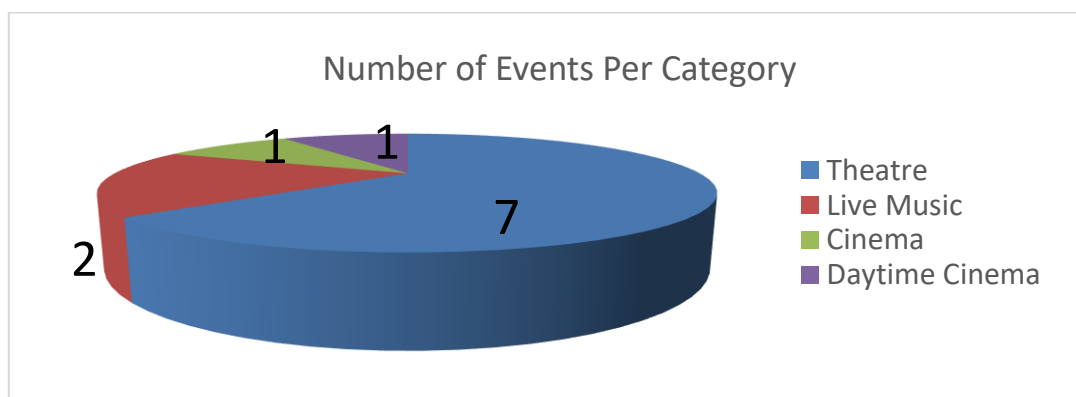
This includes providing availability to and encourage involvement from the entire community through offering a diverse range of music, arts and cultural events in the Corn Exchange.

The Council will provide a professional, well-maintained, and run hireable space for private events including parties, weddings and conferences.

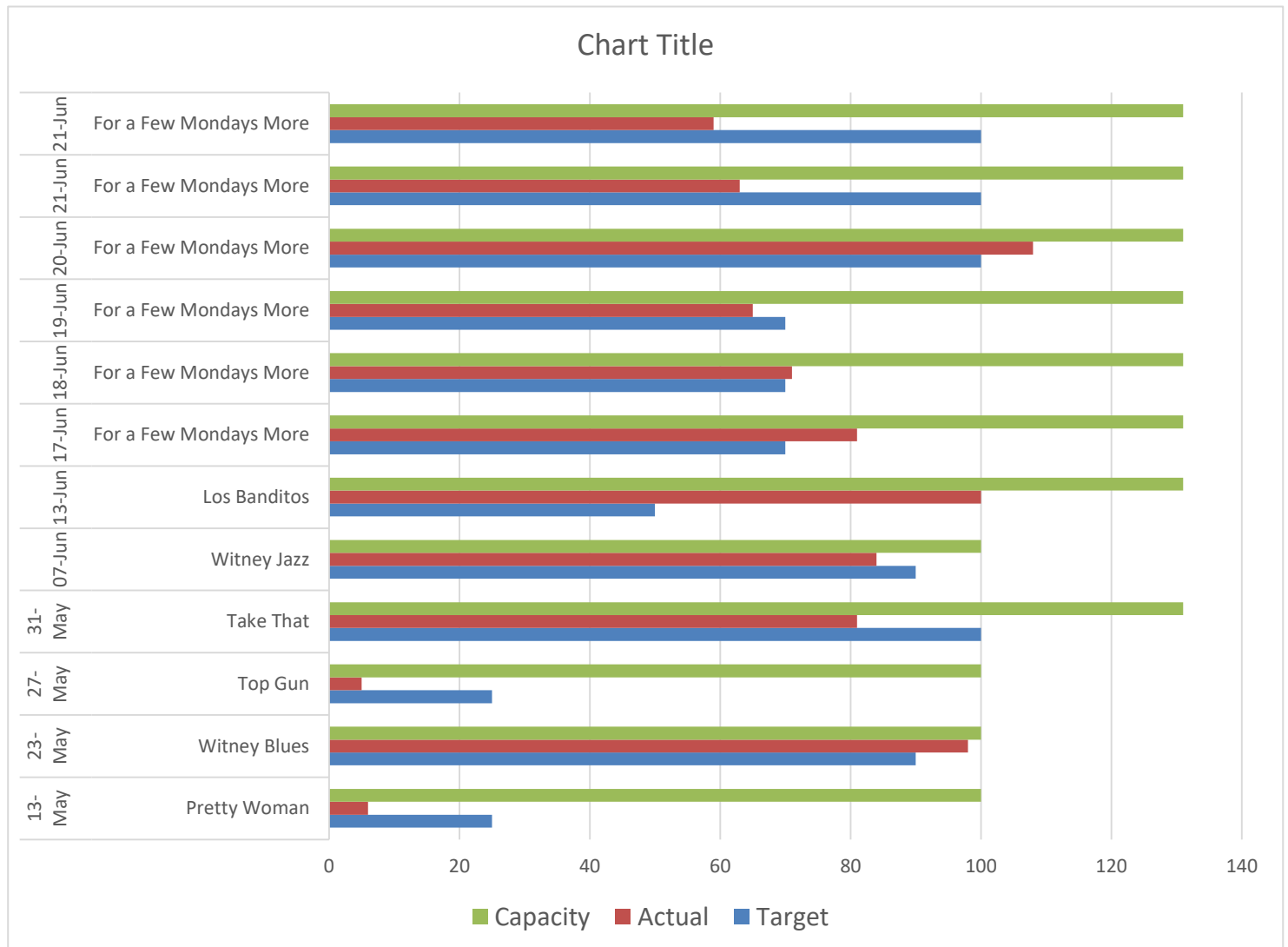
### Current Situation

To maintain the services of the Venue and Events team has been a challenge during this period while we have been recruiting the vacant Venue and Events Co-ordinator role. The team has pulled together to deliver all events and fulfil our commitments with the Caretakers stepping up to support.

The graph below shows the number of ticketed events hosted by category, since the last report in May 2025.



The table below shows attendance figures for each event at The Corn Exchange since the last report, alongside a target attendance to show how each event is performing in line with officers' goals and expectations. Each event capacity has also been included, upon request from members.



## Recent events

### Buttercross Theatre Presents: FAME Junior

Regular venue hirers, Buttercross Theatre, presented a junior production of FAME in June. Both shows were well attended and a great opportunity for local young people to be part of a performance. Data for these events will be included in the next report.

### Witney Jazz

The Witney Jazz events continue to be a popular addition to our events program, with very good levels of consistent attendance. These events utilise the flexibility of the venue by combining a partial amount of tiered seating, with cabaret tables for an intimate Jazz club atmosphere.

### **Daytime Cinema**

The attendance for the daytime cinema continued at a low level in May, and a decision was made to postpone this recurring event until an assessment has been completed to determine future screenings taking into account the impact on seasonal change affecting the demand for indoor activities.

A Venue & Events Co-ordinator has been successfully recruited who will be starting with the Town Council at the beginning of August. Assessing how the Cinema can provide entertainment for the town to include children films during the school holidays, sporting events etc, will be one the many tasks the successful candidate will perform.

### **Witney Blues**

Officers are delighted that Little Live Music company, who promote the regular Witney Jazz shows, have begun hosting additional shows under a new brand **“Witney Blues.”** This move adds to the diversity of our events program and continues to build on an already positive relationship with these event organisers. The first of these shows sold out in May, suggesting there is a clear demand for Blues shows that The Corn Exchange can now cater to.

### **Premier Screening of Los Banditos of Ducklington Lake**

The Corn Exchange showcased a local student directors’ film, shot in Witney (including scenes at The Corn Exchange) at a premiere screening on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> June. The screening event was a huge success with 100 people in attendance. BBC Oxford also reported on the event and organised a good luck message from Oxford based comedian, Paul Shahidi, was screened prior to the film.

### **A Few Mondays More**

Balancing Act, locally based theatre production group hosted a sequel to their popular 2024 show, A Fistful of Mondays. A Few Mondays More ran from 17<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> June with to a great reception from their audiences totalling over 450 people attending.

### **Outdoor Music**

The summer event series “Tunes on The Square” is now running weekly with locals gathering on the square, purchasing drinks from the bar and food from Smarts Fish & Chips, a real buzz has been generated from these events. This will continue weekly through to the first week of September.

### **Open Mic Showcase Night:**

The regular Open Mic was hosted in the theatre for the first time, providing a bigger and more professional performance area for local artists. This proved to be a popular change with a higher turnout of musicians than the usual open mic. When the monthly open mic started in the bar area, the purpose was to provide a performance space for the many local artists in Witney. Since then, many more open mics in pubs and bars in and around the town have started on a regular basis, meaning we are no longer offering a unique or valued opportunity. Therefore, the Open Mic Showcase Night will replace the regular monthly open mic in the bar and will take place every three months. This is to provide a unique opportunity to the local artists who already perform at the many open mics around the town.

### Other Events:

As well as the above events, The Corn Exchange has also hosted a number of public events including, community events, presentations, exhibitions and markets etc. from local and national organisations including:

- Teddy Bears of Witney Exhibition
- Parkers Estate Agents
- Oxfordshire Dementia Action – Rock n Roll Disco
- Specsavers Coffee Morning
- Mynt Image Market

### Upcoming Events

The Corn Exchange will continue to host the regular repeated in-house and third-party events below:

- Witney Jazz – First Friday Every Month
- Tea Dance – Every Wednesday
- Daytime Cinema – Every other Tuesday
- Multiple Classes hosted by Buttercross Theatre – Every Week
- Witney Speakers Club – Every other Wednesday
- West Oxfordshire Art Society Lectures – Once a month
- St Mary's Art Group – Every Monday
- White Feather Spiritualist Church – Once a month

**Folk Music** Counters Creek, an acoustic Folk band previously booked by Little Live Music company are returning on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> July. This event will help gauge interest in a regular folk music event series at The Corn Exchange.

### Upcoming Public Events

4 <sup>th</sup> July	Witney Jazz
5 <sup>th</sup> July	Witney Photo Group Exhibition
12 <sup>th</sup> July	Mynt Image Market
12 <sup>th</sup> July	Witney Blues
18 <sup>th</sup> / 19 <sup>th</sup> July	Chicago Teen Edition
30 <sup>th</sup> July	Counters Creek – UK Folk
1 <sup>st</sup> August	Witney Jazz
14 <sup>th</sup> August	Quantum Theatre Presents Jemima Puddle Duck
30 <sup>th</sup> August 440	Theatre Presents: Macbeth & Much Ado About Nothing double header
5 <sup>th</sup> September	Witney Jazz
11 <sup>th</sup> – 13 <sup>th</sup> September	Buttercross Theatre: Vintage Hitchcock
19 <sup>th</sup> September	Witney Blues
20 <sup>th</sup> September	Denotones 60's Experience
27 <sup>th</sup> September	WhatYouWill Presents As You Like It
4 <sup>th</sup> October	Thrill Collins

## **Impact Assessments**

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

- a) Equality – The concept of equality when reporting on events is very important to the council, as it ensures fair and impartial coverage of all events and social groups within the community to reflect fairness, representation, and inclusivity.
- b) Biodiversity – Officers focus on the broader context of their actions when organising event to maintain the Council's environmental and conservation efforts.
- c) Crime & Disorder – Council policies and operational processes adhered to by Officers include a multi-faceted approach that integrates crowd control, prevention of criminal activity, security planning, and compliance with relevant laws and regulations. Officers assess the risks relating to events ensuring the necessary due diligence, reviews, sign off and monitoring is completed. Post event analysis data is used to review opportunities for continuous improvement.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – Careful consideration is given to the environmental and climate impacts to reduce negative effects and promote sustainability. Many aspects of event planning by the Council include venue location, transportation, recycling, local produce, and energy usage. By incorporating sustainable practices into every stage of event planning, the Council aims to reduce the environmental impact, create a positive attendee experience, and help lead the way for more responsible event management in the future.

## **Risk**

Managing risks for Council events is a crucial aspect of event planning and requires careful thought to ensure the safety and success of all events. The Council's risk management control measures for events covers legal considerations, safety protocols, insurance, and other key factors ensure these are delivered successfully.

## **Social Value**

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

The Corn Exchange also hosts some events with a community focus.

- Open Mic Showcase – Provides a supportive environment and unique opportunity for beginner local musicians perform on a stage and allows more established local artists a chance to share original music.
- Daytime Cinema – An affordable daytime activity, specifically an opportunity for pensioners to have a warm activity during the winter.

**Financial implications**

All events are evaluated from the planning stage to post event analysis to manage financial risk and maximise income.

**Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report.

## HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE



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**Agenda Item:** Children's Memorial Garden

**Meeting Date:** Monday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2025

**Contact Officer:** Project Officer

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### Background

In January 2022, Witney Town Council (WTC) was tasked with creating a Children's Memorial Garden for the community with a budget of £1,000. WTC identified a suitable location in Windrush Cemetery that had archaeological restrictions reducing risk of burial spaces being impacted. The budget only allowed for a small number of features, namely Bench, Metal Archway and Pebble Pond. WTC also planted an attractive plant to grow over the arch, sadly this died due to poor soil condition.



Due to the budget constraint the garden was delivered the best it could be, but WTC always felt more could be done. Officers have identified an opportunity to improve the garden by utilising £1,500 of the "Britain in Bloom" budget for improvements.

### Current Situation

- Officers fully explored several appropriate ornaments and features to improve the memorial garden but couldn't implement due to archaeological and budget constraints.
- Officers were inspired by the wooden monolith installed at Windrush Cemetery and researched the possibility of installing a smaller version in the Children's Memorial Garden.
- After engaging with the same supplier of the larger monolith, they presented the council with a favourable quote of £200 for a custom monolith.
- To take advantage of the deal and complete this historic project, officers proceeded with purchase and installation.



- Officers also implemented the process for members of the public to purchase customised pebbles to add to the pebble pond.

### **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.

### **Risk**

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

- Monolith is well constructed and installed at a recommended depth to mitigate any risk of fall or damage from vandalism.
- Installation depth has not exceeded the archaeological restricted level.

### **Social Value**

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

- Garden will become an area of contemplation for the community in a picturesque location for healing, inspiration, remembrance and reflection.
- Community will have an opportunity to leave a lasting legacy of a loved one through personalised pebble.

### **Financial implications**

- Project was delivered significantly under budget. Monolith was £200, installation and rollout of the customised pebble process was achieved in-house against a budget of £1500.

### **Recommendations**

This is a project update however any feedback is always appreciated.