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Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments

Committee Meeting of Witney Town Council



Monday, 8th September, 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 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 8(e)(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 been 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 3 - 6)

a) To receive and consider the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries and Allotments Committee held on 7 July 2025;

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

4. **Public Participation**

The meeting will adjourn for this item

Members of the public may speak for a maximum of **five minutes** each during the period of public participation, in line with Standing Order 25. Matters raised shall relate to the following items on the agenda.

5. **Finance Report** (Pages 7 - 18)

To receive and consider the report of the R.F.O concerning the financial position of items under the remit of this Committee.

Public Halls

6. **Public Halls Report** (Pages 19 - 24)

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

7. **Corn Exchange Business Report** (Pages 25 - 30)

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

Cemeteries

8. **New Ashes Section at Windrush Cemetery** (Pages 31 - 33)

To receive and consider the report of the Operations Manager.

Allotments

9. **Lakeside Allotments Flooding Update** (Pages 34 - 35)

To receive and consider the report of the Operations Manager.



Town Clerk

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

Held on Monday, 7 July 2025

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

Present:

Councillor R Crouch (Chair)

Councillors:	J Robertshaw	D Temple
	R Smith	J Aitman (In place of A Bailey)
	O Collins	Doughty (In place of J Treloar)
	G Doughty	
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Mark Lewis	Head of Estates & Operations
Others:	One member of the public.	

H396 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Treloar & A Bailey, with Councillors J Doughty & J Aitman attending retrospectively as substitutes.

H397 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers.

H398 MINUTES

The minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 19 May 2025 were received.

H284 – A Member clarified that the river flow rates were monitored by the Environment Agency.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 19 May 2025 be approved a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

H399 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Committee adjourned for this item.

The committee received representations from a representative of Holy Trinity Church, Woodgreen concerning Agenda Item 8.

Members heard of their concern of the size of an individual tree within the churchyard which they asked to be reviewed as it was a potential risk to the church building, the safety of parishioners and users of the green, including the children that used the adjacent playpark.

They also raised concerns regarding the recent removal of trees from West Oxfordshire District Council office site across the road from the church. Whilst this had not caused a disturbance to Sunday worship, it was the representatives understanding that tree removal in a conservation area could only be instructed by a West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) tree officer of which nobody held that position at that time of the removal. They had requested a response some weeks previously from WODC however nothing had been forthcoming.

In closing they offered their thanks to the Operations Manager and his team for the excellent work in grass cutting regime which had led to biodiversity of the churchyard and the appearance of orchids and other wildflowers.

The Committee reconvened.

H400 **CLOSED CHURCHYARDS**

With the permission of the Chair, this item was moved up the agenda so the member of public could hear the discussion and outcome.

The Committee discussed the issues raised by the representative of Holy Trinity Church. Firstly the Chair, who also held a position as a WODC Councillor agreed she would follow up with Officers there to investigate and respond in respect to the issue of the removal of trees on their property.

Additionally, Members were unanimous in agreement that the Town Council's Operations Manager arrange a review of the trees under the remit of the Town Council in conjunction with the newly appointed WODC tree officer in order to address the church's concerns further.

Members were keen that it be expressed upon the WODC officers that one of the main reasons for the area being a conservation area is due to the location of the church itself.

Resolved:

1. That, Officers engage with the WODC tree Officer and liaise with the church and,
2. That, the Chair follow up with WODC Officers in respect of the church concerns of tree removal in a conservation area.

H401 **ANNUAL RESIDENTS SURVEY RESULTS**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning the results of the resident's annual satisfaction survey which was held at the beginning of the year.

Members were advised the report represented the survey results for the services under the remit of this committee and showed the combined satisfactory and above percentages against poor ones. Previous years data was also included to help benchmark the results. The report also contained all unedited comments on the services.

The Committee discussed some of the comments made and reflected that many were relevant to individual residents some of which not able to be resolved as it would not be prudent use of Town Council funds.

Members agreed that Burwell Hall was potentially underutilised and that it should be promoted to highlight its availability as a cost effective venue. It was suggested that an Open Day event could be held as part of the promotion activity.

The Committee also discussed cycling along the St Mary's church path, an issue that had been highlighted by a resident by email to Officers prior to the meeting, it was agreed unanimously that Officers speak with Oxfordshire County Council to review signage to inform of this prohibited use by cyclists.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Officers work with OCC to review the signage at St Mary's Church and,
3. That, Officers compile a promotion strategy to promote Burwell Hall.

H402 PUBLIC HALLS REPORT

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

Members were pleased to hear of the news of the recruitment of a Venue & Events Co-ordinator who was due to commence the role in August.

The Committee heard from the Head of Estates & Operations who provided a verbal update to explain that proposal to review the long-standing seat sponsorship arrangements. Members provided their updated thoughts of how the scheme could be implemented and that it posed a low-risk financial outlay and would be self-advertising once plaques were in place. They welcomed the review report at the next meeting of the Committee.

Members were also pleased to hear that there had not been any negative reaction to the placement of the clothing bin in support of Thames Valley Air Ambulance, however recognised it was still at an early stage of use.

Resolved:

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted.

H403 CORN EXCHANGE BUSINESS REPORT

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

Members were pleased to receive the summary of activity and to hear of the success of events held especially the premiere of Los Banditos of Ducklington Lake by a local young filmmaker.

They also heard of the success of the relaunched summer outdoor music events which had been bolstered by the fine weather in June and welcomed the launch of a quarterly Open Mic showcase event which they hoped would see the same level of engagement from residents.

Resolved:

That, the report and verbal update be noted.

H404 CHILDREN'S MEMORIAL GARDEN

The Committee received the report of the Project Officer confirming the completion of the Children's Memorial Garden project at Windrush Cemetery.

The Head of Estates & Operations summarised the report to highlight the tasks completed and the level of support provided by the Halls & Green Spaces Administration Support Assistant which had been pivotal in bringing a swift conclusion to the project.

Members thanked all those involved and were pleased to hear that the Friends of the Cemeteries group had also passed on their words of gratitude.

Resolved:

1. That, the report and verbal update to noted and,
2. That, all staff involved be thanked for their support in order to complete the project.

H405 NEWLAND ALLOTMENTS - REQUEST FOR SHEDS

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk outlining a Witney Allotment Association request for the Council to pay for the installation of three sheds at the Newlands Allotment site.

Members were unanimous in agreement that the sheds should be replaced at a cost to the Council as the reason for their removal was in order for the Council to install additional fencing to future proof the security of the site.

The Committee thought the budget specified by the Allotment Association was prudent and therefore agreed a budget of £1,000 from the allotments earmarked reserve and that the purchase of the units required be delegated to Officers.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, three new replacement sheds be purchased for the Newland Allotment site utilising a £1,000 budget and,
3. That this be delegated to officer to finalise.

The meeting closed at: 6.50 pm

Chair

HALLS, CEMETERIES AND ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Finance Report

Meeting Date: Monday 8 September 2025

Contact Officer: Responsible Financial Officer

Should Members have any queries about this report advance notice would be appreciated, in writing, by 10am on the day of the meeting to allow for a full response at the meeting. E-mail nigel.warner@witney-tc.gov.uk and copy in townclerk@witney-tc.gov.uk

Background

Detailed income and expenditure statements for budgets which are the responsibility of this committee are enclosed; these are the management accounts for this committee. The period to which this report relates is 1 April to 30 June 2025.

For the Halls, Cemeteries and Allotments Committee the following cost centres are in place.

Cost centre	Service
102	Langdale Hall
103	Bars
104	Corn Exchange
105	Burwell Hall
106	Madley Park Community Centre
301	Tower Hill Cemetery
302	Windrush Cemetery
303	Closed churchyards – St Mary's/ Holy Trinity
305	Allotments

Cost centres, comprising three digits, typically represent a discrete service entity, to which income and expenditure is allocated against previously agreed revenue budgets.

Within each cost centre income and expenditure is then allocated to a four-digit nominal ledger code; these codes are common across the cost centres. Nominal ledger codes further refine the costs associated with the cost centre and correspond to a specific type of account, such as materials or staffing costs. Codes commencing with "1" are income codes; codes commencing with "3" are direct costs of sales, relating only to cost centre 103; codes commencing with "4" are indirect expenditure codes.

A report are regularly presented to standing committees and previous reports are available on the relevant committee section of the website.

Current Situation

Council financial years run from 1 April to 31 March following. Consequently the management accounts to 30 June represent the first quarter of the 2025/26 year.

The summary for the period is:

	Budget	Months 1 to 3 actual	Percentage of budget spent/received in Months 1 to 3 (25% of the year)
Income	(£436,577)	(£111,142)	25.5%
Expenditure	£931,579	£202,339	21.7%
Net expenditure	£495,002	£91,197	18.4%

A full commentary on budget lines will be undertaken as part of the budget process.

Although early in the financial year Members may wish to note the following in relation to the management accounts for this first quarter:

1. A feature of this committee's management accounts are the various income lines in relation to the halls and cemeteries. The income received in the year to date is 25.5% of the years' budget, so overall running slightly ahead of budget.
2. With regard to the Corn Exchange and the Burwell Hall:
The 1863 Café/bar (cost centre 103) is performing strongly against budget at 27.2% of the annual budget taken in the first three months with the income for the quarter of £49,598 compares with £36,134 for the corresponding period for 2024-25. This increased income means that the net expenditure on the facility for the first three months of the year has reduced to £4,365 (15.2% of budget); if sustained the increased income will enable a significant reduction in the net running costs of this facility against budget as the year progresses.

With regard to the Corn Exchange (excluding the café/bar) (cost centre 104) is showing income at 25.0% of the budget taken in the first three months, so exactly on budget - increased events income compensating for lettings which are lower than budget.

Burwell Hall income is showing income of 21.3% of the annual budget taken in the first three months so lower than expected.

Overall the income for the Corn Exchange and Burwell 25.9% of the annual budgeted income has been taken in the first three months.

3. With regard to income in the cemeteries this often fluctuates between months and years. However for the year-to-date income aligns closely to budget with income to 30 June of £26,645 representing 24.7% of the annual budget of £107,729.
4. Committee gross expenditure of £202,339 is running below budget, representing 21.7% of the annual budget of £931,579. There are a couple of items to draw Members' attention to:
 - (i) With regard to events at the Corn Exchange costs of £5,480 compare with income of £6,219 as the Council aims to deliver these to make a modest surplus.
 - (ii) At line 4036/301 (Tower Hill cemetery – property maintenance) year to date spend of £6,316 exceeds the £6,000 budget. However, £5,610 relates to repairs to the boundary wall, which will be funded from earmarked reserves.
5. The combination of higher than budgeted income and lower than budgeted expenditure means that for the first quarter committee net expenditure amounts to £91,197 which is 18.4% of the annual budget of £495,002.

Note also the following comments relating to the management accounts across the Council:

1. There will always be an inevitable “lag” between expenditure being incurred and being shown in the accounts. Expenditure is not necessarily incurred evenly over the course of the year. For example most expenditure in relation to nominal ledger code 4025 (insurance) is incurred when the annual premium is paid in April. There will also be similar patterns on the income in particular seasonal items such as football and cricket fees paid and annual charges for rentals etc.
2. At 31 March 2025 a number of unspent but committed sums were transferred to the earmarked reserves. During 2025-26 these sums are now reflected as additional sums available in the “current annual budget.” The financial software does not show these figures separately in the management account report for this meeting but will show in a separate column in the differently formatted budget report when this is presented in the budget cycle.
Note that the sums themselves remain in the earmarked reserves until they are actually spent.

REVENUE BUDGET 2026-27 AND CAPITAL & SPECIAL REVENUE PROJECTS 2026-27 AND BEYOND

In line with normal Council procedures, the RFO will shortly be commencing the annual review of all the Committees to prepare the revenue budget for 2026-27.

Draft budgets are prepared based upon current activities and patterns of income and expenditure. Any additional revenue expenditure is considered separately as Revenue Growth Items.

It is also normal practice that during the budget cycle the Council considers the Capital and Special Revenue budget to identify which projects or schemes are to be implemented and undertaken during the next financial year.

In drafting budgets your officers will have due regard to the draft Strategic Plan and the medium term-financial strategy.

Members will be aware that the Council have a number of major projects in motion, the largest of which is the West Witney Project. There are also facilities due to be transferred from the District Council.

It should also be remembered that additional projects may have staffing implications – a sum in a budget to provide a new service or facility or organise an event will also mean that officer time needs to be dedicated to deliver the project.

In summary the budget round promises to be challenging and Members are requested to consider items to be included in next year's budget and any other adjustments in the context of the Council's existing and upcoming service commitments. This will enable Officers to obtain costings and the RFO to draft as accurate budget estimates as possible.

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 – whilst a sufficient budget is necessary for the Council to meet its obligations and objectives, there are no implications directly resulting from this report.
- b) Biodiversity – whilst a sufficient budget is necessary for the Council to meet its obligations and objectives, there are no implications directly resulting from this report.
- c) Crime & Disorder – whilst a sufficient budget is necessary for the Council to meet its obligations and objectives, there are no implications directly resulting from this report.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – whilst a sufficient budget is necessary for the Council to meet its obligations and objectives, there are no implications directly resulting from this report.

Risk

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

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

Social Value

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

Financial implications

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

Recommendations

Members are invited:

1. To note and approve the report and the management accounts of the Halls, Cemeteries & Recreation Committee for the period 1 April to 30 June 2025.
2. Consider items to be included in next year's revenue and capital/special revenue item budgets, noting that approval of such items will be for the Council to consider in the budget cycle of meetings.

02/09/2025

WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL Current Year

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee - 8 September 2025.

Month No: 3

Management accounts 1 April to 30 June 2025.

	Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments								
102 LANGDALE HALL								
1050 RENT RECEIVED	25,979	6,495	25,979	19,484			25.0%	
1052 EXPENSES RECOVERED	91	0	370	370			0.0%	
1060 INSURANCE RECOVERED	1,771	0	950	950			0.0%	
LANGDALE HALL :- Income	27,841	6,495	27,299	20,804			23.8%	0
4021 TELEPHONE/FAX	304	93	310	217		217	30.1%	
4025 INSURANCE	765	0	950	950		950	0.0%	
4036 PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	679	0	1,000	1,000		1,000	0.0%	
4038 OTHER MAINTENANCE	0	0	1,000	1,000		1,000	0.0%	
4048 ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	575	0	585	585		585	0.0%	
4059 OTHER PROF FEES	0	0	1,000	1,000		1,000	0.0%	
4888 O/S STAFF RECHARGE	1,865	0	2,100	2,100		2,100	0.0%	
4890 O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	137	0	137	137		137	0.0%	
4892 C/S STAFF RCHG	4,456	1,201	5,311	4,110		4,110	22.6%	
4893 C/S O'HEAD RCHG	1,549	279	1,410	1,131		1,131	19.8%	
4899 DEPOT REALLOCATION	454	0	299	299		299	0.0%	
LANGDALE HALL :- Indirect Expenditure	10,784	1,574	14,102	12,528	0	12,528	11.2%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	17,057	4,921	13,197	8,276				
103 BAR/ CAFE								
1000 C/EX. 1863 - SALES ALCOHOL	28,915	8,996	37,500	28,504			24.0%	
1001 C/EX. 1863 SALES - FOOD	36,511	10,291	35,700	25,409			28.8%	
1002 C/EX. 1863 BAR HIRE CHARGE	1,107	42	1,055	1,013			3.9%	
1003 C/EX. 1863 SALES - SOFT DRINKS	9,211	2,969	9,030	6,061			32.9%	
1009 CORN EX.1863 CAFE- HOT DRINKS	99,374	26,432	96,000	69,568			27.5%	
1014 EVENTS INCOME	217	0	0	0			0.0%	
1090 BURWELL HALL BAR - ALL DRINKS	1,413	870	3,200	2,330			27.2%	
1091 BURWELL HALL BAR HIRE CHARGE	(100)	0	153	153			0.0%	
BAR/ CAFE :- Income	176,648	49,598	182,638	133,040			27.2%	0
3000 BAR PURCHASES - DRINK	18,056	5,383	22,875	17,492		17,492	23.5%	
3001 BAR PURCHASES - FOOD	20,970	5,286	21,420	16,134		16,134	24.7%	
3009 CAFE PURCHASES - HOT BEVERAGES	23,558	5,909	24,000	18,091		18,091	24.6%	
3010 PROMOTIONS	2,668	1,416	4,450	3,034		3,034	31.8%	
BAR/ CAFE :- Direct Expenditure	65,252	17,994	72,745	54,751	0	54,751	24.7%	0
4001 SALARIES	113,561	27,160	107,000	79,840		79,840	25.4%	
4002 ER'S NIC	6,704	2,399	9,900	7,501		7,501	24.2%	

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Month No: 3

Management accounts 1 April to 30 June 2025.

	Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
4003 ER'S SUPERANN	6,587	1,575	7,000	5,425		5,425	22.5%	
4007 PROTECTIVE CLOTHING	21	0	500	500		500	0.0%	
4016 CLEANING MATERIALS	73	31	100	69		69	30.7%	
4032 PUBLICITY	15	0	0	0		0	0.0%	
4038 OTHER MAINTENANCE	0	0	500	500		500	0.0%	
4042 EQUIPMENT INC. FURNITURE	6,018	3,152	5,000	1,848		1,848	63.0%	
4059 OTHER PROF FEES	600	150	700	550		550	21.4%	
4099 MISCELLANEOUS	309	23	1,000	977		977	2.3%	
4892 C/S STAFF RCHG	6,578	1,201	5,339	4,138		4,138	22.5%	
4893 C/S O'HEAD RCHG	1,612	280	1,410	1,130		1,130	19.9%	
BAR/ CAFE :- Indirect Expenditure	142,077	35,970	138,449	102,479	0	102,479	26.0%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(30,681)	(4,365)	(28,556)	(24,191)				
104 CORN EXCHANGE								
1007 CORN EXCHNGE LETTING	64,006	14,579	68,000	53,421			21.4%	
1014 EVENTS INCOME	7,942	6,219	13,881	7,662			44.8%	
1015 TEA DANCE INCOME	2,743	692	2,400	1,708			28.8%	
1016 FUNCTION REFRESHMENT	0	50	0	(50)			0.0%	
1017 CORN EXCHANGE WEDDING LETTING	2,962	0	1,400	1,400			0.0%	
1052 EXPENSES RECOVERED	0	68	750	682			9.0%	
CORN EXCHANGE :- Income	77,654	21,608	86,431	64,823			25.0%	0
4001 SALARIES	75,017	16,579	65,544	48,965		48,965	25.3%	
4002 ER'S NIC	6,365	1,892	7,342	5,450		5,450	25.8%	
4003 ER'S SUPERANN	11,837	1,999	9,811	7,812		7,812	20.4%	
4007 PROTECTIVE CLOTHING	154	83	300	217		217	27.5%	
4008 TRAINING	3,462	630	1,020	390		390	61.8%	
4011 RATES	1,282	965	3,167	2,202		2,202	30.5%	
4012 WATER RATES	6,559	1,047	5,075	4,028		4,028	20.6%	
4014 ELECTRICITY	13,662	2,069	12,000	9,931		9,931	17.2%	
4015 GAS	9,339	(140)	8,000	8,140		8,140	(1.7%)	
4016 CLEANING MATERIALS	2,655	844	2,040	1,196		1,196	41.4%	
4017 CONTRACT CLEAN/WASTE	1,560	148	3,735	3,587		3,587	4.0%	
4018 PHOTOCOPIER COSTS	166	15	190	175		175	8.1%	
4021 TELEPHONE/FAX	1,697	382	1,260	878		878	30.3%	
4025 INSURANCE	930	0	950	950		950	0.0%	
4028 I.T.	1,698	1,029	1,500	471		471	68.6%	
4030 RECRUITMENT ADVT'G	0	0	1,000	1,000		1,000	0.0%	
4032 PUBLICITY	1,035	161	3,000	2,839		2,839	5.4%	
4036 PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	12,175	1,632	12,000	10,368		10,368	13.6%	

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Month No: 3

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	Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
4038 OTHER MAINTENANCE	7,086	2,528	4,000	1,472		1,472	63.2%	
4042 EQUIPMENT INC. FURNITURE	2,239	234	2,000	1,766		1,766	11.7%	
4043 SMALL TOOLS & EQUIPT	34	88	150	62		62	58.6%	
4045 LICENCES	2,590	1,202	2,900	1,698		1,698	41.5%	
4048 ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	364	0	370	370		370	0.0%	
4064 HEALTH & SAFETY	420	35	100	65		65	34.9%	
4141 EVENTS	10,036	5,480	10,000	4,520		4,520	54.8%	
4142 TEA DANCE COSTS	5,709	1,258	6,700	5,442		5,442	18.8%	
4144 FILM CLUB	3,551	667	4,600	3,933		3,933	14.5%	
4888 O/S STAFF RECHARGE	5,684	876	5,000	4,124		4,124	17.5%	
4890 O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	567	62	326	264		264	19.0%	
4892 C/S STAFF RCHG	13,159	2,402	10,677	8,275		8,275	22.5%	
4893 C/S O'HEAD RCHG	3,101	560	2,820	2,260		2,260	19.9%	
4899 DEPOT REALLOCATION	1,141	155	711	556		556	21.8%	
CORN EXCHANGE :- Indirect Expenditure	205,275	44,881	188,288	143,407	0	143,407	23.8%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(127,621)	(23,273)	(101,857)	(78,584)				
105 BURWELL HALL								
1005 BURWELL HALL LETTING	28,681	6,627	31,200	24,573			21.2%	
1052 EXPENSES RECOVERED	0	170	750	580			22.6%	
BURWELL HALL :- Income	28,681	6,797	31,950	25,153			21.3%	0
4001 SALARIES	59,252	9,739	46,804	37,065		37,065	20.8%	
4002 ER'S NIC	5,106	1,160	4,925	3,765		3,765	23.6%	
4003 ER'S SUPERANN	8,785	1,594	5,744	4,150		4,150	27.7%	
4007 PROTECTIVE CLOTHING	0	0	300	300		300	0.0%	
4008 TRAINING	0	0	500	500		500	0.0%	
4011 RATES	865	644	2,150	1,506		1,506	29.9%	
4012 WATER RATES	909	110	825	715		715	13.4%	
4014 ELECTRICITY	2,987	353	2,500	2,147		2,147	14.1%	
4015 GAS	2,322	736	4,146	3,410		3,410	17.7%	
4016 CLEANING MATERIALS	2,213	381	2,050	1,669		1,669	18.6%	
4017 CONTRACT CLEAN/WASTE	3,281	725	2,800	2,075		2,075	25.9%	
4021 TELEPHONE/FAX	235	69	260	191		191	26.5%	
4025 INSURANCE	437	125	445	320		320	28.2%	
4028 I.T.	1,494	406	1,000	594		594	40.6%	
4032 PUBLICITY	330	0	1,000	1,000		1,000	0.0%	
4036 PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	4,576	144	5,000	4,856		4,856	2.9%	
4038 OTHER MAINTENANCE	1,885	602	1,825	1,223		1,223	33.0%	
4042 EQUIPMENT INC. FURNITURE	378	460	1,500	1,040		1,040	30.7%	

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee - 8 September 2025.

Month No: 3

Management accounts 1 April to 30 June 2025.

	Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
4045 LICENCES	475	512	485	(27)		(27)	105.5%	
4048 ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	1,790	0	1,825	1,825		1,825	0.0%	
4064 HEALTH & SAFETY	498	0	0	0		0	0.0%	
4099 MISCELLANEOUS	54	0	200	200		200	0.0%	
4142 TEA DANCE COSTS	113	0	0	0		0	0.0%	
4888 O/S STAFF RECHARGE	2,020	0	5,000	5,000		5,000	0.0%	
4890 O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	159	0	326	326		326	0.0%	
4892 C/S STAFF RCHG	4,456	1,199	5,339	4,140		4,140	22.5%	
4893 C/S O'HEAD RCHG	1,549	280	1,410	1,130		1,130	19.9%	
4899 DEPOT REALLOCATION	478	0	711	711		711	0.0%	
BURWELL HALL :- Indirect Expenditure	106,648	19,238	99,070	79,832	0	79,832	19.4%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(77,967)	(12,441)	(67,120)	(54,679)				
6000 plus Transfer from EMR	1,940	0	0	0				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(76,027)	(12,441)	(67,120)	(54,679)				
106 MADLEY PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE								
1052 EXPENSES RECOVERED	1,204	0	0	0			0.0%	
1060 INSURANCE RECOVERED	519	0	530	530			0.0%	
MADLEY PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE :- Income	1,724	0	530	530			0.0%	0
4025 INSURANCE	519	0	530	530		530	0.0%	
4036 PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	7,617	0	0	0		0	0.0%	
4038 OTHER MAINTENANCE	1,856	0	0	0		0	0.0%	
4048 ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	0	0	760	760		760	0.0%	
4059 OTHER PROF FEES	0	0	3,000	3,000		3,000	0.0%	
4888 O/S STAFF RECHARGE	0	0	533	533		533	0.0%	
4890 O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	0	0	35	35		35	0.0%	
4892 C/S STAFF RCHG	888	240	1,067	827		827	22.5%	
4893 C/S O'HEAD RCHG	247	56	282	226		226	19.9%	
4897 MTCE O'HEAD RECHARGE	0	0	1	1		1	0.0%	
4899 DEPOT REALLOCATION	0	0	76	76		76	0.0%	
MADLEY PARK COMMUNITY CENTRE :- Indirect Expenditure	11,127	296	6,284	5,988	0	5,988	4.7%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(9,403)	(296)	(5,754)	(5,458)				
6000 plus Transfer from EMR	7,617	0	0	0				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(1,786)	(296)	(5,754)	(5,458)				

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee - 8 September 2025.

Month No: 3

Management accounts 1 April to 30 June 2025.

	Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
301 TOWER HILL CEMETERY								
1050 RENT RECEIVED	13,620	6,810	13,620	6,810			50.0%	
1060 INSURANCE RECOVERED	262	0	200	200			0.0%	
1099 MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	183	31	0	(31)			0.0%	
1100 BURIAL FEES	9,284	1,857	8,850	6,993			21.0%	
1101 GRANT OF RIGHTS	1,060	172	1,200	1,028			14.3%	
1102 INTERMENT OF ASHES	17,596	3,278	13,000	9,723			25.2%	
1105 MEMORIAL FEES	5,771	1,728	6,500	4,772			26.6%	
1106 MEMORIAL PLAQUES	594	197	500	304			39.3%	
1108 CHAPEL FEES	508	132	450	318			29.3%	
TOWER HILL CEMETERY :- Income	48,876	14,204	44,320	30,117			32.0%	0
4001 SALARIES	14,621	3,715	15,602	11,887		11,887	23.8%	
4002 ER'S NIC	1,306	451	1,915	1,464		1,464	23.5%	
4003 ER'S SUPERANN	3,173	806	3,385	2,579		2,579	23.8%	
4011 RATES	3,792	1,139	3,850	2,711		2,711	29.6%	
4012 WATER RATES	1,689	405	850	445		445	47.6%	
4014 ELECTRICITY	894	52	900	848		848	5.7%	
4016 CLEANING MATERIALS	0	0	30	30		30	0.0%	
4017 CONTRACT CLEAN/WASTE	1,325	480	1,500	1,020		1,020	32.0%	
4025 INSURANCE	0	0	445	445		445	0.0%	
4028 I.T.	0	309	0	(309)		(309)	0.0%	
4036 PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	7,466	6,316	6,000	(316)		(316)	105.3%	
4038 OTHER MAINTENANCE	52	0	0	0		0	0.0%	
4041 EQUIPMENT HIRE	0	200	400	200		200	50.0%	
4042 EQUIPMENT INC. FURNITURE	178	0	100	100		100	0.0%	
4059 OTHER PROF FEES	0	0	100	100		100	0.0%	
4064 HEALTH & SAFETY	0	0	102	102		102	0.0%	
4099 MISCELLANEOUS	195	45	200	155		155	22.7%	
4110 SUBSIDIZED LETTINGS	0	0	200	200		200	0.0%	
4350 PLAQUES PURCHASED	326	136	605	470		470	22.4%	
4355 MEMORIAL MAINTENANCE	1,400	0	2,000	2,000		2,000	0.0%	
4888 O/S STAFF RECHARGE	78,495	22,569	110,000	87,431		87,431	20.5%	
4890 O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	8,710	1,513	7,164	5,651		5,651	21.1%	
4892 C/S STAFF RCHG	13,369	3,604	16,017	12,413		12,413	22.5%	
4893 C/S O'HEAD RCHG	4,650	841	4,230	3,389		3,389	19.9%	
4899 DEPOT REALLOCATION	16,714	2,818	15,643	12,825		12,825	18.0%	
TOWER HILL CEMETERY :- Indirect Expenditure	158,356	45,398	191,238	145,840	0	145,840	23.7%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(109,480)	(31,195)	(146,918)	(115,723)				
6000 plus Transfer from EMR	1,427	0	0	0				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(108,053)	(31,195)	(146,918)	(115,723)				

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee - 8 September 2025.

Month No: 3

Management accounts 1 April to 30 June 2025.

	Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
302 WINDRUSH CEMETERY								
1100 BURIAL FEES	19,481	3,901	22,785	18,884			17.1%	
1101 GRANT OF RIGHTS	21,261	7,489	27,633	20,144			27.1%	
1102 INTERMENT OF ASHES	3,642	404	5,394	4,990			7.5%	
1105 MEMORIAL FEES	6,028	647	7,597	6,950			8.5%	
1106 MEMORIAL PLAQUES	212	0	0	0			0.0%	
WINDRUSH CEMETERY :- Income	50,624	12,441	63,409	50,968			19.6%	0
4001 SALARIES	14,621	3,715	14,932	11,217		11,217	24.9%	
4002 ER'S NIC	1,306	451	1,217	766		766	37.0%	
4003 ER'S SUPERANN	3,173	806	3,241	2,435		2,435	24.9%	
4011 RATES	7,984	2,398	8,689	6,291		6,291	27.6%	
4012 WATER RATES	318	171	242	71		71	70.7%	
4014 ELECTRICITY	2,426	299	2,750	2,451		2,451	10.9%	
4016 CLEANING MATERIALS	0	0	31	31		31	0.0%	
4017 CONTRACT CLEAN/WASTE	1,157	867	793	(74)		(74)	109.3%	
4021 TELEPHONE/FAX	0	0	273	273		273	0.0%	
4025 INSURANCE	131	0	130	130		130	0.0%	
4028 I.T.	0	309	0	(309)		(309)	0.0%	
4036 PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	9,595	448	2,040	1,592		1,592	22.0%	
4037 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	966	51	510	459		459	10.0%	
4038 OTHER MAINTENANCE	2,092	135	1,530	1,395		1,395	8.9%	
4042 EQUIPMENT INC. FURNITURE	54	6	1,530	1,524		1,524	0.4%	
4059 OTHER PROF FEES	0	0	1,020	1,020		1,020	0.0%	
4064 HEALTH & SAFETY	0	0	102	102		102	0.0%	
4099 MISCELLANEOUS	216	0	0	0		0	0.0%	
4350 PLAQUES PURCHASED	103	61	102	41		41	60.2%	
4355 MEMORIAL MAINTENANCE	1,085	0	1,790	1,790		1,790	0.0%	
4888 O/S STAFF RECHARGE	67,030	15,633	110,000	94,367		94,367	14.2%	
4890 O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	6,583	1,102	7,164	6,062		6,062	15.4%	
4892 C/S STAFF RCHG	13,369	3,605	16,017	12,412		12,412	22.5%	
4893 C/S O'HEAD RCHG	4,650	840	4,230	3,390		3,390	19.8%	
4899 DEPOT REALLOCATION	15,125	2,405	15,643	13,238		13,238	15.4%	
WINDRUSH CEMETERY :- Indirect Expenditure	151,984	33,302	193,976	160,674	0	160,674	17.2%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(101,361)	(20,861)	(130,567)	(109,706)				
6000 plus Transfer from EMR	6,215	0	0	0				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(95,146)	(20,861)	(130,567)	(109,706)				

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee - 8 September 2025.

Month No: 3

Management accounts 1 April to 30 June 2025.

	Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
303 CLOSED CH'YARDS ST MARYS/HOLY								
4036 PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	34,588	356	11,000	10,644		10,644	3.2%	
4040 ARBORICULTURE	1,000	0	1,000	1,000		1,000	0.0%	
4059 OTHER PROF FEES	0	0	1,000	1,000		1,000	0.0%	
4888 O/S STAFF RECHARGE	4,668	1,873	0	(1,873)		(1,873)	0.0%	
4890 O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	971	122	0	(122)		(122)	0.0%	
4899 DEPOT REALLOCATION	579	225	0	(225)		(225)	0.0%	
CLOSED CH'YARDS ST MARYS/HOLY :- Indirect Expenditure	41,805	2,577	13,000	10,423	0	10,423	19.8%	0
Net Expenditure	(41,805)	(2,577)	(13,000)	(10,423)				
6000 plus Transfer from EMR	31,060	0	0	0				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(10,745)	(2,577)	(13,000)	(10,423)				
305 ALLOTMENTS								
4013 RENT PAID	(125)	0	125	125		125	0.0%	
4036 PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	1,866	0	1,600	1,600		1,600	0.0%	
4037 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	0	0	1,000	1,000		1,000	0.0%	
4040 ARBORICULTURE	900	0	0	0		0	0.0%	
4888 O/S STAFF RECHARGE	10,528	0	5,500	5,500		5,500	0.0%	
4890 O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	832	0	358	358		358	0.0%	
4892 C/S STAFF RCHG	3,347	900	4,004	3,104		3,104	22.5%	
4893 C/S O'HEAD RCHG	1,163	210	1,058	848		848	19.8%	
4899 DEPOT REALLOCATION	2,119	0	782	782		782	0.0%	
ALLOTMENTS :- Indirect Expenditure	20,630	1,110	14,427	13,317	0	13,317	7.7%	0
Net Expenditure	(20,630)	(1,110)	(14,427)	(13,317)				
Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments :- Income	412,046	111,142	436,577	325,435			25.5%	
Expenditure	913,938	202,339	931,579	729,240	0	729,240	21.7%	
Net Income over Expenditure	(501,892)	(91,197)	(495,002)	(403,805)				
plus Transfer from EMR	48,259	0	0	0				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(453,633)	(91,197)	(495,002)	(403,805)				
Grand Totals:- Income	412,046	111,142	436,577	325,435			25.5%	
Expenditure	913,938	202,339	931,579	729,240	0	729,240	21.7%	
Net Income over Expenditure	(501,892)	(91,197)	(495,002)	(403,805)				
plus Transfer from EMR	48,259	0	0	0				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(453,633)	(91,197)	(495,002)	(403,805)				

HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Public Halls Report

Meeting Date: Monday, 8 September 2025

Contact Officer: Venue & Events Officer

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 has been recruited and started working at the beginning of August. This role will be integral to the day-to-day operation of the public halls, events planning and marketing. The Venue & Events Officer has been focussing on maintaining the operational services expected across Public Halls and Events and has been onboarding the Venue & Events Co-ordinator, who has started to take the day-day operation responsibility on board. This report outlines some updates on projects and proposals from the last meeting.

Seat Sponsorship

The Venue & Events Officer has researched industry examples of seat sponsorship to guide a proposal for this at the Corn Exchange. The below table has been put together to outline examples of seat sponsorship packages available at other small theatres around the country. The findings show a wide variety of cost and term length and some extra benefits with the package.

Theatre/venue	# of seats	Cost of Sponsorship	Duration	Position on seat	Image of Plaque	Further Notes
Barn Theatre, Cirencester	200	One off £200 donation	1 year	Information not available	Image not available	Donators also get: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular e-news with Barn events and insight The opportunity to book a backstage tour (2 invites) Public thank-you on our dedicated supporter web page Invitation to Barn Theatre Annual Event. Subject to various restrictions that may or may not be in place at the time of your visit.
Oxford Play House, Oxford	350	£600 £6000	5 years Lifetime	Back of the seat		A plaque will be placed on the back of a seat of your choice (subject to availability), and we'll be in touch so you can choose your own wording (up to 50 characters).
Bear Pit Theatre Stratford upon Avon	109	£100 (one seat) £150 (two seats)	Information not available	Information not available	Image not available	Naming a seat is a perfect way to celebrate a special occasion, dedicate to a memory of someone dear to you, or add your own name or your organisation's name to the supporters of this unique 'little' theatre in the heart of Stratford-upon-Avon. Sponsorship funds will go towards paying the cost of the seats.
The Watermill, Newbury	197	£250 – Stalls £150 – Circle	5 years	Underside of the seat		
The Corn Exchange Newbury	40 (cinema room)	£300 donation (or 5 annual instalments of £65)	5 years	On the head rest	Each seat will have a headrest cover, embroidered with your chosen name or message	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only available in the Cinema Room You'll be invited to attend annual VIP cinema screenings to see your headrest cover in situ. Your chosen name and/or message can be up to a maximum of 40 characters. Corporate seats to include your business name with or without the company logo are available for £400 plus VAT. VIP screenings take place once per year for 5 years
Hanger Farm Southampton	83 bleachers + 76 flat (chairs?) 159 total	£75 Bleachers £150 Front Row	3 years	Underside of seats	The plaques are gold in colour. The font will be Calibri. Space for 30 words, across 4 lines.	Your seat sponsorship includes: a personalised seat plaque for you or a loved one lasting three years and a certificate to recognise the name and location of your sponsored seat.

Corn Exchange Proposal

Based on the research above, this report outlines a proposed seat sponsorship initiative for The Corn Exchange, aimed at generating additional funding to support maintenance, programming, and community events. Seat sponsorships provide an opportunity for individuals, families, businesses, or organisations to support the theatre by having their name and/or message displayed on a plaque affixed to the rear of a seat.

Package	Cost	Duration	Details of Package
Individual	£100	3 years	Direct printed message onto plaque on back of seat. Voucher for 2x Prosecco Glasses Recognition on "Supporters" section of website.
Corporate	£200	3 years	Direct printed message onto plaque on back of seat. Voucher for 4x Prosecco Glasses Recognition on "Supporters" section of website, listed above individual donors.

Benefits

Officers recommend not to include priority booking as a benefit, due to the number of third-party hirers shows who currently manage their own box office. It is possible to have priority booking for WTC ran shows only, however the number of these shows is un-determined and will likely cause confusion for the sponsors.

It is recommended that the individual doner receives a voucher for 2x glasses of prosecco and the corporate doner receive 4x vouchers, as previously agreed.

An additional benefit to consider is a "Supporters" section of the Corn Exchange website to recognise individual and corporate doners.

The Plaque

Officers recommend that the plaque should be gold coloured aluminium, directly printed with the doners name and message. These would cost £4.50 each in batches of 20, or £3.95 if ordering 50+ using a local supplier. Gold coloured aluminium plaques have a lifespan of 5-10 years, more than covering the proposed term length of the sponsorship.

The plaque will be fixed to the back of the seat, allowing for more visibility than if they were on the bottom of the seat (only visible when the seat is vacant). The plaque will be 50x100mm and can print up to 50 characters.

Marketing Strategy

- Direct mail campaign to previous patrons and local businesses.
- Social media advertising
- Promotional material at events.
- Outreach through local press and radio

Things to Consider

The examples above are all full-time theatres / arts centres, whereas the Corn Exchange is a multi-purpose venue with lots of use without the tiered seating. This makes it a less attractive incentive for doners than full-time theatres who hosts show weekly. Whilst officers are working on increasing the number of events at The Corn Exchange, with the new staffing

structure only just being implemented, perhaps this project should hold off until the events programming has increased. The Venue & Events Officer will also be exploring potential improvements to the Corn Exchange as an event venue, including centralising the box office for all shows, which could also open up the option of priority booking as a benefit.

Members should consider, if the project is approved, whether it should be implemented immediately, or delayed allowing for other developments to the venue to take place, which could make the incentive more attractive to the public.

Hearing Loop System for Corn Exchange and Burwell Hall

Current Situation

The old portable hearing loop at the Corn Exchange is faulty and upon research for a replacement, it has become clear that a portable hearing loop is not suitable for a room the size of the hireable rooms at The Corn Exchange and Burwell Hall and is rather designed for an over the desk conversation (such as at the café counter or in a one-one meeting).

Another common option which cannot be considered for the Gallery Room is a Perimeter Hearing Loop, as the magnetic field could extend beyond the room (including into the Café) where confidential meetings / conversations could be listened to. However, due to the nature of Burwell Hall being privately hired – this could be an option for this hall.

Legal Implications

The Equality Act (2010) requires service providers (including public and community buildings) to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people, including those who are deaf or hard of hearing. A hearing loop is an example of a reasonable adjustment in rooms where speech, performance, or audio presentations take place.

Actions

Officers will obtain an evaluation of needs and specific quotations for a hearing loop system in The Gallery Room and Main Hall of Corn Exchange as well as Burwell Hall. Depending on the available options, officers will explore the possibility of a DIY install dependent on the complexity of the installation.

Pavement License

Officers have applied to renew our pavement license on the Market Square, which has been a very popular feature for the 1863 Café and Bar, in particularly for our Tunes On The Square events.

Burwell Play Day

The OPA Play Day ran at Burwell Recreation Ground was a successful event, well attended by families of Witney. The event was free to attend with free participation activities. Taken from OPA's report on the event: *"Playday is the national day for play, celebrated each year across the UK. The theme for this year's Playday is ... Spaces for Play. This year's theme highlights the vital importance of accessible, inclusive spaces where children and young people have*

opportunities to play freely, spending time, and connecting with friends – and feel valued as part of their community.”

Officers used this event as an opportunity to open the doors to Burwell Hall and show people around to promote it as a hireable space. The Venue & Events Co-ordinator was based at the hall and was able to show some potential hirers around and answer questions. We have received two additional enquiries for private parties off the back of seeing the hall at the play day.

Officers have contacted OPA to enquire about hosting the play day at Burwell again next year and, with more time to plan, we will use it to promote the venue again.

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 hearing loop (or alternative) in all halls meets the Council’s would ensure the buildings remain inclusive for all users.
- b) Biodiversity – All matters relating to Biodiversity will be considered when making decisions for both halls.
- c) Crime & Disorder – The continued use of halls as a safe space
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – no direct impact

Risk

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

1. The seating sponsorship initiative, if launched prematurely, could result in minimal interest due to a lower quantity of events. Delaying the implementation of the project, to allow for the events program to expand first could make the initiative more appealing to the public.
2. Installing the incorrect type of hearing loop in a room that requires confidentiality, such as the Gallery Room, could break that confidentiality. The council should ensure that the correct loop system is installed to avoid this.
3. The Equality Act (2010) does not specifically require a hearing loop in public venues; however, it does require reasonable adjustment to be made. If a hearing loop system is not feasible, officers will explore alternative ways to promote accessibility in our venue for those who are hard of hearing and will provide details and costs at the next meeting.

Social Value

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

1. The Seat Sponsorship initiative is an opportunity for community engagement with the Corn Exchange.

Financial implications

1. The cost of gold-coloured aluminium plaques for the seats is £3.95 per unit, when ordering more than 50.
2. The cost of a hearing loop is to be determined for each room; however, suitable systems look to be around £2,000 each.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and;

1. Decide whether the seat sponsorship package should be implemented and consider any amendments to the terms
2. If approved, decide whether the seat sponsorship package should be implemented immediately, or delayed allowing further development to the events programming before launching the packages.

HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Corn Exchange Business Report

Meeting Date: Monday, 8 September 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. The report also provides an update on the recent business of 1863 Café & Bar.

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 provides 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.

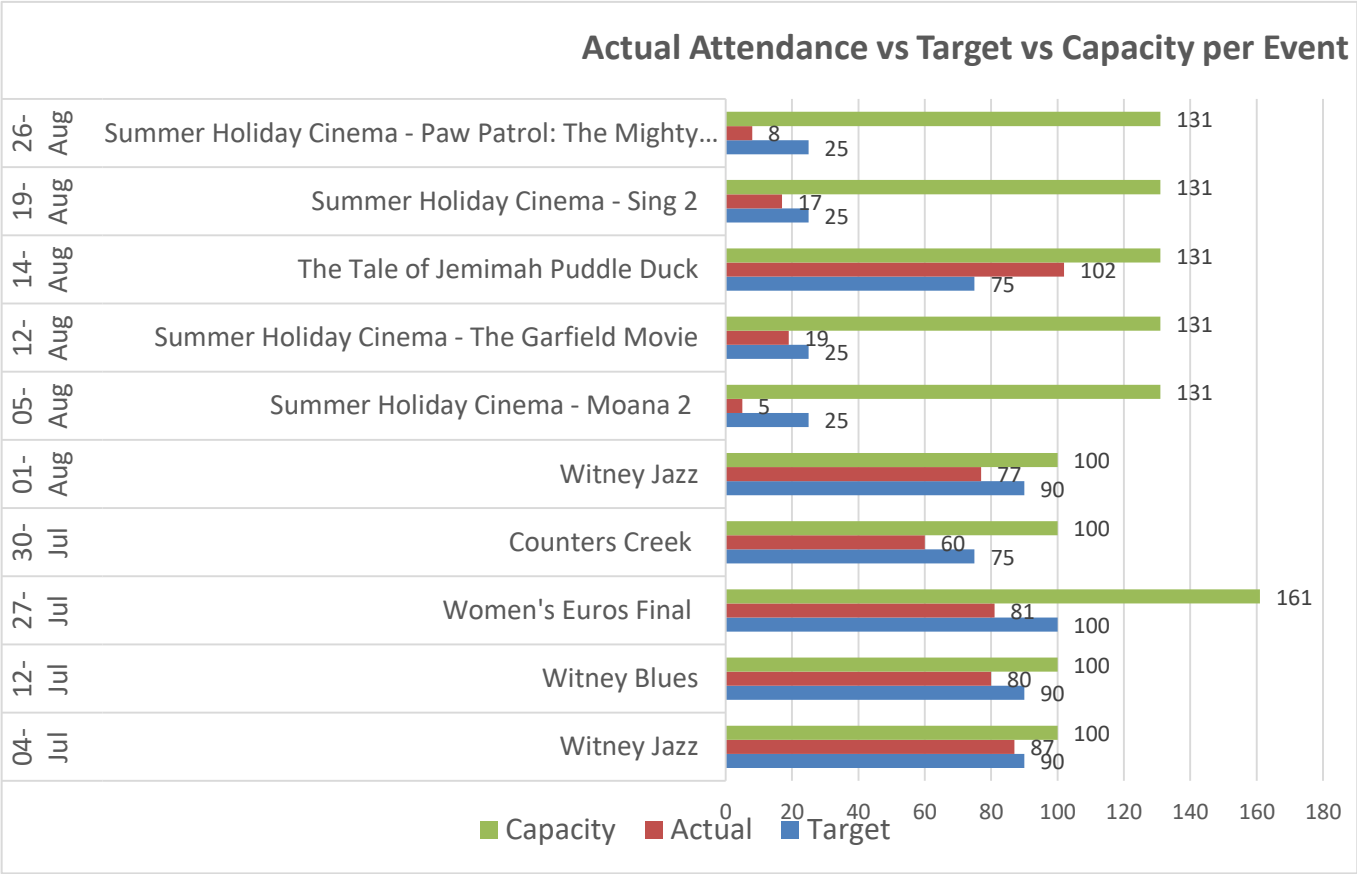
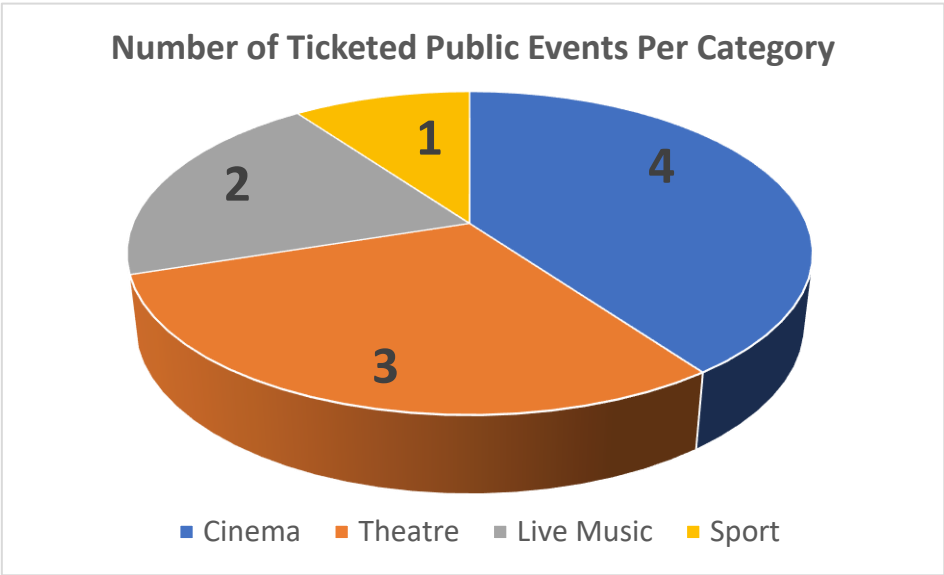
The newly appointed Venue & Events Co-ordinator commenced their role in early August. Following induction, their initial focus has been on enhancing events marketing and programming. They have also made improvements to the organisation of venue equipment and contributed fresh ideas aimed at enhancing the overall quality of our venue and events services.

Looking ahead, the Co-ordinator will work closely with both existing and new hirers to maintain a high standard of service for room bookings and events, whilst also supporting the delivery of WTC-led events at The Corn Exchange.

This will enable the Venue & Events Officer to concentrate on reviewing current procedures and developing new processes and policies, ensuring our venues and events continue to

operate efficiently, meet compliance standards, and deliver a high-quality experience for users.

The graphs below show the number of ticketed events hosted by category, since the last report in July 2025, and 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

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.

Witney Blues

Officers are delighted that Little Live Music company, who promote the regular Witney Jazz shows, have continued to host 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. These shows have continued to prove popular with high attendances recorded in May and July.

Tunes on the Square

This has been a standout series of events for The Corn Exchange throughout the summer months. Each evening has been well attended with constant positive feedback from customers on the music, bar staff and atmosphere of the event. Officers have ensured that the musicians are briefed on maintaining a reasonable volume level which has been respected, and we have received no complaints from residents or nearby businesses.

These events have made great use of our pavement license on Market Square and has driven extra income through bar sales at 1863.

Jemima Puddle Duck

Officers organised and delivered a touring production of Jemima Puddle Duck, targeted at families during the summer holidays. The show was well attended, with 102 tickets sold on a 70/30 ticket split agreement. This meant that WTC received a share that is higher than a Group 4 show venue booking fee, making this event a financial success. Attendees were left impressed with the show, and officers are looking to invite the same company back for a different show in the Easter Holidays of 2026.

Women’s Euro’s Final

The Corn Exchange screened the final of the Women’s Euro 2025 tournament, where the England Lionesses came out winners. This was another successful use of the Corn Exchange cinema screening equipment, allowing us to connect with local sports clubs to provide a community space to watch the national team. The screening had 81 people in attendance, many of them families from local football clubs.

Summer Holidays Cinema

Attendances for the Summer Holidays Cinema have been disappointing this year, despite promotional effort from officers. A national cinema chain with a Witney branch released screenings with tickets for just £1 for kids and adults meant our pricing was uncompetitive. Officers will review the feasibility of hosting family orientated screenings over the Christmas holidays, based on the plans of the other local Cinema to avoid wasting time and resources on hosting these screenings.

Other Events:

As well as the above events, The Corn Exchange has also hosted several non-ticketed public events including, community events, presentations, exhibitions and markets etc. from local and national organisations including:

- WODC Local Plan Drop-In Event
- Aspire Oxford Art Exhibition
- Specsavers Coffee Morning
- Mynt Image Market
- Weekly Tea Dance

The Corn Exchange and Burwell Hall have also hosted several private events including regular group meetings, awards ceremonies, dance/drama showcase, a private party and wedding reception.

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 (returning 30th September)
- 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

Upcoming Public Ticketed Events

11th – 13th - Buttercross Theatre: Vintage Hitchcock

19th September - Witney Blues

20th September - Denotones 60's Experience

27th September - WhatYouWill Presents As You Like It

3rd October - Witney Jazz

4th October - Thrill Collins

18th October Witney Wine Festival

30th October – 1st November WDS Bleak Expectations

7th November – Witney Jazz

8th November – Break The Rules (Status Quo Tribute with John Coghlan) Charity Gig

21st November – Witney Blues

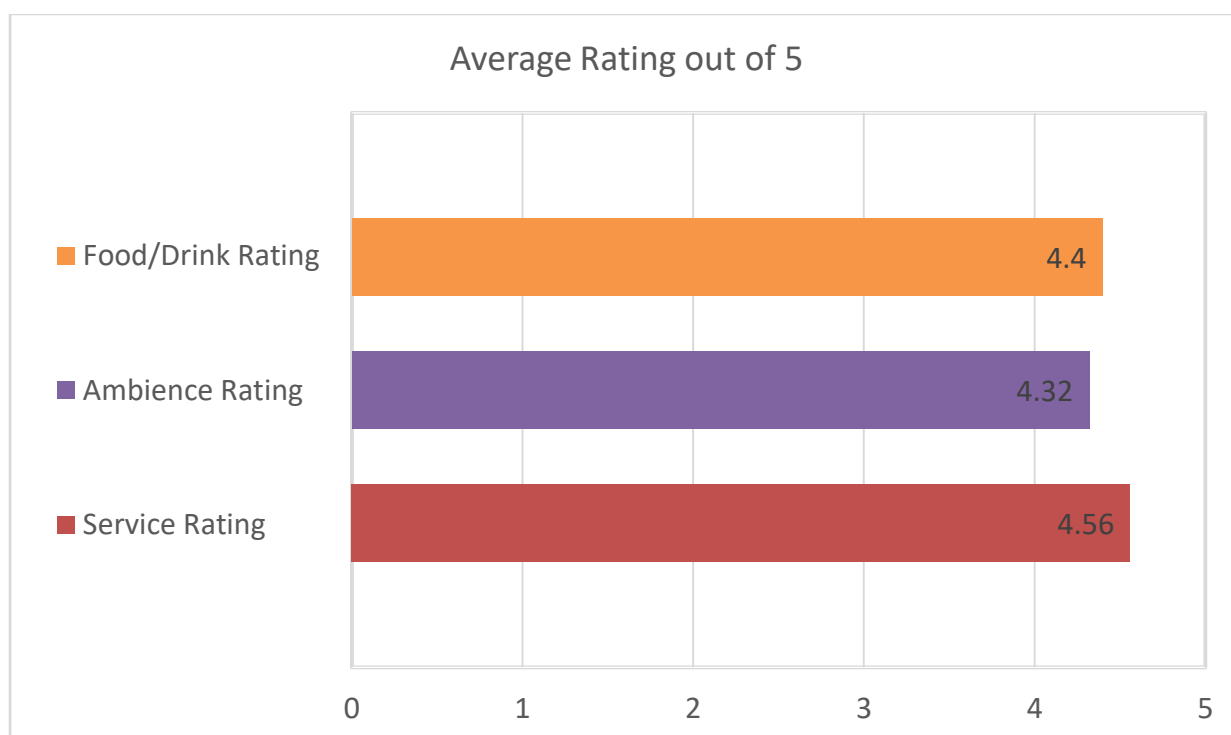
1863 Café & Bar

The 1863 Café & Bar has increased in popularity over the last 12 months and has seen a record high footfall throughout this summer. Since 1st April, overall takings from the Café and Bar are up 20% on the same period in 2024. This figure can be attributed to several factors. Consistent good weather has allowed the café to make the most of the pavement license on the Markert Square, creating much more available table coverage. This has also allowed our Tunes on the

Square event series to take place outside every Friday, increasing footfall and bar income as a result.

The Cafe & Bar Manager and Operatives have worked hard throughout this period to provide consistently high standards of customer service and have built a positive rapport with our regular customers, keeping them returning to the café.

The 1863 Café has received lots of positive feedback from customers via a designated feedback survey with some points to consider improvement on as well. The overall scoring has been summarised in the table below.



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

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.

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

The Corn Exchange is registered as a warm space this winter, providing a cosy refuge from the cold, as well as a welcoming environment for socialising and engaging in conversation.

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.
- 1863 Café provides affordable hot drinks and has enabled social connection for lots of elderly people. Sharing tables is encouraged which allows us to serve more customers and creates a warm and friendly atmosphere.

Financial implications

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

Recommendations

Member are invited to note the report.

HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS



Agenda Item: New Ashes Section at Windrush Cemetery

Meeting Date: Monday, 8 September 2025

Contact Officer: Operations Manager

Background

The current ashes section at Windrush Cemetery is nearing capacity. The section comes in the form of a path with ashes burial plots on either side. Each plot can accommodate 2 ashes interments, can be memorialised with a sloping tablet, and accommodates a small stone garden for memorial items and flowers. There are 65 remaining plots in this section, with the current rate of interments, more capacity would be required by summer 2026.

Current Situation

When the first path was nearing capacity, a second adjoining path was added. A third cannot be added as it would enter the area designated with possible archaeological remains and the meadow burial section. Understanding this, officers instructed Cemetery Design Services (CDS) in 2024 to map all remaining burial plots and include a new ashes section. The area is located on the west side of the cemetery between the two right-of-way paths.



Officers have researched some options for this area, which involve trails where ashes could be interred into columns and above-ground vaults. But due to the location of the new section and capacity requirements, it's felt a lawned ashes section would be most in keeping and cost-effective.

Option 1

Plotted lawned ashes graves where Exclusive Right of Burial (EROB) owners can have a headstone and a small garden area. This is the option currently available in the Tower Hill “Family Ashes” section.

Option 2

Is an improved version of option one; instead of ashes caskets being directly interred into the ground and coming into contact with soil and decomposing, they will instead be interred into concrete vaults. Up to 4 sets of ashes can be interred in each Vault. The concrete vaults will ensure the ground doesn’t sink and provides additional protection to the ashes caskets.



Option 3

Is an enhancement on Option 2, preinstalled ashes vaults, with a memorial. It ensures uniformity as the memorial areas are clearly defined, and memorials are uniform. To ensure these are available for ashes interments, they would have to be preinstalled in blocks.



The Vaults in options 2 and 3 would need to be pre-installed so that they are ready for use. The installation would be carried out by the Operations Team and the supplier.

Access path

The area is located approximately 40m from any of the cemetery paths. CDS have laid out all the new paths and roadways in the new cemetery design. To ensure the area is accessible for those with mobility issues, a path is necessary, especially in the winter months when the cemetery can become waterlogged. The path would also benefit the new burial session that will start being used in 2026.

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 lawned graves can be hard to access for those with mobility issues.
- b) Biodiversity – the ashes path has been a challenge to keep weed-free, and the only viable method has been the use of herbicides.
- c) Crime & Disorder – There have been reports of items being stolen from the graves.

Risk

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

The offer of multiple burial options is important for residents of Witney to ensure their burial wishes are honoured. If further burial plots are not added by summer 2026, this will be an option that Witney Town Council cannot offer.

Option 3 would not be the only option for grave purchasers, so individual headstone choice would still be available via other options.

Financial implications

- Option 2, The cost of 20 glass reinforced concrete vaults is £3,960.
- Option 3, Utilises a vault in Option 2 as well as an additional cost of £585 each for the above ground elements, it's recommended these are installed in blocks, Therefore the cost to the Council for the purchase of each block of 20 would be £15,660
- Due to the preinstallation both options 2 and 3, the interment fee could be reduced as the time spent by Town Council staff on the day of interment is less.
- Option 3 could also offer customers further savings as there would be no need for the purchase of a memorial stone or to pay the fee for the permission to erect a memorial.
- Officers are yet to obtain a quote for the path.

Recommendations

Member are invited to note the report and

1. Instruct officers to obtain quotes on the required path for the next Halls Cemeteries & Allotments committee meeting on the 10 November 2025;
2. Consider the options outlined in the report for the new ashes section at Windrush Cemetery and allocate an appropriate budget for the 2026-27 financial year (options 2 and 3 would require an outlay budget of up to approximately £15,660 but this would be recouped over time through the purchase of the graves).

HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS



Agenda Item: Lakeside Allotments Flooding update

Meeting Date: Monday, 8 September 2025

Contact Officer: Operations Manager

Background

At the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments committee meeting on 19th May 2025, the Operations Manager updated committee members on the flooding issues at Lakeside Allotments. The recommendation was made that officers investigate any additional hydrology survey work that may be required.

Current Situation

Officers have not yet consulted with the contractors who completed the topographical survey but have engaged with site representatives at Lakeside to address some of their concerns and requested historical flow/flooding data in Colwell Brook from WASP.

A meeting was arranged with allotment site representatives on the 12th of June 2025, and the following actions were agreed.

1. A drainage plan is to be obtained for the area from Thames Water.
2. A response is sought from the Environment Agency as to why the weir that was recommended in the 2008 Ducklington flood report was not constructed.
3. That the ownership of the ditch running from the entrance of the allotments along the south boundary be investigated.

As a local authority, the council can obtain a utility map for free, but due to Thames Water changing the system used for requests, this has been delayed. A thorough site investigation was carried out by officers to understand what water drains into the north side ditch, and officers can confidently say it is the drainage from the carpark of the flats and drainpipes from the flats and hotel.

The Environment Agency were contacted following the meeting regarding the weir, but no response has yet been received.

The ditch was identified to be under the ownership of Witney Town Council, and once identified, a full clearance was completed, all vegetation was removed, and the ditch was excavated back out.

From site inspections, it has also been noticed that the flooding has not had a lasting impact on the allotment, and all plots continue to cultivate crops.

Impact Assessments

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

- a) Equality – no impact.
- b) Biodiversity – impact from potential flooding.
- c) Crime & Disorder – no impact.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – Flooding in the area has an impact on the environment.

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 are no risks identified in the report.

Social Value

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

The allotment sites are an important provision by the council. They can offer the residents of Witney with small or no garden, extensions to their outdoor space for cultivation purposes. The loss of allotments for any period of the year would be detrimental to these residents.

Recommendations

1. Members are invited to note the report.
2. Agree for officers to instruct contractors to complete a flood survey at a cost of approximately £2,500

Addendum added 05.09.2025

Officers have now made contact with the civil engineers who completed the original topographical survey at Lakeside Allotments in August 2021.

They have provided a copy of the survey and confirmed their remit was to complete the survey to identify the extent of bund required to stop the flooding. Officers feel it is now necessary to instruct a hydrologist to complete a flood survey of the site to identify any measures that can help elevate the level of flooding. One company who have completed several flood surveys in the Witney Area have provide a quote of £2,050 ex VAT plus an additional £450 for a detailed drone survey. The allotment reserve is substantial, so would cover the survey cost.