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Policy, Governance & Finance
Committee Meeting of Witney Town Council

Monday, 22nd September, 2025 at 6.00 pm

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

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

Admission to Meetings

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

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

Recording of Meetings

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

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

Agenda

1. **Apologies for Absence**

   To consider apologies and reasons for absence.

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

   Standing Order 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 confirmed to the Proper Officer **before** the meeting that they are unable to attend.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

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

3. **Minutes** (Pages 5 - 13)

   a) To adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Policy, Governance and Finar Committee meeting held on 21 July 2025

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

Date of Publication 16 September 2025

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.

Policy

5. **Subsidised Letting Policy Review** (Pages 14 - 17)

To receive and consider a revised Subsidised Letting Policy.

6. **Lost Property Policy** (Pages 18 - 24)

To receive and consider a draft Lost Property Policy.

7. **Open Water Policy** (Pages 25 - 37)

To receive and consider a Draft Open Water Policy.

8. **Community Window Policy** (Pages 38 - 39)

To adopt a Community Window Policy as recommended by the Stronger Communities Committee at their meeting of 15 September 2025.

9. **Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy** (Pages 40 - 42)

To adopt a Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy as recommended by the Personnel Sub Committee at their meeting of 10 September 2025.

10. **Corporate Volunteering Policy** (Pages 43 - 45)

To adopt a Corporate Volunteering Policy as recommended by the Personnel Sub Committee at their meeting of 10 September 2025.

11. **Long Service Award Policy** (Pages 46 - 47)

To adopt a Long Service Award Policy as recommended by the Personnel Sub Committee at their meeting of 10 September 2025.

Governance

12. **Payment of Accounts** (Pages 48 - 69)

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

13. **Internal Audit Report 2025**

To note a non-material error in relation to the AGAR/Annual Internal Audit Report 2025. The date of the first internal audit visit was erroneously reported as having taken place on 16.10.25, when instead it was 16.10.24.

14. **Annual Governance Statement 2026 - Assertion 10** (Pages 70 - 72)

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

Town Hall, Market Square
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Mrs Sharon Groth FSLCC FCMI
Town Clerk

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E: info@witney-tc.gov.uk

w: www.witney-tc.gov.uk

15. **Public Works Loan Board - Approval of Loan** (Pages 73 - 74)

To receive notification of Council borrowing in relation to the West Witney Project.

Finance

16. **Finance Report**

To receive and consider the report of the R.F.O concerning the financial position of items under the remit of this Committee in 20xx/xx.

17. **Budget Parameters 2026-27** (Pages 75 - 80)

To receive and consider the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO)

18. **Financial Matters referred from Spending Committees** (Pages 81 - 83)

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

19. **Grants & Subsidised Lettings** (Pages 84 - 103)

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

20. **Broadcasting of Council Meetings** (Pages 104 - 106)

To receive and consider the report of the Committee Clerk.

21. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

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

22. **Strategic Property, Legal & Insurance Matters**

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

(To Follow)

Staffing

23. **HR & Health & Safety Support** (Pages 107 - 109)

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

24. **Minutes - Personnel Sub Committee 10 September 2025**

The Committee will adjourn for the meeting of the Personnel Sub- Committee.

To receive and consider the confidential minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting held on September 2025, and approve the recommendations contained therein. (Sent under separate cover)



Town Clerk

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

Held on Monday, 21 July 2025

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

Present:

Councillor R Smith (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	G Doughty
	A Bailey	S Simpson
	J Doughty	O Collins (In place of R Crouch)
	T Ashby	
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Nigel Warner	Responsible Financial Officer
Others:	None	

F421 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Cllr R Crouch with Cllr O Collins attending as a substitute.

F422 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr A Bailey declared a prejudicial interest in Agenta item 13 as there was a request for subsidised hire to fundraise for his mayoral charities in the year, which Cllr J Doughty concurred with as Deputy Mayor.

Cllrs R Smith and T Ashby declared a personal, non-prejudicial interests in agenda item 13 as they were personally linked to Bright Futures and Buttercross Scouts respectively.

The Responsible Financial Officer also declared an interest due to his direct involvement with Witney Food Revolution.

There were no further declarations from either Councillors or Officers.

F423 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 9 June 2025 and the Special Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 23 June 2025 were received.

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 9 June 2025 and the Special Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 23 June 2025 be approved as correct records of the meetings and be signed by the Chair.

F424 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

F425 **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 welcomed the number of positive comments that were made about its services, and it was agreed that Member cohesion and transparency were paramount to raise the professional profile of the Council and the work being undertaken. It was proposed by Cllr J Doughty and seconded by Cllr S Simpson that consideration be given and officers provide a report on the broadcasting of the Council's meetings. All Members were in agreement.

The negative comments were noted and several of these were linked to those being addressed under the auspices of the Parks & Recreation Committee. However not all areas were under the control of the Town Council and so those would need to be passed onto the relevant landowners.

It was also agreed that the issues raised which impacted those with mobility problems be referred to the town council's Community Voices Task & Finish Group.

Finally, it was agreed that the comments relating to other issues not under the control, or responsibility of the Town Council should be forwarded to those organisations so that they may review and take steps to address the resident's concern.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the comments in relation to Witney Town Council services be noted and,
3. That, the Council promotes You said, we did items where appropriate to better inform residents on comments made and,
4. That, the Council writes to West Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, Thames Valley Police, and the Woolgate Centre to lobby and/or highlight the comments in relation to their services and facilities and,
5. That, officers prepare a report on broadcasting Council meetings to be presented to this Committee on 22 September 2025.

F426 **SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY REVIEW**

The Committee received a draft social media policy which had been recommended for approval by the Stronger Communities Committee on 14 July. At the meeting a Member had raised that there were some items in the original policy which had not been included so a review had taken place by officers and this version included amendments.

Members welcomed the review and asked for a change to section 3, incorporating 'groups and forums' into the final amended paragraph and points on officer and mayoral pages. In addition, it was agreed there should also be wording on Councillors administering and/or moderating social media pages and that in section 6, Officers 'should' report incidents to the Senior Management Team of the Council instead of having just one named individual.

Resolved:

That, the social media policy, as presented be adopted by Witney Town Council with the above amendments.

F427 **COUNCILLOR TRAINING POLICY REVIEW**

The Committee received and considered the report and accompanying Councillor training policy from the Deputy Town Clerk.

The policy was based on a training statement agreed by the Council in 2024 and suggested that new Councillors should undertake a Council induction, code of conduct, and data protection training. A list of upcoming training opportunities for Councillors was also provided.

Resolved:

That, the Councillor Training Policy, as presented, be adopted by Witney Town Council.

F428 **PAYMENT OF ACCOUNTS**

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

Members were pleased to note that no cheques were issued in May as a result of moving to electronic payments and this had a monetary benefit to the Council.

Resolved:

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

Payment reference/ Cheque Numbers	In the sum of:	Account
DDs, ELPs 42-63 ;65- 68 (electronic payments) and Standing Orders April 2025	£245,991.45	General CB 1
Cheques 35161-35179, cancelled cheques 34988 & 35064; DDs, BACs and Standing Orders April 2025	£20,389.67	Imprest CB 2

DDs, ELPs 64 & 69 to 96 and Standing Orders May 2025	£338,626.58	General CB 1
Cancelled cheques 351589, DDs and Standing Orders May 2025	£9,112.47	Imprest CB 2

F429 **MODEL PUBLICATION SCHEME**

Members were advised that, due to time constraints, this item would now be presented to the meeting of 22nd September, to be ratified at Full Council on 6th October.

Resolved:

That, the update be noted.

F430 **FINANCE REPORT**

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

Members were provided with the Council's management accounts, a statement of earmarked reserves, investment statements to June, investment activity for the previous fiscal year and the external bar stocktake reports for March and June quarters.

The Chair welcomed the report and financial detail which was supplemented by a summary prepared by the R.F.O at the meeting. Finances were looking healthy as were investment returns which were received along with notification of changes to the investment manager of the Churches, Charities, and Local Authorities (CCLA) funds which the RFO advised was a positive move.

A vote was necessary on the approval of the report recommendations with the result being for each.

For	Seven
Against	Nil
Abstention	One

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the management accounts of the Committee's services to 31 March 2025 be approved and,
3. That, the statement of Council reserves as at 31 March 2025 be approved and,
4. That, the report on investments to the period to 30 June 2025 be approved and,
5. That, the report on investment activity during 2024-25 be approved and,
6. That, the external bar stocktake report for the quarters to 31 March and 30 June 2025 be noted.

F431 **FINANCIAL MATTERS REFERRED FROM SPENDING COMMITTEES**

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

Resolved:

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

F432 **GRANTS & SUBSIDISED LETTINGS**

The Committee received the report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning grant activity to local organisations.

Members debated the requests and considered that Witney Flood Group were providing a worthwhile service, they attended and lobbied on residents' behalf and should receive the full amount requested.

With respect to the subsidised letting requests, there was concern the budget for the current year was almost expunged, therefore, the Committee had to scrutinise applications unless they could be covered internally from existing budgets, such as the Climate Fair and Mayor requests.

Members agreed Witney Jazz and Aspire should both be granted their requests, although noted the commercial operation of the former. A shortfall in the budget could be made up from the discretionary fund.

Resolved:

1. That, Witney Flood Group be awarded a grant of £800 and,
2. That, subsidised letting requests for use of the Corn Exchange be approved for Witney Jazz (£160), and Aspire (£70) and,
3. That, any an additional sum over and above the subsidised letting budget for the year be allocated from the discretionary grants cost centre and,
4. That, these grants be awarded under the General Power of Competence and awardees be asked to acknowledge the Town Council in any promotional material and,
5. That, the use of the Corn Exchange for up to three Mayor events be approved at a cost of £480 to be funded from cost centre 401/4150 and,
6. That, the use of the Corn Exchange for a Climate Fayre in October be funded from the Council's Climate & Biodiversity earmarked reserve and,
7. That, the correspondence from Apollos Clothing and Lowland Rescue Oxford be noted and,
8. That, a policy specifically for subsidised lettings be drafted by officers ahead of the next meeting.

F433 **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Resolved:

That in accordance with section (1(2) of the Public Bodies (admission to Meetings) Act 1960, and as extended by Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public, including the press,

be excluded from the meeting because of the confidential nature of the following business to be transacted.

F434 **YOUTH SERVICES GRANTS**

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

Members were advised that due to the overwhelming submission of applications, that the Stronger Communities Committee had delegated allocations to a small group of Members to score the submissions and make recommendations of the level of awards.

Applications had been grouped with the majority being awarded from the Youth Grant budget, however some had been recommended to be paid from the discretionary grant budget due to them not holistically aligning with the terms of the Youth Grant in order that it retained its integrity.

Two applications were unsuccessful, and the applicants would be advised of the reasoning as well as being directed towards other potential sources of funding.

Members thanked those involved in the decision making in what was a tight and restrictive timeframe.

Recommended:

1. That, the confidential report be noted and,
2. That, the following youth service grants should be awarded from cost centre 408/4169:

    a) Buttercross Scouts £3,500
    b) Friends of Springfield School £2,850
    c) 4th Girl Guides £1,000
    d) Parish of Witney £2,500
    e) Bright Futures £3,648
    f) West Oxfordshire Levellers £1,000
    g) Witney Food Revolution £2,150
    h) Yellow Submarine £2,000

3. That, in addition, the Committee agreed with the following recommendation on awards to be allocated from the discretionary grants fund, cost centre 407/4100:

    a) Ducklington Sports Club £1,700
    b) Tower Hill FC £1,000
    c) Witney Town Band (Juniors) £1,500

4. That, Home Start Oxford be awarded £11,000 from cost centre 418/4173 for their ongoing preventative work with young children in Witney and,
5. That, these grants be awarded under the General Power of Competence and awardees be asked to acknowledge the Town Council in any promotional material and,
6. That, youth services grants are not awarded to Apollos Clothing and the Community Loft at West Oxon Boxing & Fitness Club as they did not align with the purpose and/or criteria of the scheme.

F435 **IT PROVISION**

The Committee received and considered the confidential report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning the Council's future IT provision.

Members were satisfied with the due diligence conducted by officers in line with Council policies and recommended approval of Contractor 3 in the report.

Resolved:

1. That, the confidential report be noted and,
2. That, Contractor 3 be awarded the Council's IT provision contract.

F436 **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER 5(W)**

Resolved:

That, Standing Order 5(w) be suspended in order to allow the meeting to continue as it had now lasted for two hours.

F437 **DRAFT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2025-2031**

The Committee received and considered the confidential joint report of the Town Clerk/C.E.O and the R.F.O concerning a medium-term financial strategy (MTFS).

The Town Clerk advised the strategy would provide a robust three-year financial framework and would align with the Council's developing corporate strategic plan; this was a draft document which was currently in progress.

The Chair thanked officers for their work on the strategy, which would re-introduce a written plan for the Council as a model framework. This as well as the first version, provided at the last meeting was setting the parameters for the Council to work towards.

Resolved:

1. That, the confidential report be noted and,
2. That, the principle of adopting a medium-term financial strategy to support the Council's financial planning and management be endorsed and,
3. That, the updated MTFS as presented, providing an updated financial projection based on current assumptions be noted and,
4. That, the R.F.O continues to refine the MTFS to ensure it was fully aligned with the Council's emerging Corporate Strategic Plan and can support informed budgeting and decision-making over the medium term.

F438 **DRAFT CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2029**

The Committee received and considered the confidential report and draft Corporate Strategic Plan 2025-29 from the Town Clerk/C.E.O.

Members heard that the plan was a first draft and as such feedback was welcomed in order to refine it further as the Council continued to incorporate the changes to the WODC Local Plan and the changes to local government restructuring.

The Committee discussed the seven identified priorities with Members agreeing that Community Empowerment was key.

It was agreed the Committee take time to absorb the full documents and that it be reviewed again at the next meeting of the Committee ahead of the budget setting period that would commence in October 2025 with an action plan of works.

The Council was currently compiling its response to the West Oxfordshire District Council Local Plan 2041, Members agreed that the Town Councils strategic priorities be included in that response.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Members consider the full document and provide feedback to the Town Clerk and,
3. That, the seven strategic principes be included in the Councils response to the WODC Local Plan 2041 consultation.

Cllr T Ashby left the meeting during the following item briefly between 8:19 and 8:21pm

F439 **PROPERTY, LEGAL & INSURANCE MATTERS**

The Committee received and considered the confidential report of the Town Clerk/C.E.O.

Updates were provided on the Courtside Hub development, Windrush Place Pitches and Pavillion and Little Green.

There were also updates on the progress of Witney Lawn Tennis Club's lease agreement, two ongoing insurance claims and the request from Oxfordshire County Council on the designation of a byway at The Leys.

A report was also tabled regarding the issues being experienced with the historical paving of the Buttercross.

Resolved:

1. That, the confidential report be noted and,
2. That, no response be submitted in respect of the Byway request and,
3. That, additional information be provided for the consideration of Buttercross paving works in the 2026/27 budget setting.

F440 **STAFFING MATTERS**

The Committee received the minutes of the Personnel Sub Committee meeting held on 9 July 2025.

Resolved:

That, the confidential minutes of the Personnel Sub-Committee meeting held on 9 July 2025, and the recommendations contained therein be approved.

The meeting closed at: 8.22 pm

Chair

DRAFT

WITNEY
TOWN COUNCIL

Policy Document

Subsidised Lettings Policy

Adopted: Policy, Governance & Finance Committee Minute no:

Review Date:

1. General

This policy outlines the criteria and procedures for providing subsidised or reduced-rate hire of Town Council facilities to eligible organisations. It is intended to support local voluntary and community groups whose work benefits the residents of Witney, in line with the aims of the Council's Grant Aid Policy.

2. Eligibility & Criteria

To be eligible for a subsidised letting, applicants must:

- Be a not-for-profit, charitable, voluntary, or community organisation.
- Deliver activities that provide measurable benefits to the residents of Witney.
- Demonstrate financial need or limited access to alternative funding sources.
- Be compliant with all necessary safeguarding, insurance, and licensing requirements.

Commercial enterprises, political parties, or individuals are not eligible for subsidised lettings under this policy.

3. Scope

This policy applies to the hire of any Witney Town Council-owned venues or open spaces, including but not limited to:

- Public Halls;
- Public event spaces;
- Sports pitches/Recreation Grounds.

Subsidies may be awarded in the form of a percentage reduction from the standard hire rate. The following guideline bands apply and will be judged in line with the Council's Bookings Policy group charges.

3.1 Level Percentage Reduction

Level 1	25%	Organisations delivering community benefit with some external funding available or charging for services.
Level 2	50%	Local groups run by volunteers with limited funding, open access to the public.

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Level 3 75% Registered charities or CICs offering free-to-access services for vulnerable or underserved groups.
Level 4 100% Events or services wholly initiated or supported by the Council with exceptional community benefit and no funding.

Reductions are at the discretion of the Council and subject to budget availability.

4. Application Process

4.1 To ensure that fair and proper consideration can be given to all requests, the Council requires the following to be submitted:

- A completed application form including a summary of the event or activity.
- The most recent full set of accounts available.
- Evidence of benefit to the local community.
- Any additional information the organisation considers will support their application for subsidised hire.

4.2 If the organisation is a new entity with no accounts available, please provide a Business Plan, stating aims and objectives, along with a financial projection for at least the current fiscal year and the latest bank statement if available.

5. Deadlines

3.1 Applications are considered by the Council's Policy, Governance & Finance Committee bi-annually. The deadline for receipt of applications is 12 noon on:

- 30th May 2025 for the Policy, Governance & Finance meeting on 9th June.
- 23rd January 2026 for the Policy, Governance & Finance meeting on 2nd February.

3.2 Applicants will be advised approximately four weeks after the above dates whether their application has been successful or not after ratification by the Full Council. The Town Council's decision is final.

6. Considerations for Approval

In evaluating applications, the Council will consider:

- Alignment with strategic priorities and community objectives (below;)
- Financial need and available funding;
- Frequency and duration of use;
- Previous use and conduct (if applicable).

<u>Council Aims & Objectives</u>

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6.1 The Council has the following objectives in its Strategic Vision. In offering financial support, all applicants must identify which objective its project/purpose:

6.1.1 A vibrant local economy – promote local businesses and help develop locally controlled economies which put Witney first whilst preserving and enhancing our history and unique identity.

6.1.2 An engaged and supported community – actively seek engagement with all residents and work with others to enable them to lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives.

6.1.3 A beautiful Witney – further improve and develop our open spaces and work to protect and enhance our environment.

6.1.4 A forward-looking Town Council – represent residents and businesses on key strategic issues facing the town.

6.1.5 An empowered community – encourage collaboration for the overall success of the town through the facilitation and championing of change programmes and initiatives.

6.1.6 A respectful community – promote inclusivity and always treat people fairly and with respect regardless of race or racial group, sex or sexual orientation, religion or belief, age, gender identity or disability.

6.2 Climate Emergency

6.2.1 Witney Town Council declaring a Climate Emergency on 26 June 2019, and is committed to the vision of carbon neutrality by 2028 at the latest.

6.2.2 Witney Town Council works with partners anchored in the area to deliver carbon reductions and grow the local economy.

6.3 Social Value

6.3.1 The Council recognise the social, economic and environmental value attributed to the services provided by Community Organisations/Groups and charities to residents.

6.3.2 Applicants should be able to identify the additional benefits of their application and demonstrate how this improves their lives.

7. General Conditions

In addition to the criteria listed at the beginning of the guidance, the following also applies:

7.1 Applicants can only apply once in any 12-month period.

7.2 The giving of a grant one year does not set a precedent for another year.

7.3 An application for a retrospective event/project will not be subsidised (unless the delay has occurred due to the Council's meeting calendar).

7.4 In order to comply with the Local Government Transparency Code 2015, organisations should provide a registered charity or company number on their application form, if applicable.

7.5 The Town Council is committed to adhering to the Equalities Act 2010. Any application which, in the Council's opinion, does not meet this legislation will be refused.

8. Confidentiality, Transparency & Data Protection

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8.1 The Council is subject to the Data Protection Act 2018 but must be transparent about the granting of its public funds to external parties. The Council will:

- Publish a link to the Town Council's Privacy Notice on the Subsidised lettings Application Form
- Publish the application form in its publicly viewable agenda pack for the deciding committee with the named contact on the form (but without other personal details and signature).
- Share supporting information of the application in its publicly viewable agenda pack unless advised it is commercially sensitive, or it falls under an exemption from disclosure under legislation.

11. Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner if required by legislative or strategic changes.

For any further information, please contact the Witney Town Council Communities Department on info@witney-tc.gov.uk

All completed applications with supporting information should be returned to the above email address for the information of the Responsible Financial Officer.

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WITNEY
TOWN COUNCIL

Policy Document

Lost Property Procedures

Adopted: Policy, Governance & Finance Committee Minute no:

Review Date:

1. Introduction

1.1. This Policy has been prepared to provide guidance to officers on the procedures to manage and control lost property in an open, fair and documented way, thereby protecting the interests of both employees and visitors to the Council's land, buildings and events.

1.2. The Council has a responsibility to provide safe custody of money and other personal property handed in by officers, visitors or public found on our premises or grounds. Any such items or objects, found on Council premises, or land regardless of value, are considered lost property and should be dealt with as detailed below.

2. Definition of Lost Property

2.1. 'Lost property' is a broad term used to identify items that do not belong to the Council and have been left (accidentally or otherwise) in our premises or on our land. 'Lost property' does not refer to items left in the care of officers at a venue/event for the duration of a visitor's stay, for example a pushchair.

2.2. 'Lost property' also relates to an item which has been reported lost in one of our venues our on our land but has not been found by or handed in to officers.

2.3. For the purposes of this policy lost property is separated into three classifications:

(a) Perishable items.
(b) Low value, non-perishable items.
(c) Valuable items.

2.4. If an officer is unsure about the value of an item (and therefore which processing method to follow), advice should be sought from the Line Manager.

3. Finding and reporting lost property

3.1. The purpose of our Lost Property Policy is to reunite lost belongings to their owners. Wherever possible, items should be returned to the people who have lost them. At Council run events if there is any identifying material e.g. a name on a debit card, a name on a medicine bottle within a bag this should be used to locate the owners by PA system. Mention of lost property should not be made, the named owner should be asked to make themselves known to a member of the event team who will then tell them the location of their property.

3.2. All items of lost property, including articles found at the Corn Exchange, 1863 Café, Burwell Hall, play areas, cemeteries, recreation grounds, Lake & Country Park etc., are to be collected into one designated area and stored at the Admin Office.

3.3. All items of lost property are to be recorded on the "Lost Property – Item Found" form. All parts of Section 1 must be completed. For ease of identification, lost property items should be placed into a bag/envelope which should then be sealed securely closed. The

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bag/envelope should be clearly marked with a unique reference number (Location Name/Date/Time e.g. Leys/060910/1215).

3.4. Labelled items (complete with reference numbers) should be placed into a suitable receptacle in an ascending chronological order where possible. Reference numbers and item locations should be recorded on the associated "Lost Property – Item Found" form.

3.5. Items should be collected in a secure place away from public access. They should be collated by the month in which they were found and stored in these groupings.

3.6. When bags are searched, contents should be itemised as part of the item description on the "Lost Property – Item Found" form.

3.7. Any money that is handed in should be counted in the presence of at least two officers. If the money is in note form, then the serial number of each note should be recorded and documented. All monies should be placed in a sealed envelope and be secured in the safe. All details are to be recorded on the "Lost Property – Item Found" form. All parts of Section 1 must be completed.

3.8. All completed forms should be collected in a file kept at the Admin Office, or wherever visitor enquiries are directed. It is important to have this information close at hand to be able to efficiently reunite lost property with its owner.

3.9. If a member of the public wishes to report an item lost within our buildings and land, the "Lost Property – Item Reported Lost**"** form should be completed. All parts of Section 1 must be completed. A full description of the item(s) should be obtained, details of where and when the item was lost, approximate time and date and any distinguishing marks to support proof of ownership.

3.10. If in doubt about what to do with an item, contact the Police for guidance (non-emergency number is 101).

4. Returning Lost Property

4.1. Property should be returned to the owner if the officer is satisfied, they are the rightful owner.

4.2. A full description of the item(s) should be obtained, details of where and when the item was lost, approximate time and date and any distinguishing marks to support proof of ownership. This description should be matched to details given on "Lost Property – Item Found" forms. Identification of the visitor should also be sought. In the event of a dispute, a Senior Manager should be asked to make a final decision.

4.3. For record purposes it is important that the rightful owner signs, dates and supplies an address in the found property book when collecting the item. Section 2 of the "Lost Property – Item Found" form should be completed. This personal information is to be taken and protected in accordance with Data Protection Legislation.

4.4. It is recommended that the collection of valuable property be conducted or overseen by a Senior Manager.

4.5. Completed "Lost Property – Item Found" forms are to be removed from the general lost property paperwork file when the item has been claimed. Forms should be given to the Line Manager and filed securely in accordance with the Council's Data and Retention Policy.

5. Retention Periods for Lost Property

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5.1. Storage, notifications and disposal of specific items will be managed according to the table below.

6. Unclaimed Lost Property

6.1. At the start of each month, an officer should review the items that have been held from one to three calendar months previously and dispose of accordingly.

7. Lost Property Log

7.1 A lost property log for recording the following details should be kept within the Admin Office:

- Reference number.
- Date.
- Brief description of item.
- Location found or lost.
- Location of item while being stored.
- Status – Claimed or unclaimed.
- Date claimed or disposed of to Charity, the Police or otherwise disposed of.

8. Privacy Statement

8.1 Witney Town Council is committed to ensuring that the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 1998 are met. Please refer to the Council's data protection policy and privacy notice here:
Witney Town Council Data Protection Policy and Privacy Notice

LOST PROPERTY – ITEM FOUND

Section 1

Item Description:

(What is the item? Colour, size, identifying marks. Be as thorough as possible.)

Location found: _____

Date and time: _____

Found by: _____

Form completed by: _____

Reference number and location: _____

(Location name/date/time e.g. Leys/060910/1215)

Additional notes:

(Enquiries about item made?)

_____

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Section 2: To be completed upon item claim

Name of claimant: _____

Address: _____

_____

_____

Signature: _____

Date and time: _____

ID provided? _____

Officer name: _____

LOST PROPERTY – ITEM REPORTED LOST

Section 1

Item Description:

(What is the item? Colour, size, identifying marks. Be as thorough as possible.)

Location lost: _____

Date and time: _____

Name of owner: _____

Contact details: _____

_____

_____

(Please provide a telephone number, address or email address.)

Additional notes: _____

_____

_____

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Section 2: If this item has been located, please process as usual and enter reference number and location here:

_____

Please contact the owner to allow them to collect their property

Date owner contacted: _____

Officer name: _____

9. Storage, notification and disposal guidance

Type of item	Period of retention	Notification and method of disposal
Credit/Debit cards	1 week	Phone the telephone number on the back of the card and state you have found a card and follow their advice. Do not contact the person named on the card unless you know exactly who they are and have their direct contact details. Store the card in a secure location for a maximum of one week. Log the item on the lost property log with the name on the card, the first 6 digits of the card and the last 4 digits of the card. After a maximum of 1 week cut the card up into small pieces with scissors making, it difficult to reconstruct the card information. Ensure that the secure code, signature, card number, magnetic strip and electronic chip are cut in various directions (to make it harder to piece together). Dispose of the cut card in normal waste bins (if possible, divide the shards into several different waste bins). Update the lost property log.
Passports and personal identification, keys, etc.	3 months	If possible, owner to be contacted and asked if they wish to claim the goods or how they would like the Council to dispose of them. If it is not possible to contact the owner, report to the relevant authority immediately (Police, bank) and store in a secure location unless advised otherwise by Police or the issuer. Unless the issuer requests the Council to return the item to them, and if unclaimed after 3-month period, destroy and securely dispose of the item and update the lost property log.
Items of potential or known value e.g. purse, money or jewellery	3 months	If possible, owner to be contacted and asked if they wish to claim the goods or how they would like the Council to dispose of them.

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		If it is not possible to contact the owner, report to the Police and store in secure location unless advised otherwise by Police. If unclaimed after 3 months, donate to the Mayor's charity. For purses, handbags, wallets etc. all personal information is to be destroyed and securely disposed of and the Lost Property Log is updated.
Low value items **e.g. clothing, children's toys, single gloves.**	1 month	If possible, owner to be contacted and asked if they wish to claim the goods or how they would like the Council to dispose of them. If it is not possible to contact the owner, store in a secure location. If unclaimed after 1 month, donate to local charity shops or dispose of in general waste and update the Lost Property Log.
Medicine	1 month	If possible, owner to be contacted and asked if they wish to claim the goods. Store securely for 1 month, unless perishable, and if unclaimed, take it to a pharmacy to dispose of safely and update the Lost Property Log. If medication is perishable, take it to pharmacy for safe disposal.
Food, perishables and items where hygiene is a consideration.	1 day	Where items are perishable or hygiene is a concern, items will be disposed of in general or food waste, unless claimed on the same day.

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LOST PROPERTY LOG

Reference number	Date	Brief description of item	Location found or lost	Location of item while being stored	Status claimed or claimed	Date claimed or disposed of to Charity, Police or otherwise disposed of

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WITNEY
TOWN COUNCIL

Open Water Safety Policy



Adopted by: Policy. Governance & Finance Committee. Minute no:
Date:
Review Date:

1

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1. Introduction

1.1 Within parks and public open spaces of Witney there are a range of open water features which enhance the environment for the enjoyment of people of all ages. These include lakes, rivers, Sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDs) through to tributaries which flow from small streams into fast flowing rivers like the river Windrush. The Council recognises the positive contribution that well managed water spaces can provide to the area, enhancing the environment, through leisure use, supporting tourism and healthy living objectives.

1.2 These features, however, present a potentially significant risk to people in summer when it is hot and swimming in cold water is attractive; and in winter when people are attracted to and may put themselves at risk by walking on ice over deep water.

1.3 Witney Town Council (WTC) through their risk assessment process will do all that is reasonably practicable to protect people from danger, and this policy has been established with this objective in mind.

2. Water Safety Policy - Statement of Intent

2.1 The Town Clerk is responsible for ensuring the appropriate management arrangements and resources are in place so as far as is reasonably practicable, all open water facilities and other areas of open water such as culverts, rivers, and streams, are maintained in safe conditions for the benefit of users.

2.2 The Council does not support or approve the use of any area of open water for swimming or any other water recreational activity.

3. Safety Criteria for Management and Design

3.1 There is continuous work being carried out to open water areas within our ownership, for example de-silting, water edge treatment etc. Before such work is undertaken several design factors will be taken into consideration to further improve safety.

4. Legal Responsibility

4.1 Under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, the Council are responsible for the following:

- identify what could cause injury or illness in your business (hazards)
- decide how likely it is that someone could be harmed and how seriously (the risk)
- take action to eliminate the hazard, or if this isn't possible, control the risk

5. Risk Assessment

5.1 An annual review of risk management is carried out to ensure mitigating measures are kept up to date. Additional reviews will be undertaken in line with any internal or

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external driving factors.

5.2 A generic risk assessment will apply to all open water areas along with site specific RA's as and where necessary.

6. Signage

6.1 The risk assessment will assist in supporting the need and location of suitable signs to maximize safety. Where a risk assessment has previously identified areas known to be attractive for swimming, additional "signs, normally positioned at main entrances to the site in addition to those displayed within life buoy stands, will be positioned at regular intervals around the water's edge.

7. Communication

7.1 The Council communicates the risks and dangers of open water through multiple platforms such as the Council's website and social media in alignment with awareness days, weeks, campaigns, hot spells and seasonal times of the year.

7.2 The Council will use awareness guidance in their communications on Water safety from ROSPA and other agencies and groups who specialise in highlighting the risks to reduce drowning and injuries.

8. Safety Inspections/Hazard Identification

8.1 We will ensure that routine safety inspections of open water are undertaken by WTC staff with any additional inspections to be undertaken as required. The risk assessments will be updated, amended or reviewed accordingly.

8.2 Inspection of rescue equipment is carried out weekly and recorded electronically. The results of all inspections will be recorded and maintained by the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer. Ad-hoc audits will be undertaken by the Compliance & Environment Officer.

8.3 Safety inspections will monitor:

- The provision and condition of rescue equipment.
- Safety signs and other information notices.
- Condition of the water and surrounding edges/banks.

8.4 All inspections will identify any missing or damaged equipment, signage etc., and will be recorded in the inspection report. Where the inspecting officer considers this to represent a significant hazard, immediate action will be taken to rectify and resolve the problem.

9. Supervision of Open Water Sites

9.1 Full time supervision is deemed to be neither reasonably practicable nor the most

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effective reaction to a water hazard. However, where employees are present on site, they may take a proactive approach in educating the public and highlighting the common dangers around open water. Angling is the only approved activity for WTC open water sites and supervision is not deemed to be necessary as the angling group their own safety guidance and responsibilities for their members.

10. Rivers and Brook Courses

10.1 In circumstances where rivers or brook courses run through parks and public open spaces under normal conditions the depth of water is negligible, and only in flood conditions the risk to users of the site increases. It is not practical to sign or provide lifebuoys for all sites where rivers and brook courses flow, in the event of such storm or flood conditions the use of the local media shall be used to highlight the potential increased risk to possible users of these sites.

11. Edge gradients

11.1 The critical feature of all water edges is the gradient above and more importantly, the gradient below the water line. How the edge is then treated will be influenced by environmental factors. Where the water edge is open and accessible and is to remain so, the edge profile should be graded appropriately.

11.2 It is recommended that shallow water (less than 0.66m) should be extended a minimum of 2m from the water edge, via 1:3 gradients, and a further protective margin of 1.75m with depths from 0.65 to 1.36m via a 1:2.5 gradient. This reduces the risk to the public by removing sudden change to depth and temperature..

12. Planting

12.1 Where access to the water's edge is not required, but either a steep gradient (Falling risk) or very shallow gradient (swimming temptation) exists, planting of vegetation and natural vegetation will provide adequate and aesthetic protection.

12.2 Regular inspections and maintenance of such will provide an effective natural deterrent to enter open water in these areas.

13. Shallow gradients

13.1 The attraction to enter the water at these points are increased and to deter access planting of water plants (reeds, willow etc.) can assist in discouraging persons entering the water at these points.

13.2 Regular inspections and maintenance of such will provide an effective natural deterrent to enter open water in these areas.

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14. Environmental Management

14.1 Weekly inspections include identifying any signs of pollution (oil/blue green algae/etc.) where wildlife may be put at risk. Any pollution discovered by WTC staff will be reported immediately to their line manager for the appropriate guidance provided by the Environment Agency to be taken.

14.2 It is often the case that the Environment Agency will report the presence of blue green algae to us. In such cases, we will ensure that appropriate warning notices are displayed around the affected area.

15. Fish Deaths and Environmental Incidents

15.1 Where incidents of large-scale fish deaths or other wildlife deaths are identified or reported these will be fully investigated by the Biodiversity and Green Spaces Officer with the support of the Environment Agency.

16. Ice on Open Water

16.1 When ice develops on open water at its sites, the Council will ensure that appropriate and adequate warning signs are displayed at all access points to the Lake and Country Park, and at primary access points to the open water. These signs will provide a clear warning of the danger for visitors to the Lake & Country Park.

16.2 When ice forms on open water it is the Councils policy not to break ice as it forms. The management of rescue equipment during icy conditions is addressed in Appendix 1.

17. Provision of Information

17.1 The Council recognises that the provision of appropriate and adequate information on water safety is crucial to share with staff and members of the public for both leisure and working activities in the vicinity of open water areas for accident prevention.

17.2 This information is made available in several ways:

- **Public Education**

  The Biodiversity and Green Spaces Officer will provide information on all aspects of water safety through an outreach program to local schools and community groups. This direct form of education is supported by the Emergency Services to highlight the risk and precautionary measures that can be taken.

- **Site Information**

  Information is provided at key points of access to areas of open water that provide details of the layout of the area. A map will be included at our larger open water location, (Witney Country Park), displaying the location of life preservers, the

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defibrillator, and access points for emergency services.

Signs will also include hazards in accordance with the recommendations of the RoSPA National Water Safety Committee and the requirements of the Health and Safety (Safety Signs and Signals) Regulations.

- **Council Website and Social Media**

Regular timely posts on social media platforms help raise awareness by providing guidance of the hazards associated with open water.

The digital notice board in the Admin Office window provides timely guidance on the dangers of open water during periods of extreme heat and cold weather conditions.

18. Rescue Equipment

18.1 The Council will provide life preservers in suitable and highly visible mountings at key locations around areas of open water. The locations of these are carefully considered and assessed taking into account likely points of access to water and places where a rescue attempt may reasonably take place.

18.2 Weekly inspections are implemented and recorded to check the condition and location of these preservers. Any remedial works identified are rectified in a timely manner according to the risk presented. Where vegetation around life preservers stands is identified as an issue on inspections, this will be cleared to ensure life preserver stands are visible.

18.3 Life preservers are seen by the public as a key element in lifesaving and it is recognised that in spite of their role in rescue attempts and as a warning reminder, life preservers are subject to vandalism and misuse.

18.4 Vandalism is a key concern and wherever possible vandal resistant components will be installed with incidents recorded and reported to the Council and the Police.

18.5 Where appropriate and as a result of a risk assessment, additional rescue equipment may be available in a vehicle for staff whilst they are working on or near open water. Staff who might be reasonably expected to have access to such equipment will receive appropriate training as to its use.

19. Reporting Accidents and Incidents

19.1 Where a member of staff is involved in an accident while at work or witnesses a member of the public have an accident, they shall report this to their line manager or the offices as soon as physically possible in accordance with Council procedures. A summary of which is included in Appendix 1 All accidents will be reviewed and analysed to identify the cause any if any lessons can be learnt to prevent any reoccurrence.

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19.2 Where the Council are notified of a member of the public being involved in an incident or accident, this will be managed in accordance with the procedures in Appendix 1. Members of the public are encouraged to report accidents and incidents to the Biodiversity and Green Spaces Officer by use of the Council's contact details displayed on site information boards.

20. First Aid Provision at Open Water Sites

20.1 With the exception of a defibrillator at the Witney Lake and Country Park, there is no first aid equipment stored on any Council open water locations.

20.2 First aid equipment, in accordance with the standards set out in the current First Aid at Work Approved Code of Practice, is carried on all Council service vehicles.

21. Work on or Near Water

21.1 In circumstances where staff are required to work on or support staff carrying out such duties or activities on open water or rivers, they must be provided with buoyancy aids that meet International Standards Organisation (ISO) standard ISO 12402. The buoyancy aid might also carry the CE mark relating to standards EN 393 to 399.

21.2 In accordance with the above a minimum of two staff must be involved when the use of watercraft is required.

21.3 A suitable and sufficient risk assessment must be undertaken before any such work or activities are undertaken.

22. Review and Monitoring

22.1 This policy shall be reviewed every two years or sooner if legislation or organisational needs change.

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APPENDICES

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Appendix 1

Open Water Rescue Provision Guidance on the provision of life preservers

The Council recognises the value of providing life preservers at appropriate locations around all areas of open water. The location of life preservers is determined as a result of a risk assessment to ensure that they are provided at points where they may be easily accessible by any person who needs to use them for rescue purposes.

In determining the positioning of life preservers, particular attention is paid to locations where there have been previous incidents, fast flowing water, and the presence of very steep banks in areas accessible to the public.

It is generally recognised that:

Life preservers may be provided at strategic intervals around all of the areas of open water managed by the Council. (Guide 200 meters)

Vandalism and theft represent both a risk to members of the public if an in-water incident arises and a severe financial burden to the Council when replacement becomes necessary.

Life preservers are intended to be dropped into the water from a height or thrown a short distance to a casualty who is in the water. In severe winter conditions, the water surface on most lakes and ponds freezes. These conditions significantly reduce the value of life preservers as rescue devices.

Life preservers provided in such situations act as an attraction to vandals as they can be projected across the surface of the ice to a point where their recovery represents a risk to staff or others venturing onto the ice.

In situations where members of the public may choose to ignore warnings and venture onto the ice, they are likely to break through the surface within a few feet, and therefore reaching or wading distance, of the edge.

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Appendix 2

Emergency Accident/Incident Reporting Procedure

Should any of the following work-related accidents/incidents occur to an employee or other person within your area of responsibility:

- A death or a major or serious injury to an employee requiring urgent medical treatment from a doctor or at a hospital.
- A death or a major or serious injury to a member of the public requiring urgent medical treatment from a doctor or at a hospital.
- A Dangerous Occurrence occurs on a site under your control e.g., collapse of a scaffold, explosion, release of toxic gas etc.

All accidents and incidents will be reported in accordance with the Council's Health and Safety Policy.

THE PRIORITIES FOR DEALING WITH ANY SERIOUS ACCIDENT/INCIDENT ARE:

- Treatment of casualty.
- Make the site/area safe to prevent further accidents/incidents. Other than essential work to isolate the area the scene should be left undisturbed until the accident has been investigated.
- Notify your Line Manager and Compliance and Environment Officer.

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Appendix 3

Guidance Note - Open Water Emergency Incidents

To ensure all staff members are responding consistently to open water emergency incidents, which include members of the public swimming/paddling, or any other unauthorised water activity follow the procedure below:

1. If unauthorised user(s) is in immediate danger, contact 999 for emergency services support.

2. In any event, contact your Line Manager or the office to record the incident, giving as many facts/details as possible.

3. If unauthorised user(s) is not in immediate danger attempt to "call in" the unauthorised user(s), stating the dangers, and the Council's policy to unauthorised open water use.

4. After a period of time if the unauthorised user(s) are still in the water, make further contact with WTC, to seek further assistance. The office will contact the emergency services.

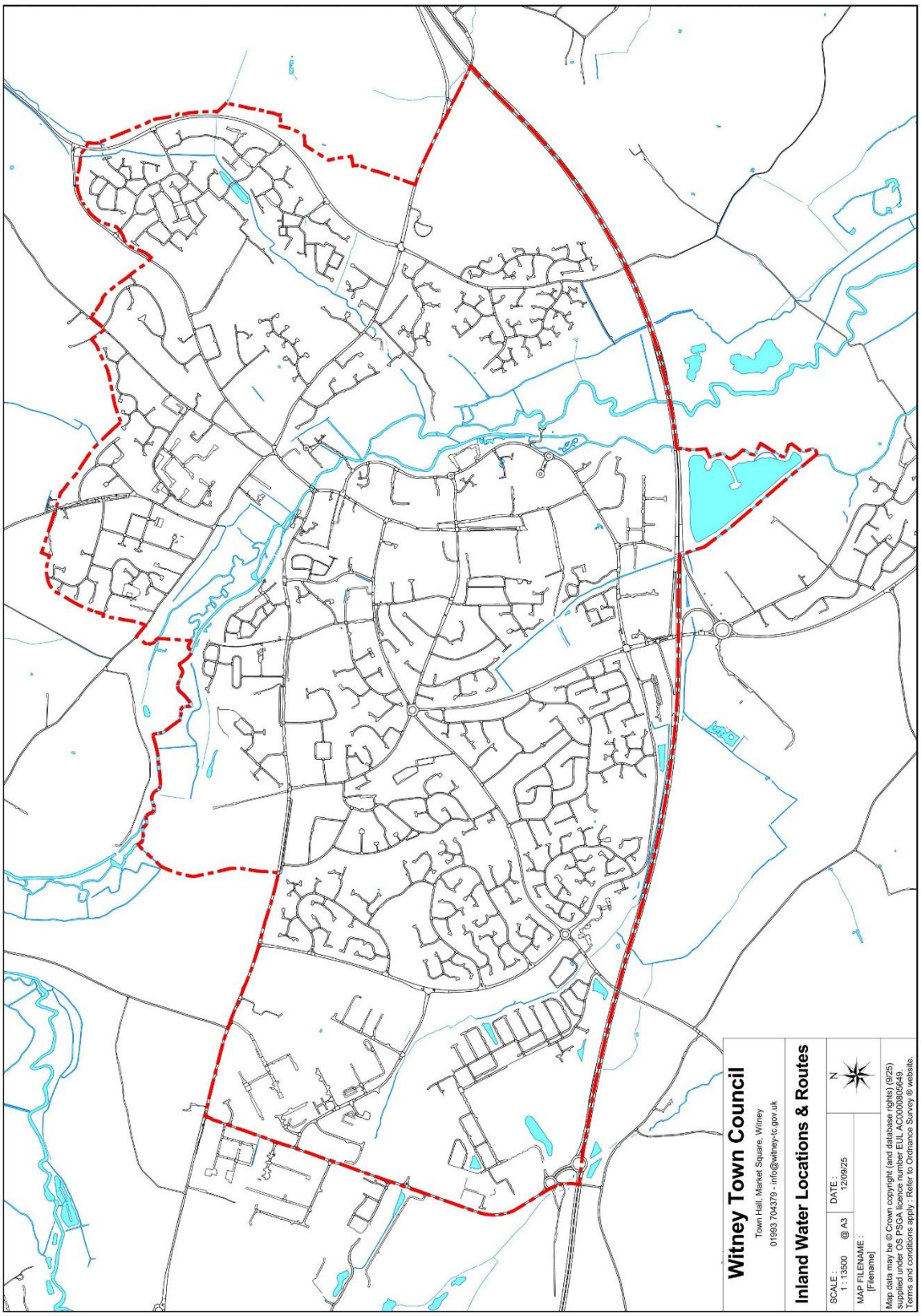
5. At no time should you leave the incident until:
   (a) You are relieved by another member of staff, OR
   (b) For a short period of time to make contact via the nearest telephone, then return to incident, OR
   (c) If the incident has been resolved.

6. **DO NOT, AT ANY TIME, PLACE YOURSELF IN ANY DANGER. ALWAYS USE RESCUE EQUIPMENT PROVIDED.**

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Appendix 4

Witney - Map of Open Water



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WITNEY
TOWN COUNCIL

Policy Document

Community Window Space

Adopted: Policy, Governance & Finance Committee. Minute no:

Review Date:

a. The window is for community use only; open to charities, groups or community organisations operating in Witney, or for the promotion of services to the benefit of Witney. No business or political organisations and all at the discretion of the Town Council (with its decision being final). Advertising for paid services is not permitted.

b. Each let is for a two-week period. A longer booking can be discussed, again the Town Council has final discretion.

c. There is no cost for the hire.

d. All bookings must be made via the Town Council Reception.

e. Groups are fully responsible for the safe setup and clearing of the space. They must ensure that individuals involved are physically able to access the space and that all setup/takedown activities follow safe working practices as outlined in the Council's Health and Safety guidance.

f. Any display must adhere to health and safety rules; for example, no additional lighting, naked flames, aerosol cans, glass items or mirrors that may cause a fire risk. We cannot allow balloons or any items that may move about. Staff reserve the right to remove or direct the removal of any item(s) in the display that constitutes a risk to staff, members of the public and/or the building itself. All activities must comply with the Council's Community Window Space Risk Assessment and any guidance provided at the time of booking. A copy is available on request.

g. The Community Window is located within a historic building, so the space comes with some unique measurements. The space is accessed from the rear of the window, via a step that is approx. 50cm high, this access point is 95cm wide and 176cm tall. The roof slopes down from 220cm at the back to 175cm at the front therefore a maximum height is 210cm. We strongly request that you arrange to view the space ahead of planning your display layout so that you can be sure of the dimensions.

h. Nothing may be affixed to the window glass. We have some display equipment such as small easels of various sizes and book stands that may be of use to elevate items to eye-level which may be borrowed for the term of the display.

i. For health and safety reasons, extra care must be taken when entering and exiting the display space, particularly due to the raised step and low ceiling height. We recommend that only individuals who are physically able to safely navigate the step and confined space

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undertake the setup. Suitable footwear should be worn, and assistance should be used where needed. The Town Council accepts no responsibility for accidents or injuries sustained during access or egress. Groups must take full responsibility for the safety of anyone entering the space on their behalf. A two-step ladder is available from the Council and must be used to access the window space. It must only be used by competent individuals and checked for stability before use. A second person must always be present to assist and provide guidance while setup or takedown is in progress.

j. In the event of an emergency, groups are responsible for ensuring that setup/takedown activities are suspended immediately and the space is evacuated safely.

We look forward to hosting your display. If you need help with anything, please ask.

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WITNEY
TOWN COUNCIL

Policy Document

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Adopted: Policy, Governance & Finance Committee. Minute no:

Review Date:

1. Purpose and Scope

1.1 This is the overarching policy for Mental Health and Wellbeing. It is underpinned by Section 3 of the *Witney Town Council Staff Handbook* (August 2025 edition).

1.2 This policy outlines Witney Town Council's commitment to protecting, promoting and supporting the mental health and wellbeing of all employees. The Council recognises that good mental health is essential for a productive, safe, and supportive work environment.

1.3 Mental health is our state of emotional, psychological and social wellbeing, it affects how we think, feel and act and how we cope with pressure of everyday life.

1.4 This policy applies to all Council employees, including part-time, full-time, temporary, agency, and contract workers.

2. Policy Statement

2.1. The Council is committed to:

- Promoting positive mental health and wellbeing in the workplace.
- Reducing stigma and discrimination surrounding mental health.
- Supporting employees experiencing mental health difficulties.
- Raise awareness of wellbeing services and support mechanisms available to employees and encourage access to the services.
- Complying with all relevant UK legislation and guidance.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 **Human Resources (HR)**

- Develop and maintain resources on mental health.
- Support Senior Managers and Line Managers in dealing with cases.
- Deliver training sessions and implement awareness initiatives.

3.2 **Senior Management Team**

- Demonstrate commitment to mental health through leadership.
- Allocate resources to support policy implementation.
- Deal with any conflict quickly and make sure the workplace is free from bullying, harassment, racism or discrimination.

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- Ensure all staff have clear job descriptions, objectives and responsibilities, and provide them with good management support, appropriate training and adequate resources to do their job.
- Ensure a physical environment that is supportive of mental health and wellbeing including sound, ergonomically designed workstation or working situation with appropriate lighting, noise levels, heating, ventilation and adequate facilities for rest breaks.
- Ensure good communication between managers, staff and teams, particularly during periods of organisational change.
- Maintain confidentiality unless disclosure is legally required.

3.3 **Line Managers**

- Promote open conversations about mental health.
- Complete risk assessments where stress or mental health issues are identified.
- Provide support and reasonable adjustments as required.
- Provide systems that encourage predictable working hours and reasonable workloads.
- Monitor workloads and working hours to ensure that staff are not overloaded and not overworking.
- Monitor holidays and TOIL to ensure that staff are taking their full entitlement.

3.4 **Employees**

- Take responsibility for their own mental wellbeing.
- Seek help and consider pursing opportunities for counselling through information provided or their own GP.
- Speak to their manager if they experience mental health concerns.
- Undertake any relevant training when identified.
- Recognise that they have a responsibility for their own personal mental health and should take appropriate meal breaks and raise concerns over workloads with their Line Manager. Holidays and TOIL should be taken to ensure they are taking a break from work when necessary.
- Respect the wellbeing of others.

4. Creating a Mentally Healthy Workplace

4.1 The Council will:

- Foster an inclusive workplace culture.
- Creating a culture that supports and guidance to those with a mental health issue.
- Offering help, support and guidance to those with a mental health issue.
- Provide access to an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP).
- Promote mental health awareness through training and events.
- Embed wellbeing into work practices and planning.
- Conduct regular stress risk assessments in accordance with the HSE's Management Standards.

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5. Support for Employees

5.1 The Council offers non-judgmental support to any staff member experiencing a mental health issue by providing:

- Access to confidential counselling and guidance and EAP services through a 24/7 helpline for professional and personal problems.
- Occupational Health support.
- Assisting those returning to work after a period of mental ill health by:
  - Making any reasonable adjustments to the role/environment.
  - Retaining and supporting staff who develop mental ill health.
- Peer support through trained Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA) who can signpost to external resources such as Mind, NHS, and ACAS.

6. Training and Awareness

6.1 The Council will:

- Deliver mental health awareness and stress management training.
- Train staff in mental health first aid (MHFA) and active listening skills to support other staff members. Contact details of current MHFA's are displayed on all staff notice boards.
- Include wellbeing in induction processes for new employees.

7. Absence Management and Return to Work

7.1 Absences related to mental health will be managed sensitively and confidentially. Return-to-work interviews will explore whether further support or adjustments are required.

8. Confidentiality

8.1 All mental health disclosures will be handled sensitively and used only for its proper purpose. However, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed as information might have to be disclosed when an issue results in formal proceedings or in order to protect an individual from harm or causing harm.

9. Monitoring and Review

9.1 This policy will be monitored through:

- HR reports on absence trends.
- Staff surveys on wellbeing.
- Feedback from wellbeing champions or health and safety representatives.

9.2 A formal review will take place every two years or sooner if required by legislation or organisational change.

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WITNEY
TOWN COUNCIL

Policy Document

Corporate Volunteering

Adopted: Policy, Governance & Finance Committee. Minute no:

Review Date:

1. Purpose

Witney Town Council recognises the value of volunteering and the positive impact it can have on both the community and individual wellbeing. This policy enables employees to take up to 2 days (pro rata for part-time employees) of paid leave per calendar year to participate in volunteering activities that benefit the community and align with the values of the Council.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Witney Town Council, regardless of length of service or role, subject to operational requirements.

3. Definition of Volunteering

Volunteering refers to freely giving time to help an organisation, group, or cause without financial gain. Eligible volunteering activities may include:

- Supporting a registered charity
- Environmental or conservation work
- Community development projects
- Educational, cultural, or youth-related initiatives
- Local community or civic events
- Activities that align with Witney Town Council's values or strategic priorities

4. Eligibility Criteria

To qualify for paid volunteering leave, the following criteria must be met:

- The volunteering activity must be undertaken with a not-for-profit, community interest, or charitable organisation
- The activity must not present a conflict of interest with the employee's role or the Council
- The activity must take place during the employee's normal working hours
- The activity should ideally take place within the local community or region, unless otherwise approved
- The request must be approved by the employee's line manager and agreed in consultation with the Town Clerk

DRAFT

5. Procedure for Requesting Leave

1. Employees must complete a Volunteering Leave Request Form at least 4 weeks in advance of the proposed volunteering date(s).
2. The request should include:

- Details of the organisation and activity
- Date(s) and duration of the leave requested
- How the activity meets the policy criteria

3. The line manager will assess the request considering:

- Relevance and appropriateness of the volunteering activity
- Operational requirements and staffing levels
- Any previous volunteering leave taken in the calendar year

4. The request will then be referred to the Town Clerk for final consultation and approval.
5. The employee will be informed of the outcome within 10 working days of submitting the request.

6. Conditions of Leave

- A maximum of 2 days (14.8 hours for full-time staff) paid leave per year may be granted
- Leave may be taken as one full block or split into half-days
- Unused volunteering days cannot be carried forward
- Employees are expected to return to work promptly after volunteering and may be asked to provide brief feedback or a reflection on the activity undertaken
- Employees may also be asked to share photos and a short summary of their volunteering experience for potential use in internal or external Town Council communications (e.g., newsletters, website, social media).
    - Participation in promotional use is voluntary and subject to relevant privacy and data protection policies
    - Any content used will be approved with the employee [who will be required to consult the organisation with which the volunteering took place] beforehand to ensure accuracy and consent

7. Monitoring and Review

- Managers will maintain records of volunteering leave taken, by recording it on Breathe HR categorised as type ‘other leave’ and reason ‘Charity Days’
- The policy will be reviewed annually by the Town Clerk in consultation with the Line Managers, to assess uptake, impact, and effectiveness

8. Non-Compliance

Any attempt to misuse the volunteering leave (e.g. for personal or paid activities) may be considered misconduct and addressed through the Council’s disciplinary procedure.

DRAFT

9. Support

Employees are encouraged to discuss ideas for volunteering activities with their line manager. Support may also be available in identifying suitable local opportunities through the Town Council's partnerships and community contacts.

DRAFT

WITNEY
TOWN COUNCIL

Policy Document

Long Service Awards

Adopted: Policy, Governance & Finance Committee. Minute no:

Review Date:

1. Policy Statement

Witney Town Council recognises and values the dedication, commitment, and loyalty demonstrated by its employees. The purpose of this policy is to formally acknowledge employees who have completed significant periods of continuous service with the Council. In particular, this policy recognises the completion of 15 years and 25 years of service with a formal award, a certificate of appreciation, and a financial token of gratitude.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all employees of Witney Town Council who are directly employed under a contract of employment and have completed unbroken continuous service as defined in section 3 of this document.

3. Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for a long service award:

- The employee must have completed either:
    - 15 years of continuous service, or
    - 25 years of continuous service
- The service must be with Witney Town Council and must be uninterrupted, although statutory breaks (e.g. approved maternity leave, career breaks, or periods covered under TUPE where continuous service is retained) may not disqualify eligibility.
- The employee must be in active employment at the time of the award.

4. Awards

Eligible employees will receive the following recognition:

- 15 Years of Service:
    - A certificate of appreciation signed by the Mayor
    - A £50.00 award, in the form of a gift token of choice
- 25 Years of Service:
    - A certificate of distinction signed by the Mayor
    - A £150.00 award, in the form of a gift token of choice

DRAFT

These awards are made once only upon achieving each relevant milestone.

5. Presentation Procedure

Long service awards will be presented in a formal setting, acknowledging the employee's contribution in the presence of colleagues and members of the Council.

- The standard venue for presentation will be a public Council meeting or an alternative ceremonial event as deemed appropriate by the Town Clerk and Mayor.
- The Mayor of Witney (or Deputy Mayor, in the Mayor's absence) will present the certificate and express formal thanks on behalf of the Council.
- The occasion may be supplemented by a short citation or summary of the employee's service, achievements, and contribution.

Employees will be given advance notice of the event and may invite immediate family members to attend if appropriate.

6. Notification and Administration

- It is the responsibility of the Town Clerk (or nominated officer) to monitor service milestones and identify eligible employees annually.
- The Town Clerk (or nominated officer) will verify eligibility and initiate the process for certificate preparation and payment arrangement.
- The award should be made as close as reasonably possible to the employee's service anniversary.

7. Tax and National Insurance

The financial awards under this policy will be in line with HMRC regulations relating to long service awards.

8. Confidentiality and Data Protection

All personal data held and used in connection with this policy will be processed in accordance with the Council's Data Protection Policy and current data protection legislation. Service milestones will only be disclosed to relevant parties for the purposes of organising the presentation.

9. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner if legislative changes or operational needs require it. Amendments will be subject to approval by the Staffing Committee and ratified by the Full Council.

POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item: Payment of Accounts

Meeting Date: Monday, 22 September 2025

Contact Officer: Responsible Financial Officer

Background

Members should note from previous reports that the Council has its bank accounts with Barclays Bank and runs three active accounts: the General Account, the Imprest Account and the Business Premium Account. Transfers between accounts take place but external payments are only made from the General Account and the Imprest Account.

Cheque payments over £5,000 and Electronic Payments are made from the General Account. Cheque payments of less than £5,000 are made from the Imprest Account.

The payment schedules, bank statements and bank reconciliations are brought to the Policy, Governance & Finance committee as part of the Council's due diligence procedures.

Current Situation

1. Bank Reconciliation and Bank Statements

Attached are bank reconciliations and associated bank statements for June and July 2025.

2. Payment of Accounts

Attached are the payment schedules for June and July 2025.

It should be noted that the Council made only four cheque payments during this period. Payments previously made by cheque are now made electronically. This has reduced the Council's environmental impact through reducing use of paper, printing and postage.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and bank reconciliations and that the following schedule of payments be approved:

Payment reference	In the sum of:	Account
DDs, ELPs 97-123 (electronic payments) and Standing Orders June 2025	£185,901.47	General CB 1
Cheques 100060 and 35180-35181; DDs, BACs and Standing Orders June 2025	£9,650.85	Imprest CB 2

DDs, ELPs 124-140 and Standing Orders July 2025	£188,256.59	General CB 1
Cheque 35182, DDs and Standing Orders July 2025	£8,975.65	Imprest CB 2

Appendix

Date	Description	Money out £	Money in £	Balance £
Balance brought forward from previous page				35,329.77
30 Jun	Payment to BX25062746455742 Ref: Elp-121	800.00		34,529.77
	Payment to BX25062746474536 Ref: Elp-123	2,834.95		31,694.82
	Payment to BX25062746362195 Ref: Elp-119	3,174.19		28,520.63
	Payment to BX25062746474176 Ref: Elp-122	3,697.06		24,823.57
	Payment to BX25062746372298 Ref: Elp-120	4,659.48		20,164.09
	STO Standing Order From Inclusive Care and Ref:- Rent		7,793.82	27,957.91
	Giro Direct Credit From Witney Speakers CL Ref: B5940		90.00	28,047.91
	Giro Direct Credit From Frost Slj&A Ref: Inv B5946		90.05	28,137.96
	Giro Direct Credit From Ostma Ref: B5916		156.00	28,293.96
	Giro Direct Credit From The Arts Society W Ref: Inv B5953		218.00	28,511.96
	Giro Direct Credit From Epos Now (UK) Ltd Ref: Swpe423WX223Dnld5M		402.81	28,914.77
	Giro Direct Credit From Epos Now (UK) Ltd Ref: Swpe423C92232GQ35M		983.22	29,897.99
	Direct Credit From Goodman L A Ref: ~~B5510~~ L-Goodman		92.84	29,990.83
	Direct Credit From Baker E Ref: B5935		199.50	30,190.33
1 Jul	DD Direct Debit to Wod Ndr DD Ref: 03 90170575	1,023.00		29,167.33
	DD Direct Debit to Wod Ndr DD Ref: 30421105	216.00		28,951.33
	DD Direct Debit to Wod Ndr DD Ref: 30623704	379.00		28,572.33
	DD Direct Debit to Wod Ndr DD Ref: 30685600	322.00		28,250.33
	DD Direct Debit to Wod Ndr DD Ref: 30903104	948.00		27,302.33
	DD Direct Debit to Wod Ndr DD Ref: 90024629	798.00		26,504.33
	Giro Direct Credit From Epos Now (UK) Ltd Ref: Swpe423WX223Dnld5M		447.07	26,951.40
	Deposit Re 45Witney 101446		1,570.35	28,521.75
	Direct Credit From Mynt Image Ltd F Ref: Invoice B5943 Mynt		490.00	29,011.75

Continued

Bank Reconciliation Statement as at 30/06/2025
for Cashbook 1 - BARCLAYS GENERAL A/C

Bank Statement Account Name (s)	Statement Date	Page No	Balances
BARCLAYS GENERAL A/C	30/06/2025		30,190.33
			30,190.33

Unpresented Payments (Minus)			Amount	
			0.00	
				0.00
				30,190.33

Unpresented Receipts (Plus)				
			0.00	
				0.00
				30,190.33
		Balance per Cash Book is :-		**30,181.71**
		Difference Excluding Adjustments is :-		**8.62**

Adjustments to Reconciliation				
30/06/2025	ADJUST	ADJUST FOR DIFFERENCE	8.62	
				8.62
		Unreconciled Difference is :-		**0.00**

Signatory 1:

Name .....Signed .....Date .....

Signatory 2:

Name .....Signed .....Date .....

BARCLAYS

Appendix

WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL
GENERAL ACCOUNT

Sort Code 20-97-48
Account No 00974935

SWIFTBIC BUKBGB22

IBAN GB78 BUKB 2097 4800 9749 35

Issued on 06 August 2025

WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN HALL
MARKET SQUARE
WITNEY
OXFORDSHIRE
OX28 6AG

3/8

Your Business Current Account

Date	Description	Money out £	Money in £	Balance £
30 Jul	Start Balance			22,003.64
	Giro Direct Credit From Epos Now (UK) Ltd Ref: Swpe429S622322235M		482.16	22,485.80
31 Jul	Payment to BX25073049615495 Ref: Elp-140	388.20		22,097.60
	Giro Direct Credit From Ostma Ref: B5951		156.00	22,253.60
	Giro Direct Credit From Ccla Investment MA Ref: LA3077549, Witney		655.56	22,909.16
	Giro Direct Credit From Epos Now (UK) Ltd Ref: Swpe42X5622322235M		810.38	23,719.54
	Giro Direct Credit From Colliers Intl Pro		261.83	23,981.37
1 Aug	DD Direct Debit to Wod Ndr DD Ref: 03 90170575	1,023.00		22,958.37
	DD Direct Debit to Wod Ndr DD Ref: 30421105	216.00		22,742.37
	DD Direct Debit to Wod Ndr DD Ref: 30623704	379.00		22,363.37
	DD Direct Debit to Wod Ndr DD Ref: 30685600	322.00		22,041.37
	DD Direct Debit to Wod Ndr DD Ref: 30903104	948.00		21,093.37
	DD Direct Debit to Wod Ndr DD Ref: 90024629	798.00		20,295.37
	Payment to BX25073149709791 Ref: Elp-142	647.64		19,647.73
	Payment to BX25073149701900 Ref: Elp-141	4,153.60		15,494.13

Continued

At a glance

30 Jul - 05 Aug 2025

Start balance	£22,003.64
Money out	£9,102.15
▸ Commission charges	£93.40
▸ Interest paid	£0.00
Money in	£10,608.99
End balance	£23,510.48

Your deposit is eligible for protection by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

05937 00003 F1VI442A 3 of 8

Barclays Bank UK PLC. Authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority (Financial Services Register No. 759676).
Registered in England. Registered No. 9740322. Registered Office: 1 Churchill Place, London E14 5HP.

Bank Reconciliation Statement as at 31/07/2025
for Cashbook 1 - BARCLAYS GENERAL A/C

Bank Statement Account Name (s)	Statement Date	Page No	Balances
BARCLAYS GENERAL A/C	31/07/2025		23,981.37
			23,981.37

Unpresented Payments (Minus)	Amount	
	0.00	
		0.00
		23,981.37

Unpresented Receipts (Plus)		
	0.00	
		0.00
		23,981.37

Balance per Cash Book is :-	**23,972.75**
Difference Excluding Adjustments is :-	**8.62**

Adjustments to Reconciliation				
30/06/2025	ADJUST	ADJUST FOR DIFFERENCE	8.62	
				8.62
		Unreconciled Difference is :-		**0.00**

Signatory 1:

Name .....Signed .....Date .....

Signatory 2:

Name .....Signed .....Date .....

BARCLAYS

WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL
IMPREST ACCOUNT

Sort Code 20-97-48
Account No 70974765

SWIFTBIC BUKBGB22

IBAN GB04 BUKB 2097 4870 9747 65

Issued on 02 July 2025

WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN HALL
MARKET SQUARE
WITNEY
OXFORDSHIRE
OX28 6AG

8/9

16995 00008 F1VI987A 8 of 9

Your Business Current Account

Date	Description	Money out £	Money in £	Balance £
25 Jun	Start Balance			1,000.00
26 Jun	DD Direct Debit to Gocardless Ref: Eposnowltd-Pyjzfms	22.80		977.20
	DD Direct Debit to Gocardless Ref: Eposnowltd-7YV2Xgh	128.40		848.80
	Giro Transfer From Account 70974641		151.20	1,000.00
27 Jun	DD Direct Debit to Stl Communications Ref: 0319-383	1,916.59		-916.59
	Giro Transfer From Account 70974641		1,916.59	1,000.00
30 Jun	DD Direct Debit to Sse Energy Supply Ref: 0085171-DD01093225	33.35		966.65
	Cheque Issued Ref: 035180	345.00		621.65
	Cheque Issued Ref: 035181	345.00		276.65
	Giro Transfer From Account 70974641		723.35	1,000.00
1 Jul	Balance carried forward			1,000.00
	Total Payments/Receipts	2,791.14	2,791.14	

Anything wrong? If you notice any incorrect or unusual transactions, see the next page for how to get in touch with us.

At a glance

25 Jun - 01 Jul 2025

Start balance	£1,000.00
Money out	£2,791.14
▸ Commission charges £0.00	
▸ Interest paid £0.00	
Money in	£2,791.14
End balance	£1,000.00

Your deposit is eligible for protection by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

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Registered in England. Registered No. 9740322. Registered Office: 1 Churchill Place, London E14 5HP.

Bank Reconciliation Statement as at 30/06/2025
for Cashbook 2 - BARCLAYS IMPREST A/C

Bank Statement Account Name (s)	Statement Date	Page No	Balances
BARCLAYS IMPREST A/C	17/06/2025		1,000.00
			1,000.00

Unpresented Payments (Minus)			Amount	
06/03/2025	35138	Witney Grandparent & Toddler G	50.00	
17/04/2025	035168	Thames & Chilterns in Bloom As	50.00	
				100.00
				900.00

Unpresented Receipts (Plus)

			0.00	
				0.00
				900.00
			Balance per Cash Book is :-	**900.00**
			Difference is :-	**0.00**

Signatory 1:

Name .....Signed .....Date .....

Signatory 2:

Name .....Signed .....Date .....

BARCLAYS

WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL
IMPREST ACCOUNT

Sort Code20-97-48
Account No 70974765

SWIFTBICBUKBGB22

IBAN GB04 BUKB 2097 4870 9747 65

Issued on06 August 2025

WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN HALL
MARKET SQUARE
WITNEY
OXFORDSHIRE
OX28 6AG

Your Business Current Account

Date	Description	Money out £	Money in £	Balance £
30 Jul	Start Balance			1,000.00
	DD Direct Debit to Sse Energy Supply Ref: 0085171-DD01143134	32.24		967.76
	Direct Debit to Stl Communications Ref: 0319-383	1,889.50		-921.74
	Giro Transfer From Account 70974641		1,921.74	1,000.00
4 Aug	Cheque Issued Ref: 035182	345.00		655.00
	Commission Charges For The Period 13 Jun /13 Jul	17.61		637.39
	Transfer From Account 70974641		362.61	1,000.00
5 Aug	Balance carried forward			1,000.00
	Total Payments/Receipts	2,284.35	2,284.35	

Anything wrong? If you notice any incorrect or unusual transactions, see the next page for how to get in touch with us.

At a glance

30 Jul - 05 Aug 2025

Start balance	£1,000.00
Money out	£2,284.35
Commission charges	£17.61
Interest paid	£0.00
Money in	£2,284.35
End balance	£1,000.00

Your deposit is eligible for protection by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

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Registered in England. Registered No. 9740322. Registered Office: 1 Churchill Place, London E14 5HP.

Bank Reconciliation Statement as at 31/07/2025
for Cashbook 2 - BARCLAYS IMPREST A/C

Bank Statement Account Name (s)	Statement Date	Page No	Balances
BARCLAYS IMPREST A/C	31/07/2025		1,000.00
			1,000.00

Unpresented Payments (Minus)			Amount	
17/04/2025	035168	Thames & Chilterns in Bloom As	50.00	
30/07/2025	35182	POST OFFICE LTD	345.00	
				395.00
				605.00

Unpresented Receipts (Plus)				
			0.00	
				0.00
				605.00
			Balance per Cash Book is :-	**605.00**
			Difference is :-	**0.00**

Signatory 1:

Name .....Signed .....Date .....

Signatory 2:

Name .....Signed .....Date .....

BARCLAYS

WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL NO 3 ACCOUNT

Sort Code 20-97-48
Account No 70974641

SWIFTBIC BUKBGB22

IBAN GB54 BUKB 2097 4870 9746 41

Issued on 02 July 2025

WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN HALL
MARKET SQUARE
WITNEY
OXFORDSHIRE
OX28 6AG

6/9

Your Business Premium Account

Date	Description	Money out £	Money in £	Balance £
25 Jun	Start Balance			2,587,819.94
26 Jun	Giro to 70974765 Automatic	151.20		2,587,668.74
27 Jun	Transfer * 225171*Wit Town C*	30,000.00		2,557,668.74
	Giro to 70974765 Automatic	1,916.59		2,555,752.15
30 Jun	Giro to 70974765 Automatic	723.35		2,555,028.80
1 Jul	Balance carried forward			2,555,028.80
	Total Payments/Receipts	32,791.14	0.00	

Anything wrong? If you notice any incorrect or unusual transactions, see the next page for how to get in touch with us.

At a glance

25 Jun - 01 Jul 2025

Start balance	£2,587,819.94
Money out	£32,791.14
Money in	£0.00
▶ Gross interest earned £0.00	
End balance	£2,555,028.80

Your deposit is eligible for protection by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

16995 00006 F1VI987A 6 of 9

Barclays Bank UK PLC. Authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority (Financial Services Register No. 759676).
Registered in England. Registered No. 9740322. Registered Office: 1 Churchill Place, London E14 5HP.

Bank Reconciliation Statement as at 30/06/2025
for Cashbook 3 - BARCLAYS B P A

Bank Statement Account Name (s)	Statement Date	Page No	Balances
BARCLAYS B P A	30/06/2025		2,555,028.80
			2,555,028.80

Unpresented Payments (Minus)	Amount	
	0.00	
		0.00
		2,555,028.80

Unpresented Receipts (Plus)		
	0.00	
		0.00
		2,555,028.80
	Balance per Cash Book is :-	**2,555,028.80**
	Difference is :-	**0.00**

Signatory 1:

Name .....Signed .....Date .....

Signatory 2:

Name .....Signed .....Date .....

BARCLAYS

WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL NO 3 ACCOUNT

Sort Code20-97-48
Account No 70974641

SWIFTBICBUKBGB22

IBAN GB54 BUKB 2097 4870 9746 41

Issued on06 August 2025

WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN HALL
MARKET SQUARE
WITNEY
OXFORDSHIRE
OX28 6AG

Your Business Premium Account

Date	Description	Money out £	Money in £	Balance £
30 Jul	Start Balance			2,406,269.89
	Giro to 70974765 Automatic	1,921.74		2,404,348.15
4 Aug	to 70974765 Automatic	362.61		2,403,985.54
5 Aug	Balance carried forward			2,403,985.54
	Total Payments/Receipts	2,284.35	0.00	

Anything wrong? If you notice any incorrect or unusual transactions, see the next page for how to get in touch with us.

At a glance

30 Jul - 05 Aug 2025

Start balance	£2,406,269.89
Money out	£2,284.35
Money in	£0.00
Gross interest earned	£0.00
End balance	£2,403,985.54

Your deposit is eligible for protection by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

Barclays Bank UK PLC. Authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority (Financial Services Register No. 759676).
Registered in England. Registered No. 9740322. Registered Office: 1 Churchill Place, London E14 5HP.

Bank Reconciliation Statement as at 31/07/2025
for Cashbook 3 - BARCLAYS B P A

Bank Statement Account Name (s)	Statement Date	Page No	Balances
BARCLAYS B P A	31/07/2025		2,404,348.15
			2,404,348.15
Unpresented Payments (Minus)		**Amount**	
		0.00	
			0.00
			2,404,348.15
Unpresented Receipts (Plus)			
		0.00	
			0.00
			2,404,348.15
		Balance per Cash Book is :-	**2,404,348.15**
		Difference is :-	**0.00**

Signatory 1:

Name .....Signed .....Date .....

Signatory 2:

Name .....Signed .....Date .....

POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item: Annual Governance Statement 2026 – Assertion 10

Meeting Date: Monday, 22 September 2025

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk

The purpose of this report is to update Councillors on new proper practices relating to the Annual Governance Statement for the 2025-26 accounting year.

Background

The Practitioners' Guide 2025 – Governance & Accountability for smaller Authorities in England is issued by the Smaller Authorities' Proper Practices Panel (SAPPP) to support the preparation by smaller authorities in England of statutory annual accounting and governance statements found in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.

It lays down 'proper practices' which must be applied to the Annual Governance & Accountability Return at the end of each financial year.

Current Situation

Assertion 10 – Digital & Data Compliance

This is a new, standalone assertion introduced in the 2025 Guide which has been added to clarify data compliance previously covered under Assertion 3. It applies to the Annual Governance and Accountability Returns (AGAR) for the financial year starting 1st April 2025 and is therefore now in effect.

The details (as taken from the General Practitioner's Guide 2025) are;

- Email management - Every authority must have a generic email account hosted on an authority owned domain, for example clerk@abcparishcouncil.gov.uk or clerk@abcparishcouncil.org.uk rather than abcparishclerk@gmail.com or abcparishclerk@outlook.com for example.

  Witney Town Council is compliant on this point

- All smaller authorities (excluding parish meetings) must meet legal requirements for all existing websites regardless of what domain is being used.

All websites must meet the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.2 AA and the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 (where applicable). All websites must include published documentation as specified in the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Transparency code for smaller authorities (where applicable).

Witney Town Council is compliant on this point.

- All smaller authorities, including parish meetings, must follow both the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016 and the Data Protection Act (DPA) 2018.

  Witney Town Council is compliant on this point. However, the collection and processing of personal data is constantly evolving. Audits take place regularly and both staff and Members have received training and are aware of their obligations.

- All smaller authorities, including parish meetings, must process personal data with care and in line with the principles of data protection. The DPA 2018 supplements the GDPR and classifies an authority as both a Data Controller and a Data Processor.

  Witney Town Council is registered as a Data Controller with the Information Commissioner's Office.

- All smaller authorities (excluding parish meetings) must also have an IT policy. This explains how everyone - clerks, members and other staff - should conduct authority business in a secure and legal way when using IT equipment and software. This relates to the use of authority-owned and personal equipment.

  The Town Council's IT Policy is under review following a change to the Council's IT provider. Updated policies will follow within the year.

In June 2026, the Council will need to approve the annual governance statement by resolution of members at a Full meeting as a whole and in advance of the authority approving the accounting statements in Section 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return. The Chair of the meeting and the Town Clerk need to sign and date the annual governance statement and enter a minute reference. Further details will follow at this time.

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 – no impact.
c) Crime & Disorder – no impact.

d) Environment & Climate Emergency– no impact.

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 Council must ensure it is compliant in the areas listed under Assertion 10 above to avoid reputational damage.

Social Value

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

Financial Implications

- There are no implications pertaining to this report.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report.

Ministry of Housing,
Communities &
Local Government

Sharon Groth
Witney Town Council
Town Hall
Market Square
Witney
OX28 6AG

Our Ref:
SRP 5/23/05 **Application 2025-26 (032)**

16th September 2025

Dear Sharon,

BORROWING APPROVAL – Witney Town Council

1. I am directed by the Secretary of State to notify you that, in pursuance of their powers under paragraph 2(2) of Schedule 1 to the Local Government Act 2003, the refurbishment of West Witney Clubhouse and construction of a works depot is approved as a purpose for which Witney Town Council, "the Council", may borrow an amount not exceeding £1,250,000.00.

2. Please note that this borrowing approval authorises the Council to borrow funds up to a specified amount. However, the Council should note that this borrowing approval does not itself confer power on the Council to incur the planned expenditure. The Council will need to satisfy itself that it does have the appropriate power before the expenditure is incurred.

3. When deciding whether to apply for borrowing in line with this approval, the council should be aware that Ministers have decided not to extend council tax referendum principles to town and parish councils in 2025-26. However, it remains an option for Ministers to make town and parish councils subject to the principles in future years.

4. Any precept increases which are attributable to this borrowing approval would not be excluded from consideration should town and parish councils be subjected to council tax referendum principles in future.

5. This approval is given subject to the following conditions, and any borrowing by the Council in breach of any of these conditions will not be authorised by this approval:

(a) the Council may borrow only for the purpose specified in paragraph 1 above;

(b) borrowing under the authority of this approval must be undertaken within the period of the approval. The approval is valid for one year from the date given above;

(c) any borrowing by the Council after the end of the period of the approval will not be authorised by this approval;

(d) in a case where a loan agreement imposes on the Council an immediately binding

Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government
Local Authority Capital Finance and Reserves
2 Marsham Street
Fry Building, 2nd Floor, SE Quarter
London, SW1P 4DF

Tel 07900 162 546
Email: parish.borrowing@levellingup.gov.uk

obligation to borrow money at some future date, the Council will draw down the borrowed funds before the end of the period of the approval;

(e) where the Council borrows any money in reliance on this approval, it will notify the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) of the date of the loan and the amount borrowed, as soon as is reasonably practicable;

(f) where the Council has not undertaken any borrowing and does not intend to undertake any borrowing, in reliance on this approval, the Council is requested to notify MHCLG as soon as is reasonably practicable.

6. In exercise of their powers under paragraph 5 of Schedule 1 to the Local Government Act 2003, the Secretary of State consents to any period determined by the Council as the period within which the money borrowed in reliance on this approval is to be repaid, provided that the period is not greater than 40 years, starting on the date on which the money is borrowed.

7. Advice on the sources and methods of finance available, and a guidance leaflet about the borrowing approval system, may be obtained from your local County Association. Councils intending to borrow from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) should visit the Board's website in the first instance www.pwlb.gov.uk. PWLB may be contacted on 0207 862 6610 or e-mailed at pwlb@dmo.gov.uk.

8. The contact at this office for any enquiries is Miss Holly Morris on 07900 162 546 or e-mail to parish.borrowing@levellingup.gov.uk.

9. I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Council and to your local County Association.

Yours sincerely,

Suzanne Clarke

Digitally signed by Suzanne Clarke
Date: 2025.09.16 12:31:36 +01'00'

Suzanne Clarke
Local Government Finance Directorate

POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item: Budget parameters for 2026-27

Meeting Date: Monday 22 September 2025

Contact Officer: Responsible Financial Officer

Should Members have any queries about this report advance notice would be appreciated, in writing, by 12 noon on the day of the meeting to allow for a full response at the meeting.

Background

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

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

During the budget cycle the Council also 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; the latter will be reviewed and updated.

Members will be aware that the Council have a number of major projects taking place, 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.

The budget round promises to be challenging.

During this September cycle of meetings the Council's committees have considered 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 so that Officers may obtain costings.

The draft budgets will be presented to the spending committees during the next (November) cycle of meetings. These committees will also review fees and charges.

The Council Tax base figure is expected to be received by mid-December.

Following the presentation of the draft budget proposals to the Council on 15 December 2025 there will then be the final meeting at which the precept is declared, on 5 January 2026.

Current Situation

For the Responsible Financial Officer to have an initial instruction to form the basis of a base revenue budget, they require the Committee to consider:

INCOME

1. Band D Council Tax

   For 2025-26 the Council agreed to raise a precept of £2,297,745, resulting in a Council Tax increase of 14.9% to £203.37 for a Band D property for the year. Members are referred to the reports and minutes of the meeting of 6 January 2025 regarding the reasons for this increase.

   Note that the Council does not receive any business rates and has not done so since the late 1980s when the current system of National Non-Domestic Rates was introduced.

   Members are asked to give initial consideration to the precept/council tax level for 2026-27.

2. Fees and Charges

   Fees and charges for cemeteries, public halls and recreation need to be considered. The Council is subject to inflationary pressures and so it is reasonable that fees and charges are increased to cover these. It should be remembered that services run at a net cost to the Council taxpayer – which is the ultimate reason they are provided by a local authority. Fees and charges are set at a level at which a reasonable amount is then recovered by those actually benefiting from the service which has been paid for by all Witney council taxpayers. The CPI (consumer prices index) as at August 2025 was 3.8%. However this is expected to rise to 4% September 2025 (Bank of England forecast) and this is proposed as the baseline for fees and charges increases.

EXPENDITURE

3. Staffing Costs

   The national pay award for 2025-26 was agreed at 3.2%.

   To be prudent, for 2026-27 Members should consider an increase of 4% in line with inflation forecasts for 2025.

4. Utilities

There remains uncertainty regarding **gas and electricity prices** and these could change depending on the increasingly unstable international circumstances.

The contract placed for 2025-26 and energy efficiency improvements made by the Council mean that the budgets for gas and electricity were reduced from £87,598 to £53,396.

In relation to 2026-27 we are awaiting advice from our current suppliers although the anticipation is that any increase will be less than the current rate of inflation.

Regarding **water charges** there is currently an OFWAT consultation regarding business price increases. For larger users increases of up to 66% per unit may occur; for the Town Council the increase could be between 10 and 20%, this on top of the 18% increase in 2025-26.

Regarding National Non-Domestic Rates the increase for 2026-27 this will be announced in the government's budget but is normally based on the CPI in the autumn, which will be around 4%. Note however that there is a business rates revaluation due to take effect on 1 April 2026 and also other changes in relation to Retail, Hospitality and Leisure (RHL) properties with rateable values (RVs) below £500,000, which will affect the public halls. These costs will be factored in by the RFO.

5. Insurance

The Council's Long-Term Agreement (LTA) with Zurich Municipal ends as of 31 March 2026. The LTA has guaranteed the same rate (insurance charge per £1K insured) for five years although premiums have risen with sums insured. The end of the LTA will likely result in significant increases and your officers should have more information in this regard following a meeting next month, although rates for any potential future LTA will not have been settled by then.

Your officers will report on options at the November 2025 meeting.

6. Other expenditure lines

When considering the estimates the RFO examines each individual budget line, looking at the historic trends and known future developments so a flat percentage is not applied uniformly across the estimates. However where a cost-of-living increase is applied, 4% will be used for 2026-27.

With regard to the rate of inflation it is anticipated that this will peak this autumn at around 4% but should then fall away over the next few years to 2% and this will be reflected in the medium-term financial forecast

Consultation on the Budget 2025/26

Members may wish to consider whether to undertake a public consultation exercise on the forthcoming 2025/26 budget.

The timetable is extremely tight. For the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) to prepare the draft budgets for committees, the work must take place between **mid-October and the end of October**, with draft budgets being considered at the November cycle of meetings. This leaves a very narrow window for gathering and incorporating meaningful feedback from residents.

If Members are minded to proceed, they will need to decide what type of consultation would be most useful. Options include:

- **Focusing on specific budget lines**

  Residents could be asked about discretionary spending on community events, grants, or amenities (e.g. "The Council allocates £10,000 towards the Witney Music Festival – would you support this being maintained, increased, or reduced?").

- **Prioritisation of services**

  Residents might be invited to identify the services they value most, perhaps using infographics from the 2025 budget newsletter.

- **Proactive interventions beyond the Council's core remit**

  Examples include desilting works at Bridge Street (delivered in-house at around half the contracted cost) or enhancing grass cutting where other authorities do not maintain land to the same standard. Consultation could test whether residents support such proactive interventions.

- **Subsidised facilities**

  Certain services are subsidised, such as football pitches where the costs of maintenance exceed income from clubs. Residents could be asked if this subsidy is appropriate or if charges should be reviewed.

- **Future service delivery and Local Government Reorganisation**

  Consultation could explore whether residents wish the Town Council to be proactive in taking on services currently delivered by the District or County Councils, and which areas they would prioritise.

- **Capital projects and play area refurbishments**

  The Council holds a preparation pool of capital projects carried forward from previous years. Residents could be asked which schemes they would most like to see progress, or which play areas they consider most in need of refurbishment.

A key challenge will be **public understanding of the Council's role**. Past consultations have shown that residents often raise issues outside the Town Council's remit (e.g. potholes, sewage discharges). Any consultation would therefore need careful framing to manage expectations and keep responses focused.

Given the pressures on officer time and the statutory timetable, Members will need to balance the potential benefits of consultation (openness, resident buy-in, gauging priorities) against the limited scope for shaping the budget at such a late stage.

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 implications directly resulting from this report.
b) Biodiversity - no implications directly resulting from this report.
c) Crime & Disorder - no implications directly resulting from this report.
d) Environment & Climate Emergency - 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 and associated matters 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 no 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.

This report forms part of the Council's mechanisms for budgetary control, as it enables income and expenditure incurred to be reviewed and to be compared with the Council's budgets.

If Members decide to proceed with a consultation, costs will vary depending on the chosen format. A basic online survey promoted via the Council's website and social media channels would have minimal cost and could be delivered within existing resources. To maximise reach,

posters with QR codes linking to the survey could be displayed in public buildings, parks, and high-footfall areas; this would involve only small printing costs. A more extensive exercise, such as postal surveys or printed questionnaires, would incur significantly greater expenditure and is unlikely to be feasible within current officer capacity or the available timeframe.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and:

1. To approve the report and the budget parameters contained therein.
2. To consider whether they wish to undertake a public consultation on the 2025/26 budget, and if so, to determine the preferred scope and method of consultation (e.g. online survey via social media, supported by QR codes displayed in community locations).

POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item: Financial Matters referred from Spending Committees

Meeting Date: Monday, 22 September 2025

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk

Background

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

Current Situation

Parks & Recreation Committee – 1 September 2025

PR485 Football Club Training Fees – The Committee recommended training sessions be allowed to proceed without charge this season.

PR488 Play Area Review – The Committee recommended that officers be authorised to procure and implement access/surfacing or a new inclusive swing at Ralegh Crescent Play Area as a high priority, within a maximum budget of £8,000, to be funded as a supplementary estimate from the General Reserve, the most expedient and cost-effective solution being sought, subject to RFO confirmation.

PR488 Play Area Review – The Committee recommended that inclusive play equipment as detailed in the report should be purchased for the sum of £16,980 from the play areas budget.

PR488 Play Area Review – The Committee recommended that Option One (Agito Cyclone) be selected for the replacement swing at both Burwell Recreation Ground and The Leys for the sum of £19,240 from the play area budget.

There were no further recommendations for the current fiscal year. Recommendations for inclusion in the 2026-27 budget were; for improvements to the Basketball Court at King George's Field, the path at West Witney to enhance the Park Run, for pitch drainage at any pitch sites that require it and for a potential increase of benches in the Council's recreation areas.

Halls Cemeteries & Allotments Committee – 8 September 2025

H410 Lakeside Allotments Flooding Update - The Committee recommended that Officers instruct a hydrologist survey to be carried out up to a cost of £2,500 from the Allotments EMR.

There were no further recommendations for the current fiscal year. Recommendations for inclusion in the 2026-27 budget were; for improvements to Public Halls hearing loops (£2,000) and for a new ashes section option at Windrush Cemetery (£15,660).

Climate & Biodiversity Committee – 9 September 2025

Biodiversity Update – The Committee recommended that officers allocate resource funds towards excavating the Curbridge roundabout to facilitate greater wildflower cover.

Biodiversity Update – The Committee recommended that the officers re-apply for Green Flag status at the Lake & Country Park for the sum of £500 when time and resources allow.

There were no further recommendations for the current fiscal year or for the 2026-27 budget.

Stronger Communities Committee – 15 September 2025

Winter Preparations – The Committee recommended the purchase of 3x salt bins for Windrush Place, subject to authorisation by OCC. The cost for the bins being £300 each, funded from 4200/402.

Communications Report – The Committee recommended the purchase of additional signage highlighting the Covid-19 Memorial at The Leys to the value of £100 from an existing budget.

Community Engagement Report – The Committee recommended that the Council recognises the 80th Anniversary of the United Nations later in the year and that a flag be purchased for the occasion, procured from the Mayor's allowance (4000/401).

Community Engagement Report – The Committee recommended that the Council should fly the Witney town flag (crest) from the Town Hall all year round. Officers are costing a new flag to replace the current one which is in a poor condition.

Community Engagement Report – The Committee recommended that the Council should support The Station's BREAK youth cafes at 1863 in the October and February half-terms. This would involve free use of the facility and discounted drinks being available.

There were no further recommendations for the current fiscal year. Recommendations for inclusion in the 2026-27 budget were; increasing The Station Detached Youth service budget to £28,000, a potential fund towards a suggested TVP 'have a go' event at The Leys and an increase of the subsidised letting budget at the Leys based in this year's figures + an inflationary increase determined at budget-setting.

Impact Assessments

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

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

Risk

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

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

Social Value

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

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

Financial implications

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

Recommendations

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

POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item: Grants & Subsidised Lettings

Meeting Date: Monday, 22 September 2025

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk/RFO

The purpose of this report is to present the Committee with grant requests from local organisations so they may agree dispersal.

Background

The Council maintains budgets for general discretionary grants and subsidised letting grants for groups or organisations which require financial assistance towards projects, costs and venue hire in order to provide services for the residents of Witney. Grant requests are usually considered by this Committee bi-annually at meetings in June and January, however there is occasion when they need to be considered at other times of the year due to Council Committee timeframes.

In the current year the budgets are as follows:

- Discretionary Grants (4100/407) - £20,000
- Subsidised Lettings – Corn Exchange/Burwell Hall (4110/407) - £1,500
- Subsidised Lettings – The Leys/Other (4110/202) - £5,500
- Annual grants - There are also specific budgets for a number of annual grants to organisations. For this meeting, they are covered in a separate report.

Current Situation

Discretionary Grant Applications

1. Thames Valley Police – A grant application for £2,500 has been received from the Neighbourhood Policing Team, requesting funding towards the purchase of an electric bike. The full application is attached as **Appendix A.**

2. Rotary Club of Witney – An application requesting an annual contribution of £3,750 towards the Christmas Lights Switch-On event has been received. The full application and supporting documents are attached as **Appendices B and C**.

Youth Services Grant

All grant recipients have expressed their gratitude to the Council, and the award agreements have been duly signed and returned.

There were two points noted by the Stronger Communities Committee on 15 September which are repeated below for transparency,

'Unfortunately, the **Friends of Springfield School** have been unable to facilitate the therapeutic horse-riding sessions proposed in their application. The group is now exploring alternative, similar youth services that may be more feasible as a replacement. They have been advised any new proposal funding would be subject to the Council's discretion and cannot be guaranteed.

Following the agreement of grant allocations in July, a representative of the **Parish of Witney** asked for the parishes aims and activities to be updated with the following, which was an agreed statement on their website. They were awarded part funds for an enrichment programme.

'Our churches share a common purpose: to help each person in our communities grow deeper in their knowledge of and relationship with God. Our vision is to be a community of mercy and kindness.

We cherish the Eucharist and the Daily Office, and we are an inclusive church committed to a hospitable Christianity where everyone is welcome.

As an outward-looking church, we seek to demonstrate God's love through our actions. We actively engage with 11 schools, 6 nursing and care homes, and provide outreach to new housing communities and those in need throughout the area.'

Correspondence

Correspondence has been received from Be Free Young Carers in relation to the grant awarded last year and is attached as **Appendix D**.

The following was also publicised in relation to a recent grant award by Ducklington Sports Club.

https://www.ducklingtonsportsclub.co.uk/news/grant-funding-from-witney-town-council

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 Christmas Lights Switch-on Event provides a free family-friendly event which is inclusive to all.

b) Biodiversity – no direct impact from the contents of the report.
c) Crime & Disorder – The provision of a bike for the Witney Neighbourhood Policing team may help with alleviating crime and ASB in Witney.
d) Environment & Climate Emergency – no direct impact from the contents of 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 Council has policies and criteria for which it uses to award its grants to ensure public funds are allocated and used appropriately. If awards are deviated from these criteria, a robust reason should be given and agreed by the Committee.

The Council must ensure they are satisfied with the information provided in order to award funds and request further information if not. To not do so could incur reputational risk.

Social Value

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

Benefits to Witney's community – the provision of a bike would lead to a more visible police presence which makes the community feel safer. The lights switch-on event is an annual social event and, judging by resident survey feedback, is important for the wellbeing of residents and for businesses.

Financial implications

At the Annual Council Meeting held on 17 May 2023, the Council invoked the General Power of Competence under which the ability to award these grants is made.

- The remaining discretionary grants budget is £10,925
- The remaining budget (4104/408) allocated for the Christmas Lights Switch-on event is £2,325 (a shortfall of £1,425).

Recommendations

Members are invited to:

1. Consider the grant request from Thames Valley Police Witney Neighbourhood Team.
2. Consider the grant request from the Rotary Club of Witney, noting any additional funds would need to be sought from another budget.
3. Note the updates concerning the Youth Services Grant.
4. Note the correspondence from Be Free Young Carers and Ducklington Sports Club.

WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Grant-aid to Local Organisations
APPLICATION FORM

(PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM IN BLOCK CAPITALS)

(1) Your Organisation			
Name of Organisation	Thames Valley Police		
Registered Address*	Witney police station, Welch Way Witney		
Post Code		Tel No.	07813570873
Contact Name	Helen Keen		
Position in Organisation	PCSO (i.e. Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary)		
Registered Charity	NO	Registration No.	

What are the activities and/or aims of the organisation:

- **Reduce crime and antisocial behaviour** in local areas.
- **Build trust and confidence** in the police through visible and accessible presence.
- **Understand and respond to local concerns** raised by residents.
- **Problem-solve** issues affecting the community, often in partnership with other services (e.g. councils, housing, youth services).
- **Prevent crime** through community engagement, education, and proactive patrols.

(2) Membership	
How many members do you have?	
Approximately how many of your members live in Witney?	
Is membership restricted in any way?	

What is your annual subscription, if any?	
Are you affiliated to a national organisation? If so, which one?	
Local venue/meeting place	

(3) Grants

Purpose for which the grant is required: The electric bike will support my role within the Neighbourhood Policing Team by enabling faster, more efficient, and environmentally friendly patrols across the local area. It will improve visibility and accessibility in areas that are difficult to reach by car, such as parks, alleyways, estates, and pedestrian zones.

Using an e-bike will allow me to:

- Engage more effectively with local residents, businesses, and vulnerable individuals.
- Respond more quickly to reports of antisocial behaviour and low-level crime.
- Conduct high-visibility patrols to deter criminal activity.
- Support community events and initiatives in a more sustainable way.
- Reduce the environmental impact of police patrols in line with local and national climate goals.

Overall, the bike will enhance community engagement, improve response times, and contribute to building safer and more connected neighbourhoods.

Amount of grant applied for	£ 2500
Has your organisation previously applied to the Town Council for a grant?	NO
If YES please give details	
Have you applied for a grant to any other body or organisation?	NO
If YES please give details	

(4) Financial

Please enclose a copy of your latest audited accounts, a financial projection for the period following the balance sheet or a Business Plan if a new organisation.

(5) Fundraising

What fundraising events or activities will your organisation be holding this year?

(6) General

Recipients of a grant from the Town Council should acknowledge the fact on all relevant literature.

Please provide or attach any additional information which may assist the Council in reaching its decision.

I certify that the above information is true to the best of my knowledge and belief, and that I am authorised to make this application for Grant-aid.

Signed: Helen Keen	Date: 13/08/2025

Please return your completed application form to the address overleaf, for the attention of the TOWN CLERK

For office use only:			
Acknowledged		Previously Applied	
Grant Aid Awarded/Amount	Y / N	Chq No.	

WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Grant-aid to Local Organisations
APPLICATION FORM

(PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM IN BLOCK CAPITALS)

(1) Your Organisation			
Name of Organisation	Rotary Club of Witney		
Registered Address*	[redacted]		
Post Code	[redacted]	Tel No.	[redacted]
Contact Name	RON SPURS		
Position in Organisation	Member – Event Manager for Christmas Lights 2025 (i.e. Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary)		
Registered Charity	YES	Registration No.	1029759

What are the activities and/or aims of the organisation:

The Rotary Club of Witney's charitable aims focus on supporting local and international projects, with a particular emphasis on community development and service.

The Club raises funds through events like the Witney Carnival, Fire Walks and Concerts to support various projects, including local charities and social initiatives for all sections of the community in Witney.

An example of the charities the Club supports are Witney Air Cadets, Witney Shed, Boxing Club for young people, Kids Out (Springfield School project), and Apollos clothing charity.

(2) Membership

How many members do you have?	35
Approximately how many of your members live in Witney?	30
Is membership restricted in any way?	Must be over 18 although the Club operates a Youth group at Woodgreen School
What is your annual subscription, if any?	£120.00
Are you affiliated to a national organisation? If so, which one?	Rotary in Gt Britain and Ireland and rotary International
Local venue/meeting place	Blue Boar Hotel and the Congregational Church

(3) Grants

Purpose for which the grant is required: To fund the infrastructure costs associated with the Christmas Lights Event on 29th November 2025

Amount of grant applied for	£3,750

Has your organisation previously applied to the Town Council for a grant?	Yes
If YES please give details	The Club works with Witney Town Council to deliver the annual Christmas Lights Event. Each year WTC make a grant to the Rotary Club to deliver the Event.
Have you applied for a grant to any other body or organisation?	No
If YES please give details	

(4) Financial

Please enclose a copy of your latest audited accounts, a financial projection for the period following the balance sheet or a Business Plan if a new organisation.

(5) Fundraising

What fundraising events or activities will your organisation be holding this year?

Choir competition
Witney Carnival – 2026. (The Rotary year is from 1st July until 30th June).
Street Collections for local and international causes – e.g. Ukraine and Gaza.
Firewalk for local charities.
Other fundraising projects will be planned and carried out as the Rotary year progresses.

(6) General

Recipients of a grant from the Town Council should acknowledge the fact on all relevant literature.

Please provide or attach any additional information which may assist the Council in reaching its decision.

I certify that the above information is true to the best of my knowledge and belief, and that I am authorised to make this application for Grant-aid.

Signed: Ron Spurs	Date: 3rd August 2025

Please return your completed application form to the address overleaf, for the attention of the TOWN CLERK

For office use only:			
Acknowledged		Previously Applied	
Grant Aid Awarded/Amount	Y / N	Chq No.	

See costs for 2025 event at Enclosure 1

See audited Accounts attached at Enclosure 2.

Enclosure 1

2025 anticipated costs

Generators	500
Windrush radio	700
UBICO	295
First Aid	375
WODC Road Closure permit	152
Stage electrics	350
SIA team for road closure	800
Printing	116
Donations to performers	300
Mulled Wine costs	350
Total	3938

Document is Restricted

1st September 2025

THANK YOU!

Witney Town Council

Thank you so much for your incredibly kind donation and support of Be Free Young Carers. Your donation has promoted the growth of the charity across the past year and we are excited to look ahead to all the exciting opportunities that are coming in the next few months. We would love if Witney Town Council would consider supporting the charity for an additional year as we continue to grow our numbers in West Oxfordshire.

Your support is having a significant impact on the lives of Oxfordshire's Young Carers. Attached is an impact report highlighting the outstanding work we've been able to accomplish in 2024-2025.

Kindest Regards,

Hannah Waugh
Head of Fundraising
Be Free Young Carers

Be Free Young Carers' 2024-2025 Impact



We have provided **916 trip places for young carers over 45 activities** in 2024/25. We have increased the hours dedicated to respite for our young carers through activities such as circus skills, ice skating, trapease, theatre trips, climbing and martial arts!



In the financial year of 2024/2025, we have initiated **10 young carer and befriender matches**.
We had **3 new befrienders** apply and complete the onboarding process during the financial year. Volunteers provided **468 hours** of support on our trips.



We have provided an average of **302 sessions of 1-2-1 emotional support** to 41 young carers and 90+ counselling sessions to young carers.
This has resulted in young carers reporting better mental health increased resilience, and improved coping strategies at the end of the 6 week period.

We have had 44 referrals for young carers in West Oxfordshire 31 of who are now registered to use our services. We ran our first trip during the summer holidays for West Oxford Young cares which was a trip to Cotswold Wildlife Park.



POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Agenda Item: Broadcasting of Council Meetings

Meeting Date: Monday, 22 September 2025

Contact Officer: Committee Clerk

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the Council's ability to live stream Council meetings.

Background

At meeting of the Committee on 21 July 2025 it was resolved that 'officers prepare a report on broadcasting Council meetings to be presented to this Committee on 22 September 2025'. (minute no. F425 refers).

The decision was made in response to feedback received through the Council's Annual Residents' Survey, with the aim of demonstrating Member cohesion and transparency, while also enhancing the professional profile of the Council and the work being carried out on behalf of residents.

Current Situation

Technical Capabilities

The Town Council held a successful hybrid meeting of the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee in March 2025 utilising new technology in the Gallery Room of the Corn Exchange, which it hopes to again repeat on 23 September 2025.

While the technology to hold hybrid meetings is in place, legislation permitting this format has not yet been approved. As such, it can currently only be used for livestreaming meetings.

Following discussions with the Venue & Events Officer and Communications & Community Engagement Officer, the Council can confirm that it is in the position to offer the livestreaming of Council meeting via the YouTube platform.

Initially meetings would be broadcast only with any participation of individuals outside of the meeting room disabled.

Democratic Management of Meetings

Many Councils have a livestreaming meeting protocol or guidance which sets out rules for respectful and professional behaviour, often covering topics like personal attacks,

interruptions, confidentiality, electronic devices, and appropriate language, ensuring that meetings are productive and fair for everyone, including members and the public.

These codes aim to uphold the principles of public life like honesty and integrity as set out in the Councillor Code of Conduct to maintain the professionalism and reputation of the Council.

If Members are supportive of livestreaming meetings, consideration should be given to the above protocol, with a request for officers to draft a version and plan to begin livestreaming from the first meeting cycle in January 2026.

A link to the upcoming meeting would be created and published along with the meeting agenda and any associated social media post relating to the meeting. Alternatively, it could be found via the Council YouTube channel page.

https://www.youtube.com/@witneytowncouncil4676

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 – Streaming of meetings would ensure fully transparency of the working of the Council and bring the meeting to a wider audience in an accessible format.
b) Biodiversity – None
c) Crime & Disorder – None
d) Environment & Climate Emergency – Would reduce the emission of attendees travelling to attend meetings.

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.

Consideration must be given to the issue of Code of Conduct highlighted earlier in the report as viewers would be at liberty to republish the meeting in whole or part.

The Council should be aware that incidents may occur outside of their control in relation to the broadcasting of meetings such as failure of power or internet reliability issues.

Social Value

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

The Council has seen greater engagement from members of the public in recent month through the promotion of its meetings, it's hoped that the broadcasting of meetings would help to further this engagement.

Financial Implications

- The Council has an existing YouTube account. There are currently no additional costs for the livestreaming of Council Meetings.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider,

1. The approval of livestreaming of Council meetings commencing from the meeting of Climate & Biodiversity Committee on 13 January 2026.

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