

Full Council

Meeting of Witney Town Council



Monday, 6th October, 2025 at 7.00 pm

To members of the Full Council - A Bailey, J Doughty, O Collins, G Meadows, J Aitman, T Ashby, D Enright, R Smith, D Temple, A Mubin, R Crouch, G Doughty, D Edwards-Hughes, D Newcombe, J Robertshaw, S Simpson and J Treloar

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 7 - 15)

To approve and adopt the minutes of the Council Meeting held on 28 July 2025 in accordance with Standing Order 18 including questions on the minutes as to the progress of any item.

4. **Public Participation**

The meeting will adjourn for this item.

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

5. **Witney Community Policing Issues**

To receive an update from the Witney Police Team (if appropriate).

6. **An Update from Witney Oxfordshire County Councillors and West Oxfordshire District Councillors**

To receive a short verbal update from Oxfordshire County Councillors representing Witney Wards and West Oxfordshire District Councillors.

7. **Report Back from the Councillors on the Work with External Bodies where they serve as the Town Council's Nominated Representative**

To receive a short verbal update from councillors who sit on external bodies where they serve as the Town Council's nominated representative.

8. **Minutes of Committees and Sub Committees**

To receive and NOTE the RESOLUTIONS in the minutes of the meetings held between 5 August 2025 and 22 September 2025, and agree the RECOMMENDATIONS contained therein.

- a) **Planning & Development Committee - 5 August, 26 August & 16 September 2025** (Pages 16 - 30)
- b) **Parks & Recreation Committee - 1 September 2025** (Pages 31 - 36)
- c) **Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee - 8 September 2025** (Pages 37 - 40)
- d) **Climate & Biodiversity Committee - 9 September 2025** (Pages 41 - 46)
- e) **Stronger Communities Committee - 15 September 2025** -TO FOLLOW
- f) **Policy, Governance & Finance Committee - 22 September 2025** -TO FOLLOW

9. **Working Group Membership**

SC521(1) – To note the recommendation, 'that, a Working Party be created to explore ideas celebrating national pride' and elect up to five Councillors to this group.

SC526 – To note the recommendation, 'that, establishment of a Town Centre Forum be approved with Witney Town Council carrying out administration of the Forum, and that three councillors to join the Forum be elected at the meeting of the Council on 6 October 2025.'

10. **Conclusion of Audit for Year Ending 31 March 2025** (Pages 47 - 53)

To receive the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (R.F.O) and note that the Council's External Auditor, Moore, have completed the review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for year ended 31 March 2025, and in their opinion the information is in accordance with Proper Practices (External Audit Report & Certificate 2024/25 and Notice of Conclusion of Audit for year ended 31 March 2025 are also enclosed).

11. **Motion - Support for West Oxfordshire Community Transport (WOCT)**

To consider a proposed motion and resolution concerning support for West Oxfordshire Community Transport (WOCT) in accordance with Standing Order 18.

This motion is brought to Full Council at variance with the decision made via a vote at Stronger Communities.

WOCT requested an additional £2500 for Witney routes in order to maintain a reliable and sustainable service. The committee voted 4:3 to turn down the request. The names of councillors voting each way were recorded.

Cllr Ashby in his capacity as a County Councillor wrote to OCC asking them to increase their WOCT funding. The outcome of discussions between OCC and WOCT is awaited.

It is appropriate for Full Council to pause, consider and vote on this matter, rather than accepting the recommendation of the spending committee without question at the minutes stage, because of the likely grave impact of the committee's decision on vulnerable residents. Witney Town Council has a strong record of working with WOCT and listening to its honest assessment of funding needs and should consider whether the evidence of need outweighs any reticence among members to extend the grant by this relatively low-risk sum.

Witney Town Council resolves, in acknowledgement that WOCT provides an essential community bus service for the residents of Witney, to increase the grant by £2,500, if this need is not met by OCC as an outcome of their September/October meeting with WOCT.

The sum can be taken from a supplementary estimate from the general reserve.

Proposed by: Cllr Ruth Smith

Seconded by: Cllr Rachel Crouch

Agenda continues on next page....

12. **Motion - Recommendations from Spending Committees in PGF Reports**

To consider a proposed motion and resolution concerning recommendations from spending in Policy, Governance & Finance Committee reports in accordance with Standing Order 18.

The recent case of the WOCT grant decision at Stronger Communities has highlighted a gap in the way recommendations from spending committees are reported. Traditionally, recommendations to spend have been presented to the Policy, Governance & Finance (PGF) Committee, and then to Full Council through minutes, while decisions not to spend have not been formally recorded in the same way.

This practice makes it harder to scrutinise the work of spending committees and limits the Council's ability to make fully informed decisions.

Witney Town Council therefore resolves:

1. *That all decisions of spending committees—both affirmative and negative—be clearly summarised to PGF, so that scrutiny of decisions is complete and transparent, and overall decision-making is improved.*
2. *That this principle be applied immediately and for the remainder of this term of office.*
3. *That when the Financial Regulations are next reviewed (June 2026), they be amended to include the following:*

Amendment to Financial Regulations

Where a recommendation on expenditure is not carried by a Spending Committee, the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee reserves the right to re-examine the matter at its meeting. The PGF Committee may overturn the decision if additional information is presented that demonstrates a clear public need and its affordability, within an existing budget or supplementary estimate from the General Fund.

Proposed by: Cllr Ruth Smith

Seconded by: Cllr Georgia Meadows

13. **Climate Action Plan** (Pages 54 - 57)

To receive the minutes of the Climate Action Plan Working Party held on 25 September 2025 and accompanying report concerning 2026-27 budget-setting.

14. **Public Convenience Provision in Witney** (Pages 58 - 61)

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

15. **Consultation - High Street & Market Square (Witney) Proposed Highway Improvements** (Pages 62 - 87)

To receive updated documents from Oxfordshire County Council concerning this scheme and consider a response, if appropriate.

16. **Civic Announcements** (Pages 88 - 89)

To receive the report of the Mayor & Mayor's Secretary.

17. **Health & Safety** (Pages 90 - 93)

To receive an update from the Compliance & Environment Officer on health and safety items.

18. **Vandalism & Anti Social Behaviour** (Pages 94 - 95)

To receive an update showing the latest vandalism to Council property and reported Anti-Social Behaviour.

19. **Future of Local Government in Oxfordshire** (Pages 96 - 102)

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

20. **Communication from the Leader**

To receive such communications as the Leader of the Council may wish to bring before the Council and to consider the recommendation of the Leader on how such communications should be dealt with.

21. **Correspondence**

To receive any correspondence received (if applicable).

a) **NALC - Seizing The Opportunity of Devolution** (Pages 103 - 105)

To receive notice of an open letter from the National Association of Local Council's (NALC) circulation concerning devolution.

b) **Civility & Respect Project Newsletter** (Page 106)

To receive notice of the National Association of Local Council's (NALC) latest Civility & Respect newsletter.

c) **OCC Response to Resident Survey Feedback** (Pages 107 - 111)

To receive a response from Oxfordshire County Council to a letter issued concerning feedback in the Witney Town Council annual resident's survey. Minute no: F425(4) refers.

d) **WODC Response to Resident Survey Feedback** (Pages 112 - 113)

To receive a response from West Oxfordshire District Council to a letter issued concerning feedback in the Witney Town Council annual resident's survey. Minute no: F425(4) refers.

e) **Certificate of Adoption - Thorney Leys (Guild Close) Witney: 410.203 S38** (Page 114)

To note that works required under the Agreement entered into under Section 38 of the Highways Act 1980 between Abbey Developments Limited and Oxfordshire County Council dated the 24th April 2024 relating to housing development have been completed, and Oxfordshire County Council has accepted liability for the future maintenance of the works as Highway Maintainable at Public Expense.

22. **Questions to the Leader of the Council**

Questions to the Leader of the Council concerning the business of the Council in accordance with Standing Order 15.

23. **Longstanding Service Recognition - Town Clerk/C.E.O**

To recognise the 25 years long-standing service of the Town Clerk/C.E.O, Sharon Groth.

24. **Sealing of Documents**

To receive details of documents sealed by the Council (If applicable).

25. **Exclusion of Press & 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.

26. **Property & Legal Matters**

To receive a confidential verbal update from the Town Clerk on property and legal matters, if appropriate.



Town Clerk

Members Interests & Registration Of Gifts & Hospitality

Members are reminded that any changes to the register of interests previously completed by them or any registration of Gifts or Hospitality received which exceed £50 should be reported to the Town Clerk **within 28 days** of the occurrence.