

MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday, 8 December 2025

At 7.00 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor A Bailey (Chair)

Councillors:	J Doughty 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 J Treloar
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Officers:	Sharon Groth Adam Clapton Derek Mackenzie	Town Clerk Deputy Town Clerk Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
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Others: Three members of the public.

703 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor O Collins & S Simpson.

704 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers.

705 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held 6 October, and 10 November 2025 were received.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Council meetings held 6 October, and 10 November 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the chair.

Cllr D Enright joined the meeting at 7:03pm.

706 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Committee adjourned for this item.

The committee received representations from two volunteers of a local radio station concerning the Council's support for the Witney Music Festival.

The Committee reconvened.

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

Two members of the public left at 7:35pm.

707 **WITNEY COMMUNITY POLICING ISSUES**

Apologies had been received from Inspector C Ball who was unfortunately unable to attend or send a representative.

708 **AN UPDATE FROM WITNEY OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLORS AND WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILLORS**

Oxfordshire County Council

Cllr T Ashby updated Members on a range of current matters, including a Fire Service Improvements consultation, recycling centre opening hours, proposals relating to the Local Government review, the Oxford congestion zone, Witney Library re-opening, the opening of Councillor priority funds, and ongoing work on the Local Plan.

Cllr J Robertshaw raised issues relating to infrastructure, Oxfordshire Link, Shores Green, the Flood Plan and the SEND deficit.

West Oxfordshire District Council

Cllr J Doughty thanked officers for the work undertaken at Marriots Walk in support of the Christmas Fayre, which coincided with the masterplan for the facility.

Cllr D Enright reported that Marriots Walk had experienced its most successful start to a Christmas season to date, with footfall increasing by 50%.

Cllr R Crouch advised that the Communities Department, in partnership with Oxfordshire Mind, was offering free two-hour training courses for Councillors. Further details would be circulated to Members following the meeting.

Cllr R Smith reported that an internal audit had taken place at West Oxfordshire District Council. This included a review of Section 106 requests from the previous year, and feedback was being sought on how the process had operated. It was also noted that a Tree Officer is now in post at West Oxfordshire District Council.

Resolved:

That, the verbal updates be noted.

709 **REPORT BACK FROM THE COUNCILLORS ON THE WORK WITH EXTERNAL BODIES WHERE THEY SERVE AS THE TOWN COUNCIL'S NOMINATED REPRESENTATIVE**

Cllr D Edwards-Hughes reported that he had attended a meeting of the Witney Chamber of Trade and was looking forward to collaborative working through the **Town Centre Forum**.

Cllr D Newcombe advised that he had attended a meeting of the **RAF Brize Norton Local Consultation Group** on behalf of the Council and provided updates on proposed runway works, including a potential closure of up to six weeks, along with initiatives relating to energy efficiency, noise and light pollution reduction and flooding.

Cllr R Smith reported that **Witney Infrastructure Neighbourhood Group (WING)** had met and discussed whether the North Witney development should be designated as a strategic development area. She also reported on **Witney Town Band**, noting a successful season and the significant contribution the Band had made to civic and community events.

Cllr R Crouch advised that the **Witney Educational Foundation** had appointed a new business manager who was reviewing the charity's financial position. She further reported that the Deputy Mayor had attended Unterhaching in November to commemorate Volkstrauertag in conjunction with **Witney Twinning Association**.

Cllr R Crouch also advised that **Witney Town Charity** had recently inspected the Almshouses, with very positive outcomes and with good grant management. Finally, she noted that the **Oxfordshire Association of Local Councils** was considering the Local Government Review and its potential impact on town and parish councils

Resolved:

That, the verbal updates be noted.

710 **PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE - 7 OCTOBER, 28 OCTOBER & 18 NOVEMBER**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Planning & Development Committee meetings held on 7 October, 28 October & 18 November 2025 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

711 **PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE - 3 NOVEMBER**

The Mayor presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 3 November 2025 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

712 **HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE - 10 NOVEMBER**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 10 November 2025 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

713 **STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE - 17 NOVEMBER**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Stronger Communities meeting held on 17 November 2025 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

714 **POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE - 24 NOVEMBER**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

P702 – In response to a members question the Town Clerk provided clarification that any decisions that impacted the budget of the Council would be communicated to all members via the budget setting process. However, ordinarily the minutes from the Personnel Sub Committee were not widely circulated due to the fact it also dealt with other staffing related matters such as grievance and disciplinary issues which were strictly confidential.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 24 November 2025 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

715 **CLIMATE ACTION WORKING PARTY - 25 SEPTEMBER**

The Mayor presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

Cllr D Enright advised that he had been omitted from the Councillors in attendance and asked that this be corrected.

Resolved:

1. That, a change be made to reflect Cllr Enright's attendance and,
2. That the minutes of the Climate Action Working Party meeting held on 25 September 2025 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

716 **WITNEY: PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE WORKING PARTY - 13 NOVEMBER**

The Chair of the Working Party presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Witney: Past, Present & Future Working Party (previously known as the National Pride Working Party) meeting held on 13 November 2025 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

During the following Agenda Item Cllr D Edwards-Hughes briefly left the meeting at 8:01pm returning at 8:03pm.

717 **CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Council received the report of the Mayor and Mayor's Secretary which highlighted the civic engagements of the Mayor and Deputy since the last meeting.

The Mayor thanked his Deputy for covering duties following the birth of his child and his secretary for assisting with the arrangements for the Mayor's Carol Service. These thanks were echoed by Members.

A Member also noted that the period from early November through to the end of the year was particularly busy with events and commented that these had all run smoothly. Thanks were therefore extended to officers for their work in delivering these events.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

718 **HEALTH & SAFETY**

The Council received the report of the Compliance & Environment Officer which provided an update on Health & Safety matters.

Members thanked officers for their work in these areas in ensuring the Council's compliance and welcomed the successful staff training, which was noted as helping to mitigate potential issues.

Resolved

That, the report be noted.

719 **VLANDALISM & ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

The Council received the report of vandalism & Anti-Social behaviour which had occurred since the last meeting.

Members noted with satisfaction a reduction in incidents at the Covid-19 Memorial since the summer and thanked staff for their efforts in addressing these matters.

Resolved:

That, the report and verbal update be noted.

720 **COMPLAINTS, COMPLIMENTS, FOIS & SARS**

The Council received the report of the Deputy Town Clerk which outlined complaints, comments and compliments received since the last report in June 2025.

Members heard from the Deputy Town Clerk who provided additional details and highlighted the continuing trend of more compliments than complaints.

The report did not align with the Council's new complaints processes and policy which had only been adopted at the last Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting.

Members raised questions relating to complaints regarding the accessibility of a new path at Witney Lake and the number of bike racks, asking if a report on the Council's stock could be provided.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

721 **FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN OXFORDSHIRE**

The Council received a verbal update from the Town Clerk/CEO who advised that West Oxfordshire District Council had scheduled a workshop on the matter, which clashed with the Council's budget meeting. She confirmed that a separate meeting was planned early in the new year. She also reiterated that, at the recent OALC Larger Councils meeting, a presentation had been given on preparing for unitarisation for larger councils by the NALC Chair of the Larger Councils Committee.

Resolved:

That, the verbal update be noted.

722 **OCC CONSULTATION - TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER FOR A40**

The Council received notice of a consultation concerning a proposed Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for the A40.

Members welcomed the TRO which complimented a Public Space Protection Order being sought by West Oxfordshire District Council for the same stretch of road. With both in place, the Authorities would have enhanced powers to help deter pony and trap racing here.

Resolved:

That, Witney Town Council welcomes the TRO on the A40 and submits a response of the same to Oxfordshire County Council.

723 **OCC CONSULTATION – WEST END (WITNEY) PROPOSED RESIDENTIAL PERMIT PARKING**

The Council received notice of a consultation concerning a proposed residential parking permit scheme at West End, Witney.

Members noted they had seen an earlier iteration of the proposal, and little had changed. This had been an ongoing issue for many years and this scheme, with multi-road restrictions did not seem to be the answer.

Resolved:

That, Witney Town Council objects to the proposal as presented.

The last remaining member of the public left the meeting at 8:25pm.

724 **OCC CONSULTATION - PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE OXFORDSHIRE'S FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE**

The Council received notice of a consultation concerning proposals to change Oxfordshire's Fire & Rescue Service.

Members noted the direct improvements to Witney's service but also the wider repercussions for West Oxfordshire which could have an impact.

Resolved:

That, a response be drafted by officers and presented to the meeting on 5th January for approval and submission in response.

725 **COMMUNICATION FROM THE LEADER**

The Leader had nothing to be communicated.

Resolved:

That, the verbal report be noted.

726 **HIGHWAYS ASSET RESPONSE TEAM (HART)**

The Council received the correspondence from Oxfordshire County Council Highway Engagement Team.

Following discussion, it was agreed that this be deferred to the Planning & Development Committee for further debate with Members being encouraged to submit details of any maintenance activity that was required within their wards so that it may be collated.

Resolved

That, a response be considered by the Planning & Development Committee at their meeting of 6 January 2025.

727 **QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

There were no questions for the Leader of the Council.

728 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

There were no items sealed since the last meeting.

Resolved:

That, the seal of the Council be affixed to any documents arising from decisions taken by this meeting of the Council.

The meeting closed at: 8.44 pm

Chair