

Parks & Recreation

Committee Meeting of Witney Town Council



Monday, 12th January, 2026 at 6.00 pm

To members of the Parks & Recreation Committee - J Aitman, S Simpson, J Treloar, R Smith, A Bailey, J Doughty, D Edwards-Hughes and D Temple (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 3 - 7)

a) To adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 3 November 2025;

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

4. **Participation of the Public**

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. **Major Projects**

To receive update reports from the Project Officer on the following projects:

- a) **West Witney - Town Council Depot & Clubhouse** (Pages 8 - 11)
- b) **The Leys - Courtside Hubs** (Pages 12 - 13)
- c) **Raleigh Crescent - Multi Use Games Area (MUGA)** (Pages 14 - 16)



Town Clerk

**PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 3 November 2025

At 6.01 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor S Simpson (Vice-Chair, in the Chair)

Councillors:	J Treloar	D Edwards-Hughes
	R Smith	D Temple
	A Bailey	R Crouch (In place of J Aitman)
	J Doughty	
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Mark Lewis	Head of Estates & Operations
	Nigel Warner	Responsible Financial Officer
Others:	Eight members of the public.	

PR614 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor J Aitman, Councillor R Crouch attended as a substitute.

PR615 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers.

PR616 MINUTES

The minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 1 September 2025 were received.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 1 September 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

Cllr D Temple joined the meeting at 6:08pm

PR617 **PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC**

The Committee adjourned for this item.

The Committee received representation from the Chair of Witney Wolves Basketball Club concerning Agenda Item 6. Members heard about the issues faced by the Club due to a lack of suitable facilities for them to train and host games and inconsistent access to those facilities.

The Committee also heard from a further member of the Witney Wolves Basketball Club regarding the costs of accessing indoor courts at the Leisure Centre facilities in Witney & Carterton. As these were not facilities that the Town Council had control over, the club were advised to speak with West Oxfordshire District Council however, they were encouraged to consider an application to the Town Council grant scheme.

The Committee reconvened.

PR618 **CAPITAL PROJECTS - WITNEY BASKETBALL COURTS**

With the permission of the Chair, this item was moved up the agenda so the members of public present could hear the discussion and outcome relating to potential funding of improvements to the Basketball Court at King Georges Field and outdoor court adjacent to Witney Leisure Centre.

Members received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer along with details provided by the Chair of the Witney Wolves Basketball Club earlier, who had provided an indication that the cost of each court refurbishment to bring them up to an acceptable playing standard would be approx. £45,500, a breakdown of how that estimate was received was also provided.

Members heard that basketball was Europe's most popular urban sport and about the impact it has on Community cohesion and the opportunities it provides in preventing anti-social behaviour. They expressed their initial support for the refurbishment project and provided details of alternative funding avenues, such as the Westhive scheme offered by West Oxfordshire District Council.

The Committee unanimously agreed to request Officers to look further into options for the King George's court and to progress discussions with Oxfordshire County Council who owned the central Witney court, known as "The Cage" located adjacent to the Windrush Leisure Centre.

Recommended:

1. That, the report of the Responsible Financial Officer be noted and,
2. That, Officers progress work to look at options to refurbish the courts at King George's Field and the OCC owned Basketball court.

All Members of the Public left at 6:29pm

PR619 **FINANCE REPORT: REVISED REVENUE BUDGET 2025/26 AND DRAFT BASE REVENUE BUDGET FOR 2026/27**

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 a verbal explanation of the report with the RFO answering their questions as they arose which included the potential for adding the volunteer OCC flood wardens to the Town Council insurance policy.

The Committee commended Officers on the water savings at the Splashpark as well as the preparation of a prudent and balanced draft budget.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and
2. That, the draft estimates as detailed in the report be approved.

PR620 REVENUE GROWTH ITEMS, SPECIAL REVENUE PROJECTS, AND CAPITAL PROJECTS

Having considered individually the proposal for improvements to basketball courts the Committee considered the remaining points of the Responsible Financial Officers report.

Members heard of the proposed improvements to Burwell Hall which would be commenced with the installation of new lockers, additionally they received an update on the introduction of parking restrictions at The Leys which was being progressed by Officers.

Regarding the needs for path improvements at West Witney to enhance the Parkrun, it was agreed that these should be considered and any works tied in with the 3G pitch installation. They heard that Officers would pursue the social community funding from the Shores Green Project as an option for the £30,000 funding gap.

The Committee also considered the need for pitch drainage across all its green spaces estate. It was agreed that grant funding over that offered by the Football Association be explored and that a report be prepared outlining the costs associated with the installation at each of the recreation grounds.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Officers prepare a report with further details of the Basketball, Park Run & drainage proposals for further consideration at the meeting of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee on 24 November 2025.

PR621 SCHEDULE OF PROPOSED FEES & CHARGES 2026/27

The Committee received and considered the proposed recreational charges for 2026-27 as part of the budget setting process.

The RFO explained the reasoning behind the proposed increase of 3.8 -4% to each of the charges, Officers would further review the charges sheet and remove those which no longer were relevant such as the hire of bowls woods, sports equipment hire and the services provided by Courtside.

Members recognised that the increase was necessary to ensure the Council adhered to its medium-term financial forecast and additionally recognised the level of financial subsidy that the Council provided to all sporting activity.

Members asked that for consistency that all fees rise by 4% as it was noted that with the effect of rounding the charges this made no material difference.

Recommended:

That, the proposed 4% increase for recreational fees and charges for 2026-27, be agreed.

The Responsible Financial Officer left the meeting at 7:05pm

PR622 SPORTS PITCHES UPDATE

The Committee received and considered the report of the Operations Manager which was accompanied by a report on the Council's grass sports pitches by STRI (formerly the Sports Turf Research Institute).

Members also received a verbal report from the Head of Estates & Operations on the salient points of the STRI report and the actions of the whole operations team to address issues faced at the Councils grassed recreational and sports areas. The majority of actions had already been completed, some additional work such as dealing with weed coverage on football pitches would be carried out in the Spring of 2026.

Members welcomed the positive comments within the report which again outlined the continued improvements and praised the impact the Council's in-house ground's maintenance regime. Members expressed their thanks to the Operations Manager and his team.

The Committee were disappointed to hear that despite the football training pitches being made available at Raleigh Crescent, these had not been booked by teams. Members heard that the next scheduled meeting with football clubs was planned for the following day and Officers hoped to gain feedback on the lack of use. It was reported that there had been some issues experienced with the goal post sockets following damage caused by West Oxfordshire District Councils contractor.

Discussion turned to the use of recreational areas for third party events with it being noted that the damage caused following Witney Feast had been repaired. Members asked that Officers carry out a feasibility review of all third-party events at The Leys to ensure these are scheduled to limit potential damage and impact to sporting activity.

Members were frustrated to hear that the cricket square at The Leys had again been unused for another year. A request for two sight screens had been received; however, the Committee was reluctant to fund these if there were no signs of cricket returning. Officers were asked to explore the potential use further with clubs and for friendly ad-hoc use and report back to the Committee.

Finally, the Committee heard of the plans for Officers to meet with specialists to consider the introduction of enhanced drainage for sports pitches, the cost of such work was estimated at £75,000 per 11v11 football pitch, however this could be offset in part by funding from the Football Association should they authorise grant funding. It was unanimously agreed that once the initial discussions had taken place that officers prepare a report for presentation to a meeting of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee and the decision be deferred to that Committee.

Recommended:

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, two portable sight screens be budgeted for and,
3. That, the continued improvement in the Council's grass sports pitches be welcomed and,
4. That, officers evaluate the use of The Leys for third party events and,
5. That, Officers prepare a report outlining the proposal for enhanced drainage for each of the councils recreational and sports grounds and any decision on how to proceed be deferred to the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee.

Cllrs D Edwards-Hughes & D Temple left the meeting at 7:37pm.

*Also, during the following item Cllr A Bailey left the meeting
between 7:42pm and 7:46pm*

PR623 MAJOR PROJECTS

The Committee received the report of the Project Officer providing an update on the various major projects that the Council was currently engaged with.

Members were pleased to hear the positive progress with the West Witney Project and welcomed the upcoming meeting on 10th November to appoint the contractor.

Additionally, the Committee were buoyed with the news that the Courtside development was still on track be delivered in January 2026 and that Officers continued to be prudent in the allocation of the Council's financial contribution to the project.

Members were also pleased to hear of the progress of the Raleigh Crescent MUGA and looked forward to receiving further updates once WODC advanced the project to the tender stage which was hoped to be later in the month. The Committee expressed their thanks to the Project officers for his work in keeping local residents abreast of project delays and developments.

Finally, the Committee were delighted to hear of the success of the redeveloped Splashpark which had now been decommissioned for the winter. Members heard of the work carried out to ensure that the water use was monitored throughout the summer season and that usage had reduced significantly from that of the previous Splashpark.

It was requested that a new sinking fund be created to ensure that funds were put aside for replacement of the Splashpark in 10 years' time, as it was clear it was a well-received facility by both residents of Witney and those families that travelled from further afield.

Recommended:

1. That, the major project update report be noted and,
2. That, the sinking fund for a replacement Splashpark be maintained.

The meeting closed at: 7.47 pm

Chair

PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Major Projects Update – West Witney (Depot & Clubhouse)

Meeting Date: Monday 12 January 2026

Contact Officer: Project Officer

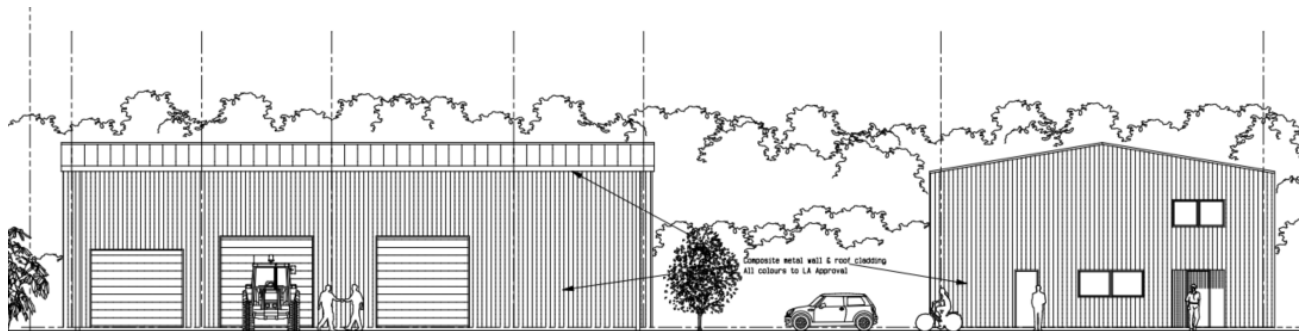
The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update regarding the major capital projects that are currently in flight.

Background

As Members will be aware, Witney Town Council's Open Spaces Strategy cited 5x themes to deliver improvements for our community: Parks, Sport, Leisure, Infrastructure & Effectiveness.

West Witney Project

New Depot



West Witney Clubhouse



Current Situation

- The West Witney Project combines the construction of a new works depot and the refurbishment of the existing Clubhouse.
- In accordance with the Council's financial regulations, the project contract was awarded to Skyline DC Ltd on 21st November 2025.
- Our partnership with Berry's has continued into the construction phase. Officers have instructed Berry's to act as 'Contract Administrators' to ensure the council has the correct and appropriate legal protection, compliance measures and quality assurance to ensure the materials and workmanship is in accordance with the agreed specification in the contract. Berry's will also assist officers in identifying and negotiating cost-saving opportunities throughout the project.
- Officers have worked with the successful contractor Skyline to identify potential savings and have achieved the following to date.
 - The introduction of a new payment plan where the main contractor will receive payment for completed works every 14 days that will result in an 8% discount. This is envisaged to reduce the total contracted sum by £150,785.
 - Changing the windows from Aluminium to UPVC without compromising security, thermal or durability specification will save up to £3,000.
 - Changing entrance door from a glazed door to a solid door, improving security and thermal ratings will save up to £12,000.
 - Building Control has confirmed that the new depot doesn't require the level of fire protection for the steelwork in the original building specification, which will save up to £5,000.

Work on the New Depot continues until mid-February and the Clubhouse renovation started on 5th Jan 2026. Cost savings are a constant consideration which are discussed frequently. Confidence is high we will continue to identify further opportunities, which officers will continue to work and report on.

- Skyline have made excellent progress to date, which has kept the new depot phase on track for completion in Mid-Feb. Significant project milestones (Foundation pouring

and steel/cladding approvals) together with Building Control inspections have been achieved without issue.

- Sport clubs who use the grounds have been engaged regarding clubhouse closure and officers have arranged for temporary toilets to be installed on the field for the duration of the clubhouse renovation, which has been appreciated by all clubs
- Work to satisfy planning approval conditions has been completed and submitted to West Oxfordshire District Council. Confidence is high that we will obtain a positive decision, which is now due in January.
- The Loan Application to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government has been successfully approved.
- The proposed completion dates for each project phase are as follows:
 - New Works Depot = 16th February 2026
 - Clubhouse Refurbishment = mid- April 2026

Impact Assessments

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

- a) Equality – This construction and refurbishment project will adhere to Equality Act 2010, treating everyone fairly, creating an inclusive workplace, and designing buildings that can be used by as many people as possible.
- b) Biodiversity – In accordance with planning conditions the new depot satisfies the required uplift in BNG rating.
- c) Crime & Disorder – security of both buildings have been specified in the tender to ensure the building remains safe and potential thieves are deterred. This includes required ratings of locks, doors and windows together with window bars, external lighting and CCTV.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – building construction consists of environmentally friendly materials, which will also improve thermal efficiency. PV roof panels and storage batteries have also been included in specification to reduce energy consumption.

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.

- To reduce the risks typically associated with construction projects, the council is working in partnership with Berry's, a specialist construction consultancy. This collaboration provides assurance that the project will deliver value for money, meet the required specifications and be completed within the agreed timeframes
- The council's rigorous procurement protocols and use of financial regulations significantly reduces the risk of engaging substandard contractors, thereby safeguarding public funds from corrective costs and legal disputes.

Social Value

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

- New depot will improve the team's ability to maintain and enhance the valuable services they provide the town. This improves the appearance of the town and its green spaces, making it a cleaner, neater and more pleasant environment for our residents.
- A refurbished Clubhouse will provide the community with a new modern building to socialise and rent function rooms. It will also provide the community with refurbished changing rooms facilities for sports teams and eliminates the current safeguarding issue restricting its use for youngsters.

Financial implications

- The financial implications have been documented comprehensively in the RFO's Full Council Report dated 23rd June 2025

Recommendations

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

PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Major Projects – The Leys (Courtside Hubs)

Meeting Date: Monday 12 January 2026

Contact Officer: Project Officer

The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update regarding the major capital projects that are currently in flight.

Background

As you are aware, Witney Town Council's Open Spaces Strategy cited 5x themes to deliver improvements for our community: Parks, Sport, Leisure, Infrastructure & Effectiveness.

Courtside Hub at the Leys



Current Situation

- The interior fit-out of the Hub building is progressing well and remains on schedule.
- Drainage works have advanced successfully, with testing completed prior to Christmas.
- The transformation of the changing rooms is continuing as planned.
- A revised opening date from Courtside is awaited, as the previously confirmed January timeline is now unlikely.

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 – This construction project will adhere to Equality Act 2010, treating everyone fairly, creating an inclusive workplace, and designing buildings that can be used by as many people as possible.
- b) Biodiversity – the project plans to achieve over 100% improvement in BNG
- c) Crime & Disorder – contractors are on site, which ensures site security and reduces risk of trespassing, vandalism and anti-social behaviour
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – building construction consists of environmentally friendly materials, which will also improve thermal efficiency and reduce energy consumption.

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.

- Officers intend to phase the council's £250,000 contribution to Courtside at set milestones that are weighted towards the end of the project, to minimise the risk of any financial loss.

Social Value

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

- Increased variety of sports will encourage Witney's residents to exercise and feel the physical and social benefits
- The completion of the Courtside Hub, coupled with new skatepark, mini-golf, renovated splashpad and excellent play area, establishes the Leys as a destination park for the area.

Financial implications

- Witney Town Council's contribution of £250,000 will be segmented and phased in accordance with project milestones and acceptable level of risk.
- Work is underway to renegotiate the lease between the council and Courtside

Recommendations

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

PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Major Projects – Raleigh Crescent (MUGA)

Meeting Date: Monday 12 January 2026

Contact Officer: Project Officer

The purpose of this report is to provide members with an update regarding the major capital projects that are currently in flight.

Background

As you are aware, Witney Town Council's Open Spaces Strategy cited 5x themes to deliver improvements for our community: Parks, Sport, Leisure, Infrastructure & Effectiveness.

Raleigh Crescent MUGA



Current Situation

- Officers have re-issued the tender document to reflect the S106 requirements for WODC to approve and publish in January 2026.
- WTC Officers have collaborated with WODC Officers to respond to several complaints from a local resident who is concerned with location of planned MUGA. Officers have captured relevant concerns and included within proposed tender to WODC. Resident has also been given guidance on formal process they can follow to comment on planning when design has been confirmed.

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 – inclusivity and accessibility to everyone are important design features of this park, which are highlighted in tender and subsequent evaluation process.
- b) Biodiversity – the project plans to deliver above the minimal uplift in BNG
- c) Crime & Disorder – location is an area subjected to occasional anti-social behaviour, which was raised at consultation events. We have asked for this issue to be addressed within the design and lighting/CCTV innovations.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – building construction consists of environmentally friendly materials and lighting will be energy efficient. Muga specification includes soundproof materials to reduce sound of ball strikes.

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.

- Differences in Town Council and District Council protocol, processes and cultures could present challenges agreeing tender specifications and transferring ownership to Witney Town Council. We are managing risk by learning from previous experience with Play Park and effective comms through robust procurement process and project management.
- Officers recognise that concepts which were presented at public consultation last year will be different to what is being delivered due to S106 spending criteria. Officers are taking relevant feedback from consultation event to incorporate into new design scope.

Social Value

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

- A key objective of the park is to encourage exercise through fun activities, which attracts users from every segment of the community to encourage social, generational, cultural and physical integration.
- Another key objective is making a safe and fun area for girls to participate in sporting activities.
- The park will address a growing concern of anti-social behaviour in the existing park, due to its covered seating areas, which are poorly lit.

Financial implications

- The project budget is reliant on S106 monies from District Council, which means the town council must work in partnership to deliver project. Robust processes need to be in place to ensure robust contracts are in place and smooth transfer of ownership is achieved.

Recommendations

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