

Parks & Recreation

Committee Meeting of Witney Town Council



Monday, 12th May, 2025 at 6.00 pm

To members of the Parks & Recreation Committee – J Aitman, A Bailey, R Smith, S Simpson, D Edwards-Hughes, J Treloar, J Doughty and T Ashby (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 30(d)(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. **Election of Vice-Chair**

To elect a Vice-Chair of the Committee for the 2025/26 Municipal Year.

4. **Minutes** (Pages 4 - 7)

a) To adopt and sign as a correct record the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee held on 10 March 2025;

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

5. **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 42. Matters raised shall relate to the following items on the agenda. 5

6. **Committee Terms of Reference** (Pages 8 - 9)

To review the Committee Terms of Reference (TOR) if appropriate.

7. **Committee Objectives & Work Programme for the Municipal Year (To Follow)**

To receive and consider the report of the Town Clerk/C.E.O concerning the priorities of this Committee during 2025/26.

Recreation

8. **Leys Cricket Update** (Pages 10 - 11)

To receive the report of the Operations Manager.

9. **Update on Cricket Provision at The Leys Recreation Ground**

To receive a verbal update from the Town Clerk.

The Town Clerk will provide an update on recent communications with Oxfordshire Cricket Board regarding ongoing interest in reintroducing cricket at The Leys. This includes a renewed expression of interest from Henry Box school in using a proposed artificial pitch on the field adjacent to their premises, and general support from the OCB for facilitating cricket activities—including All Stars and women's sessions—once construction works at Courtside are completed.

10. **Witney Basketball** (Pages 12 - 13)

To receive an update from the Deputy Town Clerk regarding basketball provision in Witney.

11. **Major Strategic Projects** (Page 14) **(Officer Report to Follow)**

To receive and consider the report of the Projects Officer concerning the progress of projects under the remit of this Committee being undertaken by the Council or Stakeholders.

12. **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.

13. **Major Strategic Projects - West Witney Projects**

a) **Project Update (To Follow)**

To receive and consider the report of the Projects Officer concerning the progress of projects.

b) **Finance Report (To Follow)**

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



Town Clerk

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

Held on Monday, 10 March 2025

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

Present:

Councillor D Newcombe (Chair)

Councillors:	R Smith	J Doughty (In place of T Ashby)
	R Crouch	G Meadows (In place of O Collins)
	J Aitman	G Doughty (In place of J Treloar)
	S Simpson	
Officers:	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Mark Lewis	Head of Estates & Operations
Others:	No members of the public.	

PR135 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Treloar, O Collins & T Ashby, Councillors G Doughty, G Meadows & J Doughty attended respectively as substitutes.

PR136 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or officers.

PR137 MINUTES

The minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 13 January 2025 were received.

P23 – Members heard that the Chair of the Traffic Advisory Committee, Cllr A Coles had made representations to Oxfordshire County Council with respect to the Traffic Regulation Order for The Leys. Officers would report back on progress.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 13 January 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

PR138 PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

There was no public participation.

PR139 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.

A Member expressed their appreciation for the report and how they were pleased to see all finances on track.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the management accounts of the Parks & Recreation Committee for the period up to 31 January 2025 be approved.

PR140 MAJOR PROJECTS UPDATE

The Committee received and considered the report of the Project Officer providing an update on the Council's Major Projects. The Head of Estates & Operations (HE&O) also provided a verbal update and response to Members' questions.

The Leys Community Hub

The Committee were pleased to hear of the completion of ground works and that the structure build was under way. Members also welcomed the additional confidential progress report from Courtside which they found informative.

Although initially disappointed to hear of the complaints regarding the height of the main building from residents of Fernleigh, Members were reassured by the confidential update from Courtside that contact had been made, and further updates would be provided to all Fernleigh residents in the preceding months.

Ralegh Crescent – Sports & Social Park

The Committee heard that the Project Officer and HE&O were due to meet with West Oxfordshire District Council later that week and final agreement was to be reached, and the tender published.

In response to a question from a Member, the HE&O acknowledged that at the same meeting the lack of working play equipment in the playpark would also be discussed. The Park would also be included in the playpark review that was currently being carried out by Officers to assess if further work was required.

Splashpad

Members were very pleased to hear that the work to rejuvenate the splashpad would commence in the week commencing 17 March with an anticipated completion date at the end of May ahead of the summer season.

Portaloo's at West Witney Sports & Social Club (WWS&SC)

The Committee considered points raised in the report and agreed that both Portaloo should be locked and that Officers should continue to work with Park Run and WWS&SC to try and find a

resolution until the completion of the refurbishment of the Social Club and replacement facilities were completed.

Members heard that the new changing room and toilet facilities would be under the control of the Town Council and this would make it easier for access to be granted to users of the recreational area.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Portaloo's at West Witney remain locked and,
3. That, Officers continue to assist Park Run in finding a workable solution for toilet provision.

PR141 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.

PR142 PROPERTY MATTERS

The Committee received and considered the report of the Head of Estates & Operations regarding the progress of the lease arrangements for Witney Swifts Cricket Club.

Members heard that the Council and Witney Swifts had some differences regarding conditions to be included in the lease and that Officers were concerned about the impact on other sports user who utilised the West Witney Sports Ground.

The HE&O expressed his concerns that should the conditions within the lease not be followed it would create a risk to sports ground users both in respect of safety concerns and the protection of grounds maintenance. Members agreed that the Council needed to retain control of their facility and that the needs of Witney Swifts should not supersede those of other users.

Members considered the request from Witney Swifts to make use of the grounds for training at no cost, Members were aware of sessions which had taken place before; one of the purposes of any such fee being charged would be to compensate the Council for this additional impact. However, there would need to be a level of respect and honesty from all users, including football teams, for the additional use of the sports fields outside of booked arrangements for game days.

The Committee were unanimous in agreement with the draft lease, specifically point 1.2 which would address the season dates and specific conditions by which Witney Swifts would be required to adhere to should the season extend beyond those dates.

Additionally, The Committee received and considered the confidential report of the Town Clerk/CEO concerning the reformation of Witney Town Football Club and a mutually beneficial strategic partnership with Witney Town Council for the benefit of Witney and its residents.

Members were pleased to see the reformation had been successful, with the Club at the top of their league. Their community work and aspirations were to be commended, particularly

regarding health and wellbeing and should be supported. The benefits of a strategic partnership as set out in their business plan were clear, but due diligence was required to ensure the Council did not overcommit operationally at this stage without further financial analysis.

Recommended:

1. That, the confidential reports be noted and,
2. That, Officers proceed with the lease discussions with Witney Swifts CC and,
3. That, cricket training fees are not waived and
4. That, Witney Town FC be endorsed as a community partner of Witney Town Council, recognising its significant contribution to local sporting and community development and,
5. That, Witney Town FC be permitted to use the Corn Exchange to advertise published material, ensuring broader community engagement and accessibility and,
6. That, financial, operational and community benefits of a more extensive strategic partnership between Witney Town FC and Witney Town Council be undertaken and presented at a future meeting of the Council.

The meeting closed at: 7.24 pm

Chair

PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Terms of Reference

Meeting Date: Monday, 12th May 2025

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk

The purpose of this report is for Members to review and recommend terms of reference for the Committee for the forthcoming municipal year.

Background

At the Annual Council Meeting held on 7th May 2025, it was resolved that terms of reference for each Committee would be reviewed at each meeting in the current meeting cycle.

Current Situation

The current terms of reference for the Parks & Recreation Committee in relation to Town Council-operated facilities are:

- a) To maintain all Recreation Grounds, Parks (including play equipment) and public open spaces and to initiate and oversee all matters of control properly associated with this recreation function;
- b) To maintain and oversee all sports activities upon any Recreation Ground or other recreational open space and buildings erected for such purposes thereon;
- c) To develop a sports strategy for all sports across the town
- d) To deal with the development and investment in the Council owned play areas, ensuring they remain safe;
- e) To facilitate entertainment, community and third-party events in such parks, recreation grounds or elsewhere in the Council's management at its discretion;
- f) The Membership of the Committee shall consist of six Members plus the Town Mayor and the Leader of the Council ex officio with voting rights;
- g) The quorum of the Committee shall be four Members.

The Committee is asked if it would like to make any amendments to the terms for the forthcoming municipal year. The Committee may like to consider the following:

- (c) To keep under review/updated the sports strategy within the Council's adopted Open Spaces Strategy to meet the changing needs of the community, governing body recommendations and West Oxfordshire District Council's Playing Pitch Strategy in the Local Plan.
- (d) To deal with the development and investment in the Council owned play areas, ensuring they remain safe and are inclusive wherever possible.

- (e) To facilitate entertainment, community, and third-party events by ensuring that parks, recreation grounds, and related facilities are suitable, safe, and properly maintained for such use.
- And,
- Within all its decision making ensure that the green environment and biodiversity of public open spaces is protected and enhanced in line with the Council's Climate Emergency aspirations.
 - To oversee any development and investment of Council owned recreation ground sites and its supporting infrastructure, ensuring they remain safe and compliant.

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 – see text in the report re inclusivity.
- b) Biodiversity – see text in the report.
- c) Crime & Disorder – no direct implications.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – see text in the 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.

Social Value

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

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and,

1. Review the terms of reference and
2. Consider any changes to the terms of reference, and
3. Recommend such changes be made to Full Council on 23rd June 2025.

PARK & RECREATION COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Cricket Fees

Meeting Date: 12th May 2025

Contact Officer: Operations Manager

Background

At the meeting of the Committee on 13th January 2025, Members were updated on the progress of the lease agreement with Witney Swifts Cricket Club. Members requested details of the costs incurred by the Council associated with the cricket provision at West Witney Sports Ground.

Current Situation

In November 2022 the Operations Manager completed a piece of work for the West Oxfordshire District Council for their playing pitch strategy around the cost of maintaining sports pitches, below is the updated costing for a cricket square and outfield.

Process	Time	Fuel 1.4ltr/H	Fuel cost	Frequency	wages	Material	Total
		1.4	£1.40		£25.00		
Mowing to 15mm	0.5	0.7	£7.84	8	£100.00		£107.84
Mowing to 12mm	0.5	0.7	£3.92	4	£50.00		£53.92
Mowing to 8mm	0.5	0.7	£41.16	42	£525.00		£566.16
Mowing to 4m	1.75	2.45	£68.60	20	£875.00		£943.60
Crease Marking	0.5		£0.00	20	£250.00		£250.00
Crease repairs	0.25		£0.00	20	£125.00		£125.00
							£2,046.52
Scarification	2	2.8	£3.92	1	£50.00		£53.92
Aeration	2	2.8	£3.92	1	£50.00		£53.92
Overseeding	0.5		£0.00	1	£12.50	£95.00	£107.50
Topdressing (Loam)	2		£0.00	1	£50.00	£385.00	£435.00
Fertiliser slow release	0.5	0.7	£1.96	2	£25.00	£35.00	£61.96
Solid tine aeration	0.75	1.05	£14.70	10	£187.50		£202.20
Liquid Iron application	1		£0.00	7	£175.00	£82.08	£257.08
Liquid Seaweed application	1		£0.00	5	£125.00	£144.25	£269.25
Process	Time	Fuel 14ltr/hr	Fuel cost	Frequency	Wages	Material	Total
		14	£1.64				
Outfield mowing 25m	0.75	10.5	£344.40	20	£125.00		£469.40
							£3,956.75

The fees received from Swifts Cricket Club for match bookings vary but average around £1,600 - £2,000 per season based on how many match bookings Swifts make through the council. With an annual maintenance cost of around £4,000 for Witney Town Council this means cricket has been subsidised by about 50%.

2 seasons ago in 2023 Swifts willingly took on the pre-match maintenance, the level of maintenance saved the council about £2,000 worth of labour and fuel and helped to cover the entirety of the remaining maintenance requirement of the cricket field.

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.

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.

Social Value

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Financial implications

- The depreciation of the equipment required for the cricket square maintenance has not been factored into the final calculation.
- Football pitch renovations which represent around £20,000.00 worth of materials, contractor costs and labour are also not factored in which also benefits the cricket field.
- With increased maintenance of the cricket square more green waste has to be disposed of from the site. This is removed from the site via a green waste skip which is also not factored into the maintenance costs.

Recommendation

Members are invited to note the report.

PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Witney Basketball

Meeting Date: Monday, 12th May 2025

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk

The purpose of this report is to inform Members on the popularity of basketball as a team sport and available facilities in Witney.

Background

The Town Council has a long-standing history of supporting football and cricket teams in Witney, including the provision of and subsidised use of pitches for these sports. It also manages projects and facilities for a range of other sports, such as MUGAs and MUSAs, and leases an area of the Leys to Courtside CIC for tennis, as well as the upcoming padel and pickleball courts.

Current Situation

Officers met with representatives from Witney Wolves Basketball Club in April which is based at Wood Green School. They shared some compelling insights about the growth of basketball in the UK — noting it is now the second most played team sport after football, with participation at its highest levels since records began. Source: [Basketball participation in England at its highest levels since records began | Basketball England](#)

The Club's ambitions strongly align with the goals of the Town Council, particularly around increasing youth engagement in physical activity. From the meeting it was evident the Club is enthusiastic about expanding opportunities for young people to play basketball in the area and are looking to grow their presence and access to facilities in Witney. Some key points where the town council is able to help are:

- Assisting with the promotion of basketball as a sport
- Lobbying for upgrades to existing basketball courts and facilities in Witney – Windrush Leisure Centre/OCC courts
- Incorporating full-sized basketball courts into future town council projects
- Seeking developer contributions (£106 requests) from new developments (along with further sports pitch provision)

Officers have engaged with West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council regarding facilities outside the Town Council's control—such as those at Windrush Leisure

Centre and other external courts—to explore whether they can be upgraded to a semi-professional standard using existing budgets or Section 106 funding.

Witney Wolves have also indicated they would like to get more involved with initiatives in the community, potentially holding basketball sessions during the summer holidays.

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 – improving inclusive, low-cost activity that brings together people from diverse backgrounds
- b) Biodiversity – no direct implications.
- c) Crime & Disorder – improving facilities so that more young people have access to further opportunities to engage and help divert from antisocial behaviour or crime.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – Any refurbishment or new project should consider construction materials.

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.

Social Value

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

Promotion and facilitation of basketball encourages physical activity and social cohesion which in turn assists with positive mental health.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and,

1. Consider assisting with the promotion and facilitation of basketball in Witney through the ways listed in the report above.

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