

Climate & Biodiversity Committee Meeting of Witney Town Council



Tuesday, 9th September, 2025 at 6.00 pm

To members of the Climate & Biodiversity Committee - D Enright, A Bailey, A Mubin, D Newcombe, J Robertshaw, S Simpson, R Smith and J Treloar (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 4 - 7)

To receive and consider the minutes of the Climate & Biodiversity Committee held on 20 May 2025;

Matters arising from the minutes not covered elsewhere on the agenda (Questions on the progress on 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. **Finance Report** (Pages 8 - 13)

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

6. **Annual Residents Survey Results** (Pages 14 - 17)

To receive and consider the report of the Deputy Town Clerk concerning the results of the 2025/26 annual residents satisfaction survey for this Committee.

7. **Climate Action Working Party Minutes** (Pages 18 - 21)

To receive the minutes of the Climate Action Working Party meeting held on 22 July 2025 and consider the recommendations contained therein.

8. **Road Verge Nature Reserves and Circular Walking Route for Witney** (Pages 22 - 33)

To consider a request from a resident for Road Verge Nature Reserves and a circular walking route for Witney.

9. **Biodiversity Update** (Pages 34 - 36)

To receive and consider the report of the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer.

10. **Lake & Country Park Report** (Pages 37 - 59)

To receive and consider the report of the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer.

11. **Carbon Footprint Report - Witney Civil Parish** (Pages 60 - 83)

To receive and consider the report of the Compliance & Environment Officer.

12. **Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan** (Pages 84 - 117)

To receive and consider the report of the Compliance & Environment Officer.

13. **West Witney Projects - Energy Efficiency Measures** (Pages 118 - 120)

To receive and consider the report of the Compliance & Environment Officer.

14. **Power For People - Community Energy** (Pages 121 - 123)

To receive correspondence from the Power for People Campaign.



Town Clerk

**CLIMATE & BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Tuesday, 20 May 2025

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

Present:

Councillor S Simpson (Chair)

Councillors:	D Enright	R Smith
	D Newcombe	J Treloar
	J Robertshaw	J Aitman (In place of D Enright)
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Janine Sparrowhawk	Compliance & Environment Officer
	Carl Whitehead	Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer
Others:	None.	

CB290 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Enright, A Bailey & A Mubin.

Councillors J Aitman, G Meadows and T Ashby attended as substitutes respectively.

CB291 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers.

CB292 ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

The Chair called for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair of the Committee.

It was proposed by Councillor J Aitman and seconded by Councillor R Smith that Councillor D Enright be elected.

An additional proposal was made by Councillor J Treloar, seconded by Councillor T Ashby that Councillor J Robertshaw be elected.

There being no other nominations a vote was taken with the result being:

Councillor D Enright	Four Votes
Councillor J Robertshaw	Three Votes

There was one abstention.

Resolved:

That, Councillor Duncan Enright be elected Vice-Chair of the Committee for the 2025/26 municipal year.

CB293 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

CB294 COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Council outlining the terms of reference for the Committee.

A Member requested that (f) be amended to include the word “Promote” and therefore read as:

(f) To explore and promote the expansion of community energy to keep the benefits of our local energy generation in our local economy.

Additionally, a Member asked that “Local Oxfordshire Organisations” be added to (d) and therefore read as:

(d) To engage with Central Government, West Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, local Oxfordshire Organisations, relevant stake holders and other organisations to initiate local action on climate change (towards achieving net zero carbon emissions) air & water pollution, and other environmental issues within the town.

It was proposed by Cllr J Aitman, seconded by Cllr G Meadows that the terms of reference be adopted with the above amendments. Members were unanimous in agreement.

In response to a Member’s question, the Deputy Town Clerk confirmed that matters of Flooding mitigation would be dealt under the Planning & Development Committee’s Terms of reference as it was considered infrastructure. Flooding events and larger flooding issued would be referred to Full Council.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Terms of Reference including the above suggested changes be recommended for approval by the Full Council at the meeting of 23 June 2025.

CB295 BIODIVERSITY & GREEN SPACES UPDATE

The Committee received a verbal update from the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer (B&GSO).

Members heard that the B&GSO was pleased to see the establishment of a dedicated Committee which he hoped would help to reinforce the work which had resulted in the award reorganisations the Council had received, these were in respect of the Lake & Country Park and further lead to greater opportunities for grant funding applications and for an application in early 2026 for local wildlife site status.

He updated the Committee regarding his and the newly promoted Park Ranger's recent progress and activity which included water testing, a furniture review, increase of noticeboard and information boards across the sites, greater volunteer interest, work to improve over 700 metres of pathway as well as having gained permission to raise pathways to reduce flooding risks.

The B&GSO responded to Members' questions regarding the results of the bank stabilisation work already carried out and that which was planned for the future, action taken and plans for the introduction of wildflower sites across the town, and ongoing water testing at the convergence of Colwell Brook and lake.

The offer of a walk with the B&SGO and Park Ranger was offered, Members agreed that this should be extended to all Councillors ideally to take place ahead of the Witney Carnival on 12th July so that Members were well informed.

The B&GSO confirmed that a written report would be submitted to the Committee at the next meeting.

Resolved:

1. That, the verbal update be noted and,
2. That, Officers to issue invites to Councillors to participate in a walk with the B&GSO and Park Ranger.

CB296 CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY & CLIMATE EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN

The Committee received and considered the report of the Compliance & Environment Officer (C&EO).

Members welcomed the summary report that had been provided and the Compliance & Environment Officer to the new role.

A Member raised concern of the cost of making retrofit and upgrades however recognised that a solid plan would allow the Council to plan effectively to strive to reach its goals.

In response to a Member's question regarding the promotion of schemes to benefit the community, the Deputy Town Clerk reminded the Committee of its remit and that as a Town Council the resources were limited however there was nothing stopping the Council promoting a wide scope of District, County and Government lead schemes to Witney residents and businesses as highlighted in Phase 3 & 4 of the roadmap provided by the C&EO.

The Chair raised the idea of hosting an event in the Council's buildings to facilitate and bring together community and support organisations in order to help educate and promote schemes and grant schemes that may be available.

Lastly, Members considered the recommendation to establish a working party in order to help expediate discussions with Officers who would be drafting the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. It was agreed that an offer be made to all Council Members to join the working party at the next meeting of the Full Council.

Members were unanimous in agreement with all the recommendations made in the report.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Officers produce a detailed roadmap following the completion of a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan and,
3. That, the idea of a Climate roadshow event be investigated by Officers and,
4. That, a Climate Action Working Party be established, and its membership be agreed at the meeting of the Full Council on 23rd June 2025 and,
5. That, this Committee be provided with regular updates of the Working Party.

CB297 COMMITTEE OBJECTIVES & WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR

The Committee received the detailed report of the Town Clerk/CEO concerning the Committee Objectives & Work Plan for 20x25/26.

Members noted that the Objectives mirrored the report of the Compliance & Environment Officer and therefore outlined the major elements of the roadmap that the Committee should focus on.

The Committee were unanimous in acceptance of the recommendations which included the already agreed establishment of a Working Party.

Resolved:

That, the Committee Objectives & Work Plan for 2025/26 be noted.

The meeting closed at: 6.55 pm

Chair

CLIMATE & BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Finance Report

Meeting Date: Monday 9 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

Detailed income and expenditure statements for budgets which are the responsibility of this committee are enclosed. The period to which this report relates is 1 April to 30 June 2025.

Current Situation

The Committee is responsible for cost centre 206, Witney Lake and Country Park.

The summary for the cost centre from 1 April to 30 June 2025 is:

	Budget	Months 1 to 3 actual	Percentage of budget spent/received in Months 1 to 3 (25% of the year)
Income	(£1,000)	£0	0%
Expenditure	£132,284	£32,742	24.8%
Net expenditure	£131,284	£32,742	24.9%

A full commentary on budget lines will be undertaken as part of the budget process.

Although early in the financial year Members may wish to note the following in relation to the management accounts for this first quarter:

1. Net expenditure of 24.9% the cost centre is “on budget” for the year, the underspend for the period being £79.
2. With regard to income the £1,000 in relation to fishing rights is invoiced later in the year.
3. With regard to expenditure the amount allowed for budget lines from 4007 to 4222 inclusive amounts to £25,690. This is split between 17 different budget lines £25,690 next year. In any given year the expenditure allocated to individual nominal

codes in this range will vary but the practice is that expenditure may be vired between lines in this cost centre provided that expenditure remains within the overall total.

Terms of reference and other climate/ biodiversity-related expenditure

Within the terms of reference for this new Committee there are a number of other areas for which the Committee are responsible. These are referenced in the Committee terms of reference for 2025-26:

(b) To manage the Council's Environmental Spaces, including Amenity Areas, Witney Lake and Country Park, Tiny Forest and Community Orchards (except recreation grounds);

c) To oversee the management of the Council's tree stock across the town;

h) To oversee the maintenance of the Council's infrastructure concerning planting displays (including hanging baskets).

Ahead of the budget your officers are working to see how these are best included in the management accounts and the necessary changes to the budget/cost centre structures.

The Committee also has an overarching responsibility for climate/biodiversity matters and these include, again quoting from the committee terms of reference:

a) To work to achieve energy efficiencies and net zero carbon emissions in the Council's operations and facilities by 2028, in line with the Council's Climate Emergency resolution made in June 2019;

d) To engage with Central Government, West Oxfordshire District Council, Oxfordshire County Council, local Oxfordshire organisations, relevant stake holders and other organisations to initiate local action on climate change (towards achieving net zero carbon emissions) air & water pollution, and other environmental issues within the town; e) To encourage biodiversity and healthy recreation in the environmental spaces;

f) To explore and promote the expansion of community energy to keep the benefits of our local energy generation in our local economy;

g) To identify ways for event's organisers to reduce the carbon footprint of events held on council ground. Any financial or policy change implications should be recommended to the Council.

Members should note that the management accounts and the Council's accounting system more generally is driven by the requirements in place for town and parish councils, including the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 and the Practitioners' Guide 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. This means that the accounts can only include actual

income and expenditure in terms of money (income and expenditure and sums held with financial institutions and cannot include anything else.

Taking all the above into account there are then a number of matters which Members may wish to note at this stage:

1. The Council had an earmarked reserve in relation to climate/ environment amounting to £43,680 as at 1 April 2025.
2. Water charges in relation to the Splashpark at the Leys for the period April to July 2025 amounted to £9,106 compared with £14,485 during the same period last year, a reduction of 37%. This will be recalculated at the end of the season but is an example of how the Council is designing into its projects the saving of natural resources and the saving of money.
3. Work and spending in relation to the desilting on the Windrush (Bridge Street) is due to commence later this month.
4. A number of grants have been awarded which specifically support the Council's work in relation to climate and biodiversity including:
 - Subsidised letting of the Corn Exchange for a climate fair - £320.
 - Grant to Witney Flood Group - £800.
 - Grant to Apollos clothing - £1,080.
 - Youth services grant to Witney Food Revolution - £2,150.

Please see relevant grant applications for further details.

The above list is not intended to be a comprehensive list of all areas of expenditure which are primarily or partly driven by the Council's climate and biodiversity objectives but to give an indication of how these cut across the Council's services.

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 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 not 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 income and expenditure statements.

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.

Recommendations

Members are invited:

Members are invited to approve the report and the management accounts of the Committee's services for the period 1 April 2025 to 30 June 2025.

03/09/2025

WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL Current Year

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 03/09/2025

Month No: 3

Committee Report

	Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
<u>Climate & Biodiversity</u>								
206 WITNEY COUNTRY PARK								
1030 FISHING RIGHTS	978	0	1,000	1,000			0.0%	
1170 GRANTS RECEIVED	10,893	0	0	0			0.0%	
WITNEY COUNTRY PARK :- Income	11,871	0	1,000	1,000			0.0%	0
4001 SALARIES	58,844	15,287	63,211	47,924		47,924	24.2%	
4002 ER'S NIC	5,610	1,918	7,982	6,064		6,064	24.0%	
4003 ER'S SUPERANN	12,707	3,317	13,716	10,399		10,399	24.2%	
4007 PROTECTIVE CLOTHING	1,076	399	1,000	601		601	39.9%	
4008 TRAINING	2,860	0	2,000	2,000		2,000	0.0%	
4017 CONTRACT CLEAN/WASTE	0	0	1,000	1,000		1,000	0.0%	
4026 BOOKS/PUBLICATIONS	55	0	100	100		100	0.0%	
4036 PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	4,207	186	2,040	1,854		1,854	9.1%	
4037 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	0	756	7,000	6,244		6,244	10.8%	
4038 OTHER MAINTENANCE	205	0	0	0		0	0.0%	
4040 ARBORICULTURE	825	0	1,000	1,000		1,000	0.0%	
4041 EQUIPMENT HIRE	0	110	500	390		390	22.0%	
4042 EQUIPMENT INC. FURNITURE	4,223	0	2,000	2,000		2,000	0.0%	
4043 SMALL TOOLS & EQUIPT	0	433	2,500	2,067		2,067	17.3%	
4044 FUEL	0	36	1,000	964		964	3.6%	
4050 VEHICLE MAINTENANCE	0	631	1,000	369		369	63.1%	
4059 OTHER PROF FEES	340	0	1,500	1,500		1,500	0.0%	
4064 HEALTH & SAFETY	528	0	1,500	1,500		1,500	0.0%	
4066 TREE REPLACEMENT	0	0	1,300	1,300		1,300	0.0%	
4099 MISCELLANEOUS	420	0	250	250		250	0.0%	
4163 GREEN FLAG APPLICATION	430	60	0	(60)		(60)	0.0%	
4222 TINY FOREST EXPENSES	0	0	200	200		200	0.0%	
4888 O/S STAFF RECHARGE	10,878	7,489	15,000	7,511		7,511	49.9%	
4890 O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	2,049	494	977	483		483	50.6%	
4892 C/S STAFF RCHG	2,227	600	2,670	2,070		2,070	22.5%	
4893 C/S O'HEAD RCHG	775	141	705	564		564	20.0%	
4899 DEPOT REALLOCATION	1,460	884	2,133	1,249		1,249	41.4%	
WITNEY COUNTRY PARK :- Indirect Expenditure	109,719	32,742	132,284	99,542	0	99,542	24.8%	0
Net Income over Expenditure	(97,848)	(32,742)	(131,284)	(98,542)				
6001 less Transfer to EMR	10,887	0	0	0				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(108,735)	(32,742)	(131,284)	(98,542)				
Climate & Biodiversity :- Income	11,871	0	1,000	1,000			0.0%	
Expenditure	109,719	32,742	132,284	99,542	0	99,542	24.8%	
Net Income over Expenditure	(97,848)	(32,742)	(131,284)	(98,542)				
less Transfer to EMR	10,887	0	0	0				

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Detailed Income & Expenditure by Budget Heading 03/09/2025

Month No: 3

Committee Report

	Actual Last Year	Actual Year To Date	Current Annual Bud	Variance Annual Total	Committed Expenditure	Funds Available	% Spent	Transfer to/from EMR
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(108,735)	(32,742)	(131,284)	(98,542)				
Grand Totals:- Income	11,871	0	1,000	1,000			0.0%	
Expenditure	109,719	32,742	132,284	99,542	0	99,542	24.8%	
Net Income over Expenditure	(97,848)	(32,742)	(131,284)	(98,542)				
less Transfer to EMR	10,887	0	0	0				
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(108,735)	(32,742)	(131,284)	(98,542)				

CLIMATE & BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Annual Resident's Survey 2025

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 9 September 2025

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk

The purpose of this report is to present Members with the results of the annual residents' satisfaction survey, conducted between February and May, regarding services overseen by this Committee.

Background

The survey was sent to every household in the post and was promoted online via social media and in the local secondary schools; 344 responses were received in total.

While the number of responses is a very small percentage of the population, the results are still an important resource in advising the Council in which areas projects, communications, and future spending should be considered.

Current Situation

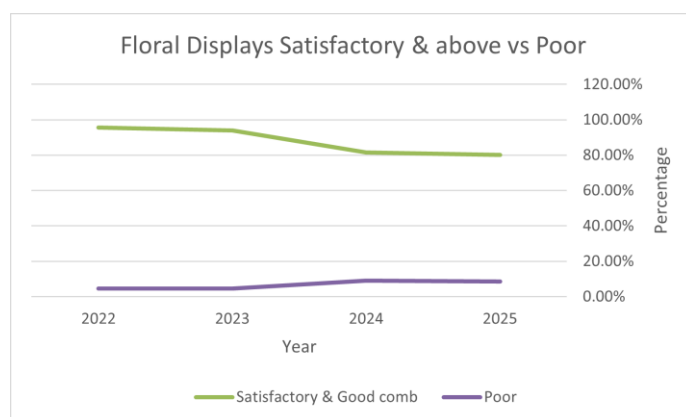
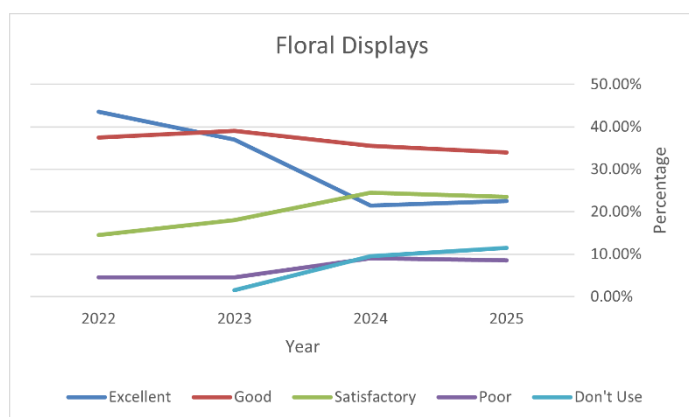
The following table shows how the services scored overall in the survey (with percentages rounded).

As a comparison, the figures/percentages from the previous three years surveys are included. It should be noted that in 2022 there was no n/a option available which is why the figures are vastly different from the last three years.

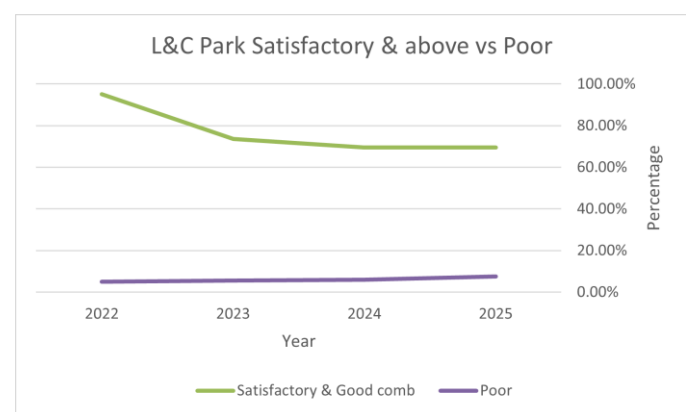
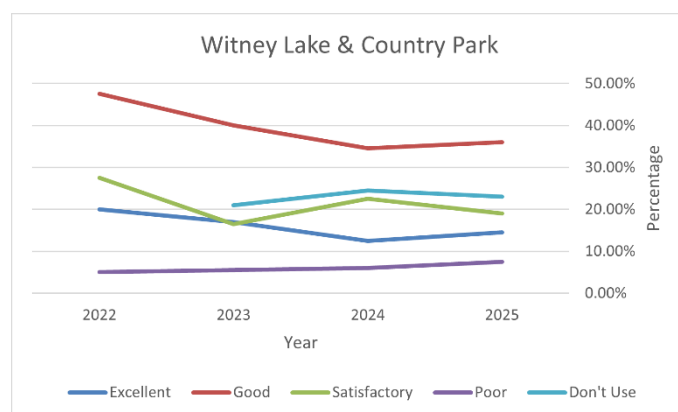
Service	Year	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	% comb	Poor	Don't use	Resp
Floral Displays (including Hanging Baskets)	2025	22.5 (77)	34% (116)	23.5% (80)	80.0%	8.5% (29)	11.5% (39)	341
	2024	21.5% (92)	35.5% (153)	24.5% (107)	81.5%	9% (40)	9.5% (42)	434
	2023	37% (80)	39% (85)	18% (39)	94.0%	4.5% (10)	1.5% (3)	217
	2022	43.5% (130)	37.5% (112)	14.5% (44)	95.5%	4.5% (13)	n/a	299
Witney Lake & Country Park	2025	14.5% (50)	36% (123)	19% (65)	69.5%	7.5% (25)	23% (80)	343
	2024	12.5% (54)	34.5% (150)	22.5% (99)	69.5%	6% (27)	24.5% (106)	436
	2023	17% (37)	40% (88)	16.5% (36)	73.5%	5.5% (12)	21% (46)	219
	2022	20% (58)	47.5% (138)	27.5% (79)	95.0%	5% (14)	n/a	289

The following graphs track performance over the previous four years for these services and show the levels are broadly the same in the previous three years.

Floral Displays infographics



Witney Lake & Country Park infographics



In addition to the results above, the survey also welcomes specific comments, all of which relating to this Committee can be seen below:

Please use this space to add more about your experience or feedback regarding any of our services, good or bad.

- Witney Lake flooding on paths unable to complete walk round lake. Drainage channels around Witney Lake blocked and full of pollution. Litter everywhere.
- Some floral displays could be aimed at perennial as opposed to annual plants. Hanging baskets lovely.
- Witney lakes BAD access needs pushing and people don't know about it.
- Witney florals were fab - last year appalling, Heard 2nd hand that plants were delivered and not watered - so died!! Burwell Hall had no council planting at all - left to locals. Disgraceful.
- With regard to floral displays, they are good but Witney will never win Britain in Bloom! Why not create a scheme for residents along High Street, Corn Street and church green to have an allowance to create their own hanging baskets and provide assistance to install.
- It's wonderful to see all the initiatives for wildlife at the Lake and Country Park.
- Can you look into the poor river situation please. If we still made blankets it wouldn't have been in the state it is - Witney is famous for blankets + the beautiful Windrush running through it - We've lost the blankets and are now losing our beauty! It'll be a truly sad day when we lose Witney as a victim to Thames Water for good. The river is worth fighting for!!

- Far more could be made of the lake (country park)
- The Witney Lake and Country Park needs more seating and the footpath is in need of serious repair in places
- More dog waste bins or the existing ones need emptying more frequently in Ducklington and Witney Lake
- Many people are requesting dogs to be kept on leads around Witney Lake. Some very frightening experiences with 2/3 dogs appearing with no owner in sight.
- Love the country park and lake but spoiled by rubbish in the first part of the stream. The water from Duckling is the main pollutant and therefore polluting the rest of the waterway. No need to mention the Windrush!
- Poor walking areas I.e. to get from Cogges to Witney country park you need to walk through fields which means they are not very accessible or walk along busy Witan way. Paths could be installed for all year-round use. In addition, there isn't many walking spots in the town despite lots of countryside, for example Tar lakes is lovely but that pathed area is tiny. Also, the path between Cogges and town (2 bridges) is dark at night and as a woman walking to town each evening to the leisure centre, it can feel unsafe in winter months, a bit more lightning would make it a safer route!

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 residents' survey helps identify service inequalities and amplify underrepresented voices, supporting fairer, more inclusive decision-making. It may also highlight items which need addressing under the Equality Act 2010.
- b) Biodiversity - The Council must ensure any issues are dealt with in line with biodiversity legislation and its own policy.
- c) Crime & Disorder - The survey provides the ability to highlight concerns about safety and anti-social behaviour. The survey can inform targeted responses, resource allocation, and partnership working with police and community safety teams. It may help identify hotspots, vulnerable groups, and areas needing intervention such as the cemeteries.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – The survey supports the Council's climate emergency commitments by ensuring resident feedback can help shape relevant policies and actions.

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.

There is a reputational risk if the Council does not address comments received in its satisfaction survey as it will be seen as not listening to residents.

The Council's committees will have competing demands on the overall Council budget so any additional project funding has to be balanced and proportionate. Additions should be in line with Councils objectives and adopted policies/strategies.

Social Value

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

Listening to residents' feedback on Council services delivers significant social value by showing empowerment, inclusion, trust, and community wellbeing; It affirms that their opinions matter and helps building a sense of respect and transparency. This is especially important for the Council, where inclusive decision-making ensures diverse needs are reflected in service design and delivery.

Internally, it supports continuous improvement across the Council's services and helps identify future objectives thereby demonstrating meaningful change.

Financial implications

- There are no new implications from the contents of this report at this point. The Committee may like to consider further projects based on the feedback or increasing/creating budgets for any item.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. What action is required from the results of the survey for services under the remit of this Committee.

**CLIMATE ACTION WORKING PARTY MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Tuesday, 22 July 2025

At 4.00 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor S Simpson (Chair)

Councillors:	J Aitman	J Doughty (In place of J Robertshaw)
	D Edwards-Hughes	R Crouch (In place of D Enright)
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Janine Sparrowhawk	Compliance & Environment Officer
Others:	None	

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Enright & J Robertshaw, Councillors R Crouch & J Doughty attended as substitutes respectively.

2 ELECTION OF CHAIR

It was proposed and seconded that Councillor S Simpson be elected. There being no other nominations it was:

Resolved:

That, Councillor Sandra Simpson be elected Chair of the Working Party for the 2025/26 municipal year.

3 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The draft Terms of Reference were received and considered and any amendments considered.

Members recognised the impending 2028 deadline originally set in June 2019 for the Council to achieve a target of carbon neutrality and therefore, welcomed the resurrection of a Working Party, including the phased timeframe in the terms of reference which would assist in focusing on those goals.

The Working Party welcomed the focus and hoped their recommendations would assist the work of the Council's Climate & Biodiversity Committee.

It was requested that two small amendments be made with the insertion of "gardens" so that the objective in Phase two read – Witney Allotments and Community Orchards & Gardens.

Additionally, it was suggested that the word “neither” be added to strengthen the line advising that the Working Party or its Members were not able to make decisions and only recommendations to the Climate & Biodiversity Committee or Full Council.

Members were unanimous in agreement to both amendments.

Recommended:

That, amendments be made to the Terms of Reference as noted above.

4 **CLIMATE CHANGE ROAD MAP**

Baseline Report

Members requested a baseline report to measure progress since the Town Council declared a climate emergency in June 2019. The Town Clerk advised that progress updates had been presented to the Full Council as the original plan evolved. However, it was agreed that a summary of historical information would provide the Working Party with a clear starting point.

Key milestones were agreed as follows:

- Draft Roadmap plan to be ready in time for the commencement of the budget setting period on 6th October 2025
- Final Road Map Plan to be presented to the meeting of the Council on 16th February 2026

Carbon Building Audit

Substantial work would follow to compile a carbon audit of council-owned buildings before the draft plan was presented in October. The audit would be conducted with the support of Energy Solutions Oxfordshire, who previously completed a report for Burwell Hall. As their assessments were currently free for community buildings, the following actions were planned:

- **Revise the existing Burwell Hall report (free)**
- **Conduct a new audit for the Corn Exchange (free)**
- **Complete audits for the Town Hall and Admin Office (paid for)**, ensuring all council-owned buildings are assessed.

Members also suggested including Madley Park Hall and Langdale Hall, however the Town Clerk advised prioritising the Town Hall and Admin Office. The other two properties are leased and could be assessed at a later stage when budgeting allowed.

Council Vehicle Fleet

It was agreed that the Works Team vehicle fleet be reviewed in collaboration with the Operations Manager to:

- Evaluate the current vehicle renewal programme
- Discuss potential upgrades and replacements
- Incorporate necessary changes into future budget planning

It was also noted that **£10,000 of matched funding from Energy Solutions Oxfordshire** may be available to support this work.

New Council Facilities

Members queried whether the upcoming capital projects at West Witney would be carbon neutral. The Project Officer would be bringing reports detailing carbon reduction measures for these facilities. These reports would be submitted to the Climate & Biodiversity Committee when available.

Phase 2 Actions

Future actions would focus on:

- **Review and updating Council policies including the events and hire policy** to include stronger sustainability measures
- **Encouraging recycling by event hirers**
- **Collaborating with Café 1863** to increase the use of recyclable products

Carbon Literacy Training

The Compliance and Environmental Officer encouraged Members who also served on West Oxfordshire District Council to advocate for the inclusion of Town Council staff and councillors in the District Council's carbon literacy training. This could include:

- Access to training materials
- Participation in existing training sessions

This initiative would align with the shared goal of collaboration among the three tiers of local government.

Town Council Website

It was proposed that the Climate Emergency page on the Council's website be updated. The current content dates back to 2019. Recommendations include:

- Streamlining the page into a single, concise resource
- Including links to external organisations offering climate change information and support
- Ensuring content remained up to date and easy to navigate

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, a draft roadmap for the climate action plan should be ready in time for the commencement of the budget setting period on 6th October 2025 and,
3. That, the final roadmap for the climate action plan should be presented to the meeting of the Council on 16th February 2026 and,
4. That, carbon building audits should be conducted for Burwell Hall, Corn Exchange, Town Hall and the Council's Reception/Administrative Office, the latter two being funded from existing budgets or EMR's and,
5. That the Work Team vehicle fleet be reviewed in collaboration with the Operations Manager and,
6. That, WODC Councillors approach officers concerning the possibility of extended carbon literacy training and,
7. That, Members research climate change websites and feedback suggestions at the next meeting.

5

CLIMATE FAIR

Event Date

Members were updated that the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee had approved the subsidised use of the Corn Exchange for the Climate Fair at their meeting on 21st July 2025.

Following discussion, Members agreed that holding the event on a Thursday would encourage participation from both partner organisations and stakeholders as well as the intended public audience

It was agreed that the event be scheduled to take place on Thursday, 9th October 2025.

Partner Organisation Engagement

Promotion of the Witney Town Council FLIR camera should be a focus of the event. However, to maximise engagement, members support would be needed ahead of the event, particularly in:

- Providing real-life testimonials about using the FLIR camera
- Sharing their experiences to encourage public interest

Invitees and Participants

An initial list of invitees had been compiled. Additional suggestions for attendees included:

- **Local press/media outlets**
- **Local sustainable businesses**
- **West Oxfordshire District Council** to be encouraged to include a focus on recycling initiatives
- **Witney Fairtrade**
- **Forest School organisations**
- **Climate Action Groups**, the Chair to provide additional contact point to Officers
- **Charity shops**
- **Zimbl EV car hire service**, recently promoted by another local authority

Members were asked to submit any further suggestions for potential invitees to the Compliance and Environmental Officer.

Future Planning

It was proposed that, if the event was successful, future Climate Fairs could include talks or workshops from key partner organisations to further educate and engage the community.

Low Carbon Hub Involvement

The Compliance and Events Officer noted that Low Carbon Hub currently held a three-year service agreement with West Oxfordshire District Council, indicating a substantial and ongoing investment. They were actively engaged in initiatives in Eynsham and could be invited to:

- Focus efforts on projects in Witney
- Potentially bring budgetary benefits and expertise to local initiatives

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Climate Fair event is scheduled for Thursday 9th October 2025 and,
3. That those on the list presented and those above be invited to take part on the day.

6 NEXT MEETING OF THE WORKING PARTY

The next meeting would be scheduled to take place between the Climate & Biodiversity Committee meeting on 9th September 2025 and the presentation of the draft Climate Roadmap to Full Council on 6th October 2025, which marks the beginning of the budget-setting process for the Council.

The meeting closed at: 5.25 pm

Chair

Agenda Item 8

Road Verge Nature Reserves in Witney

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Introduction

It has been noticeable this year that a number of roadside verges have been designated as nature reserves with appropriate signage and mowing maintenance to encourage the native wild flower diversity to flourish. One site visited by this recorder while walking in Crawley near the junction with the Charlbury road on Leafield Road brought a number of (previously unknown to the recorder) native species to the fore. These were:

Meadow clary or **Meadow sage** – *Salvia pratensis*

Hoary plantain – *Plantago media*

Yellow mignonette – *Reseda lutea* (used to make a yellow dye called 'weld' since 1000BC)

The following document captures a species list of plants found along an extended section of the Burford Road that encompasses hedgerows and footpath on one side, light woodland adjacent to the Windrush Valley Road development and a middle verge separating a slip road to that same development.

On the hedgerow side, the cutting back in the Spring of ground-invading and copse-creating blackthorn, elder and brambles left space for the wild flowers to show their heads. The walk experience along the path on that side has become *almost* a delight... if you ignore the speeding drivers at commuting hours and in the early evening.

This document aims to collate the species seen at different times of the year, each section representing a different month captured.

Proposal

It is proposed that, following the clean-up that took place by volunteers in 2023 and subsequent timely spring coppicing in 2024 by the council, the verges and middle verge be classified as 'road verge nature reserves' to preserve their unique biodiversity and be maintained in the same way each Spring.

Section 1 — Species recorded 10 June 2025

Locations

Burford Road from Tower Hill to Deer Park Road junction on both sides of the road, including the verge running parallel to the main road on the slip road leading to Windrush Valley Road.

Species list

GMullein – quite a colony and spreading on the slip road ‘middle verge’ segment



1 Great Mullein field — *Verbascum thapsus*

Location: Heading west on Burford Road...

Wild snapdragon – common toadflax



2 Common or Yellow Toadflax — *Linaria vulgaris*

Knapweed

Yarrow

Lesser celandine

White campion

Hedge bedstraw



3 Hedge Bedstraw — *Galium mollugo*

Location: Heading East on way back from Deer Park Road traffic lights

Musk Mallow near the lights and Common Mallow



4 Musk Mallow — *Malva moschata*

Bird's Foot trefoil Hedge bedstraw Lady's bedstraw



5 Lady's bedstraw — *Galium Verum*

Creeping cinquefoil



6 Creeping cinquefoil — *Potentilla reptans*

Spiny Restharrow



7 Spiny Restharrow — *Ononis spinosa*

Scabious

Common toadflax – wild snapdragon

[5 hemlock plants before the bus shelter, of which 4 trampled down – poisonous and invasive. Should be dug out with protective clothing on]

Numerous grasses that would need an expert to classify

Section 2 — Species recorded 25 July 2025

Location: Middle Verge between Burford Road and slip road to Windrush Valley Road

The light woodland area on the south side of Burford Road nearest to the lights contains many **wild plum trees** that are laden this month with yellow and red plums.

In addition, these native flowers have come into bloom since this report was first compiled. They are...

Tansy and Caper Spurge



8 Tansy — *Tanacetum vulgare*



9 Caper Spurge — *Euphorbia lathyris*

Location: Hedgerow Verge between Tower Hill roundabout on Burford Road to traffic lights at Deer Park Road

Woolly Thistle and Mugwort (or wormwood)



10 Woolly Thistle — *Cirsium eriophorum*



11 Mugwort or wormwood — *Artemisia vulgaris*

Appendix: Nature Reserve species in Crawley

Location: Leaffield Road, Crawley near junction turn off towards Charlbury



12 Meadow clary or Meadow sage — *Salvia pratensis*



13 Hoary plantain — *Plantago media*



14 Yellow mignonette — *Reseda lutea*

This flower has been used since 1000BC to make a yellow dye called '**weld**'.

CLIMATE & BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE



Agenda Item:	Biodiversity Update
Meeting Date:	Tuesday, 9 September 2025
Contact Officer:	Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer

The purpose of this report is to show what has been done to create, improve and maintain biodiversity within the Lake and Country Park.

Background

There have been 9 surveys of flora and fauna, covering the whole of the environments that make up the country park over the last 3 years.

Current Situation

Having just had a phase 1 survey of the remaining areas within the country park that have not yet been surveyed, officers now have a baseline to review and improve the country park where needed, to increase biodiversity and support works needed to create new habitats if suitable and required around the country park.

The Council has also:

- Registered the Country Park as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
- The Council has re-seeded Five Ways roundabout with native perennial wildflower seed so that there will be annual re-seeding and a spread of the existing area. They have also seeded an area on the lakeside and that has proved very popular, this area will be extended annually, and it is hoped to have a ½ hectare of new meadow over the next three to five years. Curbridge Road roundabout was not planted due to the ground containing too many roots to rotavate (this would need a 360 excavator to lift existing roots and then the area could be prepared for planting) – see recommendations.
- Officers are continuing to work closely with the Witney Shed to make bird, bat and owl boxes as well as signage for the country Park
- The Council are working closely with the following partners to support the development of the country park
 - Chilterns River Trust
 - Lower Windrush Valley Project
 - Environment Agency
 - Natural England
 - Freshwater Habitats Trust
 - Smith's Aggregates
 - WODC
 - Woodland Trust

- The Council continues to commission and carry out with the in-house team, surveys to monitor, support, and develop biodiversity across the councils' holdings (recently a Phase 1 survey by a consultant and a reptile survey by the Park Ranger)
- In Mill Meadow the "green hay" seeding has resulted in Seven new species of plant found to be growing on the meadow.

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 – Equality in biodiversity in green spaces refers to the idea that all species regardless of their size, role, or ecological status should have the opportunity to thrive and be represented within urban and natural green spaces. Achieving equality in biodiversity involves not just conserving a wide variety of species but also ensuring that ecological systems are designed and managed in ways that support diverse species' needs. This can be applied to urban parks, nature reserves, forests, and other green spaces, aiming for a balance where no group of species is disproportionately favoured over others.
- b) Biodiversity – covered in the report.
- c) Crime & Disorder – Green spaces such as Lakes and Parks can contribute to reducing urban crime by making spaces more inviting and safer for residents.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – This is deeply intertwined with both the protection of biodiversity and the fight against climate change. Both challenges require urgent and comprehensive action, as they not only affect the country's natural systems but also its economy, society, and future well-being.

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.

There are no risks identified in the report.

Social Value

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

Financial Implications

- There is an existing budget to maintain and improve the Lake and Country Park and the Council are actively looking for further grant funding to supplement the existing ones the Council have secured.
- The works team have an excavator, but the access would need to be assessed for safety and the cost of officer time taken into account to complete the work (Est: Three staff for Two days)

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

- Would members like to see the Curbridge roundabout as a wildflower area.

CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE



Agenda Item:	Lake and Country Park Report
Meeting Date:	Tuesday, 9 September 2025
Contact Officer:	Biodiversity and Green Spaces Officer

The purpose of this report is to update members on the works carried out on the Lake, Country Park and wider estate by the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer and the Park Ranger.

Background

The Lake and Country Park continues to be managed for recreation and conservation, and officers continue to work within the 10-year [Management Plan](#)

Current Situation

There has been a number of projects carried out such as:

- The Council were judged for the “In Bloom” awards and will know the result in September, see Appendix A for the portfolio we presented to show the work that has been carried out.
- Officers hosted Audley Travel and Abingdon and Witney College litter picking teams on their annual litter pick day.
- Officers worked with the Asylum seekers hotel to provide volunteer workdays to the residents.
- The Council had a student studying biology at Bath university for a number of days to gain practical experience in countryside management.
- The Council had a work experience student for a week and provided him with an understanding of what happens both day to day and what forward planning is needed to maintain a country park.
- The Council has had an area of Snipe meadow used for meditation and conscientious dancing.
- The council provides an open invitation to the following groups to use the country park as a resource
 - ICE centre they bring vulnerable young people to experience the green space
 - Bridewell gardens
 - Kids Planet
- The Council continues to look for further funding to support work on the country park and green spaces, officers have already been able to secure around £14000 for various projects within the country park (meadows, dragonfly area, community orchard and hedge planting)
- The Biodiversity Officer has led and plans to run more “meet the green spaces team” days.

- The Council is reaching out to local businesses to offer the “corporate responsibility days” (one done already).
- The Council continues to move forward with the “branding of the country park by removing and replacing old and broken benches and signage with more suitable ones (such as a new recycled bench and picnic table).
- There has been an increase in ASB and the Green Spaces team deals with things such as graffiti and removal of life rings as a top priority.
- The Council was not successful in attaining Green Flag Status not because the site was not up to standard but due lack of guidance from green flag team as to what evidence was needed in the application.
- The Council continues to carry out water tests of the lake, the dragonfly area, and in the winter the newly created scrapes on Snipe Meadow.
- The Council has designed and installed a number of new signs around the country Park.

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 –Equality in biodiversity in green spaces refers to the idea that all species regardless of their size, role, or ecological status should have the opportunity to thrive and be represented within urban and natural green spaces. Achieving equality in biodiversity involves not just conserving a wide variety of species but also ensuring that ecological systems are designed and managed in ways that support diverse species' needs. This can be applied to urban parks, nature reserves, forests, and other green spaces, aiming for a balance where no group of species is disproportionately favoured over others
- b) Crime & Disorder –Green spaces such as Lakes and Parks can contribute to reducing urban crime by making spaces more inviting and safer for residents.
- c) Environment & Climate Emergency –This is deeply intertwined with both the protection of biodiversity and the fight against climate change. Both challenges require urgent and comprehensive action, as they not only affect the country's natural systems but also its economy, society, and future well-being.
- d) All aspects of this report are to action our responsibilities to this situation

The Lake and Country Park and the facilities it provides the following

- benefits to the local community at all levels giving users a resource to enjoy and experience nature and all it provides
- Benefits to the economy, employment, a free natural resource and support to local contractors
- Benefits to the environment, increasing species levels and creating new habitats for rare and endangered species (Water Voles)

Financial implications

- There is an agreed budget for the management of the Country Park but as it grows and the usage increases, then a regular review of financial requirements will be needed.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and:

1. Consider if the council wish to re-apply for Green Flag status
2. Agree the updated Management plan (seen via link at the top of the report).

WITNEY LAKE AND COUNTRY PARK LOCAL NATURE RESERVE



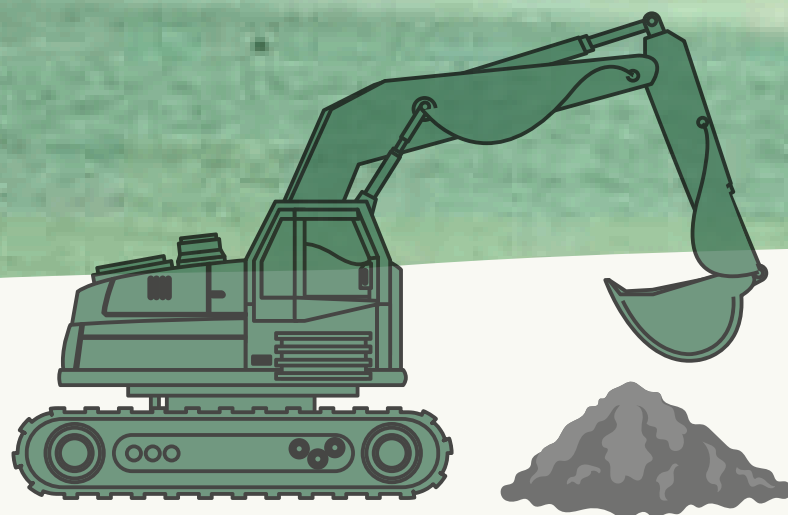
WITNEY
TOWN COUNCIL

WITNEY IN BLOOM

IS ORGANISED AND FUNDED BY WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

2025 BRITAIN IN BLOOM PORTFOLIO

HISTORY



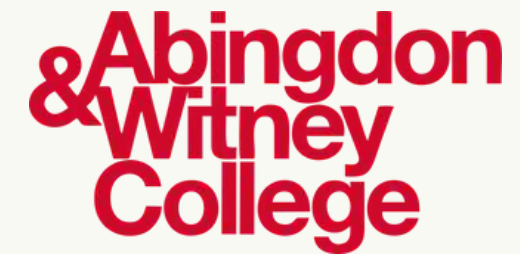
Witney Lake and County Park Local Nature Reserve is a 37 hectare Park that offers a picturesque area for recreation, whether that be taking the dog for a walk around the Lake's footpath, rambling through the tranquil landscape or relaxing whilst enjoying a picnic.



The Lake, bought by Witney Town Council on 12th Sept 1988, is a flooded gravel pit dug initially for gravel used whilst constructing the Witney bypass (A40) in the mid 1980's.

Today the Country Park sits between streams of the meandering River Windrush and includes a deep lake up to 5.2 metres, whilst a traditional hay meadow and wet grassland are being managed in partnership with Natural England and Freshwater Habitats Trust. A recent study by the Lower Windrush Valley Project and Freshwater Habitats Trust found 110 bird species and a large variety of plants including 3 Stonewort species.

VOLUNTEERS AND PARTNERS



COMMUNITY & PARTNERSHIP

Bridewell Gardens have an open invitation to send their gardeners to support the Green Spaces team. Bridewell is a mental health recovery service using social and therapeutic horticulture to support wellbeing. Through purposeful outdoor activity in a peaceful setting, individuals build confidence, learn new skills, and connect with others who share similar experiences. It's not just about gardening — it's about finding hope, identity, and strength in recovery.

Abingdon and Witney College and Audley Travel also host their annual litter pick at the Witney Lake in partnership with Witney Town Council. Both involve at least four litter pickers from each organisation to help keep our green spaces litter-free.

The Green Spaces team recently hosted a corporate volunteer day with 10 staff from LDA Design — a 100% employee-owned consultancy of landscape architects, urban designers, and planners. LDA Design is dedicated to creating great places that address the climate and biodiversity crises, taking a holistic, people-first approach to design that promotes wellbeing, sustainability, and stronger connections between people and nature.



VOLUNTEERS AND PARTNERS

COMMUNITY & PARTNERSHIP



We have regularly welcomed residents from the Asylum Seeker's Hotel to carry out conservation volunteering.

Regular “Taster Days” are held for volunteers and our own volunteer team is currently being built.

Nicholas - a Biology student needing some practical experience in conservation management - was given a placement at the Witney Lake and Country Park. He attended multiple sessions with us and helped in many various tasks.

We've also been collaborating with Jessica to explore potential outdoor spaces for dance. Jessica is a qualified conscious dance and nature connection facilitator, as well as a yoga and meditation teacher. She also brings over 35 years of experience as a chartered physiotherapist. These sessions are designed to build a deeper connection with nature, community, and support mental and emotional wellbeing.



VOLUNTEERS AND PARTNERS



COMMUNITY & PARTNERSHIP

We're proud to have a strong working partnership with the Witney Shed, who make fantastic use of the cut wood we provide. Their team has supported the Lake and Country Park by crafting wildlife habitats and essential site infrastructure, including nest boxes, signage posts, and rubbing posts.

To date, they've contributed:

- 24 bird boxes
- 3 owl boxes
- 9 bat boxes
- 11 information posts
- 12 rubbing posts
- A frame for our notice board
- A tern raft built to a WTC design

Other partners include:

- Chilterns River Trust
- Lower Windrush Valley Project
- Environment Agency
- Natural England



VOLUNTEERS AND PARTNERS

COMMUNITY & PARTNERSHIP



- The Gill Mill Aggregates team generously offered the use of their excavator to help create new wetland areas in Snipe Meadow. This work aims to restore and enhance the original wetlands and introduce up to four additional scrapes.
- We're currently collaborating with a local running club to develop a one-mile circuit around the Lake, promoting healthy lifestyles and wider community use of the space.
- We've partnered with local schools and the ICE Centre, which supports vulnerable young people with a range of disabilities, to improve access and engagement. Schools are being offered use of the rubbing posts and interactive trail books (available in both PDF and printed formats). For the ICE Centre, we've facilitated minibus access to a quarter-lake circuit, where accessible paths allow for wheelchair use. The centre has already visited and enjoyed the experience, and we have further plans to enhance accessibility across the site.
- Kids Planet is taking full advantage of the Country Park and picnic areas, giving children the chance to engage in natural play and connect with the great outdoors.



GRANTS AND FUNDING

FUNDRAISING



WOODLAND
TRUST



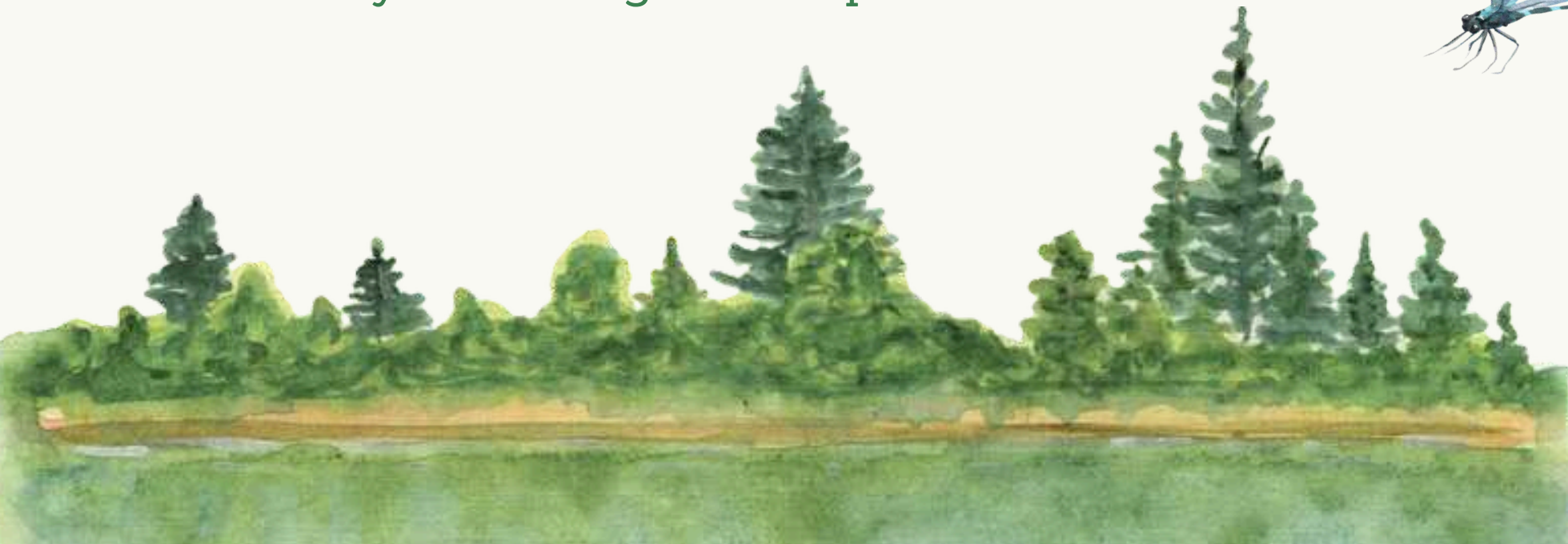
The Lake and Country Park has received:

- £9,500 from Natural England for use on the meadows
- £2,000 from Cllr Duncan Enright from his councillor's priority fund
- £1,500 from West Oxfordshire District Council to create a community orchard
- 2/3 total cost of £1,428 for hedgerow products paid for by the Woodland Trust.



EVENTS

ACTIVITIES



EVENTS

ACTIVITIES



The Green Spaces team hosted a brilliant Corporate Responsibility Day session for a consultancy of urban designers, landscape architects, and planners. This is an important way for us to build relationships with local businesses and organisations and for them to support local community.

The group completed three tasks:

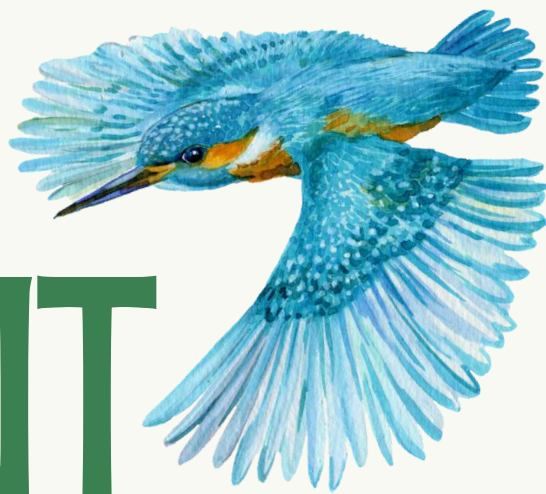
- Weeding a newly planted hedgerow.
- Constructing a log pile habitat for small animals and insects.
- Watering the new orchard.



There are a number of Geocaching sites around the Witney Lake and Country Park. The caches are located so that you do not need to stray from the public footpath and details can be found on the official Geocaching website: www.geocaching.com/play



SITE DEVELOPMENT



- One tern raft has been installed to enhance nesting opportunities for these protected bird species, and we plan to install further platforms for water birds.
- Willows along the river corridors have been pollarded to reduce shading and promote the growth of diverse bankside vegetation.
- WTC's aquatic specialist conducted a targeted Stonewort survey, contributing to our understanding of rare aquatic plant species.
- Two accessible picnic benches with extended table edges have been installed to better accommodate wheelchair users and promote inclusivity.
- A new interactive walking leaflet has been introduced, helping visitors explore the lake with engaging information about wildlife and points of interest.
- Hedgerow management has begun, specifically designed to support insect population.



Image © Debbie Cummings



SITE DEVELOPMENT



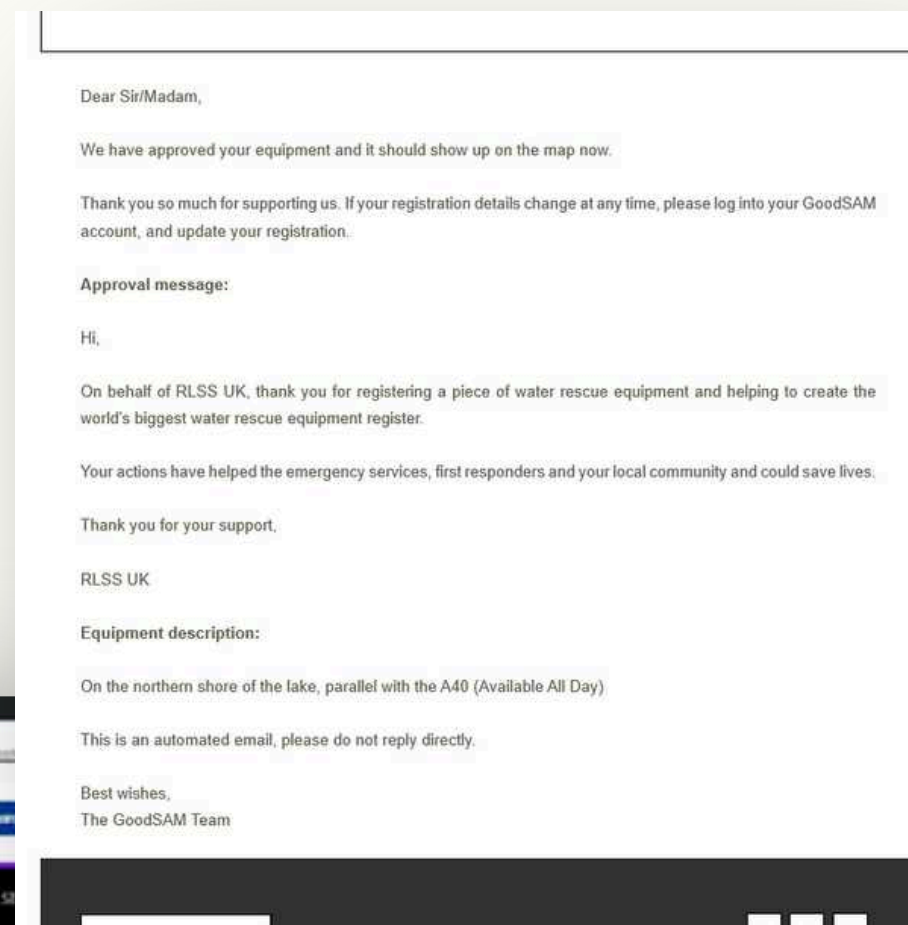
- Two new wildflower meadows have been established, including the creation of 3 hectares of wildflower-rich habitat on Mill Meadow.
- We're collaborating with the local Angling Society to improve fishing access through the installation of enhanced platforms.
- Two new scrapes have been developed on Snipe Meadow to support wetland biodiversity.
- A comprehensive botanical survey of the Lake has been completed, providing valuable insight to inform future development and conservation efforts.
- Detailed soil, spider, and invertebrate surveys have been conducted across both Mill and Snipe Meadows to deepen our ecological understanding of the sites.
- Completing a phase 1 survey of half the Country Park (other done 2 years ago)
- Habitat stacks have been installed
- A reptile survey is planned for the next 3 months.

There will be thinning over 2025 along the A40 strip (up to 200 trees) continuing to improve light and sight lines for lone walkers and others who feel vulnerable.



SITE DEVELOPMENT

- Life-saving equipment has been registered on the GoodSAM responder app, enabling faster emergency response and improved public safety.
- A dedicated webpage for the Local Nature Reserve has been launched, featuring a public survey to gather community feedback and inform future improvements.
- The new webpage also serves as a valuable resource for learning about the history of Witney Lake, with additional information on angling opportunities, life-saving equipment locations, and how to get involved through volunteering.



SITE DEVELOPMENT



- A full review, replacement, and refurbishment of signage has been undertaken. Some existing signs were repurposed for use in other areas of the Lake and Country Park, while new signage and noticeboards have been installed to enhance visitor navigation and information.
- Park furniture has been refurbished to support a consistent and recognisable visual identity throughout the Country Park.
- The WWII pillbox on Mill Meadow has been cleared and enhanced with a new interpretive sign, offering visitors historical context and a point of interest along their visit.



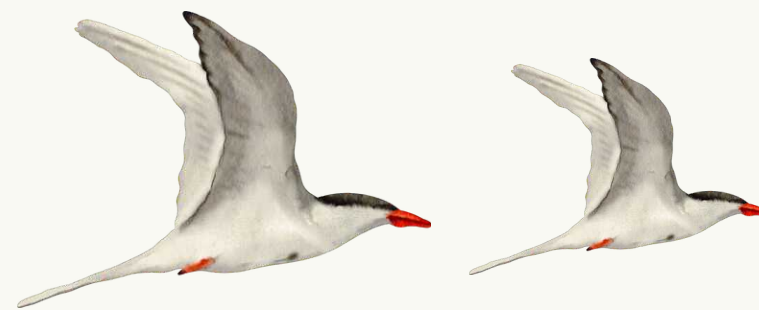
SITE DEVELOPMENT 2024 - 25

- A dragonfly area that had become very overgrown and dried out has been reinstated in Mill Meadow, part of the Lake and Country Park. A Councillor Priority Fund contributed some money for the project. The area has now been cleared and the spoil will gradually naturalise as the water clears over the next few weeks. Fencing has been installed to protect the area with a gate to allow access for mowing and other maintenance.
- Pot holes have been filled along 700m of the lakeside path to improve accessibility and safety around the lake.
- There is collaborative work with the Witney Town Council Communications team to site an information board and signage to guide visitors to the Witney Lake and Country Park.



ENVIRONMENT

- Public litter picking is supported by twice-weekly bin collections, including dog waste bins. Dual-purpose bins for both litter and recycling are in place, ensuring collected waste is appropriately sorted and recycled. In addition to scheduled maintenance, the team provides agile, on-the-spot responses to urgent issues such as broken glass or abandoned barbecues.
- Sustainability is a key focus—wood from old signage and gates is repurposed into nest boxes, new signs, and other practical uses. Reclaimed plastic, often collected from nearby businesses, is creatively reused in signage and bird boxes. A great example is the handcrafted information sign made by the Witney Shed (pictured bottom right).
- Graffiti is addressed promptly—staff carry removal kits and action is taken the same day it is discovered. A local graphic artist also contributes by regularly refreshing the artwork in the underpass leading into the site, creating a welcoming and vibrant entrance.
- The site is officially registered with Natural England as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR), and also we have applied for Local Wildlife Site (LWS) status through the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) and the Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT).
- Ongoing monitoring of the site's biodiversity includes regular flora and fauna surveys conducted by both external professionals and internal staff.
- An application has also been submitted for Green Flag status, recognising our commitment to high standards of environmental management and public engagement.



MAINTENANCE PROGRAM 2024-25



PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT

The meadows represent the largest continuous habitat within the site. Historical evidence indicates that prior to recent restoration efforts, these areas had been left unmanaged for some time. As a result, they became dominated by dense tussocks and mats of coarse grasses and rushes, along with scattered invasive tall ruderal species such as common nettle and creeping thistle. The absence of traditional management practices- such as seasonal mowing or grazing and has led to a decline in habitat diversity and ecological value.

To reverse this trend, an active management programme is now in place, supported by annual habitat reviews and re-surveys where necessary. We are also implementing the Biodiversity Metric to calculate Biodiversity Net Gain across our holdings helping us quantify the ecological and financial value of our interventions, and ensure long-term benefits for biodiversity.

As part of our ongoing engagement with the community, our Biodiversity Officer Carl and Ranger Will carry comment cards while on site. We'd love to hear from you about your experiences around Witney Lake and Country Park LNR, your feedback helps shape how we manage and enhance the site for both wildlife and visitors.



MAINTENANCE PROGRAM 2024-25



PROPOSALS FOR DEVELOPMENT

We are continuing with the active removal and control of several invasive species across the site, including Himalayan Balsam, Nuttall's Pondweed, Hemlock, and Giant Hogweed. Efforts are also ongoing to manage non-native terrapins that have been released into the lake by members of the public, as they pose a threat to native wildlife.

In addition, we are working in partnership with SSE on a three-year rolling tree management programme for the areas beneath power lines running through the Country Park. It has been agreed with SSE's contractors that felled wood will be repurposed for use in other habitat creation initiatives across the site.

All of this work is carried out with a strong focus on protecting sensitive and endangered species within the meadows—such as the Great Burnet, a priority species found in Mill Meadow (pictured right).

We conduct monthly water testing to establish a comprehensive data baseline for tracking changes in water chemistry over time. In collaboration with the Cotswolds Rivers Trust, (Windrush catchment partnership & Cotswold wetland partnership) we also maintain three mammal monitoring rafts and two roach boards to support local biodiversity monitoring efforts.



WITNEY LAKE AND
COUNTRY PARK
MANAGEMENT PLAN
SUMMARY
2024-2034



Written by Carl Whitehead, Biodiversity and Green Spaces Officer
April 2024









CLIMATE & BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Carbon Footprint Report – Witney Civil Parish

Meeting Date: Tuesday 9 September 2025

Contact Officer: Compliance and Environment Officer

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on officer's progress with actions that will progress the Witney Town Council's Climate Strategy and Action Plan.

Background

At its meeting on 26 June 2019, Witney Town Council formally declared a Climate Emergency. In response, the Council committed to taking all necessary measures to address climate change, setting a target to achieve carbon neutrality by 2028 in pursuit of a cleaner, more sustainable future for its residents.

Current Situation

Officers are currently drafting a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan to equip the Council with the necessary powers, resources, and clearly defined milestones to meet its carbon neutrality target. The Strategy will also enable the Council to support and complement wider community initiatives aimed at reducing the town's overall carbon footprint.

Supporting Information

Attached as Appendix A is the Carbon Footprint Report for Witney Parish (dated 15 July 2025), which will inform and guide officers and Members in delivering the phased objectives outlined in the forthcoming Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.

Carbon Footprint Audit for Witney Parish

Reducing carbon emissions and plastic waste is a fundamental step in tackling the climate emergency and protecting the environment. Parish and town councils are well-positioned to lead by example - by reducing emissions from their own operations, supporting sustainable practices among local businesses and residents, and promoting waste reduction and circular economy initiatives.

An understanding of Witney Parish's carbon footprint is essential for developing an effective emissions reduction strategy. Carbon calculators can be used to measure emissions from energy consumption, transport, and waste. Establishing a baseline through a carbon audit will help identify key areas for improvement across the community.

Carbon Footprint Report (Appendix A)

The attached report provides an overview of the Witney community's carbon footprint, including the scale of emissions and the primary sources contributing to them. This data has been generated using Impact (<https://impact-tool.org.uk/>), an online community carbon footprint calculator developed by the Centre for Sustainable Energy and the University of Exeter. The tool enables carbon footprinting at the parish level and has evolved to allow analysis across various geographical scales.

The Impact tool draws on over 30 datasets, some of which are composites of multiple sources. As with all modelling tools, methodological decisions influence the data selection and analysis. The resulting footprints are intended as practical guides rather than definitive measurements.

The report presents both territorial-based and consumption-based emissions and compares Witney's footprint with district and national averages.

Understanding Territorial vs. Consumption Footprints

- **Territorial Footprint:** Measures emissions produced within a defined geographical boundary, including those from heating, transport, industry, and agriculture. These emissions are counted regardless of whether the activities serve local residents or external markets.
- **Consumption Footprint:** Captures emissions resulting from residents' activities, regardless of where those emissions occur. This includes emissions from food, clothing, household goods, leisure, travel, and home heating. This approach uses household-level data aggregated to the community level.

The Impact tool presents this data visually and includes comparisons with other towns, helping to initiate informed discussions and raise awareness of everyday behaviours that contribute to emissions.

Using the Data to Guide Action

The Impact Community Carbon Calculator will be instrumental in identifying priority areas for emissions reduction. Analysis of the data can help initiate conversations, highlight areas with the greatest potential for impact, and inform both personal and community-level actions.

By comparing Witney's emissions profile with national averages, the Council can identify specific challenges and opportunities. This comparative approach will help target interventions where they are likely to be most effective.

Engaging the Community and Monitoring Progress

An early priority will be to engage and educate the community on how to interpret and use the Impact tool's insights. The footprint data can guide strategic efforts to reduce emissions and support the Council in setting meaningful change targets.

Each section of the report includes suggested targets and reflective questions to help the Council identify potential areas for action. The data is intended to raise awareness and deepen understanding of the activities contributing to emissions, thereby encouraging both individual and collective action.

The carbon footprint report will be reviewed annually to monitor progress, benchmark against regional and national averages, and inform future Council decisions.

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 impacts of implementing a Climate Change Strategy for Witney will have equal impact on all services, customers, and staff as there is shared benefit.
- b) Biodiversity – Climate change action plans can include measures to protect and restore biodiversity, which in turn can help with climate adaptation and mitigation as detailed in the report.
- c) Crime & Disorder - No direct crime and disorder impact with regards to the content of this report.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – The information and suggested targets within the report will have a direct, positive impact on the Council's plan for the wider positive benefits towards climate change mitigation and adaptation across the town.

Risk

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

Any recommendations will be reported to the appropriate Committee and Full Council for approval.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates. The Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan will have multi-dimensional impact across various areas including social, economic, and environmental benefits. Stakeholder engagement will be crucial including the public, communities, and local businesses. Consideration of the effects on local communities, including economic development, social inclusion and environmental sustainability will form the draft documents.

Financial implications

- Any costs associated with the Climate Emergency Action Plan incorporating the reduction of the carbon footprint for Witney will follow Council process and be reported to appropriate committees for approval or from existing budget allocations.
- All external funding opportunities will be explored to support climate action costs.
- Officers will maximise the use of support by the various organisations and agencies available.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That officers undertake an analysis of the Carbon Footprint Report for Witney Parish, in collaboration with Members of the Climate and Biodiversity Committee and the Climate Action Working Party, and to prepare draft recommendations and proposed actions for subsequent consideration by the relevant committee.



Carbon Footprint Report:

Witney

Civil parish

15/07/2025



1. Your Footprint Report

Welcome to your carbon footprint report!

This report tells you about your community's carbon¹ footprint – both the scale of emissions and the main activities responsible for the emissions. This information comes from *Impact* – an online community carbon footprint calculator: <https://impact-tool.org.uk/>.

The tool was developed by the Centre for Sustainable Energy and the University of Exeter, initially to make carbon footprinting at parish level possible. Since its inception a number of improvements have been made, including the ability to look at different-sized geographical areas.

Your report shows both 'consumption based' and 'territorial' emissions, and also shows how your footprint compares with the district average and the national average.

It shows your 'territorial' and 'consumption' footprints.

There are two ways of viewing a community's carbon footprint: territorial-based, or consumption-based.

Territorial footprints consider the emissions produced within a geographical boundary – such as from heating buildings, transport, industry, and agriculture – regardless of whether the residents within the community are engaged in or demand those activities. For example, if a factory lies within the boundary of a local authority, then regardless of whether what is produced in the factory is consumed locally or exported to other parts of the country (or world), the factory's emissions would still be counted as part of that local authority's territorial footprint. A territorial footprint is largely created by taking national and local authority datasets and cutting these down to the local geography in as accurate a way as possible.

A consumption footprint captures all the emissions produced from the activities that the area's residents engage in, regardless of where geographically they occur. For example, emissions resulting from the food they eat, the clothes and household items they buy, the leisure activities they engage in, their travel behaviours, and the heating of their homes. The consumption-based footprint is based on household and address-level data, which is then aggregated up to the community level (rather than cutting down from a higher geography as with the territorial approach).



¹ A 'carbon' footprint, includes carbon dioxide as well as other gases which impact the climate.



Apples and pears.

Showing both territorial and consumption footprints gives you useful information, but it is important to recognise that the two footprints cannot be directly compared as they look at the question of 'where do our emissions come from' in different ways, using different methods, and with different datasets.

Take your footprint as a guide, not as complete fact.

The carbon footprints are modelled, drawing on data from more than 30 datasets (some of which are themselves made up of multiple further datasets!). As with all models, decisions have been taken in terms of what data is used, and how the data is 'cut' and analysed. The Impact footprints have been developed with the intention that they are as useful as possible, but remember to take them as a guide, not as complete fact.

If you would like more detail about the method and datasets, please read the Impact methodology paper: <https://impact-tool.org.uk/static/doc/Impact-methodology-paper-v2.2.pdf>.

You can also download the raw data here: <https://impact-tool.org.uk/download>

How does knowing our carbon footprint help us tackle climate change?

Footprint information can guide us to where we should target our efforts to reduce emissions and have the greatest impact. To help you think about what to do next with your footprint information, in each section of this report there are change targets for reaching net zero, and some questions to help you think about possible areas for action.

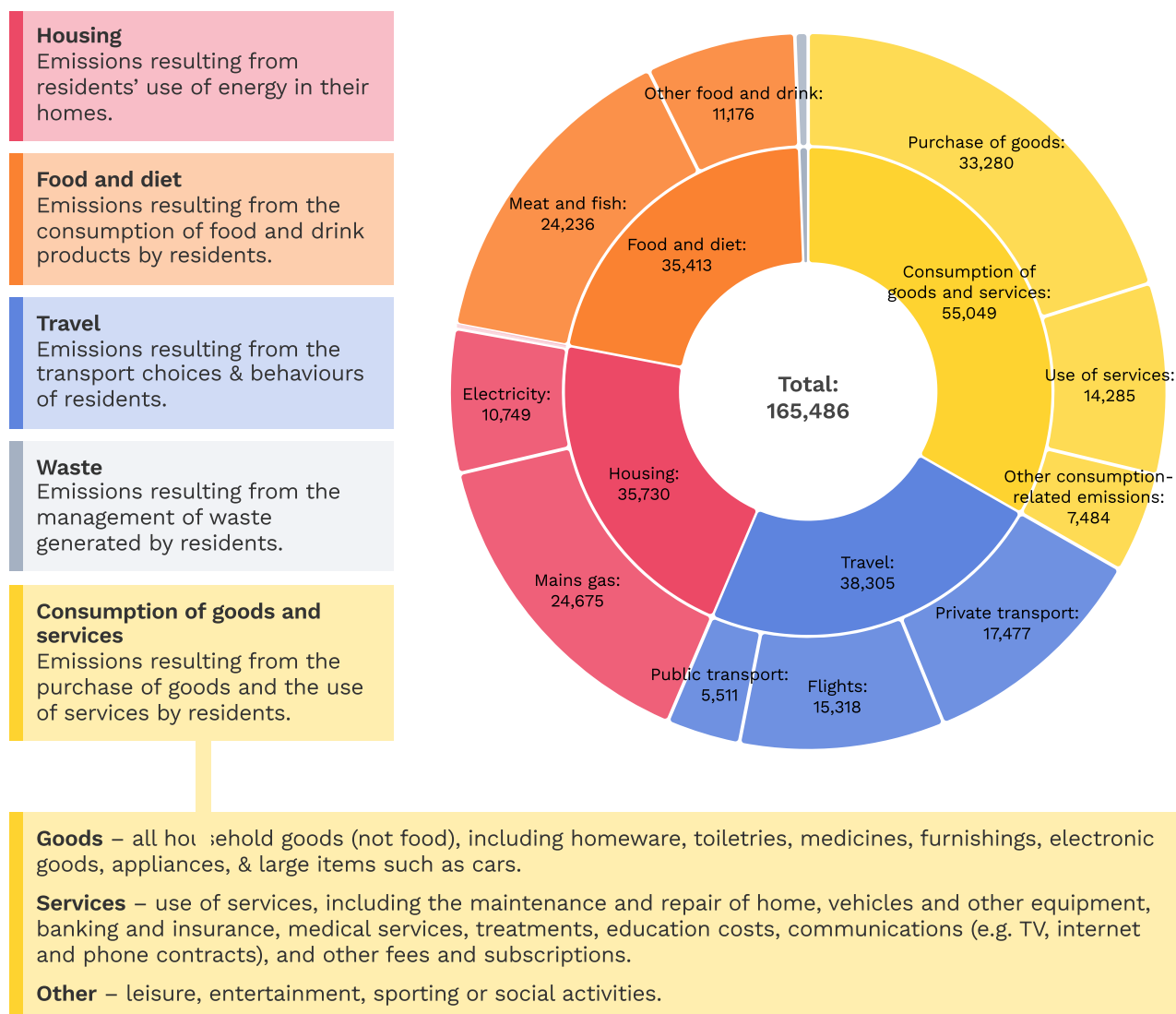
Note that these footprints are intended to raise awareness and improve understanding of the types of activities which contribute to emissions in any given area in order to stimulate individual and collective action. Local Authorities may well have carried out their own analysis and have made climate emergency declarations, drafted action plans, set out policies or be delivering schemes. We hope that the Impact tool can be used to complement this activity.



2. Your Community's Consumption Footprint

Your whole footprint

This figure shows the annual carbon emissions (measured in tonnes CO₂e²) emitted as a result of the different activities that residents within your parish's boundary engage in – from heating to eating.



A breakdown of the numbers

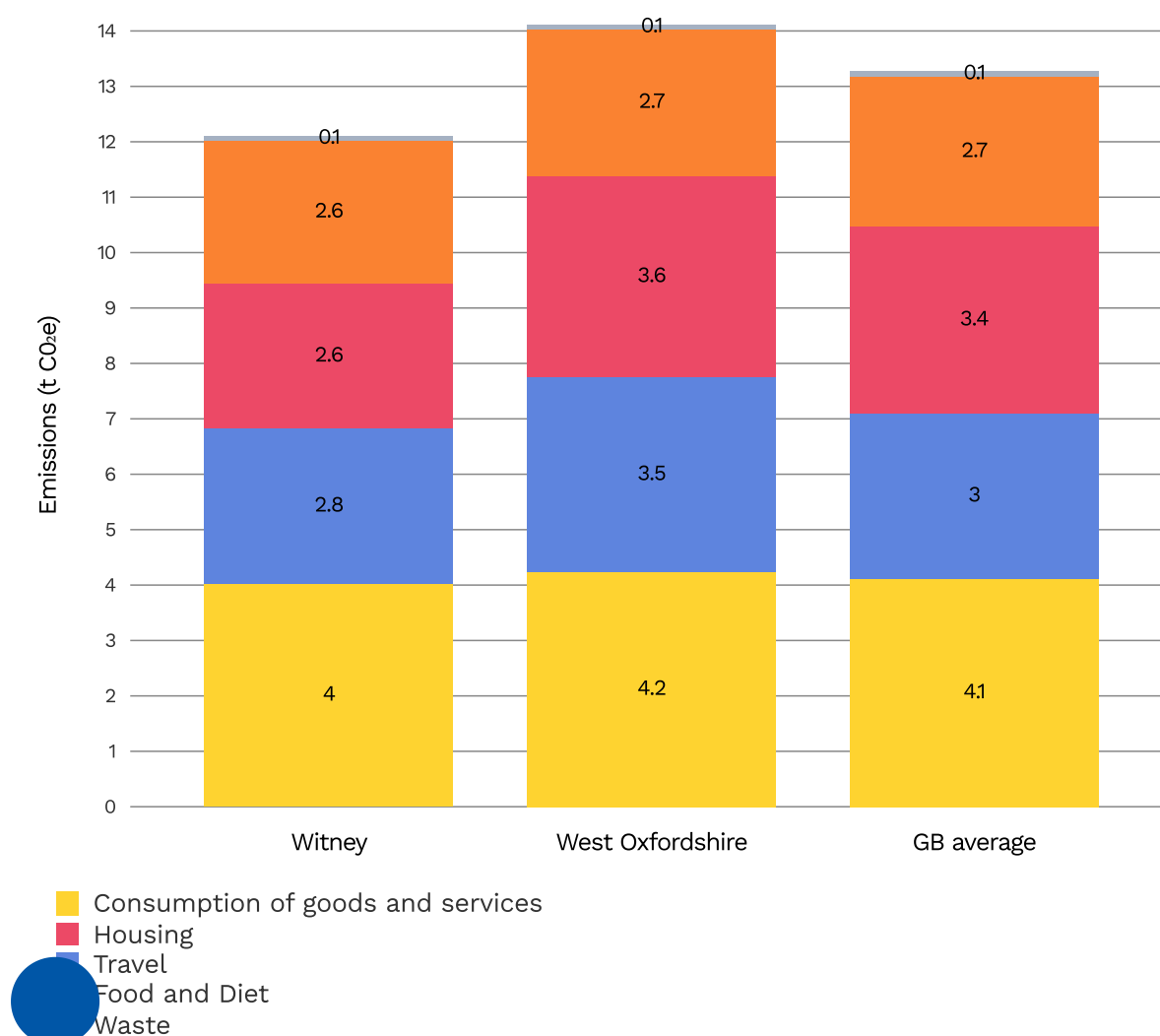
The table below shows your area's consumption footprint – total estimated emissions and per-household averages – so that you can see a breakdown of the numbers.

² CO₂e stands for "carbon dioxide equivalent" and is a standard unit of measurement in carbon accounting. It expresses the impact of a number of different gases collectively as a common unit.

	Total emissions (t CO ₂ e)	Per-household emissions (t CO ₂ e)	%
Total emissions	165,486	12	100
Consumption of goods and services	55,049	4	33
Travel	38,305	2.8	23
Housing	35,730	2.6	22
Food and diet	35,413	2.6	21
Waste	990	0.1	1

How does your area compare?

Here is what the average consumption footprint for your area looks like per household, and how this compares with the district average and the national average. Note that these per household footprints are averages. Within a larger (e.g. local authority) area you may have neighbourhoods with very different per household consumption footprints and it will be worth looking at more granular data if you are planning area-specific initiatives or messaging.



Housing

Change targets:

- Hugely reduced energy demand from existing buildings, including heritage and older buildings
- Smarter and more flexible energy demand patterns, including uses of batteries for excess renewable energy to be stored for later use
- Decarbonised heat generation (this means using heat that has not been generated from fossil fuels e.g. instead is generated by a heat pump)
- New buildings and developments achieve net zero emissions (including associated new transport)

Your community's residents' use of energy in their homes results in annual carbon emissions per household of 2.6 t CO₂e. This compares with 3.6 t CO₂e at the district level and 3.4 t CO₂e at the national level. In the average UK home, 64% of energy is used for space heating, 17% for heating water, 16% for lighting and appliances, and 3% for cooking³. As such a large proportion of household energy is used for heating, the type of heating system (i.e. is it low carbon?), and how well the home retains heat, are critical factors shaping the scale of a home's emissions. How well a home retains heat depends on a number of factors, including: when and how it was built; how much insulation has been installed; how draughty the home is; the efficiency of the windows; and the behaviour of the residents.

Carbon footprints covering a large geographical area will encompass a range of smaller communities with different housing types and demographics. This will influence the types of activities which are most likely to be successful and have the greatest impact in terms of reducing emissions from housing.

Below are some questions to help you to start to think about the implications of your community's household footprint information.

- How does your community's household energy use compare with the the district and national averages? What might the reasons be for the differences?
- What type of housing is there in your community? And what is the main heating fuel (oil, gas, electricity, etc.)?
- Is the housing easily retrofitted to improve how well it retains heat and install low carbon heating? Do you know if residents are doing this? Are there already initiatives to increase demand and encourage and support residents to take action?

³ Energy facts from: Energy consumption in the UK, BEIS (January 2021)



- What opportunities are there to retrofit community buildings?
- Many homes, public and commercial buildings have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) which measures the energy efficiency of the property. You can look at the EPCs of the buildings in your community here: <https://epc.opendatacommunities.org>
- Could you identify homes and buildings where the residents / owners have already made improvements, and showcase these – for example with an event?
- Have you explored local potential for renewable energy generation schemes, such as a solar farm, rooftop solar, or wind? Could a community owned (or jointly owned) initiative be possible?
- Are there opportunities to shift households, community buildings and businesses in your area onto green energy tariffs, where energy is generated from renewable sources?

Transport

Change targets:

- Reduced private car travel and a comparable increase in active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport use
- A complete shift to electric vehicles for remaining road mileage, after shifting a large proportion of private car journeys to other modes (public transport/active travel)
- Massively reduced air travel, particularly among frequent flyers

Car use: Residents' car use results in annual carbon emissions per household of 1.3 t CO₂e. This compares with 1.8 t CO₂e at the district level and 1.4 t CO₂e at the national level.

Air travel: Residents' air travel results in annual carbon emissions per household of 1.1 t CO₂e. This compares with 1.2 t CO₂e at the district level and 1.1 t CO₂e at the national level.

Public transport: Residents' use of public transport results in annual carbon emissions per household of 0.4 t CO₂e. This compares with 0.5 t CO₂e at the district level and 0.4 t CO₂e at the national level.



Below are some questions to help you to start to think about the implications of your community's transport footprint information.



- How do your community's car use-related emissions compare to public transport emissions? And how do these both compare with the district and national averages? What might the reasons be for the differences?
- Could existing or new community schemes help residents shift their transport behaviours to using public transport (if this is a choice) or more active travel options (e.g. electric bike hire or subsidised purchase schemes)? How could the impact of local initiatives be increased?
- Is there scope more strategically to influence provision of public transport (e.g. routes, frequency, fares, subsidies, low carbon fleets)?
- What is the provision of walking and cycling routes like? How accessible are local service centres and facilities to residents in different neighbourhoods? Is it possible for most households to access what they need without needing to use a car?
- What do you think are the key reasons for air travel in your community? Are there likely to be differences between residents of different neighbourhoods? It is worth noting that about 10% of England's population take more than half of all international flights – so trying to address 'frequent flying' is a good way to target any activities or communications campaign.

Food & diet

Change targets:

- Altered dietary patterns, especially reduced meat and dairy consumption, and a massive reduction in food waste
- Widely adopted land management practices that reduce emissions, increase soil carbon and protect and promote biodiversity

Meat and fish: Residents' consumption of meat and fish results in annual carbon emissions per household of 1.8 t CO₂e. This compares with 1.8 t CO₂e at the district level and 1.9 t CO₂e at the national level.

Other food and drink items: Residents' consumption of other food and drink items results in annual carbon emissions per household of 0.8 t CO₂e. This compares with 0.8 t CO₂e at the district level and 0.9 t CO₂e at the national level.

So, where do the emissions from our food actually come from? Without understanding this it can be difficult to know what we can do to change the carbon footprint of what we eat and drink.

Research shows us that changing **what** we eat will have a greater impact on carbon emissions than changing **where** our food has travelled from – although, of course, eating locally-produced food brings multiple other benefits such as supporting local economies, having more control over mandating more ethical and environmentally-beneficial growing practices, and creating opportunities for people to better understand where the food they eat comes from and how it's grown or made.

Whilst the emissions from a food item can really vary depending on how it is grown or reared, it is clear that animal products, and most significantly beef and lamb, account for the largest proportion of food-related emissions. Explore the BBC's Climate Change Food Calculator to better understand how food and drink items compare:

<https://www.bbc.com/future/ bespoke/ follow-the-food/ calculate-the-environmental-footprint-of-your-food.html>³.

Below are some questions to help you to start to think about the implications of your community's food and diet footprint information.

- How do your community's food and diet-related emissions compare with the district and national averages?
- Could you establish or support a behavioural change campaign to encourage people to reduce the amount of meat and dairy they consume? (It is critical that any community-based activity or communications campaigns around dietary changes is sensitive to concerns about farmers' livelihoods and people's cultural and traditional links to meat-eating).
- The amount of food wasted 'post-farm-gate' in the UK is equivalent to 22% of food purchased. What initiatives could raise awareness about food waste and encourage unwanted food to be redistributed (e.g. through a 'community fridge')?

Goods & services

Change targets:

- Decarbonised power generation (this means using electricity that does not come from fossil fuels e.g. instead is generated from solar panels)
- Hugely altered consumption patterns, buying less and re-using & repairing more

Goods & services: Residents' consumption of goods and use of services results in annual carbon emissions per household of 4 t CO₂e. This compares with 4.2 t CO₂e at the district level and 4.1 t CO₂e at the national level.

⁴ For further information, you can also read this Our World in Data (Oxford University) study:
<https://ourworldindata.org/food-choice-vs-eating-local>



All goods that we buy will have had carbon emitted in their making (including the sourcing of raw materials), packaging, shipping and sale. Without clear carbon labelling, it is difficult to know the scale of emissions resulting from each item, but it is clear that with every new product made, more carbon is emitted (and more resources are extracted and sourced – which itself can have huge environmental and social impacts). Reducing how many *new* goods we buy in the first place is the best place to start in terms of reducing goods-related emissions; and then of course re-using and repairing items where goods are needed.

Carbon emissions from the services we use will relate to the energy used by that service provider (e.g. heating in a leisure centre, pub or hospital), as well as the carbon emitted as a result of goods they buy and use (e.g. gym equipment, vehicle repair machinery).

Here are some questions to help you to consider ways to reduce emissions attributable to goods and services:

- How do your community's goods and services-related emissions compare with the district and national average? What might the reasons be for the differences?
- Are there opportunities to: grow the second-hand market; enable residents to upcycle and repair household items; share larger/more expensive/rarely used items, such as power tools?
- Are there opportunities to encourage businesses to switch to green energy tariffs (where energy is generated from renewable sources), or to support local businesses who want to reduce their emissions (e.g. with cargo bike deliveries to replace vans; energy efficiency improvements to buildings to reduce heat demand; low carbon procurement policies; local sourcing and carbon-conscious materials)?

Waste

Change targets:

- Greatly increased recycling rates, achieving a 'circular economy', and taking unnecessary plastics and other packaging out of the waste stream.
- Widespread, actively managed and planned carbon capture and storage strategies.

Waste: The management of residents' waste results in annual carbon emissions per household of 0.07 t CO₂e. (Emissions associated with waste management are distributed out evenly across the population.)

The waste 'wedge' in your carbon footprint may look small, but remember that emissions from the *management* of waste only represent a small fraction of the total emissions associated with every item that ends up in our bins or recycling boxes. So reducing waste in the first place is critical.

- What sort of messaging could be effective in helping to reduce the amount of waste being generated (e.g. avoiding plastic packaging, water bottle refills, home composting)?
- What initiatives are likely to be popular (e.g. local food boxes, repair cafes, swap shops)?

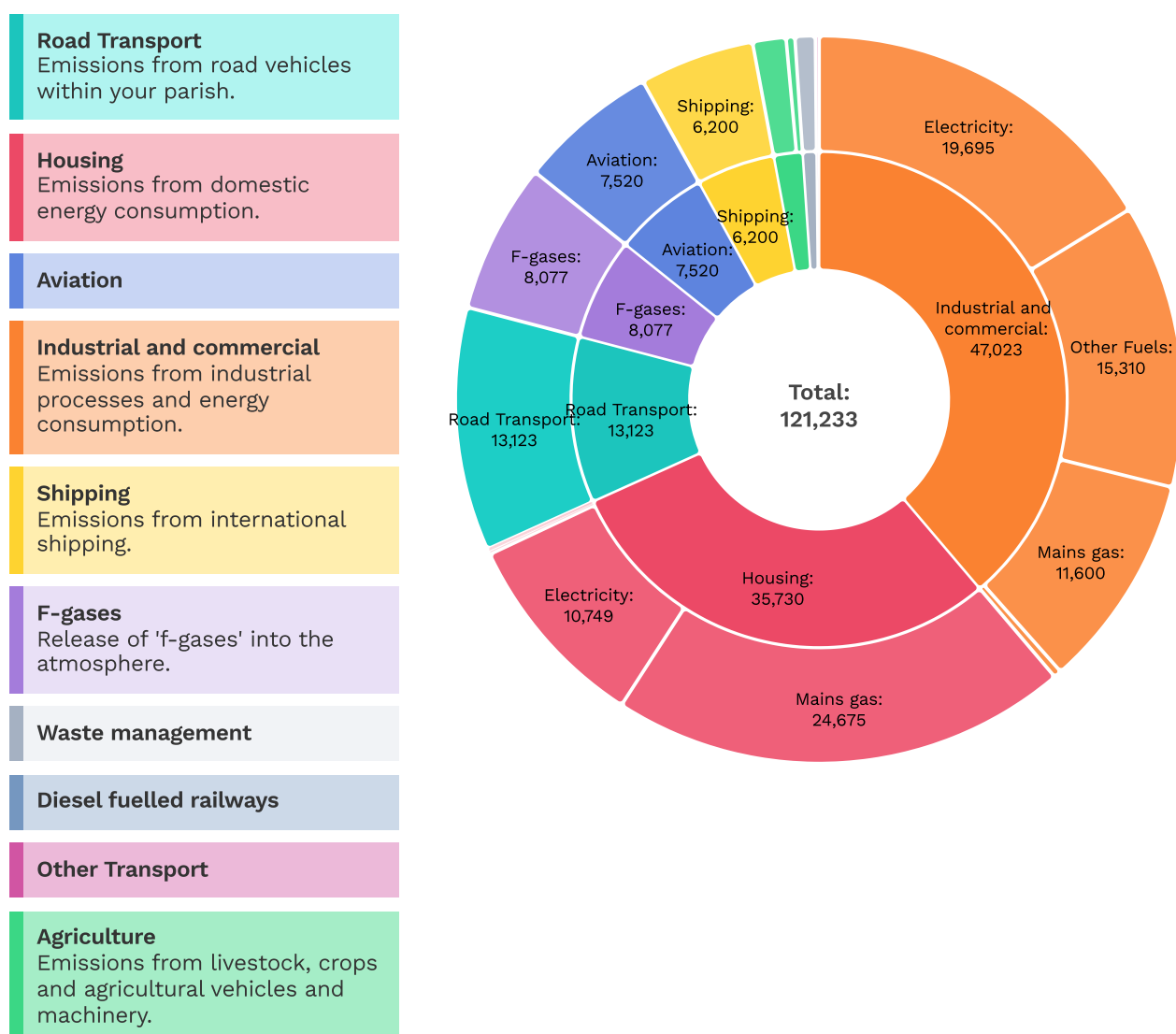


3. Territorial Footprint

Your whole footprint

This figure shows the annual carbon emissions (measured in tonnes) emitted as a result of activities taking place within your parish's boundary.

While these figures should give you a reasonable indication of the major sources of emissions within your parish's boundary, they should be taken with a small pinch of salt, as some sectors are difficult to apportion territorially. For example, emissions from international shipping are calculated for the whole country and apportioned to each parish based on its population. For more information, see the [Impact methodology paper](#).



A breakdown of the numbers



The table below shows your parish's territorial footprint – total and per-household averages – so that you can see a breakdown of the numbers.



	Total emissions (t CO ₂ e)	Per-household emissions (t CO ₂ e)	%
Total emissions	121,233	9	100
Industrial and commercial	47,023	3.7	39
Electricity	19,695	1.5	16
Other Fuels	15,310	1.2	13
Mains gas	11,600	0.9	10
Large industrial consumers	418	< 0.1	< 1
Housing	35,730	2.8	29
Mains gas	24,675	1.9	20
Electricity	10,749	0.8	9
Oil	178	< 0.1	< 1
Coal	64	< 0.1	< 1
Biomass	32	< 0.1	< 1
LPG	31	< 0.1	< 1
Road Transport	13,123	1	11
F-gases	8,077	0.6	7
Aviation	7,520	0.6	6
Shipping	6,200	0.5	5
Agriculture	2,270	0.2	2
Livestock and crop-related emissions	1,797	0.1	1
Fuel	473	< 0.1	< 1
Waste management	1,091	0.1	1
Other Transport	200	< 0.1	< 1
Diesel fuelled railways	0	< 0.1	< 1

Below are some questions to help you to start to think about the implications of your community's territorial footprint information.

- Are there particular sectors which account for a high proportion of the territorial emissions in your community?
- Based on your knowledge, are these sectors surprising or are they what you would expect?
- Who are the key stakeholders you would need to engage with to address the emissions from the highest emitting sectors?
- For example – for agricultural emissions can you engage with local land owners, or the NFU/other farmer groups to understand what is happening in your area to reduce emissions from agriculture? For industrial and commercial emissions, are there ways that businesses could be supported with reducing their emissions? For road transport what changes would be needed to improve public and active travel links?

4. Sources of information

There are lots of sources of support and information on how to reduce carbon footprints – too many to list here! Here is an introductory range of resources that we hope will help you take your next steps now that you know your carbon footprint. Most of these contain many other links relevant to the topic under discussion:

CSE resources

- Support for town and parish councils:
<https://www.cse.org.uk/my-community/support-for-town-and-parish-councils>
- Future Energy Landscapes: a community consultation method to start a conversation about renewables in your area:
<https://www.cse.org.uk/my-community/community-projects/future-energy-landscapes-community-consultation-method>
- Community Retrofit Guide:
<https://www.cse.org.uk/resource/community-retrofit-guide>
- Funding for your community project or building:
<https://www.cse.org.uk/resource/funding-for-your-community-project-or-building-2>
- Climate action support for town and parish councils:
<https://www.cse.org.uk/my-community/support-for-town-and-parish-councils>
- Home energy factsheets:
<https://www.cse.org.uk/resource/home-energy-fact-sheets>
- Neighbourhood Planning in a Climate Emergency guide:
<https://www.cse.org.uk/my-community/engagement-planning/neighbourhood-plans>

Engaging and communicating

- Britain Talks Climate is an evidence-based toolkit designed to support any organisation that wants to engage the British public on climate change:
<https://climateoutreach.org/britain-talks-climate/>
- Place standard tool. This is an engagement tool developed by Public Health Scotland provides a simple framework to structure conversations about place, based around 14 questions. There is a climate focused version of the tool as well.
<https://www.ourplace.scot/About-Place-Standard>



Other resources

- The National Association for Local Councils has also produced a list of case studies of local councils doing work on the climate emergency:
<https://www.nalc.gov.uk/library/our-work/climate-change/3297-climate-change-case-studies/file>
- Ashden Trust, tools for councils:
<https://ashden.org/sustainable-towns-cities/tools-for-councils>
- The Community Works, offering links to expert advice on local change and climate action:
<https://www.thecommunityworks.co.uk>
- Hubbub, climate action resources:
<https://hubbub.org.uk>
- Possible, climate action resources and case studies:
<https://www.wearepossible.org>
- Community Energy England:
<https://communityenergyengland.org>



CLIMATE & BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Draft Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan

Meeting Date: Tuesday 9 September 2025

Contact Officer: Compliance and Environment Officer

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on Witney Town Council's Climate Strategy and Action Plan.

Background

At its meeting on 26 June 2019, Witney Town Council formally declared a Climate Emergency. In response, the Council committed to taking all necessary measures to address climate change, setting a target to achieve carbon neutrality by 2028 in pursuit of a cleaner, more sustainable future for its residents.

Current Situation

This version of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan represents a first draft and is being brought forward at this stage to seek Member input. The intention is to ensure that the final version reflects the Council's priorities.

The draft Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (Appendix A) has been developed based on the preliminary roadmap presented on 20 May 2025 at the Climate and Biodiversity Committee meeting. A Council carbon footprint for 2025/26 needs to be established and officers will undertake this as soon as possible. This can be compared with the Council carbon footprint established in 2019-2020 and reported by the Head of Estates & Operations to the Annual Council Meeting on 8 May 2024.

Carbon audits have been requested for Burwell Hall, Corn Exchange, Town Hall, and the Admin Office; officers are awaiting confirmation of next steps. The reports will identify improvements that could be made by the Council to improve the energy performance of buildings that are owned or long-term leased. There may be challenges with the listed buildings and any proposals will need to be agreed with the Witney Town Hall Charity (leased buildings) and West Oxfordshire District Council as the local planning authority.

As an interim measure, officers have reviewed the current energy performance data for the buildings. A comparison is provided - Appendix B for reference. The data highlights varying energy performance factors, which will need to be assessed and reviewed by the Climate and Biodiversity Committee and the Climate Action Working Party once the latest carbon audits are completed.

Certain improvement actions may be accommodated within existing maintenance budgets, while others should be considered by the appropriate committee as Capital Improvement Projects during the budget planning process.

A carbon footprint report for Witney Civil Parish has been undertaken and opportunities have been outlined within the Impact report to support and compliment wider community initiatives aimed at reducing the town's overall carbon footprint. A dedicated report by officers concerning the Impact Report will follow.

A detailed Action Plan, including key performance indicators (KPIs) and timelines, will be developed to accompany the Climate Change Strategy following feedback from Members. This will allow the Council to track progress and link strategic objectives directly to measurable outcomes.

Several targets and KPIs must be defined, with suggested KPIs subject to discussion and agreement.

Climate action relating to Planning is still to be included within the Strategy. The preliminary road map detailed the following:

- Planning: Integrate carbon neutrality goals into all Council planning documents. Consider the impact on the environment of all planning applications and comment in the name of the Council accordingly (within statutory consultee guidelines).

Officers will continue to work on the draft documents to include planning.

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 impacts of implementing a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan for Witney will have equal impact on all services, customers, and staff as there is shared benefit.
- b) Biodiversity – Climate change action plans can include measures to protect and restore biodiversity, which in turn can help with climate adaptation and mitigation as detailed in the report.
- c) Crime & Disorder - No direct crime and disorder impact with regards to the content of this report.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – The information and suggested targets within the report will have a direct, positive impact on the Council's plan for the wider positive benefits towards climate change mitigation and adaptation across the town.

Risk

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

Any recommendations will be reported to the appropriate Committee and Full Council for approval.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates. The Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan will have multi-dimensional impact across various areas including social, economic, and environmental benefits. Stakeholder engagement will be crucial including the public, communities, and local businesses. Consideration of the effects on local communities, including economic development, social inclusion and environmental sustainability will form the draft documents.

Financial implications

- Any costs associated with the Climate Emergency Action Plan incorporating the reduction of the carbon footprint for Witney will follow Council process and be reported to appropriate committees for approval or from existing budget allocations.
- All external funding opportunities will be explored to support climate action costs.
- Officers will maximise the use of support by the various organisations and agencies available.

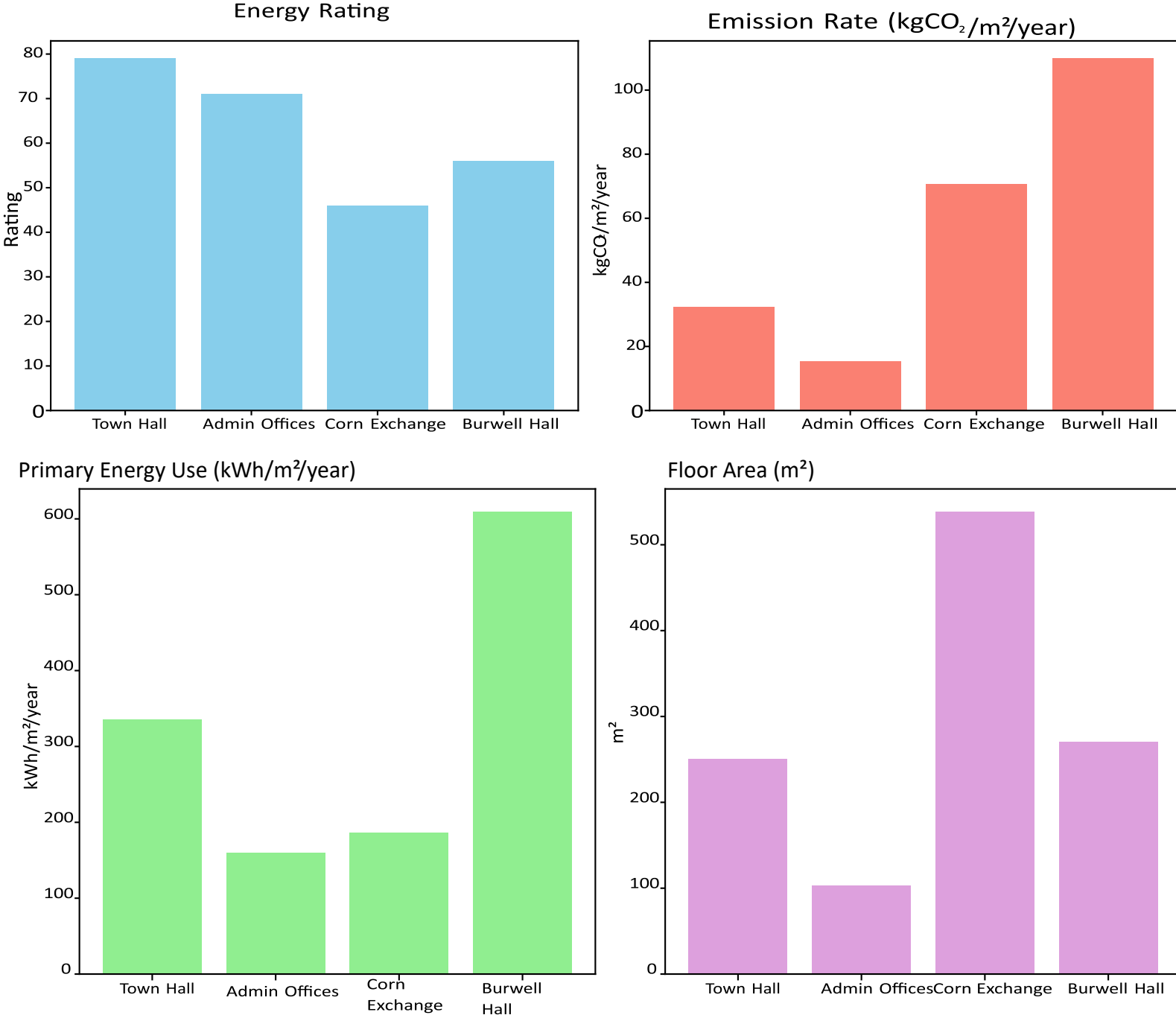
Recommendations

Members are invited to:

1. Note the progress and contents of the first draft of the Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.
2. Provide feedback and suggestions to shape the final version of the strategy.
3. Support the development of the Action Plan with timescales and measurable outcomes to accompany the final Climate Change Strategy.

Document is Restricted

Appendix B - Energy Performance Comparison of Buildings



CLIMATE & BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE



Agenda Item:	West Witney Projects - Energy Efficiency Measures
Meeting Date:	Tuesday, 9 September 2025
Contact Officer:	Compliance and Environment Officer

At the Climate Action Working Party meeting held on 22 July 2025, Members raised enquiries regarding the carbon neutrality of the forthcoming capital works at West Witney. In response, the Project Officer has provided an update to the Committee outlining the status of the West Witney Projects, including the integration of energy efficiency measures within the project specification.

Background

West Witney Sports and Social Clubhouse

The clubhouse was built in 1950's and has heartily served the local community for generations. The clubhouse needs major refurbishment to maintain the integrity of the building, prolong its life expectancy and improve the energy efficiency and experience for users of the facility.

New Depot

The Courtside project at The Leys has commenced which has resulted in the operational team vacating the Leys Depot into temporary accommodation in Witney whilst the Council planned the creation of a new depot at West Witney Sports Ground.

Current Situation

The Project Officer, in collaboration with the Council's appointed Construction Consultants, has incorporated the relevant items into the project specifications. A project update, including a timeline, will be prepared and presented by the Project Officer to the Council for Members' information.

Energy Efficiency Considerations

New Depot:

1. Solar Photovoltaic (PV) Panels

- Install solar panels to generate electricity on-site.
This is included within the specification.
- Can be combined with battery storage to increase self-consumption.
This is included within the specification.

2. Solar Thermal Systems

- Use solar energy for heating water, reducing gas or electric heating needs.

Roof space to be used for PV – PV more efficient and valuable based on 100% electricity energy needs.

3. Heat Pumps (Air Source or Ground Source)

- Efficient heating and cooling systems powered by renewable electricity.
Not an efficient means of heating habitable areas of unit – high upfront cost and Non-Material Amendment required for install from West Oxfordshire District Council.
- Often supported by UK government schemes.
Yes, grant schemes contribute £7,500 but install costs can run in excess of £30k.

4. Green Roofs and Walls

- Improve insulation, reduce heat island effect, and manage rainwater sustainably.
Not viable for this project as all buildings are pitched roof and we require clear panels for lighting.

5. High-Performance Insulation & Airtightness

- Not renewable energy per se, but essential for reducing energy demand.
Yes insulation, air tightness is in scope for this building.

6. Energy Recovery Ventilation Systems

- Recover heat from exhaust air to pre-heat incoming fresh air.
Not considered – Construction Consultants not familiar.

7. Rainwater Harvesting & Greywater Recycling

- Reduce water use, indirectly reducing energy required for water treatment.
Yes, this in within specifications and drainage strategy.

8. Smart Metering and Energy Management Systems

- Optimize energy use, integrate with renewable generation.
This is within the specification – contractor will provide a Mechanical & Electrical plan that will show how PV will generate and harvest electricity and use efficiently. Remote access is also in scope within specification.

West Witney Sports and Social Club Refurbishment:

1. Retrofitting Solar Panels

- If the roof and structure allow, add solar PV.
Yes, this is within specifications with battery storage.

2. Upgrade to Heat Pumps

- Replace fossil fuel heating systems with electric heat pumps.
A better solution could be aircon which provides heat – runs off PV/batteries and will not require a Non-Material Amendment.

3. Improving Insulation and Draft Proofing

- Upgrade loft, cavity wall, or solid wall insulation to reduce energy loss.
Wall render, cladding and windows will be thermally efficient at required rating – loft insulated.

4. Install Solar Thermal for Hot Water

- Where feasible, add solar water heating.
Not in scope as PV preferred.

5. Replace Old Windows with Double or Triple Glazing

- Reduces heat loss, improves energy efficiency.
Yes, double glazing throughout – at required thermal rating.

6. Smart Controls and Thermostats

- Allow better energy use monitoring and efficiency.
Smart meters and remote access controls to be used.

7. LED Lighting and Efficient Appliances

- Lower electricity consumption.
Yes, this is within specification.

Following a detailed review by the Council's appointed Construction Consultants in conjunction with HVAC (Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning) specialists, it has been determined that air source and ground source heat pumps are not suitable for installation in either of the proposed buildings. This conclusion is based on the specific usage profiles of the facilities, with particular emphasis on the Clubhouse, where irregular and sporadic operating hours significantly reduce the efficiency and viability of heat pump systems.

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 – equal impact on all services provided by the WWSSC and staff as there is shared benefit and inclusivity from the project.
- a) Biodiversity - no implications directly resulting from this report.
- b) Crime & Disorder - no implications directly resulting from this report.
- c) Environment & Climate Emergency - The project specifications will include energy efficiency initiatives.

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.

A risk register for this large project will be opened by the officers. There are clearly many risks which could lead to delay, poor or non-delivery. These risks are managed by competent staff, the employment of specialists as appropriate and Council scrutiny.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates. The West Witney Project will add social value through improved leisure and sporting facilities and gives the scope for further improvements in the future.

Financial implications

There are no financial implications arising directly from this report as the Council has already agreed the budgets for this Project.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note this report.

Sent: Tuesday, July 22, 2025 1:04 PM
To: Info <info@witney-tc.gov.uk>
Subject: Government commits to local supply for community energy

Dear Witney Town Council

I have some very good news to share with you about our campaign for more community energy.

For more than half a decade, we have been advocating for a change in the law that would unlock the remarkable potential for growth in these schemes.

Community energy is when smaller-scale renewable schemes, like rural wind farms or urban solar projects on schools and housing estates, are owned and run by local people. These schemes are not currently able to sell the power they generate directly to local homes and businesses, instead having to sell to big energy companies for a fraction of the price they could receive if selling locally. This makes it extremely difficult for communities to set up their own renewable energy schemes, and the result is there are hardly any in the UK.

A right to supply locally would enable community energy schemes to sell the clean power they generate directly to local homes and businesses. Communities across the UK would see the benefits of this through affordable bills, local jobs, climate safety and energy security.

On Tuesday last week, when asked about this, the Government said, **“That is exactly what we are determined to do and we will continue to work to make it happen.”**

This was part of an exchange in the House of Commons, where Michael Shanks MP, the Government Minister responsible for community energy, answered a question from Sir Jeremy Wright MP. Here is what was said, in full:

Sir Jeremy Wright, Conservative MP for Kenilworth and Southam:

“The Minister will recognise that one way to increase the supply of clean energy is to enable community energy projects to supply local energy markets. When Ministers are asked about that, as he knows they have been many times, they generally say that there is no technical obstacle to it happening, but will the Minister recognise that there is a world of difference between, on the one hand, something being technically possible and, on the other, that same thing being facilitated and encouraged so it really happens? Will he focus on the latter as the Government develop their energy market reforms?”

Michael Shanks, Minister for Energy Security and Net Zero:

“I completely agree. The right hon. and learned Gentleman is absolutely right: there are no technical barriers to doing it, but that does not mean that it is a straightforward process. To be honest, things that I thought would have been much more straightforward, like how we define “community”, are more difficult to get right, but we are absolutely determined to do it. He is right to make the point about delivering clean power that benefits local communities, so that they can buy it locally and really see the benefit of hosting it. That is exactly what we are determined to do and we will continue to work to make it happen.”

Very soon after, Jess Brown-Fuller MP stood up and asked a similar question, to which the Energy Secretary of State, Ed Miliband MP, replied. Here is that exchange, in full:

Jess Brown-Fuller, Liberal Democrat MP for Chichester:

“Private sector investment via community energy schemes is a popular way of engaging people to get behind renewable energy projects in their area. A great example is Meadow Blue Community Energy in my constituency of Chichester, which puts money back into the community with a grant scheme and is now funding solar panels on local school roofs. Does the Secretary of State agree that community energy projects would attract more private sector investment if grid access costs were reduced and the delivery of local supply was made easier?”

Ed Miliband, Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero:

“The hon. Lady raises an important issue, which was also raised by the right hon. and learned Member for Kenilworth and Southam (Sir Jeremy Wright). She is right about the virtues of community energy. Great British Energy is going to partner with local communities to deliver community energy up and down the country, because sometimes public capital—it could be loans, it could be grants—can help lever in the private capital that we need. She is also right about some of the barriers, as the Energy Minister mentioned. I want to assure her that we are going through the different barriers in granular, nerdy detail to see how we can break them down.”

We are delighted by this public confirmation from the Government, confirming they will enable local supply and are actively working to make it a reality.

This unequivocal commitment is a result of a steady build-up of support for community energy within Parliament. Under the previous Government, we brought over 320 MPs on board to back our Local Electricity Bill, a proposed law that would make it possible for community energy schemes to sell locally. This led to the establishment of the Community Energy Fund, a £10 million pot of funding for community energy projects in England. After Labour became the Government last year, we campaigned to see community energy included in the Great British Energy Act. We succeeded, meaning that smaller-scale renewable schemes can now benefit from the £8 billion that Great British Energy – a new publicly owned clean energy company – is set to spend on renewables across the next few years. Then, in March this year, we secured an additional £14.3 million in community energy funding, including for projects in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

We have always maintained that the single most effective change needed for community energy to grow is to allow groups to sell the electricity they generate directly to local people. So the Government’s statement last week was excellent news.

This and all of the above achievements have happened only because you and tens of thousands of others joined the campaign and participated in advocating to influence elected representatives. Thank you so much if you have taken action. Please take heart at what can be achieved when we organise and act together.

What now?

Our campaign continues. We intend to make sure that the new local supply process is effective and implemented promptly.

Over the coming months we will work with energy systems experts and the community energy sector on developing the detail of the mechanism to enable local supply. We will also call on the Government to provide more details with regards to their plans, such as when they intend for local supply to come into effect.

For now, it is important to say thank you. We have thanked the Minister, Michael Shanks, for making his statement of commitment last week. Could you please write a short message to him, at minister.shanks@energysecurity.gov.uk, and do the same?

Finally, here is a short video that helps show how effective our collective efforts have been over the years: https://youtu.be/FExdlx0174M?si=_GB1Fdr4rIUIGDO

Steve

Steve Shaw
Director



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