

Climate Action Working Party Meeting of Witney Town Council



Tuesday, 22nd July, 2025 at 4.00 pm

To members of the Climate Action Working Party Committee - J Aitman, D Edwards-Hughes, D Enright, J Robertshaw and S Simpson (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. Election of Chair

To elect a Chair of the Working Party for the 2025/26 Municipal Year.

2. Terms of Reference (Pages 3 - 6)

To agree the Terms of Reference of the Working Party.

3. Climate Change Road map

To receive a verbal update from the Compliance & Environment Officer outlining key dates and next steps.

4. Climate Fair (Pages 7 - 8)

To receive and consider the report of the Compliance & Environment Officer on a proposed Climate Fair event.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'S. J. - C.', is written above the title 'Town Clerk'.

Town Clerk

Terms of Reference Climate Action Working Party



Objective

The purpose of this Working Party is to support the development of a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan, and to help direct Council resources towards achieving the Council's carbon neutrality goals. These objectives were established following the Climate Emergency declared by the Council on 26 June 2019, which included the following commitments:

1. Witney Town Council joins other Councils in declaring a Climate Emergency and commits to the vision of carbon neutrality by 2028 at the latest, and;
2. explores the expansion of community energy to keep the benefits of our local energy generation in our local economy, and;
3. works with partners anchored in the area to deliver carbon reductions and grow the local economy.

The Climate Change Strategy will provide the framework for developing an Action Plan that contributes towards strategic objectives. This will include a reassessment of the Council's present carbon emissions, identifying and enabling the prioritising of actions which will be underpinned by data. The Action Plan will ensure the Council has the powers and resources necessary to achieve this, setting clear targets and detail the journey with clear milestones.

In addition, the Council can complement, support and promote other activities within the town and immediate surroundings that can lead to a reduction of the carbon footprint overall in the local area.

Timeframe

A draft action plan for Council facilities should be presented to the Council on 6th October 2025 to highlight any potential budgetary requests in the 2026/27 fiscal year and beyond.

A final Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan should be presented to the Council on 16 February 2026 based on the following roadmap agreed by the Climate & Biodiversity Committee on 20th May 2025 (minute no. CB295).

Phase 1: Baseline Assessment and Strategy (Year 1)

Objective: Understand current emissions and plan action.

- **Conduct a full carbon audit:** Council operations, estates, vehicle fleets, and supply chains.
- **Identify and set SMART targets:** Based on emissions baseline (e.g. reduce emissions by achievable targets).
- **Engage stakeholders:** Staff, Councillors, residents, local businesses, and partner agencies.
- **Publish a Climate Action Plan (CAP):** Clear milestones, budget estimates, and responsibilities.

- **Establish governance structures:** A Climate Action Working Party might be formed to assist officers with the establishment of the Strategy and Action Plan, and who will identify and make recommendations to the Climate and Biodiversity Committee and Council, regarding the actions required to address the climate change emergency.

Phase 2: Quick Wins, Operational Change and Community Support (Years 1–2)

Objective: Reduce emissions through immediate actions.

- **Retrofit and upgrades of council buildings:** Evaluate options for improving the energy efficiency of Council building - Insulation, LED lighting, solar panels on roofs, efficient heating etc.
- **Fleet and Machinery decarbonisation:** Transition fleet and machinery to electric vehicles/machinery where suitable alternatives exist.
- **Procurement Policy changes:** Review current policy prioritising local, low-carbon suppliers, consider impact on waste, carbon, and ecology.
- **Event and Hiring Policy changes:** Review of current policies to ensure the reduction of single use plastics and waste recycling is incorporated into external events on council land, property, and public spaces.
- **Sustainable energy:** Maintain 100% renewable energy from utility companies for council buildings.
- **Staff and Councillors training and behaviour change:** Training on Carbon Literacy so everyone can work towards cutting carbon emissions in their work and the decisions they make. Develop a handbook for future use and for the induction of new staff and Councillors.
- **Pesticides:** Review the Pesticide Policy adopted 25 March 2024.
- **Waste:** Review and implement continual improvement to recycling and green waste programmes across all council buildings, facilities, and operations.
- **Environmental Emergency Plan:** Develop and implement; including training of all staff for emergencies such as but not exclusive to wildfire, drought, flood, storms focussing on prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery.
- **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).
- **Engage residents in behaviour change:** Recycling, active travel, home energy efficiency, circular economy projects and community litter clean-ups.
- **Education and outreach:** Foster partnerships with schools and community groups to support climate initiatives.
- **Community Fridge:** Supporting local community fridge projects with redistributing food surplus going to waste.
- **Local Produce Markets and ‘Buy Local’:** Support local food producers and businesses.
- **Witney Allotments and Community Orchards:** Support the Witney Allotment Association and Community Orchards within the town.
- **Ethical banking:** Review arrangements.

Phase 3: Strategic Projects and Infrastructure (Years 2–3)

Objective: Implement systemic change with long-term impact.

- **Renewable energy projects:** Support OCC and WODC initiatives including community energy schemes.
- **Sustainable transport investment:** Support OCC and WODC cycling infrastructure initiatives, EV charging networks, active travel, public transport and expanding the local network of footpaths. Consider infrastructure improvements to Council owned areas.
- **Nature-based solutions:** Tree planting, wetland restoration, urban greening, wilder green spaces, and wild meadow creation. Collaborating with specialist organisations to manage land for wildlife e.g. Windrush Project, Chilterns River Trust, Envelope Catchment Partnership & River Fly Partnership, Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency etc.

Phase 4: Scaling Up and Community Mobilisation (Year 3 + beyond)

Objective: Broaden the impact beyond council control.

- **Support local businesses** to decarbonise (signposting to grants and advice).
- **Local climate resilience plans:** Assess climate risks and vulnerabilities including heatwaves, flooding, extreme weather events and develop adaptation strategies.
- **Support shared transport schemes:** Car, bike, and other transport sharing schemes.
- **Community energy and retrofit schemes:** Promote and signposting to grants and advice.

Phase 5: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Adaptation (Ongoing)

Objective: Track progress, adjust course, and maintain accountability.

- **Annual emissions reports:** Transparent publication of carbon reduction progress.
- **Key Performance Indicators:** Introduced for department managers to monitor progress.
- **Reporting:** Progress reporting quarterly to Council.
- **Review CAP every 2 years:** Update based on new tech, funding, or legislation.
- **Work with regional partners:** Combine efforts across council boundaries.
- **Benchmarking** against successful carbon-neutral town councils.
- **Celebrate success:** Communicate regularly with residents and stakeholders promoting transparency and accountability.
- **Feedback:** Use mechanisms to gather input from the community and adjust strategies as needed to stay on course.
- **Council website:** Launch a dedicated climate action webpage. Promote Council and local community group activities on social media.

Once adopted the implementation of actions will be reviewed by the Working Party on an ongoing basis until 2028.

An update from each meeting of the Working Party should be prepared for the Climate & Biodiversity Committee meetings on the following dates:

- 9th September 2025
- 13th January 2026

Constitution

Working Party rules fall under the remit of the Council's Standing Orders and will only be properly constituted once the following criteria have been met:

- a) The number of Councillors on the working party will be five.
- b) The Chair of the working party will be appointed at its initial meeting and must be a councillor unless otherwise agreed.
- c) A minimum of three Town Councillors must be in attendance at each meeting in order for it to be considered Quorate.
- d) With the authority of the Full Council the working party can co-opt members of the public who have specific knowledge/expertise on the subject to assist the group and/or relevant local users and stakeholders.
- e) An officer of the Town Council should be present at all scheduled meetings and will prepare minutes/notes to be presented at the next meeting of Full Council.
- f) All Members of Council are to be informed of any meetings of the working party; and are able to attend and ask for any relevant working party documentation.
- g) All meetings of the working party are to be fully accessible and open to members of the public, subject to any items of a confidential nature.
- h) Meetings will be held on an ad-hoc basis with the agreement of the Chair and Town Clerk (or her representative)
- i) The timing of the meeting shall be judged as appropriate by members of the working party.
- j) Any changes to these terms will be subject to confirmation by the Climate & Biodiversity Committee.

It should be noted that the working party, nor its members can make decisions on behalf of Witney Town Council and any recommendations made will be subject to approval by Climate & Biodiversity Committee and the Full Council.

Likewise, no monies or funding can be spent or committed by the working party nor its members without delegated authority or prior Policy, Governance & Finance Committee and Full Council endorsement.

CLIMATE ACTION WORKING PARTY



Agenda Item: Climate Fair

Meeting Date: Tuesday 22 July 2025

Contact Officer: Compliance and Environment Officer

The purpose of this report is to update the Climate Action Working Party on a proposed Climate Fair.

Background

The Climate & Biodiversity Committee meet on 12 May 2025 and agreed to several recommendations detailed in the report provided by the Compliance and Environment Officer. One of these recommendations is to investigate a Climate Roadshow event. The Communications and Community Engagement Officer also reported on facilitating a Climate Awareness event through the Community Engagement Report that was discussed at the Stronger Communities Committee meeting on 2 June 2025. Members were unanimous in agreement that the Town Council facilitate a Climate event to highlight the work of local organisations and Council bodies.

Current Situation

The details of the event are to be confirmed, and this will be part of the Climate Action Working Parties deliverables with support from officers.

Provisional dates (*subject to agreement*):

- Thursday, **25 September 2025** (Main Hall only)
- Thursday, **9 October 2025** (Main Hall & Gallery Room)
(*Provisional bookings made for both dates at the Corn Exchange – availability from 08:30 – 15:30 hrs*)

Key Discussion Points for Meeting:

- Confirm preferred date.
- Identify and invite relevant organisations and Council bodies. Advised that the Main Hall can accommodate 22 tables and the Gallery Room 10 tables for this type of event.
- Discuss potential themes and audience (e.g., homeowners, residents, businesses).
- Define success measures (e.g., number of attendees, partnerships formed).

Suggested Invitees (open for discussion and additional suggestions welcomed):

- **Local environmental groups** (e.g. Wild Oxfordshire, Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust (BBOWT), Wychwood Forest Trust)
- **Local sustainable businesses** – showcase & promotions
- **Town Council** (e.g., biodiversity enhancements at Witney Lake and Country Park, Tiny Forest, Community Orchards, community litter picking initiatives)
- **West Oxfordshire District Council** (e.g. recycling, composting, zero carbon toolkit, various grant availability, energy advice, biodiversity, Greenlight Hub)
- **Community repair/reuse organisations** (e.g. Witney shed, Apollos Clothing)
- **Transport and energy transition advocates** (e.g. Windrush Bike Project, Witney EV Car Club, Community Transport)
- **Allotment Society**
- **Community Fridge**
- **Witney Food Revolution**
- **Witney Edible Gardens**
- **Witney Woodland Volunteers**
- **Witney Eco Forum**
- **Witney Flood Group**
- **WASP (Witney Against Sewage Pollution)**
- **Low Carbon Hub** (e.g. Thermal Imaging Camera, Grant Awareness, energy advice, warmer homes)

Financial Implications

There is no specific budget for the event. A request for subsidised use of the Corn Exchange (£320) will be considered by The Policy, Governance & Finance Committee of Monday 21 July 2025.