

National Pride Working Party Committee Meeting of Witney Town Council



Thursday, 13th November, 2025 at 4.00 pm

To members of the National Pride Working Party Committee - R Crouch, G Meadows, A Mubin, J Robertshaw, 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. Election of Chair

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

2. Apologies for Absence

To consider apologies and reasons for absence.

Committee members who are unable to attend the meeting should notify the Committee Clerk derek.mackenzie@witney-tc.gov.uk **prior to the meeting**, stating the reason for absence.

Standing Order 30(d)(v) permits the appointment of substitute Councillors to a Committee whose role is to replace ordinary Councillors at a meeting of a Committee if ordinary Councillors of the Committee have confirmed to the Proper Officer **before** the meeting that they are unable to attend.

3. Terms of Reference (Pages 3 - 4)

To review and agree the Terms of Reference of the Working Party.

4. Celebrating Local & British Values (Pages 5 - 9)

To receive and consider the report of the Deputy Town Clerk.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'S. J. - 5'.

Town Clerk

Terms of Reference National Pride Working Party



Objective

The purpose of this Working Party is to redefine and strengthen how Witney Town Council promotes Witney's identity locally within Oxfordshire, nationally within England and Great Britain (UK), by exploring and celebrating the town's character, heritage, and cultural significance. The Working Party will:

1. Identify and articulate Witney's distinct identity; its history, values, traditions, and contemporary character and how these can be expressed.
2. Consider how to position Witney within wider contexts, highlighting its role and relevance at county (Oxfordshire), national (England and Great Britain) level.
3. Explore and develop initiatives that celebrate Britishness and national pride, ensuring that local expressions of identity contribute to and reflect broader cultural narratives.
4. Promote and celebrate culture in all its forms, including heritage, arts, community life, and civic pride, to foster a shared sense of belonging and recognition for all residents, irrespective of their background or ethnicity.
5. Encourage community engagement and collaboration, ensuring that the redefinition of Witney's identity reflects the voices and aspirations of all residents, businesses, and institutions.

Through this work, the Working Party aims to create a coherent and inspiring vision of Witney that celebrates its past, embraces its present, and projects a confident, distinctive inclusive identity for the future, locally, nationally, and internationally.

The scope of the Working Party's activities is defined by what the Town Council can lawfully facilitate and support within its available financial and staffing resources

Timeframe

An update from each meeting of the Working Party should be prepared for the Stronger Communities Committee meetings on the following dates and may include recommendations based on its work for ratification by the Council:

- 17 November 2025
- 26 January 2026
- 23 March 2026

Recommendations on the objectives above should be referred to the Council by 13th April 2026 unless otherwise agreed by recommendation of the Working Party and agreement from the Stronger Communities Committee.

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 six.
- 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 attend each meeting for it to be considered Quorate.
- d) With the authority of Full Council, the working party can co-opt members of the public who have specific knowledge/expertise on the subject and/or relevant local users and stakeholders to assist the group.
- 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 scheduled Council meeting.
- f) All Members of Council are to be informed of any meetings of the working party; and can 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 their 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 Stronger Communities 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 the Stronger Communities Committee and the Full Council.

Likewise, no 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.

NATIONAL PRIDE WORKING PARTY



Agenda Item: Celebrating Local & British Values

Meeting Date: Thursday, 13 November 2025

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk

The purpose of this report is to invite Members of the Working Party to consider ways to celebrate local and British values and to promote a shared sense of civic and national pride within the community.

Background

At the meeting of the Stronger Communities Committee held on 15 September, the Council resolved that a Working Party should be established to explore ideas for celebrating Britishness and national pride (*Minute No. SC521(2) refers*).

In their report to the Committee, the Communications & Community Engagement Officer advised that while Witney Town Council already celebrated national events and followed established protocols for ceremonial occasions, regularly making use of flags and lighting up of buildings, there was now a broader expectation to adopt more frequent flag-flying as a means of celebrating shared traditions, national pride, and occasions of commemoration or celebration.

At the meeting, the Committee also recommended that the town's coat of arms be flown year-round from the Town Hall, with the Union Flag reserved for designated national days and events to mark their particular significance.

Current Situation

This Working Party is asked to consider the following suggestions, presented to the above Committee which are below, and report back to the Council on thoughts and ideas for celebrating local/civic and national values in the wider context.

Local – Witney & Oxfordshire

Flag flying: Witney Coat of Arms

At the meeting on 15th September, the Stronger Communities Committee resolved to fly the town's coat of arms all year round (apart from other flag flying days).

The town flag features Witney's heraldic crest, and this demonstrates civic pride, a sense of belonging and reflects the town's history and heritage with references to glove making, the river Windrush, woollen mills etc as depicted on the heraldic crest below a Paschal lamb.



Flag flying: Oxfordshire Coat of Arms

There is also the opportunity to identify as part of the County of Oxfordshire. There is an official flag for Oxfordshire which is flown in Oxford on Historic County Flags Day, an annual celebration on July 23rd and St Frideswide's Day on October 18th. It has since 1949. Thame Town Council flies it for St Frideswide's Day. St Frideswide is the Patron Saint of Oxford.

Further suggestions for localised culture events:

- Best of English food event (suggested by a resident)
- Heritage Open Days themed around street names and heritage

National – England & Great Britain (UK)

Flag flying: Nationally

The Council flies the flag of St George on 23 April to mark St George's Day (also William Shakespeare's birthday), as well as in celebration of national teams and their sporting achievements.

The Council also flies the Union Flag (often referred to as the Union Jack, a term now widely accepted whether used at sea or on land) to represent Witney's place within Great Britain as a geographical island and within the United Kingdom as a political union that includes Northern Ireland. The Union Flag is flown to mark royal, civic, and national commemorations, remembrances, and anniversaries, in accordance with the designated flag-flying days published on the UK Government website: [Union Flag flying guidance for UK government buildings – GOV.U](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/union-flag-flying-guidance-for-uk-government-buildings)

The Working Party may like to consider facilitating larger events to mark the following within budget and resourcing capabilities:

- St George's Day – St George's Day Parade, best dressed window display, Corn Exchange Bar themed offers
- Armed Forces Day
- Battle of Britain Day – parade, flag raising ceremony, service, film screening

International

In addition, by former resolution, the Town Council flies flags on international days including, Commonwealth Day, World Refugee Day, and United Nations Day.

The Council's flag-flying dates are attached as **Appendix A** to this report.

Working Party Members are invited to discuss the above and make recommendations on these suggestions (or any others) to the Stronger Communities Committee for 2026-27 budget-setting on 17 November 2025.

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 – Celebrating British values can enhance equality by promoting shared fairness, respect, and participation. However, without inclusive engagement, there is a risk of exclusion or alienation for minority groups. The Council must ensure that “British values” are understood as inclusive civic values that belong to everyone who calls Witney and the UK their home.
- b) Crime & Disorder – If implemented responsibly, the celebration of British values is likely to have a positive impact on crime and disorder, strengthening civic pride and shared responsibility for safety. However, without inclusive planning and pro-active management, there is a minimal risk of social tension or antisocial behaviour.
- c) Environment & Climate Emergency – Celebrating British values in Witney can have both positive and negative environmental impacts, depending on how events are organised and the sustainability of their offering.

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.

- Celebrating British values in Witney carries low to moderate risks when planned inclusively and transparently. Challenges arise around perception, inclusion, and community cohesion. However, these risks can be effectively mitigated allowing the celebration to deliver strong social, educational, and civic benefits.

Social Value

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

Celebrating British values in Witney could create social value by promoting unity, understanding, and civic pride/participation. When inclusive and sensitive, they help

strengthen local identity, enhance wellbeing, and builds trust between communities. The key to maximising social value is in ensuring that any celebrations reflect the diversity, equality, and shared aspirations of residents.

Financial implications

- There are no financial implications at this point.
- Any additional events beyond the Council's current events calendar will need additional resources.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and:

1. Consider how Witney Town Council could enhance the celebration of British values and local/national civic pride in Witney.
2. Recommend a budget for any events in 2026 to the Stronger Communities Committee on 17 November 2025.
3. Agree the date of the next Working Party meeting if appropriate.

Witney Town Council

Flag Flying Calendar for Events, Campaigns & Commemorations

Date	Occasion	Flag/Lighting	Agreed	Donated/Dictated by
1 st Mon in March	Commonwealth Day	Commonwealth Flag Union Flag	n/a	Council UK Gov Buildings
9 April	His Majesty's Wedding Anniversary	Union Flag	n/a	UK Gov Buildings
23 April	St George's Day	St George's Flag Union Flag	n/a	Council UK Gov Buildings
6 May	Coronation Day	Union Flag	n/a	UK Gov Buildings
1 st Sat in June	Oxford Pride (Taken as Witney Pride weekend since 2021)	Rainbow Flag	C157 – Full Council - 08.04.19	P. Hicks
2nd Sat in June	Official celebration of His Majesty's birthday	Union Flag	n/a	UK Gov Buildings
20 June	World Refugee Day	World Refugee Flag	C126 – Full Council - 08.06.20	L. Ashbourne
21 June	Birthday, Prince of Wales	Union Flag	n/a	UK Gov Buildings
End of June	Armed Forces Day	Armed Forces Flag	n/a	
17 July	Birthday, Her Majesty The Queen	Union Flag	n/a	UK Gov Buildings
3 September	Merchant Navy Day	Red Ensign	C357 – Community Services - 17.07.18	B. Churchill
8 September	His Majesty, The kings Accession	Union Flag	n/a	UK Gov Buildings
15 September	Battle of Britain Day	Union Flag	SC521 Stronger Communities – 15.11.25	n/a
Remembrance Day	Second Sunday in November	Union Flag	n/a	UK Gov Buildings
11 November	Armistice Day	Union Flag	n/a	n/a
14 November	Birthday, His Majesty The King	Union Flag	n/a	UK Gov Buildings

The Union Flag will also be flown:

The day of the opening of a Session of the Houses of Parliament by His Majesty (see note 3)