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Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments
Committee Meeting of Witney Town Council

Monday, 8th June, 2026 at 6.00 pm

To members of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee - R Crouch, J Robertshaw, O Collins, G Doughty, J Treloar, R Smith, J Doughty and D Enright (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

In accordance with the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014, public meetings may be filmed, audio-recorded, or photographed. Anyone intending to record the proceedings is asked, as a courtesy, to inform the Committee Clerk before the meeting begins.

This meeting will be broadcast live via Microsoft Teams and recorded; by attending or participating, you consent to the recording and public sharing of audio and video, which may be made available for later viewing. For details on how personal data is handled, please see the Privacy Notice

To view the meeting please follow this link HCA Committee Meeting 08.06.2026

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 Cle 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 replace ordinary Councillors at a meeting of a Committee if ordinary Councillors of the Committee ha confirmed to the Proper Officer **before** the meeting that they are unable to attend.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

   Members are reminded to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests in any of the items under consideration at this meeting in accordance with the Town Council's code of conduct.

3. **Election of Vice-Chair**

   To elect a Vice-Chair of the Committee for the 2026/27 Municipal Year.

Date of Publication 2 June 2026

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

a) To receive and consider the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries and Allotments Committee held on 16 March 2026.

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

5. **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 pub participation, in line with Standing Order 25. Matters raised shall relate to the following items on t agenda.

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

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

7. **Finance Report** (Pages 10 - 24)

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

8. **Annual Resident's Survey** (Pages 25 - 30)

Public Halls

9. **Public Halls Report** (Pages 31 - 39)

To receive and consider the report of the Venue & Events Officer.

10. **Corn Exchange Business Report** (Pages 40 - 47)

To receive and consider the report of the Venue & Events Officer

11. **Public Halls Business Plan Review** (Pages 48 - 78)

To receive and consider the report of the Venue & Events Officer.

Cemeteries & Closed Churchyards

12. **Commemorative Plaque Request - Corporal John S. Christiansen** (Pages 79 - 81)

To receive and consider the report of the Administrative Assistant – Facilities.

13. **Cemetery Regulations Review** (Pages 82 - 99)

To receive the report of the Senior Administration Officer.

14. **BRAMM Cemetery of the Year Awards 2026** (Pages 100 - 102)

Consider entry into the BRAMM Cemetery of the Year Awards 2026 for the Council managed Tower Hill and Windrush cemeteries.

Town Clerk

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HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday, 16 March 2026

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

Present:

Councillor R Crouch (Chair)

Councillors:	J Robertshaw	J Doughty (In place of G Doughty)
	R Smith	J Treloar
	D Temple	J Aitman (In place of O Collins)
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
Others:	None.	

H133 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors O Collins and G Doughty, Councillors J Aitman and J Doughty attended as substitutes.

An apology was also received from Councillor A Bailey.

H134 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor J Robertshaw declared a pecuniary interest in agenda item 6 as he was an established author.

There were no other declarations from Members or Officers

H135 **MINUTES**

That, the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 19 January 2026 were received.

H38 – The Committee heard that at the meeting of Policy, Governance and Finance on 2 February a grant of £2,000 was awarded to Lakeside allotments for the installation of raised beds. (Minute: F82 PG&F 02.02.2026 Relates)

Resolved:

1. That, the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 19 January 2026 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.
2. That, the update be noted.

Cllr R Smith joined the meeting at 6:02pm.

H136 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

H137 **FINANCE REPORT**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) detailing income and expenditure for budgets which were the responsibility of the committee.

Members were pleased to receive details of the sales increases for the Café & Bar in the Corn Exchange and asked that their thanks for the hard work of the whole team be extended.

The Committee welcomed the news that the Responsible Financial Officer had moved quickly to secure the energy contract ahead of the increases due to the outbreak of hostilities in the Middle East.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the management accounts of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee for the period to 31 December 2025 be approved.

H138 **PUBLIC HALLS REPORT**

The Committee received a report from the Venue and Events Officer (VEO).

The VEO advised that an Art Display Policy had now been drafted. Members considered the policy and proposed an amendment to the honesty commission on sales feeling that 10% was more appropriate, in recognition of the requirement for the Council to charge VAT. The amendment was unanimously agreed.

The VEO also presented details of the proposed 1 in 200 Local Author scheme. He reported that a positive meeting had been held with the organisers and that the Corn Exchange would be the only venue in Witney to stock the books. A dedicated, clearly defined zoned area would be created for the display and the sale of books.

Members noted that there would be no cost to the Council for hosting the bookcase, that administration required from Corn Exchange staff would be minimal and that books would be rotated on a quarterly basis. It was further suggested that an Authors Day could be introduced, providing an opportunity for local authors to attend, promote the scheme, and engage with the community.

Members expressed enthusiasm for both the Art Policy and the 1 in 200 schemes, commenting that these initiatives would bring energy to the Corn Exchange.

With regard to proposed hearing loop improvements, Members agreed that a future-proofed scheme should be pursued and requested that all available grant and funding opportunities be fully explored to provide this equipment in all areas.

In response to a Member question, it was confirmed that there had been no uptake on the seating sponsorship scheme. Officers advised that they would continue to highlight the scheme.

Following discussion on the report the Town Clerk read a letter of appreciation that she had received from a visitor to the town which praised its facilities and appearance.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Local Art Display Policy be recommended for approval by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee, subject to the amendment introducing a 10% honesty commission and,
3. That, the 1 in 200 local author scheme be supported and progressed.

H139 **CORN EXCHANGE BUSINESS REPORT**

The Committee received the Corn Exchange Business Report from the Venue and Events Officer (VEO).

The VEO reported that January was traditionally a quieter month; however, events had been well attended overall. Cinema attendance was noted to be improving, and two quiz events had been held, both of which had received positive feedback.

Members were also advised of the two tribute music events had taken place. One featuring a returning performer, which had seen a 25% increase in ticket sales and a second event had performed at near full capacity. The VEO highlighted that much of this success had been attributable to the Venue and Events Assistant, particularly in relation to effective ticket promotion.

Venue usage figures were presented, including the addition of a new regular hirer. It was noted that the hirer had also transferred some existing sessions to the Corn Exchange, citing the high level of service provided by the caretaking and bookings staff as the reason.

In response to a question regarding cinema programming, the VEO advised that feel-good British films had proven most successful, based on audience feedback and it was further noted that the potential for private cinema hire by groups would be explored.

The Committee considered a proposal relating to schools' theatre provision. Members heard that children's theatre events at the Corn Exchange had previously taken place outside of term time however there was interest in introducing term-time performances, with three schools having expressed interest. The Corn Exchange offered a cost-effective alternative to trips to Oxford or further afield, where the cost of coach hire for schools made trips prohibitive.
The programme would be self-funding and therefore would not place any financial burden on the Council and events that events would potentially start from September.

The VEO also reported on discussions with West Oxfordshire Performing Arts Foundation (WOPAF) regarding their Speech and Drama event. Plans were being developed to host this

community arts event at the Corn Exchange, with the organisers having presented a well-prepared proposal.

In addition, the Deputy Town Clerk (DTC) advised that a meeting would be arranged with the WOPAF organisers, alongside Councillor Crouch as Chair of the HCA Committee, to discuss the allocation of the Council's £1,000 grant and how this would be used to support a bursary award.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and
2. That, Officers progress with exploring the idea of theatre programming for schools and,
3. That, the Deputy Town Clerk progress the discussions with WOPA in conjunction with the Chair.

H140 **PROPOSAL TO IMPROVE BIN STORAGE AREA AT THORNEY LEYS SHOPS**

The Committee considered the request from West Oxfordshire District Council regarding the use of Town Council land to site the bins.

Members heard that Officers were arranging a site visit to better understand the proposal and the requirements.

The Committee discussed the matter and gave agreement in principle to proceed with the siting of the bins, with delegated authority to Officers to progress and implement the necessary actions and due diligence.

Recommended:

1. That, the request be noted and,
2. That, it be delegated to Officers to proceed with the arrangements.

H141 **FRIENDS OF THE CEMETERIES**

The notes of the meeting of the Friend of the Cemeteries meeting held on 11 March 2026 were received by the Committee along with a verbal update from the Committee Clerk.

Members were pleased to hear of the meeting and that the date for the next meeting was already set and would be widely advertised to ensure a greater attendance.

Resolved:

That, the notes of the Friend of the Cemeteries meeting of 11 March 2026 be noted.

The meeting closed at: 6.43 pm

Chair

HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

Agenda Item: Terms of Reference

Meeting Date: Monday, 8th June 2026

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk

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

Background

At the Annual Council Meeting held on 6th May 2026, it was resolved that terms of reference for each Committee would be reviewed at each meeting in the current meeting cycle.

Current Situation

The current terms of reference for this Committee are:

a) To operate, maintain and control the Corn Exchange, Burwell Hall, Langdale Hall and Madley Park Hall in all matters relative to their use as public halls be it through direct management or via trusteeships;
b) The operation of such other buildings as the Council may from time to time acquire if so instructed;
c) To operate and maintain the Cemeteries, burial responsibilities, and associated duties, consequential to Statutory or Council requirements, together with the War Memorials;
d) To carry out the Council's obligations with regard to the Closed Churchyards of St Mary's and Holy Trinity;
e) To oversee the management of Hailey Road, Lakeside, Newland and Windrush Place Allotments whilst leased to the Witney Allotment Association;
f) To oversee the development and management of the Corn Exchange (including the 1863 café bar) as a community hub and arts centre in line with the Council's vision and long-term business plan for the venue;
g) Within all its decision making ensure that the green environment and biodiversity of public open spaces is protected and enhanced in line with the Council's Climate Emergency aspirations;
h) To oversee any development and investment in Council-owned public halls, and the supporting infrastructure, ensuring they meet the needs of the community, remain safe and compliant;
i) The Membership of the Committee shall consist of 6 Members plus the Town Mayor and the Leader of the Council ex officio with voting rights;
j) The quorum of the Committee shall be 4 Members.

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

Corporate Strategy

The Council's Strategic Plan 2025–29 sets out the Council's long-term priorities and direction, supporting its mission to 'make Witney a great place to live, work and visit.' This report contributes to the delivery of the following strategic pillar of the plan:

1. A Forward Looking Town Council

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 direct implications although the Council should consider its obligations under Equality legislation.
b) Biodiversity – no direct implications.
c) Crime & Disorder - no direct implications.
d) Environment & Climate Emergency - see text in the report.

Risk

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

Without clear terms of reference, Council committees risk role confusion, weak accountability, legal challenges, inefficient decision-making, and poor alignment with Council objectives. Clear and regularly reviewed terms of reference are essential for accountable, transparent, and effective committee operations.

Social Value

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

Financial implications

- The work of the Committee is funded from pre-defined budgets.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and;

1. Review the terms of reference; and
2. Consider any changes to the terms of reference; and
3. Recommend such changes be made to Full Council on 13th July 2026.

HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

Agenda Item: Finance Report

Meeting Date: 8 June 2026

Contact Officer: Responsible Financial Officer

Should Members have any queries about this report advance notice would be appreciated, in writing, by 9am on the day of the meeting to allow for a full response at the meeting.

The purpose of this report is to present to the Committee the draft management accounts for the services delivered by this Committee during the financial year 2025-26.

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 2025 to 31 March 2026.

Current Situation

The draft management accounts being presented are those for 2025-26. The cost centres for which this committee has responsibility are:

Cost centre	Service
103	Bars
104	Corn Exchange
105	Burwell Hall
301	Tower Hill Cemetery
302	Windrush Cemetery
303	Closed churchyards – St Mary's/ Holy Trinity
305	Allotments

The draft management accounts being presented are those for 2025-26. Steady progress is being made on closing down the 2025-26 accounts ahead of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return being drafted for approval at the Council meeting on 22 June. However before this date there are likely to be further adjustments made which will affect the final management accounts for the cost centres which are the responsibility of this committee. Therefore Members may notice some differences to some of the figures when they are presented to the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee later in the cycle.

There is further work planned in relation to adjustments to earmarked reserve movements. Adjustments have been undertaken so the financial accounts are in accordance with AGAR requirements. In addition note that where there are budget sums in the 2025-26 year which

are to be transferred to an earmarked reserve (ERM) to meet future commitments/liabilities this will not show as an expenditure against the Committee but instead a transfer between the general fund and the EMR.

A full commentary on the budget lines was undertaken as part of the budget process. Members may wish to note the following:

1. There will be some codes where the year-to-date figure in 2025-26 now exceeds the projected figure for the year. This is to be expected as the projections were the best estimates made in September/ October and clearly matters move on. Equally there will be other codes where not all the projected budgets will be required. Virements (transfers) between budgets are made where they can be justified but overall there are no budget lines which cause concern.

2. In relation to the 1863 Café/bar sales were revised upwards from £182,638 to £210,900 during the budget cycle. Sales to 31 March 2026 now show at £213,433 (this being 117% of original budget and 101% of revised budget). At the same time the net cost of the facility was revised downwards from £28,556 to £24,047 but the draft final figure is now £12,552. This is reflected also in the reduction of the running costs of the halls service overall, from £234,330 (in 2024-25) to £179,961 (in 2025-26).

3. The Council has agreed a delegation to the Town Clerk/CEO to opt-to-tax the Burwell Hall (cost centre 105) if it was considered necessary in terms of input VAT recovery. However following further review this is not considered necessary at this point in relation to current capital works. The position is due for review ahead of the next meeting of this committee and will consider planned projects in relation to the Burwell Hall. Members will also recall that if an option-to-tax is made then it was agreed that the output tax would be absorbed by the Council so that the additional 20% cost would not be passed on to customers, the vast majority of which are not VAT-registered organisations.

4. Members are reminded of the change in relation to the treatment of property budgets. Previously where a property was leased out this was represented in the accounts against the site where the property was located.

   For this Committee this impacts on the Cemetery Lodge rent and insurance recharge, previously shown under the Tower Hill cemetery budget (301). The rationale for the change is that the previous treatment inadvertently had the impact of distorting revenue budgets such as cc301 because in this case none of the expenditure in this cost centre related to this property. In governance terms it should also be noted that whilst clearly spending committees have an interest, property matters in relation to leases etc are primarily a matter for the Policy, Governance and Finance Committee (PGF). Consequently a new cost centre – 501 was created under PGF to consolidate

all rented property income and expenditure with the exception of the Langdale Hall and Madley Park Hall, which have their own cost centres which are also included under PGF.

Current year budgets were vired from the old budget lines to the new cost centre 501 which has the impact of ensuring that like for like comparisons may more readily be made between 2025-26 and 2026-27.

5. During 2025-26 recharges for the works team time were made to the Closed Churchyards in order to give a more accurate cost to this maintenance work. Previously this time was costed to cc402 (Community Infrastructure).

6. Energy costs are significant part of this Committee's expenditure. These are likely to rise as s result of the war in the Middle East. However there will be no adverse impact on the Council's energy budgets for 2026-27 insofar as this Committee's services are concerned as your officers placed a contract with the Council's current energy providers on 2 March 2026 based on contract sums offered prior to the start of the war. However the volatility of the international situation will cause significant inflationary pressures in other cost lines as the situation unfolds.

7. During 2025-26 the Committee's services were delivered within agreed budgets. The original budget was revised down from £515,765 to £449,348 during the budget cycle and draft net expenditure to 31 March 2026 was £428,124.

Corporate Strategy

The Council's Strategic Plan 2025–29 sets out the Council's long-term priorities and direction, supporting its mission to 'make Witney a great place to live, work and visit.' This report contributes to the delivery of the following strategic pillar of the plan:

1. A Forward Looking Town Council

However as all services require financing and their efficient delivery relies on robust controls, strong financial management and constant monitoring, of which this report is an integral part, this report may be said to contribute to all of the strategic pillars.

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 consider 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 no 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 to note the report and further

1. To approve the report and the draft management accounts of the Committee's services to for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

Witney Town Council 2025-26

Annual Budget - By Committee (Actual YTD Month 12)

Note: Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee - 8th June 2026 - draft management accounts for 2025-26

		2024-25 Final		2025-26 Draft				Estimate 2026-27		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments										
103	**BAR/ CAFE**									
1000	C/EX. 1863 - SALES ALCOHOL	34,736	28,915	37,500	34,976	37,750	0	41,075	0	0
1001	C/EX. 1863 SALES - FOOD	28,660	36,511	35,700	46,433	44,375	0	48,280	0	0
1002	C/EX. 1863 BAR HIRE CHARGE	1,430	1,107	1,055	805	750	0	1,095	0	0
1003	C/EX. 1863 SALES - SOFT DRINKS	7,064	9,211	9,030	10,893	12,450	0	13,550	0	0
1009	CORN EX.1863 CAFE- HOT DRINKS	74,800	99,374	96,000	114,841	112,100	0	121,975	0	0
1014	EVENTS INCOME	0	217	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1090	BURWELL HALL BAR - ALL DRINKS	6,600	1,413	3,200	5,367	3,325	0	3,600	0	0
1091	BURWELL HALL BAR HIRE CHARGE	150	-100	153	-50	150	0	159	0	0
1099	MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	0	0	0	166	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Income	153,440	176,648	182,638	213,433	210,900	0	229,734	0	0
3000	BAR PURCHASES - DRINK	21,000	18,056	22,875	20,523	21,675	0	23,575	0	0
3001	BAR PURCHASES - FOOD	17,196	20,970	21,420	24,888	26,625	0	28,975	0	0
3009	CAFE PURCHASES - HOT BEVERAGES	19,448	23,558	24,000	25,682	28,025	0	30,500	0	0
3010	PROMOTIONS	0	2,668	4,450	5,143	6,100	0	6,400	0	0
	Direct Expenditure	57,644	65,252	72,745	76,236	82,425	0	89,450	0	0
4001	SALARIES	105,307	113,561	107,000	116,238	117,490	0	124,745	0	0
4002	ER'S NIC	4,566	6,704	9,900	10,071	10,185	0	10,600	0	0
4003	ER'S SUPERANN	5,124	6,587	7,000	9,301	11,275	0	14,850	0	0
4007	PROTECTIVE CLOTHING	750	21	500	0	250	0	250	0	0
4016	CLEANING MATERIALS	100	73	100	236	160	0	160	0	0
4032	PUBLICITY	0	15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

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		2024-25 Final		2025-26 Draft				Estimate 2026-27		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
4038	OTHER MAINTENANCE	500	0	500	451	250	0	250	0	0
4042	EQUIPMENT INC. FURNITURE	5,000	6,018	5,000	5,791	5,500	0	4,000	0	0
4059	OTHER PROF FEES	700	600	700	600	600	0	600	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	1,000	309	1,000	615	300	0	300	0	0
4892	C/S STAFF RCHG	4,608	6,578	5,339	5,001	5,208	0	5,079	0	0
4893	C/S O'HEAD RCHG	1,304	1,612	1,410	1,444	1,304	0	1,454	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	128,959	142,077	138,449	149,748	152,522	0	162,288	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(33,163)	(30,681)	(28,556)	(12,552)	(24,047)		(22,004)		
104	**CORN EXCHANGE**									
1007	CORN EXCHNGE LETTING	57,314	64,006	68,000	61,826	62,000	0	68,000	0	0
1014	EVENTS INCOME	13,609	7,942	13,881	19,314	16,200	0	18,000	0	0
1015	TEA DANCE INCOME	2,400	2,743	2,400	3,091	3,300	0	3,300	0	0
1016	FUNCTION REFRESHMENT	0	0	0	50	50	0	0	0	0
1017	CORN EXCHANGE WEDDING LETTING	1,353	2,962	1,400	246	1,050	0	2,200	0	0
1052	EXPENSES RECOVERED	3,479	0	750	1,471	1,729	0	650	0	0
1099	MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	0	0	0	74	0	0	0	0	0
	Total Income	78,155	77,654	86,431	86,072	84,329	0	92,150	0	0
4001	SALARIES	78,384	75,017	65,544	75,882	75,560	0	82,632	0	0
4002	ER'S NIC	5,927	6,365	7,342	8,541	8,022	0	9,533	0	0
4003	ER'S SUPERANN	12,971	11,837	9,811	9,824	11,388	0	15,575	0	0
4007	PROTECTIVE CLOTHING	300	154	300	96	150	0	200	0	0
4008	TRAINING	1,000	3,462	1,020	1,339	1,020	0	1,020	0	0
4011	RATES	1,244	1,282	3,167	3,219	3,219	0	4,043	0	0

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Note: Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee - 8th June 2026 - draft management accounts for 2025-26

		2024-25 Final		2025-26 Draft				Estimate 2026-27		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
4012	WATER RATES	2,700	6,559	5,075	2,196	4,920	0	5,665	0	0
4014	ELECTRICITY	16,792	13,662	12,000	13,269	13,895	0	14,500	0	0
4015	GAS	8,987	9,339	8,000	5,297	8,500	0	8,900	0	0
4016	CLEANING MATERIALS	2,000	2,655	2,040	2,825	2,800	0	2,800	0	0
4017	CONTRACT CLEAN/WASTE	3,735	1,560	3,735	2,537	2,200	0	2,700	0	0
4018	PHOTOCOPIER COSTS	50	166	190	112	130	0	170	0	0
4021	TELEPHONE/FAX	960	1,697	1,260	1,420	1,550	0	1,600	0	0
4025	INSURANCE	1,126	930	950	977	977	0	1,350	0	0
4028	I.T.	1,400	1,698	1,500	2,087	2,100	0	2,100	0	0
4030	RECRUITMENT ADVT'G	1,000	0	1,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
4032	PUBLICITY	3,000	1,035	3,000	1,704	2,000	0	2,000	0	0
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	8,000	12,175	12,000	8,956	11,000	0	12,000	0	0
4038	OTHER MAINTENANCE	4,000	7,086	4,000	6,002	4,000	0	4,000	0	0
4042	EQUIPMENT INC. FURNITURE	2,000	2,239	2,000	998	1,000	0	1,500	0	0
4043	SMALL TOOLS & EQUIPT	150	34	150	231	150	0	150	0	0
4045	LICENCES	2,500	2,590	2,900	2,628	2,700	0	2,800	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	373	364	370	473	473	0	490	0	0
4064	HEALTH & SAFETY	100	420	100	121	100	0	100	0	0
4141	EVENTS	10,000	10,036	10,000	18,816	14,400	0	15,500	0	0
4142	TEA DANCE COSTS	6,535	5,709	6,700	4,482	6,000	0	6,300	0	0
4144	FILM CLUB	4,481	3,551	4,600	3,067	1,850	0	1,940	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	3,856	5,684	5,000	4,674	7,298	0	5,572	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	354	567	326	324	535	0	329	0	0
4892	C/S STAFF RCHG	9,215	13,159	10,677	10,002	10,416	0	10,158	0	0
4893	C/S O'HEAD RCHG	2,607	3,101	2,820	2,884	2,608	0	2,908	0	0

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Note: Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee - 8th June 2026 - draft management accounts for 2025-26

		2024-25 Final		2025-26 Draft				Estimate 2026-27		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	703	1,141	711	783	1,101	0	826	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	196,450	205,275	188,288	195,764	202,062	0	219,361	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(118,295)	(127,621)	(101,857)	(109,692)	(117,733)		(127,211)		
105	**BURWELL HALL**									
1005	BURWELL HALL LETTING	30,575	28,681	31,200	29,431	29,000	0	33,000	0	0
1052	EXPENSES RECOVERED	2,189	0	750	829	950	0	350	0	0
	Total Income	32,764	28,681	31,950	30,260	29,950	0	33,350	0	0
4001	SALARIES	52,256	59,252	46,804	42,271	42,294	0	47,959	0	0
4002	ER'S NIC	3,951	5,106	4,925	4,952	4,767	0	5,651	0	0
4003	ER'S SUPERANN	8,647	8,785	5,744	6,963	7,432	0	8,875	0	0
4007	PROTECTIVE CLOTHING	300	0	300	0	150	0	150	0	0
4008	TRAINING	500	0	500	13	0	0	250	0	0
4011	RATES	839	865	2,150	2,156	2,156	0	2,708	0	0
4012	WATER RATES	420	909	825	589	650	0	680	0	0
4014	ELECTRICITY	3,362	2,987	2,500	2,224	2,800	0	2,900	0	0
4015	GAS	8,567	2,322	4,146	1,595	3,250	0	3,400	0	0
4016	CLEANING MATERIALS	2,000	2,213	2,050	2,351	2,000	0	2,000	0	0
4017	CONTRACT CLEAN/WASTE	1,225	3,281	2,800	3,905	3,600	0	3,725	0	0
4021	TELEPHONE/FAX	268	235	260	402	400	0	285	0	0
4025	INSURANCE	592	437	445	459	459	0	625	0	0
4028	I.T.	1,000	1,494	1,000	1,543	1,550	0	1,550	0	0
4032	PUBLICITY	1,000	330	1,000	0	500	0	500	0	0
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	5,000	4,576	5,000	2,603	2,500	0	5,000	0	0

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Note: Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee - 8th June 2026 - draft management accounts for 2025-26

		2024-25 Final		2025-26 Draft				Estimate 2026-27		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
4038	OTHER MAINTENANCE	2,100	1,885	1,825	2,351	1,000	0	1,000	0	0
4042	EQUIPMENT INC. FURNITURE	1,500	378	1,500	749	1,500	0	1,500	0	0
4045	LICENCES	477	475	485	512	512	0	530	0	0
4048	ENG.INSPEC.(VATABLE)	340	1,790	1,825	335	335	0	350	0	0
4064	HEALTH & SAFETY	0	498	0	452	404	0	0	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	54	200	0	100	0	100	0	0
4142	TEA DANCE COSTS	0	113	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	19,324	2,020	5,000	4,427	8,768	0	5,572	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	1,773	159	326	346	643	0	329	0	0
4892	C/S STAFF RCHG	4,608	4,456	5,339	4,999	5,204	0	5,075	0	0
4893	C/S O'HEAD RCHG	1,304	1,549	1,410	1,444	1,303	0	1,453	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	3,524	478	711	335	1,323	0	826	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	124,877	106,648	99,070	87,977	95,600	0	102,993	0	0
	105 Net Income over Expenditure	-92,113	-77,967	-67,120	-57,717	-65,650	0	-69,643	0	0
6000	plus Transfer from EMR	0	1,940	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(92,113)	(76,027)	(67,120)	(57,717)	(65,650)		(69,643)		
301	**TOWER HILL CEMETERY**									
1050	RENT RECEIVED	13,260	13,620	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1060	INSURANCE RECOVERED	194	262	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1099	MISCELLANEOUS INCOME	0	183	0	31	31	0	0	0	0
1100	BURIAL FEES	9,283	9,284	8,850	10,554	10,175	0	9,965	0	0
1101	GRANT OF RIGHTS	2,828	1,060	1,200	935	1,200	0	1,040	0	0
1102	INTERMENT OF ASHES	12,324	17,596	13,000	9,747	11,750	0	14,600	0	0
1105	MEMORIAL FEES	5,692	5,771	6,500	4,392	5,400	0	5,600	0	0

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Note: Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee - 8th June 2026 - draft management accounts for 2025-26

		2024-25 Final		2025-26 Draft				Estimate 2026-27		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
1106	MEMORIAL PLAQUES	323	594	500	419	500	0	520	0	0
1108	CHAPEL FEES	384	508	450	402	400	0	450	0	0
	Total Income	44,288	48,876	30,500	26,479	29,456	0	32,175	0	0
4001	SALARIES	14,639	14,621	15,602	13,965	13,818	0	15,548	0	0
4002	ER'S NIC	1,193	1,306	1,915	1,691	1,738	0	1,894	0	0
4003	ER'S SUPERANN	3,177	3,173	3,385	3,030	3,000	0	3,076	0	0
4011	RATES	4,046	3,792	3,850	3,792	3,792	0	3,936	0	0
4012	WATER RATES	365	1,689	850	609	1,700	0	1,800	0	0
4014	ELECTRICITY	1,118	894	900	517	900	0	900	0	0
4016	CLEANING MATERIALS	30	0	30	0	30	0	30	0	0
4017	CONTRACT CLEAN/WASTE	1,000	1,325	1,500	1,250	1,600	0	1,700	0	0
4025	INSURANCE	435	0	445	274	274	0	375	0	0
4028	I.T.	0	0	0	309	309	0	0	0	0
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	6,000	7,466	6,000	7,167	7,250	0	7,000	0	0
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	0	0	0	25	0	0	0	0	0
4038	OTHER MAINTENANCE	0	52	0	22	0	0	0	0	0
4040	ARBORICULTURE	0	0	0	1,588	0	0	0	0	0
4041	EQUIPMENT HIRE	0	0	400	200	400	0	400	0	0
4042	EQUIPMENT INC. FURNITURE	100	178	100	0	50	0	100	0	0
4059	OTHER PROF FEES	0	0	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
4064	HEALTH & SAFETY	100	0	102	69	100	0	100	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	195	200	151	200	0	200	0	0
4110	LETTINGS - NO CHARGE/SUBSID'D	200	0	200	0	0	0	0	0	0
4350	PLAQUES PURCHASED	291	326	605	387	400	0	400	0	0

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Note: Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee - 8th June 2026 - draft management accounts for 2025-26

		2024-25 Final		2025-26 Draft				Estimate 2026-27		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
4355	MEMORIAL MAINTENANCE	2,500	1,400	2,000	1,845	1,000	0	1,800	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	80,770	78,495	110,000	83,158	83,506	0	122,580	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	10,846	8,710	7,164	5,582	6,126	0	7,243	0	0
4892	C/S STAFF RCHG	13,823	13,369	16,017	15,005	15,626	0	15,239	0	0
4893	C/S O'HEAD RCHG	3,911	4,650	4,230	4,326	3,913	0	4,363	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	13,092	16,714	15,643	14,042	12,603	0	18,171	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	157,636	158,356	191,238	159,005	158,335	0	206,855	0	0
	301 Net Income over Expenditure	-113,348	-109,480	-160,738	-132,526	-128,879	0	-174,680	0	0
6000	plus Transfer from EMR	0	1,427	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(113,348)	(108,053)	(160,738)	(132,526)	(128,879)		(174,680)		
302	**WINDRUSH CEMETERY**									
1100	BURIAL FEES	22,338	19,481	22,785	23,530	22,785	0	23,651	0	0
1101	GRANT OF RIGHTS	27,091	21,261	27,633	27,972	30,000	0	28,683	0	0
1102	INTERMENT OF ASHES	5,288	3,642	5,394	5,522	5,100	0	5,599	0	0
1105	MEMORIAL FEES	7,448	6,028	7,597	6,096	5,600	0	7,886	0	0
1106	MEMORIAL PLAQUES	0	212	0	195	93	0	0	0	0
	Total Income	62,165	50,624	63,409	63,314	63,578	0	65,819	0	0
4001	SALARIES	14,639	14,621	14,932	13,965	13,818	0	15,548	0	0
4002	ER'S NIC	1,193	1,306	1,217	1,691	1,738	0	1,894	0	0
4003	ER'S SUPERANN	3,177	3,173	3,241	3,030	3,000	0	3,076	0	0
4011	RATES	8,519	7,984	8,689	7,984	7,984	0	8,287	0	0
4012	WATER RATES	237	318	242	329	340	0	360	0	0
4014	ELECTRICITY	3,532	2,426	2,750	2,000	2,000	0	2,100	0	0

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Note: Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee - 8th June 2026 - draft management accounts for 2025-26

		2024-25 Final		2025-26 Draft				Estimate 2026-27		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
4016	CLEANING MATERIALS	30	0	31	0	30	0	30	0	0
4017	CONTRACT CLEAN/WASTE	777	1,157	793	4,941	2,600	0	2,700	0	0
4021	TELEPHONE/FAX	268	0	273	0	0	0	0	0	0
4025	INSURANCE	127	131	130	138	138	0	175	0	0
4028	I.T.	0	0	0	309	309	0	0	0	0
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	2,000	9,595	2,040	1,249	1,600	50	2,000	0	0
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	500	966	510	120	510	0	530	0	0
4038	OTHER MAINTENANCE	1,500	2,092	1,530	720	650	0	1,000	0	0
4042	EQUIPMENT INC. FURNITURE	1,500	54	1,530	600	1,000	0	1,000	0	0
4043	SMALL TOOLS & EQUIPT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4059	OTHER PROF FEES	1,000	0	1,020	0	0	0	1,059	0	0
4064	HEALTH & SAFETY	100	0	102	48	0	0	106	0	0
4099	MISCELLANEOUS	0	216	0	13	0	0	0	0	0
4350	PLAQUES PURCHASED	100	103	102	264	225	0	235	0	0
4355	MEMORIAL MAINTENANCE	2,000	1,085	1,790	592	1,000	0	1,300	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	138,044	67,030	110,000	78,009	67,702	0	122,580	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	16,101	6,583	7,164	5,582	4,966	0	7,243	0	0
4892	C/S STAFF RCHG	13,823	13,369	16,017	15,006	15,628	0	15,241	0	0
4893	C/S O'HEAD RCHG	3,911	4,650	4,230	4,325	3,913	0	4,363	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	23,539	15,125	15,643	11,996	10,218	0	18,171	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	236,617	151,984	193,976	152,909	139,369	50	208,998	0	0
	302 Net Income over Expenditure	-174,452	-101,361	-130,567	-89,595	-75,791	-50	-143,179	0	0
6000	plus Transfer from EMR	0	6,215	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(174,452)	(95,146)	(130,567)	(89,595)	(75,791)		(143,179)		

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Note: Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee - 8th June 2026 - draft management accounts for 2025-26

		2024-25 Final		2025-26 Draft				Estimate 2026-27		
		Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
303	**CLOSED CH'YARDS ST MARYS/HOLY**									
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	16,000	34,588	11,000	448	5,500	0	10,000	0	0
4040	ARBORICULTURE	1,000	1,000	1,000	0	500	0	1,000	0	0
4059	OTHER PROF FEES	1,000	0	1,000	0	500	0	1,000	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	0	4,668	0	7,802	7,995	0	9,801	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	0	971	0	594	586	0	579	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	0	579	0	1,270	1,207	0	1,453	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	18,000	41,805	13,000	10,115	16,288	0	23,833	0	0
6000	plus Transfer from EMR	0	31,060	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(18,000)	(10,745)	(13,000)	(10,115)	(16,288)		(23,833)		
305	**ALLOTMENTS**									
4013	RENT PAID	125	-125	125	0	125	0	125	0	0
4036	PROPERTY MAINTENANCE	500	1,866	1,600	0	800	0	1,600	0	0
4037	GROUNDS MAINTENANCE	500	0	500	240	500	0	500	0	0
4038	OTHER MAINTENANCE	0	0	0	2,529	2,500	871	0	0	0
4040	ARBORICULTURE	0	900	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4495	TFR FROM EARMARKED R	0	0	0	0	-500	0	0	0	0
4888	O/S STAFF RECHARGE	1,168	10,528	5,500	6,715	10,335	0	6,129	0	0
4890	O/S O'HEAD RECHARGE	107	832	358	515	758	0	362	0	0
4892	C/S STAFF RCHG	3,456	3,347	4,004	3,751	3,904	0	3,807	0	0
4893	C/S O'HEAD RCHG	978	1,163	1,058	1,082	978	0	1,090	0	0
4899	DEPOT REALLOCATION	213	2,119	782	1,095	1,560	0	909	0	0
	Overhead Expenditure	7,047	20,630	13,927	15,927	20,960	871	14,522	0	0

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	2024-25 Final		2025-26 Draft				Estimate 2026-27		
	Budget	Actual	Total	Actual YTD	Projected	Committed	Agreed	EMR	Carried Forward
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(7,047)	(20,630)	(13,927)	(15,927)	(20,960)		(14,522)		
Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments - Income	370,812	382,482	394,928	419,557	418,213	0	453,228	0	0
Expenditure	927,230	892,027	910,693	847,681	867,561	921	1,028,300	0	0
Net Income over Expenditure	-556,418	-509,546	-515,765	-428,124	-449,348	-921	-575,072	0	0
plus Transfer from EMR	0	40,642	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(556,418)	(468,904)	(515,765)	(428,124)	(449,348)		(575,072)		
Total Budget Income	370,812	382,482	394,928	419,557	418,213	0	453,228	0	0
Expenditure	927,230	892,027	910,693	847,681	867,561	921	1,028,300	0	0
Net Income over Expenditure	-556,418	-509,546	-515,765	-428,124	-449,348	-921	-575,072	0	0
plus Transfer from EMR	0	40,642	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Movement to/(from) Gen Reserve	(556,418)	(468,904)	(515,765)	(428,124)	(449,348)		(575,072)		

HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

Agenda Item: Annual Resident's Survey 2026

Meeting Date: Monday, 8th June 2026

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk
(Administrative Support Assistant – Communities & Engagement)

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

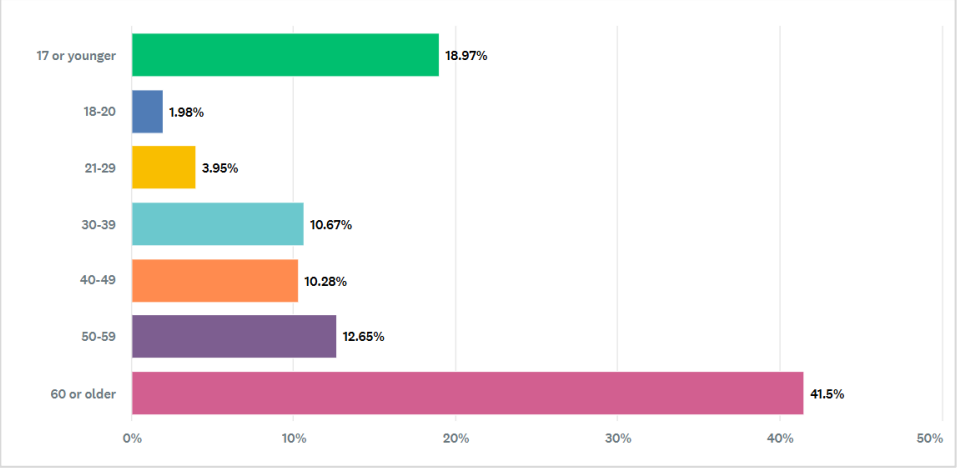
The survey was sent to every household in the post and was promoted online via social media and in the local secondary schools; 272 responses were received in total.

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

Responses from younger residents were noticeably lower this year, with participation from school-aged respondents (18 and under) decreasing from around 186 responses in 2024 and 122 responses in 2025 to 48 responses in 2026.

Respondent Age Demographics



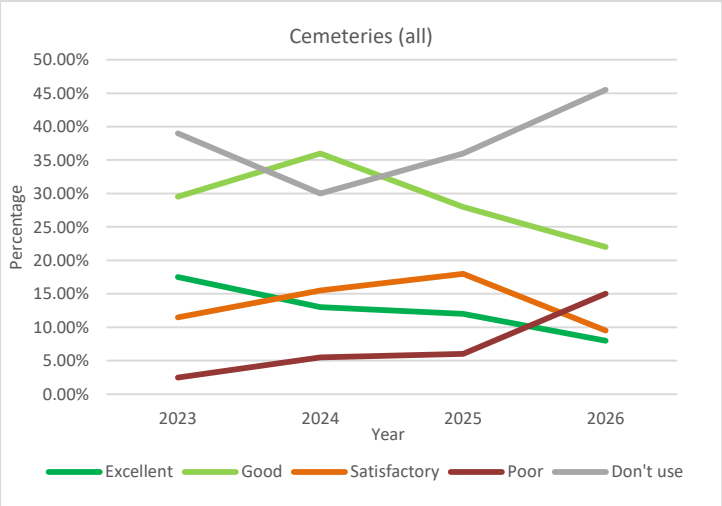
The following table shows how the services scored overall in the survey (with percentages rounded).

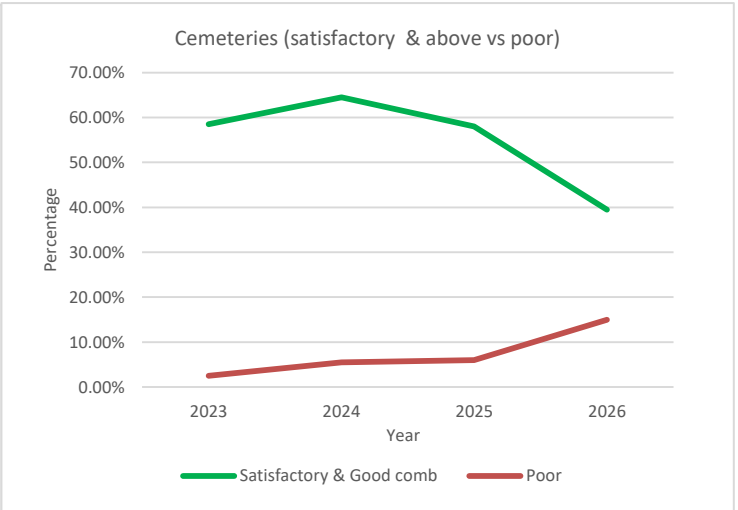
As a comparison, the figures/percentages from the previous three years surveys are included.

Service	Year	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	% comb	Poor	Don't use	Resp
Cemeteries	2026	8% (21)	22% (60)	9.5% (25)	**39.50%**	**15%** (41)	45.5% (123)	270
	2025	12% (40)	28% (95)	18% (61)	**58.00%**	**6%** (21)	36% (124)	341
	2024	13% (57)	36% (156)	15.5% (67)	**64.50%**	**5.5%** (24)	30% (129)	433
	2023	17.5% (37)	29.5% (63)	11.5% (25)	**58.50%**	**2.5%** (6)	39% (83)	214
Public Halls Corn Exchange	2026	21% (57)	24% (57)	11% (29)	**56.00%**	**25%** (67)	19.5% (52)	269
	2025	22.5% (77)	29% (97)	16% (55)	**67.50%**	**3.5%** (12)	29% (99)	340
	2024	18% (77)	31% (135)	16% (69)	**65.00%**	**4.5%** (20)	30.5% (133)	434
	2023	30% (63)	37% (78)	11% (23)	**78.00%**	**2%** (4)	20.5% (43)	211
Public Halls Burwell Hall	2026	4% (11)	10.5% (28)	10% (27)	**24.50%**	**8.5%** (23)	67% (179)	268
	2025	6% (20)	16% (54)	13% (45)	**35.00%**	**4.5%** (15)	60.5% (207)	341
	2024	5.5% (23)	22% (96)	13.5% (58)	**41.00%**	**3.5%** (15)	55.5% (242)	434
	2023	7.5% (16)	20.5% (43)	10.5% (22)	**38.50%**	**4%** (8)	57.5% (122)	211

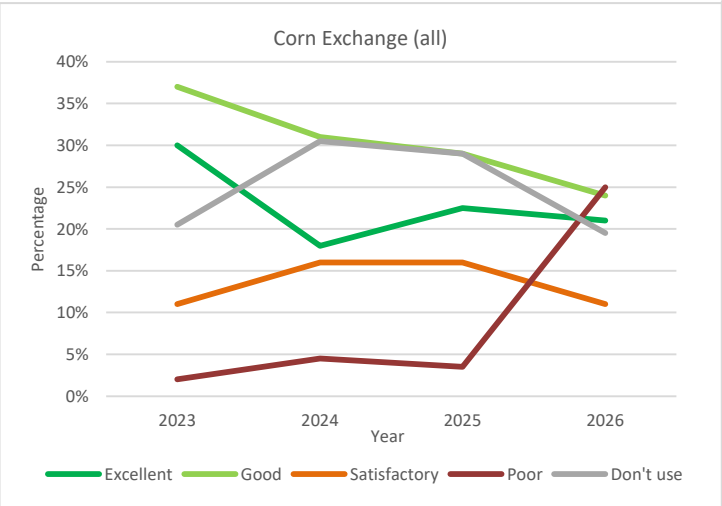
The following graphs track performance over the previous four years for these services and show the levels are broadly the same in the previous three years.

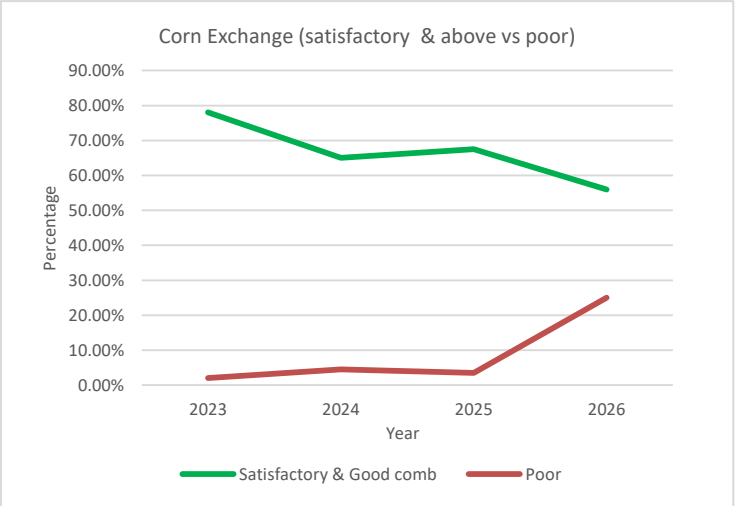
Cemeteries infographics



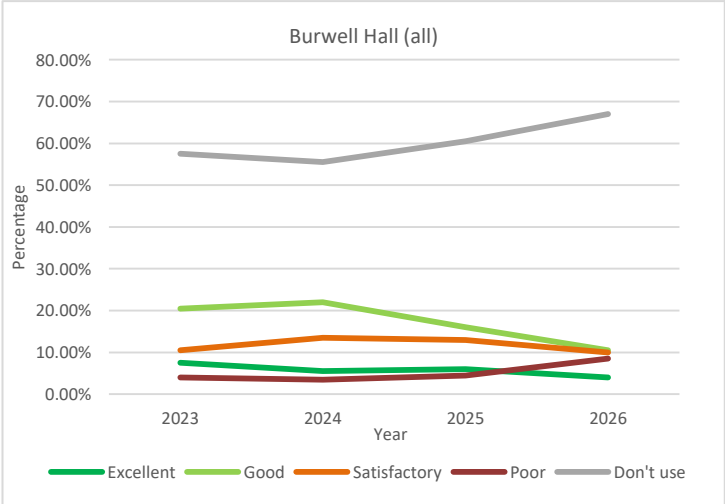


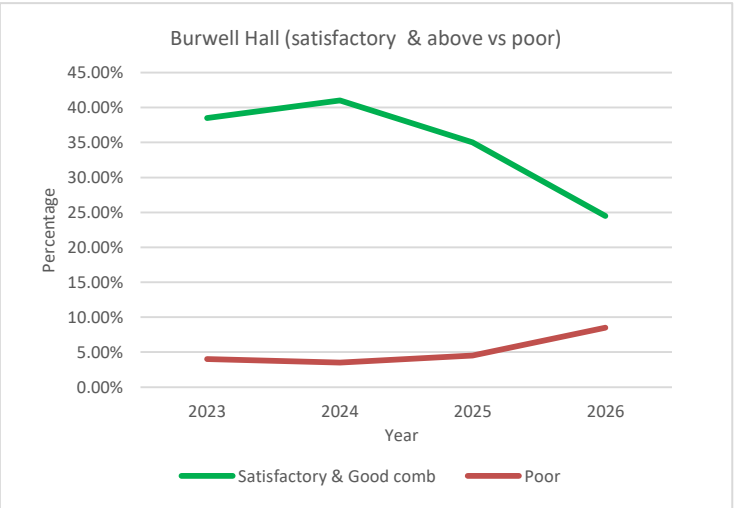
Corn Exchange infographics





Burwell Hall infographics





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

- “A rich variety of events for all ages. Loved the VJ Day & Christmas afternoon tea. The Corn Exchange is a gem.”

- “Good to see more events being held.”

- “Corn Exchange an expensive luxury.”

- “I had poor service in the cafe having to wait a long time for a very average coffee - plenty of better cafes in witney.”

- “I love the Corn Exchange and it would be great to get more touring events.”

- “Excellent Music in the Square 2025. Really hope this is repeated for 2026 please :-)”

- “Corn Exchange is much better than it used to be.”

- “I would like to see less money spent on the Corn Exchange for the benefit of a few and more on trimming the verges & making the town look nice again, for the benefit of everyone. I know this neglect is often down to OCC or WODC doing less than they did before, but there is nothing to stop you doing additional verge mowing, as other parishes do elsewhere in the county.”

- “I wish the selection of films was better at the Corn Exchange and the ticket prices are cheaper (films such as anniversarys and art house films)”

- “Health & Safety issue at the Corn Exchange. No handrails to access seating area for cinema or live entertainment”

- “Burwell Hall Car Park, the nearby playing field and surrounding areas are dirty and litter strewn and consisting mainly of food debris and general rubbish largely emanating from the nearby outlets and thereby causing vermin problems all of which does not make the hall a venue for Witney to be proud of.”

- “I use the Corn Exchange quite extensively for various events and coffee I think it's a great example of Town Council in action.”

- “I rated Burwell Hall because of the general mess and litter in the car park which often blows on to the field. The litter mainly originates from the adjacent shops and no one appears to want to take any responsibility for it. It has become an ongoing health hazard as well as being an eyesore. It must be very off-putting for anyone using the hall or fields”

Analysis

Corn Exchange

Results for the Corn Exchange show a decrease in satisfactory & above ratings compared to the previous three years. However, positive comments still outweigh negative ones, with residents praising the variety of events, Music in the Square, and the venue's wider community role. Negative feedback mainly concerns ticket pricing, film selection, accessibility to seating, and perceptions of spending priorities.

Burwell Hall

The survey results for Burwell Hall show a gradual decline in satisfactory & above ratings, while the number of residents selecting "don't use" remains high. Comments focus almost entirely on litter, cleanliness, and the condition of the car park and surrounding areas, with concerns also raised about vermin and the impact on the hall's reputation. It may be beneficial for officers to explore promoting the hall more widely for community use.

Cemeteries

The cemeteries show a reduction in satisfactory & above ratings compared to previous years, alongside an increase in poor responses. While no direct cemetery-specific comments were received this year, the overall trend suggests residents may have growing concerns around standards or awareness of the service. The high percentage of "don't use" responses also remains consistent.

Corporate Strategy

The Council's Strategic Plan 2025–29 sets out the Council's long-term priorities and direction, supporting its mission to 'make Witney a great place to live, work and visit.' This report contributes to the delivery of the following strategic pillar of the plan:

2. An Engaged & Supported Community

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 survey contains feedback on the cemeteries and closed churchyards, the latter of which are maintained as Eco Churchyards at their request. 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.

HALLS CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

Agenda Item: Public Halls Report

Meeting Date: Monday, 8th June 2026

Contact Officer: Venue & Events Officer

The purpose of this report is to provide operational updates regarding the management of Witney Town Council's venues and seek recommendations for operational actions.

Background

Current Situation

Corn Exchange Light Up Request – Long Covid Awareness

A request has been received from a resident, to light up the Corn Exchange in Teal on 15th March 2027 for Long Covid Awareness Day. The resident noted that both they and their daughter experience Long Covid symptoms which meet the criteria for ME/CFS and requested that the Council consider supporting the awareness campaign in a similar way to National ME/CFS Week.

Lighting the Corn Exchange involves minimal additional staffing workload, as the venue lighting equipment is straightforward to operate. As there is currently a HCA Committee meeting scheduled in the Gallery Room on 15th March, the building could be lit by a caretaker following the close of the meeting, should Members approve the request.

Members may also wish to consider whether approving this request would be consistent with the Council's existing approach to commemorative lighting requests.

Project Update: 1 in 200 Local Author Scheme

Officers are pleased to have rolled out the 1 in 200 Local Author Scheme within the 1863 Café at The Corn Exchange, as agreed at the previous committee meeting in March.

A selection of books was chosen from their catalogue and are prominently displayed and advertised within the café.

Sales begun within the first few days of the display and will be reviewed quarterly with 1 in 200, so stock can be adjusted strategically to maximise sales.

Project Update: 1863 Local Art Display

The 1863 Local Art Display initiative is now underway, with information and application details available via the Corn Exchange website. Officers are actively promoting the scheme to local art groups and organisations in order to encourage interest and increase applications.

Corn Exchange Wedding Packages Proposal

Officers propose the creation of a tiered wedding package system to be applied at The Corn Exchange, to greater reflect the current position of the venue and support the promotion of the Corn Exchange as a wedding venue.

The public halls hire charges contains a Weddings section. These charges only reflect use of the room(s), and don't outline the extra services often required to deliver a successful wedding at the venue. Currently, the venue is available to hire on a room only basis, exclusive basis for 2 hours, or exclusively for a full day.

Each wedding is unique and the demand and cost on the venue to deliver them varies greatly on a case-by case basis. Officers propose a re-structure of the "Exclusive Hire" basis to reflect the variation in requirements for each individual wedding and allowing couples to structure their hire to suit their needs. The room only hire for a ceremony could remain in place as an affordable solution for couples who are just looking for a licensed room to have their ceremony – it's low impact on the venues operations and requires minimal additional staffing.

Exclusive Hire Re-Structure
The potential impact on trading at the 1863 Café must be carefully considered when assessing the viability of a **two-hour exclusive-use** wedding ceremony hire. In practice, a two-hour

exclusive booking around midday would require the café to cease trading for at least half a day.

As Saturdays are both the most popular day for weddings and the busiest trading day for the café, it is important that the venue does not experience a significant loss of revenue as a result of accepting exclusive-use bookings. Analysis of average Saturday takings since April 2026 shows that income generated between 8:30am and 1:00pm is £518, compared with £275 between 1:00pm and 5:00pm. Furthermore, when comparing trading periods of 8:30am–12:00pm and 12:00pm–5:00pm, the difference in average revenue narrows to only £7, highlighting the importance of the 12:00pm–1:00pm trading period in determining the most appropriate time to close the café for exclusive venue hire.

Considering the 2-hour exclusive rate is set at £530.50, that figure should be broken down into three sections when determining potential revenue loss – Gallery Room hire, Main Hall Hire, Cafe trade. The combined cost of group 2 bookings for 2 hours in both the main hall and gallery room on a Saturday is £234.25, leaving £296.25 to cover loss of cafe trade. While average café takings during the affected period may exceed this figure, it is important to recognise that café operations incur associated staffing and stock costs that are not applicable to a ceremony-only booking. Taking these factors into account, officers consider the proposed hire fee to provide a reasonable level of compensation for lost trading income, provided the café can continue operating until 1:00pm.

To mitigate the financial impact on the venue, officers propose that exclusive-use ceremony bookings are only made available from 1:30pm onwards as standard. This would enable the café to operate as normal until 1:00pm and retain its most valuable trading period.

Officers also propose that a "by negotiation" clause be available for additional or amended hours, allowing officers to calculate an appropriate fee, based on the above rate and cafe revenue considerations, to allow the hirer to adjust these timings to suit them whilst making sure the venue's revenue is accounted for. Having this clause will also mitigate the risk of losing potential hirers based on an inability to cater to their timings.

Licensing Note: Additionally, The Main Hall ceremony hire needs to be removed from the options, as this is not under the current licence (and wasn't under the previous license either). Officers have noted this oversight; however, ceremonies have not taken place in the main hall keeping us in line with our licence.

The **Full Proposal of Wedding Packages** is outlined below:

Ceremony Only Options:
The Gallery Room- 2-hours (not-exclusive hire): £310.00 (no change)
The Gallery Room – 2-hours exclusive use of venue from 1:30pm onwards: £530.50
Ceremony & Reception Options

Package 1: £1318 (Basic)
Reflects **current charge for "Exclusive Hire"** and includes the basics required to deliver the booking.

- Use of the venue for one day (09:00am earliest access – 00:00 latest exit)
- Set up and pack down to be completed by the hirer on same day
- Supervisor to co-ordinate with registrars for ceremony
- Furniture set up upon arrival
- PA system for ceremony music
- 2 consultations (not including viewing) 6 months before, 1 month before (guidance)
- Bar included on minimum spend policy (custom quote per event)

Package 2: £2300 (Elevated)

- The above PLUS:
- PA set up including mics
- Use of stage (if desired)
- X1 Additional consultation (3 total)
- Included set up & pack down time (4 hrs either side)
  - 4pm – 8pm day before
  - 9am - 1pm day after

Package 3: £3000 (Premium)
All the above PLUS

- Venue co-ordinator throughout the day (pre-ceremony – reception in swing). This role will:
- Organise and manage wedding day timeline (based on consultations)
- Co-ordinate with suppliers' arrival, set up etc.
- Co-ordinate guest arrivals and seating
- Keep the day running on schedule
- Cue music, speeches, cake cutting and first dance
- Hand over the remainder of the evening to bar shift leader
- Additional Staff to perform turn venue turn around (meal to reception)
- Additional consultation (4 total) - The 4th consultation will finalise wedding day timeline for co-ordinator to manage.
- Full Decor Hire Included and Set Up

Tailored Approach
Couples can opt for the basic package with optional extras priced below for a "tailored package".

Equipment and Services:

- Stage Built: £100.00
- 2x Wireless Mic: (includes set up) £30.00
- Extra Consultation: £50.00
- Venue Co-ordinator (includes one extra consultation): £350.00
- Set up / Pack Down Time (must be evening before / morning after): Group 2 4-hour Session Fee
  - Main Hall £325.50 per session
  - Gallery Room £108.50 per session
  -

Decor:

- White/off white chair covers
    - £3 per chair cover with sash orders over 30
    - Just covers £2.5
- Tablecloths
    - Rounds £8 each
    - Square £8 each
    - Long £9 each
    - Stretch £7 each
      + £1 per table for satin table runner
- Red Carpet £10

Hearing Loop Project Update

A budget of £6,000 was allocated to provide hearing assistance systems across the Corn Exchange Main Hall, Gallery Room and a third identified venue area. This budget was based on the assumption that traditional perimeter induction loop systems would be suitable for all locations, and an estimated quote that officers received.

Subsequent research and site investigations have identified that perimeter loop systems are not suitable for the Council's venues for several reasons. As a result, alternative assistive listening technologies have been investigated. These solutions are significantly more expensive than originally anticipated, resulting in the need for members to consider an increased project budget.

Corn Exchange Main Hall
The perimeter loop system installed in the Main Hall in 2016 has not been in use. Officers explored the possibility of recommissioning the existing system; however, this has been found to be impractical and unsuitable for the following reasons:

- Interference caused by the metal structure associated with the recently installed tiered seating.
- The distance between the loop and users seated in the upper tiers would result in inconsistent audio quality across the venue.
- Increasing signal strength to improve coverage in upper seating areas would adversely affect users seated closer to the loop.
- The flexible nature of the hall's layout and seating arrangements means a fixed perimeter loop would not provide suitable coverage for all event configurations.

Gallery Room
A perimeter loop system is also considered unsuitable for the Gallery Room. The room is frequently used for confidential meetings and discussions, and perimeter loop systems can create audio spill beyond the intended listening area, presenting potential confidentiality concerns.

Alternative Solutions

Officers have summarised findings relating to three alternative solutions and are in contact with several new audio-visual suppliers for quotations.

Criteria	System 1	System 2	System 3
Indicative Cost	Approximately £23,000 for all three areas, based on one quotation received, others pending	Lower than Supplier 1, subject to detailed quotations and potential additional transmitter requirements. Quotations pending.	Approximately £17,000 for all three areas. Based on one quotation received, others pending
Confidentiality	Good. Audio is only accessible to users who connect to the broadcast.	Excellent. Signals remain within the room and do not pass through walls.	Moderate. Radio signals can extend beyond the room or building unless managed carefully.
Flexibility	Excellent. Suitable for multiple room layouts, seating arrangements and venue uses.	Good. Suitable for most spaces but requires clear line of sight between transmitter and receiver.	Excellent. Works effectively across different room layouts and seating configurations.
User Experience	Excellent. Users can connect directly through compatible hearing aids, earbuds or smartphones. Receivers can be provided where required.	Good. Users require a dedicated receiver and neck loop or headset.	Good. Users require a dedicated receiver and neck loop or headset.
Future-Proofing	Excellent. Emerging industry standard and increasingly supported by hearing aid and consumer device manufacturers.	Moderate. Established technology but with limited development compared to newer solutions.	Moderate. Established technology with proven reliability but less likely to become the long-term industry standard.
Ongoing Maintenance	Low. Limited equipment to manage once installed, aside from any loan receivers.	Moderate. Requires management, charging, cleaning and replacement of receiver units.	Moderate to High. Requires management, charging, cleaning, storage and replacement of receiver units.
Suitability for Corn Exchange Main Hall	Excellent. Supports large audiences and flexible seating	Good, although additional transmitters may be required to avoid	Excellent. Provides reliable coverage throughout the venue

	arrangements without coverage issues.	blind spots caused by room layout and seating.	regardless of seating configuration.
Suitability for Gallery Room	Good. Suitable for meeting spaces while maintaining controlled access to audio.	Excellent. Particularly suitable for confidential meetings due to contained signal transmission.	Moderate. Potential signal overspill may present confidentiality concerns.

Funding and Next Steps
Officers are exploring external funding opportunities to support the project and have commenced work on an application to the Arts Council England Project Grant programme. However, external funding cannot be guaranteed.

Members are therefore asked to consider whether an increased capital budget should be allocated to enable the Council to proceed with the procurement of an appropriate assistive listening solution and improve accessibility across its venues. Alternatively, the Council may be able to consider purchasing for areas at different times.

A further report will be brought forward once funding opportunities have been fully explored and detailed quotations have been received for all viable options.

Additional Point: To be compliant with the 2010 equality legislation, the council should also consider an assistive listening solution in the admin office to ensure that members of the public with hearing loss are able to access the office for enquires. A similar solution should also be arranged for 1863 Café and Bar counter, allowing customers with hearing loss to order with greater confidence.

A portable Induction loop would be suitable for both above, costing around £210 each. This should be considered when reviewing the budget for the overall project.

Fire Safety Audit

The Corn Exchange received a Fire Safety Audit on Friday 22nd May. Officers are pleased that the outcome of the audit is that the venue is of adequate safety, with a couple of suggested improvements which are being actioned.

Off the back of useful discussions with the fire safety inspector, officers have reviewed the hiring conditions and made the below additions/amendments (in red) relating to fire safety.

1. *Any electrical equipment used within the hall by hirers must have proof of Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) in the last 12 months and be used in an appropriate and safe manner. Extension leads and adapters are not permitted. Untested electrical equipment (without valid PAT labels) is not permitted.*
2. *You must always keep every designated exit route free from any other obstruction. You must not conceal viewing, or obstructing access to, any fire-fighting equipment.*
3. *Disabled persons should, where required, have a designated carer, support person, or responsible adult available to assist them to evacuate the building in the event of fire alarm activation or other emergency. Hirers must ensure that appropriate*

arrangements are considered in advance for any attendee who may require assistance to evacuate safely, including the implementation of a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) where appropriate. A PEEP template can be provided if required. An evacuation chair is available at the Corn Exchange venue for use by trained personnel where necessary.

4. *Be aware of the fire assembly points.*
5. *The lift at the Corn Exchange must not be used in the event of a fire.*
6. *A member of the halls team will liaise with the lead hirer, prior to their booking commencing, to explain any evacuation procedure.*

E-Scooters, E-Bikes and Lithium Battery Powered Devices

7. *In the interests of fire safety, hirers and all persons attending the premises must not bring into, use, store, or charge within the building any electric scooter (e-scooter), electric bicycle (e-bike) or any other electrically powered personal transport device using lithium-ion batteries, unless expressly authorised in writing by the Council.*
8. *This restriction does not apply to mobility scooters or other mobility aids used by disabled persons or those with mobility impairments. However, such equipment must not obstruct corridors, doorways, circulation areas, or designated fire escape routes at any time.*
9. *The Council reserves the right to require the immediate removal or repositioning of any device where it is considered to present a fire or safety risk. Failure to comply with this condition may result in the termination of the hire agreement without refund and may affect future bookings.*
   Hirers are responsible for ensuring that all performers and attendees comply with this condition at all times.

Health and Safety

10. ***No naked flames,*** *including but not limited to; candles, tea lights, fireworks, pyrotechnics, flammable liquids/gases, aerosols, portable gas cookers, portable heaters, or paraffin burners are not permitted. If any of the above are found to be in use the damage deposit may be retained in full to cover increase liability.*
11. *The use of smoke machines or haze machines is not permitted.*
12. *Avoid bringing combustible decorations that spread fire rapidly, such as polystyrene or untreated fabric bunting.*

Corporate Strategy

The Council's Strategic Plan 2025–29 sets out the Council's long-term priorities and direction, supporting its mission to 'make Witney a great place to live, work and visit.' This report contributes to the delivery of the following strategic pillar of the plan:

1. A Forward Looking Town Council

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 – covered in the report above re: hearing loops
b) Biodiversity – no direct impact
c) Crime & Disorder – no direct impact
d) Environment & Climate Emergency – no direct impact.

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.

By approving the actions on health and safety, it meets and ensures compliance and best practice.

Social Value

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

Financial implications

- Can be seen in the report above.
  - Income generation from wedding packages
  - Additional funding for hearing loops at the Council's Public Halls. Approx. £11,000 and £18,000 above the allocated budget. Grant funding being sought.

Recommendations

Member are invited to note the report and

1. Consider the light up request relating to Long Covid Awareness in 2027 (and beyond).
2. Consider the proposed re-structure of wedding charges and introduction of tiered packages.
3. Consider the funding requirements for the installation of Hearing Loops at Corn Exchange and Burwell Hall as well as the additional requirement in the Admin Office and 1863 Café.
4. Consider the updated hiring conditions, as a result of findings from the recent Fire Safety Audit.

HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Agenda Item: Public Halls Business Report

Meeting Date: Monday, 16th March 2026

Contact Officer: Venue & Events Officer

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the events that have taken place since the last committee meeting and report on forthcoming events in the diary. The report also provides an update on the recent business of 1863 Café & Bar.

Background

Witney Town Council aims to provide an affordable, sustainable, inclusive community arts facility that is valued and supported by the residents of Witney and West Oxfordshire.

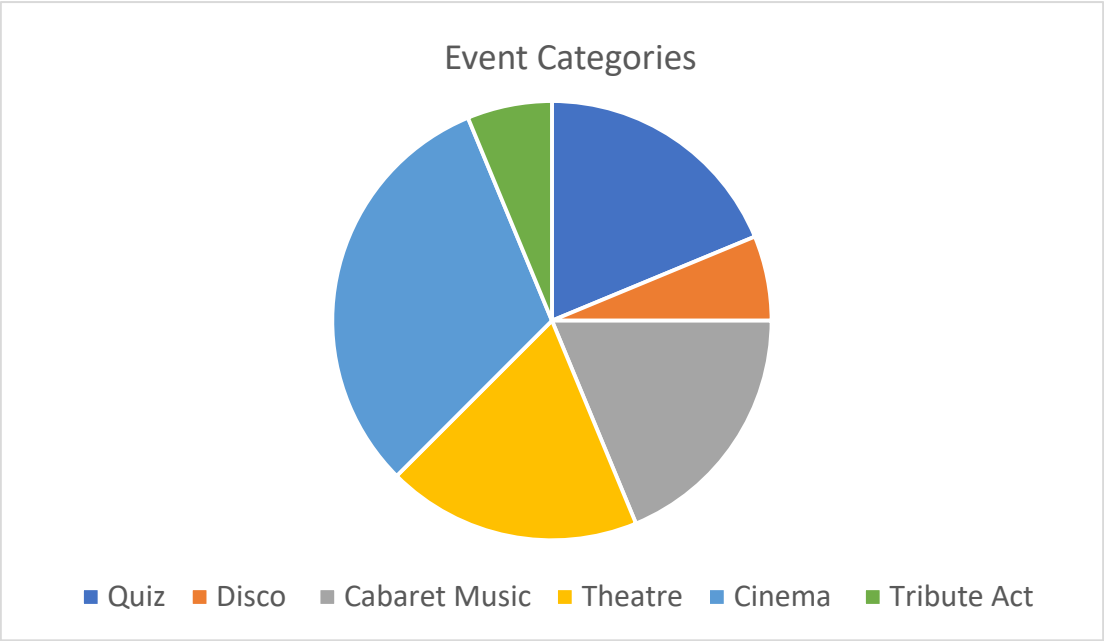
The Council seeks to make the Corn Exchange accessible to the whole community by encouraging participation and offering a diverse programme of music, arts and cultural events. In addition, the Council will provide a professional, well-maintained venue available to hire for private events such as parties, weddings, and conferences.

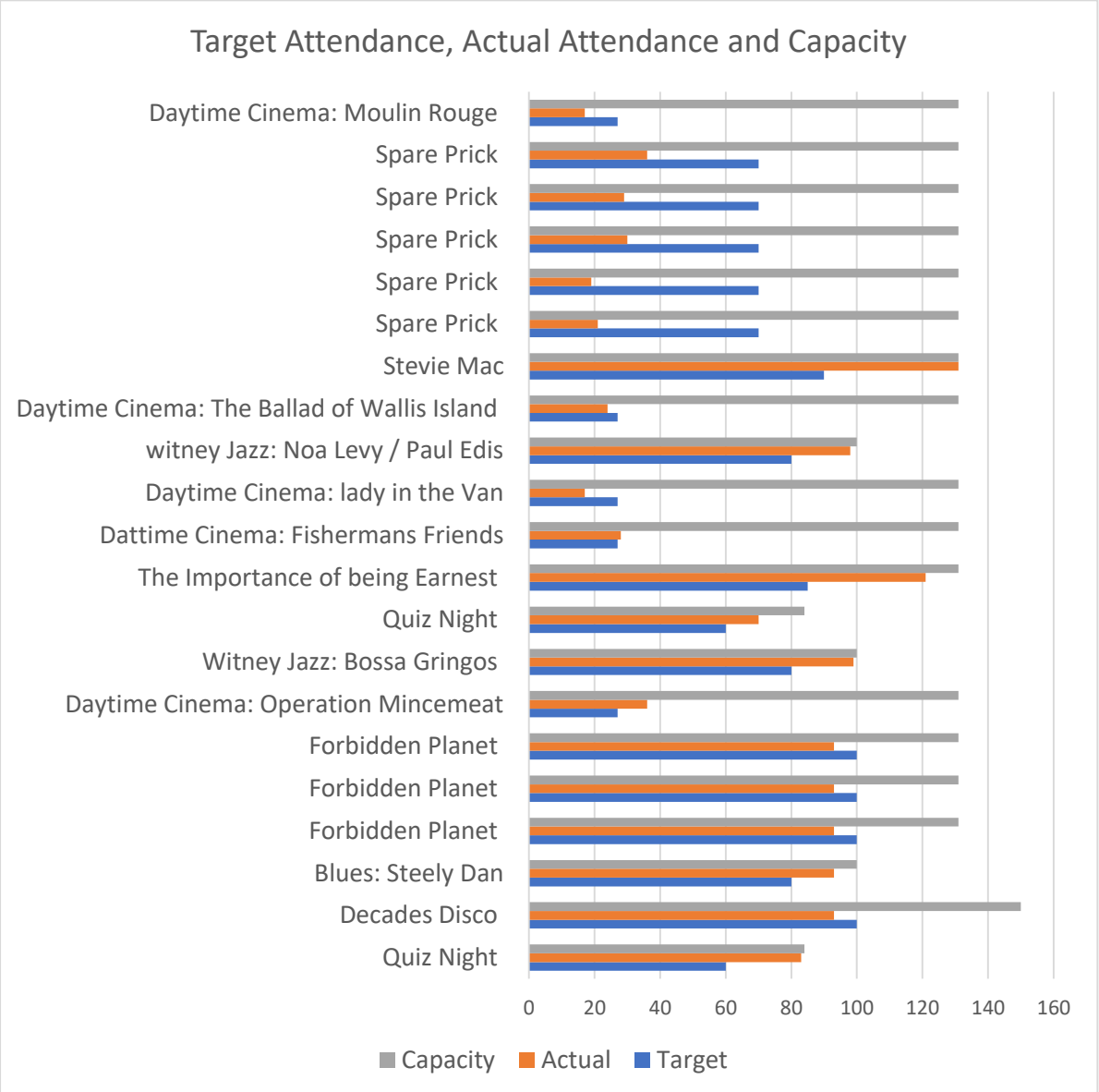
Current Situation

The Venue & Events team have been working hard to deliver a range of in-house and third-party events.

The graphs below show the number of ticketed events hosted by category, since the last report in January 2026, and attendance figures (where available) for each event at The Corn Exchange since the last report, alongside a target attendance to show how each event is performing in line with officers' goals and expectations. Each event capacity has also been included, upon request from members.

Officers schedule less events in January as it is typically a quieter month due to finances being tight for a lot of people after Christmas. However, officers are pleased to report successful attendances at recent events as shown in the table below.


Event Categories
Quiz
Disco
Cabaret Music
Theatre
Cinema
Tribute Act


Target Attendance, Actual Attendance and Capacity
Daytime Cinema: Moulin Rouge
Spare Prick
Spare Prick
Spare Prick
Spare Prick
Spare Prick
Stevie Mac
Daytime Cinema: The Ballad of Wallis Island
witney Jazz: Noa Levy / Paul Edis
Daytime Cinema: lady in the Van
Dattime Cinema: Fishermans Friends
The Importance of being Earnest
Quiz Night
Witney Jazz: Bossa Gringos
Daytime Cinema: Operation Mincemeat
Forbidden Planet
Forbidden Planet
Forbidden Planet
Blues: Steely Dan
Decades Disco
Quiz Night
0
20
40
60
80
100
120
140
160
Capacity
Actual
Target

Recent events

Quiz Nights
Quiz Nights sold out in March, while April was almost sold out. Attendance in May was slightly lower, likely due to the heatwave and the Bank Holiday weekend; however, feedback from attendees remained positive and bar takings continued to be strong.

The quiz continues to be a cost-effective and popular event. Adrian, our Quiz Master, has been booked to resume quizzes following the summer break, commencing on 19 September and running through to the end of the year.

Decades Disco
The Decades Disco experienced slower-than-expected ticket sales in the lead-up to the event; however, strong walk-in attendance on the night resulted in the event reaching approximately 75% capacity. Audience feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many attendees commenting on their enjoyment of the evening and expressing a desire for similar events to be held in the future.

Witney Jazz & Blues
Witney Jazz & Blues events continue to be popular and are gaining increasing traction. The programme has attracted notable guests, including Paul Jones, who will be visiting in July, bringing significant attention to the Corn Exchange.

These regular events are now a staple of the Corn Exchange calendar, and tickets are frequently requested during Box Office sessions.

Cinema
Recent screenings have included:

- Operation Mincemeat
- Fisherman's Friends
- The Lady in the Van
- The Ballad of Wallis Island
- Moulin Rouge

The daytime cinema programme continues to grow and develop. Both *Fisherman's Friends* and *Operation Mincemeat* generated a profit. The introduction of trailers before screenings has created opportunities to promote upcoming events to a captive audience.

Audiences continue to enjoy the film selection and regularly provide suggestions for future screenings. Officers are currently considering reintroducing evening screenings.

The Summer Holiday Cinema programme will launch weekly screenings of children's films under the theme *Childhood Classics*, featuring five films from five different decades over five consecutive weeks.

Feedback from some customers suggests that later afternoon screenings would be preferable, as lunchtime screenings can be difficult to attend. This feedback will be considered for implementation following the summer break.

Stevie Mac
The Stevie Mac show sold out several weeks in advance. Audiences thoroughly enjoyed the performance and left positive feedback on social media regarding the quality of the lighting and sound. This has subsequently attracted interest from future hirers.

The band has expressed a strong interest in returning and is looking to book another performance in 2027.

Spare Prick
Attendance for *Spare Prick* was unfortunately lower than anticipated. We believe this may have been due to the extended run from Tuesday to Saturday, which is unusual for our venue. Despite the lower attendance, the hirer remains keen to return and is planning another run of performances in 2027.

Rebecca Poole
The Rebecca Poole event was also under-attended. This may have been due to limited marketing reach both online and in person.

The Importance of Being Earnest
The Importance of Being Earnest sold extremely well and was close to a sell-out performance. The hirer is looking to return either at the end of 2026 or during 2027.

The Corn Exchange stands out as the only venue on the group's Oxfordshire tour capable of providing professional lighting and sound services, which continues to be a significant advantage.

There was a minor sound issue during the performance; however, this was managed effectively by the group. The cause was subsequently traced to a faulty cable, which has since been removed from service.

Return to the Forbidden Planet
Buttercross Theatre Productions' spring production was *Return to the Forbidden Planet*. The show was well attended throughout its run.

The production featured a large-scale professional scaffolding set, creating a tiered performance space. This unique staging provided a significant visual impact and offered audiences an experience unlike anything previously seen at the Corn Exchange.

The production also demonstrated the flexibility and adaptability of the Main Hall as a theatre performance space.

Private Events and Venue Hire
The Corn Exchange and Burwell Hall have hosted a variety of private events during this period, including regular group meetings, private parties, presentations, and other community activities.

In early May, we hosted a wedding ceremony in the Gallery Room, followed by a small cocktail reception in the Café. The couple were extremely pleased with the service provided and left positive feedback for both the venue and bar staff, both on the day and afterwards.

Upcoming Events:
The Corn Exchange will continue to host the regular repeated in-house and third-party events below:

- Witney Jazz – First Friday Every Month
- Tea Dance – Every Wednesday
- Multiple Classes hosted by Buttercross Theatre – Every Week
- Witney Speakers Club – Every other Wednesday
- Specsavers Coffee Morning – 1st Thursday of the month
- West Oxfordshire Art Society Lectures – Once a month
- St Mary's Art Group – Every Monday
- White Feather Spiritualist Church – Once a month

<u>Upcoming Public Ticketed Events:</u>

- 5th June Witney Jazz Jonny Kerry Quartet
- 13th June Yellow Submarine's Got Talent Chairty Show Case
- 16th June Daytime Cinema Finding Your Feet
- 19th June Quiz Night
- 26th June Foodbank Charity Fundraiser Gala
- 30th June Daytime Cinema Notting Hill
- 3rd July Music Box Events Paul Jones & Friends
- 14th July Daytime Cinema H is for Hawk
- 17th – 18th July Buttercross Theatre Productions Hadestown Teen Edition
- 23rd July Music Box events Julia Titus' Speakasy Band
- 28th July – 25th August Summer Holiday Cinema:
  - 28th July Chitty Chitty Bang Bang
  - 4th August Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory
  - 11th August The Little Mermaid
  - 18th August The Lion King
  - 25th August Monsters Inc.
- 30th July The Tale of Peter Rabbit and Benjamin Bunny
- 7th August Witney Jazz Ben Porter's Tribute to Porter and Gershwin
- 21st August Candy Girls Cabaret Night
- 28th August Teddy Bears Picnic

Venue Usage

As well as hosting public events, The Corn Exchange and Burwell Hall are hireable spaces available for a wide variety of bookings. Both venues receive a range of regular hirers as well as one-off private hirers.

Burwell Hall secured a new weekly hirer a few months ago, who has now also booked dates at The Corn Exchange, which will eventually be weekly when available. This is largely attributed to the positive customer service the hirer experienced with our bookings and caretaking team.

The usage report for the period **23rd March – 14th June** indicates a **10% increase** in hours booked for the Main Hall and a **11% increase** for Burwell Hall, while bookings for the Gallery Room show a **9% decrease** compared with last year.

Week commencing	23rd March	30th March	6th April	13th April	20th April	27th April	4th May	11th May	18th May	25th May	1st June	8th June		
CORN EX 2026 - 27														
Hours booked	39.00	43.00	25.00	42.00	32.00	45.00	41.00	48.00	41.00	25.00	39.00	31.00	**451.00**	**Total Hrs**
Usage Percentage	46.00	51.00	30.00	50.00	37.00	54.00	49.00	57.00	48.00	30.00	46.00	37.00	**38.21**	**Average %**
SAME PERIOD 2025 - 26 CORN EXCHANGE														
Hours booked	43.00	41.00	46.00	11.00	38.00	39.00	38.00	38.00	26.00	19.00	42.00	30.00	**411.00**	**Total Hrs**
Usage Percentage	51.00	39.00	55.00	13.00	45.00	47.00	45.00	45.00	27.00	20.00	43.00	29.00	**31.09**	**Average %**
GALLERY 2026 - 27														
Hours booked	31.00	23.00	32.00	10.00	31.00	18.00	31.00	20.00	18.00	15.00	13.00	10.00	**252.00**	**Total Hrs**
Usage Percentage	37.00	27.00	37.00	12.00	21.00	21.00	37.00	24.00	21.00	18.00	15.00	11.00	**20.07**	**Average %**
SAME PERIOD 2025 - 26 GALLERY														
Hours booked	27.00	13.00	26.00	13.00	26.00	22.00	32.00	37.00	34.00	18.00	15.00	13.00	**276.00**	**Total Hrs**
Usage Percentage	32.00	15.00	31.00	15.00	30.00	27.00	37.00	43.00	35.00	19.00	18.00	15.00	**22.64**	**Average %**
Burwell Hall														
MAIN HALL 2026 - 27														
Hours booked	45.00	17.00	25.00	42.00	51.00	49.00	45.00	48.00	43.00	24.00	39.00	42.00	**470.00**	**Total Hrs**
Usage Percentage	54.00	20.00	30.00	50.00	60.00	58.00	54.00	57.00	50.00	28.00	46.00	50.00	**39.79**	**Average %**
SAME PERIOD 2025 - 27 MAIN HALL														
Hours booked	34.00	32.00	26.00	26.00	39.00	53.00	36.00	39.00	39.00	17.00	39.00	42.00	**422.00**	**Total Hrs**
Usage Percentage	40.00	37.00	31.00	31.00	46.00	63.00	42.00	46.00	40.00	16.00	46.00	50.00	**34.86**	**Average %**

1863 Café & Bar

The 1863 Café & Bar has increased in popularity year-on-year - final figures show sales increased by 20% for the year 2025/26 compared to 2024/25.

Since 1st April 2026, sales have increased a further 7% in comparison to the same period last year.

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 concept of equality when reporting on events is very important to the council, as it ensures fair and impartial coverage of all events and social groups within the community to reflect fairness, representation, and inclusivity.
b) Biodiversity – Officers focus on the broader context of their actions when organising events to maintain the Council's environmental and conservation efforts.
c) Crime & Disorder – Council policies and operational processes adhered to by Officers include a multi-faceted approach that integrates crowd control, prevention of criminal activity, security planning, and compliance with relevant laws and regulations. Officers assess the risks relating to events ensuring the necessary due diligence, reviews, sign off and monitoring is completed. Post event analysis data is sued to review opportunities for continuous improvement.
d) Environment & Climate Emergency – Careful consideration is given to the environmental and climate impacts to reduce negative effects and promote sustainability. Many aspects of event planning by the Council include venue location, transportation, recycling, local produce, and energy usage. By incorporating sustainable practices into every stage of event planning, the Council aims to reduce the environmental impact, create a positive attendee experience, and help lead the way for more responsible event management in the future.

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.

Managing risks for Council events is a crucial aspect of event planning and requires careful thought to ensure the safety and success of all events. The Council's risk management control measures for events covers legal considerations, safety protocols, insurance, and other key factors ensure these are delivered successfully.

Social Value

- The Corn Exchange also hosts some events with a community focus, providing people with an opportunity to connect through shared experiences, reducing loneliness.
- 1863 Café provides affordable hot drinks and has enabled social connection for lots of elderly people. Sharing tables is encouraged which allows us to serve more customers and creates a warm and friendly atmosphere.

Financial implications

All events are evaluated from the planning stage to post event analysis to manage financial risk and maximise income.

Recommendations

Member are invited to note the report.

HALLS, CEMETERIES AND ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

Agenda Item: Corn Exchange Business Plan

Meeting Date: Monday, 8th June

Contact Officer: Venue & Events Officer

The purpose of this report is to present an update to the Corn Exchange Business Plan, which reflects on last year's projects and objectives and provides an update on this year's objectives and finances.

Background

The primary purpose of the Business Plan is to define clear objectives and establish the strategies and procedures required to achieve them. The Corn Exchange Business Plan is regularly reviewed and updated to reflect the venue's ongoing development and operational changes.

As a community arts venue, the Corn Exchange places social value and community benefit at the core of its mission, while also recognising the importance of long-term financial stability. The Business Plan therefore seeks to balance these priorities; ensuring that the Corn Exchange continues to serve as a vibrant, accessible, and sustainable cultural hub for years to come.

Current Situation

Personnel structure has changed since the last review, with a change of Venue & Events Officer, and the introduction of a Venue & Events Co-Ordinator. Officers have been focused on maintaining high operational standards during this transitionary period, as well as thoroughly inducting the new member of staff who started in August 2025.

The new Venue & Events Officer has undertaken a first review of the Business Plan (attached as a confidential Appendix), to provide an update on the plans outlined by the previous officer and outlining plans for improvement in the upcoming year.

The next review will provide an update on the objectives and plans laid out in year 2, and review and update the wider content of the Business Plan, including Marketing Strategy, Competitor Analysis, Market Appraisal, Current Charges etc.

1863 Café and Bar

The Venue and Events Officer recommends the introduction of 1863 Café and Bar within the Corn Exchange Business Plan at the next review. The operation of the Café and Bar is heavily intertwined with the wider venue, and whilst it can be useful to separate financial figures, plans included in the Corn Exchange Business Plan include processes tailored around increasing cafe and bar use and managed income through events.

Recommendations

Member are invited to note the report / updated business plan and

1. Consider the inclusion of 1863 Café and Bar Business plan within the Corn Exchange Business Plan at the next review.

Document is Restricted

HALLS CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Agenda Item: Commemorative Plaque Request – Corporal John S. Christiansen

Meeting Date: Monday 8 June 2026

Contact Officer: Administrative Support Assistant - Facilities

The purpose of this report is to advise of a request to create and display a commemorative Plaque on the Tower Hill memorial wall.

Background

At the meeting of this Committee on 16th March 2026 (Minute H141 HCA 16.03.2026 relates), it was advised that the Council had been approached by the Friends of the Cemeteries for a plaque of commemorative information for a Untied States soldier, Corp John S. Christiansen who was buried at Tower Hill Cemetery from 1918 – 1920 before his disinterment and repatriation to New York, USA.

Current Situation

A memorial plaque wall is available for families to erect a plaque in memory of their loved ones. The request made by Witney Museum (supported by FoTC) is that the Council erect the plaque in order that anyone visiting the cemetery is able to locate information of those individuals that served.

The option of an additional QR code, at added cost, could be considered. This would link with additional information of Corp Christiansen. Such as Corp John S. Christiansen (1890-1918) - Find a Grave Memorial

Corporate Strategy

The Council's Strategic Plan 2025–29 sets out the Council's long-term priorities and direction, supporting its mission to 'make Witney a great place to live, work and visit.' This report contributes to the delivery of the following strategic pillar of the plan:

4. A Respectful Community

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 proposal should be considered with regard to fairness, inclusivity, and equal treatment, ensuring that recognition all service personnel are commemorated.
b) Biodiversity - None
c) Crime & Disorder - None
d) Environment & Climate Emergency – None

Risk

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

Social Value

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

Financial implications

- The cost of the plaque would be £84-120 from cost centre 301/4350

Recommendations

Member are invited to note the report and

1. Consider the agreement to procure and erect the plaque on the Tower Hill Memorial Wall.

Suggested: Plaque for Tower Hill Cemetery – Memory of Corp John S. Christiansen.

Tower Hill – Double plaque (Slightly larger to fit inscription.)

(175mm wide x 50mm high)

Stainless steel – brushed finish – Etched black infill

Century 751 bold

No holes

Approximate Costing: £84.00 - £120.00

In Memory and Honour of Corp John S. Christiansen

1890 – 1918

Sunday 15th September 1918 Corp John S. Christiansen was killed in an airplane accident. Originally buried at Tower Hill Cemetery on 17th September 1918 and later being exhumed on 12th June 1920 to be repatriated from Southampton on 7th August 1920 where he was then returned to his father on 17th August 1920 in Auburn, New York for the burial arrangements to commence for his final resting place buried at Saint Patricks Cemetery, Moravia, Cayuga County, New York, USA.

Corp John S. Christiansen's Memorial ID is: 228892611 where further details, his family tree and photos can be found at Find a Grave Memorial online.

HALLS CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

Agenda Item: Cemetery & Burial Regulations Review

Meeting Date: Monday 8 June 2026

Contact Officer: Committee Clerk

Background

The cemetery regulations outline the processes and rules Witney Town Council follow as the Burial authority in Witney. These regulations are written in accordance with rules, acts and legislations for the management of burial grounds and guidance from The Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management. These regulations are monitored and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they remain current and in line with changes in legislation.

Current Situation

Officers are currently carrying out a review which will include rewording and reformatting sections of the document following feedback from Funeral Directors, Memorial Mason's, Friends of the Cemeteries and users of the cemeteries in order that they are understood and interpreted correctly.

A copy of the Current Regulations is attached as Appendix A.

Scattering of Ashes

The Council is receiving an increasing number of requests for the scattering of ashes within existing grave plots where interments have already taken place, including plots located along the Windrush Cemetery Ashes Path.

While such requests provide families with an additional means of respectfully laying loved ones to rest, they also raise important considerations that must be assessed on a case-by-case basis. These include the current use of the grave, ownership rights, and any potential future use of the plot.

It is important to emphasise that cemeteries are regulated spaces and are therefore subject to specific rules designed to preserve dignity, order, and the interests of all users. The scattering of ashes is not an automatic right; as the land is not privately owned by the individual making the request, permission must always be sought from the burial authority. Such controls ensure that appropriate records are maintained, environmental considerations are managed, and the sanctity of the site is respected.

Practices vary some neighbouring burial authorities, such as Didcot, Abingdon and Oxford City, prohibit the scattering of ashes within their cemeteries. In contrast, Witney Town Council has historically adopted a less restrictive approach, recognising the importance of providing flexible and affordable options to bereaved families, whilst ensuring full legal compliance.

Given the increasing frequency of such requests, and the need for consistency and clarity in decision-making, it is proposed that the relevant section of the cemetery regulations be reviewed and updated. This will ensure that applicants understand the requirement to seek permission, the criteria that will be applied, and any conditions attached to approval.

Members are therefore invited to consider this matter and indicate whether they support the strengthening and clarification of the Council's regulatory framework.

Officers will present revised regulations to the Committee at its meeting on 14 September 2026.

Corporate Strategy

The Council's Strategic Plan 2025–29 sets out the Council's long-term priorities and direction, supporting its mission to 'make Witney a great place to live, work and visit.' This report contributes to the delivery of the following strategic pillar of the plan:
4. A Respectful Community

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 Cemeteries offer options to religious beliefs and burial practices found in Witney.
b) Biodiversity – There is a wildflower meadow at Windrush Cemetery, and the middle section of Tower Hill is part of a rewilding maintenance programme.
c) Crime & Disorder – Rules are in place at cemeteries and supported by signage. Any antisocial behaviour or acts are encouraged by council staff to be reported to the police directly so that they may build up a record of occurrences.

Risk

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

Social Value

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

Financial implications

There are no additional financial implications to the council from the review of the Cemetery regulations.

Recommendations

1. Members are invited to note the report and
2. Consider supporting the officer-led review and subsequent revision of the cemetery regulations relating to the scattering of ashes, in order to provide greater clarity, consistency, and appropriate control over such requests and,
3. Provide any further recommendations to be considered by Officers during the review.

WITNEY
TOWN COUNCIL

Cemetery Regulations
March 2025

1. Definitions and interpretation

1.1. **WTC, Town Council, Council –** Witney Town Council, the local burial authority which has the power to manage and provide burial grounds.

1.2. **EROB –** Exclusive Right of Burial

1.3. **Spent –** An EROB is considered spent if all usable grave space has been used.

1.4. **Full Interment –** the burial of a non-cremated body.

1.5. **Ashes Interment –** the burial of cremated remains.

1.6. **Green Form/Registrar Certificate** - The certificate to authorise a burial or ashes interment.

1.7. **Statutory Declaration** - A formal, written and legally binding statement of fact, signed in the presence of a solicitor/Commissioner of Oaths.

2. Law and Jurisdiction

2.1. These regulations shall be governed by the laws of England and shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the English courts.

3. Variations

3.1. These Cemetery Regulations supersede and replace any prior regulations, terms, or conditions previously in effect. We reserve the right to modify, amend, or update these Cemetery Regulations at any time without prior notice. Any such changes will be effective immediately upon the date stated on the document.

4. General cemetery Information

4.1. Windrush Cemetery Access

4.1.1. Windrush cemetery is permanently open to members of the public with parking available near the entrance to the cemetery. The road around the grave sections is only designed as an access road for works vehicles and funeral cortège.

4.1.2 The cemetery is not open for vehicles during ceremonies.

4.1.2.1 A sign will be placed on the entrance and car parking controlled by cemetery operatives.

4.1.2.2 No notice will be issued of closure for a ceremony.

4.2. Tower Hill Cemetery Access

4.2.1 Tower Hill Cemetery is open Monday through Friday between the hours of 09:00 – 16:00. The gates are unlocked and locked by Town Council staff and contractors. On request, the bollards gaining access around sections 6, 7 and 8 can be removed for vehicles. Please make this request at least 24 hours prior to your visit by calling the Council offices.

4.2.2 During weekends, the gates are unlocked between 7:00 – 11:00 and the bollards are removed for access around sections 6,7 and 8.

4.2.2.1 For ceremonies, the main vehicle gates and the north pedestrian gate will be locked.

4.2.2.2 No notice will be issued of a closure for a ceremony.

4.3. Cemetery Rules

The following general rules are applicable across both cemeteries and are considered an offence within the cemetery grounds.

4.3.1. General Rules

4.3.1.1. Dogs are permitted in the cemetery but must always be on leads and all waste must be cleared up.
4.3.1.2. No parking in any areas of the cemeteries that are not designated parking spaces.
4.3.1.3. Bicycles must not be ridden within the cemetery.
4.3.1.4. All rubbish must be cleared away.
4.3.1.5. The amplifying of any music or disturbing sound

4.3.2. Offences within the cemetery

4.3.2.1. wilfully create any disturbance in a cemetery
4.3.2.2. commit any nuisance in a cemetery.
4.3.2.3. wilfully interfere with any burial taking place in a cemetery
4.3.2.4. wilfully interfere with any grave or vault, any tombstone or other memorial, or any flowers or plants on any such matter
4.3.2.5. play any game or sport in a cemetery.

5. Burial plots and interment options

5.1. Lawn Burials

Lawn burials are the standard burial plot offered at both Windrush and Tower Hill Cemetery. They can accommodate one or two full interments depending on the cemetery. All lawn burials can have a memorial installed along with a small garden area, subject to the purchase of EROB.

5.1.1 At Windrush Cemetery, all lawn burials are at double depth to accommodate two full interments.
5.1.1.1. Only once two full interments have been completed can the remaining grave space be used for ashes interments.
5.1.1.2. No ashes interments are permitted until the plot space has been fully buried, at Windrush this is two full interments and one single interment at Tower Hill.
5.1.1.3. If an applicant wishes to spread ashes on a grave this can be accommodated by peeling back the turf layer and spreading the ashes over the surface of the soil.
5.1.1.4. The charge for this will be the same as an ashes interment.
5.1.1.5. To perform a future burial this layer of soil will have to be disturbed, and the cremated remains will be moved from the resting place.
5.1.2. Tower Hill lawn burials are at a single depth.
5.1.3. All bodies must be interred within a coffin.
5.1.3.1. The coffin must have a nameplate for the interred.
5.1.3.2. Due to burying at double depth, it is required that cemetery staff can correctly identify an interment at the first level before interring the second body.

5.2. Muslim burials

Muslim burial plots are provided; these are correctly orientated in accordance with religious beliefs. All Muslim plots are single-depth burials.

5.2.1. Burials are permitted in either a coffin or wrapped in a shroud.

5.2.2. In the case where a burial shroud is used the funeral organisers must backfill the grave so that the body is no longer visible to council staff who will complete the backfill.

5.2.3. When wrapped in a shroud a suitable container must be used to transport the deceased to the graveside.

5.2.4. The funeral organiser can line the base of the grave with brushwood or softwood boards to a depth no greater than 30mm.

5.2.5. On the expiry of exclusive rights of burial, any headstone may be removed by the council, but no further interments will take place in any available plot space.

5.3. Meadow burials

A wildflower meadow is in place at Windrush Cemetery for interments. The overall concept of this area is to grow and maintain a flowering meadow. The meadow can have up to three cuts each year these are in the spring, summer and autumn with the main summer cut being a collection. Further cuts for winter maintenance may be used to help maintain weeds and supplementary seeding in March and April. Once the ground has recompacted in the meadow section a wildflower mix will be sown on the grave.

5.3.1. Rules differing from standard burials for meadow burials are as follows:

5.3.1.1. Exclusive rights of burial cannot be purchased.

5.3.1.2. Plots cannot be reserved.

5.3.1.3. No embalmed bodies

5.3.1.4. No form of grave marker can be installed.

5.3.1 Identification

5.3.1.1 As no grave maker can be placed the record of burial will be the standard council process but additionally, a grave marker peg will be buried in the ground.

5.3.1.2 The plots will be identified if needed in future through a grave maker peg that contains an electronic readable tag (RFID tag).

5.3.1.3 This RIFD tag will be recorded across the burial book and cemetery management software.

5.4 Woodland Burials

5.4.1 Woodland burials are interred at the bottom section of Windrush cemetery. These offer an environmentally friendly burial option but are also a cheaper burial option. The option has been designed to have the lowest carbon footprint option across both Witney cemeteries.

5.4.1 Only single-depth interments

5.4.2 Exclusive rights of burial cannot be purchased.

5.4.3 Plots cannot be reserved.

5.4.4 No embalmed bodies

5.4.5 No form of grave marker can be installed.

5.4.5.1 This includes immediately after an internment; all flowers will be removed directly following the internment by town council staff.

5.4.5.2 The intended purpose of the area is to be as environmentally conscious as possible, so it is encouraged that flowers are not organised for a funeral.

5.4.6 All burials must take place in an eco-friendly coffin or burial shroud.

5.4.6.1 Bamboo, banana leaf, willow, cardboard

5.4.7 In the case where a burial shroud is used the funeral organisers must backfill the grave so that the body is no longer visible to council staff who will complete the backfill.

5.4.8 Oversized coffins are not permitted.

5.4.9 The plots will be identified if needed in future through a grave maker peg that contains an RFID tag.

5.4.10 Once a predefined section has reached capacity trees and wildflower perennial bulbs will be plated to create small woodland areas.

5.5 Children's and Baby Plots

5.5.1 Separate smaller children's and baby plots are offered at Windrush Cemetery which are used for the children's funeral fund. They have been designed to inter at a later date the ashes of the parents/guardians.

5.5.1.1 Baby: 0.9m length x 0.66m width

5.5.1.2 Children's: 1.5m length 0.99m width

5.5.1.3 Children's and babies' plots EROB are sold at 90 years.

5.5.2 Once a full interment has taken place the internment of two sets of ashes can be completed on top.

5.5.3 Memorials are a smaller size which is listed on the separate memorial sizes document.

5.6 Ashes Path

Windrush Cemetery has a paved ashes path for the interment of ashes caskets.

5.6.1 Each ashes plot can accommodate two caskets.

5.6.2 The EROB must be purchased.

5.6.3 Only a sloping desk tablet can be installed.

5.7 Family Ashes Plots

Tower Hill Cemetery has family ashes plots for the interment of ashes, each plot can accommodate up to eight ashes caskets.

5.7.1 Only a standard lawned grave memorial can be installed here.

5.8 Scattering of Ashes

Ashes may be scattered at cemeteries with permission from Witney Town Council. There are designated ashes scattering beds at both cemeteries.

5.8.1 Written permission must be obtained from Witney Town Council, this can be in the form of an email.

5.8.2 A date and time must be agreed with the council offices.

5.8.2.1 Witney Town council staff regularly conduct maintenance in the cemeteries and if they have not been made aware they will stop the scattering of any ashes.

5.8.3 The scattering of ashes onto grave plots is not permitted even if the EROB is purchased for that plot.

5.8.3.1 The scattering of ashes is not accurate, and the ashes can easily be distributed onto neighbouring plots by the weather or inaccuracy in the process. This can be seen as offensive by those interred into other plots.

5.9 Memorial plaques and stones

5.9.1 Memorial plaques can be installed on the memorial wall at Tower Hill Cemetery or the Memorial monolith at Windrush Cemetery.

5.9.2 Memorial stones can be installed in the stone pond in the children's memorial garden at Windrush Cemetery.

5.9.3 The interment for those named on a memorial plaque does not have to have taken place in the cemetery.

5.9.4 An application form must be completed for the installation of a memorial plaque.

5.9.4.1 The size, material and inlay colour of the memorial plaques are determined by cemetery officers to ensure all plaques are uniform.

6 Schedule of Interment

The Town Council will follow the below process for all interments in its cemeteries. The interment process will be managed in cooperation with the undertaker and/or funeral organiser.

6.1 A completed interment form must be submitted to the council as the notice of interment.

6.1.1 This must be complete with the grave plot number and date and time of interment.

6.1.1.1 If the grave plot to be used is not owned by the deceased, the EROB owner must provide written permission for its use.

6.1.1.2 This must be submitted along with the internment form.

6.2 The date and time of the interment will be arranged with the Town Council.

6.3 All efforts will be made to offer the time and date requested.

6.4 However, as the burial authority, dates and times of interment are entirely at the discretion of the Town Council.

6.5 A burial time should first be organised with the Town Council before any other party.

6.6 Times and dates are managed based on the multiple factors such as:

6.6.1 Other internment bookings

6.6.2 Staffing

6.6.3 Equipment availability

6.6.4 Grave location

6.6.5 Proximity to open graves

6.6.6 Excavation time

6.6.7 Public holidays

6.7 After a completed interment form has been received cemetery operatives will then begin the process of excavating and preparing the grave space.

6.8 All paperwork must then be submitted 24 hours prior to the time of the interment.

6.9 Once the internment has been completed the burial will be recorded by cemeteries operatives in the relevant cemeteries burial register.

6.9.1 This must be signed off by the undertaker/funeral organiser.

7 Graveside preparation and backfilling

7.1 All graves are prepared for interment to avoid the sight of excavated soil.

7.1.1 All excavated soil will be covered temporarily.

7.1.2 The graveside will be dressed with artificial grass, this includes the ashes interments in the ashes path at Windrush Cemetery.

7.1.3 The excavated soil is placed on the neighbouring grave.

7.1.3.1 If the funeral organisers wish for the excavated soil to be located away from the interred grave this must be requested at the first notice of the burial and confirmed by Witney Town Council.

7.1.3.1.1 An additional charge will be charged for this service.

8 Cancellations and additional charges

8.1 Cancellations

8.1.1 If an interment has to be cancelled by Witney Town Council due to any paperwork not being submitted the full burial charge will be charged to the undertaker/funeral organiser.

8.1.2 The final submission for any paperwork is 24 hours before the time of internment and by this time the burial plot would have been prepared and in some circumstances require to be backfilled.

8.1.3 It is the responsibility of the undertaker/funeral organiser to ensure the arrival of the procession arrives on the times detailed on the interment form.

8.1.4 Certain considerations will be made if the cancellation is a result of exceptional circumstances, but this will be at the discretion of the Town Council.

8.2 Late Arrival and departures

8.2.1 The undertaker/funeral organiser is responsible for the timekeeping of the ceremony.

8.2.2 Additional fees will be charged for late arrivals and departures.

8.2.3 These fees will be charged in increments of 15 minutes.

8.2.4 The fee is listed on the burial charges as the late fee.

8.2.5 The time allocated for a ceremony is 45 minutes.

8.3 Existing Memorial

8.3.1 If the internment is the second internment into a lawn or ashes plot the undertaker/funeral organiser must pay any associated charges for the removal of a memorial.

8.3.2 This should be identified at the first notice of interment.

8.3.3 This is exclusive for memorials in situ on the grave plot of interment.

8.4 Changing interment dates

8.4.1 Any amendment to a final submitted date will be charged at the fee listed on the burial charges list.

8.4.1.1 The date submitted on the interment form is the final submitted date.

8.4.1.2 A funeral director/funeral organiser by booking a date is removing availability to others.

8.4.1.3 Reasonable changes to funeral times will not be charged.

8.5 Oversized burials

8.5.1 Oversized burials will be charged an additional fee above the maximum casket sizes stated below.

8.5.1.1 Maximum length (feet to Head) 213cm/84 inches

8.5.1.2 Maximum width (Commonly the shoulders of the coffin) 71cm/28 inches

8.5.1.3 Maximum depth 58cm/23 inches

8.5.2 The oversized burial fee is listed on the burial charges lists as oversized burials.

8.6 Weekend Burials

8.6.1 Will be charged at the hours worked by three cemetery operatives at a weekend rate plus the standard burial fee and all other associated charges.

9 Burial Times

9.1 Burials are available in both cemeteries Monday – Friday excluding public holidays. Available burial times change throughout the year based on daylight saving.

9.1.1 **November to March:** Monday- Friday 11:00 – 14:00

9.1.2 **April to October:** Monday – Thursday 11:00 – 15:00, Friday 11:00 – 14:00

9.2 The times listed above are not inclusive of the entire ceremony time a booking can be accepted at the latest time listed.

9.3 In exceptional circumstances, burials can be arranged for a weekend, but this will be at the Town council's discretion and will normally be based on the availability of staff.

9.4 There are no assurances that a weekend burial can be arranged and would entirely be based on staff availability.

10 Burial Notice

A minimum of three working days' notice is required prior to any burial, not including the date of burial. This time is required to complete the administration, excavation and preparation of a grave space including ashes plots.

10.1 Witney Town Council cannot ensure that every interment can be accepted with 3 days' notice, some factors will affect this time frame.

10.1.1 If a headstone needs to be removed the funeral organisers will be responsible for its removal and only once removed can cemetery operatives complete the excavation and preparation of the grave space.

10.2 The certificate for burial or cremation commonly known as the 'green form' or ' registrar's certificate' must be delivered to the Town Council office no later than 24 hours before the date of interment.

10.3 This can be emailed, sent via post or delivered in person.

10.4 Witney Town Council accepts no responsibility for lost certificates for burial in the post.

10.5 It is an offence of the Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953 if the certificate of burial has been lost, failed to be delivered or forged.

10.6 No burial will take place if the certificate for burial has not been supplied 24 hours before the time of interment.

11 Exclusive rights of Burial

11.1 The exclusive rights of burial permit the grantee the right of burial within a grave plot and to anyone they give permission. It also gives the grantee permission to erect a headstone.

11.2 The exclusive right of burial grant will list the burial authority (this will always be WTC for council cemeteries), cost of the grant, grave space, section, cemetery, date of EROB, term of EROB and personal details including email address. The grant will be issued to the grantee and a copy retained by Witney Town Council which will also be stored digitally.

12 Limitations

12.1 The EROB does not give the grantee a right to the land but only the exclusive right to say who can be buried and erect a headstone. All other rules and regulations must be followed.

13 Term of Exclusive Rights of Burial

13.1 The length of the EROB will run for a set period from the date of purchase that will be stated on the grant. Currently, this length of time is 30 years for Windrush Cemetery and 30 years for Tower Hill Cemetery. WTC may make amendments to the EROB period this would only affect the sale of new EROB and the renewal of any EROB.

13.2 As a burial authority, the council cannot issue or extend the rights of burial in perpetuity or for a period beyond one hundred years. Witney Town Council would not extend the EROB period beyond the terms aforementioned for each cemetery.

13.2.1 The exception is for Commonwealth War Graves of which EROB in perpetuity will be granted or assumed.

14 Transfer of the Exclusive Right of Burial Back to the Burial Authority

14.1 At any time, a grantee of the EROB can transfer back the grant to the council. The council will purchase the rights back at the cost of the original purchase. This will be the cost listed on the grant of the EROB.

14.2 The council will only purchase back the EROB if there is unused grave space, for example, plots are in a re-usable condition as below.

14.2.1 Windrush, only a single burial has taken place at double depth.

14.2.2 Tower Hill, a minimum of four or more remaining ashes plots within one grave space.

15 Transfer of the Exclusive Right of Burial

15.1 All EROB transfers will be administered by the burial authority.

15.2 WTC will charge a fee for the transfer that is listed in the burial charges.

15.3 The remaining term of the EROB will not be renewed on transfer.

15.4 A new grant will be issued to the new grantee and a copy retained by WTC and stored digitally.

15.5 Living Grantee

15.5.1 An EROB owner can at any time transfer an owned EROB to a new grantee.

15.5.2 The original EROB document will need to be provided along with the following documentation.

15.5.2.1 Proof of identity of the current EROB owner and new grantee.

15.5.2.2 Proof of residency of the new EROB owner.

15.5.2.2.1 If the residency status of section 21 cannot be met by the new grantee, then an additional EROB fee will be charged to fall in line with the rate for non-residents.

15.5.2.2.1.1 This fee will be an additional fee of the original EROB sale price to compensate for the non-residency status.

15.5.2.2.1.2 This fee will only be charged if there is remaining grave space for a full interment or additional ashes internment in ashes plots only.

15.5.2.2.2 Written signed confirmation from the original grantee transferring the EROB to the new the new named grantee.

15.6 Deceased Grantee

15.7 If the EROB grantee is the deceased being interred into the EROB's stated plot, then an EROB transfer is not required.

15.8 If the EROB has not been spent (A memorial stone is still to be erected or further interments can still take place) the transfer of the EROB to a new grantee should be arranged.

15.8.1 There is no requirement to transfer an EROB on the death of the original owner. This only needs to take place if a beneficiary wishes to utilize an EROB that has not been spent.

15.8.2 To transfer the EROB of a deceased grantee the following documents must be provided.

15.8.2.1 The Original EROB

15.8.2.2 The deceased's will, if there is one.

15.8.2.3 An original grant of probate or letting of administration where there is no will.

15.8.2.4 Proof of identity of the new grantee.

15.8.3 In circumstances where the current owner has died without specifically giving the exclusive right to a named beneficiary, the burial authority may transfer the right via a statutory declaration to a family member with a valid claim.

15.8.3.1 In these circumstances is the legal responsibility of the burial authority to conduct due diligence investigation at the applicant's cost.

15.8.3.2 In circumstances where other family members have competing claims, all must renounce their claims for a statutory declaration to be completed.

15.8.3.2.1 In circumstances where other family members cannot be contacted to renounce their claims, the EROB cannot be transferred.

15.8.3.2.1.1 At the burial authorities' discretion permission may be granted to the grantee to erect a headstone, without an EROB with the disclaimer that it must be removed at the grantee's cost should a competing claimant come forward.

16 Renewal of Exclusive Rights of Burial

16.1 A grantee of EROB can renew the EROB once at the expiry date or for a period of up to 30 days prior to the expiry. The renewal fee and term of EROB will be the current cost and term set by WTC.

16.2 WTC will attempt to contact grantees of EROB where their period of exclusive rights is due to end. Attempts to make contact for renewal will only be made if there is usable grave space within a plot where the intent by WTC is to reutilise this space. This process will only happen in such a place that previous burials will not be disturbed and as aforementioned, there is unused grave space.

16.3 Contact will be made through all forms listed on the EROB and any updated contact details held by WTC. If a period of 30 days has passed since the first contact was attempted, then no further contact will be attempted.

16.4 This will include standard forms of contact over the phone, post and email but may also involve attaching a letter to the headstone of the plot.

16.5 If all reasonable contact has been attempted and a period of 30 days has passed, then the council will start the process of reutilising the plot for further burials.

17 Re-use of Grave space

17.1 The Town Council will reclaim and resell unused grave spaces once the EROB has expired.

17.2 This is providing that any future burials in a plot do not interfere with a burial that has previously taken place.

17.3 This will be done as detailed in 12.3.

17.4 It is also within the power of the council to raise the level of the ground above a single interment to accommodate further burials. This would only be done where the EROB has expired.

18 Commonwealth war graves

18.1 As the burial authority, the Town Council may grant the right to the Commonwealth War graves Commission to provide a memorial on an identified Commonwealth War grave.

18.2 The exclusive right of burial on these graves will be in perpetuity.
18.3 The Town Council's power to remove memorials cannot be exercised without the consent of the commission.

19 Public graves

19.1 Public graves, also known as common graves or paupers' graves are grave spaces of which no EROB or memorial rights exist.
19.2 Public graves will be used when no other arrangements have been made for the deceased.
19.3 There is no private right for anyone to place a tombstone or other memorial on the surface of the grave.

20 Record Keeping

20.1 All interments will be recorded on the date of interment in the cemeteries' burial register.
20.1.1 This must be signed by the undertaker/funeral organiser.
20.2 Interments will then be recorded separately in the register of burials by a council officer, with details to include.
20.2.1 Surname
20.2.2 Forenames
20.2.3 Address
20.2.4 Profession
20.2.5 Age
20.2.6 Date of death
20.2.7 Place of death
20.2.8 Date of burial
20.2.9 Section and grave number
20.2.10 Woodland and meadow burials will have the RFID number stored in the burials book and digital system.
20.3 Full details of the interment will also be stored on the councils' digital burials system.
20.4 Cemetery mapping
20.4.1 Plans of all graves are stored digitally and physically at Town council offices. Details include.
20.4.1.1 Plot numbers
20.4.1.2 Grave numbers
20.4.1.3 Number of burials
20.4.1.4 Location of ashes

21 Residency

21.1 A resident of Witney is defined as someone who:
21.1.1 Currently lives within the Witney town boundary.
21.1.2 Lived in Witney in the last 5 years or been a resident of Witney for a 30-year cumulated period.
21.1.2.1 Acceptable evidence of residency in Witney for the past 5 years or a cumulated period will need to be provided.
21.1.3 For non-residents, double rates are charged for EROBs and interments.
21.1.3.1 The rate will be double that listed on the burial charges list.
21.2 When reserving a grave space, the EROB must be purchased, the charge for the EROB will be based on the residency of the purchaser.
21.3 The burial charge will be based on the residency of the deceased and not the EROB holder if not already the deceased.

21.4 Proof of identity and residency will need to be provided for the purchase of an EROB.

21.4.1.1 Proof of identity coupled with proof of residency will have to be provided via a driver's license or passport along with a utility bill or bank statement no more than 3 months old.

21.4.2 If the certificate for burial or cremation lists an address not within the Witney town boundary then then proof of identity and residency will have to be supplied with the interment form.

22 Reserving grave spaces

22.1 Grave spaces can only be reserved for the following burial plots.

22.1.1 Lawn Burials

22.1.2 Ashes plots

22.1.3 Family Ashes Plots

22.2 A section of the cemetery is held for grave reservation while a separate section is designated for immediate burials.

22.2.1 If an applicant wishes to reserve a grave space out of that rotation an additional fee will be charged

22.3 When reserving a grave space, the EROB must be purchased.

22.4 No one person can reserve more than two burial plots.

23 Children's Funeral Fund

23.1 The Children's Funeral Fund for England can help to pay for some of the costs of a funeral for a child under eighteen or a baby stillborn after the 24th week of pregnancy.

23.2 The children's funeral fund can help pay for the following:

23.2.1 Burial fees

23.2.2 Cremation fees, including the cost of a doctor's certificate.

23.2.3 Coffin (up to the cost of £300)

23.3 Responsibilities to make a claim.

23.3.1 A claim for the burial through the scheme is made by the council as the burial provider.

23.3.2 A claim for a coffin will be made by the funeral director or if not using a funeral director the funeral organiser must make this.

23.3.3 Cremation claims needed to be made by the cremation provider.

23.4 Limitations

23.4.1 The children's funeral fund will cover the cost of an appropriately sized grave to the size of the body. Full interments are currently only possible in Windrush cemetery which offers adult, child and baby-sized plots.

23.4.2 Witney Town Council will only use the fund to cover an appropriately sized plot for burial.

23.4.3 In the instant, a full double-depth adult plot has been requested the difference in cost will have to be paid to the council.

23.4.4 If a required child or baby plot is unavailable a full adult plot will be offered.

24 Cemeteries Maintenance

24.1 Grave Mounds

24.1.1 From the date of interment for 1 year a mound of soil will be maintained at 20cm above ground level.

24.1.1.1 This is necessary as the backfilled excavated soil recompacts over a period of one year.

24.1.1.2 The area cannot be planted in

24.1.1.3 Flowers and wreaths may be laid but these will be moved to the head of the grave when the soil is topped up.

24.2 Levelling

24.2.1 After 1 year has elapsed from the date of interment the grave will be levelled during the next Spring or Autumn.

24.2.2 The grave will be levelled to the ground with topsoil free of large stones and then grass-seeded.

24.2.3 Periodically, graves of those who have been interred for over 1 year may require a re-levelling to level the surface of the ground for maintenance purposes.

24.2.3.1 This is typically done in sections, and notice will be issued via staked signs.

24.3 Grounds Maintenance

24.3.1 Both Tower Hill and Windrush Cemetery are maintained as lawned cemeteries and are cut short.

24.3.2 The historic central section of Tower Hill and the meadow and woodland at Windrush are maintained on wildflower regimes.

24.4 Memorial Testing

24.4.1 From the date of installation, all memorials undergo a safety inspection every 5 years.

24.4.1.1 This process is completed by Witney Town Council as the burial authority through the use of contractors or employees.

24.4.2 The testing uses non-intrusive methods to assess the stability and safety of a memorial against N.A.M.M standards.

24.4.3 All testing is conducted by staff trained in S.I.A.M (Safety Inspection and Assessment of Memorials Safety)

24.4.4 Prior notification to testing will be in the form of staked signs in the relevant cemetery.

24.4.5 Any memorials that require remedial action from testing will be the responsibility of the EROB grant owner.

24.4.5.1 The Town Council will contact the EROB owner with the required remedial works to be carried out.

24.4.5.2 If an adequate amount of time has passed from the initial contact the town council will make the memorial safe through the most economic means.

24.4.5.2.1 Laying the memorial flat on the ground.

24.4.5.2.2 Fencing the grave area for safety.

24.5 Damage to Memorials

24.5.1 The Town Council accepts no liability for damage to memorials that is caused by any means other than gross negligence of cemetery operatives.

24.5.1.1 For example, the council will not be held responsible for minor damages caused by mowing activities.

24.5.1.1.1 In the event of damage caused by gross negligence by a cemetery operative, such as plant equipment hitting and fracturing a memorial, the council will cover the cost of repairs.

24.5.1.1.2 The incident would have to be documented for the Town Council to accept liability, an incident report or photographic evidence of the incident would be required.

24.5.1.2 It is recommended that EROB owners take out an insurance policy on memorials against damage including public liability.

24.6 Excavation process

24.6.1 In the process of excavating a grave for an interment, the excavated soil will be placed on the nearest neighbouring grave.

24.6.2 The excavated soil will be in situ from the date of excavation until the completion of the internment, this time frame is kept as short as possible.

24.6.3 Grave space reservation and interments are also managed to ensure no one area received excessive damage from excavation machinery, or that excavated soil is placed on a recently buried grave.

24.6.4 Any damage will be repaired but may be restricted by seasonal conditions.

24.6.5 Removing headstones to gain access to reserved plots

24.6.5.1 To gain access to certain reserved grave spaces, it may be required to remove headstones.

24.6.5.2 Notice will be issued to the EROB owner listed on the grant.

24.6.5.3 An EROB owner cannot refuse the removal.

24.6.5.4 The Town Council will cover the costs of any removal and offer to have the memorial cleaned.

24.6.6 Removing the headstone for the second interment into a double-depth grave

24.6.6.1 It is the responsibility of the funeral manager to arrange the removal of an existing headstone prior to the second interment into a double-depth grave.

24.6.6.2 This must be done prior to issuing Witney Town Council with interment forms.

24.7 Holiday items clearance

24.7.1 Periodically throughout the year, more thorough item clearance will be carried out, typically these are 1 month following Christmas, Easter, Mother's Day and Father's Day.

24.8 Tree works.

24.8.1 Any damage caused to a memorial by falling tree limbs is classed as an act of God and the town council accepts no liability.

25 Stone Masons

25.1.1 Stone masons working in Witney Town Council cemeteries must be registered with the Town Council, and the following documentation must be provided yearly.

25.1.1.1 Public Liability insurance of £5million

25.1.1.2 Risk assessment for working in a burial ground covering all activities.

25.1.2 Stone Mason must be registered with the NAMM registration scheme RQMF (register of qualified memorial fixers) and follow the NAMM code of working practice.

26 Memorials

26.1 Process

26.1.1 The EROB must be purchased to install a memorial at both cemeteries and rights granted by the EROB owner.

26.1.1.1 For memorials spanning two plots, the EROB must be owned for both plots.

26.1.2 Full details on measurement for memorials can be found in the separate Memorial Sizes Document.

26.1.3 Memorials can be installed on all lawned plots 12 months after the date of interment. This leaves time for the ground to recompact and grass seed to germinate and grow.

26.1.4 During this 12-month period, a small plaque or wooden cross can be staked in the ground to identify the plot.

26.1.5 This will be removed on the date of grass seeding and stored in the relevant cemetery depot.

26.1.5.1 The wooden crosses must be no bigger than 10cm wide and 25cm high.

26.1.6 Before the installation of any memorial, a completed memorial application form must be submitted for approval.

26.1.6.1 Only once a 12-month period has passed and approval has been granted can a memorial be installed.

26.1.6.2 The submitted approved memorial application form will be checked against the physical memorial before installation at the relevant cemetery by a cemetery operative.

26.1.6.2.1 If any details of the memorial do not match that of the approved document, installation may be refused.

26.1.6.3 Any memorial found to be installed without approval will be removed and the cost recovered from the person who ordered the tombstone.

26.2 Approval

26.2.1 Memorials with the exception of wooden crosses must be manufactured from stone.

26.2.2 Memorials must be within the sizes listed on the memorial sizes document.

26.2.3 A memorial must not cause offence, Witney Town Council will review the drawing and text of all memorials and withhold the right to refuse any memorial that may cause offence. Some examples could include,

26.2.3.1 Football club logos.

26.2.3.2 Political messages

26.2.3.3 Offensive symbols

26.2.4 Inscriptions should be simple, dignified and reverent.

26.2.5 The memorial must have the section number or letter and plot number in 15mm engraved writing on the rear of the base stone.

26.3 Headstones

26.3.1 All headstones in Town council cemeteries must be made up of a foundation slab, base stone, and headstone.

26.3.2 The top surface of the foundation slab must be level with the ground.

26.4 Monoliths

26.4.1 Monoliths that do not have a foundation or a shoe must be installed with at least a third of the total stone height below ground.

26.4.2 Monoliths that are installed into a shoe must have a least a third of their total weight induing the foundation below ground.

26.4.3 The max height of a monolith is 111cm with an additional 37cm sitting below ground level.

26.5 Wooden Crosses

26.5.1 Wooden crosses are permitted in the cemeteries but must be constructed in a skilful manner.

26.5.2 An application for a memorial still must be made with a detailed picture, listing measurements of each separate piece of the cross.

26.5.2.1 The following conditions must be met for approval.

26.5.2.2 Within the maximum sizes of memorials

26.5.2.3 An additional one-third of the total height is staked below ground level.

26.5.2.4 Manufactured from a hardwood.

26.5.2.5 No ornate details

26.5.2.6 Must have a plaque or be engraved with the name of the interred.

26.5.2.7 Section and grave number on the reverse

26.5.3 Wooden crosses will be inspected on a yearly basis for their condition.

26.5.3.1 If a wooden cross has deteriorated contact will be made with the EROB owner for its restoration or removal.

26.5.3.2 Once a period of 6 weeks has passed from the first notification, cemetery operatives will remove the cross and store it in the cemetery depot.

26.6 Babies & Children's

26.6.1 Due to a smaller grave size, there are reflected smaller memorial sizes of a maximum height of 75cm.

26.7 Memorial Tablets

26.7.1 Memorial tablets are only permitted in the ashes path of Windrush cemetery.

26.7.2 These are restricted to just slopping desk tablets.

26.7.3 Size details can be found on the memorial sizes document.

27 Placement of items on graves and gardens

27.1 Graves can only be adorned with flowers and small items made of non-hazardous unbreakable materials such as wood, ceramic, or plastic.

27.1.1 All adorning items should be placed in the garden area or the area of the foundation slab of the memorial.

27.2 Any other items will be removed by Town Council staff and stored safely in the cemetery depot for collection if requested.

27.2.1 This will be done without notification and Witney Town Council takes no responsibility for damaged or lost items.

27.3 The following items are not permitted, this is not an exhaustive list but contains items that have been commonly found in the cemeteries.

27.3.1 Glass objects including items containing glass such as candle holders and photo frames.

27.3.2 Any shrubs or trees

27.3.2.1 These will be removed at the earliest convenience without notification and stored for collection if requested.

27.3.3 Electrical items such as solar lights

27.3.4 Balloons and large flower displays

27.3.4.1 On the date of internment, these may be left and will be cleared away by the Town Council 7 days following the internment if not done so already.

27.3.5 Any form of fencing/kerbing signifying the burial area

27.3.6 Large items such as statues

27.4 Witney Town Council will communicate with EROB where large items must be removed from graves.

27.4.1 The notification will first give the chance for the EROB owner to remove the items.

27.4.2 Once a period of 6 weeks has passed from the first notification, cemetery operatives will remove the items and store them in the cemetery depot.

27.5 Garden area

27.5.1 All lawned graves have a designated garden area in which the EROB grant owner can plant and place items.

27.5.2 The permitted garden area is the width of the foundation slab and has a depth of 45cm starting at the base of the foundation slab.

27.5.3 If the EROB owner does not wish to install a memorial and only wishes for a garden area the area can encompass the location of the headstone increasing, it to a 90cm square.

27.5.3.1 The EROB must still be purchased for a garden area.

27.5.4 No form of fencing/kerbing can be installed marking the area of the garden.

27.5.5 Shrubs and trees are not allowed to be planted.

28 Vaults

28.1 The construction and reopening of vaults will be managed by Witney Town Council.

28.2 Applications can be made to construct brick or concrete block vaults and concrete chambers or vault liners in both Tower Hill and Windrush Cemeteries.

28.2.1 Applications will be assessed against multiple criteria and may be rejected if the installation of a vault is not possible. Contributing factors that could affect an application are listed below.

28.2.1.1 Ground conditions

28.2.1.2 Plot size available in a burial area.

28.2.1.3 Neighbouring oversized plots

28.2.1.4 Achievable excavation depth

28.2.2 Vault should be installed simultaneously with grave reservations.

28.2.2.1 The time frame for an interment requesting a vault at the same time will be at the discretion of Witney Town Council

28.2.3 Vault constructions will be charged at the incurred contractor cost received by Witney Town Council plus an additional admin fee for management.

28.2.4 Vault interments will be charged at a single-depth burial charge.

28.3 Reopening of vaults

28.3.1 Notice from the burial manager to reopen an existing vault must be issued to Witney Town Council prior to any interment booking being made.

28.3.1.1 This is so Witney Town Council staff can open and inspect the condition of a vault and measure the vault for maximum coffin size.

These regulations will be monitored and reviewed by the Council's Policy, Governance & Finance Committee every 12 months, or in response to changes in legislation.

Adopted: Policy, Governance & Finance Committee on 31/05/2025. Minute Number: F86
Proposed Date for Review : March 2026

BRAMM

IMPROVING STANDARDS

BRAMM Cemetery of the Year Awards 2026

The FREE to enter competition will once again be available from 31 March until 30 June 2026 and open to any Burial Authority (Cemetery or Churchyard) within Britain.

This year there are only 50 yes/no questions focused primarily at the facilities offered directly to the bereaved, reducing the time to enter to less than 15 minutes. Feedback of the scores is given at the end of the questionnaire. Each question has a link to a “best practice” example if your cemetery is currently not providing the facility of the bereaved.

The three categories of Cemeteries in this year's competition are -

A. Large Burial Grounds above 10,000 graves

B. Small/Medium Burial Grounds up to 10,000 graves

C. Parish, Town and Community Councils

After the Competition closes a selection of the highest scores in each category will be taken forward and requested to supply 3 photographs of their Cemetery when extra marks will be awarded for the maintenance and appeal of their Cemeteries and used to determine the Cemetery of the Year Awards Gold and Silver places in each category.

The winner in each category will receive a Cemetery of the Year Gold Award Certificate and granite plaque, and a Cemetery of the Year Press Release that can be used to promote your achievement, in your local newspaper, social media and on your website. Silver Awards Certificates will be presented to the runners up along with a CYA Press Release.
Note: The competition will also include the following two extra categories in this year's competition.

D. The Best New CYA Entrant Award, for the highest scoring new entry in each category in CYA 2025.

The winner will receive a CYA Best New Entrant Certificate and a CYA Press Release that can be used to promote your achievement, in your local newspaper, social media and on your website.

E. The BRAMM Memorial Masons Award will be open to **any memorial** already fitted in a Cemetery within the last 5 years. Previous entries are not accepted.

It will be marked on its design and innovation qualities and the winner will receive £1000.00 prize money along with a BRAMM Gold Award Certificate and a BRAMM Press Release that can be used to promote your work.

Silver Awards will be presented to the runners up along with a BRAMM/CYA Press Release to promote your work.

Cemetery of the Year 2026 Rules.

1. *Any person entering the Cemetery of the Year competition accepts full responsibility for the accuracy and content of their responses to the prescribed questions. All answers must be*

provided truthfully, accurately, and in good faith. Entrants are expected to have due regard to, and demonstrate compliance with, all applicable Cemetery Regulations when submitting their responses.

2. *Entry to the competitions is restricted to one entry per Cemetery please, but multiple cemeteries from the same burial authority can enter.*

3. *If more than one Cemetery using an identical set of Cemetery Rules and Regulations from the same Burial Authority reaches the finalists in the same category, the organisers reserve the right to choose only one entry in that category.*

4. The competition is open to any Burial Authority (Cemetery or Churchyard) within Britain.

5. The top scores in each category will be adjudicated after the competition closing date using the contact details on the entry form.

6. The Adjudicator's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered in to.

7. The competition will run from March 31 until June 30 2026.

8. The finalists in each category will be invited to the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM) Conference in September 2026 to receive their prizes.

Good Luck