

Public Document Pack

CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Tuesday, 26 November 2024

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

Present:

Councillor A Bailey (Chair)

Councillors:	G Meadows J Aitman S Simpson	G Doughty J Doughty R Smith
Officers:	Adam Clapton Derek Mackenzie Cara Cannon Sharon Groth Nigel Warner Carl Whitehead	Deputy Town Clerk Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk Admin- Communities & Planning Town Clerk Responsible Financial Officer Park Ranger
Others:	2 members of the public.	

P667 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

P668 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers at this point of the meeting.

Later upon discussion of Item 15 – Church Green & Corn Street proposed parking restrictions, Councillor G Meadows declared a non-pecuniary interest due to her being a member of the Witney Town Charity which owned the Church Green Almshouses.

There were no other declarations from Members or Officers

P669 MINUTES

The minutes of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee meetings held on 17 September, 8 October and 5 November 2024 were received.

P504 – The Committee Clerk updated Members that Officers were awaiting contact from the family of Arthur Titherington to confirm they were happy with the naming of “Titherington Close”

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee meetings held on 17 September, 8 October and 5 November 2024 be approved as a correct record of the meetings and be signed by the Chair.

P670 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

The Committee adjourned for this item.

The Committee received representations from a resident of Station Lane concerning Agenda Item 15. He spoke as one of the residents who lived in seven properties in Station Lane on the Eastern side of the Church. The resident was able to provide additional information regarding the current parking arrangements which he felt principally worked under the current restrictions however, his main concern was the exclusion of these properties from the scheme.

Following the resident's participation Members asked questions to obtain additional clarification.

The Committee reconvened.

P671 **CHURCH GREEN & CORN STREET PROPOSED PARKING RESTRICTIONS**

With the express permission of the Chair, this item was moved up the agenda so the members of public could hear the discussion and outcome.

The Committee received and considered the notification from Oxfordshire Country Council regarding the proposed introduction of a residents parking scheme for Corn Street and Church Green.

Members discussed the proposal and supported the request of the member of public that had spoken as it was clear to them the implications the scheme would have on him and his neighbours. The Committee was also conscious of the additional impact of the Town Councils proposals to introduce parking restriction on The Leys which was in very close proximity to the proposed Church Green scheme could have.

The details of the scheme were discussed at length after which a proposal was made to support the Corn Street Scheme but to oppose the Church Green Scheme however, should the Church Green element proceed that the following be considered.

Witney Town Council welcomes discussion on these matters and are aware that discussions have taken place over many years with local stakeholders and residents.

With local knowledge, the Council supports the proposed restrictions in Corn Street but opposes those in Church Green. Should these proceed, the Council would expect the following to take place:

- *Discussion with all affected residents, including those in Station Lane and Farm Mill Lane on current parking provision and the need for visitor permits for these and others.*

- *The inclusion of the even numbered properties 2-12 & 20 Station Lane as a must. There is a concern that residents from properties surrounding the proposed area have not been consulted highlighting a lack of local knowledge.*
- *Review the “Vision for Church Green” document which was submitted to Witney Traffic Advisory Committee in 2021 (attached),*
- *Consider the impact of potential parking restrictions at The Leys, being proposed by Witney Town Council for introduction in 2025.*
- *Consideration of disabled bays by the Almshouses*
- *There is parking along the Henry Box School side of Church Green which currently has no restrictions and is not included in the scheme – further consideration of this should take place.*
- *The Council would also like to comment that a section at the Church western end of Church Green is showing as having restrictions in the consultation document, but this is not the case.*

Vote was then called for. The proposal was carried, with voting as follows:

In Favour	6
Against	0
Abstentions	1

Resolved:

1. That, the correspondence be noted and,
2. That, the response outlining the Committees decision and concerns above be forwarded to OCC for consideration.

(The members of the public left the meeting at 6:32pm)

P672 **FINANCE REPORT: REVISED REVENUE BUDGET 2024/25 AND DRAFT BASE REVENUE BUDGET FOR 2025/26**

The Committee received and considered the report of the RFO concerning the base revenue budget, draft estimates on budget parameters for 2024/25 and a revenue budget summary.

For the benefit of Members, the RFO outlined the contents of the report and explained that now the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Team were established that projects were coming to fruition at pace which had led to modest increases in general.

The main increase was due to personnel costs resulting from the establishment of the Green Spaces team and more of the budgets lines being attributed directly to specific cost centres rather than to a general budget line. However, this would allow for greater future analysis on individual budget costs.

Members were unanimously in agreement with the draft revised base revenue budget for 2024/25 and the estimated base revenue budgets for 2025/26.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,

2. That, the draft revised base revenue budget for 2024/25 and the estimated base revenue budgets for 2025/26, as detailed be agreed.

(Councillor G Meadows left the meeting at 6:40pm)

P673 REVENUE GROWTH ITEMS, SPECIAL REVENUE PROJECTS, AND CAPITAL PROJECTS

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer.

Members heard that the majority of new Capital Items could be met from the existing earmarked budget.

The RFO also advised that Officers had been successful in obtaining grant assistance for many of the projects which helped to supplement the earmarked reserves and assist the delivery of projects.

The Committee were all in agreement with the reports proposals.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, that the Revenue Growth and new Capital items be agreed by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee.

(The RFO and Town Clerk left the meeting at 6:44pm)

(Councillor G Meadows returned to the meeting at 6:48pm)

P674 BIODIVERSITY UPDATE

The Committee received the report of the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer (B&GSO) which provided an update on the work to improve the towns biodiversity across its green spaces.

Members heard about the plans to establish wildflower areas at eight sites. The Committee asked that these be larger in size than previous years and for consideration to be given to the height of the potential growth so as not to impact the vision of both pedestrian and vehicles at roundabouts or junctions.

The Committee heard that Officers had been exploring the sponsorship of roundabouts to offset some of the cost of the wildflower planting, Members were agreeable to this being explored further providing relevant due diligence was carried out.

The subject of No Mow May arose and opinions were offered by Members, it was explained by the B&GSO that there was a huge benefit from the scheme however, it was imperative to get the process correct so as not to leave areas looking unkempt and affecting vision displays at junctions. The past had shown that with WODC and OCC having reduced cutting schedules it was areas under their ownership which reflected negatively on the Town Council in the eyes of residents and visitors to the town.

Members agreed that communications from the Council should be improved to provide details of when, where and why the Council was cutting or not cutting particular areas.

The Committee considered two matters in relation to tree works; they were supportive of the Council's tree policy however asked that a pragmatic approach be taken in cases where potential damage to property could occur and asked officers to review the policy.

Lastly, Members considered the Biodiversity Policy, the document had also been considered by the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee the previous day and a recommendation made to include details of the employment of the council's Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer. Members were unanimously in agreement with the recommendation to adopt the policy

Resolved:

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, the Council support the principles of No Mow May in selected areas with increased communication and,
3. That, delegation be provided to officers to establish wildflower areas and,
4. That, Sponsorship at roundabouts be supported and explored further and,
5. That, the request to remove or reduce the size of a healthy tree as outlined in the report be refused and,
6. That, Officers review the Council Tree Policy to provide greater clarity on the reasoning for its decision-making processes and,
7. That, subject to the amendment recommended at Policy, Governance & Finance on 25 November 2024 that the Biodiversity Policy be adopted.

(Councillor A Bailey left the meeting at 7:17pm and handed the remit of Chair to the Vice Chair Councillor G Meadows)

P675 **WITNEY LAKE & COUNTRY PARK - OPERATIONAL UPDATE**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer concerning the works and projects the green spaces team had been engaged with.

Members were updated on the details of water testing which was being carried out to monitor the Lake, the In Bloom Silver Gilt award achievement, work to improve the fishing platforms in conjunction with Witney Angling Society and also the recent Lakeside allotments flooding events.

The Committee were pleased to hear of the work to introduce community orchards at Thorney Leys and Snipe Meadow.

The B&GSO updated Members also on an additional proposal to add an orchard at King George V Field. Officers were in discussions with Oxfordshire County Council to ensure the orchard would complement the proposed path which was under consideration to cross the field also. All Members were in agreement with the establishment of all three orchards.

Resolved:

1. That, the report and verbal update be noted and,
2. That, Officers progress the idea of a community orchard at King George V Field.

P676 **WITNEY LAKE & COUNTRY PARK - MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Committee received the report of the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer which provided an update on progress on of the Lake & Country Park Management Plan.

Members heard of the proposal to register the Country Park with the aim of it becoming a Local Nature Reserve. It was proposed by Councillor J Aitman and seconded by Councillor J Doughty that Officers proceed with the application and all Members were in agreement.

The Committee also discussed proposals to repair the well-used paths around the lake which had suffered due to the extensive flooding from the River Windrush; they also discussed the potential to widen some of the path to make them more accessible and Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliant. The Committee were in agreement that further investigations to cost be explored and conversations held regarding potential third-party funding. They were particularly pleased this was an item raised in the 2024 resident's survey.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Officers apply for Local Nature Reserve status at the Country Park and,
3. That, Officers proceeding with costings for the path repairs and potential widening around Witney Lake.

P677 **WODC INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN - GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE**

The Committee received and considered the correspondence received from Capita Local Public Services in respect of the West Oxfordshire District Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan for green infrastructure across Witney.

In response to a Member's question, the B&GSO confirmed that it was imperative to be included in the overall WODC plan so it was agreed he would work with the Head of Operations and Estates to provide a submission of the Council's Management Plan to be considered.

Resolved:

1. That, the correspondence be noted and,
2. That, delegation be provided to the B&GSO and HO&E to complete the submission of the management plan and additional comments for consideration in the new WODC Infrastructure Plan.

P678 **COTSWOLDS NATIONAL LANDSCAPE DRAFT MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Committee received the Cotswolds National Landscape Management Plan which was currently in a draft format.

Members again asked the opinion of the B&GSO who confirmed he had received and considered the draft consultation and although Witney was located outside of the Cotswold Area of Nature Beauty (ANOB), the River Windrush ran from that area into and through the town and the Country Park, therefore he would continue to contribute to the consultation as it progressed on behalf of the Council.

Resolved:

1. That, the correspondence be noted and,
2. That, delegation be provided to the B&GSO to make submissions to the consultation and provide updates to the Committee.

(The Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer left the meeting at 7:45pm)

P679 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Committee received and considered a schedule of planning applications from West Oxfordshire District Council.

With the express permission of the Chair, an additional application was considered, this was a re-consultation following amended plans being submitted for 33 Moorland Close, Witney Planning Ref:24/02341/HDD due to the short consultation period advised by WODC. A response of "Witney Town Council have no objection to amended plans" was agreed for submission.

Members noted the re-consultation of the application in respect of Former Hackett's, Wesley Walk Planning Ref:24/02179/FUL which had been circulated to members outside of the Committee again due to the short consultation period advised by WODC. For which a response of "Witney Town Council has no objections to this application" was submitted on 12 November 2024.

Resolved:

That, the comments, as per the attached schedule be forwarded to West Oxfordshire District Council.

P680 PLANNING DECISIONS

The Committee received and considered a schedule of planning decisions received from West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC).

The Committee Clerk summarised the reasoning for the decisions that were contrary to the Committee's submission.

Resolved:

That, the list circulated advising of WODC planning decisions be noted.

P681 OCC PLANNING CHANGES CONSULTATION

The Committee received and considered an updated criteria list for Oxfordshire County Council Planning Applications.

Members noted all aspects appeared to be covered but the document was difficult to navigate with the absence of a contents page.

Resolved:

That, the proposed changes be noted.

P682 SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

As the meeting would run over 2 hours in length, the Committee agreed to suspend standing order 48 in order to allow the meeting to continue for a further 30 minutes.

P683 A40 EYNHAM PARK & RIDE TO WOLVERCOTE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The Committee received and considered the notification of public engagement for the A40 Eynsham Park & Ride to Wolvercote scheme.

Members welcomed the scheme however had concerns which formed the response.

Witney Town Council welcomes the public consultation on the plans for the A40 Eynsham Park & Ride to Wolvercote Scheme however, it has concerns that they ask are acknowledged and addressed.

- *The Witney to Eynsham section is the slowest current section for users of the A40 route into Oxford, this section is no longer to see improvements as originally discussed therefore no through link is to be provided to Witney.*
- *The Council welcomes the improvements to bike routes and priority bus lanes.*
- *No clear mention is made of the future of Cuckoo Lane. The Council ask that the two-way access remains as currently. This provides an important alternative route when needed to safely disperse traffic in a safe and coordinated manner*
- *The Council expects Witney, as the second largest service centre on the A40 route, to be highlighted as a destination for all users.*
- *Flooding – The November 2024 flooding incidents which led to the severe restriction and eventual closure of the A40 road and cycle paths illustrated the importance for a plan to ensure the transfer of users across the proposal area in the event of future flooding events.*

Members also agreed that all ward Councillors should be encouraged to submit their own submissions to the scheme as well as asking residents to submit their own thoughts.

Resolved:

1. That, the correspondence be noted and,
2. That, the above response be submitted to Oxfordshire County Council and,
3. That, all Witney Town Council members be encouraged to submit responses on behalf of their ward members.

P684 FOOTPATH MODIFICATION ORDER 2024 - MARLBOROUGH LANE, WITNEY

The Committee received notification of a footpath modification order from Oxfordshire County Council.

Members welcomed the correction to the footpath mapping to ensure that access is correctly recorded.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted.

P685 APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL OF PAVEMENT LICENCE - GREGGS, 4-5 WELCH WAY, WITNEY

The Committee received the application from Greggs, 4-5 Welch Way, Witney for a renewal premises licence.

Resolved:

That, a No Objection response be forwarded to the licencing team at West Oxfordshire District Council.

P686 WITNEY TRAFFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE MINUTES 24 SEPTEMBER 2024

The Committee received the minutes of the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee held on 18 June 2024.

Members considered the matter of line marking at Windrush Leisure Centre per Minute T53. The Committee was unanimous that the issue be raised with Oxfordshire County Council for the renewal of the white lining.

Resolved:

1. That, the minutes of the Witney Traffic Advisory Committee held 24 September 2024 be noted and,
2. That, that a request be forwarded to OCC requesting the replacement of the line markings out of the Windrush Leisure Centre.

P687 WITNEY SHORES GREEN - CONDITION 8 (LIGHTING SCHEME) - PLANNING REF: R3.0103/24

The Committee received correspondence relating to the approval of Planning Application Ref: R3.0103/24 (Lighting Scheme) at the Shores Green Junction of the A40.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted.

P688 WITNEY SHORES GREEN - CONDITION 19 (EUROPEAN PROTECTED SPECIES MITIGATION LICENCE) - PLANNING REF: R3.0118/24

The Committee received correspondence relating to the approval of Planning Application Ref: R3.0118/24 (European Protected Species Mitigation Licence) at the Shores Green Junction of the A40.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted.

P689 **WITNEY SHORES GREEN - CONDITION 20 AND 21 (DRAINAGE STRATEGY) - PLANNING REF: R3.0104/24**

The Committee received correspondence relating to the approval of Planning Application Ref: R3.0104/24 (Drainage Strategy) at the Shores Green Junction of the A40.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted.

The meeting closed at: 8.07 pm

Chair

Witney Town CouncilPlanning Minutes - 26th November 2024

679

-
- 679- 1 WTC/160/24 Plot Ref :-24/02573/FUL Type :- FULL
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 12/11/2024
 Location :- 27 MARKET SQUARE Date Returned :- 27/11/2024
 MARKET SQUARE
 Proposal : Conversion of retail storage/ancillary space to two flats.
 Observations : Whilst Witney Town Council does not object to this application in principle, Members ask that an acoustic assessment be carried out to assess any noise impact to the proposed development, from the surrounding area prior to first occupation.
-
- 679- 2 WTC/161/24 Plot Ref :-24/02697/HHD Type :- HOUSEHOLDE
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 12/11/2024
 Location :- JUNIPER HOUSE 3A BURFORD Date Returned :- 27/11/2024
 ROAD
 BURFORD ROAD
 Proposal : Erection of a single storey rear extension.
 Observations : While Witney Town Council does not object to this application in terms of material concerns, it notes the loss of permeable drainage and would ask that mitigating measures are considered to help decrease the possibility of surface water flooding in this area, in accordance with policy EH7 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.
-
- 679- 3 WTC/162/24 Plot Ref :-24/02740/S73 Type :- VARIATION
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 12/11/2024
 Location :- 1 FRENCH CLOSE Date Returned :- 27/11/2024
 FRENCH CLOSE
 Proposal : Variation of condition 2 of planning permission 22/02953/FUL to allow the removal of shared access with changes to surfaces and relocation of bike and bin store for plot 1 and bike store for plot 2.
 Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.
-
- 679- 4 WTC/163/24 Plot Ref :-24/02742/S73 Type :- VARIATION
 Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 12/11/2024
 Location :- 38 LANGDALE GATE Date Returned :- 27/11/2024
 LANGDALE GATE
 Proposal : Variation of condition 2 (to allow changes to floor area and layout, and alterations to the roof design including rooflight locations) and condition 3 (to allow the use of brick in place of timber at ground floor level) of planning permission 22/01630/HHD.
 Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.
-

679- 5	WTC/164/24	Plot Ref :-24/02645/S73	Type :-	VARIATION
	Applicant Name :- .		Date Received :-	12/11/2024
	Location :- 60 CORN STREET CORN STREET		Date Returned :-	27/11/2024
	Proposal : Variation of condition 2 of permission 11/1725/P/FP to allow the addition of an external door and accessway			
	Observations : Witney Town Council does not object in principle however, Members request re-consultation should the opinion of the Conservation/Heritage Officer not concur.			
679- 6	WTC/165/24	Plot Ref :-24/02646/LBC	Type :-	LISTED BUI
	Applicant Name :- .		Date Received :-	12/11/2024
	Location :- 60 CORN STREET CORN STREET		Date Returned :-	27/11/2024
	Proposal : Internal and external alterations (amendments to listed building consent 11/1726/P/LB to include formation of a doorway in external wall at first floor rear gable elevation to provide means of escape and construction of a raised external balcony to provide linked access to existing balcony) Part retrospective.			
	Observations : Witney Town Council does not object in principle however, Members request re-consultation should the opinion of the Conservation/Heritage Officer not concur.			
679- 7	WTC/166/24	Plot Ref :-24/02763/HHD	Type :-	HOUSEHOLDE
	Applicant Name :- .		Date Received :-	12/11/2024
	Location :- 67 EARLY ROAD EARLY ROAD		Date Returned :-	27/11/2024
	Proposal : Demolish garden wall and erection of 1m high boundary wall.			
	Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.			
679- 8	WTC/167/27	Plot Ref :-24/02762/HHD	Type :-	HOUSEHOLDE
	Applicant Name :- .		Date Received :-	12/11/2024
	Location :- 67 EARLY ROAD EARLY ROAD		Date Returned :-	27/11/2024
	Proposal : Demolish conservatory, erection of single storey rear extension, front porch, new door into the existing bay and enlarge existing front windows.			
	Observations : While Witney Town Council does not object to this application in terms of material concerns, it notes the loss of permeable drainage and would ask that mitigating measures are considered to help decrease the possibility of surface water flooding in this area, in accordance with policy EH7 of the West Oxfordshire Local Plan 2031.			
679- 9	WTC/168/24	Plot Ref :-24/02643/HHD	Type :-	HOUSEHOLDE
	Applicant Name :- .		Date Received :-	12/11/2024
	Location :- 56 NEW YATT ROAD NEW YATT ROAD		Date Returned :-	27/11/2024
	Proposal : Erection of single storey rear extension with a lean to roof and an open gable end porch.			
	Observations : While Witney Town Council does not object to this application in terms of material concerns, it notes the loss of permeable drainage and would ask that mitigating measures are considered to help decrease the possibility of surface			

679- 10 WTC/169/24 Plot Ref :-24/02179/FUL Type :- FULL
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 12/11/2024
Location :- FORMER HACKETTS WESLEY WALK Date Returned :- 27/11/2024
WESLEY WALK
Proposal : New structural opening to accommodate commercial kitchen extraction system and the installation of 3 number external air conditioning condensers.
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections to this application.

679- 11 WTC/170/24 Plot Ref :-24/02702/FUL Type :- FULL
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 12/11/2024
Location :- UNIT C NEWMAN COURT Date Returned :- 27/11/2024
NEWMAN COURT
Proposal : Change of use from B1 to B2 motor service and repairs.
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

679- 12 WTC/171/24 Plot Ref :-24/02393/FUL Type :- FULL
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 12/11/2024
Location :- WITNEY MILLS CC NEWLAND Date Returned :- 27/11/2024
NEWLAND
Proposal : Installation of a 3 lane enclosed practice cricket facility.
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections to this application. Members support and encourage this development and welcomes the potential growth for the Cricket Club this may bring.

679- 13 WTC/172/24 Plot Ref :-24/02394/FUL Type :- FULL
Applicant Name :- . Date Received :- 12/11/2024
Location :- WITNEY MILLS CC NEWLAND Date Returned :- 27/11/2024
NEWLAND
Proposal : Increase in height of the boundary net fence.
Observations : Witney Town Council has no objections regarding this application.

The Meeting closed at : 8:07pm

Signed : _____ Chairman Date: _____

On behalf of :- Witney Town Council