

**Witney Town Council**  
**VE & VJ Day 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Task & Finish Group**

**Virtually via Microsoft Teams**  
**13 March 2025, 4pm**

**In Attendance:** Cllr J Robertshaw (elected Chair of meeting), Cllr O Collins, Cllr R Crouch, Cllr G Meadows, Cllr J Treloar.

Adam Clapton, Polly Inness, Cara Murray, Annie Hathaway.

**Apologies of Absence:** Cllr J Aitman had advised she would be late to join the meeting.

**Minutes:** The minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2025 were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

**VE & VJ Days Anniversaries Report:**

The Task & Finish Group received the update of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer (CCEO).

The Group were taken through the report, which confirmed the items which had been recommended and agreed by the Council to mark the occasion(s).

There were some groups and individuals still to contact as a priority and BBC South Today had asked to broadcast live from Market Square during their evening show on 8<sup>th</sup> May – a meeting on this would take place with the Mayor and Chair of this Group the following Thursday. In addition, the following points were discussed:

Ring of Bells

Cllr O Collins was leading on this and had recorded a video to help advertise and encourage residents to participate which had been finalised and sent to Cllr Collins for approval. Although he had attended the Witney Bellringers in the previous week, they had not confirmed they were taking part in the national peel.

Entertainment in Market Square

Witney Town Band had confirmed they would be performing between 6-7pm with a break for the bellringing.

It was hoped participants in Market Square would wear 1940's style clothing, including Buttercross Theatre, WOAPA, and Witney Dramatic Society but confirmations hadn't yet been received.

The Chair of the meeting asked if there would be any MC for the evening. It was agreed there could be an MC, with both Cllr Collins and Treloar offering to fill the role. Officers

agreed to consider if it was needed as the Mayor had officiated at the D-Day celebration in 2024 and it had worked well.

The Chair also raised the National Lamplight of Peace. Officers advised this had been brought forward from what was happening nationally from 9.30pm to 7.30-8pm. This was because it was deemed too late for some taking part and the Corn Exchange 1940's Open Mic Night would be starting at 8pm. The Cadets would hopefully take part in this part of the evening as they had for the D-Day 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

### Promotion

Officers advised the event would be publicised through the usual Council channels – social media, posters, and an issued PR. In addition, it had been advertised in the annual newsletter delivered to every household and would be in the April Witney Letterbox magazine.

### Street Parties

The CCEO advised the information on applying for street parties was still accessible on the Town Council Website. Cllr R Crouch advised she would find out if WODC were making the process simpler for the May Bank Holiday weekend, and if so, the town council could share the information.

### VJ Day – 15<sup>th</sup> August 2025

Members were reminded the plans to mark this would centre on the museum and a display they were planning for Arthur Titherington, the former Japanese POW. A Member advised it would be helpful if Officers could find out when a street sign for the new housing development, named in his memory would be unveiled. He was also memorialised on a bench on Church Green which could be covered in knitted poppies.

It was also agreed there should be some kind of wreath-laying to mark the occasion and possibly a display of archive newspapers.

### **Recommended:**

1. That, the report and updates be noted.

Meeting closed at 4:33pm

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No further meetings of the T&F Group were scheduled, but all agreed one should be held in June to finalise the VJ Day 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary items. Date TBC.