

**FULL COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 14 April 2025

At 7.04 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor O Collins (Chair)

Councillors:	A Bailey	A Mubin
	G Meadows	G Doughty
	J Aitman	J Doughty
	T Ashby	D Newcombe
	D Enright	S Simpson
	R Smith	J Treloar
Officers:	Sharon Groth	Town Clerk
	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
Others:	None.	

202 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Robertshaw, R Crouch & D Edwards-Hughes.

203 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or officers.

204 MINUTES

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 17 February 2025 were received.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Council meeting held on 17 February 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meetings and be signed by the Chair.

205 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

206 **WITNEY COMMUNITY POLICING ISSUES**

There was no representative from Thames Valley Police present.

Councillor A Mubin arrived at 7:08pm during the following agenda item.

207 **AN UPDATE FROM WITNEY OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLORS AND WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILLORS**

West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC)

Cllr J Doughty reported on the housing situation within the district which was currently extremely stretched due in part to the lack of available properties. Private landlords continued to sell properties rather than these remaining as rental housing stock. Officers were working at capacity however should Members have anyone with needs they should be directed to the Welch Way Office.

Cllr D Enright and Cllr R Smith also added their concerns with Cllr Smith reassuring Members that WODC were looking at ways to fill these gaps however, there was a lack of suitable properties. Support was also being provided by way of loans to landlords to bring empty homes back into use.

Cllr D Enright provided updates which included the repurposing of the Elmfield site to provide a new business centre with flexible units and a café. He also updated Members on the developments within the Marriotts shopping area such as the new decorations and the consultation taking place with tenants regarding a new layout of the centre.

He had also been working with the Witney Chamber of Commerce to review the attraction of visitors and shoppers to Witney and welcomed the long-awaited plans for the new layout of the High Street which were due to be presented in May after the County Council Elections. In addition, a motion had been passed concerning provision of banks and banking hubs in the District.

Cllr R Smith advised that the Community Infrastructure Levy agreement was due to be signed off by WODC in June. Also, that the electoral boundary review had been postponed due to the impending devolution and reorganisation of Oxfordshire's local government organisations.

Resolved:

That, the updates be noted.

208 **REPORT BACK FROM THE COUNCILLORS ON THE WORK WITH EXTERNAL BODIES WHERE THEY SERVE AS THE TOWN COUNCIL'S NOMINATED REPRESENTATIVE**

RAF Brize Norton Local Consultation Group

Cllr D Newcombe reported back on a recent meeting where much of the discussion was in relation to minor ground maintenance issues, such as grass cutting and hedge maintenance along with noise complaints from aircraft activity. The consultation group had been assured that measures were in place to mitigate noise. The Council understood this would be something expected from the UK's largest operational air base.

Witney Allotment Association (WAA)

Cllr R Smith advised that the WAA had held their Annual General Meeting which she has facilitated as Chair. It was hoped that the two new sub-committees would now work toward their establishments and separation of the agreed activities.

Witney Sports & Social Club

Cllr Smith also updated on the recent Annual General Meeting and the Committee welcomed the upcoming redevelopment, the financing of which they hoped would be attainable by the Council.

Witney Town Band

Cllr O Collins had attended the recent Annual General Meeting. He reported that their finances and moral was good and that they had passed on their thanks to the Council for the support which had been provided to them over the past years.

Witney Twinning Association

Cllr Collins also advised of the plans for the celebration of the anniversary of the two twin towns which would take place on 2nd May with an event in the Corn Exchange. All Members were welcome to attend and were reminded to respond to the invitation that had been sent by Friday 18 April.

Cllr A Bailey advised, as Chair of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee, he had attended a workshop regarding the introduction of Oxfordshire's Local Area Energy Plans (LAEPs) which was concerned with how the County could be powered by renewable, locally generated energy in the future.– He advised he would keep the Council updated with any future information and on developments.

Resolved:

That, the updates be noted.

209 **CLIMATE, BIODIVERSITY & PLANNING COMMITTEE - 4 MARCH & 25 MARCH**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Climate, Biodiversity & Planning Committee meetings held on 4 March & 25 March be received and any recommendations therein approved.

210 **PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE - 10 MARCH**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

PR 142 – The Town Clerk/CEO presented a plaque received from Witney Town Football Club which was to be displayed in the Corn Exchange as a recognition of the agreed community partnership.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 10 March be received and any recommendations therein approved.

211 **HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE - 17 MARCH**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 17 March be received and any recommendations therein approved.

212 **STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE - 24 MARCH**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee meeting held on 24 March be received and any recommendations therein approved.

213 **POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE COMMITTEE - 31 MARCH**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

Additionally, the Chair of the Committee provided a short verbal update of the decisions made at the special meeting of the Committee that had immediately proceeded this Council meeting. Full minutes would be prepared and presented at the next meeting.

Resolved:

1. That, the minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance Committee meeting held on 17 March be received and any recommendations therein approved and,
2. That, the verbal update from the Special meeting held on 14 April be noted and the recommendations be approved.

214 **CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Council received the report of the Mayor and Mayor's Secretary which highlighted the civic engagements of the Mayor and Deputy since the last meeting.

The Mayor advised that the two performances of "every Brilliant Thing" had been well attended and had resulted in an amount of over £1,100 being raised for the Mayor's charities. He thanked all those that had attended as well as the generosity of the writer, the sole performer and the Corn Exchange staff.

He expressed thanks to his Deputy and Secretary for the support they had provided over this period as it was his final meeting as Mayor, he also extended those thanks to all Members.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

215 **MAYOR ELECT**

The Chair, Cllr O Collins invited nominations for the position of Town Mayor for the ensuing municipal year.

Cllr Collins proposed his Deputy, Cllr A Bailey to serve as Town Mayor. With no further nomination's forthcoming, a vote was taken and other than one abstention, Members were unanimous in agreement.

Therefore, Cllr A Bailey was duly voted Mayor Elect by the Council for the municipal year 2025/2026.

Resolved:

That, Cllr Andy Bailey be voted Mayor Elect/Designate for the ensuing municipal year.

Councillor G Meadow left the meeting at 7:31pm

216 **HEALTH & SAFETY**

The Council received the report of the newly appointed Compliance and Environment Officer regarding Health & Safety matters.

Members welcomed the report and the regular updates that it provides.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

217 **VANDALISM & ANTI SOCIAL ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

The Council received a list of vandalism reports since the last meeting.

Members were disappointed to see the detail recorded however, thanked the Operations Team for stepping in and dealing with incidents as soon as possible.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted

218 **ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES - 19 MARCH 2025**

The Council received the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 19 March.

The Chair expressed his thanks to the Councillors who had attended and that it had been an enjoyable evening with no kerfuffle or major issues.

The Committee Clerk provided a verbal update of the action taken as a result of questions that arose in the meeting which had been passed to other organisations for actioning. Members thanked him for resolving these so swiftly and asked the Officers consider publication of this work to update residents.

Resolved:

1. That, the minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 19 March be noted and,
2. That, the verbal update be noted and publicised in the most appropriate way.

Councillor G Meadow returned to the meeting at 7:36pm

219 **CIVILITY & RESPECT UPDATE**

The Council received the report of the Deputy Town Clerk which provided a reminder to Members of the National Association of Local Council's (NALC) Civility & Respect pledge which Witney Town Council signed up to in October 2022.

It was emphasised to all Councillors that the pledge covered all aspects of their engagement. .

Members were also reminded of the training opportunities that were available to them and should contact the Deputy Town Clerk to participate in any of them.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Councils adherence to the NALC Civility & Respect pledge be noted and,
3. That, Members review and consider any training requirements in order to fulfil their roles.

220 **GOVERNANCE – REGISTER OF INTERESTS, HOSPITALITY & DATA PROTECTION**

The Council received the report of the Deputy Town Clerk this time providing a reminder to Councillors of their obligations concerning the declarations of their interests, hospitality and data protection.

Members were reminded of the Data Protection training session scheduled for 14 June 2025, those who were unable to attend the previous session were strongly encouraged to attend the June session.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Members note their obligations regarding Register of interest, Gifts & Hospitality and Data Protection and,
3. That, a data protection training session will be run for all Members on 14 June 2025.

221 **COMMUNICATION FROM THE LEADER**

There was no communication from the Leader.

222 **BRONZE NALC LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME**

The Council received correspondence relating to the awarding of the National Association of Local Councils Bronze Award to the Council.

Members offered their thanks to Officers, in particular the Deputy Town Clerk, who had worked extremely hard to ensure that that Council met the required standards.

The award was evidence that the Council was well managed and governed in line with legislation.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted.

223 **COURTSIDE CIC**

The Council received a confidential update from Courtside CIC regarding the progress of the Leys Community Hub.

A Member asked what arrangements were in place by Courtside to provide activities for older residents. Officers advised they would follow this up with Courtside and report back.

Resolved:

1. That, the correspondence be noted and,
2. That, Officers ask for details of activities for older residents from Courtside.

224 **ENVIRONMENT AGENCY - FLOODING & LOCAL PLAN 2041**

The Council received correspondence from the Environment Agency which was in reply to the Council letter of 6 January regarding the Flooding & Local Plan 2041.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted.

225 **PCC FEBRUARY & MARCH NEWSLETTERS**

The Council received notice of the Police & Commissioners February & March 2025 newsletters.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted.

226 **OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL - CHURCH GREEN & CORN STREET PARKING RESTRICTIONS**

The Council received notification of the amendments to the Parking restrictions which had come into effect on 7 April 2025.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted.

227 **WODC NET ZERO UPDATES FOR SALT CROSS GARDEN VILLAGE**

The Council received an update of progress on the Salt Cross Garden Village Net Zero aims.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted.

228 **THAMES VALLEY FLOOD SCHEME**

The Council received notification from the Environment Agency regarding the closure of the Thames Valley Flood Scheme.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted.

229 **QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

There were no questions for the Leader of the Council.

230 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

The Town Clerk advised that the following documents were sealed by the Council.

Date	No of Seal	Nature of Document
18 February 2025	93	Lease of Unit 29 Stanley Court in duplicate with HTF Holdings
18 February 2025	94	Rent Deposit Deed for Lease of Unit 29 Stanley Court in duplicate with HTF Holdings
11 March 2025	96	Declaration of Nature Reserve under the National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act 1949
18 March 2025	97	Renewal/Extension to the lease for Unit 3 Coseley Building, Windrush Industrial Estate, Witney with Welland Property Trustee Ltd. (Previous Seal ref 90 refers).

The Chair also advised that the certificates presented to recipients of Citizen of the Year Awards had also been sealed.

Resolved:

1. That, the above sealed documents be noted and,
2. That the seal of the Council be affixed to any documents arising from decisions taken by this meeting of the Council.

The meeting closed at: 7.47 pm

Chair