

Witney Town Council Annual Residents' Satisfaction Survey 2025

Summary Report for Committee

Prepared by: Administrative Support Assistant – Communities & Planning | Date: 22nd May 2025

Introduction

The 2025 Annual Satisfaction Survey gathered feedback from **344 residents**, including detailed age data and over 160 comments. The goal was to assess perceptions of services delivered by Witney Town Council, identify strengths, and inform areas for improvement.

Demographics: Who Responded?

Age Group Breakdown (334 responses):

Age Range	Count	Percentage
17 or younger	122	36.5%
60 or older	114	34.1%
50–59	33	9.9%
40–49	23	6.9%
30–39	26	7.8%
21–29	8	2.4%
18–20	8	2.4%

Key Insights:

The largest responding group was under 18, highlighting fantastically strong engagement from young people. There was also significant feedback from older residents (60+). Young adults (18–29) were underrepresented.

What the Council is Doing Well

Highest Rated Services:

Service	Avg. Score (out of 4)	Resident Feedback Highlights
Civic Events (e.g. Remembrance)	3.06	Praised as respectful and well-executed.
Corn Exchange	2.99	Community hub for music and activities.
Christmas Lights	2.92	Popular seasonal feature.
Community Events	2.80	Family-friendly and inclusive.
Recreation Grounds/Open Spaces	2.75	Enjoyed by families and walkers.

Positive Mentions in Comments:

- Floral displays continue to be appreciated.
- Witney Lake and the Country Park received praise for recent improvements.
- The printed newsletter was well received — residents requested a wider distribution.

Areas for Improvement

Area	Issue Type	Details
Communication	Awareness Gap	Residents reported being unaware of events and how to engage.
Street Furniture	Condition	Reports of poorly maintained benches, bins, and shelters.
Grass Cutting & Pitch Maintenance	Recreation Grounds	Multiple comments, including from youth sports participants and local football clubs, highlighted inconsistent or inadequate grass cutting on playing fields. Specific issues were raised about Burwell Field and The Leys, where long grass or poor conditions affected regular training and matches.
Youth Provision	Lack of structured spaces	High youth participation revealed a lack of safe, age-appropriate facilities.

Feedback Themes

Positive suggestions:

- More daytime events for older adults, including affordable meals, games, and community interaction.
- Affordable, regular evening events at the Corn Exchange (e.g. music, quizzes, bingo).
- Strong support for beautification efforts – (more flowers was a common request!)
- Desire to see more done with Marriotts Walk, such as creating a more of an evening culture. Note: *Marriotts Walk is the responsibility of WODC.*

Common concerns:

- Potholes and drainage issues were frequently mentioned. Although they are the responsibility of OCC, many residents still direct complaints to WTC, which highlights the need for clearer signposting on who is responsible for what.
- Confusion over council responsibilities remained a key theme with residents expressing frustration about issues that fall under WODC or OCC, such the High Street improvements, as well as public toilets being insufficient either in number or poorly maintained. They assume they are WTC matters and again reinforces the need for clearer public education on Council roles.
- Cleanliness and littering were also commonly mentioned and pointed to issues in both parks and public areas, with some expressing frustration at the perceived decline in tidiness, particularly in high-footfall areas.
- The pace of visible change or improvement was criticised, a few comments reflected the view that the Town Council is too slow to act on known issues, with some respondents feeling “consulted but not heard.”

Under 18 Feedback

With 122 youth respondents, common themes included:

- Calls for more youth spaces and places to meet.
- Requests for sports areas, music or entertainment venues, and food outlets.
- Feelings of being targeted or moved on unfairly by others when gathering socially.

The survey saw an impressive response from young people; their feedback offers a valuable window into how our younger residents experience Witney, both the opportunities and the limitations. A recurring theme in their comments was the need for more spaces to safely gather and socialise and many young people said they struggle to find places where they can simply “hang out” without having to spend money or feel unwelcome. Suggestions ranged from dedicated youth clubs and drop-in centres to ideas like under-16s events, indoor lounges, or even spaces for gaming and table sports. This desire for a social “third space” - somewhere that is neither home nor school, came through repeatedly.

Food and retail options featured prominently too. Fast food outlets were mentioned frequently, alongside requests for more teen-oriented retail outlets, but these aren’t just about consumption, they’re tied to a sense of independence, belonging, and participation in wider social life.

When it comes to activity and recreation, they were very clear: Witney’s current offering does not meet their needs. There were multiple requests for improved and more accessible sports facilities, particularly AstroTurf pitches, football goals with nets, and basketball courts, some also mentioned underused fields or poor maintenance of recreational grounds as barriers to participation. Larger ideas like an ice rink, bowling alley, and indoor leisure centre upgrades also appeared, showing an appetite for more ambitious, longer-term investment in youth infrastructure!

Several respondents also expressed frustration at being “moved on” or made to feel unwelcome in public spaces and expressed a desire for “people to be nicer to young people.” There were also concerns about the prevalence of litter, the lack of mental health support, and the easy access to energy drinks and vapes — which some suggested could be better controlled. A few responses revealed more awareness of community engagement and decision-making; one young person specifically called for the Youth Council to give teenagers a say in town matters.

Interestingly, there were also a few comments which also mentioned flowers, floral displays, and nice places around town, suggesting that they value aesthetics and would like more attractive public spaces — perhaps places they can be proud of, meet friends, or share on social media. This hints at a desire for visually engaging spots in Witney that help foster a sense of identity and belonging, particularly for teenagers who increasingly use digital spaces to connect with their surroundings.

Reflection and Next Steps

This feedback paints a clear picture: young people in Witney are looking for recognition, representation, and real spaces — both physical and social — in which they can thrive. They are asking to be seen as part of the community, not as an afterthought.

In response, there is a strong case for exploring the creation of a dedicated youth hub — a welcoming venue designed in collaboration with young people themselves. Finally, ongoing investment in all-weather sports pitches, creative programming for teenagers, and better communication around what is already available would go a long way in addressing the gaps they’ve identified.

Young people in Witney are asking for more than entertainment — they're asking to be respected, included, and listened to. Their feedback highlights both immediate needs (safe, welcoming places to gather) and broader desires (to be taken seriously in decisions that affect them).

While certain requests — like high street shops etc — are outside the direct control of Witney Town Council, they still offer useful insight into how young people define a vibrant, youth-friendly town. What is within the Council's remit is the potential to support inclusive community spaces, co-design youth events, and provide platforms for their voices — such as Witney Youth Council or regular youth forums.

Geographic Reach- Postcode Analysis

A total of 253 respondents (out of 344 total) provided postcodes. The purpose was to check geographic spread and ensure feedback was collected primarily from Witney residents.

Key Findings:

- The vast majority of respondents listed postcodes starting with OX28, which covers Witney town and its immediate neighbourhoods, and a small number of entries were from OX29 and OX18 postcodes.
- A few entries were clearly outside the Witney catchment (e.g. OX12, OX3) or were incomplete, and some participants wrote "I live in Witney but prefer not to say" or entered locations such as "Henry Box School" (suggesting student or family-based participation). Even one incredibly helpful response of "Ban scooter at SK8 park".
- Approximately 85–90% of postcode responses appear to come from within Witney (OX28), and around 10–15% may be from adjacent areas or non-residents.

Recommendation:

- While responses from nearby areas still provide valuable context (many use Witney's services), future communications could further clarify that the survey is intended for Witney town residents only.
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Conclusion

This year's survey shows a positive public perception of core services, particularly events, venues, and green spaces. The response from under-18s was exceptionally high, showing that our younger population is eager to be heard. By improving communication, clarifying roles of each Council, and focusing on inclusivity, Witney Town Council can continue to build trust and engagement across all age groups.

Each Committee will receive detailed analysis and comments relating to their services during the next Committee meeting cycle.