

Appendix A

FLAG FLYING AND ENGLISH IDENTITY HERITAGE

Witney Town Council is very supportive of people flying the Union Flag or England flag on their own property and in a well-maintained condition.

The highway – including roundabouts, pedestrian crossings, traffic lights, and lamp posts – falls under the jurisdiction of Oxfordshire County Council (OCC).

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL has stated that:

“We are aware that roundabouts are being painted up and down the nation. On a general basis, individual judgements are made on such painting of roundabouts based purely on road safety considerations and nothing else.

Flags are being erected throughout the nation including on bridges and other highway infrastructure. OCC are currently liaising with other councils and National Highways to understand how they will be approaching the situation.

If you wish to forward your comments to OCC, the most direct way to report this is via the FixMyStreet service, which passes reports straight to the relevant team for action: <https://fixmystreet.oxfordshire.gov.uk>. You can also copy your report to your County Councillor so they are aware and can follow up on your behalf.”

IDEAS FOR WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Witney Town Council already does a lot to celebrate the town and it’s history and heritage and we should publicise that, while making additional plans to expand those activities.

As suggested by a resident - **Best of English food**. This will need defining using the National Survey that takes place annually. It seems to be a two-horse race between, Fish and Chips and Chicken Tikka Massala Fish and chips is favourite at the moment so will depend on the current title holder at the time. The criteria is normally used to decide the wider category of Best of British food.

Flying the Town Flag

We could fly the town flag every day, apart from when that is superseded by a national or local event for which we would normally fly a different flag. We have a smallish version of the town

flag already and this would be better replaced with a bigger one that is more easily identifiable from a distance.

The town flag features Witney's heraldic crest and this demonstrates civic pride, a sense of belonging and reflects the town's history and heritage with references to glove making, the river Windrush, woollen mills etc as depicted on the heraldic crest below a Paschal lamb.



Social Media post -Witney Crest Heraldic Meaning

Official blazon

Arms : Vert on a Fess wavy Argent between in chief a sinister Glove of the last between two Leopards' Faces each holding in the mouth a Shuttle Or and in base a representation of the Butter Cross at Witney Gold a Barrulet wavy Azure.

Crest : On a Wreath of the Colours upon a Mount Vert between a Crescent and a Star Or a Paschal Lamb proper.

Motto: 'INGENIO FLOREMUS'- With ingenuity we flourish

Origin/meaning

The arms were officially granted on September 9, 1955.

The white and blue wavy band on a green background represents the surrounding countryside and the River Windrush on which the town stands. For centuries Witney has been associated with blankets and in 1711 the weavers obtained a charter from Queen Anne incorporating them as a Company and Blanket Hall was built in the High Street. Here all blankets had to be taken for measuring and weighing, thus ensuring that the very high quality of the blankets was maintained.

The two leopard's faces holding shuttles are from the Blanket Makers arms, which appears beneath the one-handed clock on Blanket Hall. The glove represents the gloving industry, for which the town is also famous. At the base is the Buttercross that stands in the heart of Witney, it is said to be the base of an ancient preaching cross - of uncertain age.

The Paschal lamb was used as a device before the arms were granted and the mount on which it stands can be seen as referring to the site (known as the Mount), where the Bishops of Winchester built a palace some time between 1047 and 1070.

Flying the Town Flag

There is also the opportunity to identify as part of the County of Oxfordshire. There is an official flag for Oxfordshire which is flown in Oxford on Historic County Flags Day, an annual celebration on July 23rd and St Frideswide's Day on October 18th. It has since 1949. Thame Town Council flies it for St Frideswide's Day. St Frideswide is the Patron Saint of Oxford. We don't have this flag, but it could be obtained.

Perhaps we could fly it every time a pothole is filled.

Other Flags

English Flag Nationally we fly the flag of St George on 23rd April (also commemorating Shakespeare that day) and we fly it in support of national teams and their sporting achievements.

St George, born in Cappadocia (modern-day Turkey) and raised in Palestine is the patron saint of, or celebrated in around 25 countries cities and regions in the world.

We also fly the **Union Flag/Jack** (both are commonly used these days whether at sea or not) as a marker of our place within Great Britain as a geographical island and as a political region (UK) that also incorporates Northern Ireland.

Union Jack/Flag We also flag fly the Union Jack to commemorate royal, civic and national commemorations, remembrances and anniversaries.

The Town Council needs a new town flag and a St George flag too as ours is a little old and slightly weathered.

Lighting the Corn Exchange

This is the only public building we currently have the ability to illuminate. We might consider lighting up the Corn Exchange in red and white or red, white and blue when appropriate and also the trees in market square when that is possible (out of nesting season).

Random placing of flags

Flags attached in an ad hoc fashion to street furniture (lamp posts, bridges etc) that does not belong to WTC might invoke some liability and subsequent insurance implications. This can be checked out if that is what councillors want to facilitate. These checks and risk assessments should also be carried out if the council wishes to display flags in places it has not done before. -Reference what OCC says above about placing flags on their street furniture.

St George's Parade Might the Town Council be able to offer support to the scouts to bring back their St George's Day parade? A first step would be to discover what made them discontinue this in the first place.

A request to mark St George's Day was made at a previous Stronger Communities meeting and the question asked as to what ways in which people would like to see it marked, but no suggestions were received.

Corn Exchange St George themed offers

Would the corn exchange offer a simple themed coffee or snack menu for St George's day? The shake shop probably already do a shake, but could be asked along with other businesses to take part too.

St George's Day Best Business Window

Mayor to judge

Social Media post -Famous English Achievers

We could find ways to promote the work of our fantastic architects, artists, musicians, engineers, authors etc. Perhaps working in partnership with the museum. This could link to the Heritage Open Day suggestion.

Heritage Open Day - Street Names and Heritage

We previously planned to run this as a Heritage Open Day Activity in 2019. It wasn't taken up so we could try this again with more support to help with research. Full details are still available on the website link below.

Are you a local history buff? We are just launching our @heritageopenday event for 2019. The theme is #ThisIsPeoplePower. Who are the movers & shakers of times gone by commemorated by having streets in Witney named after them? We are asking residents to find out <https://www.witney-tc.gov.uk/heritage-open-day-2019-write-up-your-street/?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAYnJpZBExQ1BHTmhweW9IT1dWTIRHWAEEcq86xuOy>

[cMob4STBVdYfJD9GklQhy0tpNOMa4yLyCmmE2pWcKk8JMbWVNxc aem pulN1wGX HmHF ej10JKmuA](#)

We will mount a family friendly FREE exhibition of findings in the Corn Exchange. Where do you live? Fancy researching your house or business building? Did someone notable live there? We'll include that too.

Lots of hits and tips on how to get started on our website.

Battle of Britain day and bombs on Church green (From the Town Clerk)

The Battle of Britain was a major World War II campaign fought in the skies over the United Kingdom between July and October 1940. It was the first major military campaign fought entirely by air forces.

- After the fall of France, Nazi Germany attempted to gain air superiority over the Royal Air Force (RAF) as a precursor to a planned invasion of Britain (Operation Sea Lion).
- The RAF, supported by radar technology and aided by pilots from many allied nations (including Poland, Canada, New Zealand, and Czechoslovakia), resisted the Luftwaffe's large-scale bombing raids.
- Britain's successful defense prevented a German invasion and marked a turning point in the war, leading Winston Churchill to famously describe the RAF pilots as the "Few": "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."
- The official commemoration is Battle of Britain Day, observed on 15 September, the date considered the climax of the battle.

How councils can celebrate and commemorate the Battle of Britain

Councils play a key role in keeping history alive for their communities. Here are some ways they could celebrate:

Civic & Community Events

- Parades & Services of Remembrance: Organise or support parades with veterans' groups, cadets, and local bands, followed by services at war memorials.
- Flag-raising ceremonies: Fly the RAF Ensign or Union Jack at council buildings on 15 September.
- Moments of silence or bell-ringing to mark the day.

Education & Awareness School programmes: Provide educational packs or host assemblies teaching children about the Battle of Britain.

- Talks & exhibitions: Invite historians, veterans, or family members of “the Few” to share stories.
- Library & museum displays: Highlight archives, wartime photos, and personal stories from local residents.

Community Engagement

- Film screenings: Show documentaries or films such as *The Battle of Britain* (1969).
- Heritage trails: Map local airfields, shelters, or memorials connected to WWII.
- Art & writing competitions: Encourage young people to reflect on themes of bravery, sacrifice, and resilience.

Symbolic Acts

- Lighting buildings: Illuminate landmarks in RAF blue or with themed projections.
- Planting memorial gardens with themed plaques.
- Social media campaigns: Share stories of local connections to the Battle.

What did happen in Witney—Later in 1940

Although 15 September passed without incident in Witney, the town did experience an air raid later that year, specifically on the night of 21–22 November 1940:

- Two bombs struck in two key areas: Church Green and near the Eagle Brewery in the south of town [witney-tc.gov.uk](https://www.witney-tc.gov.uk)+2Facebook+2.
- These bombs caused significant blast damage:
 - Homes, the grammar school, notable buildings such as the church, police station, and council offices suffered broken windows.
 - The almshouses at 28–38 Church Green were also damaged.
 - Visible remnants, like shrapnel marks on railings at Church Green, still mark the impact’s location [Will Writes Words and Stuff](https://www.witney-tc.gov.uk)+15[witney-tc.gov.uk](https://www.witney-tc.gov.uk)+15[sofo.org.uk](https://www.fo.org.uk)+15.

So while the Battle of Britain peaked in the skies on 15 September, for Witney, the tangible impact came a couple of months later—during the early Blitz in November 1940.

Summary: Witney & Battle of Britain Day

Date	Event
15 September 1940	No recorded impact on Witney; the Luftwaffe attacks focused on London
21–22 November 1940	Witney suffered two bomb strikes at Church Green and Eagle Brewery

Social Media post -WTC has its own You Tube interview with Derek West about the Church Green Bombs

<https://studio.youtube.com/video/EUZbet7QWG0/edit>



Social Media post -Memorial Stone unveiling at the old airfield attended by a former Mayor of Witney, Peter Dorward in 2018. Marking Witney Aerodrome

Social Media post -WTC Commonwealth War Grave Commission commemoration walk at Tower Hill Cemetery.

Includes the unmarked grave – Old Witney Gazette story about Christiansen the American airman killed at Witney Aerodrome, buried in Tower Hill Cemetery and cared for in perpetuity by the town of Witney with gratitude and remembrance of his sacrifice.

<https://www.facebook.com/WitneyTownCouncil/posts/pfbid0334E4mzFyL5WEs1WSswZuRwSJmR6bAgKgJzgoE3p5t8ZTLiq6ECectXSUfJPKw3Z9I>