

Ms Sharon Groth
Witney Town Council

Paul Fermer
Director of Environment &
Highways
Oxfordshire County Council
New Road
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11th September 2025

Dear Ms Sharon Groth,

Many thanks for sharing the results of the Witney 2025 Annual Residents' Satisfaction Survey, this is a very useful barometer of how the public sector is perceived and helpful to identify areas where residents' expectations are not being met. I have circulated the information to a number of teams across Oxfordshire to share the key findings with them to follow up.

I sincerely apologise for the extended delay in responding to you whilst we completed our investigations and drafted responses. Please find below our replies to your queries.

Footpaths, Accessibility & Maintenance

- Witney's pavements and footpaths are in poor condition — uneven, overgrown, muddy, and unsafe for people with mobility issues, wheelchair users, and pushchairs.
- Paths in areas like High Street, Burwell, Deer Park Road, Church Green, and Woodford Way need repairs.

Regarding the condition of pavements around Witney Town, high-traffic areas such as the High Street and Church are subject to monthly inspections. All other locations mentioned are included in our statutory 12-month inspection cycle, which is scheduled to take place between September and October this year. Any issues identified, such as vegetation overgrowth, debris, or surface deterioration that meet the criteria outlined in our Highway Safety Inspection Policy will be investigated and addressed accordingly.

In addition, Church Green and the footways within Deer Park are included in this financial year's programme for long-term treatment. Planned works include full reconstruction and footway slurry surfacing to improve durability and accessibility. For further details, please refer to our planned maintenance map at <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-travel/roadworks/planned-road-maintenance>. The map also highlights other scheduled projects across the county, including roads, street lighting, bridges, footways, and cycleways.

- Overgrown hedges and grass verges not maintained regularly; complaints via FixMyStreet often unresolved.

In relation to grass verge maintenance, our current policy provides for one cut per year. The scheduling for verge cutting across Oxfordshire is coordinated county-wide, and details for each area can be found on our local website: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/transport-and-travel/street-maintenance-z/verges>. Please note that West Oxfordshire District Council is responsible for grass cutting in all residential areas within 20mph and 30mph speed limit

zones, while Oxfordshire County Council manages grass cutting in rural areas outside of these speed restrictions. West Oxfordshire District Council has recently adjusted its grass cutting schedule to better align with Oxfordshire County Council's policy. As a result, the reduced frequency may have become more noticeable to residents.

We are sorry to hear that recent reports submitted via Fix My Street have not met expectations. Please note that not all issues, particularly those related to overgrown hedges fall under the direct responsibility of Oxfordshire County Council. In many cases, boundary hedgerows are privately owned, and it becomes necessary for us to contact the adjacent landowner, as they are responsible for maintaining their vegetation. As a result, resolving these types of issues can require additional time and resources.

1. More accessible and year-round walking routes needed, especially between Cogges, Witney Country Park, and Madley Park.

We support the need for more accessible and year-round walking routes across Witney, as outlined in the Witney Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. A number of new routes between Cogges and the town centre have been secured through the planning obligations for the East Witney Strategic Development Area and will be delivered as the development builds out. We have also secured active travel funding to improve the route from Madley park to Oxford Hill via Woodbank which is undergoing engineering design at the moment, along side planned improvements to the west of Witney at Deer Park Road for improved surface to the bridleway linking Windrush Place and Deer Park Road where new crossings will be installed.

- Path lighting is insufficient in some areas, making evening routes feel unsafe, especially for women.

As far as the street lighting team are aware, the only issue with path lighting in Witney area that involves streetlighting is within the Leys Recreation Ground off Station Lane, specifically near the tennis courts and skateboard park are located. Please advise if there are other areas with the existing highway street lighting of concern and where those might be located.

We understand that Witney Town Council have had have an ongoing project working on a new/major update to the pavilion within the Leys Recreation Park. Unfortunately, the developer has had the power supply removed to the pavilion. This removal has also impacted on the streetlights and CCTV within the park. Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN) are aware of the situation and is actively working to restore power once the mains power supply is replaced/installed. Oxfordshire County Council is monitoring the situation and will follow up with SSEN if there are any updates at our next meeting. However, if Witney Town Council can advise of any proposed completion dates of these works that would be really appreciated.

Potholes, Roads & Infrastructure

- Persistent complaints about potholes throughout Witney and surrounding villages (e.g. Church area, A40, Woodstock Road, Witan Way).
- Roads and signage are poorly maintained and in need of repair.

With regards to pothole, we encourage reports to be submitted through the Fix My Street (FMS) portal. This platform ensures that the information reaches the correct team for investigation. When reporting, please include detailed location information and, if possible, recent photos. This will greatly assist our team in identifying and addressing the issue efficiently. I can confirm that the pathway through the Church is scheduled for a footway slurry treatment to be completed by November this year. In addition, the A40, Woodstock Road, and Witan Way are inspected regularly. Any defects or issues that meet the criteria outlined in our Highway Safety Inspection Policy are addressed accordingly.

For more information on highway repairs and our risk assessment process, please visit the Oxfordshire County Council website:
<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/roads-and-transport/street-maintenance-z/road-repairs>

- Drains not cleared regularly – calls to lobby Oxfordshire County Council to address this.

Oxfordshire County Council has recently committed an additional £1.5 million to enhance its highway drainage operations, marking a significant shift in its approach to gully emptying and surface water management. This investment, approved as part of the 2025–26 budget, aims to transition from a four-year cleansing cycle to an annual programme that will cover all 145,000 roadside gullies, manholes, and catchpits across the county.

Traffic & Enforcement & Traffic

- Insufficient enforcement of High Street Road closure — regularly ignored without consequence.

Since the limited access traffic regulation order (TRO) was implemented on High Street, Witney the county council has been monitoring traffic flows using the road. Poor adherence to the TRO led to a Cabinet Member Decision being taken to implement an enforcement camera to proactively enforce the restriction. The plan and timescales to implement the camera are being finalised and delivery is expected this financial year.

The councils Local Transport and Connectivity Plan and Witney Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan seek to ensure safe routes to school and the councils travel plans team works directly with schools to identify measures that can improve safety. A number of improvements are in train, including the improvements to the path from Oxford Hill to Woodbank to aid trips to the schools in that area; a funding agreement is being pursued between OCC and WTC for a path a King George V Field, and the planned crossings at Deer Park Road will also help in making journeys to school safer. The council is in the process for confirming funding for a further crossing at Witan Way near Sainsburys also. As always suggestions on where further improvements are needed are always welcomed and the Traffic Advisory Committee is a positive forum for discussing these matters.

- Calls for on-the-spot fines and more traffic wardens, especially to manage illegal/bad parking on Bridge Street, Mill Street, and Lower High Street

The council's current enforcement contracts only allow for a finite level of resource which can be deployed at any one time across the County. The council works with its enforcement contractor to ensure efficient and effective deployment of both on-foot and mobile civil enforcement officers. However, the council does have flexibility to carry out targeted deployment for short periods where concerns are raised about compliance with the restrictions. Complaints are taken seriously, and the council's civil enforcement team will review the points raised with our enforcement contractor to see whether further improvements can be made.

Meanwhile, the civil enforcement team have requested our parking contractors, to deploy a civil enforcement officer to the area to ascertain the parking situation. If a vehicle is observed parked in breach of the restrictions in place, after an observation time a Penalty Charge Notice will be issued. However, if you continue having problems with vehicles contravening the parking restrictions you may report any illegally parked vehicles using the online web form, which is monitored daily by our parking contractors. The link is <https://service.oxfordshire.gov.uk/reportparkedvehicle>

High Street & Traffic

- Strong criticism of High Street closure — seen as a mistake with lack of public consultation.

I would like to clarify that the decision to implement a Traffic regulation Order to restrict access at Witney High Street and the 20mph zones across Witney were not taken without due process. Oxfordshire County Council followed all relevant statutory procedures, including a formal public consultation and a Cabinet Member decision. The consultation process was open to all stakeholders and included opportunities for residents, businesses, and other interested parties to provide feedback. The decision to proceed with these schemes was made following careful consideration of the consultation responses, alongside technical assessments. These decisions were made in accordance with the Council's governance framework. While the council acknowledges not all parties agreed with the outcome, the process was transparent and compliant with statutory requirements. There are no plans to reverse these decisions, as they are considered to have led to the positive outcomes envisaged at the early stages of design.

With regard to comments that weekend traffic congestion on routes into Witney deters people from visiting and shopping locally, the Local Transport and Connectivity Plan aims to ensure that Witney remains a thriving Oxfordshire town. The plan seeks to deliver improvements to walking, cycling and public transport to enable a choice of transport modes instead of reliance on the private car.

- Calls to reopen High Street to traffic and remove 20mph limit.

As part of the planned monitoring and evaluation of the 20mph project, the council will be contacting all the parish and town councils to seek their views on how it is working and any changes that may be required

(subject to consultation and funding) – further information is provided under the Monitoring heading in [The 20mph transformation programme | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

Youth, Schools & Community.

- More youth facilities needed.
- Local schools require more support and staff training, especially to help students with hidden disabilities.

In response to the first point, we would like to outline how the County Council's Targeted Youth Support Service currently supports young people in Witney. This includes:

- **Detached Youth Work:** TYSS staff engage with young people in public spaces, including skate parks and hotspots identified through community safety data. This includes partnership work with Thames Valley Police and The Station Detached Youth team.
- **One-to-One and Group Support:** TYSS offers tailored interventions for young people. These are delivered in schools and community settings.

We are also currently working closely with partners in the district council and the local voluntary and community sector to look at ways to increase youth provision and activities in the area.

Regarding the second point on schools, I believe the Education and SEND teams may be best placed to identify appropriate contacts for staff training and inclusion support.

From - Targeted Youth Support Services, Oxfordshire County Council

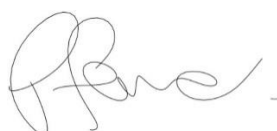
Cleanliness & Town Appearance

Witney described as dirty and unkempt — bird mess, weeds on pavements, litter on main routes (including A40). Concerns that the town's appearance is embarrassing to visitors.

[As regards cleanliness and town appearance, this needs to be forwarded to West Oxfordshire District Council - Litter, street cleaning and dog fouling - West Oxfordshire District Council which deals with litter picking as well](#)

I hope these responses suitably addresses the points raised in your letter.

Yours sincerely



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