

**CLIMATE ACTION WORKING PARTY MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Thursday, 25 September 2025

At 4.00 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor S Simpson (Chair)

Councillors:	D Edwards-Hughes	J Robertshaw
	D Enright	R Smith (In place of J Aitman)
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Zoe Henstridge	Administrative Support - Halls & Green Spaces
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
Others:	None.	

7 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor J Aitman, Councillor R Smith attended as a substitute.

8 MINUTES

The minutes of the Climate Action Working Party meeting held on 22 July 2025 were received.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Climate Action Working Party meeting held on 22 July 2025 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

Cllr D Enright joined the meeting at 4:05pm

9 WITNEY PARISH CARBON FOOTPRINT

The Working Party received and considered a report which complimented the Compliance and Environment Officer's progress with the Councils Strategy & Action Plan. The report had originally been considered by the Climate & Biodiversity Committee on 9 September and Members of the Working Party were now asked for their recommendations and proposed actions.

Members welcomed the report which highlighted the potential goals in reducing the carbon footprint of the parish and noted that a number of those goals were already being carried out in the Council's activity such as their support for community bus services, the community fridge

and larger, promotion of active travel and improved land management which incorporated the use of allotments and community orchards. It was noted that further changes could be incorporated into the further actions that the Working Party and Climate & Biodiversity Committee set.

Although wider parish objectives were part of the Council's overall objective to be carbon neutral by 2028, it was agreed carbon reduction of the Council's facilities and estate should take precedence and that this should be the main focus of the Working Party.

Members appreciated the short time that the Compliance and Environment Officer had been in post in order to compile the assessments and reports between meetings of the Committee and Working Party and welcomed receipt of an impact report on the Council's activities at the earliest opportunity.

Recommended:

1. That, the report of the Compliance and Environment Officer be noted and,
2. That, an impact report of the Council Activities be provided and,
3. That, the changes be incorporated where possible, but precedence be given to the town council's facilities.

10 **DRAFT CLIMATE STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN**

The Working Party received and considered the report of the Compliance & Environment Officer, along with the draft climate strategy and action plan for the Council. The report and draft plan had originally been considered by the Climate & Biodiversity Committee on 9 September and Members of the Working Party were now asked for their recommendations and proposed actions.

The C&EO welcomed the points raised by the Climate & Biodiversity Committee at their meeting on 9 September. Members heard that some of the suggested improvements would come from existing budgets however others would have to be included in the 2026-27 budget setting process.

Additionally, Members heard that work was ongoing with the Action Plan this included collaboration between all Officers to ensure that any action followed the overall corporate strategy plan and reflected individual Committees terms of reference.

Members made additional suggestions to refine the details within the Action Plan, such as the inclusion at an early stage of the financial cost of each action as well as the potential carbon reduction impact figures so as to allow the Council and residents to see, as each Key Performance Indicator was reached, the cumulative impact of carbon reduction achieved.

Members asked that the actions be placed into order of impact and for Council and Community actions to be separated. They acknowledged that although the action plan and strategy were not yet at a quantitative stage, that the work so far was a great starting point and were pleased with the progress made.

Lastly, various access to grant funding options were discussed and the C&EO advised they were aware of these and that each would be explored further as the action plan was implemented.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Officers incorporate the suggestions of the Working Party into the final version of the Action Plan and Climate Change Strategy and
3. That, any grant funding opportunities are explored by Officers.

11 PUBLIC HALLS - BURWELL HALL

The Working Party received and considered the report of the Compliance & Environment Officer concerning potential improvements to Burwell Hall.

Although officers were in the process of obtaining assessments for the Council's other facilities, an energy audit in 2022 had highlighted several further areas for improvement after the replacement of the boiler which was completed in 2023.

Members were advised that small changes such as the replacement of lighting was carried out as the need arose and that the existing maintenance budget for the hall would be used. However larger projects such as the ones highlighted in the 2022 report for improvements to the halls ceiling (£10,000-15,000) and the introduction of Solar PV arrays (£10,000 – 12,000) would require budget setting or grant funding.

Officers would look to obtain updated estimates for the costs of the ceiling and Solar PV works ahead of the 2026-27 budget setting however, the Deputy Town Clerk advised that there was an existing Energy efficiency budget for the Councils buildings which may be utilised towards the cost of improvements.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, updated estimates for Solar PV and Ceiling insulation be obtained ahead of 2026-27 budget setting and,
3. That, the level of the existing energy efficiency be investigated by Officers.

12 WATER REFILL STATION - THE LEYS

The Working Party received and considered a verbal update from the Compliance & Environment Officer concerning a potential budget addition for the 2026-27 year.

Members heard that this scheme had originally been the idea of the previous Youth Council. The Operations Manager had reviewed the project in 2023 and indicated a cost of approx. £3,500 to implement.

Members were supportive as it's need was evidenced at events previously held on The Leys. They asked that the new Youth Council and Stronger Communities Committee be involved in the delivery of the project along with a consideration that the fountain be utilised by both people and dogs.

Recommended:

1. That, the verbal update be noted and,

2. That, the project be supported by this Working Party and recommended for inclusion in the 2026-27 budget for consideration by the Stronger Communities Committee.

Cllr D Enright left the meeting at 4:39pm

13 **CARBON LITERACY TRAINING**

Members of the working party that were also West Oxfordshire District Council members were asked to provide their feedback on research.

The Chair advised that she has attended meetings held by WODC however, had not been able to progress the idea of having the carbon literacy training opened up to the Town Council.

Cllr R Smith advised that the decision would likely be taken by the Audit & Governance Committee and would follow up with her fellow WODC Councillors to request a response from WODC.

Recommended:

1. That, WODC Council members follow up with the Audit & Governance Committee.

14 **WEBSITE INFORMATION**

Working Party members advised they had seen several Council websites which hosted green and climate initiatives.

Members provided ideas of Websites from other Councils and agreed to forward the details they had to the Compliance & Environment Officer for consideration.

Additionally, Members would continue to look and provide details of anything they found that could be of further interest.

Recommended:

1. That, the websites as advised be noted and,
2. That, Members continue to provide additional material.

15 **WITNEY ECO FAIR**

The Working Party received an update on the Eco Fair scheduled for 9th October from the Compliance & Environment Officer.

Plans were in place and 9 out of 32 of the invited representatives had replied to advise they would be taking part. Confirmed attendees were from WODC, OCC, WTC, Low Carbon Hub, BBWOT and the Cherwell Collective

The C&EO would continue to chase up those that had not responded, those that were unable to attend would be asked if they had literature that could be displayed in their absence.

Members asked if the digital poster advertising the event could be shared and flyers could be made for their use, distribution in the Corn Exchange and also shared by the Chair, who would be attending a similar event being held by St Marys Church Eco Group.

Recommended:

1. That, the verbal update be noted and,
2. That, the digital poster be shared and small flyers be created.

The meeting closed at: 4.52 pm

Chair