

PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Monday, 9 March 2026

At 6.01 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor J Aitman (Chair)

Councillors:	S Simpson	R Smith
	J Treloar	J Doughty
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Mark Lewis	Head of Estates & Operations
Others:	None.	

PR117 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Edwards- Hughes & A Bailey.

Though no formal apologies were received it was advised by another Member that Cllr D Temple would be absent from the meeting.

PR118 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members or Officers.

PR119 MINUTES

That, the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 12 January 2026 were received.

PR18 – Officers advised that further details of a visit to West Witney would be discussed under Agenda item 7a.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 12 January 2026 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

PR120 PARTICIPATION OF THE PUBLIC

There was no public participation.

PR121 FINANCE REPORT

The Committee received and considered the report of the Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) detailing income and expenditure for budgets which were the responsibility of the committee.

A Member raised the potential for the introduction of more adult exercise equipment. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that there was not a specific allocation requested during the 2026/27 budget setting period for this provision however, the Committee may wish to consider this as a future proposal.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the management accounts of the Committee for the period to 31 December 2025 be approved.

PR122 SPORTS PITCHES UPDATE

The Committee received and considered the report of the Head of Estate & Operations.

In light of recent reporting from the Football Association on the standard of sports pitches across the country Members received data on the level of use of the pitches under the Town Council's control. Despite exceptional wet weather Officers were pleased to report that the level of use remained high; although some matches had been cancelled these had all been at the request of football clubs.

The Committee also heard of the potential return of cricket to The Leys following interest from Witney Mills Cricket Club, Officers were currently agreeing the details however were hopeful for its use between May & September. Members expressed their support and heard that any cricket would be structured around the other events held at The Leys such as Witney Carnival and seasonal fairs. It was also raised that any potential opportunity for English Cricket Board (ECB) support be explored.

The Leader of the Council, supported by the Committee expressed their thanks to the Ground Maintenance team for their hard work to ensure that the sport playing surfaces were kept in good order, special thanks went to the two members of the team who received long term service awards at the Civic Reception event held on the previous Friday.

The suggestion was made that Officers investigate the opportunities for members of the works team to be enrolled in FA accredited training days to further improve their knowledge and skills.

Lastly, Members heard that there had been approaches from other football teams outside of the town to use pitches, as capacity was at a high level these requests had been declined. In response to a question Officers assured Members that if any capacity became available then a further report would be presented for consideration and for a policy to be agreed.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Officers explore potential ECB funding and,
3. That, Officers investigate the opportunity for further sport pitch accredited training and,

4. That, the thanks of the Leader of the Council and Committee be passed to the Grounds Maintenance Team with special mention to the two long service members.

PR123 WEST WITNEY SPORTS GROUND PROJECTS

The Committee the report of the Project Officer along with a verbal update from the Head of Operations and Estates regarding the progress of the West Witney depot and clubhouse refurbishment projects.

Members welcomed the positive progress of the new depot, noting that it was nearing completion and that the Works Team had commenced phased occupation of the facility. It was further noted that this would enable the surrender of the temporary accommodation.

The Committee also noted that the redevelopment of the main social club building was also progressing well, with a proposed completion date in May.

Members commended officers on the high quality, factual and well-structured update reports provided throughout the project. In light of this, it was agreed that a pre-completion site visit was not necessary.

The Committee expressed a desire to formally recognise the completion of both projects and requested that two separate opening events be arranged to celebrate their delivery.

Members also noted that the project remains on track to achieve a significant saving against the original tender cost, attributed to the diligent work of officers, contractors and the Council's building consultants.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, Officers make arrangements for celebratory opening events.

PR124 THE LEYS/COURTSIDE HUB

The Committee received the report of the Project Officer along with a verbal update from the Head of Operations and Estates (HE&O) regarding the progress of the Courtside CIC redevelopment at The Leys.

Members were advised that the works were now entering the final stages and that completion was scheduled for May 2026.

It was noted that the temporary closure of the skate park had been necessary to enable the current phase of works to be undertaken safely. Members were further advised that the tennis courts would be resurfaced to repair damage caused during the construction phase.

The Committee was informed that the Town Council's financial contribution to the project would be released upon the achievement of key project milestones. It was proposed by Councillor J Aitman, seconded by Councillor J. Doughty, that it be delegated to Officers to make the payments when the agreed milestones were reached, the proposal was unanimously agreed.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted; and
2. That, authority be delegated to the Town Clerk, in conjunction with the HE&O, to release the Town Council's funding contribution in line with the agreed project milestones.

PR125 RALEGH CRESCENT MUGA/MUSA

The Committee received the report of the Project Officer along with a verbal update from the Head of Operations and Estates regarding the progress of the proposed MUGA/MUSA project at Raleigh Crescent.

Members were advised that officers continued to support West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) in progressing the project. Two potential site options were currently being considered: Raleigh Crescent and the adjacent Deer Park open space. The Committee heard of concerns which were raised by both WODC and the Town Council regarding the viability of the Deer Park site; however, it was proposed that this option be included within the future tender process to determine its financial feasibility.

The Committee expressed thanks to the Project Officer for their continued work in progressing the project in partnership with WODC, particularly in light of delays arising from Section 106 funding requirements.

It was agreed that, in future, the Town Council should seek greater input into Section 106 agreements to help mitigate similar delays. Members requested that the Town Clerk contact the relevant Section 106 Officer to explore the feasibility of this approach.

In response to a Member's question regarding lighting at the proposed sports facility, the Head of Operations and Estates confirmed that advanced LED lighting with timer controls would be installed to minimise impact on neighbouring properties.

Resolved:

1. That the report be noted, and
2. That the Town Clerk contact the relevant Section 106 Officer to explore opportunities for increased Town Council input into future agreements.

The meeting closed at: 6.33 pm

Chair