



WITNEY
TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Witney Youth Council held at 4.00 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney on Thursday 14th May 2026.

Youth Councillors Present:

Three Youth Councillors

Witney Town Council Mentors Present:

Cllr J Aitman
Cllr G Meadows

Witney Town Council Officers Present:

A Hathaway – Admin Assistant for Communications and Engagement
A Clapton – Deputy Town Clerk

The Councillors in attendance were Youth Council mentors and were there to guide and answer questions. Officers advised Members this was their opportunity to provide a voice for young people in Witney and the Town Council would try and bring about their ideas and suggestions.

1. **Apologies**

Apologies from one youth councillor were received.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

Youth Councillors were advised that if they knew anyone or had any involvement in any of the items being discussed at the meeting, they should say it at this point.

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11th March 2026 were adopted and signed as correct.

4. **Guest Participation**

Participants at the meeting spoke with the Youth Council.

- Jason Huffadine, Project Director of The Station

Jason spoke with the youth council about The Station's upcoming events, such as their van graffiti activity in May, their KICK sessions coming up over the summer, and the development of their Hot Chocolate van. Invitations to help decorate the van during their next BREAK on 27-29 May from 2-4PM were offered to youth councillors. He also kindly offered advice on how to engage with other young people, such as offering free drinks in exchange for answering questions and handing out leaflets at the Witney Carnival.

5. Witney Youth Council’s own Pizza and Politics

Youth Councillors discussed that a good place to trial this would be at the upcoming Witney Carnival – Saturday 11th July 2026. A whiteboard could be shown with various young person responses to the Annual Resident’s Satisfaction Survey for the youth council to ask other young people about, alongside games or activities to win free drinks or sweets.

6. Young People Responses in our Annual Residents’ Satisfaction Survey

Officers informed the Youth Council on the following responses in the Annual Residents' Survey.

“I am a young resident of Witney and am writing on behalf of myself and my friends about something that matters to us and the future of Witney. Right now, there are very few affordable places where young people can safely meet, spend time and feel welcome. Most cafes and shops in town are aimed at adults or are too expensive for us to use. Without safe welcoming hangouts, we often end up with nowhere to go after school or on the weekends. We’re not asking for handouts. We’re asking for Witney to be a town where young people can belong.”

“The parks are good, but I think more benches in them and picnic tables would satisfy lots of people and having lots of swings in playgrounds increases the likelihood of young people over 12 to go to the park”

“I’m a student at Woodgreen, I have lived in Witney since I was born. I’ve found that it is so much nicer going on walks here than I thought, because of the gorgeous places to walk like Witney lake, and the flowers that just liven up everything in a wonderful way. I’m really grateful that everyone in town is so kind and approachable and I like to go to the park all the time with my friends”

“Improvement of sporting areas across Witney, allowing a variety of people to stay active needed.”

“Most of my experience is Good and satisfies me however, there are occasions where furniture and other services are poor and not up to standard, this is either it being dirty or non-existing where should be. This could be improved by adding more of these public services and entertainment opportunities maybe using public fields and parks etc etc i.e oxlease park and field for events such as bouncy castle and bbq or other stuff on those lines, this could improve the community engagement throughout the town.”

“Lots of litter around but still beautiful sites to be in.”

“As a teenager, I wish there were more places to just sit, in a field for example and just relax with some friends”

“Everything costs far too much for an area which has the highest youth mental health numbers in England. I know of non-profits that want to do World changing work in the area (UK Paradigm) and they cannot afford statutory prices set to do the work that will fix everything.”

7. National Youth Council

Youth Councillors were informed that their membership for the National Youth Council was underway.

8. Witney History Walk for Youth Council

Youth Councillors were unable to make the date of the 27th June. The Youth Council Admin would enquire about other dates or otherwise confirm cancellation.

9. Upcoming WTC Events for 2026

Youth Councillors were informed of upcoming Witney Town Council events for involvement.

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| 2026 | |
| May | 6th - Annual Council Meeting |

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| | 19th - Bus Users' Meeting 22nd - West Witney Sports & Social Club Opening Day 22nd Splash Park Opening |
| June | 5th - Summer Newsletter Inclusion Deadline 7th - Witney Town Band Live at Woodgreen 13th - Start of Drowning Prevention Week 20th - World Refugee Day Flag Raising 23rd - Youth Council Meeting 27th - Armed Forces Day |
| July | 5th - Witney Town Band Live at Oxlease Park 11th - Witney Carnival 27th - Start of Love Parks Week |
| August | 2nd August - Witney Town Band Live at the Leys |
| September | Date TBC - Witney Feast 18th - Autumn Newsletter Inclusion Deadline 22nd Car Free Day |
| October | 10th - World Mental Health Day |
| November | 9th - Remembrance Day 27th - Christmas Light Switch-On 29th - Advent Fayre |
| December | TBC - Mayor's Carol Service 2nd - Winter Newsletter Inclusion Deadline |

10. **St Mary's Church Youth Café Update**

Youth Councillors were informed that the new Youth Café trialled over April at St Mary's Church would continue until 30th May. From then onwards, the café would pause over summer as they looked for other funding.

11. **Witney Youth Council New Member Recruitment**

Witney Youth Council were encouraged to spread the word that they were accepting new members. Social media posts would be sent out along with notices to schools. Other successful ways of promoting such as at the Witney Carnival and staff connections taking posters into schools.

Resolved: That, the Youth Council Admin print posters for Youth Council members to pick up and put around schools.

12. **Items for Future Agenda**

A youth councillor suggested further discussion of the details of what activity the youth councillors could do at the Witney Carnival.

13. **Dates of Future Meetings**

The dates of the upcoming Youth Council meetings were received.

- Tuesday 23 June 2026 – 4PM to 5PM (Informal Meeting)
- Thursday 9 July 2026 – 4PM to 5PM

The Meeting closed at 4.55pm.