

Agenda Item: Annual Resident’s Survey 2026

Meeting Date: Monday, 15th June 2026

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk
(Administrative Support Assistant – Communities & Engagement)

The purpose of this report is to present Members with the results of the annual residents’ satisfaction survey, conducted between February and May, regarding services overseen by this Committee.

Background

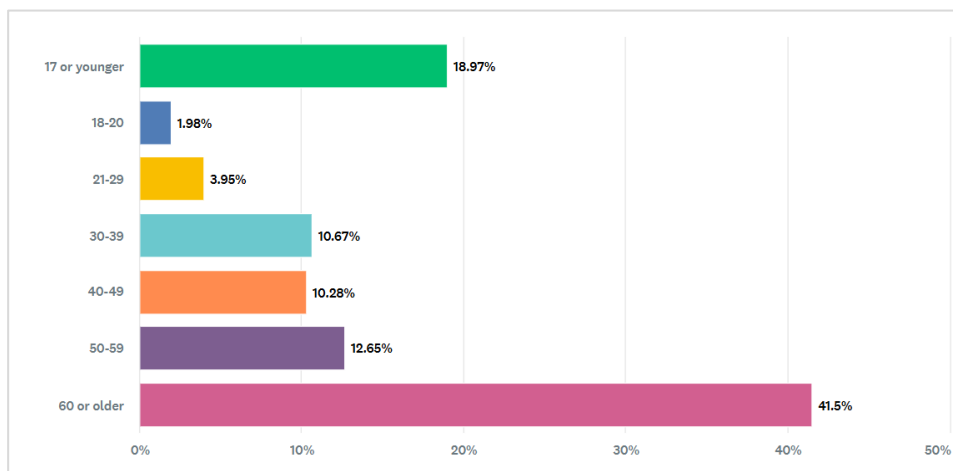
The survey was sent to every household in the post and was promoted online via social media and in the local secondary schools; 272 responses were received in total.

While the number of responses is a very small percentage of the population, the results are still an important resource in advising the Council in which areas projects, communications, and future spending should be considered.

Current Situation

Responses from younger residents were noticeably lower this year, with participation from school-aged respondents (18 and under) decreasing from around 186 responses in 2024 and 122 responses in 2025 to 48 responses in 2026.

Respondent Age Demographics



Survey Scores Overall

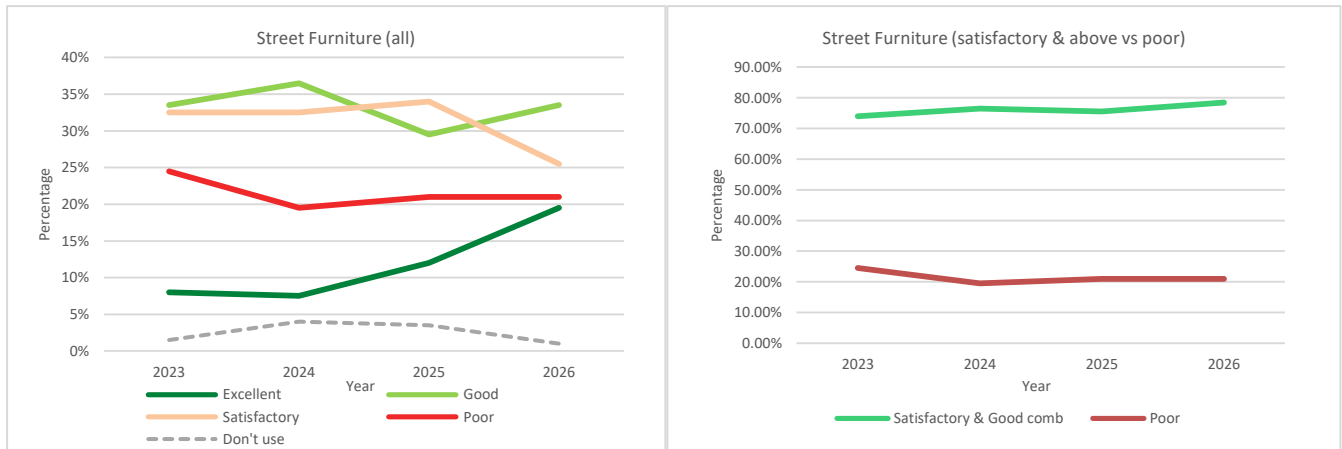
The following table shows how the services scored overall in the survey (with percentages rounded).

As a comparison, the figures/percentages from the previous three years' surveys are included.

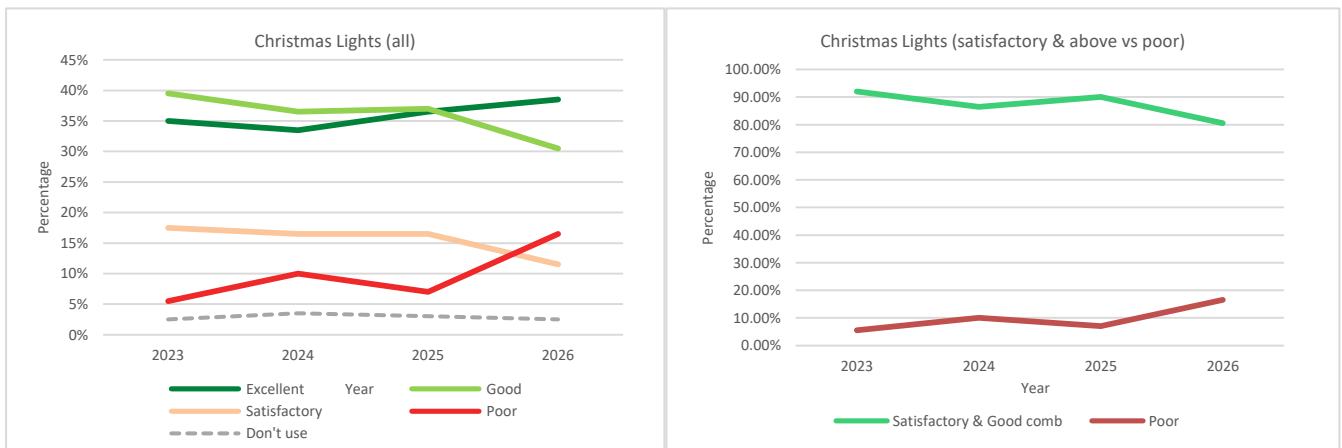
Service	Year	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory	% comb	Poor	Don't use	Resp
Street Furniture (bins/benches/bus shelters)	2026	19.5% (52)	33.5% (90)	25.5% (68)	78.50%	21% (56)	1% (3)	269
	2025	12% (42)	29.5% (100)	34% (116)	75.50%	21% (71)	3.5% (12)	341
	2024	7.5% (32)	36.5% (158)	32.5% (141)	76.50%	19.5% (84)	4% (17)	432
	2023	8% (17)	33.5% (73)	32.5% (71)	74.00%	24.5% (54)	1.5% (4)	219
Christmas Lights Display	2026	38.5% (104)	30.5% (83)	11.5% (31)	80.50%	16.5% (45)	2.5% (7)	270
	2025	36.5% (125)	37% (126)	16.5% (56)	90.00%	7% (24)	3% (10)	341
	2024	33.5% (146)	36.5% (160)	16.5% (72)	86.50%	10% (43)	3.5% (16)	437
	2023	35% (76)	39.5% (86)	17.5% (38)	92.00%	5.5% (12)	2.5% (6)	218
Civic Events (e.g. Remembrance & Mayor's Carols)	2026	23.5%(64)	30% (81)	11% (30)	64.50%	3% (8)	32% (87)	270
	2025	21% (71)	32% (110)	16.5% (56)	69.50%	5.5% (18)	25% (86)	341
	2024	16.5% (72)	34% (149)	19% (83)	69.50%	4.5% (19)	26% (112)	435
	2023	24% (52)	33% (72)	18.5% (40)	75.50%	6% (13)	18.5% (40)	217
Community Events (e.g. Play Days, coffee mornings)	2026	8% (21)	18.5% (49)	8.5% (23)	35.00%	4% (11)	61% (164)	268
	2025	5.5% (19)	18% (62)	14% (47)	37.50%	7.5% (26)	55% (186)	340
	2024	8.5% (36)	22.5% (98)	13.5% (60)	44.50%	8% (34)	47.5% (208)	436
	2023	7% (14)	21.5% (44)	16% (33)	44.50%	7.5% (15)	48% (99)	205
Communication	2026	6.5% (18)	23% (62)	39.5% (105)	69.00%	18% (48)	12.5% (34)	267
	2025	8% (28)	28% (94)	25.5% (87)	61.50%	22.5% (76)	16% (54)	339
	2024	8% (35)	35% (149)	27% (116)	70.00%	16% (68)	14% (60)	428
	2023	12.5% (23)	31% (56)	28.5% (52)	72.00%	18.5% (34)	9.5% (17)	182

The following graphs track performance over the previous four years for these services and show the levels are broadly the same in the previous three years.

Street Furniture infographics



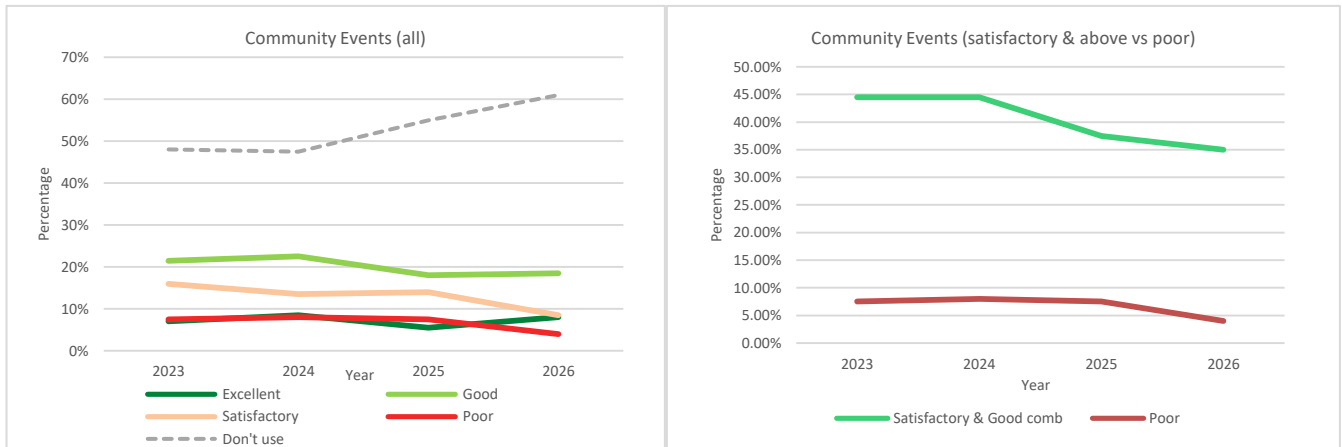
Christmas Lights infographics



Civic Events infographics



Community Events infographics



Communications infographics



In addition to the results above, the survey also welcomes specific comments, all of which relating to this Committee can be seen below:

Street Furniture & Christmas Lights

- The bus shelters do not shelter us from the rain and many stops do not have a shelter - especially out of town stops.”
 - “Too much graffiti is left in situ. Litter never gets collected from side streets. Many of the bins and street furniture covered in old adverts and are dilapidated.”
 - “Benches need repairing. Xmas lights are vibrant and bring the town to life.”
 - “Christmas lights not as good as previous years.”

- “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.”
- “Loved the Christmas lights this year.”
- “Christmas lights are the only thing worth paying for IMHO”
- “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”
- “Christmas lights looked ace last couple of years”
- “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-existent 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.”
- “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.”
- “Christmas light were poor last year.”

Community Events & Civic Events

- “St Georges day was great - bring on the elections.”

- “More community events would be good, it helps create a sense of community. The splash park should be switched on when the weather is good earlier in the year Some of the smaller parks could do with more equipment (have a drive round somewhere like ambroseden and see all the little parks) During Covid when market square was full of tables and chairs and the pubs and restaurants were allowed outside seating it was so lovely, during the summer it felt like being abroad and there was a buzzing little atmosphere. Witney has such a great community that can be enhanced by promoting and providing the opportunity to come together. Every year Bicester does a ‘big lunch’ it’s well advertised and everyone is encouraged to bring a picnic together, this could be done on a summer afternoon at the leys, perhaps get Witney radio to provide music and make it an annual event?”
- “A rich variety of events for all ages. Loved the VJ Day & Christmas afternoon tea.”
- “Remembrance Day is good, love it when the town comes together for events like this.”
- “Fantastic ambience at the St Georges Day celebrations - same every year please! Can the scouts come?”
- “Good to see more events being held.”
- “Could have more hymn sheets printed for Remembrance Day.”
- “Why is the council spending £13,000 on a music festival? There is little benefit to Witney residents. If it weren't subsidised, it would still go ahead, with tickets costing just a pound or two more. Why should the small number of Witney residents who attend get such a large subsidy from the majority, who don't? Why are Witney ratepayers subsidising tickets for non-residents from all over the country? Any extra business for local pubs or hotels is of no benefit to the Town Council, as businesses don't pay council tax. This unnecessary extravagance needs to stop, with the money spent on keeping the town clean & tidy instead, for the benefit of us ALL.”

Communications

- “Do newsletters to address in witney”
- “Your leaflets are hard to read for colour blind.”
- “Stop trying to make everyone go digital”
- “Lived in Witney since '89 - 37 years - 1st comms in all that time! Went into your info centre a few years ago - RE RBL - couldn't help - Data Protection Act!”

- “Why is there no information re the work being carried out at the Leys. A poster in your shopwindow would be something.”
- “It would be nice to hear more about what's happening in our town.”
- “My mother lives in Ducklington and receives an excellent newsletter every month. Witney Town Council communicates with residents very little in contrast with no newsletter I am aware of.”
- “Everything is good but we don't shout about it. Things could be better, like the lake’s signage to and from, events in Witney to get involved in”

Analysis

Street Furniture

Street furniture continues to receive broadly positive feedback, with combined “satisfactory and above” responses increasing slightly to 78.5% in 2026. The proportion of “excellent” ratings has also increased significantly compared to previous years, suggesting improvements are being recognised by residents. However, concerns remain regarding the condition and maintenance of benches, bus shelters, bins, graffiti, and litter in public spaces.

As the Town Council is responsible for the majority of public seating, general feedback has been included in this report.

Christmas Lights

The Christmas Lights display remains one of the Council’s highest-rated services, with over 80% of respondents rating the service satisfactory or above. Many comments praised the atmosphere and vibrancy the lights bring to the town, with several residents noting improvements in recent years.

Civic Events

Civic Events continue to receive strong levels of support from residents, particularly for traditional events such as Remembrance commemorations and St George’s Day celebrations. Comments frequently reference the positive sense of community created by these events and appreciation for opportunities to bring residents together.

Community Events

Community Events continue to record lower engagement levels than other services, with 61% of respondents selecting “don’t use” in 2026. Satisfaction levels have also declined slightly compared with previous years. However, comments from residents who do attend events are generally positive and highlight the value of activities that encourage community participation and improve the atmosphere within the town.

Communication

Communication scores have improved compared with 2025, particularly in “satisfactory” responses, although the service remains one of the Council’s lower-performing areas overall. Comments suggest residents would like more regular and accessible updates regarding Council activities, projects, and events, including printed newsletters, clearer project information, and non-digital communication methods.

It should also be noted that 41% of the 272 survey responses came from residents aged 60 and over, who may be more likely to favour traditional forms of communication. In addition, the survey itself as a physical newsletter distributed to households across Witney may also have influenced the response demographic and preference towards printed communication. The Committee may therefore wish to consider how best to balance digital and non-digital communications to reach a broad range of residents.

Corporate Strategy

The Council’s Strategic Plan 2025–29 sets out the Council’s long-term priorities and direction, supporting its mission to ‘make Witney a great place to live, work and visit.’ This report contributes to the delivery of the following strategic pillar of the plan:

2. An Engaged & Supported Community

Impact Assessments

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council’s Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality - The residents’ survey helps identify service inequalities and amplify underrepresented voices, supporting fairer, more inclusive decision-making. It may also highlight items which need addressing under the Equality Act 2010.
- b) Biodiversity - The Council must ensure any issues are dealt with in line with biodiversity legislation and its own policy.
- c) Crime & Disorder - The survey provides the ability to highlight concerns about safety and anti-social behaviour. The survey can inform targeted responses, resource allocation, and partnership working with police and community safety teams. It may help identify hotspots, vulnerable groups, and areas needing intervention such as the cemeteries.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – The survey supports the Council’s climate emergency commitments by ensuring resident feedback can help shape relevant policies and actions.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

There is a reputational risk if the Council does not address comments received in its satisfaction survey as it will be seen as not listening to residents.

The Council’s committees will have competing demands on the overall Council budget so any

additional project funding has to be balanced and proportionate. Additions should be in line with Councils objectives and adopted policies/strategies.

Social Value

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

Listening to residents' feedback on Council services delivers significant social value by showing empowerment, inclusion, trust, and community wellbeing; It affirms that their opinions matter and helps building a sense of respect and transparency. This is especially important for the Council, where inclusive decision-making ensures diverse needs are reflected in service design and delivery.

Internally, it supports continuous improvement across the Council's services and helps identify future objectives thereby demonstrating meaningful change.

Financial implications

- There are no new implications from the contents of this report at this point. The Committee may like to consider further projects based on the feedback or increasing/creating budgets for any item.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. What action is required from the results of the survey for services under the remit of this Committee.