

**WITNEY PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE WORKING PARTY MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Tuesday, 26 May 2026

At 6.15 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor J Treloar (Chair)

Councillors:	R Crouch G Meadows	J Robertshaw
Officers:	Adam Clapton Polly Inness Thomas Davies Annie Hathaway	Deputy Town Clerk Communications & Community Engagement Officer Deputy Venue & Events Officer Admin Assistant - Communications & Engagement
Others:	4 members of the public.	

At the start of the meeting, the Chair invited everyone present to introduce themselves.

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor R Smith.

2 MINUTES

The minutes of the Witney: Past, Present & Future Working Party meeting held on 18 February 2026 were received.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Witney: Past, Present & Future Working Party meeting held on 18 February 2026 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

3 EVENTS UPDATE

The Working Party received and considered the report of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer (CCEO).

St George's Day Event

Members received feedback on the St George's Day events, which officers described as a simple, positive, and family-friendly occasion. Council teams and Working Party members were thanked for their support in delivering a successful, well-attended and inclusive event, with no incidents reported and positive feedback received from attendees, including a personal thank you card sent to the Council.

Suggestions for future years included expanding the performance area, improving signage and event communication, simplifying the quiz, recognising front line service crews on stage, reviewing catering arrangements, and repositioning seating away from speakers.

The Working Party welcomed the strong attendance and community involvement. The museum representative reported good participation in the dragon-making workshop and St George's Day tours, while members also praised local businesses for supporting the window decoration initiative. Some disappointment was expressed at the low uptake from schools for the dragon competition, which members agreed should be reviewed for future events. Members also noted the successful Witney Vikings football activity despite limited space.

The CCEO confirmed the event had been delivered under the £1,000 budget and members agreed that the underspend should be used towards future Working Party events during the year.

Overall, members thanked Council staff for organising the event so successfully and agreed that a strong foundation had now been established for future annual St George's Day celebrations. The Chair noted that the event showed an array of what Witney had to offer and felt immense pride on the day.

Armed Forces Day

The Working Party received an update on an event being organised by Witney's joint Cadet Forces on The Leys on Saturday 27 June 2026. Members noted that the Council had agreed to subsidised use of the facility following a recommendation from this Working Party.

The event would include charity stalls and military vehicles and would be located near the Courtside Hubs building, with only a limited amount of space required. Officers had requested that the Leys WW1 Memorial be cleaned in preparation for the event. The CCEO also advised that the customary raising of the Armed Forces flag at the Town Hall would take place on the preceding Friday evening.

Members asked that once full details were confirmed that they be communicated to the wider public and Councillors.

Heritage Open Day

The Working Party received an update on Heritage Open Days 2026, with officers exploring a collaborative event with Witney Museum between 11–20 September around the theme "Everyday Histories". Members noted the potential to highlight Witney's blanket-making heritage and other local industries, possibly involving The Blanket Hall and Cogges Manor Farm. A craft event already planned at the Museum on 12 September may also form part of the programme, with further discussions to follow.

Members also heard about early proposals for Bishop's Palace Community Heritage Events aimed at promoting the site through activities such as tours, exhibitions, and family events. No funding was being requested at this stage, although support and suggestions from the Council would be welcomed.

The Chair advised that an organisation had expressed interest in supporting future civic events, such as St George's Day celebrations. Members agreed further details would be needed regarding the nature of any sponsorship arrangement and whether it aligned with the Working Party's remit and capacity.

Recommended:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the feedback, and outcomes from the St George's Day event debrief be noted and,
3. That, St George's Day Events be held in a similar vein in future years and budgeted for accordingly and,
4. That, the proposed arrangements for Armed Forces Day activities on The Leys for 2026 be supported and,
5. That, the planned discussions regarding Heritage Open Day be noted and that further plans be brought to the next meeting and,
6. That, the Council supports continued partnership working with local organisations, community groups, and volunteers to enhance future events and engagement opportunities, including,
 - a. Support for Bishop's Palace Community Heritage Events by the Museum,
 - b. Sponsorship opportunities where appropriate and,
7. That, this Working Party requests that the underspend for this year's St George's Day event budget be allocated on other events during the year under the auspices of this Committee and,
8. That, a further meeting, or meetings are held in June and/or July 2026.

4 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Due to the time of the year, it was suggested that a meeting or meetings be held in June and or July 2026.

The meeting closed at: 6.50 pm

Chair