

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

Held on Wednesday, 15 July 2026

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

Present:

Councillor J Treloar (Chair)

Councillors:	R Crouch G Meadows	J Robertshaw R Smith
Officers:	Adam Clapton Derek Mackenzie	Deputy Town Clerk Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
Others:	None	

5 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor A Mubin.

6 MINUTES

The minutes of the Witney Past, Present & Future Working Party meeting held on 26 May 2026 were received.

The Chair advised that the organisation which had approached him regarding support or sponsorship for future events had relocated and therefore, this was no longer an option.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2026 be approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

7 EVENTS UPDATE

The Working Party received the report of the Communications & Community Engagement Officer along with a verbal update from the Deputy Town Clerk regarding arrangements for upcoming events, principally for Heritage Open Days.

Members were pleased to note that the Town Council's inaugural St George's Day celebrations had recently received a Local Council Award for Community Event of the Year an award that recognised the event's success in bringing together people of all ages through a programme of community activities, local heritage, music and family entertainment. The Working Party congratulated all officers, volunteers, community groups and partners involved in delivering the event and acknowledged the achievement as a significant endorsement of the Council's approach to community engagement and the objectives of the Working Party.

Members expressed their support for the proposed Heritage Open Days programme and welcomed the partnership with Witney & District Museum and were pleased to see a range of activities being planned to celebrate and promote Witney's heritage and history.

Members thanked officers for the consideration of the extended hours of accessibility for the activities at Tower Hill cemetery, recognising that this would hopefully enable as many residents as possible to participate in the events especially working residents and families.

Members also acknowledged the support of Witney & District Museum in developing complementary events that would enhance public engagement including those activities aim at children.

A member who also served on Oxfordshire County Council advised that they would seek opportunities to facilitate and promote the Bishop's Palace activities and guided tours to help maximise attendance and public awareness and ensure the greatest benefit was derived from the Museum's planned programme.

Recommended:

1. That, the update be noted.
2. That, the Working Party's thanked be passed to all those involved in the organisation and delivery of the award-winning St George's Day celebrations.
3. That, the proposed Heritage Open Days programme be supported.
4. That, officers continue to work with local heritage organisations to maximise participation and promotion of the events.

8 RAF BRIZE NORTON - FREEDOM OF WITNEY

The Working Party received a verbal update from the Committee Clerk on behalf of the Venue & Events Officer regarding discussions with RAF Brize Norton concerning arrangements for 2027 to mark the 50th Anniversary of the granting to them of the Freedom of Witney.

Members were advised that correspondence had been exchanged with RAF Brize Norton and that the Station Executive Officer had responded to confirm that there would be a change in command and that the proposals regarding a Freedom March would be reviewed once the new Station Commander had taken up post at the end of July.

Members further noted that 2027 would also mark the 90th Anniversary of operations at RAF Brize Norton, which could have implications for the timing and arrangements of any Freedom March or other associated commemorative events.

The Working Party recognised the significance of both anniversaries and agreed that further discussions should take place with RAF Brize Norton once the new Station Commander had assumed their post.

Recommended:

1. That, the update be noted.
2. That, officers continue liaison with RAF Brize Norton regarding arrangements for 2027.
3. That, a further update be provided to the Stronger Communities Committee meeting on 21 September 2026.

9 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Members agreed that the next meeting of the Working Party should be held in mid-October 2026, with the exact date to be confirmed by officers.

The Working Party further agreed that invitations should be extended to any local residents who had expressed an interest in the work of the group, enabling them to attend and participate. Members should forward any details to the Committee Clerk.

Recommended:

1. That, the next meeting of the Working Party be held in mid-October 2026.
2. That, officers invite interested residents to attend and participate in future meetings of the Working Party.

The meeting closed at: 4.31 pm

Chair