

**MEETING OF THE
WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Monday, 13 July 2026

At 7.30 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney

Present:

Councillor J Doughty (Chair)

Councillors:	G Meadows	R Crouch
	J Aitman	G Doughty
	T Ashby	D Newcombe
	R Smith	J Robertshaw
	D Temple	S Simpson
	A Mubin	J Treloar
Officers:	Adam Clapton	Deputy Town Clerk
	Derek Mackenzie	Senior Administrative Officer & Committee Clerk
	Nigel Warner	Responsible Financial Officer
Others:	None	

349 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

At the commencement of the meeting apologies for absence were received from Councillors O Collins, D Enright & D Edwards-Hughes.

Cllr D Enright subsequently joined the meeting at 8:45pm.

350 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest from Members.

Cllr A Mubin arrived at 7:03pm

351 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 13 April, 6 May and 22 June 2026 were received.

202 – The Deputy Town Clerk reminded Members of the Code of Conduct training session being run by West Oxfordshire District Council online on 14 July 2026.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the meetings held on 13 April, 6 May and 22 June 2026 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and be signed by the Chair.

352 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

353 **WITNEY COMMUNITY POLICING ISSUES**

No representative from Thames Valley Police was available to attend the meeting. Members with issues were encouraged to contact the Witney Neighbourhood Policing Team directly and no items were raised.

354 **AN UPDATE FROM WITNEY OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILLORS AND WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILLORS**

West Oxfordshire District Council

Cllr R Crouch advised that the hotel hosting asylum seekers had closed approximately six weeks previously. She also updated Members on the Council of Sanctuary application and reported that a submission was due to be made in September.

Cllr J Aitman reported that she was pleased to see the new Shores Green slip roads due to open in the coming days.

Cllr J Treloar updated Members on proposals for the installation of electric vehicle charging points on Church Green and that he was working to ensure there was no reduction in the provision of central Post Office services within the town.

Oxfordshire County Council

Cllr T Ashby reported that the High Street & Market Square improvement works were progressing to schedule. He advised that works associated with the A40 scheme, including bringing the Eynsham Park & Ride into use, were due to commence over the summer and noted that some disruption was likely during the construction period.

He further reported that the Oxford congestion zone would be replaced by a Traffic Filters scheme on 14 September, that Botley Road was expected to reopen soon following its prolonged closure and, that the footpath for Madley Park and Deer Park Road were progressing following the award of the contract.

Cllr J Robertshaw advised that the outcome of the Local Government Review was expected to be announced shortly. He also highlighted ongoing efforts to recruit additional foster carers across Oxfordshire.

Resolved:

That, the verbal updates be noted.

355 **REPORT BACK FROM THE COUNCILLORS ON THE WORK WITH EXTERNAL BODIES WHERE THEY SERVE AS THE TOWN COUNCIL'S NOMINATED REPRESENTATIVE**

Cllr R Crouch reported that **Witney Town Charity** would be hosting an afternoon tea event in September to bring together residents of the various Almshouses and strengthen community connections.

Cllr Crouch also provided an update from the **Witney Educational Foundation**, highlighting the ongoing need to recruit governors for local primary schools. She advised that one of the Foundation's principal aims remained the provision of financial assistance to children and families experiencing hardship to participate in school trips.

Lastly, Cllr Crouch reported that the **Witney Twinning Association** was seeking new members to the group and was undertaking work to raise awareness of the Association and its activities within the town.

Cllr J Doughty updated Members on **West Oxfordshire Community Transport (WOCT)** and advised that she would shortly be visiting the organisation and travelling on one of its bus services in order to speak directly with users and gain a better understanding of the service provided.

Cllr R Smith reported that a recent **Witney Town Band** event held at Oxlease had been well attended. She also advised that the Band was seeking a musical lead for its junior band section.

Cllr D Newcombe provided an update from the **RAF Brize Norton Local Consultation Group**, which had met the previous week. Members heard about plans for a new hangar and a number of other infrastructure improvements and upgrades across the RAF Brize Norton site.

The Mayor added that she and the Deputy Mayor had recently attended a formal event at RAF Brize Norton and commented positively on the occasion and the hospitality received.

Resolved:

That, the verbal updates be noted.

356 **PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE - 21 APRIL, 12 MAY, 2 JUNE & 23 JUNE 2026**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Planning & Development Committee meetings held on 21 April, 12 May, 2 June & 23 June 2026 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

357 **CLIMATE & BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE - 19 MAY 2026**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

CB 257 – No response was received and therefore nothing was submitted.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Climate & Biodiversity Committee meeting held on 19 May be received and any recommendations therein approved.

358 **PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE - 1 JUNE 2026**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Parks & Recreation Committee meeting held on 1 June be received and any recommendations therein approved.

359 **HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE - 8 JUNE 2026**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

H295 – Members heard that the entries were limited to one cemetery and therefore the entry of Windrush Cemetery was progressed.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments Committee meeting held on 8 June 2026 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

360 **STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE - 15 JUNE 2026**

The Vice Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

SC304 – The Leader and Mayor thanked officers for their work at Witney Carnival and the positive response to the residents' survey activity. They also welcomed the attendance of the Youth Councillors and noted the excellent level of engagement throughout the lively event.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Stronger Communities Committee meeting held on 15 June 2026 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

361 **POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE - 27 MAY 2026 & 22 JUNE 2026**

The Chair of the Committee presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

F327 - In response to a Member's question, it was clarified that the grant awarded to Courtside Hubs CIC was specifically to support free sessions for local schools, providing opportunities for young people to be introduced to a range of sporting activities.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Policy, Governance & Finance meetings held on 27 May 2026 & 22 June 2026 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

362 **WITNEY: PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE WORKING PARTY - 26 MAY 2026**

The Chair of the Working Party presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

The Mayor congratulated the Working Party and officers for all their work on the St George's Day event in April.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Witney: Past, Present & Future Working Party meeting held on 26 May 2026 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

363 **CLIMATE ACTION WORKING PARTY - 11 JUNE 2026**

The Chair of the Working Party presented the above minutes to Council and moved their acceptance.

Cllr Smith asked that she be added to the meeting attendance as this has been omitted.

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the Climate Action Working Party meeting held on 11 June 2026 be received and any recommendations therein approved.

364 **COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Council received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk regarding the annual review of the Committee Terms of Reference.

Members were satisfied with the Standing Committee recommendations as presented and agreed them unanimously.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Committee Terms of Reference for the Council's Standing Committees as presented be approved.

365 **REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

The Council received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk regarding appointments to Outside Organisations.

Members heard that Mr C Woodward was happy to continue as the Town Council's appointed Trustee to the **Witney Educational Foundation** for a further four-year term.

The Council also noted and thanks of **Witney Town Charity** following their request for the appointment of Mr M Lee as the town council trustee.

Cogges Welfare Trust Charity, following the resignation of Cllr J Aitman from the role, it was proposed by Cllr J Treloar, seconded by Cllr D Temple and unanimously agreed that Cllr J Robertshaw be appointed as the Town Council's nominated Trustee.

Resolved:

1. That, the continuation of Mr C Woodward as the Council's Trustee to the Witney Educational Foundation be noted and,
2. That, the thanks in respect of the appointment of Mr M Lee to Witney Town Charity be noted and,
3. That, Cllr J Robertshaw be appointed as the Council's Trustee to the Cogges Welfare Trust Charity.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that, following the Council's decision earlier in the year to reduce the number of Committee cycles, a small number of matters required consideration by Council in order that work could progress over the summer and not be delayed until the September cycle of meetings.

366 **HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS**

The Chair of the Committee presented the report and explained the request from Witney Allotments (North) for two additional sheds. Members heard that the request had arisen following the division of two larger plots to create additional allotment plots, which would assist in reducing the waiting list.

During discussion, a Member expressed opposition to the proposal, noting that the request was not related to improving accessibility provision and therefore, in their view, should not be supported. Additionally, the Members along with another believed that as the Town Council did not receive income from the Allotments that the financial cost should not be borne.

The Responsible Financial Officer advised that the cost of the sheds would be met from the Allotments Earmarked Reserve and could only be utilised for allotment-related purposes. Additional costs for the installation would be met from existing operational budgets.

Following the confirmation that it was a duty of the Council to provide allotments where there was demand, it was proposed by Cllr J Aitman, seconded by Cllr R Smith, that the proposal be approved as presented.

A named vote was requested with the result as follows:

For: (10) Cllrs R Crouch, J Doughty, G Doughty, J Aitman, R Smith, S Simpson, T Ashby, D Newcombe, G Meadows and A Mubin.

Against: (2) Cllrs J Robertshaw and J Treloar.

Abstention: (1) Cllr D Temple.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and
2. That, the request from Witney Allotments North for the provision of two additional sheds be approved at a cost of £657.98.

Cllr J Treloar left the meeting at 7:58pm rejoining at 8:03pm

367 **POLICY, GOVERNANCE & FINANCE**

Members received a verbal update from the Responsible Financial Officer which provided additional context to the Earmarked Reserve information published as part of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return considered by the Council at their meeting of 22 June. The Responsible Financial Officer outlined the current position of the Council's Earmarked Reserves and advised that further information would be presented to Members in September prior to the commencement of the precept setting process.

The Responsible Financial Officer also provided an update on the financial position of the West Witney project. Members heard that expenditure to date stood at £2,002,775, with an estimated £101,362 remaining to complete the project. The Leader thanked Officers for their work in ensuring that the overall project remained within the approved budget.

The Deputy Town Clerk presented a grant application from Witney Community Primary School, which had been carried forward from an earlier Committee cycle. Members felt that the proposed play equipment formed part of the school's core infrastructure and would primarily be available to pupils rather than the wider community. It was therefore considered not to meet the ethos of the Council's grant funding scheme, which sought to support projects offering wider community benefit and enrichment opportunities.

It was proposed by Cllr J Treloar, seconded by Cllr R Smith, that the application be refused. A vote followed, with ten votes in favour of refusal and two against.

Members also received updates on the grant awards received from Witney Town Charity towards accessibility improvements at Unterhaching Park and the replacement bus shelter at Oxford Hill.

The Council considered a request for a subsidised hire of the Corn Exchange for the annual Eco Fair at a cost of £210, which was agreed unanimously.

The Deputy Town Clerk further updated Members on changes to the financial contribution made by the Cogges Welfare Trust towards the upkeep of the Buttercross Clock. Members noted the resolution to address the future management of this long-standing arrangement.

A request submitted by the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer for the installation of protective fencing at the Country Park was also considered. Members heard that the fencing was intended to reduce anti-social behaviour and protect wildlife habitats. Concerns were raised regarding ground stability in the proposed location; however, it was noted that any such matters would be addressed by officers as part of the operational delivery of the works. Approval was made for a budget of £1,200 to be set.

Finally, the Deputy Town Clerk provided a verbal update regarding a request from The Station Youth Outreach Service to deliver six parenting courses in the Gallery Room commencing in September. Following discussion, a vote was taken and the proposal in principle was approved by eleven votes in favour and one against.

Resolved:

1. That, the verbal update regarding the Council's Earmarked Reserves and the current financial position of the West Witney Project be noted and,
2. That, the grant application from Witney Community Primary School be refused and,
3. That, the grant awards made by Witney Town Charity towards accessibility improvements at Unterhaching Park and the Oxford Hill bus shelter be noted and,
4. That, the request for a subsidised hire of the Corn Exchange for the annual Eco Fair at a cost of £210 be approved and,
5. That, the proposed arrangement regarding the future contribution towards the upkeep of the Buttercross Clock be approved and,
6. That, a budget of £1,200 be allocated for the installation of protective fencing with officers authorised to determine the most appropriate method of installation and,
7. That, The Station Youth Outreach Service be permitted in principle to deliver six parenting courses as subsidised lettings in the Gallery Room commencing in September.

368 **PARKS & RECREATION**

Members received the report of the Deputy Town Clerk including an update from the Head of estates & Operations regarding the extended opening hours of the Splash Park, where they heard that the approved budget was expected to utilise its full allocation. A Member noted that some of the signage was displaying incorrect information and officers agreed that this would be corrected as soon as possible.

Members also received a verbal update on proposed KICK football sessions to be delivered by The Station at The Leys during the summer holiday period. Officers advised that a suitable area had been identified which would not impact upon the ground recovery works currently taking place on the football pitch areas used during the playing season.

Resolved:

1. That, the update on the extended opening hours of the Splash Park be noted and,
2. That, officers arrange for the correction of the Splash Park signage and,
3. That, the proposed KICK football sessions at The Leys be noted.

*During the following item Cllr T Ashby left the meeting at 8:38pm rejoining at 8:41pm
Cllr D Enright joined the meeting at 8:45pm*

369 **STRONGER COMMUNITIES**

The Council received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk which contained proposals in relation to wayfinding for the town.

The Council received and considered a request from West Oxfordshire District Council regarding its proposed Wayfinding Scheme and the associated proposal for Witney Town Council to assume ownership and future maintenance responsibility for the assets following installation.

Members welcomed the principle of the project and recognised the potential benefits that improved wayfinding could bring to the town. However, concern was expressed that the proposed commuted sum was insufficient to mitigate the Council to a potentially significant future liability arising from the maintenance and replacement of approximately thirty signs. Members felt that insufficient information had been provided on the long-term warranties and guarantees that would accompany the assets.

Reservations were also raised regarding the proposed gateway signage at Corn Street and Langdale Gate. Members were disappointed that no visual representations of the proposed designs had been made available, which limited their ability to provide informed comments on the appearance of the scheme. Members expressed a desire for Town Council involvement in the design process as the project developed.

Following discussion, Members unanimously agreed that the request to assume ownership and maintenance responsibility should be declined in its current form.

The Council also received additional information via the report from the Communications & Community Engagement Officer regarding the development of an interactive town map.

Members were supportive of the project in principle and agreed that the Deputy Town Clerk should be authorised to progress the work over the summer. Whilst willing to host the map, Members considered that further information was required regarding its content and functionality and felt that West Oxfordshire District Council should meet any associated hosting costs.

Cllr D Enright did not participate in the vote on this item due to his late arrival during the discussion.

Resolved:

1. That, the principle of the Wayfinding Scheme be supported and,
2. That, the request for Witney Town Council to assume ownership and maintenance responsibility for the wayfinding assets be declined in its current form and,
3. That, the Council seek greater involvement in the design process and request further information regarding warranties, maintenance liabilities and gateway signage proposals and,
4. That, authority be delegated to the Deputy Town Clerk to progress the interactive map project, with West Oxfordshire District Council being requested to fund any associated hosting costs.

370 **SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER NO 5(W)**

Resolved

That, Standing Order 5(w) be suspended in order to allow the meeting to continue as it had now lasted for two hours.

371 **STANDING ORDERS - REVIEW**

The Council received and considered the report of the Deputy Town Clerk regarding the annual review of the Council's Standing Orders that current stood adjourned.

Members raised no questions and were satisfied with the Standing Orders as presented.

The Deputy Town Clerk added that he had been notified that the National Association of Local Council had advised that a review of the model standing orders had been authorised and he would circulate the consultation to all Members for their individual responses.

Resolved:

1. That, the report be noted and,
2. That, the Standing Orders as presented be approved and,
3. That, details of the NALC Model Standing Orders review and consultation be circulated.

372 **FINANCIAL REGULATIONS - REVIEW**

The Council received and considered the revised Financial Regulations together with a verbal explanation from the Responsible Financial Officer.

Members were advised that paragraph 4.8 had been amended to include reference to the relevant legislation in order to provide greater clarity.

Members were unanimously in agreement to approve.

Resolved:

1. That, the verbal update be noted and,
2. That, the Financial Regulations as presented be approved and adopted.

373 **CIVIC ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Council received the report of the Mayor and Mayor's Secretary which highlighted the civic engagements of the Mayor and Deputy since the last meeting.

The Mayor expressed her thanks to former Mayor, Cllr A Bailey, for his service to the Council and the town during his Mayoral year. She also advised that she and the Deputy Mayor had enjoyed the start of their terms of office and looked forward to representing the Council at forthcoming engagements.

The Mayor took the opportunity to promote her forthcoming charity events scheduled for July and September and encouraged Members to support them where possible.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

374 **HEALTH & SAFETY**

The Council received the report of the Compliance & Environment Officer regarding Health & Safety matters.

Members heard an update on preparations for the implementation of Martyn's Law, with officers continuing to share knowledge and review procedures to ensure the Council complies with the new requirements. Updates were also provided on a range of Health & Safety matters, including water risk assessments and the recent RoSPA inspections of the skate park at The Leys.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

375 **VANDALISM & ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR**

The Council received the report of vandalism and anti-social behaviour incidents that had occurred since the last meeting.

The Committee Clerk provided a verbal update on a recent act of vandalism which had resulted in damage requiring repairs estimated at approximately £400. He also advised that further information would be obtained regarding an incident involving a swan and that the matter would be reported to Thames Valley Police as appropriate.

Members expressed their disappointment at the continued occurrence of such incidents and thanked officers for their ongoing efforts in responding to and recording issues as they arose.

Resolved:

That, the report and verbal update be noted.

376 **COMPLAINTS, FEEDBACK & INFORMATION GOVERNANCE**

The Council received the bi-annual report of the Deputy Town Clerk outlining complaints, comments and compliments received from November 2025 to July 2026.

Members noted the contents of the report and were pleased to see the continued positive feedback received in respect of Council services, facilities and events. The report provided assurance that complaints and comments received were being considered and addressed appropriately in accordance with the Council's adopted procedures.

No questions were raised by Members.

Resolved:

That, the report be noted.

377 **FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN OXFORDSHIRE**

The Council heard that there was no substantive update at the present time, although it was anticipated that an announcement from the Government on its preferred option would be made later that week. Following this, further consideration and discussion of the implications for Witney Town Council would take place.

Resolved:

That, the verbal update be noted.

378 **COMMUNICATION FROM THE LEADER**

The Leader advised Members of the forthcoming screening of the *National Emergency* film. She and the Chair of the Climate & Biodiversity Committee would be appearing on Witney Radio alongside a representative of the Witney Eco Forum to promote the event and the opportunity to discuss and raise awareness of environmental issues.

The Leader also updated Members on correspondence received from Witney Swifts cricket club regarding the continued delay to the delivery of the West Witney clubhouse project. Members heard that a meeting would be arranged between officers, Councillors and representatives of the Club to discuss the current position and identify how the Council may assist in supporting the project.

Resolved:

That, the Leader's update be noted.

379 **POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER NEWSLETTERS**

The Council received the April, May and June 2026 newsletters from the Thames Valley Police & Crime Commissioner.

Resolved:

That, the newsletters be noted.

380 **NALC LOCAL COUNCIL AWARD SCHEME - SILVER AWARD**

The Council were pleased to acknowledge the successful attainment of the NALC Local Council Award Scheme Silver Award.

Members congratulated officers and staff on the achievement, recognising the significant work undertaken across the Council to meet the required standards. Thanks were expressed to all officers and staff for their contribution towards securing the award.

Resolved:

That, the Council's achievement of the NALC Local Council Award Scheme Silver Award be noted.

381 **MINISTRY OF HOUSING, COMMUNITIES & LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

The Council received a letter from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government in response to the Council's concerns about the financial pressures on parish and town councils, as previously agreed.

A Member sought clarification on the process for issuing the letter. The Leader confirmed that she had viewed a draft before it was submitted.

Resolved:

That, the correspondence be noted.

382 **REVIEW OF SPEED LIMITS ON OXFORDSHIRE RURAL A AND B CLASS ROAD NETWORK**

The Council received notification of Oxfordshire County Council's review of speed limits on the rural A and B class road network.

Members agreed that the consultation should be referred to the Planning & Development Committee for consideration and the preparation of a Council response. The Committee Clerk

would also circulate the consultation details to all Members to enable individual responses to be submitted if desired.

Resolved:

1. That, the consultation be referred to the Planning & Development Committee for consideration and response and,
2. That, details of the consultation be circulated to all Members for information.

Cllr A Mubin left the meeting at 9:30pm rejoining at 9:34pm

383 **QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

Windrush Pavilion

Cllr T Ashby asked that now that the electricity supply had been connected to the pavilion was there a timescale for the transfer of the facility into the ownership of Witney Town Council.

In response, the Leader advised that she was not aware of a date for the transfer and suggested that, in his capacity as a West Oxfordshire District Councillor, Cllr Ashby raise the matter directly with West Oxfordshire District Council officers.

High Street/Market Square Works

Cllr J Treloar raised concerns regarding the impact of the High Street and Market Square improvement works on local businesses. In particular, he highlighted the lack of signage advising visitors that businesses remained open and trading during the works.

Members shared these concerns and felt that greater efforts should be made to support town centre businesses throughout the construction period. It was unanimously agreed that the Leader write to Oxfordshire County Council and West Oxfordshire District Council on behalf of the Council, copying in the local bus company. It was not felt needed for the letter to be circulated for approval however the Leader confirmed that she would provide a copy of the letter to all Councillors once issued.

Resolved:

1. That, the Leader write to West Oxfordshire District Council and Oxfordshire County Council on behalf of the Council, highlighting Members' concerns regarding the impact of the works on local businesses and requesting improved signage and promotion to make clear that businesses remain open and trading.
2. That, the question and response be noted.

Cllr J Treloar left the meeting at 9:36pm.

384 **SEALING OF DOCUMENTS**

The Committee were given notice of the following signed documents, signed by the Deputy Mayor in the Mayor's absence.

Date	No. of Seal	Nature of Document
11 June 2026	100	Lease of The Leys Recreation Ground Multi-Activity Hub Courtside CIC In Duplicate
11 June 2026	101	Concession contract relating to The Leys Recreation Ground Multi-Activity Hub In Duplicate
11 June 2026	102	Parent Company Guarantee Courtside Hubs CIC In Duplicate

Resolved:

1. That, the above sealed documents be noted and,
2. That, the seal of the Council be affixed to any documents arising from decisions taken by this meeting of the Council.

The meeting closed at: 9.40 pm

Chair