

Dear Sharon

Many thanks for sharing with us an overview of the feedback from your 2026 Annual Residents' Satisfaction Survey from earlier this year.

Further to your request for further details on the key themes highlighted in the survey responses, I have addressed these key points below:

Car Parking

West Oxfordshire District Council has a clear commitment to supporting the economy and businesses in Witney by protecting free parking where many councils across the country and Oxfordshire charge for parking. We currently provide over 1800 free parking spaces for people visiting the town centre for shopping, leisure and work. Our data shows occupancy levels across Witney vary during the week from between 55.14% to 82.70% at the busiest times showing we have capacity. We also provide a significant number of long stay spaces so that local workers can use our car parks aswell as visitors and shoppers.

Regarding proposals to develop on Woodford Way, as you may be aware there is a very high need for social rented homes for local people in West Oxfordshire and so we need to take a strategic view about how we can meet this incredibly important challenge with the land we own without detracting from existing provision and amenity. Any new development will of course be subject to a Planning Application and while we have not yet reached this stage with Woodford Way, this would provide the opportunity for the community to comment and to ensure that parking provision is considered as part of any future plan.

Waste, Litter and Street Cleansing

I appreciate the concerns raised by residents regarding litter bins, littering, and the condition of some street scene infrastructure. Maintaining a clean and attractive environment is important to us, and we recognise the impact that litter and poorly maintained assets can have on residents' perceptions of the area.

Litter bins across the district underwent a comprehensive review and rationalisation programme several years ago, during which the Town Council was consulted. More recently, West Oxfordshire District Council has introduced a digital monitoring system for litter bin servicing. Ubico teams now record bin fill levels during emptying rounds, providing valuable data on bin usage and helping us ensure that bins are emptied at the appropriate frequency. This information is reviewed regularly, and a further assessment from the summer will be undertaken in the coming months. At present, the available data indicates that the current number of litter bins is sufficient, and we have not received evidence of widespread increased littering in busy locations that would suggest a need for additional bins. It is also worth noting that simply installing more bins does not always lead to less littering, as littering behaviour is influenced by a range of factors beyond bin availability.

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However, if the ongoing review identifies areas where additional capacity or changes to servicing frequencies are required, appropriate measures will be implemented.

With regard to dilapidated bins, outdated advertisements, or other poorly maintained street scene items, we encourage residents to report these issues directly to the Council. We are committed to addressing such concerns wherever possible and can investigate and arrange remedial action when issues are brought to our attention. While we strive to deliver a high quality service at all times, there are occasions when external factors such as weather conditions, seasonal demands, operational pressures, or misuse of public spaces can impact outcomes. In these situations, feedback from residents and local partners such as Witney Town Council is invaluable, as it helps us identify issues quickly and take corrective action where needed.

Regarding the specific concerns about litter accumulation around locations such as the path adjacent to the Premier Inn and Burford Road, I have passed these on for investigation and review.

Grounds Maintenance

We acknowledge the concerns raised regarding grass cutting and the maintenance of green spaces and public areas. It is encouraging to note that some residents have observed recent improvements, particularly within the Market Square area.

The survey period covered February to May, which coincides with the start of the grass cutting season. During this time, grass growth can be particularly rapid depending on weather conditions, and there can be variations in how sites appear between scheduled maintenance visits. Without specific locations or examples however, it is difficult to comment on individual concerns.

WODC remains committed to maintaining green spaces to an appropriate standard and continually monitor performance. As with other environmental services, there are occasions when resident expectations may not be fully met due to factors beyond our immediate control. Where residents identify areas that they believe require attention, we encourage them to notify the Council so that concerns can be investigated and addressed as appropriate.

Town Centres

We take great pride in maintaining regular and ongoing dialogue with businesses across Witney town centre and high street, ensuring we understand both the opportunities and challenges facing our business community.

We are pleased that Witney continues to experience very low levels of vacancy, reflecting the town's strong appeal to both independent and national businesses. The vibrancy of our high street, combined with a loyal customer base and attractive environment, means that many businesses are keen to establish themselves here. Alongside this, we are continuing to strengthen our partnership with Witney Chamber of Commerce to support the town's growth

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and visitor experience. This includes an exciting programme of wayfinding improvements, featuring new signage, interactive digital maps and freestanding information points designed to help visitors navigate the town more easily, discover more of what Witney has to offer and encourage longer dwell times in the town centre.

We are also delighted to see our new market operator going from strength to strength in Market Square. The market plays a valuable role in enhancing the town centre offer, increasing footfall and supporting local traders, and we look forward to working with them to continue its development. In addition, public realm improvements are due to commence at Marriott's Walk, helping to create a more attractive and flexible space for visitors and businesses alike, complimenting the Witney High Street Works completing later this year. We also hope you will have noticed the impact of our dedicated marketing specialist for Marriotts, delivering an expanded programme of events, markets and activities that are further animating the area and attracting new visitors. Overall we have seen an impressive 28.6% year-on-year increase in footfall in Marriotts Walk.

We recognise the importance of popular restaurant and leisure operators, including the interest residents have expressed in brands such as Nando's. While we are unable to comment on any discussions that may take place with individual businesses, please be assured that we listen carefully to the views of residents and remain committed to supporting a diverse town centre offer that meets the needs of our community.

I trust this information is helpful to you and please do not hesitate to get in touch to clarify or discuss any of the above further. Looking ahead, we are excited to be working with Witney Town Council and other partners to establish a Witney Town Centre Forum. This will help coordinate activity, strengthen collaboration and develop a shared vision for the future of the town centre. Together, we want to ensure that Witney remains a thriving, welcoming and attractive place to live, visit, work and enjoy.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Martin'.

Phil Martin