WITNEY TOWN YOUTH COUNCIL



Witney Town Council

V2 2019

What does a Youth Council do?

The aim is to involve Witney's young people in local government, giving them a voice within the town and the opportunity to help shape their community with other young people in mind.

What are the benefits of being involved?

- Improve self esteem and confidence
- · Great opportunities for personal development
- · Expand your skills and knowledge bank
- It's a great addition to your CV

Add Value to Your Community

- Promote a positive image of the town and young people and improve relationships between older and younger people in the community
- Be part of the democratic process and get involved in the decisions that affect young people in the town
- Learn about your community and develop an understanding of political processes, citizenship and representation

Members are able to connect and collaborate with other young people to help address the issues that affect the youth of Witney







In This Issue

- What does a Youth Council Do ?
- · How Does It Work?
- What Can You Do?
- What Do We Want In Return
- What To Expect
- What Next?



How does it work?

Witney's Youth Council consists of 14 members (residents of Witney) drawn from schools and youth organisations to give a good cross section of the town a chance to be involved. The members range between 12 and 18 years old.

You will have your own annual budget of £500 a year to support events and projects you have resolved to work on.

Youth Council meets 6 times a year at meetings that are timetabled to fall 2 weeks before each Full Council meetings. In this way your minutes and resolutions can be approved in a timely manner so that you can get started on the things that matter to you with little delay.

How involved is the Youth Council?

- Youth councillors hold regular meetings and get involved in campaigns or projects and meet with local councillors and other key decision makers
- Members can help inform and influence decisions regarding youth projects
- The minutes of the Youth Council meetings report back to full council
- You will have your own small budget so that you can fulfil some of your ideas

What can you do?

Within your budget you can decide what is important. This might involve putting on a small event or taking part in something else that is happening.

There are restrictions on what you can spend money on, just as there are for the Town Council. You are spending tax payer's money, so you have to ensure that what you provide with that is value for money and of benefit to the wider community.

As you have limited funds you will also need to budget carefully to make sure you stay within your limit.

Getting things for free is a good way to stretch your budget, so brush up on your negotiating skills!





What do we want in return?

You do not need experience to become a member of the youth council. You just need to be between the ages of 13 and 18 and live in the town. It is however, vital that you have:

- drive and enthusiasm
- commitment
- a desire to make a difference
- the ability to listen to other young people
- willingness to communicate with others
- Ideas about what can be done

In return we would like a commitment from you. Youth Council meets a minimum of six times a year and you are expected to attend at least two of these meetings. We hope that you will find the experience so interesting that you will easily manage this commitment.

We'd appreciate reliability and good time keeping so we can hold meetings as planned and all get home at a reasonable time.

It's important to retain members so that meetings can take place and there is continuity in the process of decision making and management of events and projects that the Youth Council undertakes so we will do everything we can to make being a Youth Councillor rewarding.



What to expect

Once you are established there are many ways in which you might get involved other than just holding meetings and planning events or projects that you would like to take forward.

The Town Council holds a number of Civic and community events throughout the year which have plenty of scope for the involvement of our Youth Councillors.

These include things such as Free Family Play Days where you could run an activity for teenagers, and more solemn occasions such as the Remembrance Day Parade where you might want to nominate a wreath layer for the Youth Council.

You could present a special award for the Schools in Bloom entries or perhaps nominate a deserving member of the public for a Citizen of the Year Award or get involved with flag raising days. There are so many ways for you to be part of the Civic life in the town.

You could also have a dedicated page on the Town Council's website to let everyone know what you are doing.



What next?

At your first meeting you will discuss and adopt Terms of Reference. These define the remit of the Youth Council. Its powers and its responsibilities.

You will elect a Chairman who will lead your meetings, a Vice Chairman who steps up when your Chairman is unavailable and choose someone to act as 'secretary'. Your secretary will be your minute taker and the person who will make sure everyone receives information and papers before and after subsequent meetings. You will also need a Treasurer to help you manage your budget.

Finer Details

You might want to adopt your own mission statement or ask about some training. You are welcome to attend council meetings to get a feel for how they work. There is nothing like seeing this first hand.

Councils usually have a set of rules (Standing Orders) that define how they work. Many of these apply to meetings and these relate to things such as the rules of debate, how long meetings last, what times they are held, disorderly conduct etc.. You will need to formulate some Standing Orders of your own so that your meetings work for you and achieve results.

Important contacts

Town Hall Market Square Witney OX28 6AG

Tel 01993 704379

Polly Inness Communications Officer 01993 777828

Polly.inness@witney-tc.gov.uk

Democratic Services Officer 01993 777822

What has the Youth Council been up to?

In March the chair of the Youth Council attended the Annual Town Meeting. As a result they were able to liaise with the Neighbourhood policing team and exchanged feedback and information regarding youth concerns with the drug and ASB problems in the town. They also spoke and represented young people at the Town Council's Climate Emergency meeting.

The Youth Council are currently fundraising for a sustainable water refill station for the town, a project they settled on earlier this year. So far they have run an Easter egg hunt and Cake sale along with a tin can alley stall at Witney Carnival that not only raised funds but promoted recycling at the same time. They are currently making plans for a Witney's Got Talent competition and a further cake sale.

All in all it's been a very successful first 18 months. They have just elected a new set of officers for the forthcoming term and we are confident that they will continue to be a voice for the young people of Witney and work toward making the changes they feel are important.

