

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

WEDNESDAY 14 MARCH 2018

Community Services Committee

The Community Services remit includes:

- ❖ Civic Events
- ❖ Community Engagement
- ❖ In Bloom
- ❖ Christmas Lights
- ❖ Benches
- ❖ Bus Shelters
- ❖ Communication
- ❖ Youth Council

Civic Events

'The Great War' 100th commemoration – planning for this started a year ago and will culminate with events across the town led by various community groups to be held over the week preceding Sunday 11th November when a new memorial will be unveiled on The Leys after the normal Remembrance Service.

'Poppy Mile' – individuals and groups across the district have been busy knitting poppies in an effort to reach our target of 15,000 (we have over 6,000 to date) – there are even contributions as far afield as the USA, New Zealand and Holland.

The poppies will be spread from the Corn Exchange, along Church Green to St. Mary's and onto The Leys, which is the general route the soldiers of Witney would have taken as they went off to serve King and Country.

Schools – all 14 of our secondary and primary schools are involved, with each one making a large circular mosaic unique to their own school – these will be displayed in the Corn Exchange during the week leading up to the 11th November.

Passchendaele 100 – following on from the previous year's Somme 100, Somme Company, Oxfordshire (The Rifles) Battalion ACF were once again invited to host this poignant event on November 9th last year. Robert Courts MP read out the Roll of Honour of the local men who had lost their lives at Passchendaele, whilst Mayor Cllr Chris Woodward read out the 58 regiments that these men served in.

Traditional Services also held

Witney Feast
Remembrance Sunday
Mayor's Carol Service
Mayor's Civic Service
Christmas Lights

Community Engagement

Witney Town Council continues to support the Community Bus Service, without which many of our residents would be without essential transport

In Bloom will, this year, concentrate on the WWI commemorations

Christmas Lights – once again the lights were quite spectacular, building on last year’s enhancement to extend to more of the town and providing a dazzling display and an event attended by thousands! Many thanks to the Rotary Club, Round Table and Lions for their continued support.

Benches – we are engaged in a rolling programme to replace old benches and provide more throughout the town. Again, suggestions and sponsors are welcome.

Bus shelters – many of you will have noticed the fantastic artwork on the Newland bus shelter, created by an innovative partnership between Witney Town Council and the students of Abingdon & Witney College. This first shelter was sponsored by local company Krayma Technical Solutions and installed by vinyl print company Leach Print. The aim is to renovate all 16 of the town’s bus stops and we encourage local businesses to “Adopt a Stop”.

Oxfordshire Play Day – a break from the usual venue saw this free event held on the King George Field – fantastic fun and extremely well attended

Communication – we continue to build on our communication with people and always look for new and innovative ways in getting information to as many residents as possible. Tonight we launch the 2017/18 Residents Satisfaction Survey in order to gauge what we are doing well and not so well. There are hardcopies of the survey in the room, and there is a facility to complete this online as well as via the March edition of the Letterbox publication which gets delivered to every household.

Youth Council – a new and refreshing approach in promoting engagement with our young people. The Youth Council is made up of students from our secondary schools and is open to ages 11 – 18 and gives our young people an insight into how a local authority works as well as providing valuable feedback to the Town Council on issues from a youth perspective.

After initial guidance sessions The Youth Council held the first meeting in its own right last month and elected their first Chair, Yasmin Digweed of Wood Green School.

We wish these aspirational young residents well and look forward to helping them realise their aims.

My thanks to officers and fellow councillors for their dedication and support over the past year.

Finally, many thanks to the outstanding folk of this remarkable town without whose contributions much of the above would not be possible.

Cllr Chris Holliday, Chairman – Community Services Committee