



## WITNEY'S TINY FOREST



It's been all over the media with newspapers and magazines, TV and Radio programmes all running the story, but just what is Witney's Tiny Forest and what does it mean for the town? We look back as the Tiny Forest heads towards its First Anniversary.

Having declared a climate emergency in 2019, the opportunity to pioneer an exciting joint project, a first in the UK, was one that we, as a forward-looking council and energetic community, absolutely could not, turn down.

A Tiny Forest is a densely planted, fast-growing native woodland. It's around the size of a tennis court and 3000 of them exist worldwide. The chance to have the very first one in the UK came from Earthwatch, who offer nature-based solutions in built-up areas to boost biodiversity.

In a town like ours with an enthusiastic, up for anything community, getting

volunteer manpower for a project like this is not too hard. Local volunteer group, Witney Land Army recruited a team of community planters, while Earthwatch provided selected native trees, appropriate for the soil and site.

Our design deviated from the usual rectangle, opting instead for a polygon, mirroring the shape of St Mary's, Cogges' church tower - a tangible link to a historic local feature.

On planting day, wellies were an absolute must. Surface lying water in clay gave us concern that we might end up with a tiny lake rather than a tiny forest, but with the addition of plenty of straw the ground was ready in time and 600 saplings were quickly planted by around 70 volunteers over the course of a day.

Important data collection is going on now as the Earthwatch team and



volunteers measure CO2 uptake and monitor the growth of biodiversity.

Why not pay a visit to "Tychwood" and start reaping the health, and recreational benefits of this wonderful, new outdoor community space that reconnects us with nature?

The entrance to the play area is at Eton Close [www.witney-tc.gov.uk/witneys-tiny-forest/](http://www.witney-tc.gov.uk/witneys-tiny-forest/)





# All about your Council Tax

The primary source of income for most Parish Councils comes from the Precept, part of the Council Tax. We explain the contribution you make to the Town Council through your Council Tax and how it is spent.

## WHAT IS A PRECEPT?

The Town Council receives a small pro-portion of the local Council Tax. It does not receive any direct funding from central government.

The funding collected pays for the running of the Council and the services it provides.

## HOW IS IT CALCULATED?

The Town Council makes an estimate of income and expenditure for the next financial year, including some for future planned projects and/or unexpected events. It is then calculated as an amount per Council Tax Band D Property and added to the Council Tax Bill of all the dwellings with-in the Parish area.

## HOW IS IT RAISED?

West Oxfordshire District Council collects your Council Tax on behalf of the District Council, County Council, Police, Fire and the Precepts for any Parish/Town Councils in their district. It is important to note that Witney Town Council's Precept is just a small percentage of your overall Council Tax Bill.

## HOW MUCH IS IT & WHY HAS IT GONE UP?

The Precept charged by Witney Town Council will rise in April by less than 40p a month for the average home (Band D property) from £154.40 to £159.04 per annum. This equates to a £4.64 increase over the year. These funds will enable the Council to continue offering value for money while absorbing a loss of income during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The precept will allow for further investment in sports facilities, public halls, youth services and climate emergency initiatives while maintaining nine play parks, two cemeteries and the Lake and Country Park to a high standard for residents.

These funds will help provide a sound basis for the Council's strategic plan, and in particular:

- Continued support for the community bus
- Financial support for Youth Services in Witney
- Creation of an Inclusivity & Diversity Panel
- A full review of the Council's open spaces, parks, sports pitches and play areas
- Enhancing the Corn Exchange, providing Witney with a small Community Arts Centre

## HOW IS IT SPENT?

Your Precept is spent on maintaining the provision of all the facilities and services the Town Council offers as shown below.



The Leys (Sports Pitches & Splashpark) **£18.56**  
West Witney Sports Ground **£4.37**  
Burwell QEII Recreation Ground **£2.86**  
King George V Recreation Ground **£2.31**  
Witney Lake & Country Park **£6.11**



Tower Hill Cemetery **£10.88**  
Windrush Cemetery **£12.58**  
Closed Churchyards **£1.18**



Bank Interest/Charges **-£0.42p**  
Corporate Management **£10.86**  
Democratic Representation & Management **£10.80**  
Capital and Earmarked Reserves **£6.14**



Burwell Hall **£7.42**  
Corn Exchange **£11.79**  
Income from Leased  
Community halls **-£1.68**



Community Activities/Newsletter **£12.88**  
Community Infrastructure **£35.67**  
(inc grass cutting & open spaces)  
Civic Activities **£3.15**  
(inc Remembrance Sunday & events)  
Christmas Lights **£3.58**

Total:  
**£159.04**  
per Band D household per year

Witney Town Council  
Annual Residents' Satisfaction Survey 2021

As the new municipal year approaches Witney Town Council is inviting your views and comments on the services we provide.

This is a marker for us to judge how we are doing and where we can improve.

If you would rather take part online or others in your household would also like to respond you can find this survey at: [www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/WTCSurvey2021](http://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/WTCSurvey2021)

Section 1 – Town Council Services

The Town Council provides the following in the town – please rate the performance in each of the under-mentioned services

1 = Excellent    2= Good    3 = Satisfactory    4 = Poor

	1	2	3	4
Recreation Grounds/Play Areas/Open Spaces	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Witney Lake and Country Park	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The Leys Splash and Adventure Parks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Floral Displays (including hanging baskets)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Street Furniture (bins/benches/bus shelters)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Cemeteries	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Corn Exchange	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Burwell Hall	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Christmas Lighting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Civic Events (e.g. Remembrance)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Community Events (e.g. Play days)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Communication	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Town Council services overall</b>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If you rated any of the Town Council services as poor, please use this space to explain why:

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As some of our services are age specific would you mind letting us know your age range ? Please circle the appropriate range:

Age: U-17   18-20   21-29   30-39   40-49   50-59   60+

Section 2 – Which of these Town Council Services have you found the most useful/beneficial during the Covid-19 lockdowns?

Please tick all that apply

- Recreation Grounds
- Play Areas
- Open Spaces
- Witney Lake and Country Park
- Floral Displays (including hanging baskets)
- Street Furniture (bins/benches/bus shelters)
- Cemeteries
- Christmas Lighting
- Communication

Which of these was the most useful to you?

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Do you consider the Town Council could have done anything further to assist you during the Covid-19 lockdowns?

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Any additional comments you'd like to make?

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Thank you for taking our survey. Please return to the Town Hall using the freepost address overleaf by

7th May 2021

You can continue to submit online until 30th May

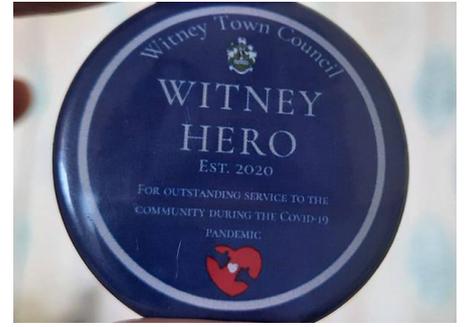
## COVID HEROES

It is time to acknowledge the enormous debt of thanks we owe to all those in our town who have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic with dedication and hard work. These are ordinary people doing extraordinary things that have an immediate, positive, and tangible impact on the morale and wellbeing of others in our town.

With your help we can celebrate these modest heroes and offer a heartfelt thank you. There are no categories because sometimes the smallest act of thoughtfulness at the most difficult

of times makes someone the biggest of heroes to you, in that moment, but whoever you nominate must live in Witney themselves, or be providing a service to people in Witney.

Please let us know YOUR Witney Hero, including comments/stories as a way of saying thank you. Every person or organisation nominated will receive a badge and certificate from the Council which will include your comments. There is no closing date for this nomination while the Pandemic is ongoing, and the



community is still supporting each other in exceptional ways.

Nominate on the Witney COVID Heroes page of our website: [www.witney-tc.gov.uk/witney-covid-19-heroes/](http://www.witney-tc.gov.uk/witney-covid-19-heroes/)

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Witney Town Council  
Town Hall  
Market Square  
WITNEY  
OX28 6AG

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WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL  
I AM HAVING MY SAY TO  
**YES,**

*A little bit of sellotape here to secure*