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YOUR NEWSLETTER

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THE CORN EXCHANGE - PHASE II

Witney's Corn Exchange continues its transformation, as Phase II of a program of refurbishment and improvement is undertaken by Witney Town Council. This accessible building, with nearby free parking, is available to hire for a variety of functions.

Behind the beautiful Italianate façade, a blossoming and inviting community arts centre is emerging. The newly equipped hall offers brand new theatre furnishings, including high quality lighting and sound equipment, with new theatre seating on the way. And it's busy! A production of Cinderella by Buttercross Theatre Productions saw the return of panto over the festive period, and the popular jazz club performs on Fridays, offering affordable and accessible performances to all.

It's also a flexible space and throughout the week community groups use both the main hall and the gallery room. The first floor gallery room is the perfect space for smaller group meetings, private functions



Photograph courtesy of Tom Smith

or displays, and is accessible via a lifting platform.

The installation of the 1863 bar and café in 2020 has been an additional draw. Staffed by a friendly and welcoming team - who are always on hand to help the well-stocked coffee shop with its beckoning, comfy sofas and eclectic furnishings reflects the warm welcome that awaits you as you step in from the cold.

From inside, the huge windows with their wooden shutters help to retain the sense of the building's history and the convenient, modern touches blend in unobtrusively. It's a fantastic place to sit and read or

even play a game. As restrictions lift we will be inviting you to join us at the occasional themed coffee morning. If you prefer a solo experience, take a seat outside and people watch, looking out over the Market Square.

The Corn Exchange is an entertainment and community venue that the people of Witney and surrounding areas can be proud of.

Whether you are looking for the perfect place to host your event, or just want to know What's On, please get in touch with our friendly booking staff on 01993 704379 - or drop in for a coffee and have a chat with the team.



Photograph courtesy of Ron Milsom photography



Photograph courtesy of Polly Inness



Witney Town Council

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 proportion 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 within 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?

From 1st April 2022, the average taxpayer in Witney will be asked to pay a precept rise of around 65 pence a month for Witney Town Council's share of the Council Tax. The decision to increase the precept payment was agreed at an extraordinary meeting of the Full Council on Wednesday 5th January 2022.

The precept increase of 4.9% will enable the Town Council to maintain its council's general fund and fulfil its statutory obligations. This is a rise of £7.97 per Band 'D' property for the year, bringing it to a total of £166.83.

The forecast for running the Town Council's services for 2022-23 remains uncertain, due to the ongoing effects of

the pandemic, so this years' budget represents a prudent estimate of income and expenditure. These funds will help provide a sound basis for the Council's strategic plan, general improvements and enhancements to existing assets, in particular:

- Continued support for the community bus
- Increased financial support for Youth Services in Witney
- Marking the Queen's Platinum Jubilee
- Reviewing how it delivers the grounds maintenance of its open spaces, sports pitches, and floral displays
- Further measures to ensure the Council stays on target to reach carbon neutrality by 2028.

HOW IS IT SPENT?

Your Precept is spent on the provision and maintenance of the facilities and services shown below:



The Leys (Sports Pitches & Splashpark) **£17.78**
 West Witney Sports Ground **£3.75**
 Burwell QEII Recreation Ground **£3.13**
 King George V Recreation Ground **£2.29**
 Witney Lake & Country Park **£7.54**



Tower Hill Cemetery **£12.08**
 Windrush Cemetery **£14.37**
 Closed Churchyards **£0.43**



Bank Interest/Charges **-£0.05p**
 Corporate Management **£14.10**
 Democratic Representation & Management **£12.26**
 Capital and Earmarked Reserves **-£4.99**



Burwell Hall **£7.21**
 Corn Exchange **£15.57**
 Income from Leased
 Community halls **-£1.27**



Community Activities/Newsletter **£18.46**
 Community Infrastructure **£35.99**
 (inc grass cutting & open spaces)
 Civic Activities **£4.36**
 (inc Remembrance Sunday & events)
 Christmas Lights **£3.20**

Total:
£166.83
 per Band D household per year

Witney Town Council Annual Residents' Satisfaction Survey 2022

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/WTCSurvey2022 or scan the QR code.



Section 1 – Town Council Services

Witney Town Council provides the following in the town. These are the only services we provide. Anything else not mentioned here such as potholes, or refuse collection, is dealt with by the District or County Councils. We are asking you for your experience of OUR services, and how we might improve these, so the focus of this survey is only on these. Please rate the performance for each of the services below.

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

	4	3	2	1
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"/>
Town Council Services Overall	<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 – Other projects

Town and Parish councils are increasingly having to make difficult decisions on the future of services; plugging funding gaps, and undertaking additional projects which benefit the community, and Witney is no exception.

Along with subsidising the local Community Bus, Witney Town Council has also provided grants to organisations providing vital youth services. It is also working to address the Climate Emergency, aiming to hit a target of carbon neutrality by 2028. It also promotes and supports Active Lifestyles, which contribute to the physical and mental wellbeing of the town's residents.

With these ambitions in mind, along with the services already listed in the left-hand column, we would like to know what YOU see as priorities and where you would like to see future Town Council funding distributed.

Given all the services listed on the left, and the three project areas above (Youth Services, Climate Emergency and Active Lifestyles) please tell us where you would like to see money directed. Use the comment section below to let us know what is important to you, where you perceive gaps or see a need for investment.

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Thank you for taking our survey. Please return to the
Town Hall using the freepost address overleaf by
25th April 2022
You can continue to submit online until 30th April

INVESTING IN PLAY

An aspirational Open Spaces Strategy that aims to “create a Witney where facilities and standards are as high as is practicably possible”, will guide the development of the Town’s play areas and how these can be sustainably managed over the next several years. Since 2020 new equipment has been added to King George V, Burwell, Fieldmere Rd, Moorland Rd and The Leys Play areas.

Play helps with social interaction, mental and physical health issues and is especially important to the health and wellbeing of our children who saw so many restrictions on play during the pandemic.

This highlights the importance of investment in projects such as the reinstatement, in November last year, of the Park Road Play area. This had previously been closed for a number of years but is now a popular community playground for younger children.

The Town Council is developing a programme to ensure that all ten of Witney’s current play areas are regularly reviewed to see where investment is most needed, so that children of all ages have access to safe, inclusive, challenging, fun and inclusive play opportunities. Investment in play meets the Council’s ambition to support Active Lifestyles.



Fold in first

FREEPOST RSYS-YBEX-JLCT

Witney Town Council

Town Hall

Market Square

WITNEY

OX28 6AG

Fold in second

WITNEY TOWN COUNCIL
I AM HAVING MY SAY TO
YES,

A little bit of sellotape here to secure