



WITNEY
TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the Witney Youth Council held At 3.45 pm in the Gallery Room, The Corn Exchange, Witney on Monday 10th March 2025.

Youth Councillors Present:

Six Youth Councillors

Witney Town Council Mentors Present:

Cllr G Meadows

Cllr R Smith (Witney Town Council Leader)

Cllr S Simpson – joined the meeting during Agenda Item 5.

Witney Town Council Officers Present:

A Clapton – Deputy Town Clerk

A Hathaway – Business Administration Apprentice

Others:

Youth Lead & Schools Chaplain

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from 1 Youth Council member. With the Chair joining the meeting later, the Vice Chair assumed this position.

2. Declarations of Interest

Youth Councillors were advised that if anyone knew or had any involvement in any of the items being discussed at the meeting, they should say it at this point.

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes

Members agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 16th January 2025 were correct.

4. Guest Participation

The Youth Lead & Schools Chaplain asked how the Youth Council would like her to help them regarding a Cultural Day/collaboration with Witney Music Festival (WMF).

Through discussion, it was confirmed the collaboration with WMF would be a celebration of cultures through music on the stage at the event on The Leys. If the Youth Council wanted to hold a culture day bringing in other aspects it should be a different event.

The discussion led to the next item on the agenda.

5. **Culture Day**

The Youth Council discussed this idea and agreed the event should be about food, music, and dance. It could also be used to share their survey for young people. It could run between 12-4pm at The Leys in July and could have various stalls which could be run by invited participants, and a stage.

Council officers advised the Youth Council only had £500 and this would not stretch to holding an event of this size, but further discussion could take place outside the meetings.

Resolved: That, the Youth Council hand out leaflets at a stall at the Witney Music Festival to promote their Culture Day. Performances and food stalls would feature on the Culture Day, however more planning was needed.

A Youth Councillor and Witney Town Council Mentor joined the meeting at 16.28pm.

6. **Youth Council Lanyards**

Officers advised Witney Youth Council had been provided £50 as part of the Witney Town Council's £50 for fifty Grant Scheme, allowing them to purchase the lanyards for £16.22 instead of £66.22. Future branding was not considered.

7. **High Sheriff's Big Breakfast**

The Youth Council had received an email from the new High Sheriff Oxfordshire, Mark Johnson, in which he discussed his plans for driving meaningful change through a series of informal breakfast gatherings called the High Sheriff's Big Breakfast Conversation. His theme for the year was Hearing the Young Unheard, focusing on early intervention and crime prevention, particularly within youth organisations and schools.

The breakfast gatherings were described as helping to bring together diverse voices from across Oxfordshire to explore practical solutions to community challenges, and he wanted to know if the Youth Council would be interested in hosting one and who they would invite.

Members were enthusiastic about taking part but were concerned about the dates and times of the breakfast, but if it could be arranged they were willing to host.

Resolved: That, the Youth Council hosts a breakfast session, inviting friends and other young people. There was no further discussion on the details therefore this may be discarded if the event was not planned in good time.

8. **Salford Youth Council – Petition to ban corporal punishment against children in the home**

Salford Youth Council had asked the Witney Youth Council whether they would like to be a signatory to an open letter to the Home Secretary about banning corporal punishment in the home. Corporal punishment was defined as physical punishment, such as caning or hitting. Their aim was for one hundred youth councils across England to maximise the impact.

The Youth Council were supportive of signing the letter. Officers confirmed members understood what they were signing which would be from the Youth Council as a whole, and not individual members.

Resolved: That, the Witney Youth Council signs the open letter in support of the ban.

9. **Annual Town Meeting (Page 10)**

The Youth Council were asked if they would like to take part in the Annual Town Meeting and confirm the role they should play if favourable.

Members were pleased to take part, but some had prior engagements on the evening. It would be a good opportunity to let people know they exist. It was advised they could give out Annual Reports and/or newsletters/surveys to residents as they entered the building.

Resolved: That, Youth Councillors are emailed details of the Annual Town Meeting and they could attend if they wish.

The Leader of the Witney Town Council joined the meeting at 16.40pm.

10. Questions from Witney Town Council Officers

Head of Estates and Operations

What outdoor leisure activities would you like to see in Witney in addition to the existing play area equipment and multi-use games areas?

Youth councillors listed activity areas such as paddleball courts, an outdoor gym, a lido, bike pump track, and more central basketball and netball courts. The Chair discussed places for bag storage, so that they weren't trip hazards on the court or pitch. Some discussed multi-sport courts, with different coloured lines for their respective activity (blue lines for football, red lines for basketball, yellow lines for netball) all in the same place. Some youth councillors added that it often got cramped with multiple groups trying to play in one area. Other ideas spoken were small food stalls and bike tracks around the border.

Resolved: That, the suggestions above be returned to the Officers.

11. Youth Council Logo

Youth Councillors outlined what they would like to see in the logo, such as symbols relating to people and community, using the same colours as the Witney Town Council logo. An officer questioned whether attending a workshop focused on creating this logo and other designs would be helpful. The Youth Councillors decided to go forward with it.

Resolved: That, the Media Officer, and Assistant Media Officer attend a Canva workshop with officers to create a logo and additional posters.

12. Young People's Survey

Feedback was given for the survey, and it was agreed an updated version would be taken to the next meeting to sign off.

Resolved: That, Officers will bring an amended survey from the feedback to the next meeting.

13. Noticeboards in Schools

Youth Councillors discussed adding details of planned future events to the poster, as well as a QR code to the website. Some discussed the practicality of scanning a QR code at school as many were not allowed to use phones. The Daily Diary was brought up as the only place phones were allowed to scan QR codes and so it was decided as the place to put the poster.

Resolved: That, the poster, when designed by the Media Officers, be sent to schools for use in the daily diary.

14. Questions about the Council

The Youth Councillors asked for further clarification on the Vice Chair and Media Officer roles. The Media Officer then asked for the Witney Youth Council Instagram login to be sent to them, and for a Facebook account to be set up.

The Chair of the Youth Council also asked whether the funds of the Youth Council were invested and whether there would be a return on these to increase their budget.

The Leader of the Council advised this was an interesting question and officers agreed to investigate further and report back to the next meeting.

15. Items brought to members attention by the Town Clerk or Public

Witney Model Aviation Club Email – An email had been sent to the Witney Youth Council to ask if there was any interest in a presentation about what they do and how young people could get involved. This was brought to the Youth Councillors' attention and they agreed to invite them to the next meeting.

The Youth Council members then considered further local groups and organisations they could invite to future meetings, such as the Air or Fire Cadets, the Girl Guides, Scouts, football teams, APCAM, and the youth service The Station. A short video could also be created to send out, explaining what the Youth Council does, this would be particularly helpful with Wood Green School, to see if any further Members could be gathered.

Resolved: That, the Youth Council admin send a list of local groups and organisations for the Chair to draft an invitation email to.
That, the Aviation Club be invited to a future meeting of the Youth Council.

16. Items for Future Agenda

A Youth Council member requested further training opportunities. Officers were tasked with looking into this further ahead of the next meeting.

The guest at the meeting arranged an informal meeting outside of the Youth Council meetings to discuss ideas for the Culture Day.

17. Date of the Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting was agreed to be in late June, after the Witney Music Festival. The exact date and time will be conducted for a survey sent to all youth council members.

The meeting closed at 17.33 pm.