

Terms of Reference

Witney Youth Council



WITNEY
TOWN COUNCIL

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Witney Town Council resolved to establish a Witney Youth Council under minute number SC298 – 12 June 2023.
- 1.2 Witney Town Council supports and empowers young people in Witney to be more involved in making decisions about issues and services that affect them in their futures. A Witney Youth Council gives children and young people a ‘collective voice’ that is listened to and helps influence actions by decision makers.
- 1.3 Witney Youth Council shall seek to represent the young people of Witney as a section of society on any issues of concern to them and will work towards the improvement of the image and status of young people within Witney, bring about change and make things happen by:
 - 1.3.1 Developing projects which represent young people
 - 1.3.2 Creating spaces for young people
 - 1.3.3 Creating learning opportunities for young people
- 1.4 Witney Youth Council shall, where applicable, be involved in the organisation of events for young people including those with different cultural, religious backgrounds, those with special or different needs and those from other diverse sections of the community.
- 1.5 Witney Youth Council holds a budget of £500 towards the administration of fundraising events for projects it may wish to undertake.
- 1.6 As the authority to establish the Witney Youth Council was given by Full Council, all recommendations should be referred to Full Council, however any matters that relate to any projects managed/administered by any other Council Committee should be referred to the Stronger Communities Committee.
- 1.7 Witney Youth Council shall operate as a non-party political or statutory body.

2. Membership

- 2.1 Witney Youth Council shall be open to **all** young people aged 11-18 years who live, go to school in, or are members of a group/organisation in Witney.
- 2.2 The term of Youth Council membership will be for 2 years (if a member wishes to serve longer than this time the Town Council will review the request).
- 2.3 The term of office (Council year) for the Youth Council shall be from September to July each year to coincide with the school year.
- 2.4 Membership will be determined by an application process run by Witney Town Council in conjunction with schools (where applicable). The decision on membership will be decided by a Witney Town Council Youth Mentor panel following an application and a basic interview if required. The decision of the membership panel is final and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

- 2.5 Only once all necessary forms and parental/guardian consent is received, will individual membership be confirmed.
- 2.6 Training will be offered by Witney Town Council to all Youth Council members.
- 2.7 There shall be a maximum of 20 representative members of the Witney Youth Council.
- 2.8 Any changes to the Membership numbers or must be agreed by Witney Town Council.
- 2.9 Witney Youth Council may co-opt other young people to participate in meetings as non-voting members, advisors or guests.

3. Youth Council Elected Roles

- 3.1 Witney Youth Council will be required to elect the following positions:
 - 3.1.1 **Chair(person)** - This person shall chair meetings of the Youth Council and holds a casting vote if votes in a meeting are tied.
 - 3.1.2 **Vice-Chair(person)** – This person shall deputise for the Chair in all duties in the Chair’s absence.
 - 3.1.2.1 Witney Youth Council shall elect a Chair and Vice Chair at its first meeting of the School year, who will both serve until the September meeting.
 - 3.1.2.2 The election will be by show of hands, whoever receives the highest amount of votes will be Chair and whoever receives the second highest amount of votes will be Vice Chair.
 - 3.1.2.3 If vacancies occur among the Chair or Vice Chair, the Witney Youth Council shall fill them from the members present. The person elected shall fill the vacancy until the next election is due.
- 3.2 The Youth Council must also elect the following administrative positions:
 - 3.2.1 **Treasurer** – This person is responsible for keeping a tab on the accounts of the Youth Council.
 - 3.2.2 **Media Officer** – This person is responsible for Youth Council social media channels.

4. Meetings

- 4.1 The Witney Youth Council shall have a quorum of four Youth Councillors.
- 4.2 There will be at least 4 meetings of the Witney Youth Council withing a year which should be held in January, March, June and September.
- 4.3 Any additional meetings may be called at any time.
- 4.4 The time of the meetings will be between 3.30-5.30pm.
- 4.5 No council or committee meeting shall extend beyond 1.5 hours.
- 4.6 Meetings will take place in the Corn Exchange, Witney unless otherwise agreed at the previous meeting for an emergency or extra-ordinary meeting. Any other venue must be fully accessible.
- 4.7 The Annual Meeting of Witney Youth Council will take place in September each year.

- 4.8 Every meeting must be attended by at least one Youth Mentor and an Officer of the Town Council.
- 4.9 Meetings of the Witney Youth Council will not be open to the Press and Public. Members of the press and public may be invited by its members to meetings.
- 4.10 The order of business at each meeting shall be:
 - 4.10.1 Apologies for absence
 - 4.10.2 Agreement and Matters arising from the previous minutes
 - 4.10.3 Council Business
 - 4.10.4 To consider new matters for discussion
- 4.11 The Conduct of Business shall be as follows:
 - 4.11.1 Each item on the agenda will be discussed in the order shown but this may be varied with the approval of the Youth Council, following a formal request to the Chair.
 - 4.11.2 During discussion, each member must indicate their desire to speak by raising a hand to catch the eye of the Chair. A member may only speak with the Chair's consent.
 - 4.11.3 Anyone who disobeys a ruling of the Chair on who shall speak, interrupts, or in some way disrupts a meeting, shall be asked by the Chair to stop. If they persist in their behaviour, the Chair shall then exclude them from the meeting.
- 4.12 Where any item which occurs in a meeting is not covered in these Terms of Reference, they shall be decided under the relevant Witney Town Council Standing Order, as guided by the Council Officer present.

5. Agendas & Minutes

- 5.1 Witney Youth Council member should actively seek the opinions of the people they represent with a view to placing items of interest on the agendas of Witney Youth Council meetings.
- 5.2 All items for inclusion on the agenda must be received by the Town Council's Committee Team at least ten days before the date of the next meeting.
- 5.3 Three clear days before each Witney Youth Council meeting, an agenda will be sent via email, to their home address or school as appropriate. This will detail what will be discussed at the meeting.
- 5.4 Minutes must be prepared ahead of the next meeting and will be presented by The Chair and signed by them when approved.

6. Chairing

- 6.1 If present, the Chair will chair the meeting.
- 6.2 In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair will take on the role. If neither is present, Witney Youth Council members present shall elect a Chair for the meeting.

7. Voting

- 7.1 Subject to a meeting being quorate, all questions at a meeting shall be decided by a majority of the Councillors and non-Councillors with voting rights present at voting.
- 7.2 All voting shall be taken by a show of hands.
- 7.3 In any case of equality of votes, the Chair may give a casting vote in addition to any vote they may already have given.
- 7.4 If more than one course of action is suggested, the Chair shall decide which one must be voted on first and, only if the vote is lost, will another suggestion be put to the vote.

8. Expenditure

- 8.1 Any expenditure incurred by the Youth Council must be agreed at a meeting by a majority vote.

9. Terms of Reference

- 9.1 Any changes to change these terms of reference shall be proposed by the Witney Youth Council and decided upon by Witney Town Council.
- 9.2 The terms of reference shall be reviewed annually in January each year by the Witney Youth Council.

10. Data Protection & Safeguarding

- 10.1 Each member of Witney Youth Council shall provide the Committees Team with their contact details for the purpose of circulating meeting papers and correspondence. Any use of WhatsApp messaging will be by legislation and terms of service.
- 10.2 All data will be kept in line with Witney Town Council's data protection policy and privacy statement which can be found here: <https://democracy.witney-tc.gov.uk/ecCatDisplay.aspx?sch=doc&cat=13309>
- 10.3 All members details and meetings will be held in line with Witney Town Council's Safeguarding Policy which can be found here: [under review]

11. Resigning or Removal from Witney Youth Council

- 11.1 Members can resign in writing to the committee via the Town Council (letter or email).
- 11.2 If a Member does not attend three meetings without notice or explanation, not following the code of conduct by not responding to communications they will be removed from the Youth Council. In this instance they will receive a formal letter from the Youth and Town Council asking them to respond, if there is no response or the Youth Council disagree with the response, they will be asked to step down from the Youth Council.
- 11.3 If Youth Council members miss three consecutive meetings or fail to participate in meetings they may be asked to attend a meeting with other Youth Council members and/or Youth Mentors to discuss any issues that are barriers to attending/participating.
- 11.4 If the member continues to fail to attend or participate, the group will hold a vote to decide whether or not they should allow the member concerned to remain a member of the Youth Council.

- 11.5 A member should also resign if they leave the area or are otherwise unable to attend meetings or complete the roles of a member.
- 11.6 Not delivering on their responsibilities on behalf of the young people you represent, inappropriate behaviour or not meeting the expectations of what Witney Town Council require from them as a Youth Council member may result in removal. The outcome will be decided on individual circumstances.