

Witham Town Council Community Engagement Statement

Witham Town Council is the local level of government for Witham, placing the needs and aspirations of residents at the heart of all its work. The Council is committed to defending local interests, promoting strong community cohesion, and ensuring Witham remains a vibrant and inclusive town.

Engagement with the Community

Witham Town Council operates an open-door policy for all public enquiries, whether through correspondence, emails, telephone calls, social media messages or visits. The Town Hall remains a central hub for the community, serving as an anchor for the Newland Street Conservation Area and proudly hosting the town's Information Centre – one of the last such centres in Essex.

The Information Centre continues to provide a wide range of services, from free dog waste bags to visitor information and community signposting, and acts as an emergency safe space for those in crisis. Friendly and knowledgeable staff are available to answer queries or direct residents to the most appropriate authorities and organisations.

The Town Hall regularly hosts 'drop-in' police surgeries, enabling residents to raise concerns face-to-face with local officers. The building is also used by the NHS for Retinopathy Clinics and Diabetic Prevention Clinics and as a Banking Hub throughout the week for Barclays, Halifax and Lloyds Bank, making it a truly multi-functional community space.

Witham Town Council organises a diverse calendar of free and inclusive events throughout the year, fostering community spirit and providing opportunities for residents of all ages to come together. Regular events include:

- Easter Trail
- Witham Dog Show
- Witham Music Festival
- Halloween Trail
- Witham Christmas Fayre and Christmas Grotto
- Teddy Bear's Picnic
- Witham Street Entertainment Festival
- Remembrance Parade
- Summer Fair
- Open Gardens



These events are held in Witham's picturesque outdoor spaces as well as in the town centre and are designed to be accessible and enjoyable for all.

To reach people where they are, the Council now holds regular pop-up engagement stalls around the town, giving residents the opportunity to talk directly to councillors and staff about local issues. This year, the Annual Town Meeting was held as part of the Witham Dog Show to attract a larger and more diverse audience, ensuring more voices could be heard in an informal, friendly setting.

The Council works closely with local partners such as the Witham Hub and the United Reformed Church, which hosts craft stalls and provides a warm space during the Christmas Fayre. It also supports initiatives that address community needs, including cost-of-living support, warm hubs and wider community projects.

To help tackle loneliness and improve wellbeing, the Council has introduced a weekly "Chatty Café" in the Heritage Room on Thursdays, offering a welcoming space for residents to come together, meet new people and build connections.

Leadership in Planning for the Future

Witham Town Council actively engages with the public through a growing social media presence and ensures transparency by publishing all committee papers, agendas and updates on its website and social channels. Residents are encouraged to attend all Council and Committee Meetings, where they can raise concerns, ask questions or comment on proposals.

The Council responds proactively to local concerns such as healthcare provision, town centre vitality and parking. Following strong feedback from residents, the Council was instrumental in preventing the introduction of parking charges in Newland Street, helping to protect access to local shops and services. Having listened to residents' concerns about difficulties in accessing Broomfield Hospital, the Council successfully applied for a grant, to be used alongside Section 106 funding, to trial a direct bus service from Witham to Broomfield.

The Council also uses engagement feedback to shape longer-term opportunities for the town. Drawing on ideas and priorities raised by residents, it has applied for the Town of Culture 2028 competition, showcasing Witham's creative assets, heritage and community spirit. In parallel, Witham Town Council is developing a Neighbourhood Plan to protect the town from speculative development and ensure that future growth brings clear and lasting benefits to the community.

Grant Support for the Community

To support local organisations and projects that benefit residents, the Council operates two grant schemes. A Councillor Grant scheme provides funding to local groups and charities delivering activities or services that improve quality of life in Witham, and may be used for things like community events, equipment, or small-scale projects.



In addition, a Community Grant scheme offers support for larger or longer-term initiatives that align with the Council's priorities and have a town-wide impact. Through these schemes, the Council helps enable and empower local organisations to deliver their own ideas and respond to emerging needs.

Commitment to Ongoing Engagement

The Council is dedicated to continuous improvement in community engagement, regularly reviewing its approach and embracing new methods to reach all residents. During the coming year, the Council will continue its programme of pop-up engagement stalls around the town and will build on initiatives such as the Chatty Café to strengthen social connections.

Through community events, partnerships, grant support, transparent governance, online and in-person engagement, and active listening, Witham Town Council strives to ensure every resident has a meaningful voice in shaping the future of Witham.

To be adopted on 18th May 2026.

To be reviewed at AGM 2027