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**Agenda Item:** Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service - Use of Country Park & Lake

**Meeting Date:** Tuesday 11 February 2025

**Contact Officer:** Biodiversity and Green Spaces Officer

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The purpose of this report is to consider entering into an agreement to allow use of the area at the Country Park & Lake as a training venue for the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

### **Background**

Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue service have been looking for a venue to carry out training of personnel in preparation for real life water-based incidents. The Country Park has been the scene of former incidents; allowing this training to take place would allow the Fire & Rescue Service to practice potential scenarios which could prove critical should similar events occur in Witney's waterways.

### **Current Situation**

Officers seek approval from the Committee to enter into discussions with the Fire & Rescue Service to agree a memorandum of agreement for the above use and to obtain all relevant completed risk assessments and ensure insurance is in place.

### **Impact Assessments**

The Town Council has a duty to consider the effects of its decisions, functions and activities on equality, biodiversity, and crime & disorder. Consideration should also be given to effects on the environment, given the Council's Climate Emergency declaration in 2019.

- a) Equality – no impact.
- b) Biodiversity – no impact.
- c) Crime & Disorder –Green Spaces such as Lakes and Parks can contribute to reducing urban crime by making spaces more inviting. The allowance of the area as a training facility would allow for community engagement with the Fire & Rescue Service and lead to a safer area for residents.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency –The use of the area could affect the natural environment temporarily while in use.

### **Risk**

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

Along with a memorandum of agreement and confirmation that all risk assessments and insurance are in place, all requirements from the council would be fulfilled.

### **Social Value**

Social value is the positive change the Council creates in the local community within which it operates.

By allowing this training to take place, the Council would be supporting a positive and proactive approach to future incidents in the community.

### **Financial implications**

- There would be no financial cost to the Council.

### **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and

1. Delegation to Officers to agree a memorandum of agreement with Oxfordshire Fire & Rescue Service.