

CLIMATE AND BIODIVERSITY COMMITTEE



Agenda Item: Lake and Country Park Report

Meeting Date: Tuesday, 9 September 2025

Contact Officer: Biodiversity and Green Spaces Officer

The purpose of this report is to update members on the works carried out on the Lake, Country Park and wider estate by the Biodiversity & Green Spaces Officer and the Park Ranger.

Background

The Lake and Country Park continues to be managed for recreation and conservation, and officers continue to work within the 10-year [Management Plan](#)

Current Situation

There has been a number of projects carried out such as:

- The Council were judged for the “In Bloom” awards and will know the result in September, see Appendix A for the portfolio we presented to show the work that has been carried out.
- Officers hosted Audley Travel and Abingdon and Witney College litter picking teams on their annual litter pick day.
- Officers worked with the Asylum seekers hotel to provide volunteer workdays to the residents.
- The Council had a student studying biology at Bath university for a number of days to gain practical experience in countryside management.
- The Council had a work experience student for a week and provided him with an understanding of what happens both day to day and what forward planning is needed to maintain a country park.
- The Council has had an area of Snipe meadow used for meditation and conscientious dancing.
- The council provides an open invitation to the following groups to use the country park as a resource
 - ICE centre they bring vulnerable young people to experience the green space
 - Bridewell gardens
 - Kids Planet
- The Council continues to look for further funding to support work on the country park and green spaces, officers have already been able to secure around £14000 for various projects within the country park (meadows, dragonfly area, community orchard and hedge planting)
- The Biodiversity Officer has led and plans to run more “meet the green spaces team” days.

- The Council is reaching out to local businesses to offer the “corporate responsibility days” (one done already).
- The Council continues to move forward with the “branding of the country park by removing and replacing old and broken benches and signage with more suitable ones (such as a new recycled bench and picnic table).
- There has been an increase in ASB and the Green Spaces team deals with things such as graffiti and removal of life rings as a top priority.
- The Council was not successful in attaining Green Flag Status not because the site was not up to standard but due lack of guidance from green flag team as to what evidence was needed in the application.
- The Council continues to carry out water tests of the lake, the dragonfly area, and in the winter the newly created scrapes on Snipe Meadow.
- The Council has designed and installed a number of new signs around the country Park.

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 –Equality in biodiversity in green spaces refers to the idea that all species regardless of their size, role, or ecological status should have the opportunity to thrive and be represented within urban and natural green spaces. Achieving equality in biodiversity involves not just conserving a wide variety of species but also ensuring that ecological systems are designed and managed in ways that support diverse species' needs. This can be applied to urban parks, nature reserves, forests, and other green spaces, aiming for a balance where no group of species is disproportionately favoured over others
- b) Crime & Disorder –Green spaces such as Lakes and Parks can contribute to reducing urban crime by making spaces more inviting and safer for residents.
- c) Environment & Climate Emergency –This is deeply intertwined with both the protection of biodiversity and the fight against climate change. Both challenges require urgent and comprehensive action, as they not only affect the country's natural systems but also its economy, society, and future well-being.
- d) All aspects of this report are to action our responsibilities to this situation

The Lake and Country Park and the facilities it provides the following

- benefits to the local community at all levels giving users a resource to enjoy and experience nature and all it provides
- Benefits to the economy, employment, a free natural resource and support to local contractors
- Benefits to the environment, increasing species levels and creating new habitats for rare and endangered species (Water Voles)

Financial implications

- There is an agreed budget for the management of the Country Park but as it grows and the usage increases, then a regular review of financial requirements will be needed.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and:

1. Consider if the council wish to re-apply for Green Flag status
2. Agree the updated Management plan (seen via link at the top of the report).