

## HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS



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**Agenda Item:** Lakeside Allotments Flooding update

**Meeting Date:** Monday, 8 September 2025

**Contact Officer:** Operations Manager

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### Background

At the Halls, Cemeteries & Allotments committee meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2025, the Operations Manager updated committee members on the flooding issues at Lakeside Allotments. The recommendation was made that officers investigate any additional hydrology survey work that may be required.

### Current Situation

Officers have not yet consulted with the contractors who completed the topographical survey but have engaged with site representatives at Lakeside to address some of their concerns and requested historical flow/flooding data in Colwell Brook from WASP.

A meeting was arranged with allotment site representatives on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June 2025, and the following actions were agreed.

1. A drainage plan is to be obtained for the area from Thames Water.
2. A response is sought from the Environment Agency as to why the weir that was recommended in the 2008 Ducklington flood report was not constructed.
3. That the ownership of the ditch running from the entrance of the allotments along the south boundary be investigated.

As a local authority, the council can obtain a utility map for free, but due to Thames Water changing the system used for requests, this has been delayed. A thorough site investigation was carried out by officers to understand what water drains into the north side ditch, and officers can confidently say it is the drainage from the carpark of the flats and drainpipes from the flats and hotel.

The Environment Agency were contacted following the meeting regarding the weir, but no response has yet been received.

The ditch was identified to be under the ownership of Witney Town Council, and once identified, a full clearance was completed, all vegetation was removed, and the ditch was excavated back out.

From site inspections, it has also been noticed that the flooding has not had a lasting impact on the allotment, and all plots continue to cultivate crops.

## **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 – impact from potential flooding.
- c) Crime & Disorder – no impact.
- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – Flooding in the area has an impact on the environment.

## **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.

There are no risks identified in the report.

## **Social Value**

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

The allotment sites are an important provision by the council. They can offer the residents of Witney with small or no garden, extensions to their outdoor space for cultivation purposes. The loss of allotments for any period of the year would be detrimental to these residents.

## **Recommendations**

1. Members are invited to note the report.
2. Agree for officers to instruct contractors to complete a flood survey at a cost of approximately £2,500

### Addendum added 05.09.2025

Officers have now made contact with the civil engineers who completed the original topographical survey at Lakeside Allotments in August 2021.

They have provided a copy of the survey and confirmed their remit was to complete the survey to identify the extent of bund required to stop the flooding. Officers feel it is now necessary to instruct a hydrologist to complete a flood survey of the site to identify any measures that can help elevate the level of flooding. One company who have completed several flood surveys in the Witney Area have provide a quote of £2,050 ex VAT plus an additional £450 for a detailed drone survey. The allotment reserve is substantial, so would cover the survey cost.