
Agenda Item:	Parks & Recreation
Meeting Date:	Monday, 13 th July 2026
Contact Officer:	Deputy Town Clerk

The purpose of this report is to present any outstanding or urgent matters requiring the Council's consideration before the next scheduled meeting cycle in September 2026.

Current Situation

Splash Park Operating Hours Update – 26 June 2026 (Head of Estates & Operations)

The Splash Park continues to be a popular attraction, especially during the most recent heatwave.

During the period of exceptionally hot weather in May, the Council received requests to review the operating hours to allow visitors to use the facility earlier in the day.

In response, the operating hours were amended at the beginning of June from 12:00pm–6:00pm to 10:00am–5:00pm.

Since these revised hours were introduced, the Council has not received any further requests or complaints regarding the operating times.

The Splash Park is scheduled to be turned off on 7 September 2026. Based on current usage levels and expenditure, forecasts indicate that the allocated budget will be fully utilised but is expected to remain within budget.

It is also worth noting that, due to the prolonged hot and dry weather experienced this year, there is a possibility that Thames Water may introduce a hosepipe ban, as it did last year. During the previous ban, Thames Water confirmed that Witney Town Council could continue operating the splash park, recognising the water recycling system in place to enable the watering of the town plants, and the reduced daily operating hours, including the two-hour shutdown at midday.

Should a hosepipe ban be introduced again this year, it is anticipated that there would be minimal risk of any budget overspend as a result of the reduced operating period and associated water usage.

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 – providing the most possible hours for free access to the inclusive Splash Park.
- b) Biodiversity – no direct impact
- c) Crime & Disorder – no direct impact

- d) Environment & Climate Emergency – The Council must be mindful of water usage, particularly if drought conditions occur later in the summer.

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.

Extending the Splash Park opening hours further would increase operating costs, including water, electricity, and routine maintenance, and may result in greater wear and tear on equipment.

Social Value

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

The extended Splash Park opening hours during the summer provide greater opportunities for children and families to enjoy free, accessible outdoor recreation. This supports physical activity, improves health and wellbeing.

Financial implications

- The Splash Park is operating within budget on the times, as changed on 1st June 2026.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report.