
Agenda Item:	Biodiversity Update
Meeting Date:	Tuesday 8 September 2026
Contact Officer:	Biodiversity and Green Spaces Officer

The purpose of this report is to update officers on the biodiversity developments within Witney Town Council Green Spaces

Background

Witney Town Council continue to develop and improve its biodiversity and fulfil its part in the wider county and national biodiversity targets

Current Situation

The latest updates on projects the projects completed are:

- Curbridge Road roundabout: Progress has stalled due to Officer concern regarding the contractor's proposal for additional costs outside of the original quotation
- Officers have put in two applications to Trust for Oxfords Environment (TOE) for a Stonewort Bank and another Tern Raft
- The Council are continuing to monitor reptiles on Snipe Meadow
- The Council are being helped by both U3A and SSE who are carrying out bat surveys around the Country Park and the records will be shared with the council
- Officers are working with, The Lower Windrush Vally Project and Berks, Bucks and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust (BBOWT) on wildlife recording and reporting

Corporate Strategy

The Council's Strategic Plan 2025–29 sets out the Council's long-term priorities and direction, supporting its mission to 'make Witney a great place to live, work and visit.' This report contributes to the delivery of the following strategic pillar of the plan:

5. A Beautiful Witney

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)

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.

Social Value

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

Financial implications

- The Trust for Oxford's Environment grants combined would provide around £2,000 for the projects mentioned.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the actions in this report and approve the works planned