

## FULL COUNCIL

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**Date:** Monday, 5 December 2022

**Title:** Oxfordshire County Council Flood Warden Scheme

**Contact Officer:** Deputy Town Clerk - Adam Clapton

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### Background

Following a multi-authority flooding meeting held at the District Council offices during the summer, Oxfordshire County Council has developed a Volunteer Flood Warden Scheme. Volunteers will be the eyes and the ears on the ground and report potential flooding risks to the relevant authorities.

The Scheme has been established by the County Council's Flood Risk team and Witney has been earmarked as a pilot test area, given the continued flooding risk in areas of the town.

### Current Situation

The Town Council has been sent details of the Flood Warden Scheme which are attached for information and has been asked to publicise and help gather volunteers.

In a meeting with County Council Officers, it has been advised they are looking for 4-8 volunteers to carry this role out within Witney and for the town council to insure them while conducting this work. The County Council will provide Full training and PPE.

If the Council is agreeable, applications will be gathered and assessed before sending a small number to the County Council to manage the scheme. Ahead of publication, Members are encouraged to consider any residents or groups in their electoral wards as a 'ward approach' would ensure coverage for the whole town, and not just in particular areas which may already be monitored by others.

Separately, West Oxfordshire District Council has advised that additional water gauge boards are being installed along the river Windrush and will be asking for help to monitor readings during potential flooding events.

The Town Council already directs residents to the OCC flooding pages on its Community resilience website page. Further information on who to contact for each potential flood risk will be added for information.

### **Environmental impact**

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

The scheme will help mitigate issues relating to flooding in the town.

### **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.

As volunteers in Witney, the County Council has asked if they can be insured under the auspices of the Town Council. This would make the Town Council liable for any injury etc. while volunteers are undertaking the role.

### **Financial implications**

- Potential increase in insurance premium (marginal, if at all)

### **Recommendations**

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. Agreement to insure volunteers under the Town Council's insurance and,
2. Suggestion of any potential Flood Wardens in wards and,
3. Publication of the scheme on Town Council media outlets.