

This Conference notes that:

1. Oxford has a high number of waterways and, as Oxford City Council note, 'Wild swimming in Oxford's waterways is popular but risky'.
2. Brasenose College met with the Royal Life Saving Society, who recommended peer to peer influence as one of the best ways to mitigate water hazards.
3. A project titled 'Safe Celebrators' is being organized in principal by Brasenose JCR and St Catherine's JCR, with the aim to provide welfare support during times of exam celebration. This is not medical support and not lifeguarding.
4. There have recently been increased patrolling by University Security Staff, in order to clamp down on 'trashing'.

This Conference believes that:

5. More needs to be done to mitigate the risk of tragedy or serious injury due to drowning. In particular, students should be encouraged not to jump into the water during post-exams celebrations.
6. University policy seems to be more focussed on public relations (i.e. relating to littering) than student safety. Increased patrolling may lead to students seeking areas further away to 'trash', places which may be harder to reach for emergency services.
7. Oxford City Council and/or Oxfordshire County Council can do more to mitigate water hazards, in particular at Port Meadow.
8. Risk occurs throughout the academic year and safety should be communicated at three distinct points of the year:
 - a. Start of Michaelmas term (new students arriving, including those coming from environments with little or no awareness of water hazard).
 - b. Start of Hilary term (hazard of flooded towpaths, ice and darkness).
 - c. Start of Trinity term (hazard of the end of exams coinciding with hot weather – most drownings in the UK involving young people occur at this time).

This Conference mandates the SU to:

9. Represent to the University that students would like there to be bystander initiatives provided where reasonably possible, which have the purpose to provide welfare support and communication on water safety during post-exam celebrations. This includes the 'Safe Celebrators' initiative
Communicate with Oxford City Council and/or Oxfordshire County Council to have the Port Meadow water area professionally assessed for hazards (e.g. undercurrents etc.)
10. Communicate with the central University to provide clarity on their post-celebration policy, such that student safety is prioritised. This should include discussions on whether a blanket ban is the best policy.
11. Provide guidance through the SU channels to incoming students in Michaelmas, and henceforth at the three distinct points of the year on water safety.