

## **Hinchingbrooke Country Park – Aquapark FAQs.**

### **What is this project, what are the objectives?**

This project is part of the wider capital investment programme, linked to the Commercial Sustainability Plan for Parks and Open Spaces, as approved by cabinet on 17th March 2026. Link to the cabinet report can be found [here](#).

The project will deliver an inflatable Aquapark on the Main Lake at Hinchingbrooke Country Park over the Summer Season of 2026. The objectives are:

- To deliver a high-quality leisure-based activity for families, at Hinchingbrooke Country Park.
- Providing an alternative experience on the park, to attract new and existing audiences, while major construction and redevelopment take place, to ensure we continue to provide a great experience for residents during what could be a difficult period of change.
- To redefine the use of the lake and encourage more residents to get active and experience the park from a different perspective – out on the water! It has long been documented that green spaces reduce stress levels and are good for overall well-being, but the evidence suggests that accessing blue space may have more significant impact and has additional benefits such as swimming and unique soundscapes.

### **What are the expected timelines?**

We are hopeful the aquapark will be open for resident use in time for the Summer Holidays, with a target opening weekend of the 18th and 19th July. We expect the Aquapark to close in the first or second week of September, at which point the inflatable will be taken away, thoroughly cleaned, dried and put into storage, by our trusted partner.

### **What is an inflatable experience/ Aquapark?**

An inflatable Aquapark is a floating, modular water-based amusement park, made of air-filled structures that provide interactive play, slides, climbing and obstacle courses for all ages. Suitable for both children and adults, they provide a combination of fun, physical exercise and social interaction.

### **What will the Aquapark be called?**

We haven't decided yet! We would love to give it a name and a brand that reflects the rich heritage and wildlife of the site and appeals to residents. We are looking to run a short competition as part of the press release to see who can provide us with the best name in exchange for a prize of free entry on opening weekend.

### **How much of the lake will it take up, and how will you access the Aquapark?**

We intend to split the lake into three thirds utilising boons. The third closest to Huntingdon Road is where the new aquapark will reside. The third in the middle of the lake, we will keep open for our regular activity users who have permission to operate under a service level agreement with HDC. The final third, closest to the wildlife lake, will be preserved for wildlife, and we intend to install a brand-new tern raft here with support and funding from the Friends of Hinchingsbrooke Country Park. Access to the aquapark will be from the Leonbergers beach side of the lake, and a floating pontoon will be provided to get residents out to a deep enough depth to avoid injury when entering the lake.

### **What is the maximum capacity for the inflatable?**

The maximum number of people who can be on the inflatable at one time is 120. However, our Lifeguards will need to work on strict ratios, to keep visitors to the aquapark safe, and we expect we will rarely meet this capacity. We will manage capacity and sessions aligning with other capacity needs across the park; ie number of car parking spaces we have available, and not overlapping with other mass engagement activities, such as Park Run on Saturday mornings.

### **How are you ensuring this doesn't affect the wildlife in the park?**

We have worked with MKA Ecologists Consultancy closely to understand how this could impact the wider park, they have conducted an Ecological Impact Assessment with a clear set of recommendations. The project team are now working closely with Park Rangers to ensure all recommendations and any appropriate ecological mitigation is completed. We are also planning to section off one third of the lake specifically for wildlife, and will be adding an additional tern raft.

### **How will this affect the existing compound used for regular activity users?**

At time of writing, we plan for there to be no impact on the existing compound for regular activities already taking place on the lake. We plan to set up and access the Aquapark from the Leonberger's Beach side of the Lake.

### **How will we stop illegal trespass on the water?**

During sessions, anyone that has booked and paid to utilise the Aquapark will need to wear a helmet, which is both a safety measure and so we can ensure anyone on the inflatable has indeed had their safety briefing and signed appropriate waivers etc. We are also installing CCTV that provides footage to the main 3C control room, and if anyone is found to be trespassing, the police and on-call park staff will be notified. We will ensure entrance to the aquapark is closed off when no staff are around, via a lockable heavy-duty gate, and will add in preventative measures to deter climbing over the gate.

We have built up scrub around the lake over the Spring to make accessing from any other point difficult. We will also add additional 'No unauthorized swimming signs' and will seek legal action if individuals are found to be using the lake out of hours in direct contravention of the Country Park byelaws. We will also look to shift our sessions to be able to open later on the days where it is particularly warm, and therefore more tempting for people to enter the lake, and will keep a keen eye on the weather forecast to manage this appropriately.

### **Who will patrol the site when it is not in use?**

We do not intend to have staff patrolling the site, as we feel the measures outlined above should be enough to mitigate against out-of-hour use. If we find this is not the case, we will reconsider whether security staff might be necessary.

### **How will this affect existing SLA lake users?**

We want as many people to be able to experience Hinchingsbrooke Country Park from the water as possible, and are working hard to ensure that impacts for existing lake users are understood and for any negative potential impacts for individuals or clubs we hope to find solutions. One early mitigation has involved splitting the lake down into three sections and ensuring one third of the space is designated to those already using the lake. We have communicated with those who have SLA's and made them aware of our intentions. We are having more in-depth conversations with those that have expressed concerns to find the best way forward. We are hopeful that those who have been using the lake and supporting the park for many years, will move forward with us, welcome this new temporary addition over the six weeks of the Summer Holidays, and the additional residents that will be able to start enjoying the lake in the same way they have.

### **What Changing Rooms will be used for this activity, and where will they store wetsuits?**

We are looking to provide a full suite of peripheral infrastructure to support the Aquapark and provide the best possible experience for residents. These will be delivered in shipping container style and will include, a welcome area, medical room, office for water park staff, changing facilities, toilets and storage for all relevant safety equipment. Wetsuits, helmets and buoyancy aids will be included in the cost of an aquapark entry fee and will be mandatory to wear. (wetsuits may not be mandatory once the water reaches what is considered a safe temperature within industry).

### **How will you ensure that activities are carried out safely and legally?**

We take safety of our residents extremely seriously and are working closely with the chair of the Aquapark Association to understand what is considered best practice within industry, to align our standards with this best practice. We have a full set of Standard Operating Procedures written by industry professionals, and our site will be regularly risk assessed by competent staff. We are providing all lifeguards with a full suite of training, including NLPQ, OWL and Aquapark Modules which are approved by the Royal Life Saving Society, and will have a full stock of first aid equipment available on site including a defibrillator, and a designated medic room. We will ensure we are always operating within agreed industry ratios for lifeguarding and safe working practices. We are also improving access at the entrance opposite the Bromholme Lane to ensure fast and safe access for Emergency Vehicles should they be required. We are providing the top level of safety equipment, and making the wearing of helmets, aqua park socks and buoyancy aids mandatory to minimize accidents. We will also make wearing wetsuits mandatory when water temperatures reach  $<8^{\circ}\text{C}$  for Adults and  $<12^{\circ}\text{C}$  for Children. We have been completing water quality testing on the lake over the past few months, inclusive of microbiology and blue-green algae testing and can confirm that the water is safe for swimming in line with EU bathing standards. We have a programme of testing planned throughout the year, and delivered by industry professionals 'Swim Safety' to monitor these levels and will take appropriate action in line with EU bathing standards should the water quality decrease. We will also be providing on-site lockers, which could be used by those using the Aquapark, to ensure they can keep their belongings safe and to deter any petty theft.

### **Who will be responsible for any damages caused to other lake users equipment?**

It is extremely unlikely that any damage will occur to other lake user's equipment, as we intend to split the lake down into three thirds with an area designated for the Aqua Park. We will manage Aquapark user's whereabouts within the lake via our lifeguards, and so it is extremely unlikely any visitors will wander into a different third. If our regular activity users stick to their section, we do not see how it is possible any third party damage could take place. Aquapark users are also entering from a different side of the lake and so there should be no reason (beyond what is considered the norm every day risk) that other park visitors should be anywhere near the regular activity user's equipment.

### **Will you meet with existing regular activity users to discuss the plans in more detail?**

We have booked meetings with regular activity users who have requested to meet with us. We intend to engage with each separately if/ when they feel the need to, as needs are quite unique and specific to each.

### **How much will it cost to use the Aquapark?**

Tickets for the Aquapark will be priced at £19 inclusive of wetsuit hire, buoyancy aid and helmet. There will be an additional charge of £3 for Aquapark socks which can be used again. Lockers will require a padlock to operate, which can be brought from home or can be hired from us on the day at a cost of £1.

### **What are you doing to ensure adequate parking provision?**

We will manage the Aquapark capacity in line with car parking provision available at the time. We are exploring several opportunities to increase car parking provision so as many people can enjoy this new facility as possible, however, the details of which are commercially sensitive at present. We will take a sensible and measured approach to ticketing in line with on park events and activities, what car parking we have available at time of opening and as the weeks progress, to avoid putting additional pressure on our car parks.

### **What else has been considered as an alternative to the Aquapark?**

The Aquapark is part of a wider Commercial Sustainability Plan which was approved by cabinet on March 17th. The details of which can be found [here](#).

### **What is the minimum age for use?**

The minimum age for use is age 6 and must be accompanied by a paying adult. The maximum ratio of adult to children is 1:2.

### **Will I need to wear a wetsuit?**

We always recommend you wear a wetsuit, however, it will be compulsory if the water falls below 15C. This is to minimise the risk of cold-water shock. Wetsuit hire is included in the cost of your ticket.

### **Will I need to wear a helmet?**

Yes, wearing a helmet on our aquapark is compulsory, this is to prevent risk of serious head injury. Hire of helmets is included in the cost of your ticket.

### **Will I need to wear Aquapark socks?**

Yes, wearing Aquapark socks is compulsory to prevent slips on the inflatable. These are charged at £3 and can be re-used on a subsequent visit, if they have been laundered and are clean to prevent contamination in the lake.

### **How do I book a session?**

You can book a session via our One Leisure booking platform [here](#).

### **What is your refund policy?**

Once a booking has been made, the tickets will be non-refundable and non-transferable to another date. On the rare occasion where we might need to cancel a session due to circumstances beyond our control, such as thunder and lightening, we would issue a refund in this instance.

### **Was planning permission sought?**

Yes – we have worked closely with the planning department to understand what is required from a planning perspective and are fully compliant with their requests.

**If you have a question that hasn't been answered in this document, please get in touch with the project team directly on [Hinchingbrookecountrypark@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:Hinchingbrookecountrypark@huntingdonshire.gov.uk)**