

COFTON LAKE CONSERVATION LIMITED

**MINUTES OF AGM HELD ON SUNDAY 27TH APRIL 2014 AT
THE OAK TREE, REDNAL**

Present: Diane Carr, Chairman/Director
Sue Garvey, Treasurer/Director
Paul Whitby, Committee Member
Katie & Mark Bradley, Committee Members
Colin Jones, Director/Committee Member
Dave Townshend – White Swan Piscatorials/Director
Geoff Smith – White Swan Piscatorials/Director
28 members present

Apologies: John Owen/Director
Irene Barclay, Committee Member

1) Introduction: For the benefit of new members the committee were introduced and the minutes from last year's AGM were accepted and approved.

2) Resignation and Reinstatement of Directors and Committee Members: As called for in the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Company, the Directors and Committee members are required to resign from office at the AGM. All are willing to stand for a further term apart from Colin Jones who resigned at the last committee meeting both as a committee member and a director. I am sure you will all join me in thanking Colin for his help over the years especially his work in building the boat house. Paul Whitby has agreed to take his place as a director and Vince Harrison has agreed to join the committee.

3) Financial Report: - Sue Garvey – We ended last year with £17,772 held in the Cofton Lake Conservation account at Lloyds Bank, Longbridge. Subscriptions received for the year were £2245 and we received £6.78 interest.

The funds, as you know, are to cover the cost of ground and boundary maintenance etc., and also our annual insurance, and anything else that may unexpectedly crop up in the future. The cost of grass cutting has unfortunately gone up by £200 this year and will now cost £49 per cut.

The subscription payments received so far are considerably better than last year, although we are still outstanding two payments. This makes very hard work of something which should be so simple.

Finally, I would like to thank all of those who gave donations in addition to the £12 maintenance subscription.

4) Chairman's Report: - Diane Carr - It will be 10 years this year since we first purchased this site and for the benefit of new members I would like to let you know how this all came about.

Back in 2002 I had a telephone call from a friend of mine who was an estate agent, to say they had been approached by West Midland Travel and Sports Association who had owned Cofton Lake and surrounding land for over 54 years and they were thinking of selling. I immediately got in touch with West Midlands Travel who informed me that a Dr Bruno Broughton had valued this site at around £320,000.

Prior to this an application had been put in to build houses on the north bank of infill land along the lake area. This had been turned down by Bromsgrove District Council but due to the more recent planning approvals on what was green belt land in the surrounding areas, it was possible that this land could be built on in the future. In fact there were developers already taking an interest.

A meeting was arranged in the Village Hall with all the residents backing onto the lake to try and raise enough money to buy this area to ensure that this little bit of England stayed just as it was. A committee was formed and a huge champagne to try and raise the money was launched.

It was soon evident that it was not possible to raise enough money purely from people backing onto the lake so after a phone call to West Midlands Travel I found out that the White Swan Piscatorials fishing club had offered £50,000. A proposition was put to WSP, if they gave us their £50,000 towards the purchase price, they could fish it. This was agreed and subsequently an agreement was drawn up by mutual solicitors.

We were still short of money. A limited company was formed and shares were offered for sale to any like minded conservation people. Cheques came from all over and in no time at all we had raised £230,000. An offer of £190,000 was put in to West Midland Travel and eventually this was accepted.

Solicitors were then appointed and contracts drawn up. Contracts were eventually signed and transferred on 18th December 2004.

When the site was first acquired it had been badly neglected for many years by the previous owners and was extremely overgrown and impossible to walk round. Our first priority was to enable people to walk all around the lake. A 50 meter boardwalk was erected across the marsh area and a bridge built over the sluice – undergrowth was cleared, pathways made and benches installed. Unfortunately work came to a halt when British Waterways, as they were called then, had to drain the lake – on two occasions – due to a fault with the valves. This work seemed to go on forever and it was over two years before the valves were eventually corrected and the lake filled and re stocked with fish – at the expense of British Waterways.

This last year we have seen a lot of maintenance work along the pathways. We employed contractors to take out dead or dangerous trees and the fishing club have organized working parties to shore up areas where the banks were disappearing into the water. We are always looking for volunteers to help with this work. Anyone willing to help please get in touch with a committee member.

What plans have we for the future! To commemorate our 10th anniversary we thought it would be nice to have a picnic on the site sometime in September. The date will be posted on the web site. Anyone with no access to a computer, please let us know and we will either telephone or post a note through your door. We also intend planting some trees – we have asked various garden centers for quotes. We also intend planting wild daffodils in the autumn and once again anyone willing to help please do get in touch.

It was reported that a few members, for various reasons, want to sell their shares. If anyone knows of any interested party, please let us know.

5) Fishing Club Report : Dave Townshend – The Fishing Club announced that they were putting up their fishing subscription to £15 per year. This is the first increase since the lake was purchased. There was no objection.

They also stated they would like to incorporate night fishing which until now has been banned. The people most affected by this would be members backing onto the lake. A letter had been sent to all concerned asking for their comments. A considerable discussion followed. Dave Townshend pointed out

that strict rules would be applied. Night fishermen would have to be in the area before 10.00 pm and not allowed out until after 6.00 am. Night fishing would be booked in advance in order that WSP knew who was in the area after dark. Only certain pegs would be allowed to be fished at night mainly on the North shore and 3 backing onto the field on the South side. Various issues were raised but after a lengthy discussion it was agreed that a 3 month trial run be allowed but only on certain nights of the week. The trial to begin in 2014 so that any issues can be resolved in time for 2015. A letter to be sent to members who's houses back onto the lake informing them when the trial is to start.

6) Open Forum: The question of disabled access was once again raised. Meetings had taken place during last summer and the site was inspected but in order to carry out the work the fishing club had in mind, when quotes were received it was considered to be too costly. However, the committee agreed that the slope from the car park to the boathouse be looked at with a view to making it less steep and more easily accessible.

Himalayan Balsom is still a huge problem. We will never get rid of this altogether but it was suggested that when anyone is walking around the lake they take a plastic bag and pull up some of the new shoots. It was also pointed out that Skunk Cabbage was evident in the marsh area and although it was an attractive plant with its yellow flowers, it is very invasive and needs to be monitored.

Once again complaints have been received regarding dog fouling. The fishing club have erected 'no fouling' signs around the lake. Please do keep your dogs on a lead and under control as it states in the Rules.

The Chairman then thanked the committee, the fishing club, Graham Herbert our Accountant who had come all the way from Dorset to be here today – to Simon Munn who looks after our web site – all free of charge!! And to all the members for coming today and their continued support.

7) Date of Next Meeting – To be notified at a later date.

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Signed
Date