

COFTON LAKE CONSERVATION LTD

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2014



Mandarin Duck

Dear Member,

It has been a busy year this last year and much progress has been made especially to the pathways around the lake. We are sure you will all agree that it is a vast improvement. Thanks to Jenny and Trevor Hardwick who allowed access through their land for the digger to get down to the area and also to Vince Harrison who helped and supervised the work. We still need to get these new paths covered in bark to help with the weed control but a quote has been received and this work should be done sometime in the new year.

Thanks must also be expressed to Mr and Mrs Atwell who kindly painted the bridge and also to the helpers who turned up for the picnic and then planted over 1000 bluebell and wild daffodil bulbs. Thanks to Sandra who made a cake in commemoration of our 10th anniversary – pictures on our web site.

Talking of our web site, we need to thank Simon Munn who designs and updates it and we would remind members that all minutes, newsletters, photos are posted regularly - so please do look at the web site from time to time.

We are sure you will have all seen our beautiful Mandarin duck. He is very tame and we feel sure he must have come from a private estate somewhere. The committee have phoned various centers and have also made enquiries regarding purchasing a female to keep him company! So far all females found for sale have been pinioned – flight feathers permanently removed to stop them flying off. If anyone has any suggestions please let us know.

We have had problems once again with residents cutting back trees and shrubbery around our land. Can we once again point out that the lake and surrounding land is owned by Cofton Lake Conservation - a Registered Limited Company and was purchased in order to preserve it and keep it as natural as possible and away from the hands of possible future developers. The Fishing Club bought 23% - 36% was bought by residents backing onto the lake, and 41% was purchased by people far and wide – not all from our area, some of whom had once lived in this area and had moved away and wanted to ensure that this lake and

land stayed as it was for generations to come. We are forever grateful for all who contributed to the purchase of this site but would reiterate the site is owned by Cofton Lake Conservation Limited and residents who back onto this land are not the only members and are therefore not allowed to cut back trees or hedges without prior permission. Anyone found to be doing this will be made to pay for our tree surgeons to tidy the site and replant new trees.

Can we also mention here that fishermen have complained about the dog fouling around the lake and ask residents and members to please not let your dogs run wild in the lake area and also use bags to clean up after your dogs.

Two of our committee members had been invited to attend the Bittell Reservoir Diffuse Catchment Management Committee meeting which is held each year and attended by Bromsgrove District Council, The Environment Committee, Barnt Green Waters, Canal and River Trust, Natural England, St Modwens and various local Parish Councils in the area. The meeting was chaired by Prof. Ian Trayor who thanked everyone for coming and making it such a good attendance.

The main topics of conversation were:-

- 1) Confirmation of boundaries and land ownership in Barnt Green and Cofton.
- 2) Hydrology of site
- 3) Water Quality: Environment Agency reported they had a mandate to improve the water quality which had previously been falling.
- 4) Concern was expressed regarding the long term management of the new development of the Longbridge site, in particular the river arrow. It was reported that all houses sold are required to pay an annual management charge to maintain the area.

The effect of Himalayan Balsom was discussed and it was mentioned that we at Cofton had tried to reduce the spread by cutting back in the Spring before the seeds had time to reproduce. However it appears that Bittell had found a spray that would kill the Balsom but would not harm the environment.

Back in the early days when the lake was first purchased we did try and get free trees, plants, and in fact any help from various organizations such as Wildlife Trust, Worcestershire County Council, RSPB etc, but as the area was not open to the general public we were always turned down. However, earlier this year our attention was drawn to an advert from The Wildlife Trust who were offering free trees to worthy sites throughout the UK so we thought we would give it another shot and apply. Forms were filled in and sent off and promptly forgotten. Months and months later a letter was received from The Wildlife Trust stating 'Congratulations, you have been accepted – 115 trees will be delivered for planting week beginning 3 November. (Bear in mind they would be delivered to our registered address – my home address !!) - Panic set in and phone calls made. How big were these trees, would we need a transporter – how big is a parcel of 115 trees!!! Panic over, on the 5th November (as one member said – just in time for bonfire night!) a parcel arrived – size approximately 3-ft x 2-ft – inside were 115 tiny trees and shrubs – in another pack were the stakes and guards. Thanks to Irene, Alex, Vince and Shelagh they are now planted around the lake. We shall look forward to seeing how they thrive in the coming years.

The Fishing Club night fishing trial seems to have gone without any problems. No complaints had been received and it was agreed that this could continue and be discussed again at the next AGM.

The fishing club are going to erect two benches along the dam wall area in memory of past members and we have had enquiries from 2 local residents who want to also purchase a bench. We would point out that anyone purchasing a bench should also arrange for maintenance. They need weeding and painting regularly. Anyone who can't do this let us know and we can arrange for someone to carry out this work for you. Anyone wishing to donate a bench please get in touch with a Committee member. Cost of a 5-ft bench is approximately £300.

One of our committee members Paul Whitby is a keen photographer and every year produces personalised calendars for friends and family of pictures in and around Cofton. This year's calendar's first page shows our Mandarin Duck! Anyone wanting a personalised calendar please give us a call on 0121 445 1220 and let us know the name of the person you want it dedicated to. Beautiful photographs and lovely Christmas presents especially to anyone who has moved away from the area. Paul has to charge for paper etc so cost is just £5.00 per calendar.

Date for your diary!!! The next AGM will be held on Sunday 26th April 2015 at the Oak Tree, Groveley Lane at 4.00 pm. Please do try and be there.

Thanks again to the Fishing Club who have worked hard again this last year and for their quick response to fallen trees and their work across the dam back in the Spring. So much better now to get across. Thanks also to you all for your continued support and we wish you a Merry Christmas and Healthy New Year.

Cofton Lake Conservation Ltd
December 2014

PLEASE SEND THIS FORM WITH YOUR ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

PLEASE ENSURE THIS IS IN BY END OF JANUARY

Annual subscription is £12 but the Committee would like to thank all members who pay more – they can be assured that this money is put to good use.

Name.....

Address.....

Subs to be in by end January. Cheques to be made out to Cofton Lake Conservation Limited and sent either to Sue Garvey 58 Ashmead Drive Cofton Hackett B45 8AB or the registered office 19 Cofton Lake Road, Cofton Hackett B45 8PL or direct into our bank Sort Code 30-96-12 A/C 53186960

According to the Memorandum and Articles of Association the subs for the lake are due from the date of the AGM until the 1st January in the following year. Anyone not paying in this period would have their share cancelled and made null and void.