

COFTON LAKE CONSERVATION LTD
MINUTES OF A.G.M. HELD ON SUNDAY 26TH APRIL 2015

Present: Diane Carr – Chairman/Director
Sue Garvey – Treasurer/Director
Paul Whitby – Director
John Owen - Director
Katie Bradley – Committee Member
Dave Townshend – Director/White Swan Piscatorials
Geoff Smith – Director/White Swan Piscatorials
27 members present

Apologies: Mark Bradley – Committee Member
Colin Jones – Member
Mr and Mrs Colebrook – Member
Val Blunn – Member
Jenny and Trevor Hardwick

1) Introduction: - Diane Carr - Welcome to the 11th AGM of Cofton Lake Conservation Ltd. Cofton Lake Conservation Limited was formed in December 2004. The Company is a company limited by guarantee. Members initially paid a total of £1500; £1 was their guarantee and £1499 went into the reserves. This was all drawn up by our Solicitors Anthony Collins in Birmingham.

For the benefit of new members the committee were introduced and the minutes from last year's AGM were accepted, approved and signed. Please note these minutes are always posted on our web site.

2) Resignation and Reinstatement of Directors and Committee Members: - John Owen
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 Vince Harrison who resigned as a committee member.

3) Financial Report – Sue Garvey - We ended last year with £23,278 held in the Cofton Lake Conservation account at Lloyds Bank, Longbridge. Subscriptions received for the year were £2215 and we received £6.16 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 fortunately NOT gone up this year and the cost remains at £49 per cut.

The subscription payments received so far are considerably better than last year, although we are still outstanding three payments.

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

A copy of our accounts is available for you to see.

4) Chairmans Report: We have had a very busy year which started with the planting of wild daffodils and bluebells which I am pleased to say did flower this year even though we were told they would not flower in their first year. Thanks to Irene who organized the purchase of the bulbs and all those who turned up to help plant them.

Benches: The fishing club have installed two benches on the dam and thanks to two members two more benches are to be erected within the next few weeks. Can I just ask the people who donated or erected benches to make sure they are free of weeds and painted with wood preservative periodically. Talking of wood preservative, thanks to Mr and Mrs Atwell who painted the bridge over the dam.

Paul Yates our tree maintenance man has done a wonderful job clearing the pathways and laying bark chippings and a huge thanks must go to Vince who organized the digger back in the autumn when the pathways were widened. We have also installed handrails on the steeper slopes in order that elderly members can now take advantage of walking around the lake.

We have discussed raising the share price from £1500 to £1750 as from January 2016. This is in line with inflation and a 16.7% increase. This has been agreed with the committee – I would ask for your comments and approval.

The Himalayan Bolson seems to be even more prolific this year than any other and we would ask anyone walking around the lake to take a plastic bag with them and pick out as many seed heads as possible.

Whilst mentioning helpers – we have been most disappointed with the turnout of helpers on our maintenance days – please anyone willing and able to help could you please give us your e-mail or phone numbers so we can let you know when we have our working parties. Dates are always posted on our web site.

We cant let today go by without mentioning our Mandarin Duck. He was a character and gave us much pleasure while he was with us. He arrived 'out of the blue' in July 2014 – we did try to find out where he had come from but all to no avail. Trouble was he thought he was a human! He spent many happy hours walking around the lake with anyone who would put up with him, sitting talking to fishermen – he even became the mascot for the White Swan Piscatorial on the front cover of their web site! He used to wake Sue and Pete up at 6.00 every morning by pecking on their window and peering through their curtains and spent many happy hours in various houses just sitting happily chirping at people. Many phone calls were made – RSPB – Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, Natural England, Norfolk Wild Foul Trust and many more, but it appears that the Mandarin is classed as a Native Ferrel Bird and although there are some 7000 pairs of Mandarins scattered in the wild around Britain it is an offence to introduce these birds into the wild from captivity - So there was no way we could introduce a mate.

He then became so tame he was in danger of being run over or killed by cats or dogs as he was forever on the road and it was then that we sought a safe haven for him and he was taken to a wildlife sanctuary in Banbury where hopefully he will live happily for the rest of his life.

5) Fishing Club Report: - Dave Townshend - It appears that the trial for night fishing has been a success and no complaints have been received from residents. Night Fishing will continue on the first and third weekend periods of each month. Geoff Smith has almost finished the work on the widening and leveling the lower pathway to the right of the Boathouse. A sign with Cofton Lake fishery rules has been erected in the car park.

6) Open Forum: Members were asked for comments regarding the proposed increase in the share price. A general vote was taken and only 1 member objected, this was then proposed and seconded by Judy Hickman Smith and passed. Increase will be from January 2016.

Mr and Mrs Hawley from 48 Ashmead Drive were concerned about trees that had been planted in the lake area at the bottom of their garden. Assurance was given that this would be looked into when the next inspection took place.

Concern was also raised regarding land drains coming into the lake area from Cofton Lake Road. Members were informed that these were from storm water drains at the bottom of Cofton Lake Road which were installed when the houses were built in 1938 and had always caused a problem with mud on the pathways. This problem had been made worse by people at the top of Cofton Lake Road tarmacing over their driveways. Last year pipes were installed to carry this water away from the pathway and directly into the lake. It does seem that this may have solved the problem, but it will be monitored.

Discussions took place regarding the clearing of trees and undergrowth around the lake area. Alex Barclay was concerned that some clearing had been done without permission and too much maintenance in several areas had been carried out at the same time. It was pointed out that although this lake and area was purchased as a conservation area, maintenance does have to be done and a section at a time dealt with as and when necessary. Expert advice has been given by someone from Worcestershire Council who has walked around the area periodically pointing out areas that need maintaining. The rules and regulations of the lake, which everyone signs, does state that no one should cut down trees or undergrowth without permission from the committee. A tree had been cut down to the rear of No. 56 Ashmead but they had been charged for the removal of the tree and had offered to put in a replacement. From what the committee could see, all other work around the lake was done with the prior permission of the committee.

Conclusion – Diane Carr:

It just leaves me to say thank you to Graham Herbert who does our accounts – to Simon Munn who looks after our web site - all on a voluntary basis - thanks to the fishing club – especially Geoff who has spent so much time this last year helping with maintenance – thanks also to the directors and committee for their continued support and also for you all for attending today. See you next year.

7) Next Meeting: To be arranged.