

COFTON LAKE CONSERVATION LIMITED

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2018



As always another busy year. Repairs have been made to the notice board and also the boardwalk. Some of the benches have been cleaned and treated. Please note anyone who has a bench around the lake can you please ensure that it is cleaned and treated and kept in good condition.

Canal and River Trust inspected the valves and dam in June and it was reported that everything was working satisfactorily. It is good to report that the new representative from CART keep us informed of any inspections that take place.

It was reported by a resident in The Grove that silt was building up in the little lake which runs from the sluice at Cofton. CART have been notified and they confirmed that this small lake is owned by St Modwen and is not our concern. St Modwen have been informed.

The duck islands have now been purchased and we are awaiting a date for the Fishing Club to install them. Due to heavy rain the last maintenance day had to be cancelled.

Report from White Swan Piscatorials Fishing Club

The Committee of the White Swan have been concerned that the catches of silver fish (roach, perch etc) have declined over the last couple of years since the floating islands have been removed. At the start of the year we arranged a visit from our Environment Agency Fisheries Officer, who suggested that the reduction in silver fish could be down to poor habitat and lack of refuges for fish from predatory birds - cormorants. To provide some cover for the fish and to encourage them into the margins we have felled a couple of trees into the lake which will hopefully help. We are looking at other things we can do to provide refuges in the deeper water, but we took on another fishery at the end of last year and our attention has been focussed on improvements there. Tim has continued with working parties to maintain the pathways around the lake.

Unfortunately we have again caught catfish from the Lake. Two fish were removed by the Environment Agency this year. Recent reports from one of our members is that another one was lost at the net, so it would seem we still have catfish in the Lake. Catfish are a non-native species to the UK and require special licences from the Environment Agency before they can be stocked into a water. The water has to be fully contained with no possibility of the fish escaping and spreading into other water. As Cofton Lake forms the headwaters of the River Arrow and feeds the canal system, we would not get a licence even if we wanted one for Cofton. Catfish grow to very large sizes and have mouths the size of a bucket. They eat other fish and if not controlled can damage the fish stock and the balance of the water. Introducing fish without a licence is illegal and carries a maximum fine of £50,000. We do not know if the fish we are catching now have been in the lake since we first caught them in 2016, or whether catfish are still being stocked. Please keep your eyes open for any suspicious activity.

Dave Townsend Secretary White Swan

The Bittell Reservoir Annual Catchment committee meeting was scheduled for Tuesday 4th December at Bittell but due to illness was cancelled at the last minute. Bittell have had problems similar to ours regarding the valves in the dam wall and the reservoir has had to be drained in order that work can be carried out. It appears that the one valve has been repaired but they are still having problems with the other. The reservoir is far from full and this hasn't been helped by the long dry summer. However, they told me that they are hoping to sail on Boxing Day! Water has been taken from Cofton and more information will be forthcoming once the next meeting has been re arranged.

During the dry hot summer we had problems with youths getting into the lake area and swimming. It seems they were getting in via the sluice. CART were informed and we asked if they could ensure that the fences from the sluice were checked and repaired where necessary. The rest of our fences were checked and any gaps were filled in.

Once again we have had reports of residents backing onto the lake area cutting back trees and undergrowth. Please ensure that residents adhere to the rules which they signed stating that they are allowed to clear a pathway down to the main path of no more than 1 meter wide and no more.

Please remember this lake is not only owned by members backing onto the lake and in fact the majority of members live elsewhere and purchased a share in order to preserve the area and encourage wildlife. One such member who lives in Bromsgrove sent us a report this year of his early memories of Cofton Lake. The following is an extract:-

"I was born in 1936 which was the year that there were three kings on the throne which may have had some reason for my mother giving me the Christian names of Edward George. I suppose the first I remember going to the lake would be when I was 6 or 7 which was the year my father volunteered to go in the RAF. He was a keen angler so when he got the chance he would fish in Cofton lake. The local people treated the lake almost like a lido. We would take sandwiches and a blanket to sit on and while Dad fished Mum would sit there doing her knitting. It was regarded as a day out. Me and my young friends would fish for sticklebacks and frogs etc. We were very rarely supervised and being near water wasn't regarded as being a hazard. We collected blackberries from the hedgerows to make jam, being war time this was very important as jam was regarded as a real treat. The road where we lived was right alongside the Austin Motor works which was regarded as an enemy target so for this reason we slept in an air raid shelter called a Morrison Shelter. Because of all the problems at the time you can see why this lake, the hills and Cofton Park were so important to the local people. It played an important part of my life as a child. This is why I was pleased to play some small part in preserving it for the future in the hope that others can get as much pleasure as we did in future years. I hope these memories will be of some interest to the Cofton Lake members"

Ted Brookfield

We thank Ted for this and also for his generous donation to help with the maintenance.

We must also thank the fishing club for their work throughout the year in keeping the pathways clear and felling any dangerous trees. We thank Simon for his input with keeping our web site up dated. We also thank Rob our accountant for preparing our accounts and also for the continued support of the rest of the committee and all the members of Cofton Lake Conservation Ltd.

We do have some new members this year and for them and also existing members we hope you will be able to attend our AGM which will be held at Generous George at 4.00 pm on Sunday 28th April.

Please remember that annual subscriptions are due in January. These can be paid either in cash, cheque or bank transfer all as per the enclosed form.

The committee thank you all and wish you a Happy Christmas and healthy 2019.

Cofton Lake Conservation Ltd

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 Jan. Cheques made out to Cofton Lake Conservation Ltd 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 number 53186960

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