

ICofton Lake Conservation Ltd

Newsletter December 2020



Well what a year we have all had! Do hope everyone is keeping safe and well during these difficult times. It is a shame we could not hold our AGM in April due to lockdown and who knows if we will be able to meet for the next one in April 2021. Lets just hope the vaccine is a success and we are by then back to normal. We have had a few houses around the lake changing hands which means we have new members. During lockdown we have also sold a few more shares. To these new members we say welcome and we hope you enjoy walking around this area for years to come.

Even though we have been in lockdown the Committee and Directors have had a busy year. Once again it took until late July before all subs were in. If you are paying by bank transfer, please put your name on the payment as this can be confusing. All bank details are shown at the end of this Newsletter.

Whilst talking of payments, we must thank Sue Garvey who has been our Treasurer since we purchased this lake and land and has now retired and gone to live in Wales near her son. Our sincere thanks go out to her for her work over the last 16 years and we wish her well. The committee sent her flowers to thank her for all the work she has done over the years. We now have a new Treasurer. Our thanks to Paul Whitby who has offered to take over from Sue. Paul is a committee member and is also a Director so is fully conversant with the running of the Company.

A new picnic bench has been installed near the car park and it is planned that the original picnic bench be replaced sometime in 2021.

As you will see when walking around the lake the water level has been kept low for the whole year. This is all due to the problems that occurred at Whaley Bridge in Derbyshire in August 2019 when the dam collapsed. C&RT who own the dam wall have been instructed to keep all waters throughout the UK below the dam level. This is beyond our control but we are being kept informed by the Engineer in charge of Cofton of their intentions. In fact their engineers have been and taken samples of the actual dam and we hope that work will take place very soon. They also have a problem with the slipway, this work will also be carried out at the same time. I assure you we are in constant contact with C&RT and are pushing for this work to be done as soon as possible.

We have had reports of blue green algae in the lake during the very hot months. Now that the weather has got colder this should resolve the matter but please be careful when walking round the lake with dogs as this algae is harmful to animals. We shall be watching this next summer should it return.

May we remind all shareholders not to give out the gate number to friends and family. They are only able to walk around the lake accompanied by the shareholder. We had reports of youths swimming in the lake during the hot months and this is not permitted. If you see anyone in the lake area swimming or acting suspiciously please report this immediately to a committee member. We have had a couple of residents who live backing onto the lake complaining of people walking round looking into their houses. Can we please ask people to respect people's privacy whilst walking round the lake.

We have had some problems with boundaries, especially to the rear of houses backing onto our land along the Barnt Green Road. Some of these houses back onto what is known as Muriel's Marsh which is a strip of land behind the houses on the Barnt Green Road which adjoins our land. When we first acquired the lake, Mr Sandy who owned Muriel's Marsh wanted to donate the land to us on condition that it would always be known as Muriel's Marsh after his late wife. Unfortunately, he died before this was settled, however, his nephew who inherited the land has now contacted us and carried out his uncles wishes. We are in the latter stages of registering this land with the Land Registry and hope to build a pathway around the area (providing easier access to the houses on Barnt Green Road and Ten Ashes Lane) and install a bench in memory of Muriel. Most of the possible pathway can be built with aggregate stone and borders, but some of the area in question is very boggy and will have to be bridged. If any of our members have any contacts to help source supplies or have ideas (e.g. bridging materials) in this field will they please get in touch. A quote is being obtained from the company who erected the original boardwalk and of course it depends on costs as to whether this work is undertaken.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE GATE NO WILL NOW CHANGE ON 1ST March 2021

FISHING CLUB REPORT – DAVE TOWNSHEND

What a year! Fishing, like all other activities, was stopped during the first lockdown. We resumed again on May 15th and thanks to the work of the Angling Trust we have been able to continue fishing during lockdown 2 when other sports activities were stopped. When we started again in May fishing became very popular. The banks of Cofton Lake were lined with members. Unfortunately, not all were well behaved and we had to expel one of our members for anti-social behaviour. Water levels were variable through the year due to the issues with the dam wall that have been mentioned previously. Despite this, fishing was good and our members continue to enjoy the pleasures of fishing the lake. The lower water levels and lack of any flow through the lake almost certainly contributed to the algae problem we had this year. It didn't affect the fishing, but it did pong a bit and put a few folks off visiting. We hope C&RT get their act together and complete any works on the dam wall and spillway soon so that the lake returns to normal. Going forward, we are changing our membership year to run from March to February. We feel that March is a better time of year for members to renew and also for attracting new members. This year's membership will be extended by 2 months to the end of February. The additional 2 months will be some compensation to our members for the time we were unable to fish during lockdown. The change of lock combinations will also move to the 1st March.

A.G.M. Due to the pandemic no date has been arranged for the AGM which is usually held on the last Sunday in April. The following is the finance report which should have been read out at the AGM in April.

FINANCE REPORT 2019 – 2020: Sue Garvey We ended last year with £36,143.23 held in the Cofton Lake Conservation account at Lloyds Bank, Northfield. Subscriptions received for the year were £2490 which includes a very kind donation of £50 and £16.35 interest. This was £0.50 more than last year. 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 not been increased this year and the charge remains at £52.00 per cut. The subscription payments received were considerably better than last year, although several payments were still outstanding. The chasing of late payments makes very hard work of something which should be so simple. PLEASE ENSURE THAT SUBS ARE PAID BY END OF JANUARY.

Please read the payment form at the end of this newsletter. A copy of the accounts is kept at the registered office for anyone wishing to see them.

Once again we thank the fishing club for their work throughout the year. We thank Simon for keeping our web site up dated. Thanks also to Rob our accountant for preparing our accounts, and also for the continued support of the Directors and Committee members.

Christmas this year may be bleak for many of us but we thank all our members for their help throughout the year and trust we all have a healthy virus free 2021.

Diane Carr – Chairman – Cofton Lake Conservation Ltd

PLEASE SEND THIS FORM WITH YOUR ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION

PLEASE ENSURE THIS IS PAID BY THE 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 of Jan. Cheques made out to Cofton Lake Conservation Ltd and sent to Paul Whitby, 15 Middle Drive, Cofton Hackett B45 8AL 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. NOTE IF SENDING BY BANK TRANSFER PLEASE ENSURE YOUR NAME IS INCLUDED ON THE TRANSACTION. 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.