

ACoifton Lake Conservation Ltd

Minutes of AGM held on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> April at Cofton Hackett Village Hall

Present: Diane Carr – Chairman – Director

Paul Whitby – Treasurer – Director

Dave Townshend and Tim Walsh Directors and members of White Swan Piscatorials

Ann Blackburn – Committee Member

Brian Partridge – Committee Member

Katie and Mark Bradley – Committee Members

Irene Barclay – Committee Member

Rob McCulloch – Accountant

Apologies: Ted Brookfield, Debbie Edwards, Dr John Owen

The Committee were introduced.

As is called for in our memorandum and articles of association, all the directors and committee members have to resign at the AGM and become re elected. All are willing to stand for a further term except John Owen and Irene Barclay. John has been with us from the start of this venture even attending meetings prior to us acquiring this lake and land and we thank him for his continued support and wish him well in his retirement. Thanks to both him and Irene.

I now hand you over to Paul for out Treasurers report:

As at December 2020 the current account stood at £9715.29 and the Deposit account stood at £32,828.77. Interest earned was £11.81.

As at December 2021 the current account stood at £12,200.69 and the Deposit account stood at £32,832.06. Interest earned was £3.29.

From December 2021 to April 2022 the current account stands at £15,594.59. The Deposit account stands at £32,833.17. Interest earned was £1.11.

Since December 2020 the deposit account total interest earned to date is £16.21.

By far the biggest expenditure over the past two years has been on the materials and contractors we have used to build the pathway around Muriel's Marsh. The total amount to date is £7,331.66. this expenditure would have been much higher had it not been for the volunteers who have turned up every week over the past year to get the job done. We can balance this with 5 more membership shares we sold to people living in properties in Ten Ashes and Barnt Green Road the sale of which amounts to £8750.00.

Chairmans Report: - Diane Carr

It has been a long and difficult time for us all during the last 2 years but our committee has not been idle. The land around the lake still has to be maintained and we do have damaged and fallen trees reported from time to time. Pathways have to be repaired and boggy areas made more accessible.

The biggest project recently tackled was Muriel's Marsh. When we first purchased this lake and land, Mr Sandy who owned the 3 acres known as Muriel's Marsh after his late wife, phoned me to say he was donating this parcel of land to CLCL on condition that it always be known as Muriel's Marsh and

none of the land would ever be sold or given away. Sadly, Mr Sandy passed away before we actually signed the final papers. However, a couple of years ago Mr Nick Sandy, Mr Sandy's nephew who had inherited the land, contacted us to say he wanted to carry out his Uncle's wishes and donate this land to us. The transfer was made and the land was officially registered as ours with the land registry. And so started the mammoth task of building a safe boardwalk and pathway around the perimeter. A quote was received for the first section at the rear of Ashmead Rise some 50 metres long - £5500. On inspection it was decided to call for volunteers to try and do it ourselves. Thanks must go to Geoff Smith and his wife Di and also Adam both from the fishing club, various committee members – not forgetting Linda for bringing us tea and biscuits, Elliot who built the bridges and the Milkman who built the boardwalk! We met every Thursday – whatever the weather, diverting the river back to its original position and clearing it of years of silt. We carried on cutting through the undergrowth to create a safe pathway for all members to enjoy. It was finally completed 3 weeks ago after almost 12 months.

I know most of you have heard this before but for the sake of new members I would like to point out that most of our members do not back onto the lake. Many live around Cofton, Barnt Green and Bromsgrove and some much further afield. Out of the 177 membership shares the fishing club own 23% - people backing onto the lake 36% and the remaining 41% is owned by people from far and wide.

We are always conscious of keeping costs down as much as possible and we feel we must inform all members that two houses who back onto Muriel's Marsh are trying to claim some of this land by claiming 'adverse possession' – we have objected but we have to inform you all that we have appointed a solicitor and to date we don't know how much this might cost. The solicitor we are using has been recommended by Nick Sandy as he specialises in land disputes. This is not the first time someone has tried to take our land it happened once before and on that occasion they lost their claim and were instructed to remove their fence and sheds and erect a fence on the original boundary line. We have a duty to all our members local and from afar to ensure that this land is preserved in full for now and for years to come.

The new pathway meant that houses along Barnt Green Road and Ten Ashes now have access to the lake for the first time and I am pleased to say we have new members who have joined us and all are delighted with the work carried out.

We were concerned that some residents had used the area as a dumping ground and we have found old carpets, plastic, metal old BBQ's etc etc and our next step is to remove all this rubbish. We are looking for volunteers to help and as we realise many of you work during the week so a work party is taking place on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> May from 11 am. Anyone able to help please meet at 11 around the new boardwalk. We shall also need volunteers to help planting wild flowers, paint the old boardwalk and repair the notice board. Anyone able to help please make a note on the list being distributed around the room. It would also help when you are walking around the lake to pull up some of the Himalayan Balsam.

I now had you over to Dave for the Fishing Club Report.....Fishing saw a surge in popularity during lockdown being one of the few activities that were still permitted. Our membership numbers have increased and the lake is proving popular.

In addition to general maintenance activities, a lot of effort has been put into renewing the fence along the horse field to keep out unwanted visitors and improve the general security of the lake area. There's still a little more to do, but hopefully this will be completed soon. We have also installed new fishing platforms along the Ashmead Bank which will help keep the pathways clear of our tackle and made it easier to walk round. We stocked 50 smaller carp and 250 small Tench into the lake recently too.

OPEN FORUM:

Numerous e mails and messages from the floor saying how pleased they all were with the new walkway. A resident donated a small oak tree that will be planted and offers of help in the future especially with the on-going problem of the Himalayan Balsam.

It just leaves me to say a big thank you to the fishing club for their maintenance days around the lake, thank you to Simon Munn who hosts our website, thanks also to Rob for doing our accounts and the committee and directors for all the work they do voluntarily in their own time. Special thanks must go to all the members who pay more than their annual subscription especially to Ted Brookfield who has used this lake with his parents from the 40's and sends cheques through the year towards it's upkeep and to ensure it stays as a conservation area. I assure you this money is well spent. Also I thank you for your support over the years and for taking the time to come today. We wish you all a happy and healthy summer.

Diane Carr

Chairman Cofton Lake Conservation Ltd.