



Lake Working Group Meeting Minutes

held on 3rd April 2024 at 7pm, in the Main Hall, Village Centre.

Present: Cllr Bridget Culley (Chair) (BC), Cllr Jeanette Davies (JD), Charlotte Rimmer (CR), Alex Martin (AM), Cllr Dave Peart (DP).

In attendance: Maxine Owen (Clerk) (MO) Members of the Parish: 8

Meeting start: 19:00

1. **Introduction led by the chair:** General Welcome.
2. Time for Public Speaking: Not required, meeting structured to be interactive all through with audience.
3. Apologies for absence: None
4. Declarations of interest: None

5. **Topic 1: Management Plan**

5.1 Summary of Discussion: CR started by introducing herself and explain her 'day job' working for Test Valley as Senior Countryside Officer – Biodiversity and Landscape. CR explained the draft plan which will help the PC manage the next 10 years. A plan that will be reviewed and evolve over the years. There are just a few gaps in information to fill in. CR wishes to organise a meeting with the anglers of the Fishing Syndicate to understand their perspective. One section concerns the Grounds Maintenance Contract specification and management of that team when cutting in the Lake area, and that it is important for the cuttings to be taken away each time.

It was discussed that outside the Grounds Maintenance Contract much of the work could be done with volunteers or by organising working parties. Next Volunteer Day is 20th April 2024.

The stabilisation of the bank needs some work, and brushwood mattresses on the water's edge will help reeds expand on the edge which also makes good habitat for bird-life and invertebrates to feed the fish. Suitable areas will need to be identified in collaboration with the fishing syndicate.

CR advised that she would like to run a hedge-laying workshop for volunteers next autumn, to particularly deal with the hedge at the Derrydown end.

There was discussion about wildlife surveys that might be useful in the Lake area, and could help the committee obtain grant money for projects in the future.

CR will provide MO with details of a good wildlife camera as the PC have put money in the 24-25 budget to buy one. The Sustainable Bourne Valley owned camera has been placed on site a few times this year already and typically caught record of birds rather than the hoped for otters that have been active in the area.

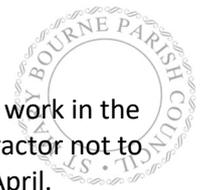
It was agreed that members of the fishing syndicate could do some strimming now that the toads have left.

ACTION: Organise meeting with Fishing Syndicate – **CR & AM**

6. **Topic 2: Trees**

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6.1 Summary of discussion: MO advised that the approval for the first round of tree work in the parish had been approved by BDBC. There had been a request for the tree contractor not to commence works until the toads had left, this was estimated to be around mid-April. Groundlord will be well aware we are heading into nesting season, and will take the appropriate steps to ensure no nesting birds are disturbed unnecessarily or harmed in any way. Treeworks will be starting on 16th April 2024, and will probably be 3-4 days. Most of the work is in the lake area, plus two trees on the Recreation Ground. A Map of the trees in the parish was on display and copies of the Tree Report – MO offered to send copies by email to anyone interested. A list of the trees for the first round of tree works was displayed.

AM raised the issue of the collapsed willows on the islands, and offered that members of the fishing syndicate would be willing to tackle some of these. AM advised that over years the Lake will naturally silt up, but the fallen willows will be speeding up this process. MO to organise permission from PC and BDBC tree department for this work to go ahead late summer.

Managing the gradual silt up of the lake should be part of the Management Plan.

ACTION: Permission from PC & BDBC for work on Willows on islands – **Clerk**

7 Topic 3: Geese

7.1 Summary of discussion: The number of geese on the lake was discussed, and all agreed that their numbers are probably too high. CR advised that a general licence would be required to oil the eggs which she would sort out and explained the process. Access to the islands would be key, so investigations into the state of the boat had been made. MOP has offered to help with the use of his Open Canoe. CR & MO to liaise when the time is right. CR advised that there were currently 4 pairs of geese on the lake, but these could have 8 goslings each. These goslings would then themselves return to the lake to breed.

ACTION: Continue monitoring goose pairing and egg laying – **CR**

8 Topic 4: Planting

8.1 Summary of discussion: JD advised that the bulbs that had been planted behind the benches in the Rec had been successful and then thanked MOPs for their kind donations of snowdrops which have now also been planted.

The nettles are now starting to grow, so contact needs to be made with Scofell who have quoted to spray a test area of nettles, and will also be asked to spot spray in certain areas. It was also suggested that digging out of the nettles could be added to the list of jobs for the volunteer day on 20th April.

JD advised that PC had purchased some plant plugs which she would bring on and then plant once the nettle spraying had been done.

ACTION: Speak to Scofell to organise nettle spraying - **Clerk**

9 Topic 5: Volunteer Day – 20th April 2024

9.1 Summary of Discussion: A list of jobs for the Working Party Volunteer Day on 20th April was discussed. JD & CR to put a list together. Initial thoughts of tasks that should be included: Repair of the Flora & Fauna board, tidying up logs, digging of nettles, ground prep and seeding of grass.

ACTION: Create and publish advert for Volunteer Day – **JD**

ACTION: Consider list of jobs for Volunteer Day - **ALL**

9 Topic 5: General Discussion & Questions from MOPs

9.1 Summary of Discussion: An MOP asked about the safety equipment in the lake surround and was advised that the life-buoys had all been recently replaced. BDBC no longer ask for

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confirmation of their condition, and MO advised that this type of question was now more likely to come from the PC's insurers.

An MOP suggested there seemed to be a drop in the variety of birds in and around the lake. Another wondered whether this might be down to Avian Flu? CR advised that this is possible, but more likely to be a reflection of problems with numbers nationally, and how Avian Flu might be affecting migrating birds, than a problem caused at a local level. AM advised that there is a good variety of water fowl on the lake including Gadwalls which are seen in greater numbers on SMB Lake than elsewhere.

The presence of otters at the lake was discussed, and AM & CR confirmed they had seen otter-related fish kills, and AM advised a dog otter could travel 10 miles in a night. Otters have not yet been caught on the wild-life camera.

The first family of ducklings has been reported in the parish.

An MOP also thanked everyone for the ongoing work on the Lake and it's surround.

Date of next meeting: To be Confirmed

Meeting end: 19:45

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