

Lavell's Wetland Trust

Charity Number: 1176960

LWT c/o Dinton Pastures Country Park, Davis Street, Hurst, Reading, RG10 0TH

Trustees Annual Report for the period 1st January 2020 to 31st December 2020

Summary of the objects of the charity set out in its governing document

Lavell's Wetland Trust's (LWT) aims and objectives are to enhance, protect and preserve the natural habitats, fauna and flora in the Loddon Valley for the benefit of the public and to advance public education and interest in the conservation of the countryside and wildlife

Type of governing document

Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) association model constitution filed with the Charity Commission.

How the charity is constituted

CIO consisting of approximately 450 members.

Trustees and Committee Members for the period covered by this report

Chair:	Jane Campbell
Secretary:	Angela Gunn
Treasurer:	Phil Kinch
Membership Secretary:	Les Blundell
Chief Visionary Officer:	Fraser Cottington
Trustees:	Renton Righelato, Ron Bryant
Committee Members:	Peter Scudamore, Bob Bennett

Trustee selection methods

Volunteer trustees with appropriate skills are sought from the membership and nominated by the management committee or by individual members

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit in relation to these objects

We undertake volunteer work parties attended by members of the CIO, members of the public, and those in programmes such as the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme. These take place at least monthly in order to maintain and improve the Lea Farm Lake reserve and the conservation areas within Dinton Pastures Country Park.

Further "one-off" work parties are arranged for local schools, scout groups, corporate bodies and others to encourage a wider understanding of nature and introduce more people to conservation and a healthy lifestyle.

We undertake monthly guided walks, open to the public, to identify the birdlife and other fauna that can be seen at Lavell's Lake LNR, Dinton Pastures Country Park and Lea Farm.

We provide a website to inform the public about Lavell's Lake & Lea Farm Lake, its wildlife and facilities and our work and events. This includes a history of bird recordings at the site that is publicly available for conservation, research or other purposes.

We undertake larger improvement projects either using the funds of the charity or external resources, or a combination of the two.

We wish to recognise the great contribution that members of the CIO, members of the public and members of other organisations make through their efforts during the year. We could not achieve our objectives without the financial support of our annually subscribing members, the efforts and expertise of members of the committee and other volunteers. The help and support of Dinton Pastures Countryside Service (DPCS) is invaluable.

Summary of the main achievements of the charity during the year

Lea Farm Lake

Lea Farm Lake was gifted to LWT in April by one of our trustees. We were able to complete most of the excavation and landscaping improvements to the wetland habitat at the site, which has been possible thanks to a grant from the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE) with funding provided from Network Rail. This is part of LWT's vision for a protected wetland corridor along the lower Loddon Valley, with three wetland habitats in the middle of the Loddon Gravel Pits Biodiversity Opportunity Area. LWT's site at Lea Farm Lake is establishing a high value habitat link between Dinton Pastures to the south and Sandford Country Park and the Hurst and Twyford Lakes area to the north. DPCS partners LWT in the project, which will enhance the connectivity between Dinton Pastures and Lea Farm Local Wildlife Sites.

Volunteer work parties

We were able to hold 9 work parties in 2020 (7 were regular monthly work parties, 5 of the monthly work parties were cancelled; 3 due to Covid and 2 due to flooding) but we were able to hold 2 extra work parties. Attendance ranged from 8 to 36 with an average of 19 volunteers with an average of 1 new volunteer per work party. Volunteers worked to prepare the ground for the excavation of the reedbed site and to replant and secure the site.

Publicity and engagement with the public

The LWT hide at Lea Farm Lake was closed for part of the year due to the Covid lockdown but, when restrictions allowed, it was re-opened in a Covid-safe way with limited access using a booking system. We were able to maintain interest in the Trust through news items on our website and social media, articles in the publication RG10 and the Hurst Village Society Newsletter.

The website has been updated and now includes information posted by members on our Facebook page. The wildlife section has been expanded in particular for butterflies and dragonflies. Reported sightings include; Brown Argus and Purple Emperor butterflies, grass snakes, water voles and lots of insects. Our major project for the year was the habitat improvement at Lea Farm Lake and a videolog of the work was made available on our website. Before the start of the excavation work an odonata survey was carried out and the results added to the Lavell's webpage.

The Dawn Chorus walk had to be cancelled this year but we were able to hold 2 monthly bird walks. Others were cancelled due to Covid, flooding or weather conditions. Before the start of lockdown, a group of scouts took part in one of our work parties.

Despite the impact of Covid restrictions, membership has remained steady, with a number of renewals and new subscriptions following some unusual wildlife sightings, while membership of our popular WhatsApp bird news service has increased.

We have benefitted from a substantial legacy from a local family towards a new hide at Lea Farm Lake, overlooking the new expanded reedbeds, for which we are extremely grateful. Our members have also made numerous, generous donations towards this new project including through a GoFundMe campaign.

Brief statement of the charity's policy on reserves

The charity maintains a reserve of £9,000 for emergency work and unforeseen events. Taking on Lea Farm Lake has meant a significant increase in the assets LWT has to replace and maintain. The trustees have therefore decided to build up an asset management fund by setting aside £1,500 each year, starting from 2021. This fund will be used to cover the costs of planned replacements and repairs to our major assets.

Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above. Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature: 

Name: JANE CAMPBELL

Position: CHAIR

Date: 2nd AUG 2021