

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 2021 to 31st December 2021

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 470 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 Cottingham
Additional 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. The website has been updated and now includes photographs and sightings of other wildlife: flora, butterflies & moths, dragonflies & damselflies and mammals.

We undertake larger improvement projects either using the funds of the charity, 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 their financial and practical support. 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

The Lea Farm riverside footpath was gifted to LWT by one of our trustees, following his gift of Lea Farm Lake last year. We were able to erect fencing to protect the site and to plant shrubs at the lakeside to minimise disturbance of birds and other wildlife.

We have progressed the project to improve the habitat of both the Lea Farm Lake and Lavell's Lake Nature Reserve sites. This has been possible thanks to a grant from the Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE), with funding provided by Network Rail. Work in the year has included transplanting Phragmites for the new reed bed at Lea Farm Lake and coppicing Willow to improve the habitat for Loddon Lily at both sites.

Volunteer work parties

We were able to hold a number of additional work parties this year and caught up on some tasks that were deferred last year due to the lockdowns. There were 17 work parties with a total attendance of 228. Attendance ranged from 5 to 27 with an average of 13. Attendance at some work parties was affected by roadworks or Covid, 1 work party was cancelled due to snow. Tasks included transplanting reeds to the excavated reedbed site and planting shrubs to provide screening in the future.

Publicity and engagement with the public

The LWT hide at Lea Farm Lake was again closed for part of the year due to Covid restrictions. It was opened on 12 April when restrictions were eased; access was limited by the use of a booking system. The hide has been fully open without restrictions since 19 July. We now have a QR code, at the hide and gates on the site, which links to our membership webpage allowing the public to join and gain more flexible access to the hide. We have been able to maintain interest in the Trust through news items on our website and social media as well as a talk to the Berkshire Ornithology Club. We have seen an increase in both general membership and use of the WhatsApp bird news service.

The Dawn Chorus walk was cancelled this year and monthly bird walks were restarted in April following the easing of lockdown.

The GoFundMe fundraising campaign for a new hide at Lea Farm Lake is ongoing and planning is in progress.

We received a donation from the new Waitrose 'Give a Little Love' charity scheme. We plan to use this to fund a small bird watching hut at Lea Farm Lake which should offer views of Kingfishers and Egrets all year and Water Rail, Snipe and hopefully Bittern in the winter.

We have a new agreement with Reading District Angling Association giving their members fishing rights from the riverside footpath. As part of the agreement, they will be helping with the management of the habitat along the riverside.

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 maintain and replace. The trustees have therefore decided to build up an asset management fund by setting aside funds each year, starting with £1,000 in 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: *J Campbell*

Name: *JANE CAMPBELL*

Position: *CHAIR*

Date: *18/7/2022*