

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 2024 to 31st December 2024

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 580 members.

Trustees and Committee Members for the period covered by this report

Chair:	Jane Campbell
Secretary:	Angela Gunn
Treasurer:	Peter Scudamore
Membership Secretary:	Araba McMillan to September 2024
Chief Visionary Officer:	Fraser Cottington
Additional Trustees:	Ron Bryant
Committee Members:	Keith Boseley, Ella Wheeler (from September 2024)

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 monthly at weekends and fortnightly on weekdays with the aim of maintaining and improving 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 local nature reserve, Dinton Pastures Country Park, and Lea Farm Lake.

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 includes photographs and sightings of other wildlife: flora, butterflies & moths, dragonflies & damselflies, and mammals.

Larger improvement projects are undertaken using either 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 and Lavell's Lake

We bought a new Tern raft to replace one that was beyond repair. This was successfully used to raise chicks by Terns and Black Headed Gulls, both species have declined following outbreaks of avian flu.

In recent years, high water levels have resulted in the lower sections of our Sand Martin wall being flooded during the breeding season. A grant from the Berkshire Ornithological Club has enabled us to add three layers to the existing wall, an increase of 63 nest compartments. The reconstruction of the roof overhand also enabled us to install 2 House Martin nest boxes on the wall. In addition, 2 Swallow boxes were installed on the viewing screen on Lea Farm Lake.

An ongoing problem with a leak in a Thames Water pipe has made access to one section of the reserve difficult as the ground was very boggy. We have installed a pipe to drain the leak (clean water) into the lake and laid gravel to allow the area to dry.

A sheltered viewing bench was built using a donation from the Hurst Village Society. This overlooks the landfill site adjacent to Lea Farm Lake.

Winter flooding of the Loddon River has resulted in the riverside path becoming very muddy. Dinton Pastures Country Services provided us with wood chips to cover the mud and improve the walking surface.

Volunteer work parties

Heavy rain and flooding have again resulted in some work parties being cancelled. We have continued with the regular task of cutting down or coppicing willow, and berry bearing plants and Southern Marsh Orchids were planted. We pulled up invasive Himalayan Balsam plants to ensure the growth of other native plants, and, one of our volunteers put in a lot of extra time to continue this task. Following the removal of the damaged fixed wheelchair ramp, we now have a portable ramp at the hide.

We hosted corporate work Parties from Reading Football Club Community Action Team and Mondelez. These groups cleared willow, planted Blackthorn, and cleared the riverbank of vegetation to promote new growth.

This year, one of our young volunteers gained the Duke of Edinburgh Gold Award.

Publicity and engagement with the public

We offer membership of various WhatsApp groups related to bird sightings and other wildlife chat. We have been able to maintain interest in the Trust through news items on our website and social media.

We attended three events, Woodley Carnival, the Earth Fayre in Wokingham and the Woodley Christmas Extravaganza. These enabled us to raise our profile in the community and to make contacts with related groups.

Our Dawn Chorus Walk has held in April and the regular monthly walks also continued. We have again received several enquiries for possible corporate volunteer days.

Planned work

We hope that all the planning consents have finally been approved for building the new hide at Lea Farm Lake. Weather permitting we plan to start work late April or early May and complete the hide in the autumn, at the end of the breeding season.

We still hope to be able to use the funding from the grant from Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment (TOE), with funding provided by Network Rail to; 1) make new islands to create habitats for breeding waders and Shelduck, 2) reshape and raise the old shingle island by 16" to above summer flash flooding levels, 3) create a significant shallow water and marsh area. A biodiversity report is still needed and the work was not possible in 2024 due to high water levels.

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. In 2021, the trustees decided to build up an asset management fund by setting aside funds each year. In December 2024, this fund contained £5,500 and 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:

16/04/2025.