



2020-2021

Improving... Conservation Recreation Education

The Cotswold Water Park is a stunning wetland landscape with over 180 lakes covering an area of more than 42 square miles. It has thousands of water birds visiting each winter and received national recognition for its importance for wetland wildlife. It is a place that acts as a carbon sink; its reedbeds, woodlands and wetlands absorbing and storing carbon from human activities; a place which hundreds of thousands of people enjoy every year, improving their physical and mental well-being from recreational activities.





Introduction

Welcome to our first Impact Report which looks at our achievements for 2020/21 and our plans for the next financial year and beyond.

Despite all the challenges which Covid-19 presented during the year, I am pleased to report a financial surplus (prior to a £1.4 million property revaluation) and importantly, that we were still able to continue with our projects across the Cotswold Water Park. This included the extensive habitat management on our sites and enabling our countryside parks and nature reserves to remain open for well-being and recreational use.

and for any discussion concerning the future development of this rich natural environment. The Trust has critical roles to play in promoting wildlife, environmental sustainability and the conservation of natural capital in the Cotswold Water Park.

I am also delighted to announce that our membership has increased significantly and we now have over 1,000 members.



The Trust has made important strides in developing a clear vision for the future. Following a full review, we have updated our Statement of Purpose to better reflect our objectives yet keeping our core aims of conservation, recreation and education. During this process we also recognised the benefit of changing our name to Cotswold Lakes Trust.

Following the change of our name, we launched our own dedicated website and continue to maintain and develop the Cotswold Water Park website. The Trust aims to be the focal point for the protection and improvement of the Cotswold Water Park for the benefit of wildlife and people

A tremendous amount has been achieved during the year by a small team of staff, volunteers and Trustees and I would like to thank them for all their effort and support. The Trust has exciting plans for the future and we look forward to sharing these with you as they develop.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Hazel'.

Paul Hazel
Executive Chairman
Cotswold Lakes Trust



Improving...
Conservation



Recreation



Education

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS FOR 2020-2021



Conservation

During 2020-2021 and the challenges of Covid-19, we have continued to maintain large areas of the Cotswold Water Park which we manage.

27.5
acres of
woodland

23
acres of
reedbed

265
acres of
lakes

3,450
metres of
hedgerow

2,350
metres of
river

66
acres of
wetland

24
acres of
grassland



The extensive habitat management work that we carried out across our sites provided an improved environment for a vast array of species found in the area. These works included creating extensive rides and glades at Cleveland Lakes & Waterhay Reedbed, sensitively laying hedgerows at Cokes Pit and Shorncliffe Reedbed, re-establishing a graded structure of vegetation at the Old Railway Line and significant reedbed management.

Scarce species such as the Bittern, Great White Egret and Marsh Harrier successfully bred in the Cotswold Water Park for the first time and the Little Ringed Plover continues to flourish. The Cotswold Water Park Black Poplar Project achieved a high propagation success rate of these rare trees and protection of the area's Water Vole population continues with encouraging results along some stretches of rivers. During the year we continued to work in partnership with many landowners, mineral extraction companies, and other organisations by providing advice to them on how to achieve conservation enhancements on their land.

The collation of biological data by many hundreds of volunteers across the Cotswold Water Park, for submission to local Biological Record Centres, continues to play an important part of the Trust's work ensuring that important land management decisions can be taken with access to the most up to date information.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS FOR 2020-2021

Recreation

Cotswold Lakes Trust manages an important network of sites across the Cotswold Water Park and encourages local people and visitors to access these for appropriate recreational purposes. These include nature reserves, country parks, long distance access routes and car parks.

280
acres of
land for
recreational
use

14,445
metres of
footpaths

7
bird hides

234
acres of
Nature
Reserves

Improving public access for an increased number of visitors

The Cotswold Water Park attracted an increased number of local day visitors and holiday makers during the year. Many enjoyed using the area for local exercise during the lockdown months, improving their physical and mental well-being from outdoor recreational activities. Once Covid-19 restrictions were lifted, the area experienced a substantial increase in those enjoying domestic holidays accentuated by the restrictions on overseas travel.

Cotswold Lakes Trust has initiated partnership working with Cotswold District Council, Wiltshire Council, Gloucestershire County Council, Wiltshire Police and Gloucestershire Constabulary to try to resolve some of the various recurring public behaviour issues in the Cotswold Water Park. The aim is to reduce the impact of visitors during the busy summer

months on the Cotswold Water Park landscape, its residents and its wildlife. One of the joint initiatives, which was rolled out across the Cotswold Water Park during the summer, was the 'Enjoy and Respect' campaign which encouraged visitors to help protect this unique landscape.



OUR ACHIEVEMENTS FOR 2020-2021

Reaching out/Education

1.3
million
website page
views

400,000
website
users

70,000
leisure maps
distributed

1,000+
CLT members,
an increase
of 100%

New Cotswold Lakes Trust website

To further emphasise our identity, The Trust launched its own dedicated website www.cotswoldlakestrust.org. We continue to manage and develop the Cotswold Water Park website www.waterpark.org and social media pages as these are important communication tools for visitors to the area. During 2020, page views to the website increased by 40% to 1.3 million.

Interactive map of the Cotswold Water Park

A new online interactive map, produced with funding from the GFirst Kick-starting Tourism Fund, was added to the Cotswold Water Park website. It highlights leisure businesses, accommodation providers, nature reserves and countryside sites located within the Cotswold Water Park.

Printed Guides

The Trust continues to produce information guides such as the popular Cotswold Water Park Leisure Map and Walks Guide.

More members joining

During the year Cotswold Lakes Trust membership numbers have increased significantly from 470 to over 1,000, reflecting how many people are enjoying membership benefits including free access to our sites in the Cotswold Water Park.



Our plans for 2021/22

Water Vole Recovery Project

The Trust is very grateful to The Hills Group who continue to support the Water Vole Recovery Project and for the additional income from the Lower Mill Estate Section 106 Fund (administered by Cotswold District Council). This will enable the Trust to carry on protecting and monitoring the Cotswold Water Park's Water Vole population, which should increase numbers on stretches of rivers.

150km of new on-road cycle routes

Following a successful application to Gloucester County Council's Growing our Communities Fund, the Trust is waymarking 150km of on-road cycle routes in the Cotswold Water Park and creating a children's activity trail along the Old Railway Line.

Developing and expanding our membership scheme

Through funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Trust will be installing new membership software which will enhance communication and engagement with our members.

New play area at Neigh Bridge Country Park

The replacement of the children's play facilities at Neigh Bridge Country Park will commence in winter 2021 with funding from The Hills Group and Gloucestershire County Council's Build Back Better Fund.

Volunteer Hub at Cleveland Lakes

Thanks to support from The Hills Group, we are sourcing much needed shelter and storage facilities for our hard-working volunteers at Cleveland Lakes Nature Reserve.

Mobile information and education trailer

After the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions, the Trust was delighted to welcome back its volunteers with an Information Point cabin in the grounds of the Gateway Centre during 2021. From spring 2022, we plan to have a converted mobile information and education trailer, utilising funds raised through Crowdfund Cotswolds, which will be used as an information point at various locations within the Cotswold Water Park and as a mobile education centre touring local primary schools.

New information boards and a new circular walk

With funding from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund, we will be producing six new information boards on some of our sites, a new circular walk from Neigh Bridge and access and improvements to the Old Railway Line.

Development of water activities at Cleveland Lakes

Following a very successful Rowing Open Day at Cleveland Lakes, we will develop activities to encourage use of the southern lake for rowing, canoeing and other non-motorised water sports, ensuring that we are working in harmony with the adjacent nature reserve.





The next five years

During 2020, we welcomed four new Trustees to the Board: Barry Butler, Anne Cooper, Duncan Hall and Ed Wilson, who between them have brought conservation, fundraising, governance, project management and financial expertise. The Board of seven Trustees has created a strategic plan for the Trust incorporating a five-year financial plan and the exciting Cotswold Lakes Trust Challenge Fund Appeal.

The Challenge Fund Appeal aims to raise over £1.5 million during the next five years to enable the Trust to invest in some exciting projects. These include major improvements to The Old Railway Line, the creation of a new off-road circular cycle route, new interpretation boards at all our sites and the establishment of water based recreational and educational facilities at Cleveland Lakes. Incorporated in the plans are vital new resources including an Outdoor Education Officer, Biodiversity Officer and Recreation Officer to help develop and deliver a wide range of projects across the Cotswold Water Park.



Formed in 1996, Cotswold Lakes Trust is a registered charity.

Registered Charity No. 1120518

Cotswold Lakes Trust is governed by a Board of Trustees who oversee the work of a small team of seven staff and many dedicated volunteers based near Down Ampney in the Cotswold Water Park.



Matthew Millett
Development
Director



Ben Welbourn
Operations
Manager



Helen Hanks
Administration
Manager



Davina Stirland
Marketing &
Comms Manager



Kim Milsom
Biodiversity Field
Officer



Kieren Thomas
Ranger



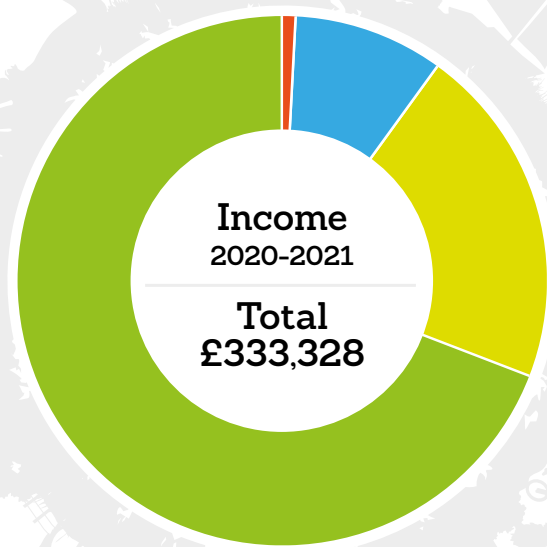
Michael Diss
Ranger

Financial Statement

This year your support has helped us fund the important work of the Trust including wildlife conservation, improving public access and maintaining countryside sites.

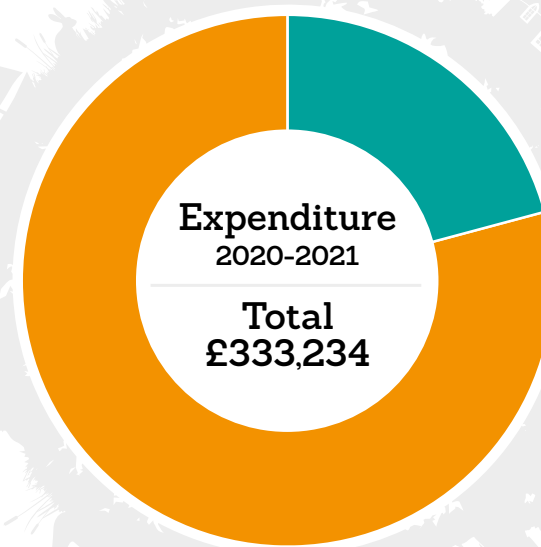


Our full Report and Accounts are published on our website www.cotswoldlakestrust.org



Income key:

- Donations
- Charitable activities
- Trading activities
- Other income



Expenditure key:

- Raising funds
- Charitable activities

Thank you...

Cotswold Lakes Trust works with a range of partners; local mineral operators, land owners, leisure providers, local businesses, councils, community groups and several statutory bodies to care for the Cotswold Water Park and ensure that conservation and wildlife are integrated into its current and future development. We would particularly like to thank those businesses who have supported us financially over the last two years:

- The Hills Group
- National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Thames Water
- Lower Mill Estate Section 106 Nature Conservation Fund
- Gloucestershire County Council Growing our Communities Fund
- Cotswold District Council Cotswold Community Fund
- GFirst Kick-starting Tourism Fund
- All our leisure business partners who generously support our fundraising activities
- Polydron
- Cotswold Lakes Brew Co.
- St. James's Place
- Vertex
- Nationwide
- Xylem
- Communisis
- Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council
- Swindon Borough Council

We would like to thank the following photographers for their use of images: David Hall, Dave Kilbey, Dave Soons, Dan Stubbins, Robert Iles, Kim Milsom, Jill Bewley, CWP Hire, Cotswold Forest School, South Cerney Outdoor, South Cerney Sailing Club, Go-by-Cycle, Cotswold Lakes Trust Rangers, Nigel Gardiner, Bowmoor Sailing Club, Cotswold Country Park & Beach.

We are very grateful to our 1,000+ members who support our work, respond to fundraising appeals and volunteer for our events.





Cotswold Lakes Trust is a charity dedicated to the conservation and enhancement of the Cotswold Water Park for the benefit of wildlife and people

www.cotswoldlakestrust.org

Follow us:

