

NEWS RELEASE – 5 October 2022

Cotswold Lakes Trust's new play area gets a giant thumbs-up

Cotswold Lakes Trust's new play area went down a storm when the gate was officially opened at Neigh Bridge Country Park in Somerford Keynes.

After a speedy ribbon-cutting ceremony, local children clambered all over the equipment. Even Gloucestershire County Councillor Lisa Spivey had a go.

"It's fantastic. We've waited so long for something like this," said Somerford Keynes Parish Councillor Mark Hastie-Oldland.

Executive Chairman of Cotswold Lakes Trust Paul Hazel thanked all those who helped fund the project, especially The Hills Group, along with Gloucestershire County Council Build Back Better Grant and local company, Somerford Consulting. "We're really proud to have been able to make this project happen," he said. "It's a great new facility which was much needed."

Group Director for Hills Quarry Products, Peter Andrew, cut the opening ribbon along with five-year-old Rose Hastie-Oldland who then made mincemeat of the monkey bars. "Hills have been operating in the Cotswold Water Park area for over 100 years and have created many of the lakes and wonderful habitats you see in this area today. We are proud to support Cotswold Lakes Trust in the projects they undertake to enhance biodiversity and community engagement," said Mr Andrew.



The play equipment was designed and built by Helen Shackleton and Lloyd Turner incorporating recycled salvageable parts from the previous playground.

Mum of four, Shirin Pawlowska, was delighted to have a place for her children to play. “We don’t have a village green or an area where kids can gather in Somerford Keynes, so this is perfect. It was worth waiting for,” she said.

Cotswold Lakes Trust plays a major role in the environmental welfare of the Cotswold Water Park – a network of 180 lakes stretching across 42 square miles from South Cerney in the north and Somerford Keynes in the west, to Cricklade in the south and Lechlade in the east.

Based in Down Ampney, Cotswold Lakes Trust is governed by a Board of Trustees (all volunteers) who oversee the work of a small team of just seven staff, assisted by loyal volunteers. It receives no core funding from central or local government and relies heavily on donations. The Cotswold Water Park is nationally recognised as a unique wetland area which is home to tens of thousands of water birds, 20,000 residents and 1 million visitors per year. ENDS

Notes to editors

About The Hills Group:

Established in 1900 The Hills Group Limited is a privately owned family company with a broad and successful portfolio of business activities which include recycling and waste management; quarrying of aggregates and production of ready-mixed concrete; and building new homes.

About Cotswold Lakes Trust:

- Cotswold Lakes Trust is a fully registered charity (no 1120518) dedicated to the conservation and enhancement of the Cotswold Water Park for the benefit of wildlife and people.
- Cotswold Lakes Trust aims to be the focal point for the protection and improvement of the rich natural environment of the Cotswold Water Park and for any discussion concerning the future development of leisure and recreation facilities and public access.
- It manages hundreds of acres of land within the Cotswold Water Park, from Neigh Bridge Country Park near Somerford Keynes to Riverside Park in Lechlade, and encourages the public to responsibly access the sites for recreational purposes, ensuring that the importance of these sites for wildlife is conserved and enhanced.
- It aims to engage with visitors, the local community, schools and universities to promote a greater understanding and appreciation of the heritage, wildlife and landscape of the Cotswold Water Park – migratory bird-life, fossil finds in the sedimentary sand and gravel, precious wildflower meadows and the Cotswold Water Park’s bio-diversity.
- Cotswold Lakes Trust has no core central or local government funding. It works with donors, charitable funds, individuals, companies and its members to ensure that the Cotswold Water Park is used and cared for in ways which will maintain it for future generations.
- It is based at Cotswold House, Manor Farm, Down Ampney, Cirencester GL7 5QF
- www.cotswoldlakestrust.org

About Cotswold Water Park:

- Cotswold Water Park is a network of more than 180 lakes in an area of 42 square miles, stretching roughly from South Cerney in the north, Somerford Keynes in the west, Cricklade in the south and Lechlade in the east.
- It has become a unique wetland landscape created after 60 years of intensive gravel extraction.
- The lakes offer a huge diversity of habitats for birds, mammals, fish and insects, plus extensive leisure opportunities for its 20,000 residents and one million annual visitors.
- In 2021 it was recognised nationally as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.
- The Park straddles three counties (Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Oxfordshire) and four local authorities.
- Within it are several environmental charities and many commercial organisations including corporate, small and medium-sized businesses. None but Cotswold Lakes Trust are dedicated to the Cotswold Water Park alone.
- <https://waterpark.org/>