




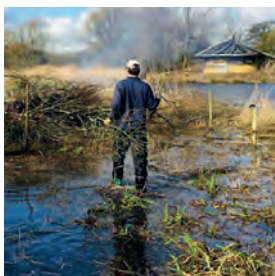
Impact Report

2021-2022

Improving...
Conservation
Recreation
Education

An aerial photograph of the Cotswold Water Park, showing a complex network of blue lakes and rivers winding through a green landscape. The water bodies are interspersed with patches of brown and green fields, and clusters of small buildings and trees. The overall scene depicts a vast, interconnected wetland system.

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.



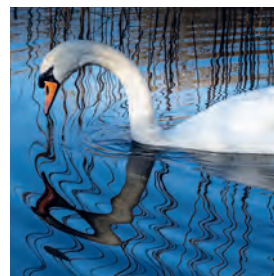
Introduction

Welcome to our 2021-2022 Impact Report which looks at our achievements for the last year and our plans for the next financial year and beyond.

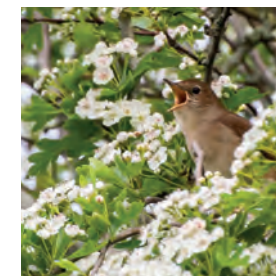
I am delighted to report another successful year for Cotswold Lakes Trust with a third successive financial surplus split evenly between unrestricted and restricted funds. The result, which has benefited from an excellent year at Cotswold Country Park & Beach and an increase in grant income, will provide a sound base for the development of the Trust in the next few years.

In February, we launched our ambitious five year £1.5m Challenge Fund Appeal to finance core projects to ensure that the Cotswold Water Park and its important wetlands landscape will become a leading and sustainable example of how people and wildlife can co-exist. As the Trust receives no core funding, the Challenge Fund will help us achieve our ambitious plans and create three new vital roles to help deliver these and other projects. We continue to strive to improve access for disabled people to allow them to fully enjoy the physical and wellbeing benefits visiting the area can bring.

We were delighted to welcome our first ever Ambassador, the transatlantic rower, Jessica Oliver and two new Trustees, Heidi Thompson and Tom Corran who between them bring new, complimentary skills to the team of eight.



Our small team manages an impressive 234 acres of nature reserves, 275 acres of woodland, 265 acres of lakes and 280 acres of land for recreational use, in addition to other wetlands, hedgerows, grassland, hides and footpaths. The team also produce useful guides, keep our websites updated, fundraise and look after our members and volunteers.



Following a very positive year, the team and I look forward to this trend continuing and we would like to thank the continued support we receive from our members, volunteers and stakeholders who collectively ensure that the Trust can continue to deliver on its core objectives of conservation, education and recreation.

Paul Hazel
Executive Chairman
Cotswold Lakes Trust





Improving...
Conservation



Recreation



Education

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS FOR 2021-2022

Conservation



During 2021-2022, we have continued to maintain and improve the large areas of the Cotswold Water Park which we manage.

The extensive habitat management work that our Rangers, with the help of volunteer work parties and corporate volunteer days, carry out across our sites continues to provide an improved environment for the vast array of species found in the Cotswold Water Park. Work has included laying approximately fifty metres of sensitive hedgerows, continued coppicing and management of over four acres of reedbed habitat at Waterhay Reedbeds and around Cleveland Lakes, and bringing invasive Himalayan Balsam back under control along the Old Railway Line and at Clayhill Meadow. Work has continued on the islands at Shorncote Reedbeds and Coke's Pit and in partnership with Mainstay Group, we have restored the pond at Bridge Car Park on the Old Railway Line.

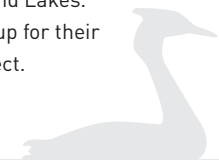
This year, we completed the two-year Shorncote to River Thames wetland connection project which enabled a series of environmental enhancements to be carried out at Cleveland Lakes and Shorncote Reedbeds, and created better ecological connections between them by enhancing parts of the Cerney

Wick Brook. We have also installed two volunteer hubs at Cleveland Lakes which now provide much-needed shelter and storage facilities for our hardworking volunteers.

Marsh Harrier, Bittern and Great White Egret all bred for the second consecutive year in the Cotswold Water Park; joining Little Ringed Plover on the list of nationally scarce species which raise families here. Three of these breed on our reserves and the harriers are regular visitors but breed at another site. An extensive Breeding Bird Survey around Cleveland Lakes revealed that populations included an impressive 387 warbler territories, whilst wintering waterbirds continued to visit in nationally important numbers.

With support from The Hills Group and Cotswold District Council we have continued our long-term Water Vole Recovery Project, protecting and monitoring the area's growing Water Vole population. Water Voles are thriving on many of our small rivers, with ongoing Mink control and habitat enhancement contributing to their spread. The Cotswold Water Park Black Poplar Project success is demonstrated by the numbers of strong, healthy, young trees which can be seen around the area; whilst ongoing advice and discussion with mineral extraction companies, plus many landowners, encourages conservation-based improvements on their land.

We successfully fundraised for the habitat management and enhancement works at Cleveland Lakes. Once again, we thank The Hills Group for their substantial contribution to the project.



OUR ACHIEVEMENTS FOR 2021-2022

Recreation

Cotswold Lakes Trust manages an important network of sites across the Cotswold Water Park including nature reserves, country parks, long distance access routes and car parks. Local people and visitors are encouraged to access and enjoy these for appropriate recreational purposes.

Improving public access for visitors and local people

During the year, the Cotswold Water Park attracted an increased number of day visitors and with restrictions on overseas travel, a greater number of UK visitors taking staycations. Visitors using our car parks increased by over 5%.

With the support from Cotswold District Council through the Contain Outbreak Management Fund, the Trust was able to create and install new information boards on five of our sites, two circular waymarked walks from Neigh Bridge Country Park and access and surface improvements to the Old Railway Line. The new information boards, located at Neigh Bridge Country Park, Lakeside, Riverside Park, Cotswold Country Park and Beach and the Gateway Centre, encourage people to utilise guided walks from these key points in the Cotswold Water Park.

Work commenced in developing 150km of on-road cycle routes and installing an activity trail on the Old Railway Line, in the form of a series of rubbing plaques for smaller children.

Further recreational improvements included the replacement of around half of the children's balance trail at Neigh Bridge Country Park.





OUR ACHIEVEMENTS FOR 2021-2022

Reaching out/Education

Cotswold Water Park and Cotswold Lakes Trust websites and social media

The Trust develops and manages two websites and six social media pages. The Cotswold Water Park website continues to be an important communication and reference tool for visitors to the area and during 2021, recorded 1.38 million page views and 460,000 users.

University and college students

During the year, we hosted eleven groups of students from Cirencester College and Royal Agricultural University and provided a long-term and short-term student ranger placement.

Mobile information and education trailer

Through Crowdfund Cotswolds, we successfully fundraised for the Beaver Bus. The converted information and education trailer will be used as a mobile information point and as an education centre touring local primary schools.

We commenced fundraising for an Outdoor Learning Officer, securing £5,000 from The Summerfield Charitable Trust towards this post.

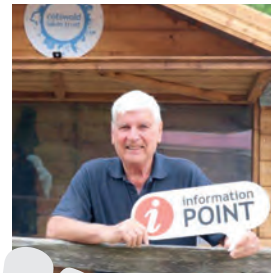
Developing and expanding our membership scheme

Through funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), we installed new membership software which will enhance communication and engagement with our members and has enabled us to offer a direct debit facility.

The NLHF funding also enabled us to create promotional videos of our sites, a film on the Trust, produce newly designed membership packs, an activities booklet for families and 1,500 promotional packs on the Cotswold Water Park. The packs were delivered to Year 6 pupils in 31 Swindon primary schools to encourage them and their families to gain the benefits from visiting the Cotswold Water Park.

Visitor Information

Throughout the year at weekends and school holidays, the visitor information volunteers, based in a cabin in the grounds of the Gateway were able to welcome and provide advice to 1,600 visitors to the Cotswold Water Park.



Our plans for 2022/23



Conservation

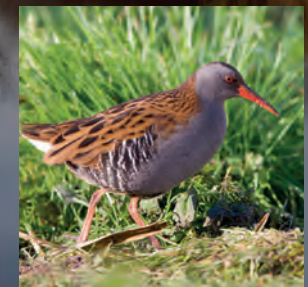
- Pond creation at Riverside Park
- Commence works on the first phase of the Old Railway Line improvement project
- Commence the delivery of habitat enhancements at Cleveland Lakes and continue the management of Waterhay Reedbeds
- Further 50m of hedge laying primarily at Shorncote Reedbeds and Cleveland Lakes
- Continue the management of Coke's Pit islands
- Enhance conditions for ground nesting birds across our sites
- Look into the feasibility of wetland scrapes creation next to Lake 85a at Shorncote Reedbeds
- Seek funding for a Biodiversity Officer

Recreation

- Open up access at Cleveland Lakes to more groups for rowing, canoeing, triathlon and other non-motorised sports and fundraise for basic on-site facilities
- Develop the Cleveland Lakes Masterplan - commence the planning process
- Continue to look for opportunities to develop an off-road cycle route around the Cotswold Water Park
- Develop a landscape masterplan for Neigh Bridge Country Park and install the new children's play facility
- We continue to explore suitable locations for circular routes for disabled access

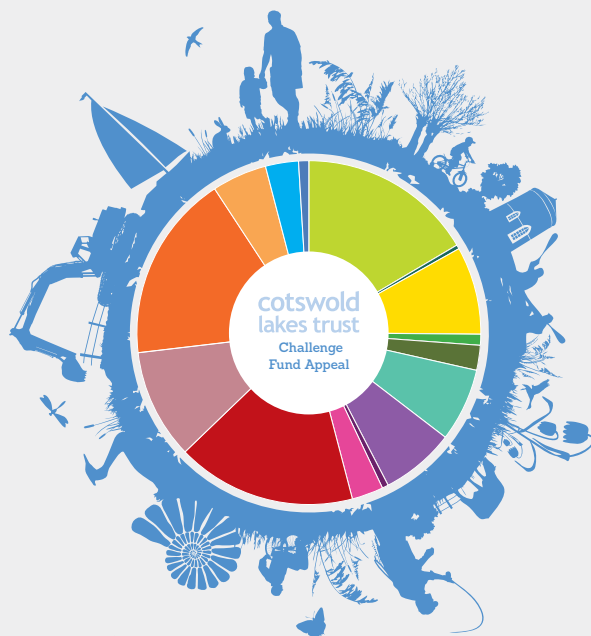
Education

- Complete the new Beaver Bus and deliver educational sessions to local primary schools.
- Seek remaining funding for an Outdoor Learning Officer



Challenge Fund Appeal

The £1.5 million fundraising programme will ensure that the work carried out through conservation, recreation and education, will help to improve the Cotswold Water Park and protect this nationally important landscape for generations to come.



Conservation

- Biodiversity Officer and Rangers (plus vehicle)
- Installation of an equipment store and Volunteer Hub at Cleveland Lakes
- Wildlife improvements along the Old Railway Line
- Ecological enhancements at Riverside Park
- Tree planting and river enhancements across the Cotswold Water Park
- Expansion on the wetland nature reserve at Cleveland Lakes

Recreation

- Recreation Officer
- Nature Reserve Guide and walking / cycling maps
- Play Area and landscaping at Neigh Bridge Country Park
- Developing Cleveland Lakes water activities centre with improved access and accommodation
- Installation of a play area and access improvements at Riverside Park
- Development of cycle routes across the Cotswold Water Park
- Better signage and picnic areas at Cotswold Lakes Trust sites

Education

- Education Ranger
- Creation of the mobile education and information trailer

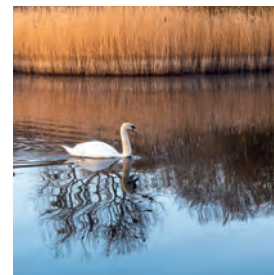
The next five years – the Challenge Fund Appeal



One of the Trust's key projects is the development of Cleveland Lakes as a major centre for rowing, canoeing and paddleboarding. As our Ambassador, Jessica Oliver will help to promote the project and is very keen to encourage participation by school children. As well as the Cleveland Lakes project, Jessica would like to support the Cotswold Lakes Trust themes of education, recreation and conservation.

This year we raised a total of [£76,807] towards our Challenge Fund Appeal projects, bringing the total raised to [£163,605] at the end of March 2022. Since the year end, the fundraising total continues to increase.

Over the next five years we will continue fundraising for the Cotswold Lakes Trust £1.5 million Challenge Fund Appeal to enable us to invest in exciting and important projects, as well as vital new resources to help develop and deliver these and other plans 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 eight 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



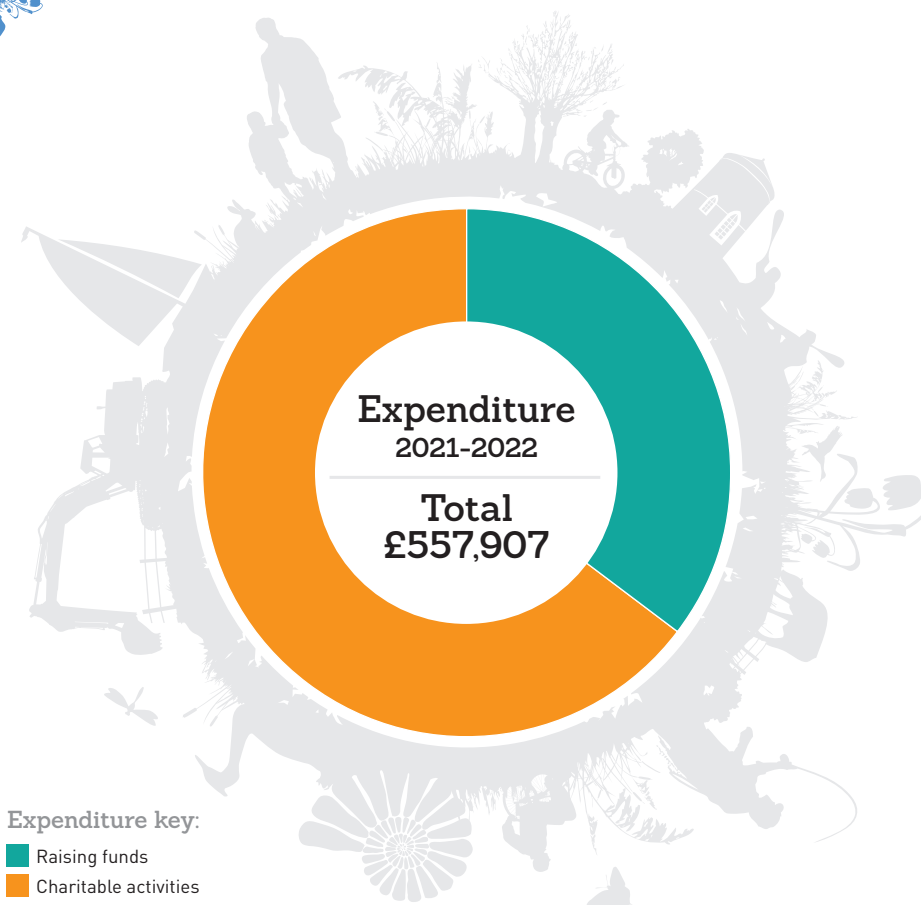
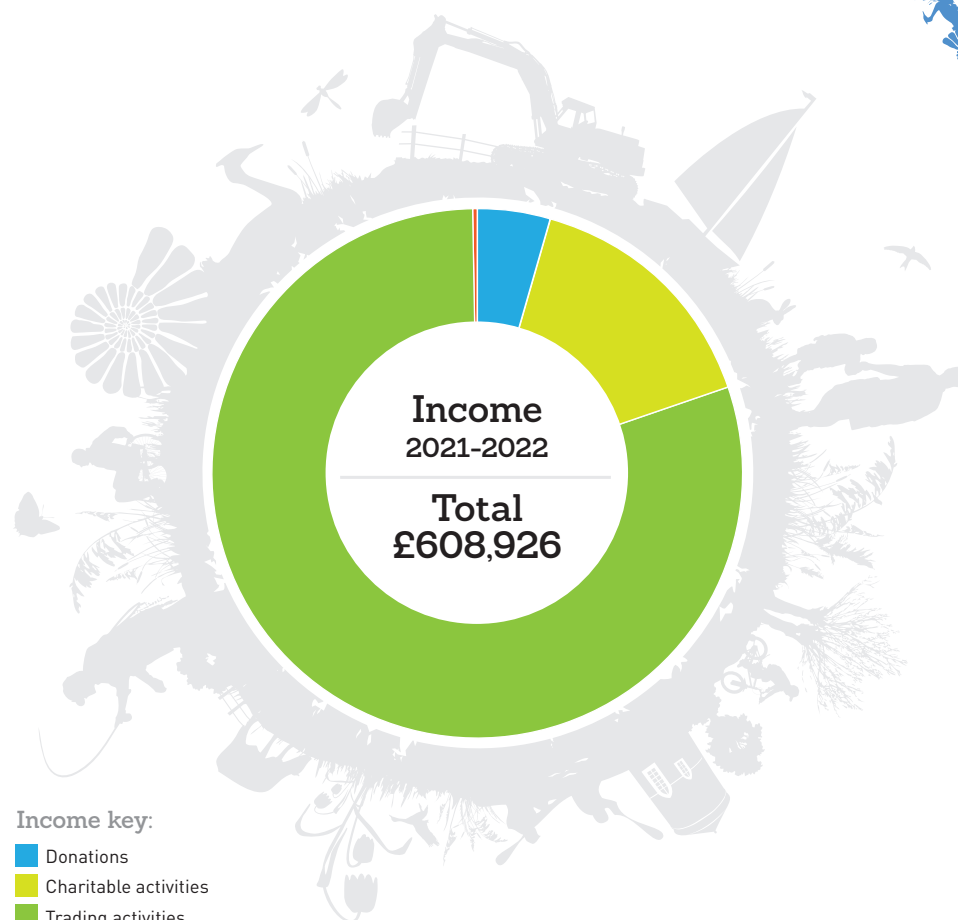
Joe Fell
Assistant Ranger

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



Thank you...

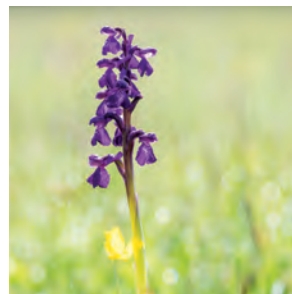
Cotswold Lakes Trust works with a range of partners; local mineral operators, land owners, leisure providers, local businesses, councils, community groups and several statutory bodies to care for the Cotswold Water Park and ensure that conservation and wildlife are integrated into its current and future 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
- Lower Mill Estate Section 106 Nature Conservation Fund
- Gloucestershire County Council Build Back Better Fund
- Cotswold District Council Contain Outbreak Management Fund
- The Summerfield Charitable Trust
- All our leisure business partners who generously support our fundraising activities
- Polydron
- Cotswold Lakes Brew Co.
- St. James's Place
- Vertex
- Nationwide
- Commercial by Nature
- Royal Agricultural University
- Cirencester College (Countryside Management course).

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, South Cerney Outdoor, Cotswold District Council, South Cerney Sailing Club, 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

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