

Friends of STOCKER'S LAKE



NEWSLETTER NO. 89 Jan 2022

Chair's New Year Message 2022 Nigel Daley

A Happy New Year to our members from us all. We finally held our AGM in early December 2021, covid having forced us to cancel it in Spring 2020 and again in Spring 2021. How marvellous it was to see so many pairs of eyes peeping out from behind a sea of face coverings. Nick Maksimovic, our grazier gave us a hugely entertaining talk on all matters to do with farming, cattle and the countryside, not to mention a few politically pointed environmental observations (both local and national). This year's AGM will take place on 11th May so be sure to visit our new updated website for further details. Many thanks to Simon for all his hard work and expertise.

Despite nearly 90% of members now using online methods for paying subscriptions and receiving notifications it frequently occurs to me that as an environmental group/charity we still produce quite a lot of paper through newsletters, envelopes and postcard reminders each year. Please let us know if you could switch to taking your newsletter and other notifications by email and be aware that on our new website all recent newsletters as well as details of all of our events (such as the AGM and work parties and walks) are now very easy to find on the website.

I am in no doubt that our £5 membership subscription is extraordinarily good value and I believe that as much as possible of the monies we receive should be used for the good of the nature reserve rather than administrative tasks. Also in the interests of maximising our income, could I ask that you add a donation to your subscription if you can and also let our Treasurer know if you are happy to allow FoSL to have the 25% tax benefits through the gift aid scheme on all the money you give us. In a similar vein, it would also be really helpful if you would arrange for your subscription and any donation to be paid to us by Standing Order.

Towards the end of last year, a planning proposal was submitted for a development on the site of the

Springwell Lake Factory at the end of Springwell Lane, beside the canal near Springwell Lock and Stocker's Lake Nature Reserve. Your committee objected on environmental impact grounds, with a loss of habitat (both flora and fauna). This is the second time that this site has been subject to a planning application, (previously in 2015) and there are a number of brownfield sites both in Hillingdon and Three Rivers that could, if developed, create a detrimental impact on the reserve. We would ask you to be the 700 pairs of eyes and ears for the reserve and please do get in touch with me if you hear of anything that may need FoSL's careful consideration. We look forward to seeing you on the Reserve in 2022.

New FoSL Website

www.fosl.org.uk

Simon Jones Webmaster

We are delighted to announce our new FoSL website which went live in early January. A simpler structure with several new features accompany a brand new look with more, higher quality images.

New features include:

- support of videos for the first time. Currently there are three. Others will be added over time, eg. when new offshore camera footage becomes available.
- other new content – eg. an archive of FoSL newsletters (on the News page) and a downloadable walker's guide and map (on the About/Visit page)
- a 'phone-friendly' design. The new site reformats itself automatically to optimise use of varying screen dimensions on different devices. Try it!
- various back-end enhancements to make it easier for us to keep the site current and to process new joiner applications.

The new site design owes a lot to feedback from our members' survey last summer in which we invited

Friends of Stocker's Lake is a registered charity No. 1080501. It aims to support conservation at Stocker's Lake Local Nature Reserve.

www.fosl.org.uk

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comments on how the old website might be improved. Our thanks again to everyone who contributed.



Thank you also to everyone who has contributed photographs to the new site. Particular thanks to Giles Lury who generously allowed us to pick a lot of images from his wonderful “A man, his camera and a lake” website and blog (<https://gileslury.wixsite.com/my-site-1>).

Why not browse our new website and all its features? If you are receiving this newsletter electronically simply click on [this link](#). If you are reading a paper copy you will need to type www.fosl.org.uk. Once you have familiarised yourself with the new site - visit it again regularly to keep yourself up to date on news, events and recent sightings.

New YouTube Channel

Alongside the relaunch of our website we are launching a brand new FoSL YouTube channel. This works in tandem with our website by acting as a repository for FoSL videos, however it can also be browsed in its own right and used to view a range of videos, not just those featuring on our website. Eg. you will find offshore camera clips from our herons’ 2019, 2020 and 2021 breeding seasons.

To access our YouTube channel you can either [click here](#) (if reading this newsletter electronically), or click on the YouTube icon in the footer section of any page of our new website or else open YouTube and type “Friends of Stocker’s Lake” into its search engine.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Further details and updates will be on the website

<https://www.fosl.org.uk/upcoming-events>

February

Sunday 6th Work Party 0955 hrs
Check location with Jack Westbrook or website

Sunday 20th our 2nd Wildfowl Walk
Meet at the Causeway seat 1000 hrs

March

Sunday 6th Work Party 0955 hrs
Check location with Jack Westbrook or website

Sunday 27th Heron and Egret Watch
Meet at the Causeway Seat 1300 hrs for directions to viewing location. Finish circa 1600 hrs

April

Butterfly survey begins plus the wildflower count in the cattle meadows

Sunday 3rd Work Party 0955 hrs
Check location with Jack Westbrook or website

AGM 11th May, Mill End Baptist Church, Rickmansworth See our web site for further details.

Committee Members/Contact Details

Nigel Daley Chairman	07921 650322 chairman@fosl.org.uk
Dick Beeden Treasurer & membership	0208 4219958 treasurer@fosl.org.uk
Jack Westbrook Lead Warden	07716 296093 warden@fosl.org.uk
Larry Hurst Fundraiser, Publicity	07831 767420
Simon Jones Website	07799 477902 webmaster@fosl.org.uk
Linda Ascroft Events organiser	07791 971323
Susan Thomas Newsletter editor and Data Protection Officer	susanethomas@ btinternet.com
Russell Ball Assistant Warden Membership recruitment	07884 426671
Bob Sherren Assistant Warden Cattle Lookers	07929 394120
Steve Carter Wildlife recorder	07917 796976 Text preferred
Nicola Pazdzierska Assistant Warden	

Work Parties

10 to 1230 hrs. Meet at 0955 hrs. Meeting points vary month by month according to the work being planned so any members wishing to volunteer who do not receive a monthly invitation should check with our Lead Warden, Jack Westbrook in the first instance. warden@fosl.org.uk

REPORTS

AGM

The AGM held on Wednesday 1st December at Mill End Baptist Church, Rickmansworth was well attended and was followed by an excellent talk by Nick Maksimovic our grazier. The minutes can be seen on our new website.

<https://www.fosl.org.uk/s/AGM-2021-minutes.pdf>

The next AGM will be held at the same venue on 11th May.

Hedge Laying Course

Bob Sherren

A hedge laying course was led by Alex and Anna from HMWT and attended by several of our members and committee. A report and photographs can be found on the website. [Hedge Laying Course - Dec 2021 — Friends of Stocker's Lake \(fosl.org.uk\)](#)

Tern Raft

Dick Beeden

The new tern raft was launched at the beginning of April and was used by the terns as we had hoped. Consequently we have ordered a further one from KK Mouldings, a boat builders in Ely, and Affinity water via HMWT are paying for another. Come the spring we hope to have two more rafts out on the lake.

Cameras

Dick Beeden

The nest cameras out on the island performed well again this year. I am awaiting an update on the annual maintenance as to whether we will have the 4G mobile connection up and running this year to link in with the web site.

Recruitment Day (RD) 24 October 2021

Russell Ball Recruitment Officer

<https://www.fosl.org.uk/all-events/recruitment-day-oct-2021>

Helped by our Dexters and many willing members 20 new members were signed up. A full report and more photographs can be found on the website.



Work Parties

Three very productive work parties have been organised by our Lead Warden, Jack Westbrook and comprehensive reports are on the website. 7th November, 5th December and 2nd January.

<https://www.fosl.org.uk/all-events/wildfowl-walk-09-01-22>

A Disappointing Year for Butterflies at Stocker's Lake

FoSL's 2021 Butterfly survey report is just in. Unfortunately it makes for depressing reading with the second lowest count recorded since our surveys began. Periods of sustained heavy rain on and off through the spring and summer were undoubtedly a factor, but worryingly at a national level across the UK there appears to be a continuing decline in overall numbers of butterflies and moths. A full report can be seen on our website. <https://www.fosl.org.uk/s/FoSL-Butterflies-Report-2021.pdf>

Stocker's Lake Bird Report 2021

Thank you to Steve Carter for his comprehensive report and many photos which can be seen on the website. <https://www.fosl.org.uk/s/Stockers-Lake-Bird-Report-2021.pdf>

SUBSCRIPTIONS AND MEMBERSHIP

Dick Beeden Treasurer

It is that time of year again. I would urge you all to renew because in the main it is your £5 subscriptions (no change again this year) and donations that enable us to continue our good work on the reserve. Without it our work would be severely restricted. Membership runs 1 January to 31 December each year and

technically the renewal date is 1 January unless you are among the 200 or so members who now pay by standing order, in which case your renewal date is the date of your standing order. Whilst I am happy to receive money at any time of the year, renewing early in the New Year would save me from jogging your elbow later on. Your renewal form is either with this newsletter or will follow shortly. May I urge you to use the standing order facility on your bank account as it will save both you and me work in the long run and avoid me sending you those irritating reminders. The banking details are the same for all on line payments:

Standing Orders or one off payments namely:

Account Name: Friends of Stocker's Lake
(It is likely your system will check this)
Account number: 73219968
Sort Code: 20-91-79
(It is a Barclays account)

Please, please, please use your surname and postcode as the reference. Otherwise it can be tricky for me to match the payment to you.

For most of you, no doubt the greatest benefits of membership are to have somewhere local to walk among nature's wonders and know that you are doing your bit to help preserve the habitats of the many plants and creatures that call Stocker's Lake home. It has also, of course, been one of the few pleasures permitted during these strange lockdown days. Clearly, many of you have done just that as membership has gone up again for the second year running despite the restrictions on what we have been allowed to do at the lake.

Membership numbers are important. The bigger our organisation, the more influential we can be. Big business, local and national governments tend to ignore one person speaking for themselves; but if that person is speaking for hundreds, they are more likely to hear that voice and act. Stocker's is always under pressure and the position has changed little in recent years. 40 years ago, it was the M25, now it is cutting the track for HS2 and the effect that could have on the water in the area. Land is still wanted for yet more housing, not to mention the latest planning application for flats on the land currently occupied by the light industrial units on your right as you enter the reserve at the Springwell Lane end of the reserve and the warehouse proposals just along the river at Maple Cross look as though they will go ahead. Both Three Rivers and Hillingdon have already identified 3 large pieces of land close to our reserve as possible sites for

housing. We will, of course, voice our views and objections as strongly as possible. We would like to think that all of you are behind us. So please everyone, make a special effort to renew and help to make our voice heard and heeded. And while you are at it, why not encourage friends or other family members to join?

Report from CW Wildlife Rescue Caring for Hedgehogs

Are you aware of the wonderful work done by CW Wildlife Rescue, a charity based at Stocker's Farm which is adjacent to the reserve? FoSL recently made a donation to support the work done there and an interesting report of their activities with hedgehogs appears on our website.

<https://www.fosl.org.uk/news-blog/caring-for-hedgehogs-at-nearby-cw-wildlife-rescue>

**Any hedgehog out in daylight is almost certain to be in need of assistance.
If you find a hedgehog in need, put it in a box and keep warm in a quiet place. Don't feed it and contact CW Wildlife Rescue on 07508 819197 who will be able to advise you.**



Leaving a Lasting Legacy

**If you enjoy nature, a legacy can ensure the future of our wonderful reserve.
Please consider leaving a Gift to Friends of Stocker's Lake in your Will. There are inheritance tax advantages of leaving a legacy to a Charity.**