

The background features a light blue sky with a large white sun and a branch of autumn leaves in shades of yellow and orange. Below the branch is a white rectangular box with a black border containing the newsletter's title and subtitle. At the bottom left, there is a cartoon illustration of a brown beaver.

THE POST

LMEHA NEWSLETTER

—

LIFESTYLE - NEWS - FUN



November 2021

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Welcome to the Autumn issue of the homeowners newsletter and we hope you enjoy reading it.

This is the place to share good news, reviews, tips and local services, or if you notice something interesting around and about the estate let us know.

Please send your reviews and news and we'll include it in the next newsletter.

We publish 3 newsletters a year – May, August and November. Please send copy to:

Tony & Catherine Graham at:

cgraham770@gmail.com

or drop us a hard copy in at 64 Mill Village – thanks!



Chairman's Letter 1/3

Hello,

Welcome to the LMEHA Autumn 2021 Newsletter. Autumn is a wonderful season in a place like Lower Mill, observing the changes in the nature and the colours of the trees is always special.

Just as life in general and the estate have been returning to normal the Association has been able to be socially active again. The Summer Festival was a great success and it was good to see so many members enjoying the events and mixing with fellow homeowners. Big thanks to Stuart for organizing the event and for everyone who helped. Also thank you to Habitat First Group who again sponsored the event. We were also able to make a donation to two deserving charities from the proceeds from the festival – SARSAS (Somerset and Avon Rape and Sexual Abuse Support) and SSAFA (the Armed Forces Charity).

Building the community spirit is a key aim of the Association and we will be staging more events in the near future. This will include a trip to Gloucester Rugby, photography sessions and visiting a local vineyard. Baliwoo have also just recently launched a series of homeowner only evenings (and a breakfast) which is an ideal opportunity to meet fellow homeowners – see more details later in this edition.



Chairman's letter 2/3

One topic we are discussing with the landlord is how we could create a bar/social club for homeowners, watch this space for ideas and suggestions. For me one of the benefits of being at LM is being able to meet so many interesting people.

We are always keen to have new events and if anyone has an idea for a new event please do not hesitate to come forward. I am pleased to report that we have had a steady influx of new members. However, we are always keen to welcome new members into the Lower Mill Homeowners community so if you have a new neighbour, please tell them about the Association.

In October we launched Flexy, an App that allows people to order local produce for delivery to their home on the estate, the goal here is to enhance the experience of members and their guests by being able to source local Cotswold produce easily and conveniently. The Association does receive a small commission on Flexy sales.

I would just like to politely remind members that the Lower Mill home insurance policy created by member John Dunn

john.dunn@lukerowe.com



Chairman's letter 3/3

I think we are all well aware of the parking challenges on the estate particularly at peak periods. This has been raised with both the Estate Management and HFG and several ideas and options are being evaluated. Hopefully more news soon

Climate Change is certainly a hot topic as I write and HFG have started their Carbon Zero Project. Initially studies are being conducted and recommendations will follow. I am sure there will opportunities identified for improvements at Lower Mill. HFG recently received recognition from the Guardian for this initiative <https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2021/oct/29/10-of-the-best-travel-companies-committed-to-climate-action>

This can only be good for the value of our properties.

The next LMEHA committee meeting is in December and if there are estate wide topics and issues that members would like to raise, please contact me at secretary@LMEHA.com

As this is our last newsletter for 2021, I would just like to thank everyone who freely gives their time energy and expertise to keep LMEHA a growing thriving Association and to wish all our members and their families the compliments of the season and best wishes for 2022.

Graham, LMEHA Chair



LMEHA Rural Sub-Committee

Update from - Hilary Collins and Fiona Galbraith

The *Lower Mill Estate Landscape and Ecological Management 2017-2021*, “the Ecology Plan”, is a requirement of LME’s planning consent. Under the guidance of Habitat First Group’s Ecologist, the plan details the annual actions by the Estate Manager and his grounds crew to support and improve our wildlife habitats. The next iteration is currently going through a statutory approval process. Your committee has made suggestions to address noted deficiencies and we are looking forward to seeing the new document when it becomes available.

The plan also requires wildlife monitoring to be conducted as a measure of effectiveness of the plan and of overall impact of the development and we continue to press for greater visibility of these trends too.



LMEHA Rural Sub-Committee cont'd

Generally, we have been focussed on the following matters:

- regular clearance and maintenance of spillways
- adding culverts to prevent footpath flooding
- improving footpath signage
- balancing homeowner's requests to cut reeds with maintaining important nest sites for bird species in decline
- encouraging greater understanding and appreciation of the Estate's ecology by homeowners, agents, guests, young people and children, through a range of no and low-cost measure
- gaining greater clarity in the employment of the grounds team and ensuring that their activities are correctly ascribed to the service charge.

The rural subcommittee recently resumed a programme of quarterly meetings with the Estate Manager to re-establish an effective two-way flow of information.

Any-one wishing to contribute or raise matters for consideration at these meetings is welcome to contact Hilary and Fiona via the committee.



New Committee members

We have had several new volunteers join the LMEHA Committee – here's an intro to 2 of them:



Jo Felstead

Jo and husband, Steve, have owned their Clearwater house since 2005. Over the years it has provided a welcome escape from work and city life. Jo is a regular early morning swimmer at the spa and enjoys getting out and about on the Estate and surrounding countryside by bike and on foot.

Jo joined the Committee in 2021 having recently retired from a career in finance and project management. She is keen to help build on the community spirit and sustainable enjoyment of the leisure facilities that makes Lower Mill a special place to relax and unwind.

Nicola Blackmore

Having visited for a family holiday we fell in love with Lower Mill and purchased a resale on Clearwater in 2020. I live with my husband Stephen, our 2 little girls Isabelle and Isla and our old Westie Ralph, and look forward to visiting as often as we can for family holidays. Whilst my girls are young we do not need school holidays so will be renting our house out during peak times and will enjoy visiting when the estate is quieter. I am currently the membership secretary and encourage every homeowner to join. I look forward to making friends with other residents through the committee social events and will host events when I can.





WILDLIFE NEWS & UPDATE

Autumn is here, already offering some stunning sunrises and sunsets over the lakes. Such a wonderful time of year with lots of wildlife activity as our overwintering species arrive and our resident species are busy fattening up for winter. At this time of year the hedgerows are full of the berries and nuts providing wonderful colours and a great 'larder' for our birds and mammals.

Our summer breeding bird surveys recorded 19 different species definitely breeding on the Estate (not including waterbirds). There were another four species probably breeding too, giving us a total of 23 species with 187 territories (nest sites) between them. Strangely, this is more species and territories than were recorded last year when lockdown gave us a much quieter environment. On Swillbrook Lakes there were 19 different species recorded as breeding in 64 territories. As part of the Section 106 planning commitment we are required to monitor numbers of Reed warbler and Reed bunting separately to show that we are not having a negative impact on these species. Both these species rely on our reed beds for survival. This year we had territories of both of these lovely little birds throughout the inner Estate with Clearwater and Howells Mere being hotspots.

WILDLIFE NEWS

- cont'd



On the wider Estate the southern and western ends of Somerford Lagoon were of most importance to both species.

Really excitingly a Bittern was spotted again over summer. These brilliant birds bred in the Cotswold Water Park for the first time last year. These birds suffered a huge decline due to loss of suitable reed bed from the 1970s onwards. Reeds and reed beds are vital habitats for so many bird and invertebrate species and managing them sensitively helps our wildlife and helps us meet our planning commitments. Everything crossed that Bittern will breed at Lower Mill one day soon.

As you will know COP26 is currently in full swing, highlighting the global ecological and climate crises. As the most nature depleted of the G7 countries, the UK has a long way to go to reverse the damage we have done over the years. We now need to do more than ever for nature as it underpins everything we rely on in our daily lives. At Lower Mill Estate we are doing what we can to help reverse this decline, while creating better places for people and wildlife.



WILDLIFE NEWS

- cont'd

Since the last update, in a boost to nature recovery, all 177 lakes covering 2,000 hectares of the Cotswold Water Park (CWP) have been given Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) status. Natural England feel the CWP is a leading example of how people and nature can thrive together. This is a great boost for the CWP, Lower Mill Estate, and to the Nature Recovery Network.

Cont'd over.....



WILDLIFE Question corner

Question Corner

In each newsletter, this space will be used to answer a couple of your wildlife questions. Please send any questions to Catherine Graham (editor) at cgraham770@gmail.com

who can select if too many submitted, and then send on to me.

Question -

“Swans seem to gather on Flagham Fen from Autumn onwards. Do they migrate here from somewhere else and then return, or are they here all year round and just not in groups?”

Answer -

The swans seen in large flocks at Lower Mill are Mute swans. These winter flocks are made up of those birds that are staying in their summer territories (i.e. those that breed at Lower Mill) being joined by other birds that have travelled short distances to join them. In very cold weather some Mute swans may migrate from Europe to the UK but they largely stay in the East of the country. Our flocks get together on Freeth Mere and Flagham Fen as we have a good supply of aquatic weed and invertebrates for them to feed on over winter.

WILDLIFE

Question corner

cont'd



Question -

“We took this photo a few weeks ago in Mill Lake. We think it’s a crayfish but what type is it? And are they an invasive species on the estate?”



[pic Tony Graham]

Answer –

This is an invasive Signal crayfish. This species was introduced to the UK for commercial purposes in the 1970s. It quickly escaped into our waters and is now widespread. Much larger than our native White-clawed crayfish they outcompeted them for food and habitat and also brought with them the crayfish plague to which our native species are susceptible. There are now very few populations of the native species left in the UK, while the Signal crayfish proliferates and causes damage to our river banks through erosion and bank collapse.

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WILDLIFE

Question corner

cont'd



The crayfish lay several hundred eggs which stay attached to the female. When the young hatch they remain attached to the female while they go through several moults, before becoming free swimming Photo shows female with eggs.

The good news is that our otters love eating these Signal crayfish so you will often find large red pieces of shell (carapace) in their spraint (droppings) if you're brave enough to have a close look.

We are also trapping these crayfish (under licence) to try and keep numbers down and they are being turned into delicious dishes in Ballihoo!

Dr Phoebe Carter

Chief Ecologist

pcarter@habitatfirstgroup.com

W: www.habitatfirstgroup.com



[pic Bob Iles]



Homeowners Reviews – Dragonfly Cafe

Anyone who has explored the many trails of the Cotswold Water Park will know it's teeming with wildlife. However, have you ever noticed fish bones, including the vicious jaws of some large pike, or the disseminated remains of crayfish exoskeleton, scattered along the shores of the lakes or river banks, and wondered how these remains came about? The culprit is our native otter. These wonderful but elusive animals are making a steady comeback across the UK and are now common across the Cotswold Water Park – much to the frustration of the fishermen from the local angling clubs. We've all probably seen the odd otter in a zoo / animal sanctuary but how about in the wild? Well now is a chance to see one during your stay at LME.

A short walk from the estate is the **Dragonfly Café**, on the Lower Moor Farm Nature Reserve. (See map over). The café serves up delicious cakes and coffees on a decking overlooking Cottage Lake. If you arrive early you may be rewarded with the sight of a mother otter and her three kits frolicking in the lake in front of the café during the early morning mist rising off the lake.

A wonderful sight and a great experience adults and children alike.

Review by Andy Mortimer

Dragonfly Café-map & workshop

Open Wednesday - Sunday 10am-4pm all year round.

Serving fresh homemade soup and scones and cakes from a local bakery every day. All produce is locally sourced.

SPECIAL XMAS WREATH WORKSHOP

“Make your own festive wreath using traditional methods and sustainable natural materials at Dragonfly Café Lower Moor Estate”

Date - December 16th at 10.00- 13.00 / Price - £50.00

Tickets and more information from:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/christmas-wreath-workshop-tickets-198871759787?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>





The Pusser's Review

**The Gilbertine Kitchen
Priory Court, Poulton
Cirencester GL7 5JB**

Not to be confused with Guillotine - nevertheless, you are expected to use the cutlery. The location is a good base for some local walks. The loop through the farm, then the village, takes about 50mins with a stop at the Church to seek forgiveness for the sins of the cake-fest. The return to the café provides reward enough for the calories expended.





The Pusser's Review cont'd

Waterside Kitchen and Bar
Wickwater Lane, Cirencester, GL7 5RL

Who has ever heard of “Pod” dining before COVID, where diners are seated inside a large plastic umbrella? Nevertheless it works perfectly as a shelter for our wet days. The Japanese style sushi and European style small plates provide good social eating. Thankfully, the plates are more filling than they look and it is conveniently located a short distance from the Lower Mill Estate.





The Pusser's Review cont'd

Coffee @ Odd Socks
Elliott Rd, Love Lane Industrial
Estate, Cirencester GL7 1YS

Well...the Pusser's daughter wears odd socks - apparently it is a thing. The café's title therefore made us curious. It is an open and airy venue in the heart of the industrial estate. A good choice for breakfast or a coffee when forced to visit Cirencester for those DIY essentials in the nearby Wickes. They make a good coffee – and despite the chocolate powder advertising it doesn't taste of socks .



PLAY. GRAZE. LAZE.

Balli
Hoo

Update from Matt F&B General Manager

- **HOMEOWNERS EVENTS**

We've had the first few homeowners gatherings at Ballihoo and we'd like to say thank you to all those who came along. We were pleasantly surprised to see more than predicted turn up and it felt like they were very worthwhile. For those who attended, I really hope you felt the same. Please do feel free to email with any comments - we have 2 more left in November on the 9th and 16th so please do. email msiadatan@habitatfirstgroup.com to book. More events will be announced shortly!

- **HOMEOWNERS CLUB**

We are now launching our homeowners club with the following form: [Owners Ballihoo Club \(google.com\)](#) By filling out this form, you will receive your 10% homeowner's discount and you will also begin to accumulate points every time you spend at Ballihoo. £1 will equal 1 point, and we all know what points mean Prizes!!! We aim to thank you for all your support going forward, so the more you support us, the more we will give back. A perfect partnership! Once you have filled out this form, when booking a table online, just leave a note in the booking notes stating 'homeowner' and we can find you on the system upon arrival, or if you're simply popping in for a coffee, just let one of the staff know who will put your order onto your tab so your points are accumulated.

PLAY. GRAZE. LAZE.

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Hoo

Update from Matt F&B General Manager

- **CHRISTMAS and NEW YEAR AT BALLIHOO –**

We are open as follows:

Xmas Eve: 9am to 4.30pm

Xmas Day: Closed

Boxing Day: 9am to 4.30pm

December 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th normal hours

December 31st 9am to 3.30pm then 6pm NYE Party. Booking essential.

Please join us at Ballihoo for New Years Eve ... we are asking everyone to arrive at 6pm for welcome drinks then the food will be served from 7pm and last dish going out by 9.30pm, then we relax, turn up the music and become a bar led evening having fun, cheer and see in midnight together for all those who aren't knackered and need to put the kids to bed of course! However, all kids welcome and maybe just for one night they can stay up late with the grown-ups!

Email msiadataan@habitatfirstgroup.com to book.

PLAY. GRAZE. LAZE.

Balli
Hoo

Update from Matt F&B General Manager

- **DECEMBER 23rd** Some of you may know Bob. Bob does everything on the estate including tending to Ballihoo allotment, working with the grounds team in keeping the estate looking amazing, a keen photographer with his material being used on all our social platforms and much more. He is also a member of the local brass band, so on the 23rd December he is coming with his band to play some Christmas songs for one and all. The band will arrive from 6.30pm to 8.30pm and we will be giving out song sheets for one and all. We will be doing jacket potatoes, mulled wine, mince pies and other Xmas treats. No bookings necessary, just come along and join in the fun. We are imagining a massive group sing along, under the stars and Bob's brass band will be placed under the stretch tent for all to see.
- **CHRISTMAS DAY** If you are with us for the big day, why not consider letting head chef Paul and his brigade take all the hard work out of Xmas Day? Contact us to order our Ballihoo Christmas Order Kits. Essentially, we will source, prep and almost serve your Xmas lunch to you. Christmas lunch, restaurant quality, zero effort, maximum satisfaction. It's a game changer!

Matt Siadatan
F & B General Manager



Local events



The Friends of Somerford Keynes Church - Christmas Concert

Continuing in the long traditions of these Concerts we are delighted to welcome the Guildhall School Of Music String Quartet playing Vivaldi's "Four Seasons" and more

Somerford Keynes Church

Saturday 4th December at 7 pm (mulled wine and mince pies from 6.30 pm)

Please come and support the Village Church at this festive time, as always the Church will be dressed for Christmas, candle lit and will provide the perfect start for the Christmas season.

Tickets are £15 per adult and £5 per child and are available, in advance from Dave Crofts (861658) davecrofts@msn.com

or Sussanne Lock (861250) sussannelock@hotmail.co.uk



Local events

20th - 28th November CIRENCESTER

The 2021 outdoor Christmas Markets kick off on November 20 with a weekend-long Christmas market. The return of the popular Advent Festival takes place on November 27 and to finish off the weekend, a Christmas Arts and Crafts Market is scheduled for Sunday, November 28.

BARN
theatre



Spectacle of Light at Sudeley Castle

Selected dates from Friday 26
November - Thursday 30
December 2021



Tetbury Christmas Lights & Festive Market

Friday 3 December 2021
Lights switch on, market and an
evening of festive delights.





Fun for next year

Something to think about for next year?

We'd love to get a couple of tables going – happy to organise it, so if you're interested contact me cgraham770@gmail.com

St. George's Day Ball and Gala Evening **Saturday, April 23rd 2022** **De Vere Cotswold Water Park Hotel, South Cerney**

A full programme of Gala entertainment including a
sumptuous 3-course banquet
The Band of Her Majesty's Royal Marines
The Flag and Ribbon Dancers of the Divine Company
Mini Proms
Dancing to the Royal Marines Dance Band and Disco
Grand Auction
.....and more!

Tickets: £80 each

Seating at tables of 10 or 12 for individuals, couples or groups

Dress code: Black tie or uniform. Red & white theme preferred but not essential

Doors open 6pm for call to dinner at 6.45pm. Carriages 1am



News from Cotswold Lakes Trust

Some news from CLT.....

New cycle routes

The six new on road cycle routes, funded by Gloucestershire C. Council's Growing Our Communities Fund are due to complete later this year. The proposed new routes covering a combined distance of 150km, together with a family activities trail on the Old Railway Line, are being waymarked mainly for proficient cyclists on quiet lanes and roads across the eastern and western sides of the CWP. Cyclists will be guided using downloadable maps, a series of way markers and/or a printed cycling guide.

Mobile information and education trailer

The Trust is delighted to have reached its funding target through Crowdfund Cotswolds for the mobile information and education trailer and would like to thank Cotswold District Council, Lower Mill Estate, Polydron, Relish Festive, Lake Pochard Management Co., 41 Mill Village and all the generous individuals who donated. The trailer will be purchased and converted during the upcoming winter months and is expected to be ready to use from spring 2022. Cotswold Lakes Trust Membership

Membership

Cotswold Lakes Trust now has over 1,000 members. Membership is only £18 per year and if you would like to join, please see:

www.cotswoldlakestrust.org/membership

Membership entitles you to discounts in the CWP and free parking in all Cotswold Lakes Trust car parks. More importantly, you will be helping to protect the outstanding biodiversity and wildlife in the Cotswold Water Park.