



THE POST

LMEHA NEWSLETTER



LIFESTYLE - NEWS - FUN



June 2022

Hello and welcome to the June edition of **THE POST** – our LMEHA newsletter.

The next newsletter will follow in September so please send us anything you wish to include by the end of August. This could be a review, a wildlife question, a good news story, a new club, or a suggestion of what else you'd like to see in our community newsletter.

Catherine & Tony Graham
cgraham770@gmail.com

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

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Message from our Chair

Welcome to our June 2022 Newsletter.

Life at Lower Mill is certainly picking up a pace, with the pandemic hopefully behind us we've had two busy holiday weekends and the Jubilee Weekend is just ahead and then the summer! The estate has been very busy which is good but not without its challenges. The estate is looking great thanks to our hard-working Estates Team.

The association has also been very active. We recently held our AGM; this is a good opportunity to reflect upon the progress of the association. The association's activities are varied and diverse, they range from organising a series of social events, to keeping close track of the Service Charge. In between, LMEHA has a series of community activities, this newsletter and the website being good examples, opportunities for members such as home insurance and flexy. Last but not least, LMEHA represents homeowners to the estate management, HFG, the Parish Council and Cotswold District Council.

At the AGM we welcomed Neil Smith to the committee, Neil is going to start our Renting sub-committee. This is an integral part of life at Lower Mill and if anyone would like to join this sub-committee, please let us know.

On the same weekend we held our Annual Charity Duck Race which was a lot of fun despite the cold weather. We also had a members rugby trip to Gloucester to see them play Bath which although being a bit one sided (64-0) treated us to some excellent tries. The Chairman's drinks held after the AGM was as usual a very pleasant evening.



Message from our Chair – cont'd

I am pleased to advise that Annie McKeown has volunteered to manage the LMEHA website. A big thanks to Annie and to Fiona and Mike Cordy for managing our website for a long time.

The Rural Group goes from strength to strength with weekly walks organized by Hilary Collins attracting a loyal group of nature lovers. The Sustainability/NetZero group is gaining momentum and definitely something for the future. The Photography Group also recently started their activities and the Cycling Group also ventured out into the countryside. LMEHA has a lot going on!

We now look forward to summer at Lower Mill. Hopefully the weather will co-operate and we can enjoy long days in our pleasant environment.

Preparations are already under way for our big event of the summer, the LMEHA Summer Festival – August 26-28th

As with any association we look forward to welcoming new homeowners into LMEHA, so if you have a new neighbour, please tell them about LMEHA and encourage them to join us.

Have a great Summer,

Graham

LMEHA Chair

LMEHA Membership

We are always looking to recruit new members to the LMEHA and will do doing leaflets and a revised welcome pack.

If you have a new neighbour, please encourage them to join:

- They can learn about LMEHA on our website, www.lmeha.com
- They can join by completing the [online membership form](#)

See over for some of the many benefits of joining our community

Lower Mill Estate Homeowners Association



Membership Benefits

- ★ **Representation** We provide constructive representation to the Landlord.
- ★ **Cost Control** We scrutinise the service charge and advise on spending priorities.
- ★ **Community** We build community spirit and provide homeowner support.
- ★ **Information** We share Estate and Local knowledge.
- ★ **Social** We run fun social events including the annual LME Festival.
- ★ **Buying Power** We pool our collective buying power to negotiate discounts.

Membership Pack from Secretary@lmeha.com

LMEHA - social and clubs

LMEHA Photography Club

The new LMEHA photography club held its first meeting in May and agreed to meet on the 2nd Sunday of each month from around 10.30am to 12 O'clock.

We will be doing a mix of taking photos, editing, and learning. The group is suitable for people of any level of experience.

If you would like to join, [registered here](#)

We are starting to share photos in these albums:

•[Action](#)

•[Landscape](#)

•[Macro](#)

•[Night](#)

•[People](#)

•[Wildlife](#)

Mike McKeown

LMEHA Website

Annie McKeown has now taken on running the **LMEHA website**, with technical support from Mike McKeown.

If you have any suggestions for content or navigation, please email annie_mckeown@hotmail.com, annie_mckeown@hotmail.com

www.lmeha.com



LMEHA Rural Sub-Committee

The subcommittee meets regularly with the estate management to facilitate two-way communication related to the wider and wilder aspects of the estate. Much of the ecology-related work is done during the autumn and winter months, whereas in spring and summer the ground crews are focused on flower bed maintenance, grass cutting, fencing, painting, and other general maintenance activities in communal areas.

Things to report include:

- Last year wildflower seeds were collected from Swillbrook meadow and used to encourage wildflowers on meadows throughout the Cotswold Water Park.
- The dipping pond near Pikes Corner was expanded.
- A large wood chipping project was completed, with the resulting mulch available to homeowners, and to be used throughout the estate.
- Tree cutting and clearing to install an otter fence on the privately-owned Lake 65 (between Mill and Farmhouse Lakes) has been halted by Natural England, until at least July 2022 so that they can discuss permissions with the owner.
- Maintenance will be conducted on our three bird hides. Homeowners are encouraged to help reduce maintenance costs by closing windows and doors after using the hides.

LMEHA Nature Club

The LMEHA Nature Club, launched in March 2022, has proved very popular. In its first ten weeks, the club held eleven nature walks, with a total of eighty participants (homeowners, and their families or friends). Forty-six homeowners attended one walk or more.

The leisurely walks were informal, collaborative, and fun. We socialised, helped each other identify birds and their songs, swapped stories of beaver, otter, and other wildlife sightings, and discussed useful nature-identification apps and other resources. Walks were up to three hours in duration and between two to twelve people attended.



LMEHA Nature Club – cont'd

Many of the walks explored different (and new-to-some) routes through our beautiful wider estate. Tony Spooner led a wonderful walk when participants saw/heard eight warbler species (Willow, Sedge, Reed, Cetti's, Garden, Blackcap, Whitethroat and Chiffchaff), had great views of a Cuckoo, were surrounded by feeding House Martins, Swifts, and Swallows, and spent time on their hands and knees finding tiny Orange-tip Butterfly eggs and caterpillars on cuckoo flowers. An excellent way to spend a rainy morning! Steve Dobson led a glorious sunny morning foray, when participants were treated to great views of hovering kestrels, and a barn owl hunting and repeatedly delivering prey to its nest box.

Other walks went further afield to explore nearby trails and nature reserves. A walk to the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust's Lower Moor Farm complex saw participants wowed by fields of Green-winged and Early Purple Orchids at Clattinger Farm, and refreshed by a stop for yummy cakes and coffee at the Dragonfly Cafe. Sue Forsyth, Barbara Valentine, and Ally Wells organised an amazing visit to North Meadow National Nature Reserve/SSSI in Cricklade, a biologically important, traditional hay meadow with 500,000 rare Snake's-head Fritillary flowers blooming in April/May. Unfortunately a walk organised by Sally Rugg around Somerford Keynes was cancelled due to bad weather.

LMEHA Nature Club – cont'd

Club members also collaborated by suggesting walks, volunteering to lead walks, and working out logistics and car sharing. Thanks to all for jumping in to give the club such a great start. Thanks also to homeowners who responded to the Nature Club Survey, circulated in early April. Your input was, and will be, invaluable.

Next steps for the club include: setting up a steering group, arranging some walks with expert guides, and continuing to have fun, informal walks on different days and times so that as many homeowners as possible can participate, and so that we get to see and learn about nature in all its shapes and forms.

Look out for an early morning walk, and a moon-lit walk coming soon!



LMEHA Nature Club – cont'd

How can homeowners help protect nature?

LME is a sanctuary to many insect, mammal, and bird species whose numbers are plummeting for a variety of reasons.

The breeding season is a crucial time and homeowners can help by:

- Using established paths around the estate, and keeping dogs away from lakesides and long grass, to avoid disturbing, often-hidden, nests. A third of British bird species nest on the ground – RSPB.
- Making sure outdoor cats are well-fed, and have a bell on their collar to reduce predation on birds, mice and voles. Sonic collars are also available. Keep your cat indoors when birds are most vulnerable: an hour before sunset and an hour before sunrise, especially between March and July and December-January – RSPB.
- Growing nature-friendly, LME-approved, plants in gardens, and avoiding pesticides or weedkillers through having a more tolerant attitude to “weeds” – plants in the wrong place.
- Switching off night-time lighting when not needed so as not to attract moths and other insects.

Hilary Collins



WILDLIFE UPDATE from HFG ecologist

By now I'm sure you've all seen that our dragonflies and damselflies have started emerging. With this, we have seen the Hobby arrive at Lower Mill. This wonderful little falcon comes all the way from sub-Saharan Africa and can be seen catching dragonflies and damselflies in rapid flight and eating them while on the wing. The best places to spot them are over Somerford Lagoon, Freeth Mere and Flagham Fen.



Photo of Hobby in flight (credit Richard Tyler).

WILDLIFE UPDATE cont'd

So far it doesn't look a good year for the House martins (again). House Martin Conservation UK & Ireland says that as well as habitat loss, climate change is impacting on these wonderful birds. The expansion of the Sahara desert is making their migration longer with little in the way of food or water on route. Weather patterns have become much more erratic and extreme weather more frequent with strong winds and heavy rain causing bird fatalities, while drought can prevent hatches of important invertebrate food they rely on. We are creating a new large muddy puddle in Millstone car park. We will keep this wet all summer to provide nesting material for the birds. You can help too by simply filling something like a dustbin lid with mud and clay, popping it on your lawn and keeping it wet over the summer.

We are in the process of repairing the weir on the River Thames as it is about to collapse. The area surrounding the weir has been cleared of vegetation under the guidance of an ecologist with a specific water vole licence. This has been done to temporarily displace the voles so that we can carry out the works without harming them. All habitat will be reinstated once these essential works are complete. We have already provide a special water vole bank in the nature corridor in Minety Lake which we hope will be used one day as the water voles move from the Thames and around the lakes. Keeping lovely, lush bankside vegetation is essential to encourage this movement.



WILDLIFE UPDATE - cont'd

The Cuckoos have been calling in Swillbrook Lakes and a Bittern is being seen more regularly on Somerford Lagoon. Both of these birds are of conservation concern and their presence at Lower Mill is really exciting.

We will be carrying out our wildflower monitoring in Pike Corner later in the summer to see effective the goat grazing has been. We are also collaborating with the Glorious Grasslands team from the Cotswolds AONB to harvest some wildflower seed from Pike Corner which will be used as part of their exciting and ambitious 3-year project to create the largest network of wildflower-rich Jurassic limestone grassland in the country.

In June our new Ecology Assistant James will be starting at Lower Mill. James will be keeping an eye on all our wildlife and habitats as well as setting up some interesting wildlife walks for both yourselves and guests. We will keep you posted on all events.

Dr Phoebe Carter MEnvSc

Chief Ecologist

pcarter@habitatfirstgroup.com

W: www.habitatfirstgroup.com

WHAT'S NEW AT BALLIHOO

Hello homeowners of Lower Mill. Hope all is well and you're all looking forward to the new summer season, which is approaching rapidly!! I want to thank you for all your continued support and engagement with Ballihoo.

TEAM MEMBERS

We are finding our feet with new team members. You may have noticed lots of new faces; it's been a joy to grow and progress the team since Covid has eased and life is slowly getting back to normal. Last summer, we were lucky enough to be introduced to some of your family members who were keen to join our team over the holidays. This year, we want to extend that pool of talent, so if any of your family members want to work with us whilst staying at Lower Mill we'd be super interested to hear from them. We are looking for energetic, happy and humble humans eager to be part of the Ballihoo community. It's also a great opportunity to formulate friendships within the estate. Please email me at msiadataan@habitatfirstgroup.com

FOOD

We launch our new summer menus at Ballihoo in mid-June. There's an abundance of British seasonal flavours & colours ready and waiting for you, and the Ballihoo allotment is producing some fabulous produce too! We look forward to welcoming you over the summer so you can sample the delights in store!

We have had our new pizza oven installed which produces authentic, hand-stretched, stone-baked pizza, using natural wood fire to heat. The online click and collect service (order through our website Ballihooclub.com) is live! This is open every weekend (12.00-21.00) and then every day in peak season. You can also order our homemade frozen meals on this too!

HOMEOWNER CLUB

Homeowner's breakfasts/dinners will be commencing every last Thursday of the month, the first one Thursday 30th June. We can't thank you enough for your support to date on this. More details to follow soon.

We are collating your details as homeowners so we can honour your 10% discount plus, as you spend with us, build up points. These points will turn into prizes when you hit certain benchmarks. If you haven't already, fill out a form or email me and I'll email you a form to fill out and return.

Thanks and really hope to see you soon.

Matt & the Ballihoo Team



Go to the website - [The Cotswolds Experience](#)

The [flexy](#) website enables you to access and organise deliveries of high quality, locally produced food and drink.

From [bbq meat boxes](#), locally produced [beer](#), [fresh fruit & veg](#), wine and [spirits](#). Enjoy all the Cotswolds makers and local businesses have to offer! You can even book a private chef to cook the perfect dinner party or organise a mobile [spa treatment!](#)

THE COTSWOLDS EXPERIENCE

Enjoy all the Cotswolds makers and local businesses have to offer and more!

Enter **LMEHA30** at checkout for **30% off** your first order





LOCAL EVENT - Mosaic Making Workshop

The Dragonfly Café are planning a **Mosaic Making Workshop** on Saturday 16 July. This will be run by a local artist, with sessions from 11-3pm on Sat 16th July.

Details are as follows:

- No prior knowledge or experience needed to enjoy it
- Will help people make small coaster sized mosaics with designs of dragonflies/bees/beetles/flowers etc - keeping it wildlife themed
- Magnets will be provided so people have the choice of making their creations into magnets.
- It will be ticketed through Eventbrite at £6.50 a ticket (look out for posting which will be available nearer the date)
- The workshop will run across 3 sessions, throughout the day – e.g. slot at 11am, then 12:30 etc.
- Groups will consist of about 8 people
- The workshop will be suitable for children of 5+ with the help and supervision of an adult



LOCAL EVENT - Footie



Cirencester Town FC

9 h · 🌐

👍 Like Page

To celebrate the 20th Anniversary since we moved to The Corinium Stadium we will be hosting a special game to mark the occasion.

Ciren Town Legends

V

Manchester United Legends

Saturday 16th July 2022

15.00pm





LOCAL EVENT - Gala Ball

This is a really fun event that raises a good amount for charities.

We already have one LMEHA table of 10 people booked – at current date there are still some tickets available.

Contact Cotswold Lakes Trust via the details below to buy tickets.

Cotswold Water Park | 2022

BALL



Sparkling Wine
Reception

3 Course Dinner
with Wines

After Dinner
Entertainment

Charity Auction
and Raffle

Dancing to the
Curious Little
Big Band

Black Tie

Saturday 15th October 2022

De Vere Cotswold Water Park Hotel

Ticket Price: £70
Table of 10 £650

Tickets can be bought online at www.cotswoldlakestrust.org or www.waterpark.org or contact CWPBall@cotswoldlakestrust.org
DISCOUNTED OVERNIGHT ACCOMMODATION AT THE DE VERE HOTEL, SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY

Cotswold Lakes Trust is a registered charity 1120518