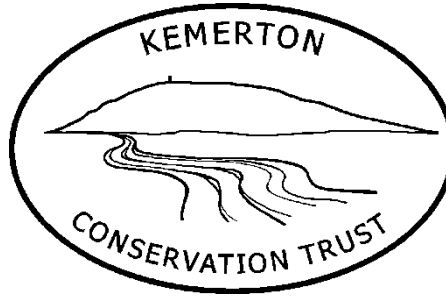


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Construction of Water's Edge Hide at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve - Final Report 25th July 2016

Project Background

Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve is a 46.5 acre (18.8 ha) wetland complex created out of a former gravel working, situated between the villages of Bredon, Westmancote, Kemerton and Kinsham. There are approx. 10000 residents within 2 miles of the reserve. The reserve is a designated Local Wildlife Site, and has a diverse range of habitats including a 16 acre (6.5 ha) lake, pools, seasonal wet scrapes, reed beds, grassland, and land specially cultivated for arable plants. The lake is well known locally as a birding spot with a wide range of waterfowl throughout the year as well as other wetland birds using the reedbeds and other habitats. A public footpath runs along the western edge of the lake and many visitors enjoy the views from the path. However, the maturing reed beds (a BAP habitat) are gradually blocking the view and in a year or so the lake will not be visible from the public footpath, which will stop many visitors from being able to experience the lake's wildlife and lovely views (see Appendix A – Photo Montage, photo 1).

In 2014 the Trust decided that in order to continue to allow visitors to enjoy the view and get closer to the birds and other wildlife on the lake, a new hide was needed on the western bank of the lake. This new hide would be directly accessible from the public footpath and would sit over the water at the end of a 40m boardwalk which would cut through the reed beds (see Appendix B – Site Plan). The boardwalk and hide would allow visitors to walk through the reed beds before entering the hide and accessing unhindered views across the lake. It would allow nature lovers to get views of wildlife including Great Crested Grebe, Wigeon, Teal, Pochard, Mute Swan and Heron on the open water and Reed Warbler, Reed Bunting and Cuckoo in the reed bed. It would also allow us to encourage the reed beds to expand as part of our long-term site management.

There are two hides already on the site; the West Hide and the East Hide. The West Hide, which is directly accessible from the public footpath allows visitors views over the scrapes and the north edge of the lake, but again, the maturing reed beds are now obscuring views of the open water as the hide is set back some way from the lake itself. The East Hide is situated at the east end of the lake and is accessible from a permissive path. This hide, which sits on the lake bank, enjoys great views of the eastern end of the lake but it is quite a long walk to reach it and many visitors cannot or

do not walk that far to use the hide. The permissive path is for pedestrian traffic only and no dogs are allowed in order to protect the wildlife so dog walkers can only use the public footpath. For many visitors, being able to view the lake and wildlife from the public footpath is the only way they will see it, so the planned new hide would allow those visitors to continue to enjoy the reserve to the fullest in the future.

Initial project scoping began in early 2015 and by June we were ready to begin fundraising. The project budget was £23026.10 (see Appendix C - Outline Budget), with a fundraising target of £20,526.10. The balance of £2,500.00 was to come out of the Trust's own reserves. Over the next six months seven applications for funding were made and five were ultimately successful. A total of £18,000.00 was received from the following organisations; Welcome to Our Future through the Severn Waste Environment Fund (£8,000.00), Bredon Parish Council through the New Homes Bonus (£4,500.00), Garfield Weston Foundation (£3,000.00), Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust (£2,000.00) and a funder who wishes to remain anonymous (£500.00). Although this was short of the original target, in January 2016 the Governors made the decision to proceed with the project, with the shortfall being covered by additional Trust funds.

Project Aims

The aim of the project was to build a wonderful new amenity for visitors to Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve to offset the loss of views across the lake from the public footpath as a result of maturing habitat.

Project Plan

The project would include the clearance of a small area of reed bed on the western edge of the lake to allow the construction of the boardwalk and hide. In addition to the boardwalk and hide, new fencing would be erected to form a pathway from the public footpath to the lake edge and the start of the boardwalk. The fencing would include two gates to allow vehicle access to cross the path, which is vital for the site management. An interpretation board would be designed and erected in front of the hide to educate visitors on the wildlife of the site, and this would also incorporate a map of the reserve. Once the hide was completed, an official opening ceremony would be held and the new amenity would be publicised through local press and through our website and newsletter.

The project would involve our volunteer Support Coordinator Kate Aubury, our volunteer Warden John Threadingham and our work party volunteers (these are a group of volunteers who meet once a month to carry out habitat management on the Trust's reserves). For this project, Kate would manage the project including all fundraising and publicity, the work party volunteers would spend a day clearing the site in preparation for the hide installation under John's supervision and John would also erect the new fencing and interpretation board.

Overview of Works

The hide was due to be constructed in late April when water levels would be lower than in winter but before the main bird nesting season. In preparation of this, John and the work party volunteers spent a morning clearing a section of the lake bank in late March. Reeds and bramble were cut back to create a 3m working width for the construction path (see Appendix A – Photo Montage, photo 2). In addition to the work party, John

and an additional volunteer, George Day, spent another day finishing cutting the reeds in the water from a boat along the full 40m length of the planned boardwalk. They also measured the actual water depth (original estimates having been based on the nearest clear water about 10m along the bank). It was found that in places the water was over 1m deep, which was deeper than estimated prior to the original quotes being requested. Our chosen contractor Gilleard Bros was contacted and the quote increased by £900.00 (inclusive of VAT) to account for deeper piles and the necessity of using a raft to cope with the deeper sections. Work also started on the design of the interpretation board in March, with Kate mocking up the outline artwork and a designer finalising it and preparing it for print.

The construction company were booked to begin erection of the hide at the end of April but we were forced to delay the works when a pair of swans took advantage of the newly cleared channel through the reeds and built their nest there in early April (see Appendix A – Photo Montage, photo 3). After estimating the eggs would hatch the last week in May we rescheduled the hide construction for late June and crossed our fingers that the swans would successfully hatch their young and leave the area in time. All project funders were notified of the unavoidable delay.

On 29th May our warden observed the swan pair and two cygnets on the open water, so the build was given the green light for 13th June. The week before the works began, our warden John and volunteer George Day cut the reeds again as the delay had allowed them to grow back somewhat (see Appendix A – Photo Montage, photo 4). The workers from Gilleard Bros arrived on 13th June and the boardwalk and hide were completed within a week (see Appendix A – Photo Montage, photos 6, 7 and 8). The boardwalk was extended by 2m during construction to ensure the hide sat on the edge of the reed bed as planned. The construction was supervised by Kate through regular site visits and she signed off the finished building on Thursday 16th June, making her and her daughter Lottie the first people to enjoy the wonderful views from the newly completed hide (see Appendix A – Photo Montage, photos 9-13).

Once the hide was erected, John completed the new fencing connecting the existing public footpath to the new boardwalk path (see Appendix A – Photo Montage, photos 14 and 15), the interpretation board was printed and erected on site and all works were completed by 30th June.

On 16th July the hide was officially opened by Kate, following a speech by Trust Chairman Adrian Darby, with representatives from the funders, local councillors, Trust Governors, members and volunteers among the invited guests (see Appendix A – Photo Montage, photos 16-22). A press release was issued to local press about the project and the Grand Opening and photos and an update posted on our Facebook page.

Project Results

All works planned were carried out successfully by end of June 2016, with the Grand Opening held in July. The project therefore ran 2 months over schedule but this was an unavoidable delay as it is illegal to disturb nesting birds. The delay was kept to a minimum and did not have any major impact on the successful delivery of the new hide.

The project ran over budget by £932.42. This was mainly down to the £900 increase to the hide and boardwalk costs due to deeper water necessitating deeper piles and a

change to working methods by the contractor. The costs of the additional 2m of boardwalk added during construction was absorbed into this at no extra charge. The balance of £32.42 was in respect of delivery charges for the new interpretation board and door sign as the original budget had failed to include a cost for this. The budget overrun has been covered by Trust funds.

Overall the project has been successful and the original aims were met. The response by visitors to the reserve since the hide officially opened has been extremely positive and the hide will be a wonderful resource for visitors for many, many years to come.

The Future

The 'Construction of Water's Edge Hide at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve Project' has now officially finished and all funds have been spent. However, there will be some ongoing management in the form of reed cutting and maintenance of the boardwalk which will continue into the future. The Trust will use our volunteer warden and volunteers to carry out annual maintenance as required, with the small cost of wood treatment being covered from our general funds.

Acknowledgements

Kemerton Conservation Trust would like to thank our generous project funders, Welcome to Our Future through the Severn Waste Environment Fund, Bredon Parish Council through the New Homes Bonus, Garfield Weston Foundation, Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust and an anonymous funder, without whom this project could not have been carried out.

We would also like to thank all those who assisted in the delivery of the project, including Support Coordinator (and project supervisor) Kate Aubury, Warden John Threadingham, volunteer George Day, volunteer David Aubury, our work party volunteers, Chairman Adrian Darby and Governor Matthew Darby. All of these contributed their time in a voluntary capacity and helped make the project a success.

Appendix A: Photo Montage

Photograph Copyrights: Lorraine Demir (14), David Aubury (11, 16, 18) Kate Aubury (all others)



1. Planned site of hide before work commenced, March 2016



2. Volunteers clearing the channel through the reed bed, March 2016



3. The swan nesting in the newly cut channel, April 2016



4. New reed growth in the channel during nesting delay, May 2016



5. Re-cut channel after nesting complete, June 2016



6. Construction starting onsite, June 2016



7. The team from Gilleard Brothers Ltd in front of the hide, June 2016



8. The newly finished hide, and boardwalk June 2016



9. First bird photo from the new hide; a Little Grebe, June 2016



10. The female Swan & her cygnets on completion day, June 2016



11. Kate Aubury with daughter Lottie in the hide, June 2016



12. View of Water's Edge Hide from the North bank, June 2016



13. View from one of the side windows in the hide, June 2016



14. John Threadingham erecting the new fencing & gates, June 2016



15. The completed fencing & access gates, June 2016



16. Adrian Darby welcoming attendees at the opening, July 2016



17. Kate Aubury officially opening Water's Edge Hide, July 2016



18. John Threadingham with volunteer George Day at the opening



19. Attendees at the opening enjoying the views from the new hide



20. Matthew Darby chatting to opening attendees on the boardwalk



21. The hide door signs acknowledging our funders, July 2016



22. Adrian Darby leading opening attendees on a tour of the reserve

Appendix B: Site Plan



Title	Date	Scale	OS data based on 1:2500 Land-Line or 1:25000 Mid-scale with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. © Crown Copyright
Site Plan	2015	1 : 1,000 @ A4	

Appendix C: Outline Budget for Proposed Bird Hide at Kemerton Lake Nature Reserve

Capital Expenditure 2015/16

Item	Net Cost	VAT	Total Cost	Notes
3.6x2.4m Hide with 40m Boardwalk incl. all materials & labour	£18,559.00	£3,711.80	£22,270.80	Quotation from Gilleard Bros based on site visit & specific requirements
New fencing from public footpath to start of boardwalk incl. 2 gates to allow vehicle access to lake edge	£301.00	£60.20	£361.20	Approx. 10m of fencing x 2 required to form a path from the public footpath to the lake edge & start of boardwalk. Will need to include a galvanised steel gate & 2 strainer posts on both sides as vehicle access is required for habitat management of lake edge
2 x Galvanised Steel 12ft Gate	£147.00	£29.40		Part of fencing costs
2 x Gate Furniture	£20.00	£4.00		Part of fencing costs
4 x Strainer Post	£40.00	£8.00		Part of fencing costs
8 x 5.6ft round post	£24.00	£4.80		Part of fencing costs
Single Galvanised Wire 50m	£30.00	£6.00		Part of fencing costs
Wire netting 25m 600mx25mm	£40.00	£8.00		Part of fencing costs
Prepare site for hide construction incl. cutting back reeds	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	Labour will be provided as an in-kind donation by KCT's warden & volunteers
Fence & gate erection labour	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	Labour will be provided as an in-kind donation by KCT's warden & volunteers
Design new interpretation board	£200.00	£0.00	£200.00	8hrs design work by local designer DJ Computing & Design + initial design work carried out as in-kind donation by KCT's Support Coordinator Kate Aubury
Print new interpretation board	£137.00	£27.40	£164.40	A1 Acrylic/Glass sign - re-using existing metal lectern to save costs (Greenhouse Graphics - full colour cast vinyl panel)
Acrylic Sign for front of Hide	£24.75	£4.95	£29.70	A 400x200mm sign with the name of the hide, date opened & a list of grant funders (Archer Signs - 3mm Rigid PVC with 4 holes)
			£23,026.10	

Ongoing Maintenance Costs (to be covered by KCT)

Clearance of vegetation from boardwalk/access area	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	This will be carried out annually by our volunteer warden and our volunteer work party This will be carried out as required by our volunteer warden - not anticipated to be necessary in first few years as the hide will be built over open water
Cutting back reeds round front of hide	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	This will be done every 5 years by our volunteer work party - assumes 4 tins of creocote
Painting the hide & boardwalk with wood preservative	£40.00	£8.00	£48.00	at £10 per tin
Sundries incl. paint brushes & disposable gloves for volunteers	£20.00	£4.00	£24.00	Cost ever 5 years This cost will be covered from the funds raised every year by our Friends of KCT membership. On average each Friend gives £10 per year so less than 2 membership donations will be required to cover ongoing maintenance costs.
Annual Costs			£14.40	