

AUTUMN 2006 NEWSLETTER

AN UPDATE FOR THE RESIDENTS OF
HANLEY CASTLE AND HANLEY SWAN

“The Pond Issue”



Hanley Swan village pond has been the subject of much debate, interest and concern over the summer months due to the murky water and loss of bank-side vegetation. The Parish Council has had a meeting at the pond with Wade Muggleton, Senior Wider Countryside Officer of Worcestershire County Council, when we sought his advice as to the cause of and possible solutions to the problem. Wade was most helpful and informative and sent us the following report which was included in the September issue of the Parish Link:

“The pond on the green is undoubtedly the centrepiece of the village and has no doubt attracted people from near and far for centuries. However, external factors can bring about changes in ponds and in recent times Hanley pond has undergone considerable change. Whilst feeding the ducks might seem like a harmless family activity, it is actually detrimental to both the ducks as well as the water. Bread is not a natural component of a duck’s diet and is not good for their health. It is also detrimental to the pond as the un-eaten bread falls to the bottom of the pond, rots and releases excess nutrients into the water, resulting in green mucky water in which natural pond plants can no longer survive. We would therefore ask residents and visitors alike not to feed the ducks. “

Following this advice, notices were displayed by the pond and elsewhere

around the village asking people not to feed the ducks. Unfortunately, however, these were removed within a few days of being posted and the duck population remains excessively high.

From the information we have been able to gather, it is evident that we have two choices, with the number of wildfowl present being the deciding factor:

- (1) We can allow the situation to continue with an unnaturally high density of wildfowl leading to a continuation of the problems experienced over the summer — murky water, the loss of vegetation and other pond life, and bank erosion.
- (2) We can reduce (by natural means!) the population of the wildfowl by ceasing to feed the ducks and geese. This will bring an improvement in water quality and allow us to re-establish vegetation, such as water lilies, (which were always an attractive feature of the pond) and allow other pond life to regain a foothold

Quite obviously, we don't want to ban wildlife altogether from our pond! However, if we stop feeding the ducks, the population will drop to a level that can be sustained by the food available naturally. The result — in conjunction with some repair work — will be that the condition of the pond will return to what we would all like to see. We think that the choice is clear and the way forward is up to you!

Bank Erosion



The pond in December 1998.....and now

The pictures say it all — just look at how the bank is now half the width it was: most of that erosion has taken place over the last couple of years. Wade Muggleton agreed with the Parish Council's concern over this and his report included the following comments:

“Erosion of the pond’s banks is now considerable. With so many ducks on the pond, vegetation has little chance to establish and so with nothing to bind them together the banks quickly erode into the pond.

We are planning to hold a few village work days in the autumn/winter when staff from the Worcestershire County Council’s Countryside Service will instruct local volunteers on how to use living willow revetments to stabilise the banks.

This technique is eco-friendly as well as a creative skill that can make for a great days activity”.

The first two days work have been arranged for Friday 1st. and Saturday 2nd. December, starting at 10:00 a.m., so if you would like to learn this skill and lend a hand in securing the future of the pond, please come along on either (or both!) of the above days.

Do you want to save your pond?
Do you want to learn a new skill?

If so, come along to the pond on
Friday 1st. and/or
Saturday 2nd. December
from 10:00 a.m. onwards

Learn how to make and help install living
willow revetments to stabilise the banks
of the pond

PARISH COUNCIL CONTACT INFORMATION

Hanley Castle Parish Council meets on the third Thursday of January, March, May (AGM), July, September and November at Hanley Swan Village Hall: meetings start (usually) at 7:30 pm. All members of the public are welcome at these meetings, though they will be allowed to address the council only before and after the meeting unless otherwise invited by the Chairman.

Our Council comprises:	Telephone
Sue Roberts (Chairman)	592686
Tony Atkinson	310408
Anne Ballinger	592812
Ann Davies	310861
Francis Harcombe	310740
Margaret Norris	310786
John Taverner	310460
Ian Thompson	310716
Associated officers:	
Ann Canham (Clerk)	310366
John & Margaret Quibell Smith (footpaths)	310578
David Cheale (Tree Warden)	310233
Sue Adeny (MHDC Councillor)	310440
Mary Wilkinson (MHDC Councillor)	593704

Comments and contributions from parish residents are welcomed on any subject to do with our community. The Parish Council is very conscious of the cost of producing and distributing this newsletter and the methods of so doing will be under constant review.

If you would be prepared to receive it in electronic form either by email or by downloading it from our website, please let us know — this will help us to keep production costs to a minimum.

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