

COPYTHORNE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – TUESDAY DECEMBER 8TH 2020

Item 10. Splitwind Pond Maintenance Programme

Firstly, I would like to use the opportunity afforded me by this report to advise members that for the sixth consecutive year the PondNet Survey conducted by the Freshwater Habitats Trust has detected the presence of Great Crested Newts in Splitwind Pond.

At our October 2020 meeting I reported on the issues that affected our ability to carry out the full programme of winter maintenance work that was approved following reports at our October 8th 2019 and November 12th 2019. As members will recall these works were based on the Splitwind Pond Management Plan drawn up some years. The relevant extract is below. The full plan can be found via the following link:-

(<https://www.copythorne.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/splitwindpondmanplan.pdf>)

Activity	Frequency	When	Details
Grass cutting	To be carried out three times per year	May August November	Mow a 3 foot strip of highway verges, all of main triangle at road junction and other grass areas
Clear pond vegetation	2 x in one year	October November	Pull any bulrush (<i>Typha latifolia</i>) growing in pond centre and northern edge. Control other plant growth within main body of pond by manual means. Hand pulling, digging out or raking. Non-native species such as Australian swamp stonecrop (<i>Crassula helmsii</i>), New Zealand pygmy weed and parrots feather (<i>Myriophyllum aquaticum</i>) should be removed as much as possible and discouraged from colonising the pond.
Tree pruning	As and when needed	October - January	Prune back overhanging branches. Cut back limbs to allow light and prevent leaf fall into pond
Strimming	To be carried out three times per year	August November March	Strim slope side to pond edges to height of 100mm. All of area behind pond (North side) 100mm. Taking care not to clear young tree growth and around cherry trees (<i>Prunus avium</i>)
Leaf collection	Leaves cleared after leaf fall	October November December	Leaves should be collected and removed from edge and road side grass strip

As reported at our meeting on October 13th 2020 I had asked our pond works contractor (Catts Tree Care) to cut, chip and remove the strong regrowth of the Goat Willow around the pond. To progress this work I have obtained a quote of £108 (inc. VAT) and asked the contractor to schedule the work as soon as possible. A date is still awaited.

With regards to the clearing of the pond vegetation itself (which has also seen stronger than usual growth) I have discussed all of our previously proposed works with the Consultancy Manager of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. She has confirmed that the works are appropriate and advises that we should be able to remove half to two thirds of the vegetation. She also advises that we should leave the vegetation removed on the sides of the pond for a couple days before removal and composting. This will allow any creatures inadvertently removed with the vegetation to return to the pond.

Last year, two quotes were obtained for the works required. The responses (ex. VAT) were as follows:-

	QUOTE 1	QUOTE 2	
1. Grass Cutting	£ 45	£ 50	
2. Clear Pond Vegetation	£240	£450	
3. Pruning	£ 60	£ 75	
4. Strimming	£ 45	£ 50	
5. Leaf Collection	£ 45	£ 75	
Total	£435	£700	
ALL IN ONE PRICE	£391.50	£600	(Cont'd./....)

(...Cont'd.)

We awarded the contract to the provider of Quote 1, Catts Tree Care, who as previously reported, due to factors outside of their control, were unable to undertake the work during the permitted period allowed for works to ponds with Great Crested Newts.

Given that Catts Tree Care has a strong history of successfully undertaking work at Splitwind Pond I have asked them to re-quote for the required five items of work as detailed above.

(NOTE:- As the Responsible Financial Officer of the Council I am satisfied that on this occasion my actions are within our Financial Regulations, in particular 10.3 which states that:-

“All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any de minimis provisions in Regulation 11.1 below.)

RECOMMENDATIONS

That subject to the overall cost being within the £600 budget for Splitwind Pond maintenance:-

1. Council approves the quote of £108 incl. VAT (£90 ex. VAT) from Catts Tree Care to cut; chip and remove the Goat Willow from around the pond.
2. Council, subject to it not exceeding their previous quote by more than 10%, approves the requested quote from Catts Tree Care to undertake the five items of works detailed above

David Rigby, Parish Clerk
November 24th 2020