



Newsletter

March 2024

Big Christmas Swan Feed – the show went on!

Boxing Day and New Year's Day saw a good turnout for the swan feed – a big thank you for everyone's support.



A very special thank you goes to all the brave souls who came along to support us on 28th, including Worcester's Deputy Mayor, Mel Allcott, who drew a very short straw indeed!

By then, the river had burst its banks so South Quay was flooded, and we had torrential rain that day. Mel was wet and frozen, but she stayed for the duration and showed a keen interest in the swans and what we do.

A festive pop-up on the Project website advertising the event clearly helped to spread the word. It's hard to judge the success of our new banner, as it was under floodwater for most of December!



Territorials

This is the time of year when swans that have paired up will leave the sanctuary in search of a territory in which to nest and breed, and existing pairs that have come into the city for the winter, when food in the countryside is scarce, endeavour to return to their old haunts.



A good territory is hard to find, so territorial fights may erupt and can be noisy and dramatic. Intruding swans are often chased off, but some will stay and fight – sometimes to the death. We've already had one fatality in Diglis this year, with another possible victim of a territorial on the river.

The river is generally 'open house', where young swans look for a mate and practice their skills and older swans take refuge in the flock, but there's a feisty pair that patrols between Diglis Island to Diglis Parade.

Territorials don't just happen around the breeding season, of course. Intruding swans will be seen off at any time of year.

This was a peaceful stand-off in the GBG car park. The intruder was walked back to the river.



Could you be a Swan Food Supplies Coordinator?

This key, home-based role is important in improving swans' nutrition. We sell 15kg sacks of pellets to the public, and use them to fill the handy bags we sell at outlets around the city. These sales help to fund our daily swan feed.



You'd order sacks of floating swan pellets and store them somewhere cool and dry, then issue them to supporters, and to volunteers filling our handy bags. You'd then store the filled bags ready for the Outlets Coordinator to collect. Email Marilyn for info at: theswanfoodproject@gmail.com



New outlet for swan pellets

The closure of The Pump House in Gheluvelt Park was a very great loss. For years we enjoyed a warm collaboration, and they sold our handy bags of pellets for the swans and ducks in the park.



However, The Swan Inn at 78 Barbourne Road – just across the road from the park – has agreed to sell them for us and has displayed our advertising poster. The pub opens at 2pm.

The Lemon Tart, opposite the pub, also sells our bags. Open 9:30 am – 2pm.

Fishing in the Swan Sanctuary



There are a number of *No Fishing* signs around the sanctuary, which extends from the Cathedral ferry steps to the viaduct, but they are small.

The City Council has undertaken to provide larger signage.



The top swan has lead poisoning – see the position of the neck.

Apart from trying to improve the swans' nutrition, the Project also endeavours to protect and improve the environment they and other wildlife live in.

Fishing is banned in the Swan Sanctuary, but it still happens. Just recently someone was seen fishing from their boat as they rode through the sanctuary.

Hooks, fishing line and lead weights pose a serious threat to wildfowl. They can get caught up in or swallow hooks and line (see our July 2023 Newsletter) and swallow weights.

We are currently monitoring illegal fishing, and would ask anyone who sees it to send us a photo. **Important:** Please don't get involved with the person fishing, and take a photo only if you feel it is safe to do so.