



Newsletter

Spring 2026

Flood time feeding

Our feeding team have been put through their paces this winter, with river levels fluctuating for weeks on end. Feeding normally takes place at the boathouse steps, but when the river floods Bromwich Parade, feeding moves to South Quay.

The move requires considerable coordination, checking the Diglis gauge for current and projected river levels, moving corn and equipment from the project food store ready for each feed, and helping those volunteers without transport to bring corn and buckets to South Quay.

Once there, it's an easy place to feed. There's more room than at the steps, so the swans can spread out to feed, and the flow of the water is very slow, so the corn doesn't get washed away.

It's also enjoyable to interact more with the public, who often come down to view the flood waters and watch us feed.



The river fluctuates between about 0.45m to over 5m on the Diglis gauge, and can rise very quickly.

Mud, glorious mud!

After the flooding comes the clean-up. The council clean the mud from the riverside paths, but project volunteers clean the boathouse steps.

Cleaning the lower boathouse steps is a normal part of the feeding routine, but project volunteers do a deep clean after flooding, removing any mud and debris left behind to make the steps safely accessible for feeders and the public.

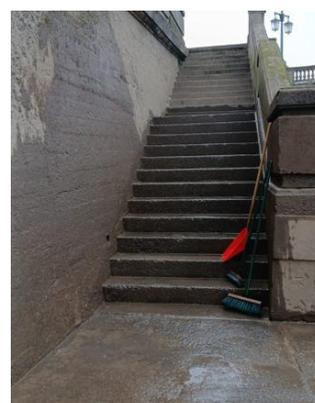
With the river bursting its banks so many times this winter, cleaning has been a regular task.

We often take care of these steps by Worcester bridge too. Our volunteers have cleaned them several times this winter.

Hopefully no more flooding for a while!



Before



After

Keeping nests safe

We're in the mating season once again. Swans are choosing their nesting sites, and a few early birds have even started laying.



May 2025

People often worry about the poor pen sitting on the nest for weeks on end, but it's important *not* throw food onto or near nests. It encourages rats, and we've had cases of rats hiding in nests and eating the eggs, or the cygnets as they hatch. The pen feels the movement beneath her and thinks it's her cygnets hatching.

The pen goes into a sleepy state while she's sitting on her eggs, so she doesn't need much food - but she does get off the nest if she needs to feed, drink or bathe. The cob remains close by to guard the area, in-between patrolling their territory. Sometimes he'll get on the nest to keep the eggs warm for her, although he doesn't have the right equipment (an incubation pouch) to incubate them.

It takes one to two days for a swan to create an egg, after mating has occurred. The pen lays eggs every two days or so, but doesn't start incubating them until the clutch is complete. The cygnets hatch out about 35 days later.

Events

Swan puppet street collection



On November 15th last year we took to the High Street once again with a brand new swan puppet, made by a group of our crafty volunteers.

We took £213.39 on the day, and a further £250 in online donations.

The Big Christmas swan feed



Always a popular event, we had a good turnout of families, friends, visitors and supporters, who came to feed the swans for free. Many also bought our handy bags of pellets to feed later.

Worcester's Mayor, Dr. Andy Lamb, enjoyed helping us on 29th December.

Thank you to everyone for your support!

May Bank Holiday plant sale

Once again we'll be having a Plant Sale near Café Afloat in Diglis Basin:

Monday 25th May, 11:00 till 15:00

Please come and support us!

If you'd like to grow some garden plants, or have spare ones you could pot up for us, please email theswanfoodproject@gmail.com.

Plants not sold on the day will be put out for sale during the summer at: *11 Cole Hill, WR5*