



Newsletter

Summer 2026

Strange behaviour in Diglis!

People have been getting in touch, worried about the Diglis cob's behaviour.



Last year he was seen pecking around windows, but stayed with his family most of the time.

This year he is spending hours pecking at local businesses, as well as pecking at his reflection in parked cars at the end of Finger Wharf, and when on the water, at shiny boat hulls.

Considering the role of a cob gives us some insight into this behaviour. It's his job to guard against rival swans intruding into or taking away his territory. His pen goes into a six-week moult soon after hatching, so her defensive capability is limited. He is responsible for the food supplies and safety of the whole family. Currently there are no rival swans trying to get into the marina – except for his own, reflective selves.

It can help to block off windows temporarily, but this cob is so enterprising in finding threats that it seems unlikely this behaviour will be extinguished unless real swans appear.

Shot swan!

Feeding time is a good opportunity to look over the flock for problems like fishing line or injuries. This summer a small lump in a swan's neck raised suspicions. Following a phone call to Vale Wildlife Hospital, he was taken in and a ball bearing (from a catapult) was surgically removed. Once the stitches were removed, he was soon back on the river.

You can just see the spot where the ball bearing was removed. He's doing well.



Looking after the swan sanctuary

Last year we started repairing the bank beside the boathouse steps. It was badly worn away due to flooding, creating a steep 'cliff' that was a danger to swans and the public.

We filled in the deep drop off the wide step by creating a dead hedge at the top of the slope to slow water run-off and trap silt, then back-filling with a 'compost heap' of leaves, brash and grass cuttings, mixed with silt collected from the steps at the screen house. This was topped with a hurdle of donated basketry willow wands, and more silt to stop it floating away.



Our efforts withstood winter flooding quite well, so this year we've been fortifying and improving on last year's efforts.



We also hold monthly work parties for more regular activities like cleaning the boathouse and bridge steps, weeding, litter picking, and maintaining our food store.

If you'd like to help with special projects or regular work parties, email Marilyn at:
theswanfoodproject@gmail.com

May plant sale and beyond

For last year's plant sale, we shivered, but this year we melted (though not as much as everyone has in June/July)!



Despite the heat, we had a good turnout, and thanks to the hard work and generosity of our volunteers and supporters, had a rich and varied array of plant donations, plus some swan items.

Including donations, we made about £220 on the day, and continued sales at 11 Cole Hill, WR5 raised another £180.80 by the end of June. Enough for just over three weeks feeding next winter.

If you'd like to donate plants or hold your own plant sale, please email Marilyn at:
theswanfoodproject@gmail.com