



Anglian Water Park Newsletter



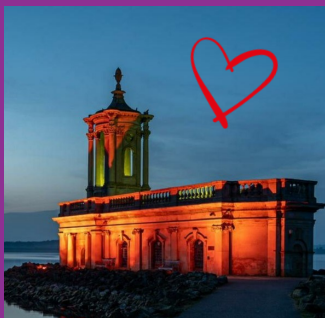
March 2021

Will Kirstein

Park Manager at Rutland Water and
acting Park Manager at Grafham Water



In the strangest of years, we are sure you can imagine that the operations have been focused on reacting to and managing around the COVID 19 Pandemic. From March 2020 through to the present day, like all businesses we have experienced extraordinary amounts of disruption and a far from usual year. We have seen a number of operations and events suspended at both Rutland and Grafham, such as Birdfair, Sunday Swims, Parkrun and our usual sporting events.



However, since we reopened our parks in June we have seen record numbers of visitors on site enjoying their government sanctioned exercise. While the vast majority have been very well behaved the parks were under intense pressure in the summer with large numbers of visitors plac-

ing strain on limited facilities. We are extremely grateful to our wonderful volunteers who turned out in force every week to help us clear up after busy weekends.



Despite the large levels of disruption and frequent closures we are extremely proud to have been able to provide the levels of access and activities that we have done. Our parks have been an extremely important resource for many to find much needed head space and we are delighted that we were able to deliver.

As we made the decision not to furlough our staff we redeployed them to work on the parklands and have focused on maintaining and infrastructure repairs and improvements to our tracks, fences and facilities. We have also dedicated the time to conservation and biodiversity projects.

With the discovery of Quagga mussel in Rutland Water and

the continued presence of Killer Shrimp at Grafham Water we are reviewing our biosecurity arrangements with a view to ensuring these are as robust as can possibly be. We would like to take the opportunity to remind all users to practice good biosecurity by ensuring they check, clean and dry all water based equipment thoroughly before arriving at or leaving Rutland Water. Non native species remain an ever present threat to our water access and pose a very real risk to the levels of access we currently enjoy. We implore all users to engage with the Check Clean Dry agenda and help us in keeping the unwanted species at bay.

Moving forwards our priority is to continue to navigate the complexities and challenges that COVID will no doubt present as we move towards a hopefully "more normal" year and season.

Harry Wayne-Barker

Reserve and Fishery
Manager



During this testing year, where our green spaces have become even more important to our wellbeing, we have welcomed more visitors than ever to Taverham Mill Nature Reserve. It has been particularly great to see so many families enjoying the site.

Over the past twelve months, we have worked hard to improve our paths and create new boardwalks, viewing platforms and seating areas. During 2020 it was also fantastic to open up our new tea room facility and seating area.



During 2021 we look forward to the creation of a new car park, nature trails and new bird hides further along the river Wensum towards Costessey. This beautiful wilderness will, for the first time, see some public access and we are excited about bringing that project together over the coming months.



Thank you for your continued support and we hope to see you all at the reserve during the next year.



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John Taylor
Park Manager
Alton Water



This past year has been challenging for us all and with green space being more important than ever this has brought its own challenges to the team here at Alton. We have seen increased levels of people visiting the park throughout this period with families using the area for exercise and wellbeing.

Our staff have continued to work throughout the pandemic to both ensure that the site is safe for people to visit and to ensure that we were ready to welcome everyone back.

During the past 12 months we have continued to invest and improve the park, we have refurbished areas of the water sports centre and created a new cycle hire/repair centre which has been popular with the local cyclists.



The new meeting room is equipped to cater for around 20 people and is available for groups to hire. A new ANPR parking system has been installed giving a fairer system of charging and allows those visitors just calling in for a coffee or dropping their cycle off to take advantage of the initial free period.

October 2020 saw the arrival of our Highland cattle; these cattle graze our Taverham site during the drier months but due to the ground becoming too wet during the winter we have decided to winter graze them at Alton. It is hoped that these will assist us in managing some of our grassland in a more sustainable way as well as providing an attraction to our visitors. They will return to Taverham early spring and we will see them again in the autumn of this year.



Many thanks for your support throughout this challenging period.

David Rowe
Head Ranger
Pitsford,
Hollowell
and Ravensthorpe



Well, what can you say about 2020? With a good start to the fishing season at Ravenssthorpe and Pitsford and having stocked our waters with thousands of quality trout we were looking forward to another great fishing season. But then in March COVID-19 struck and we had to contend

with site closures which was a difficult experience for all of our staff. With the sites closed, we concentrated our efforts on site improvements.

After one of the wettest winters for many years we had a challenge ahead to get Pitsford Water Park's access tracks back to some sort of order. With a combination of heavy rainfall and vehicle access, many areas had washed away and become severely damaged. Our ranger team worked tirelessly throughout April and May to install drainage and improve the track surface whilst the site was closed. We have now taken the decision to restrict vehicular access for anglers from November to March to mitigate some of this damage in future.



We continued to stock fish throughout the lockdown to help support our fisheries and our fish suppliers having stocked 22000 fish into Ravenssthorpe and Pitsford by the time we reopened in June

and although shorter many anglers have told me that it has been the best seasons fishing, they have ever had in terms of quality fish.



We are now well into our winter program of works and have completed servicing of our boat fleet. We will be completing tree safety works, hedge cutting, planting, coppicing willows and working to prevent erosion across Pitsford, Ravensthorpe and Hollowell.

On behalf of all staff across our parks we'd like to thank all of our users and customers for supporting us throughout the most challenging year we have ever faced. Stay safe and we very much look forward to welcoming everyone to the parks throughout 2021.

