

WINGERWORTH LIDO
COUNCIL OFFICER SUBMISSION

Wingerworth Lido: Scrutiny Briefing Report
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Purpose

This purpose of the report is to:

- Provide a brief history of the series of events pre and post the decision
- Summarise the current position from an officer perspective following consultation with the Angling Trust, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust (DWT), and local environmental interest groups.

Pre-decision

For many months prior to the Council considering ending the lease with Clay Cross Angling Association (CCAA), the Council regularly received accusations from the public of poor management by CCAA especially relating to negative environmental impacts.

A particular issue, that is contested by the Angling Community is their continued use of Blue Dye (Dyofix), a UV suppressant and the consequences on the wider biodiversity. The Council does not employ ecologists and in general, obtains professional advice from Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, who also, amongst other things, raised the use of the Blue Dye as a concern.

A few months prior to the Council acting (July-24), were the deaths of some new-born cygnets which appeared to be caused by discarded fishing line and hooks. These matters were reported to the Police. This incident led to the Council receiving a number of formal complaints from residents, emails raising concerns about the CCAA and further letters complaining about the club's management of the fishing rights at the site.

Discussions with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and their most recent surveys had also raised concerns regarding the decline in biodiversity and brought into question the Council's Statutory Duties.

A council's statutory duties are the legal obligations placed on it by legislation, requiring it to act in areas such as environmental protection, public safety, and governance; these duties guide and constrain officer decision-making to ensure compliance with the law and the delivery of services in the public interest.

In line with the constitution and prior to the decision, officers consulted with Portfolio Holder, Finance and Legal colleagues through the August 2024 Asset Management Board (an advisory body as set out in the Constitution), along with consultation with local elected members.

In September 2024, CCAA association were also contacted to make them aware of our intention to end the Lease.

The Decision (17 December 2024)

The decision to end the agreement was taken on the 17 December 2024 by serving the relevant notice. At that time, concerns had been raised with regards the environmental decline of the pond, supported by Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and through consultation with elected members, no concerns or objections were raised with regards the loss of fishing and support for the decision was received.

The decision was taken by the Assistant Director – Property, Estates & Assets, utilising delegated powers from the Executive. The Council manages hundreds of lease agreements across the council estate and thousands of land and HRA assets are included. The decision taken was not considered anything outside of the ordinary or politically contentious, this view was supported by no challenge from CCAA and no objection through the consultation process.

Post-decision

January 2025 - CCAA acknowledged the decision, didn't challenge the decision and immediately started discussions with regards removal of their fish stocks, signage and fishing pegs.

January 2025 - CCAA informed their club through their Facebook group on the 6 January notifying club members from 30 June 2025, they will no longer be able to fish the Lido.

February 2025 – CCAA commission company to remove the fish from the Lido

February – July 2025 - Dialogue with the Friends of Wingerworth Lido and Derbyshire Wildlife Trust

30 June 2025 – CCAA lease comes to an end

August 2025 – Draft licence agreement and example constitution for the group were shared with the 'Friends of Wingerworth Lido' representatives for consideration.

August 2025 – NEDDC asked the community to 'express an interest' if they wanted to participate and be part of 'Friends of Wingerworth Lido' through a social media campaign.

August 2025 – First media enquiry received regarding Wingerworth Lido

August 2025 – First contact from Countryside Alliance and other such groups

September 2025 – Engagement with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust with regards the scope of a Biodiversity Improvement Plan

September 2025 – Council motion to review the decision at Environment Scrutiny.

October 2025 – Met with Cllrs Shipman & Hancock and a member of the public Domonic Webb to discuss the Lido and potential legal proceedings.

October 2025 – Following the above meeting and a suggestion that Wingerworth Parish Council were considering taking on the management of fishing at the Lido, the Parish Council was contacted to seek their proposal. In response, the Parish Council suggested to wait for the Environment Scrutiny to complete its work and then discuss matters further.

October 2025 – The Leader and Director of Growth and Assets met with the Angling Trust to hear their proposals and through their representation, that of CCAA.

November 2025 – Derbyshire Wildlife Trust were commissioned to create the Biodiversity Improvement Plan with works starting in April 2026 due to seasonality of the required surveys.

November 2025 – Derbyshire Wildlife Trust indicate a potential temporary arrangement which includes fishing but requires much tighter management, no further water treatment and no further artificially restocking, amongst other things.

November 2025 – A meeting took place between the Council, Angling Trust and Wingerworth Wildlife (A prospective friends group participant) to seek common ground and a potential way forward preparing for all eventualities from the Scrutiny review.

November 2025 – Both the Angling Trust and environmental interest groups have their differences of opinion and are sore from the recent social media abuse perceived by both 'sides'. However, they both agree angling and environment enhancement can exist together on the Lido and suggest the potential of non-exclusive use for an angling club and 'Friends of' group prior to the Biodiversity Improvement Plan and action Plan is complete.

In Conclusion:

The above should be seen as an indicative timeline to provide Scrutiny Committee an overview of the series of events. There have been many officers involved in Wingerworth Lido since August 2025 from teams across the Council including Estates, Legal, Governance, Performance and Engagement, Communications and Senior Management Team. There has also been a vast amount of correspondence on the matter both internal and external. Naturally, the timeline above does not consider all the correspondence and is a summarised view.

As this paper is to inform the Scrutiny Committee, it doesn't include any steps the scrutiny have taken or taking to support their review (Consultation, stakeholder submissions, etc).

I'm aware that Scrutiny has invited written representations from all stakeholders. Again, for the avoidance of doubt, any summarising of the stakeholder position in this

paper only summarises the position as I understand it. The direct submissions to the scrutiny committee from stakeholders should be considered their definitive position.

The decision was taken under the correct constitutional authority, by the appropriate officer, and within delegated powers. All required consultations were completed and documented.

Along the way, council officers have engaged with all stakeholders to achieve the best outcome for residents whilst meeting our statutory duties. Officers recognise and support the review process, and welcome the recommendations from Scrutiny, whatever they may be, informed by public consultation and stakeholder input.

Finally, in making your recommendations please consider the councils statutory duties and take advice as necessary. The council cannot lawfully make a decision that goes against its statutory duties.