Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme Phase 2

It is with great relief that we can announce that following a consultation late last year on options for the second phase of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme and detailed discussions with key stakeholders and residents, the option of Rodley Nature Reserve as a location will no longer be pursued for water storage to reduce flood risk.

Proposals for upstream water storage areas are being assessed and developed as part of the scheme. These areas can be operated by a control gate system meaning water can be held within the chosen storage area and then released back into the river when safe to do so. Rodley Nature Reserve was identified as one potential location where the scheme could create more water storage to help manage river levels through the centre of Leeds during a flood.

Leeds City Council executive member for regeneration, transport and planning Councillor Richard Lewis said: “We have had some very positive discussions with Rodley Nature Reserve through our consultation process, but after looking further into using the reserve as part of a scheme to reduce flood risk, and listening to the concerns of stakeholders, we have taken the decision not to proceed with this location as an option. We would like to thank all of those with an interest in Rodley Nature Reserve for taking the time to take part in these amicable discussions and for giving their feedback."

Rodley Nature Reserve Trustee Jerry Knapp said "The Trustees of Rodley Nature Reserve are very pleased that the reserve is no longer being considered for use as a flood water storage area. This helps to safeguard the reserve as a refuge for wildlife and as a great community asset. We would like to put on record our appreciation of the very professional way that the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme team has worked with the trustees of the reserve to produce a good resolution to this issue."

We should also like to express our sincere thanks to everyone who took part in the consultation process and took time to write to the LFAS team to express their views and concerns……this undoubtedly helped us to get over our case for the value of the reserve.
We are delighted to announce that Rodley Nature Reserve has been chosen as one of the finalists in the BBC Countryfile Magazine Awards 2018. The awards are a celebration of the British countryside and its people, from mighty landmarks and national parks to the best nature reserves and finest rural pubs. Readers of the magazine were invited to send in their suggestions for the greatest sites and a panel of experts reviewed all the submissions and whittled the nominees down to five in each category.

We are up against some good opposition so please do vote for us. The final shortlist of nature reserves is as follows:

**Nature Reserve of the Year 2018**

- Rodley Nature Reserve, Leeds
- RSPB Ham Wall, Somerset
- RSPB Arne, Dorset
- Clara Vale, Tyne and Wear
- Loch Druidibeg, South Uist

Voting runs until Monday March 5th. You can vote online on the BBC Countryfile Magazine website [countryfile.com/awards](http://countryfile.com/awards) or via the reserve website [www.rodleynaturereserve.org/news](http://www.rodleynaturereserve.org/news) where there is a link to the voting page. You can also vote by post, sending the form in the February issue of the magazine (forms available in the visitor centre) to BBC Countryfile Magazine, 2nd Floor, Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol, BS1 3BN.

Winners will be announced mid-March in an online ceremony and will appear in the May issue of the magazine which goes on sale on 13th April.

This is a great accolade for Rodley Nature Reserve and the volunteers who work so hard to make it the wonderful place it is for both wildlife and people.

So please do vote for us!
If you were walking along the Willow Path over the Christmas period and you didn’t know already you might have wondered why so many birdwatchers were hanging around, apparently aimlessly. The word had obviously got round and they were clearly waiting for something a bit special to turn up. The bird in question was a Firecrest. This beautiful little bird is indeed a bit special and for some it was their first ever in the UK. It was certainly a first for Rodley.

At just 9 to 10 cm long, the Firecrest shares the title of the UK’s smallest bird with its cousin the Goldcrest, so trying to find one in the tangle of the Coppice was at times like looking for the proverbial needle in a haystack. Firecrests breed in very small numbers in the UK, mainly in the south east of England but some arrive from across the North Sea in autumn along with large number of Goldcrests. It has probably been the best autumn and winter ever for Goldcrests at Rodley with daily sightings in the Coppice and the Firecrest may well have arrived with them. Both species have thin beaks which are ideally suited for picking out small insects and the Coppice is obviously proving a good source of food for them. The bird was still present at the beginning of this year and may hopefully stay the rest of the winter.

Excitement on the Willow Path

Photograph taken by Mandy Haxby

Photograph taken by Adrian Hardy

Extension to Accessible Pathways

The Reserve has once again been successful in being chosen by the Co-op Local Community Fund for funding support. This latest initiative runs until November 2018 and the funding will be used to extend the accessible path around the Reserve, improving the surface for all walkers, wheelchair and pushchair users.

The Co-op stores in Farsley and Swinnow have selected the Reserve as one of their charities, but you can still nominate Rodley Nature Reserve as your cause, provided you live within a 15-mile radius.

Please support Rodley Nature Reserve by signing in to your Co-op account and choosing us. If you’re not already a member you can find out about Co-op membership either in-store or online at www.coop.co.uk/membership. Simply sign in and go to ‘Choose a Local Cause’. Three local causes will appear. To find us, scroll down the page to ‘Find Other Causes’, type 5,10 or 15-mile distance and type ‘Environment’ in the Cause Category box, to find us.

As a member, every time you shop at The Co-op, 1% of what you spend on selected own-brand products and services will go to Rodley Nature Reserve. Plus, all the money from shopping bag sales will add to the fund. Thank you for helping us.
Rodley Robins celebrated their Christmas Party in the Visitor Centre on Saturday 9th December. They went on a Scavenger Hunt around the Reserve first to work up an appetite. As it was below freezing, many birds were about, but the only snail they could find was hiding in the Dipping Pond under thick ice! The Robins made Secret Santa gifts for each other, all hand-made out of natural materials found in the wild. Father Christmas arrived on his mobility scooter, driven by Rudolf and assisted by his trusty elf bearing gifts for the children. Christmas Carols were sung whilst they partied, although some of the words were not quite the originals!

Follow our adventures throughout the year in our ‘Robins’ - Story So Far’ book which is available for viewing in the Visitor Centre.

Denese Swann, Robins Leader

The Manager’s Garden Hide

Following the extension to the original hide last summer work is now underway on the rebuilding of the original hide and it has given us the opportunity to include a viewing area for wheelchair users. Access to the hide here can be a bit difficult in the winter months as the grass does get quite slippery. It is planned to construct a hard path from the road to the Manager’s Garden to make access easier throughout the year, particularly for wheelchairs. The hide construction work has been made possible thanks to a generous grant from Green Leeds Ltd.