

A Shamley Green Matter

Pond Management No.2, 13 March 2021

Message to: Chairman Shamley Green Environment Group

Copied to: Chris Howard, Phil Crickmay, Claire Jenkinson, Chrissie Pick, Athar Shareef, Charlotte Gray, Clerk Wonersh PC

POND MANAGEMENT – WHAT IS A POND?

According to the Shorter Oxford English Dictionary: “A fairly small body of still water, frequently with a specified purpose, formed artificially by hollowing or embanking, eg fish pond. Also a natural pool or small lake.”

According to Wikipedia: “A pond is an area filled with water, either natural or artificial, that is smaller than a lake. Ponds may arise naturally in floodplains as part of a river system or can simply be an isolated depression that filled with runoff, groundwater, or precipitation. As such, ponds may be freshwater, saltwater or brackish in nature. Ponds are frequently man-made. Among their many uses, ponds provide water for agriculture livestock and communities.”

An article in “British Wildlife” in 1994 “New Approaches to the Management of Ponds” quotes the 1993 definition of the Pond Conservation Group: “A small body of water, between 1m² and 2ha in area, which usually holds water for at least four months of the year.”

There are a myriad of variations and no international agreement on dimensions. The latter paper focuses primarily on natural ponds and through all stages of their frequently transient life. However it emphasises the specialized forms of wildlife that each stage may harbor, including ponds terminally clogged with reed-mace!

Our interest is village ponds, almost certainly man-made, needing to contain fresh water for human or livestock use and usually for all the year. Much of the water should be free of invasive weed and accessible.

If we want our pond to be attractive to the widest range of wildlife then it should be of sufficient depth not to completely freeze in the winter and not dry out in the summer. There are specialized creatures which can survive the latter; but they are not relevant to our current interest.

I have managed a fish pond for 40 years and developed and managed a very successful wildlife pond in Sandhurst Copse woodland for 20 years. The breakthrough on the former came when I stopped feeding the fish and removed the lines deterring the visiting heron! To the latter I applied several constraints in order to maximise the diversity of wildlife and enable management of the pond without an impossible battle with invasive nature each year:

- No fish
- No ducks
- No very invasive weed, in particular reed-mace
- No artificial wildlife introductions

Based on that experience and in particular the speed of natural population by wildlife, this is the model to which I have been working for the two village ponds and which I suggest we formally adopt, with the exception of the ban on ducks!

I do have in mind a possible experiment or re-introduction of reed mace, grown contained within a submerged (4 inches) concealed concrete caisson abutting one bank of the Bricklayers Pond.

PAVM