



# Heath Lake improvements

## Newsletter 1. Autumn 2021

### Introduction

Access to green spaces is important for our health and well-being and never more so than during the past 18 months of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Heath Lake – a 2.8 hectare body of water within an area of public woodland and heathland, close to the village of Crowthorne, provides the local community with the opportunity for superb access to nature, with a variety of walking routes through the lake and nature reserve.

Working with Wokingham Borough, who manage Heath Lake, we have been surveying the water quality and plant life in the lake during summer 2021. This has helped us build a better understanding of the current condition of the lake, confirming that the quality of the water in the lake needs improving.

### Water Quality

The lake's water quality has been effected by a build up of sediment at the bottom of the lake. This is predominantly due to surface water carrying silt into the lake and plant matter breaking down on the lakebed.

This has resulted in a reduction in the number and diversity of aquatic plants the lake sustains and leading to the lake failing to meet national environmental objectives.

#### Did you know?

Heath Lake is only around 1 metre deep.

It is the one of only a handful of acidic lakes in Berkshire and is home to several rare aquatic plants, including the alternate water-milfoil and the 6 stemmed water crowfoot.

This has seen it designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) by Natural England.

From our recent macroinvertebrate survey we found the notable 'Trumpet ramshorn' (*Menetis dilatatu*) in the lake. See image below.



By making improvements to the lake we can help these species to grow and thrive.

Work to maintain and improve the lake will help encourage a greater quantity and diversity of aquatic life thus protecting the site's special status.



Heath Lake, 2021

### Making improvements to the lake

We are now looking at how to improve the water quality in the lake by removing the accumulated silt and preventing silt building up in the future.

Options being considered to desilt the lake include:

- Dropping the water level & removing the silt
- Pumping the silt out of the lake
- A combination of the above

As part of our optioneering work we are also considering where to base a site compound and how to dispose of the silt.

### Keeping the lake healthy

To prevent the future build-up of silt we are planning to install a small number of below ground basins to catch sediment before it flows into the lake.

Along the lake edge, we are also looking at options to create wildlife habitats and new viewpoints across the lake.

### Next steps

We are currently reviewing the various different options to improve the water quality of the lake and expect to present our preferred option early next year.

We anticipate starting the improvement works in the Autumn of 2022 and be completed by the Spring of 2023.

### Get in contact

If you have any queries about Heath Lake and the work we are planning to do, please contact our project stakeholder lead Mark Mathews via email at: [mark.mathews@jacobs.com](mailto:mark.mathews@jacobs.com)