

The Marlens CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) is a local, volunteer-run community organisation which runs Clevedon Marine Lake for the benefit of the community. Marlens has a 50 year lease on the lake from North Somerset Council (from 2015- 2065).

A major refurbishment in summer 2015 (funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, North Somerset Council and Clevedon Council) restored the lake to "as new" condition, and triggered an explosion in use by a wide range of people. This report covers the year November 2019 to October 2020 with a look ahead to 2021.

Objectives

Marlens main objective is still "To bring life to Clevedon Marine Lake" but now we are a registered charity this has to be expressed more formally as:

The Objects of the CIO are:

1. *To provide or assist in the provision of facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation or other leisure time occupation of individuals who have need of such facilities by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disability, financial hardship or social circumstances or the public at large with the object of improving their conditions of life.*
2. *To advance in life and help young people through:*
 - (a) *The provision of recreational and leisure time activities provided in the interest of social welfare, designed to improve their conditions of life;*
 - (b) *Providing support and activities which develop their skills, capacities and capabilities to enable them to participate in society as mature and responsible individuals.*
3. *To secure, preserve, protect, develop and improve the features of historic or public interest in relation to Clevedon Marine Lake and its surrounding area.*

Key elements this year have been Recreation and Social Welfare, while continuing to provide for Young People.

What have we done to meet these objectives?

The renovation of the lake in 2015 dealt with the leaks, improved the drainage, re-instated an island for swimmers, improved wheelchair and disability access to the lakeside and created a new splash pool area for young children and families.

The renovation did not change the basic "look and feel" of the lake (other than dealing with the dilapidation) and installed interpretation boards to explain the lake history. We also have a Discovery Trail leaflet leading from the pier to the lake which highlights heritage features such as the ring bolt which used to secure changing cubicles on the lakeside and the "core seat" taken from the

hole drilled through the outer wall to put in the new sluice.

Young people and families have been quick to use the lake and paddling pools for recreation when the sun shines.

Clevedon Canoe Club and Clevedon Sailing Club still have enthusiastic youngsters who are developing their skills, and Clevedon Marine Active runs regular paddle skills courses for St.Nicholas Chantry primary school, as well as ad-hoc sessions for other schools and youth organisations. We also have registered coaches: independent operators who provide personal tuition to individuals and groups.

We have not ignored the older generation, installing additional concrete seats around the lake where they can rest while watching the activity.

However this year has been dominated by the Covid-19 Pandemic. The lake is considered to be part of the public beach so has remained open for individual exercise throughout the pandemic. It has been in regular use by individual walkers, swimmers, cold-water dippers and paddleboarders, providing valuable wellbeing (both physical and mental) for those concerned.

Lake Users

The lake is part of the Clevedon seafront promenade, so has a steady footfall throughout the year of people who enjoy the view as they pass or sit to watch what is going on.

Once "Covid Lockdown 1" had ended, the summer of 2019 saw regular use of the lake by our member clubs, coaches, individuals and the public in general.

The boat hire concession was intermittent but will continue with improvements in 2020.

A new user in 2020 has been the Clevedon Parkrun at 9-9:30 each Saturday morning. It is growing rapidly in popularity and, when Covid permits, now has hundreds of runners of all ages and abilities. The regular route includes the lower promenade along the lake and we are happy to accommodate this popular community activity.

Finally there has been heavy use by the general public: individuals from far and near using the lake for crabbing, swimming, boating, having picnics or just going for a stroll to enjoy the view. The island was very popular with swimmers, especially young people, and throughout the summer there was rarely a daylight hour when the lake didn't have somebody swimming and somebody paddling in the splash pools. The lake is also a place where local young people can hang out, relax and meet their friends. We would like them to value and protect the lake, and use it to grow their own capabilities, and we see some indication of this happening.

Managing the Use

We see several kinds of use:

- Individuals using the lake. This is free of charge but we appreciate donations. We try to make it easy for those who enjoy the lake to contribute to its upkeep through our lakeside donation boxes or online.
- Member club sessions.
- Classes run by individual instructors who have registered with Marlens (registration includes a check on their qualifications, safeguarding check, first-aid qualification and risk assessment)
- Paid services such as boat hire, training courses, parties, events. These are provided by our registered coaches, our member clubs or our boat hire concessionaire.
- People hiring the lake from Marlens for their own activities and events.

All activities and events should be on the lake calendar which you can see on the Marlens web site. Viv French (bookkeeper@marlens.org.uk) keeps this up to date with the help of trustees Mike Perrott and Rowan Clarke.

In most cases these different activities can share the lake at the same time. There are some safety issues as the lake becomes busier, especially when people are learning to sail, so in 2020 the Sailing Club launched a new scheme during sailing sessions. A floating rope divides the lake in two with sailing at the pier end and all other activities asked to keep to the island end.

Other safety actions:

- There are now two defibrillators (AEDs) near the lake, one on the Coastguard station and one on the Salthouse pub.
- Slippery ramp notice on the ramp into the water at the splash pool end. We clean the ramp as much as we can, but with lake full of water we can't remove the algae which make it slippery.
- In 2021 we will install steps near the ramp as an alternative way into and out of the lake.
- Regular cleaning of the splash pools to avoid the build-up of slippery algae. This is made easier by the new drain onto the beach.
- Safety advice on the web site in the FAQs.
- First aid courses for volunteers (though our course had to be canceled in 2020 because of Covid).
- Regular water quality checks from May to September. If bacteria levels are high we warn users (red flag), empty the lake at the next spring tide and refill from the Bristol Channel.

Maintenance and Improvements

In 2019, North Somerset funded a new drain from the splash pools onto the beach. This was something we knew we wanted originally, but couldn't afford at the restoration in 2015. It has made it much quicker and easier to drain and clean the pools (no need for pumping). Our volunteers now aim to do this

every weekend, which should enable us to stop the pools getting slippery.

The 5 concrete seats we installed in 2019 proved very popular and are heavily used by swimmers, families and people who just want to sit and look. We therefore installed additional seats in March 2020.

Our marine lake fills from the turbid Bristol Channel, and every overtopping tide deposits some silt in the lake. This has been building up since the lake was renovated in 2015 and was becoming a problem. The Bristol Channel is an important wildlife site and it has taken us a whole year to get official approval to dredge our silt and tip it back into the channel. We now have a 10-year licence to dredge for one week each October and March, starting October 2019. Results so far have been encouraging. It looks as though this regular dredging will clear the backlog of silt within two or three years, and then keep on top of it.

Funding

We need to build a reliable income. The lake costs money to run properly (repairs, equipment, improvements, training, insurance, web site...) these activities need coordination and we also need to market the lake and lake activities.

Principal funding sources for Marlens in the past year, have been:

- ☐ Marlens Lottery which is slowly growing and can now be joined online from the lake web site. People can also join Marlens directly without joining the lottery, as "Friends of Clevedon Marine Lake". These members have a say in formal decisions such as the election of trustees, and in return... well we don't yet have much to offer in return apart from our thanks, an exclusive swim hat or tote bag, and the satisfaction of helping Marlens to succeed. We will have social events as a thank you to volunteers and members and there will be discounts for members at Marlens training courses and other events.
- ☐ An affiliation contribution from clubs who make regular use of the lake, some of whom are from outside Clevedon.
- ☐ Registration fees from qualified instructors who wish to teach clients at the lake. We check on registration that instructors are appropriately qualified, have current DBS checks and have professional insurance.
- ☐ Donation boxes at the lake, which we encourage the many people who use the lake to put something in each time they use the lake.

The pandemic caused the cancellation of other activities we would usually have run:

- ☐ Events throughout the year (for example Winterfest, Lake Day, Open Water Series, visit to Concorde museum, Clevedon Long Swim, Last Night of the Proms, Light Up the Lake)
- ☐ Hire of the lake for external commercial events such as triathlons and filming.

- Being visible (and raising some money) at community events run by other organisations (Hill Road St Nicholas Fayre...).
- Talks to local groups (WI, Probus, Bridge Business Club...)
- Grants for specific projects associated with our objectives.
- Donation buckets at events such as Light up the Lake.

As you can see from the accounts, all this normally adds up to a useful sum of money each year. The pandemic impacted many of our usual sources of income, but lake users largely made up the shortfall by donations and memberships. We are very grateful for this support.

Structure

We have to make sure that we continue to listen attentively to the views of the whole community, not just those who pay, so we have a working structure with three parts:

- An operations team responsible for day-to-day running of the lake and associated activities, composed largely of lake users and volunteers.
 - Maintenance team led by Bob Slee and Alan Wilson.
 - Love the Lake cleaning team which is now coordinated via WhatsApp.
 - Lake activities led by the clubs and lake users
- A board of unpaid volunteer trustees who carry formal responsibility, set the budget for the operations teams and make sure we don't go bankrupt.
- Informal consultation and listening to provide a communication channel with active users, our volunteers, young people and the wider community. This is implemented in various ways:
 - Our online presence (Facebook and Twitter) managed for us by Carol Price (who has now handed over to Laura Nesbitt)
 - Publicity and Marketing led initially by Kate Gay, and now by Rowan Clarke.
 - An open “Coffee with Marlens” get-together in the Salthouse bar every second Saturday of the month – 9am at the community boat store for an hour or so cleaning up the lake then 11am in the Salthouse for a natter over coffee. Everyone welcome.
 - Open discussion meetings with lake users 2-3 times per year, plus our open discussion at the AGM.
 - Informal feedback from our volunteers, users and concerned citizens, plus contact with schools.

Volunteers

Volunteers are a key to success – and every organisation in town is looking for them!

The lake cleaning team, have cleaned the lake every weekend through the summer and after over-topping tides through the winter.

The technical work has continued, following the “how to” guides left by Alan Wilson, again all done by volunteers (except where we employed a contractor for a specific task, such as installing concrete seats);

In the background we have been thinking about how to make sure that our volunteers are trained, kept informed, properly looked after and proud of their role ...and (most important) enjoying being Marlens volunteers.

A WhatsApp group has been set up for the active volunteers, and is proving a success. A useful tool for gathering a working party, and it keeps everyone in touch.

Anybody can come and clean the lake at any time, without asking Marlens, and many people do pick up litter and put it in the litter bins on the upper promenade. We really appreciate this community effort.

Marlens volunteer “love the lake” team gathers at the lake every Saturday morning throughout the year to clean and maintain it. New volunteers are always welcome, whether they can come regularly or only occasionally.

Trustees

The people with formal responsibility for the lake are the Marlens Charity Trustees.

The trustees at 31st October 2020 were: Chris Blades, Barry Cherokoff, Rowan Clarke, Hilary Jenkins-Spangler, Joe Norman, Steve Price, Bob Slee. Two trustees retired at the 2020 AGM (Linda Knott, Tony Cherry) and two resigned during the summer (Kate Gay, Gavin Price) after making a valuable contribution. Though not a trustee, Carol Price retired from running our social media activities after many years of service to Marlens in a variety of roles.

Marlens is governed by our constitution, which has been agreed with the Charity Commission and was adopted by our members on 12 November 2013. It is a public document and you are welcome to have a copy – just ask.

According to our constitution there are three ways you can become a trustee:

- ☐ Be appointed by the members (normally at the AGM).
- ☐ Be co-opted by the trustees, in which case the members must approve the appointment at the next AGM.
- ☐ Be appointed by Clevedon Town Council (1 trustee).

Trustees are appointed for three years and can serve up to 3 terms (which should be enough for anyone!). There is no formal training for trustees, but they are expected to familiarise themselves with the Marlens constitution and

Charity Commission guidance.

1/3 of the charity trustees must retire at each AGM, so Steve Price, Bob Slee and Joe Norman are retiring this time at the 2020 AGM (held on 21 March 2021).

All three have served 3 terms as trustees, so must stand down as trustees, though they will continue to help the lake. Fortunately we have 4 excellent candidates to replace them.

We have a lot of knowledge and experience within the Board, but there are some gaps we would like to fill (for example accountancy, law, young people). We would like a more diverse mix of trustees – anyone interested, please contact the acting Secretary (secretary@marlens.org.uk) or any trustee.

Vivien French has taken on the job of Bookkeeper, which is really helpful, and Andrew Wait has taken on the role of Secretary. Both of these are part-time paid posts.

Marketing

The Clevedon Marine Lake website clevedonmarinelake.co.uk launched last year has worked well, while the Marlens web site was facing maintenance problems, so early in 2020 the Marlens web site material was folded into the lake web site. This also avoids confusing duplication.

Technology

In addition to the CML website, we invested (in16-17) in an electronic timing system for the open water swimming events. This not only gives more accurate timing, it also improves safety by telling us quickly if there is a swimmer missing. Member clubs interested in hiring this system for their own events should contact the Secretary.

We also set up a camera which used to show still pictures of the lake via the CML website, and now shows live video. The purpose of LIVE LAKECAM is to enable people – locally, regionally, nationally or internationally – to ‘visit’ the lake remotely, to help plan their trip. The feature streams live footage from the lake to whet people’s appetite if they haven’t been before and to enable regulars to check out conditions, much like the cams you find at popular surf beaches. More visitors means more people engaging with the lake and local businesses in Clevedon.

Environment

We care for the environment by collecting and binning plastic rubbish from the lake and its surroundings during our frequent clean-ups. We have also fitted a water bottle refill tap to the outside of the community boat store, alongside the cold water shower and dog bowl.

The lake develops a rich ecosystem of crabs, worms, fish and birds, so when we clean mud from the lake we try to leave some mud undisturbed to conserve

the crabs, and refill the lake again on the next tide cycle.

Finance

This year our Treasurer will present our final accounts at this AGM. They have been inspected by an external examiner and then posted to the Charity Commission web site.

Some of the funds in our bank account are earmarked for repair of the lake. Our lease makes Marlens responsible for the first £3000 each year spent on maintenance, so we need to hold at least this sum in reserve. For challenges bigger than £3000 we can look to North Somerset for support, In the current financial climate there is no guarantee that N.Somerset would take action quickly, so it is realistic to have a cushion beyond £3000 if we want to keep the lake in service. The Trustees have decided on £10,000 as our working reserve, to cover this and other eventualities.

We have started saving towards the boat-store rebuild project so that we have resources to back up grant requests when the time is ripe.

Looking Forward

Assuming there are no further waves of the pandemic, we expect to see the following:

- Discover Clevedon - The lake feature as an attraction on the new DiscoverClevedon website and promotional leaflet – aimed at attracting more visitors to the town as a whole – which was launched pre-Easter 2019 by the BID team.
- Schools - Will be able to engage with our registered instructors to use the lake as it suits them. This could be regular training session or a couple of days during the school's own “activity week”.
- Open water swimming events (provisional dates) – This summer there will be events for our open-water swimmers including the annual Clevedon Long Swim which has been running since 1928.
 - Saturday 14 August: Swim Run
 - Saturday 28 August Long Swim
- Triathlons – Portishead and Clevedon Triathlon Club (PAC-TRI) will be using the lake for training sessions, but so far nobody has come forward to run a public Triathlon.
- Musical Extravaganza Friday 2 October at Clevedon Community Centre.
- Drain-down and dredging 24 October. - 3 November
- Light Up the Lake Saturday 4 December, complete with lantern parade along the prom and entertainment at the lake.
- Tour of Bristol Old Vic Theatre, details tba

- Tour of Arnos Vale Cemetery, details tba

Development Vision:

We don't want to stop at renovating the lake itself. Further changes can enhance the value of the lake to the community.

1. **Artwork:** A lake blackboard, with regular turnover of poems from local poets. This came from an initiative by Clevedon Community Bookshop as part of their Literary Festival planned for June 2021.
2. **Boathouse expansion:** The current Community Boat Store is a great asset but could be so much better. We envisage a total rebuild replacing the existing buildings with a bigger and more convenient building which could also provide toilets, teaching space and other facilities. It would also give us the resources to launch water sport activities for people with disabilities. This would need to be a high-quality building because of its position on the sea front, so would be an expensive project requiring long-term planning and financing. We have started building a fund for this, as you can see from our accounts.

Joe Norman, Chair

on behalf of Marlens Trustees

Receipts & Expenditure

Marlens

For the year ended 31 October 2020

	2020	2019
Receipts		
Bucket Collections	1,530.76	1,273.90
Collection Goblets and Lakeside Boxes	4,401.14	1,421.98
Events	1,437.65	12,825.70
EveryClick Donations	1,244.42	234.84
Fundraisers	2,739.63	1,068.00
General Donations	581.32	1,029.58
Gift aid	1,033.52	1,330.21
Interest Income	35.50	61.85
Lake hire	845.00	3,685.00
Lottery income	5,430.00	3,705.00
Membership	8,138.00	3,222.00
Sales of Goods	219.35	741.88
Total Receipts	27,636.29	30,599.94
Expenditure		
Cost of Goods Sold	-	504.00
Event Costs	889.06	3,718.13
Fundraising & Volunteer Costs	958.03	350.17
Lake Camera & Connection	504.00	640.14
Lake Equipment (not capital equipment)	6,730.62	568.49
Lake Improvements	840.00	-
Lake Repairs & Maintenance	883.08	401.28
Lake Samples	240.00	450.00
Lottery Prizes and Expenses	2,418.52	2,055.00
Silt Removal	8,892.00	11,404.14
Website	935.00	610.00
Total Expenditure	23,290.31	20,701.35
Gross Surplus of Funds	4,345.98	9,898.59
Administrative Costs		
Audit & Accountancy fees	148.80	120.00
Bookkeeping, Calendar & Membership Fees	2,156.30	2,548.34
Insurance	1,624.20	258.00
Paypal & EveryClick Fees	185.20	59.49
Postage, Freight & Courier	117.39	8.04
Printing & Stationery	112.04	10.00
Secretarial Fees	180.00	-
Travel - National	-	40.00
Total Administrative Costs	4,523.93	3,043.87

	2020	2019
Net Surplus of Funds	(177.95)	6,854.72
Net Surplus of Funds	(177.95)	6,854.72
Surplus of Funds after Taxation	(177.95)	6,854.72

INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF MARINE LAKE ENTHUSIASTS (MARLENS)

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 31st October 2020, which are set out on pages 3 to 5.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 145(5)(b) of the Act); and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's Statement

In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:

- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act;
- to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or

2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed



Newsham Hanson
Chartered Certified Accountants

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1-5 Bellevue Road
Clevedon
North Somerset
BS21 7NP

Date.....5/2/2021.....