

Just let us take care of Stratton pond

PARISH councillors are fed up waiting to find out whether they can develop a neglected spot into a flourishing open space. Since 2009, Stratton St Margaret Parish Council have been asking Swindon Council to transfer authority over Claridges Lake to them in order to develop the land into a local open space. Councillor Nigel Chalk (Stratton St Margaret) said: "They only occasionally prune the trees and cut the grass. "Our grounds team is less than half a mile away and we would take over that park and make a good job of it. We'd like to turn it into a proper park, plant it out, put flowerbeds in and make it a nice place to visit. What we'd also like to do is sort out the lake. Local kids have always fished it and the borough council want to stop it. They put signs up saying you can't fish in it, but the kids just jump in and pull the signs out. We know it's been fished for 60, 70 years and we'd like to clear it out so people can fish it safely again. "It just needs a general tidy. We can't understand why it is taking so long."

Despite an initial transfer date of 2011 being suggested by the parish council, it is still waiting for the land to be handed over. Councillor Richard Hurley, (Con, Covingham and Dorcan) Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Housing and StreetSmart, said: "We are keen to work with parish councils and pass on, where appropriate, land and assets which it makes sense for them to be responsible for and look after. "The transfer of seven new sites, including Claridges Pond, and the extension of leases of five other sites are currently in the pipeline and we are liaising with Stratton Parish Council on "The plans showing the areas to be transferred are nearing completion, subject to the Parish Council's approval." "We have also been liaising with the Parish Council about the war memorial land, a proposal which we fully support, and it is one of the sites included in this transfer of assets." The parish is keen to take over Claridges Lake and other stretches of land over Stratton, in order to develop the spaces for local residents. Paul Russell, clerk to the Stratton St Margaret Parish Council, said: "It makes perfect sense to do that and did so in 2009. At the time we were really keen to take on because we have the resources to do it. "We're here to add value to residents' experience of the parish."



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