

## **BLUE GREEN ALGAE (CYANOBACTERIA) – WARNING**

A recent warning has been issued to visitors and dog walkers to Caldecotte Lakes, (North and South) Milton Keynes, where the Parks Trust have reported a potentially toxic bloom of Blue Green Algae to the Environment Agency. Their web site advises that due to current weather conditions there are likely to be other incidences of Blue Green Algae in other water bodies and caution is advised.

The algae can occur in river in inland waters, estuaries or the sea when favourable conditions occur (sunny weather, high water temperature and good nutrient levels). “Blooms” with large amounts of algae appear as a scum on the water which may look like paint, jelly or clumps and can vary in colour from green through to reddish brown. There are many different species of blue-green algae only some of which produce toxic compounds, but you can't tell by looking at them so it is best to assume they may be toxic.

The algae which are toxic can cause severe effects on the liver and nervous system in dogs, in some cases leading to death. **We would advise all dog walkers to keep their pets out of the water as a precautionary measure** to avoid any potential exposure to algal toxins. Notices have been placed at Caldecotte Lakes as a precautionary measure. In addition, we would advise you to avoid exposure of yourself or your family to the water – less severe but still unpleasant illness can be caused in humans who have ingested or swum through algal scum.

Most animals with suspected exposure never show any signs – possibly because they have not been exposed or the exposure was to a non-toxic alga. However, should you suspect your dog has been exposed and it develops vomiting, trembling, weakness, a wobbly gait or collapse we suggest you contact your veterinary surgeon for advice as soon as possible.