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What's Beane Happening?

The newsletter of The River Beane Restoration Association – Issue 3 Spring 2013

Welcome

Once again a great deal has 'Beane Happening' and a national campaigning organisation has come to Watton at Stone to launch its '**Charter for Chalk Streams**'. The purpose of the organisation, including wildlife, conservation groups and river restoration groups from Dorset to Yorkshire, is to press the government and its agencies to radically reform water policies to enable England's endangered chalk streams to return to good health. We had the dubious honour to host the launch. I say 'dubious' because The Beane was chosen as one of the most over abstracted, most damaged rivers in the country. A photo call near the **much hated** Whitehall Pumping Station showed two of our local MPs, Stephen McPartland and Charles Walker, standing in the river in their ordinary shoes. They stayed dry!



*The 'beautiful Beane', a once famous fishing river is now, in parts, little more than a dried up ditch. **Come on Environment Agency, tell us you are going to close Whitehall** – that's right, still no announcement, but we live in hope!*

Key campaigning issues for the charter group include:

- Designation of all chalk streams as Special Areas of Conservation
- Impose a primary duty on OFWAT to promote Environmental sustainability
- Compulsory water metering and an education campaign to reduce water demand
- ... clear targets for replacing aquifer abstraction with surface supply and storage.

See the full charter by CTRL + click [here](#).

Notice of AGM

This will be held at 8.00pm on 12 June in Watton at Stone Memorial Hall located in the High Street. We are expecting speakers and presentations from Affinity Water, The Environment Agency, and Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT).

Topics to be covered will include:

The abstraction licence at The Whitehall pumping station

The Chalk Stream Charter Launch and what happens next

Progress on 'Beane' projects in the catchment plan

Hope to see you there - **ALL ARE WELCOME**

Beane and Mimram Catchment Plan

(CNTRL + click [here](#) to see the full plan.)

In this issue we are featuring 'The Lammas Project'. Here the river is plagued by ponding causing slow flows and silting, a straight channel resulting in no habitat variation, restricted light caused by overhanging trees and large numbers of invasive plants like giant hogweed (see photo) and Himalayan balsam. The plan is to cut a notch in the weir, construct deflectors and trim the canopy.

Representatives of the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and The Environment Agency Have met with the Parish Council and riparian owners to explain how the plan can benefit the river and the response was positive. We now await the final riparian permissions for the work to start. It will be good to start seeing some improvements in the parts of the river we have left.



Giant hogweed

Invasive Plants

Would you like to join a working party to get rid of them? Charlie Bell (HMWT) is organising Himalayan balsam working parties on the following dates:

*June 6th, 21st, 27th
July 20th, 25th
Aug. 17th, 29th and
Sept. 21st*

Let Bob know if you can help. Don't forget to let Bob know if you spot mink as well. His email is antheaandbob@hotmail.com

Beane Blockbuster!

Following the two recent films about chalk streams by WWF and HMWT which featured The Beane in some scenes, we decided to make a film giving information and education exclusively about **our river**. How it used to be, what happened to make it the impoverished stream it is today, and what is being done about it.

We want to highlight the disconnected policies of the various government agencies, and have interviews with the Water Company, Environment Agency, MP's and if possible a Government Minister.

The University of Hertfordshire have agreed to produce the film. The scripting has started and the first shots were captured at the Chalk Stream Charter launch on 23 May. Filming should be completed during the summer and editing will take place after that with an expected launch date sometime in the autumn.

Watch this space!

CNTRL + click here to visit our sister organisation's web site, 'Friends of the Mimram', for access to an important consultation and petition.