



Welcome

After a strange winter, that seemed to wait until March before really biting, Spring finally feels like it is on its way. Daffodils have been confused, but the sensible snowdrops have just carried on as normal. So have the invertebrates and other creatures living in the upper Beane which has now been flowing without interruption for a couple of years. Without doubt this has been helped by Affinity Water bringing forward some of the promised reduction in abstraction and we are all looking forward to the final reduction which will take place by April 2018. The new pipeline is ahead of schedule and so a large number of people are making plans to take advantage of the increased volume of water.

In this Issue

- Pipeline ahead of schedule
- Water voles
- River Walks
- Improvements and a new walk at Waterford Marsh
- Road Shows
- Art competition
- Merchandise

A New Pipeline to Save The Beane



Affinity Water are going to bring water from a less environmentally damaging source at Sacombe and use it to replace the water that is currently pumped from the Beane aquifer. The picture shows pipes being laid from Sacombe to Whitehall where they will connect with the network that serves the Stevenage area. If you take a trip along the lanes nearby you can see the works taking place. The completion date for laying the pipes is September this year and so far they are ahead of schedule. Next pumping stations, valves and other electrical works will follow on so that everything will be ready for April 2018.



In the last issue of this news letter we reported on a project to reintroduce water voles on a section of the River Stort. At our meeting on 25th February we were delighted to hear that the initiative has been a big success. In fact, the people responsible are now looking for a second river to repeat the exercise - one that has been mink free for several years. Watch this space...!



River Walks

These were popular last year and we will have some new ones this year. The first is a guided walk on Waterford Marsh and Heath to see the river improvements carried out in 2015. (see below) This will be on May 14th for a 2 hour walk. Meet at 10.30 at the Vicarage Lane Car Park, for those with SatNav the post code is SG14 3LU.

Improvements along the Beane at Waterford Marsh



Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT) have recently launched a circular trail at Waterford, which includes some scenic sections of the River Beane, also a part of the Hertfordshire Way. The walk takes approximately one hour and starts from the Vicarage Lane car park entrance at Waterford Heath (SG14 3LU), a reserve managed by the Trust on the site of a former Tarmac gravel quarry. After joining the river alongside the Heath, the walk continues south into Waterford Marsh and then turns east into Great Mole Wood, to rejoin the Heath. Details of the walk will be available on the Trust's website (www.hmwt.org.uk) and a printed version will also be issued soon.

HMWT have recently made improvements to Waterford Heath, thanks to funding support and work parties of volunteers. New waymarked signs, interpretation boards, seating, fencing, gates and car park renovations have been added and overgrown trees and shrubs along the river, cut back. Similarly at Waterford Marsh, the River Beane and its flood plain has benefited greatly from major investment by Herts County Council's Countryside Management Service (CMS), the Environment Agency and other funders. The project has involved extensive works over the last three years to improve the water course and various wildlife habitats. Both CMS and HMWT have worked closely with Stapleford Parish Council in a successful partnership to make these improvements and to promote better access to the area. (See www.hertslink.org/cms for more information about Waterford Marsh.)

Road Shows

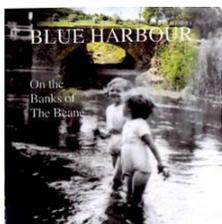
Last year we held several road shows at village fetes and we will do the same again this year:

Stapleford	2 May
Watton at Stone	30 May
Aston	3 July

Children's Painting Competition (Advanced Notice)

In 2015 we invited children from schools in the Beane Valley to enter paintings into a competition. There were several classes based on age and the winning pictures were included in this news letter. The schools were enthusiastic and so we will repeat it again this year. Notices will be circulated to schools in mid May and entries will be requested for the end of June.

Merchandise



Show your support for The Beane by purchasing our new RBRA car sticker (our logo + web address). It can go where your tax disc used to be. £1.50 including postage available through the 'contact us' link on the web site.

Some people have inquired about purchasing the title song from our film 'On the Banks of the Beane'. This is available on an album together with 9 other songs released by 'Blue Harbour' (Phil and Jim). It costs just £6 including postage and is also available through the 'contact us' link. All proceeds are being donated to the Herts and Middlesex and the Essex Wildlife Trusts. A reminder that the film DVDs are also still available through the website.

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