

What's Beane Happening?

The newsletter of The River Beane Restoration Association
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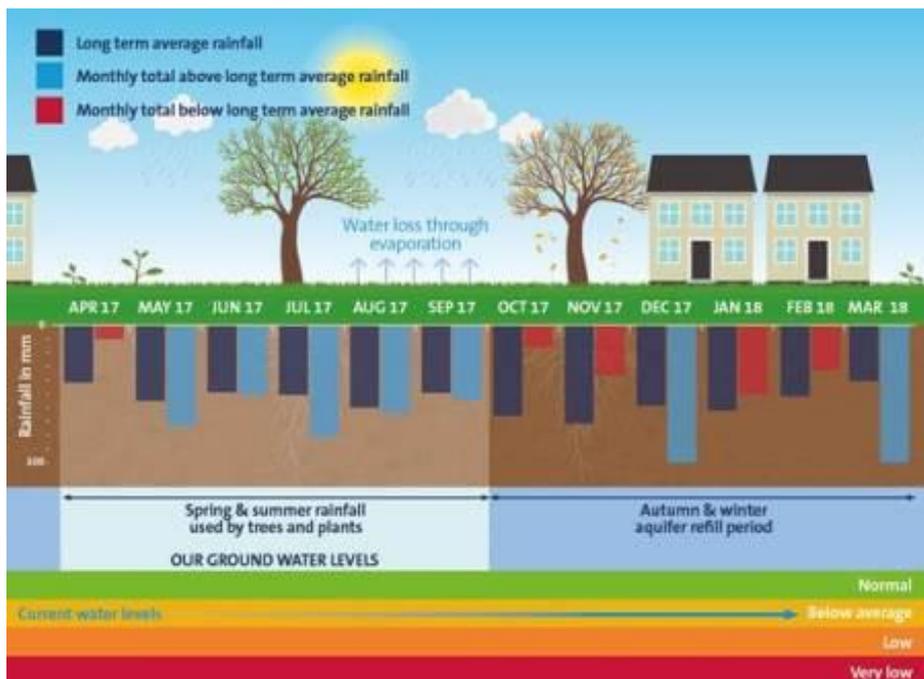
Welcome



Spring is finally here! As I write this newsletter we are enjoying some welcome warm sunshine after a long, grey and occasionally arctic winter. A winter that has been miserable, and although damp for most of the time it has not been wet. Then March arrived, and heralded almost six weeks of continual rain. Our dog's favourite walks involved wading, almost ankle deep, along muddy paths. Practically every day he needed a shower off when we got home, and if we weren't quick with the towel he gave us a shower afterwards! Comments from me like, 'How lucky it is that this weather has come during the

recharge period for the aquifer...' soon wore thin! However, the bore hole readings are now at their highest level since 2015 for the time of year. As a result, the upper river, which has been dry for the past eighteen months, has now started flowing again.

The above picture shows the pool at Aston (Stony) Ford, and the pictures bottom right were also taken this month once the river started flowing again at Whitehall Farm. (See the article below regarding frustrations about the ford at Whitehall Farm.) The graphic below has been taken from an Affinity Water publication and demonstrates that, despite the recent rain, groundwater levels are still below average and that we need to be careful about our water use to avoid future restrictions.



In this Issue

- The upper river is flowing again
- Groundwater remains below the long term average
- Frustration over Whitehall ford.
- GDPR – important notice
- Some thanks



Down stream from Aston Ford.



The two pictures above are where the river flows through Whitehall Farm, near the pumping station. You can see how straight the river is. Affinity water will be returning the river to its original course meandering through the meadow.

Frustration rises over Whitehall Ford

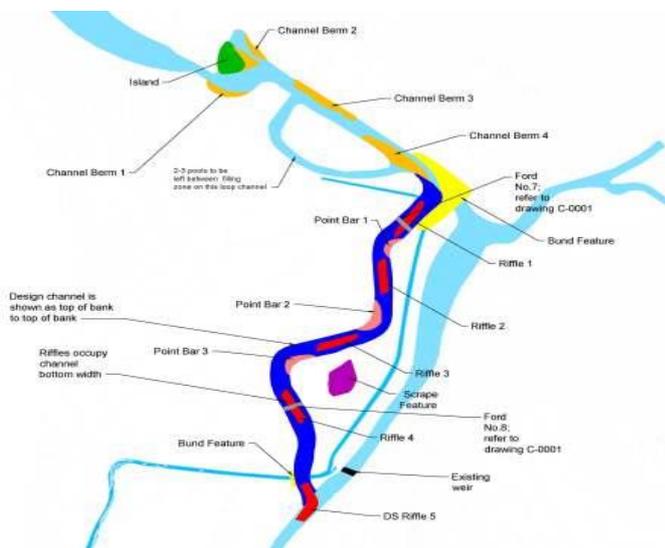
The ford at Whitehall has tubes which normally take the river under the road. At times of high flow, the water floods across the road. The Environment Agency and Wildlife Trust have advised that the tubes are not big enough to comply with current regulations and prevent migrating fish and other creatures moving up and down the river.

There has recently been a discussion involving Affinity Water, Hertfordshire County Councillor Ken Crofton – a strong supporter of the RBRA, Andrew Bott – the landowner, and the Highways Agency. The Highways Agency has not been persuaded to improve the ford citing lack of budget. We all have sympathy for the Agency, you only have to look at the number of pot holes in the roads. However, working in close co-operation with the Environment Agency and the Wildlife Trust, Affinity Water are spending millions of pounds restoring the river to its once former glory, and make no mistake, this work is of international importance (as attested by the World Wildlife Fund). Central to this work is ensuring there are no barriers to movement of fish and other creatures yet this overall plan is being thwarted because one tiny piece of river is the responsibility of Hertfordshire's Highways Agency who won't undertake this relatively minor piece of work. This appears to be another example of disconnected bureaucracies inadvertently conspiring to prevent progress, something the RBRA has fought against for the past 25 years. We will continue to fight, if you know anyone who can help please speak to them.



The ford at Whitehall where the pipes beneath the road are too small.

Affinity Water Continue to work on the Beane



Affinity water are continuing with a series of works on the Beane as part of their regeneration plan. The above diagram is just one example where a weir is being bypassed south of the Broadwater to allow free movement of fish and other animals. The dark blue section is a new channel. You can see the care that has been put into the design, including riffles (shallow rocky sections where the water is churned up) that are so important for river fly and other small creatures that are fundamental to the eco system. RBRA currently monitors river fly at ten sites to check on the health of the river. We want to monitor the newly created channels as well and therefore need more volunteers. Training will be provided. If you are interested please contact Bob Thornton for more details, antheaandbob@hotmail.com or 01920 427526.

Our thanks to Laurie Naish

Laurie has been the EA's biodiversity officer for the Lea Valley and has taken a keen interest in the Beane. She is leaving to take up a post in project management, but hopes to continue in a volunteering roll.

Congratulations to David Johnson

H&MWT Living Rivers Officer is leaving the Trust to join the EA in a fishery protection role. We thank David for his work on the River Beane and wish him every success for the future.

General Data Protection Regulation – Important Notice

To continue to receive our newsletters you must send an email to our secretary at philipjhewitt@yahoo.co.uk. Otherwise, as a result of new regulations which come into force on 28/05/2018 we won't be able to send you future editions.



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