

# What's Beane Happening?

The newsletter of The River Beane Restoration Association  
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## Welcome

In the Winter newsletter I commented on the dry winter (in fact the past three years have been very dry) and as we had had a wet start to February I asked people to keep their fingers crossed for a wet spell as Spring approached. It didn't happen, so the upper Beane still hasn't had a chance to recover, is mostly dry, and will stay like this throughout the summer despite any rainfall. We have discussed this situation at our meetings and in previous newsletters. Various solutions have been put forward, including digging out the springs that used to feed the watercress beds near Walkern before flowing into the river. We are not sure about the viability of that at the moment but probably we will just have to wait for nature to sort itself out. In the mean time let's be positive. So the picture in our welcome section is of a beautiful stretch of The Beane near Stapleford which is benefiting from the reduced abstraction at Whitehall. I dread to think what the lower river would be like if the previous level of abstraction was still happening.



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## Come to our AGM, everyone welcome

Our AGM will take place on Monday July 8<sup>th</sup> at Watton at Stone Methodist Church Hall and everyone is welcome. There are some important items on the agenda. Our activities have diversified over the years and we have moved from being a campaigning organization to one more involved with practical conservation. To support this change we would like to elect a Vice Chairman and a committee. The committee will help with forward planning and liaising with other organizations like HMWT. If you would like to be involved please contact our secretary [rbra.secretary@gmail.com](mailto:rbra.secretary@gmail.com).

There will be reports on our regular activities of borehole dipping and river fly monitoring. Again, if you would like to be involved contact our secretary. We hope to have a speaker on sustainable grazing on river banks but this is as yet to be confirmed and refreshments will be available at the end of the meeting. We still await further news on the possibility of reintroducing water voles to the river.

If you would like to see a copy of the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife trust water vole news letter CTRL + click to follow the link <https://www.hertswildlifetrust.org.uk/whatwedo/about-trust/news-and-publications> and scroll down to the 'water vole and non-native invasive species news letter'.



*A walk around the edge of fields in the Beane Valley reveals how dry and cracked the earth already is even though the picture was taken in April!*



## A nostalgic view of Whitehall farm



The picture to the left, taken a few years ago, shows the river flowing through Whitehall Farm. Affinity Water have plans to reinstate the original meandering route the river used to follow through this field before it was straightened. However, we do need some rainfall and work to be done on the pipe work at the nearby ford before this work can be brought to a successful conclusion.

## Secretary

Many thanks to our former secretary, Philip Hewitt, who did a great job but is now no longer able to continue. Our new secretary is David Standing. David is a long term resident of Walkern and has had an interest in the river since he paddled in it as a boy.

## News from Affinity Water

Water resources remain below average due to the dry start to the year. Groundwater is more likely to be replenished from rainfall during autumn and winter, when there is less plant growth and evaporation. October to March is the critical recharge period when rainfall is expected to reach the aquifers (porous rock where groundwater is stored), which are used for 60% of supplies. We are now heading into the spring and summer months and further recovery of groundwater sources past May is unlikely. One of the things that would help to preserve water for the environment and to ensure a continuation of domestic supply without restrictions is to create gardens that are more water efficient.

Here's how:

Choose plants that thrive in dry conditions, such as Alyssum, Geraniums, French and African marigolds, Petunias, Aquilgia, Campanula and Lavender. **Look for plants that can withstand full sun.** Move hanging baskets and pots into shady areas where possible. **If you are potting up or planting containers, use ones made from plastic, glazed terracotta or wood. These tend to lose less water than bare terracotta.** You can also use a small amount of gel crystals to retain water in pots. **Use mulches like bark chips or gravel to reduce evaporation (and suppress weeds).** Use a water butt to collect rainwater and water early in the morning or during the evening to reduce loss through evaporation.



**Congratulations to Peter Evernden and Rev. Jenny Gray** who were married on Easter Monday at Watton at Stone Parish Church. Peter, a long standing member of the RBRA, is one of our river fly monitors and was the project manager for our award winning film. The Bishop of Hertford officiated. We wish them a long and happy life together.

### **A walk along the Mimram on July 20<sup>th</sup>**

**Why not join us for this guided walk along our beautiful sister river, the Mimram. We will be meeting at 10.00am in the Thieves Lane car park of Panshanger Park. Post code SG142WN. Everybody is welcome.**

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