

Friends of the River Frome



Newsletter June 2014

www.fromeriverfriends.org.uk

Hello my river luvvers!

The weather recently has been definitely 'luvverly' so I hope you have had a chance to enjoy it. A stroll along the path from the town centre to Welshmill, or from the town centre along Willow Vale through Rodden Meadow is just the thing on a pleasant summers day, enjoying the cooling shade offered by the river greenery. A bunch of us River Friends did a bit of river strolling last week, but with waders on, getting down and damp in the river along Wallbridge to pull out some shopping trolleys (returned to their rightful owner) and various bike frames, metal posts and assorted bric-a-brac (returned to the recycling centre). A very productive time was had by all and it was great fun too! We just like messin' about on (and in) the river.

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The Mayor's Garden Party

As you know Friends of the River Frome were one of three charities chosen by the out-going mayor, Dickon Moore to raise money during his tenure. We were invited to attend his garden party to help out and display our publicity material. It was a lovely day with a large number of people attending and all proceeds going to his charities. He was able to raise £1000 from this event, and combined with the local film-makers evening at the Merlin Theatre, and his sponsored bike ride to Chateau-Gontier, the total raised for his charities was £2500! A fantastic achievement and we were very happy to receive our share of £825. This is a very welcome donation and we are extremely grateful to Dickon for his efforts on our behalf.

Festival Litter Pick



Come to the River Friends Festival Litter Pick Saturday 5th July 4-5pm

Outside the Cheese and Grain
Wear gloves and footwear suitable for slopes.
Children are the responsibility of the adults who bring them.



Progress on Projects

Mike Bull and Bob Sargent have been making progress on the Frome river strategy on a number of fronts. They have obtained planning permission for the Henley Way - Welshmill footpath (on the opposite side of the river to the existing path) and have been on protracted discussions with Network Rail regarding the section under the railway viaduct. This part needs a large timber ramp to get up to street level at Henley way and it has been a spatial puzzle to get it to conform (nearly!) with requirements for disabled access whilst avoiding the protection zones for the viaduct structure. However, a way forward has been found, and construction should start soon.

Meanwhile two footbridge crossings are being designed further upstream. One is at the foot of Adderwell and will cross over to the new Southfield development, when that gets underway. This should link the new

development to the footpath which runs upstream along the river and also to the path up the side of Adderwell. It is hoped that funding for the footbridge will be part of the planning settlement for the new residential area at Southfield.

The second planned crossing is less advanced, but is intended to link Saxonvale with Rodden Meadow, providing access across the river without have to walk up to the town centre and back down Willow Vale. Funding for this one is more speculative, depending on future planning decisions at Saxonvale.

The Upper River

For years nutrients and silt have been entering the upper reaches of the River Frome. There are effective ways of enabling farmers to improve this situation and the habitat in general. We had hopes of the Catchment Sensitive Farming project for the Frome which would have helped farmers to apply for European money but the scheme has closed due to lack of funding. We have not given up. Sue Everett and others are consulting with Ian Mock of the Bristol Avon Rivers Trust to try to maintain the momentum. Several of us have met up with him to talk about what we can do more strategically to improve the upper river. There may also be habitat improvement measures that can be taken. BART is now gathering views from 'stakeholders', i.e. river users, landowners and farmers, and organisations including FRF, to identify the best approach on all of this. A new environmental land management scheme will be introduced in 2015 and we are all hoping that this will offer farmers new options to help them restore habitats and reduce farm-based pollution.

Litter picks

On the afternoon of 5th June two River Friends and two Hope Frome stalwarts worked with Aster Homes and volunteers on the Mount. It was quite a challenge to find litter there, very unlike five years ago. We did manage to fill our sacks with stuff hidden in the vegetation of the Dippy.

Balsam Bashes

An adventure challenge is our need to attack Himalayan balsam while it is flowering. This is best done in the second half of July and in August. It offers a summer of healthy exercise! We will launch with a Festival event on 10th July when we will need as many experienced bashers as possible to guide new helpers. We start from outside the library at 10.15ish. Wear long sleeves, long trousers, gardening gloves, and appropriate footwear. Bring a water bottle. Children are the responsibility of the adults who bring them.

Further dates starting from outside the library will include:

14 July 10.30am

15 July 7.30pm

19 July 10.30am

Festival Town Walks

Dorothy-Anne will be leading some Mendip Health Walks along the river. Meet outside the library at 10.15am on 4 or 9 July for an interesting and friendly one hour.

A leaflet about these and many other walks can be picked up in the library.

River Meandering on FromeFM

<http://frome.fm/programmes/talk/meandering/> will give you a chance to hear various discussions along the river and elsewhere. The programme goes out live on 96.6FM at 4pm on 5th July and 12 noon on 12th July.

F.R.O.G.S wildlife walk 26th June

There will be a FROGS wildlife walk on Thursday 26 June, looking at moths and butterflies with Eve Tigwell. Meet at 2pm at the junction of Wallington Way and Vallis Road to walk down to Vallis Farm and back. Adults £2, children free but must be accompanied, sorry no dogs please!

