



Friends of the River Frome Newsletter November 2015

Hello to all River Friends.

It's been a busy summer this year with lots of Balsam bashing and the completion, at last, of the Henley Way riverside path. Hoorah! All excellent work by committee members and our lovely volunteers.

Please see the info regarding our upcoming AGM which will mark the end of an era when **Dorothy Anne Bryant**, long-standing member, stalwart, ex-Chair, and all-round fantastic citizen of Frome stands down from the committee. She has worked long and diligently in support of River Friends and she will be sorely missed. So come and wish her well for the future. I'm sure we will still see her helping out every now and again.

AGM - Tuesday February 9th 2016 at 7:30pm

We are pleased to welcome **Chris Stringer** as our speaker this time. He is Frome Town Council's Environment Officer and he will be talking about the Council's plans for enhancing the environment over the coming year. Chris has a number of projects in hand and it will be good to hear about this important and interesting work.

There will be the usual small amount of official business regarding Committee members, finances and work in progress. **The committee will definitely be much depleted due to Dorothy Anne's resignation, indeed the organisation of litter picks and Balsam bashing was her main responsibility and our current volunteer committee members are already pretty busy, so we are in DESPERATE NEED of one or two more people to help continue these activities. Please do consider offering your services, we are a very supportive team, and if you are up for it we'd be delighted to hear from you. Please contact our Chair, Nick on 01373 471687,**

nickray51@gmail.com for more information.

THE NEW RIVERSIDE PATH IS OPEN - TO 'THE OTHERSIDE'



After much hard work from our committee members Mike and Bob, the town can now boast a lovely new riverside path. It has been named 'The Otherside' and provides a quieter route opposite the Welshmill path, from and to the town centre, and also makes a nice circular walk in conjunction with the existing path. The path was built at the request of Frome Town Council from a proposal that appeared as part of Friends of the River Frome River Strategy document. We are very proud of this first concrete (well, earthy) result of Bob's report.

The project design was developed by Mike, with the grounds work executed by Mindset Training and the fine wooden shelter built by a team from Edventure. A brilliant community collaboration!.

BALSAM BASHING 2015 - Dorothy Anne's report

This year we concentrated on two stretches of the river. We were able to make a remarkably good job of them because we built on the success of previous years. The centre of Frome and upstream as far as beyond the Mount were cleared within several metres of the banks. Downstream from Witham as far as Witham Hall Farm, all was cleared except for a small deep stretch which caused difficulties after the late August rain. The fast, high water at this time also prevented our tackling a last few riverside plants from a boat.

I estimate 400 volunteer hours were spent working this year with about 300 of them done by Duke of Edinburgh bronze award volunteers from Frome College. In small groups eleven of them cleared the strip from the Retreat to beyond the Mount both early season and again in September. Some also helped at Witham.

Judy Hosegood got small teams of us working downstream from Witham Friary and our member Richard Ackroyd and the tunnels

group were able to keep the town bridge area clear. Myself, Peter Hoare, Nick Ray, and Des Harris went after awkward plants on the river verges.

The council cut the banks in August which dealt with the last few plants in the centre of town. Riverside owners have done their bit. The major disappointment was that the Asda Nature Reserve was out of bounds because of nesting and by September riverside plants were in seed.

Next year we plan to start work in June. Judy hopes again to lead parties near Witham and a boating and wading group plans to survey downstream from Wallbridge.

WILD FLOWERS IN THE TOWN CENTRE

Wild flower seed has been broadcast along the riverbank at Chateau Gontier Walk by Chris Stringer and his team. They are hoping that they will germinate ok and bring some welcome colour and interest to the town centre.

ENVIRONMENT AGENCY PROJECT TO IMPROVE FISH HABITAT

The Environment Agency (EA), they who manage the British waterways, are proposing two pieces of work to improve the fish habitat along the River Frome. Work will be done using woody debris and rocks to develop pools and riffles to encourage fish breeding and better environments for the fish to thrive.

One site will be alongside Rodden Meadow and the other down beyond Weylands. The EA, who have received a grant of £8000 for the work to encourage fishing along the river, is keen to involve as many local groups and volunteers as possible to offer time and effort to complete the work and effectively boost the size of the work achievable. Friends of the River Frome, along with the Town Council, Frome Fishing Club, Bristol Avon Rivers Trust and The Trout Trust have already met to start planning the work. It is hoped that the work should be completed by late Spring next year.

We'll keep you posted of volunteer opportunities.

RIVER POLLUTION - WHAT CAN BE DONE?

We had the following letter published in the Frome Standard recently encouraging awareness of water pollution. Please let us know of any incidents you see.

"Friends of the River Frome has come across a number of pollution incidents affecting the River Frome and its tributaries over recent months,

and would like to take this opportunity to ask everyone to keep an eye out while out and about along the river.

It is important that signs of river pollution are reported immediately to the Environment Agency on 0800 807060 so that they can (1) record the incident and (2) do something about it. Signs of pollution include foam, cloudy water with an unpleasant smell and, where oil or diesel is involved, an oily sheen. Observations of slurry going into ditches and streams, or other polluted runoff from farms and fields, should also be reported.

If possible, take photographs and record the location on a map (e.g. you can do this using www.streetmap.co.uk, pinpoint the location and then read off the x, y coordinates). Once you have made a report to the Environment Agency please email a copy of your report to contact@fromeriverfriends.org.uk, as we intend to compile our own "State of the River" report."

<<<< **THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT!** >>>>

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