

NEWSLETTER NUMBER ONE

CURAT



CAM UPPER REACHES ACTION TEAM

LATEST NEWS

Weedkiller

We approached the Environment Agency about the potential flood risk caused by the river becoming choked with weed. Their response somewhat alarmingly, was to tell us of their intention to spray the centre of the water course with Glyphosate, a weedkiller with a very questionable environmental impact. Cam Valley Forum had also become aware of their intention and issued a strong letter of protest to the EA. We await their response. It is extraordinary that the EA, of all people, would consider this action appropriate. They have been doing it for a number of years apparently.

Otter sighting

On a much brighter note at the beginning of August there was a rare sighting of an otter at Horse River Green in the centre of Great Chesterford. Tell us if you see one and any other exciting wildlife. Send pictures too and we will hope to make them available to all. We are fortunate that in spite of everything there is still a diversity of wildlife along our river.

Facebook

Please join our [Facebook group](#) to both receive and provide latest news on the river. We also have an [Instagram](#) for sharing photos.

Welcome to our first newsletter

Can I begin by thanking you for expressing an interest in CURAT and more importantly, in our part of the River Cam. The response has been terrific with so far almost 40 people signing up. We have progressed rapidly from a two-man band of myself and Cllr Richard Pavitt.

ORGANISATION Having more people involved is great but it does mean we have to become more organised to maximise our impact. We would like to put in place an organiser for each village along the river starting at the river's source in Widdington through Newport, Littlebury and north to Duxford. Are you that person in your village?

SKILLS We need to know what your particular skills and interests are. It is not essential to being part of this group but there are no doubt some very useful skills among you – we just need to know who, and what. Here are some of the skills we can use:

Organisation – bringing together working parties, getting access permission;

Photography – for the record and also social media;

Science - for water testing (although it doesn't need to be super high level);

Observation - reporting on wildlife and events on the river;

Botany – helping to identify plants especially the invasive aliens;

Health and safety - for use with working parties;

Communication – for developing a presence on social media.

Please let us know where you are, if you are willing to take an organisational role, and if you can help with any of these skills. Email us at info@curat.org.uk

AFFILIATIONS There are numerous bodies involved with our river, from the Environment Agency through to local angling clubs. We will seek to keep in touch with many of them. However our main affiliation will be with the Cam Valley Forum, a well-established body which brings together various groups like ours and acts as a focal point, especially for lobbying. Take a look at their [website](#).

ACTION Our name is intended to say what it does on the tin, Cam Upper Reaches Action Team, with the emphasis on action. One of the first things we need to do (and quickly, before it seeds) is to get rid of the Himalayan Balsam that is plaguing the river. This [link](#) will take you to a fact sheet on Himalayan Balsam which explains how to get rid of this invasive (although visually attractive) plant. You can start to help straight away – this is the crucial time to attack the Balsam before it seeds. So if you can, it is safe to do so and you have permission to enter the riverside, get out there and do a bit of Balsam bashing! Preferably remove and take away the whole plant but if that is not possible just removing the flowering heads helps to slow down its march along our river.

Best wishes and thanks for becoming part of CURAT. Our river needs you!

Colin Day, chair