

# NEWSLETTER NUMBER TWO APRIL 2021



## LATEST NEWS

### BALSAM BASHING!

Getting rid of Himalayan balsam is a top priority for the health of our river. Lower down the river eradication efforts have been going on for some years but it is essential that balsam is removed from the upper river to prevent seeds carrying downstream. We aim to start in May concentrating on the Slade in Saffron Walden and the loop of the Cam running through Audley End. We have discussed this with the Estate Manager who is happy to give us access.

We envisage a couple of weekends working in half day sessions (it is quite physical work). We need to know your availability from mid-May to mid-June which is the peak time to remove the offending plants before their seeds drop. We also need leaders for each group. **PLEASE** respond if you are willing to get involved and we will put together a plan.

We have obtained a £1,000 grant from Affinity Water to assist with this task, which we will spend on equipment and inevitably, insurance.

### 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 Second newsletter

I am delighted to say that we have progressed rapidly from a two-man band of myself and Cllr Richard Pavitt to more than 80 people, and growing daily.

**RIVER HEALTH** it is also good to report as many of you will have observed, that the health of the river is much improved following the high level of rainfall through the winter. It has had a good flush through! The aquifer has filled and springs have begun to run once more. The water is generally clearer too, another indication that chalk water is flowing again. While the river has been 3 to 4 inches higher than last autumn we wait to see if this is maintained. It probably won't be unless we continue to have above average rainfall.

**POLLUTION ON TV** BBC Panorama recently aired a shocking report of how England's rivers are being knowingly polluted with sewage, a situation that has been going on for years. It was on BBC1 on 12th April and will be available on the iPlayer for a while.

**MEMBER INFORMATION** Kim Blake who lives in Wendens Ambo has kindly agreed to assist with member comms. It would be of great help for us to know more about you, particularly which village you live in and whether you have skills we could draw on. If you have not already responded to Kim's email on this subject please drop her a line at [Kim@curat.org.uk](mailto:Kim@curat.org.uk) (and please check your junk/spam mail folder and unblock this email address if it is there).

**LOCAL ORGANISERS** 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? Please get in touch.

**FINANCES** We at last have a bank account. It has taken nearly six months of endless paperwork. Until now the costs of launching and running CURAT have been financed from our own pockets. There is no member subscription for CURAT but if you would like to make a contribution, large or small, please get in touch with myself or Kim for the bank details.

**NATIONALLY** in the past nine months there has been a whirlwind of media coverage and resulting increased awareness of the plight of chalk streams and the appalling amount of sewage that is being discharged into rivers. Feargal Sharkey has been at the forefront of this and has campaigned relentlessly. After many years of neglect the plight of the nation's rivers is now very much on the Govt radar. We wait to hear more from DEFRA and the Environment Agency.

**MARKET POP UP** as soon as the weather is reliably milder and Covid restrictions allow, we intend to have a stall at the Saffron Walden Saturday market to distribute our leaflet and hopefully recruit more people to the cause. Most people don't realise the vital part rivers play in our ecosystem and maintaining biodiversity. The Cam is especially important to this part of Uttlesford.

**Don't forget, we need volunteers for the Balsam bashing sessions! Get in touch with myself or Kim Blake.**

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

**Colin Day, chair**  
[colin@curat.org.uk](mailto:colin@curat.org.uk)