

The Hanneys Flood Group Review of 2018 – 2019 Activities

Profile: One significant achievement has been the raising of the profile of the FG within the villages. Our active contribution at the Michaelmas Fayre and articles written for Hanney News prompted a number of village organisations, Hanney News, Hanneyfest, generous individuals and both East and West Hanney Parish Councils to donate much needed funds for general administration running costs and some for specific pieces of equipment. The Michaelmas Fayre itself donated funds to help the fitting out costs for the Hanney Hut. We are very grateful to all those people and organisations for their generosity. We have stable financial income for the ongoing running costs but will still need grants and donations for key items of equipment. A case in point is the requirement for a new trailer to convey equipment to work areas.

Improved Letcombe Brook: If you take the time to look at the Brook along any of Hanney's waterside footpaths from the railway, through the fields of Priors Court Farm and Weir Farm, beside Dandridges Mill, the British Legion, behind Brookside, past the Iron Bridge, Lower Mill to the bottom end of Philberds Manor's big field, (inadvertently christened Charlotte's Bottom when I left out the word field!!); you will see a fast flowing, crystal clear stream with stretches of gravel beds clearly visible.

How have we done it? Working alongside Mark Bradfield, Letcombe Brook Project Officer, we have opened up areas of Letcombe Brook by removing overhanging branches, brambles, etc; maintained a faster flow rate by allowing narrowing of channels through better management of weed and reed clearance.

We have also removed seven large trees since our last AGM. Tonight's case of wine was kindly donated by Charlotte and Dave following the removal of three trees from the Brook near their northern boundary. Thank you.

Himalayan Balsam: We have succeeded this year in pulling out the HB at least once from the railway line all the way to Charlotte's bottom field. Some patches have had two or three clearances as new seedlings sprung up in the cleared areas. In those parts of the Brook where we have been clearing away the HB for several years there have been fewer signs of it this year and in some areas only the occasional isolated plant. Through July we need to be vigilant and if you see any please pull it out carefully as it begins to flower from now on. Got to try and get it out before it seeds. A very big thank you to Phil and her teams for another big effort this year, between us all 100-man hours.

Water Level and Rainfall Monitoring: This important project has been rejuvenated after being dormant for a while. The augmentation of water to the Brook and extraction from the Brook will both cease during 2020. The Brook will then return to its natural levels of water – but nobody knows what that is. So it is really important that we collect some data of the existing water levels and how it fluctuates. (Grove FG have been collecting data for some years). Our aim is to get a rain gauge up and running to complete software and hardware protocols which can be applied to both the rain gauge and the water level monitor. We have

a site for the rain gauge and for the water monitor, most of the hardware (low cost), some further software needs to be written to interface with either the Hanneys website or the FG website. This will make the data accessible to anybody interested in the findings. Presentation in the form of charts, graphs, etc has already been demonstrated using freely available Google software. We are very nearly there. The project guru is David Price.

Hanney Hut: Last year we were waiting to hear if we had been successful in getting a grant from Scottish and Southern Electrical Networks for a new storage facility to replace the ageing trailer, and, for some special equipment to support the E+WHPC's Disaster Plan. Well we were successful and many of you will have seen the Hut behind the tennis courts. The Hut structure was finally completed early this month after installation damage was repaired and the additional door security installed. Massive thanks to Keith and David Stubbington for masterminding and actioning the building project, especially when both were committed to their own projects at home. Thanks to the army of volunteers who did the labouring and skilled jobs with such enthusiasm during three weekends in the spring.

We just need to complete the fitting out before transferring equipment from the trailer. We have a plan, some materials and hopefully, enough carpentry skills. The donation from the Michaelmas Fayre has helped with the costs of the lighting in the Hut.

Shortly we will have a horsebox trailer or garden shed for sale, please spread the word if you know anyone who may be interested. £250 secures the sale!

The year ahead:

Complete the rain gauge and water level monitor project. Roll out more water level monitors when proving has been completed.

Integrate the FG, The Nigel Eady Community Woodland and Disaster Team resources within the Hanney Hut facility.

Continue to support the Letcombe Brook Project in managing the Brook primarily to reduce the risk of flooding and to enhance the opportunities to create diverse wildlife habitats.

Continue to build up relationships with the major landowners and residents whose properties boarder the Brook and other village water courses.

Support the Parish Councils over Riparian Rights and Responsibilities – continue to promote understanding for house holders in particular.

Continue to reduce Himalayan Balsam until eliminated.

Develop a litter trap pilot for the Brook under Charlotte Hodgson's initiative.

Clive Manvell

The Hanneys Flood Group Committee