

The Hanneys Flood Group Review of 2019 – 2020 Activities

Hanney Hut: At the beginning of this year we “just” needed to complete the fitting out of the Hanney Hut before transferring equipment from the old horsebox trailer. We had a plan, some materials and it turned out, enough carpentry skills to do this. The donation from the Michaelmas Fayre 2018 helped with the costs of the lighting in the Hut. We thank Keith Chisholm for much of the fitting out with assistance from David S and me. Costs were minimised through recovering spare timber from various villager’s building projects and the shelving donated from de-cluttering activities!

Having completed the fitting out we set about spending the remainder of the SSEN Resilience Grant on the equipment they had approved before the deadline at the end of the year. Since then we have filled in the equipment gaps with purchases from HFG funds. The most notable additional item was the generous funding from EHPC for a new trailer to take equipment to where it is needed. We have also received funding from the 2019 Michaelmas Fayre for some more specialised items. We sold the old horsebox trailer.

This is an appropriate opportunity to thank the neighbouring Hanney Tennis Club for their cooperation with the construction phases and continued provision of services for the Hut and to WHPC for the lease of the land on which the Hut sits.

The accommodation of the HFG, The Nigel Eady Community Woodland and Disaster Team resources within the Hanney Hut facility has been completed. We have a building fit for purpose.

Profile: HFG has maintained its positive image in both villages mainly through the monthly working parties, active contribution at the Michaelmas Fayre and articles in Hanney News. Both East and West Hanney Parish Councils continue to donate essential funding for general administration running costs and some for specific pieces of equipment. We have stable financial income for the ongoing running costs but will still need grants and donations for key items of equipment.

Improved Letcombe Brook: The Brook continues to flourish from the work undertaken by the HFG in conjunction with Mark Bradfield the Letcombe Brook Project Officer. Just take a look anywhere from the railway line to beyond Philberds Manor. Mark has made spectacular impact to the Brook banks in the fields alongside Philberds Manor clearing brambles, opening access to more light, enabling more diversity, and removing several fallen trees and many more overhanging branches this year. Wildlife is flourishing with increased reports of otter activity in Grove and Wantage.

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. Despite Lockdown some areas 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.

Water Level and Rainfall Monitoring: This important project has been rejuvenated after being dormant for a while. The augmentation of water into the Brook and extraction from the Brook ceased early 2020. The Brook will return to its natural levels of water – but nobody knows what that is. We need to see how it settles down after the wettest February on record and the hottest May!

The year ahead:

Looking for a small team to commence mapping project; 2-3 people should be enough.

Complete the water level monitoring project.

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 Brooks and other village water courses.

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

Continue to reduce Himalayan Balsam until eliminated.

Acknowledgements

The Hanneys Flood Group is indebted to East and West Hanney Parish Councils for their ongoing support through permanent funding and donations for equipment. Also, a debt of gratitude to the Michaelmas Fayre fund for its donation for equipment in the Hanney Hut.

We also extend our appreciation to Mark Bradfield, Letcombe Brook Project Manager for his enthusiastic support of the monthly working parties, for developing relationships with village land owners and for his advice and guidance of measures to improve the diverse habitats for the wildlife that currently flourishes in the Brooks.

Items we would like some help with sourcing

Old plastic garden table to cover the generator if it is raining. Needs to be collapsible and the legs need to be in each corner, top needs to be complete. It does not need to be load bearing but someone will put something on it for sure.

Looking for funding in the region of £400 for a gazebo or other shelter such as the Coleman 5x5 metre shelter, including walls. Needed as a temporary shelter for any residents or volunteers out in the open during a disaster scenario – hot or cold.

Outright purchase or regular hire of a high-pressure water jet to clear blocked culverts and other watercourses.

Clive Manvell

The Hanneys Flood Group Committee