



Updates from:

- Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership
- Rivercare Grantham
- Lincolnshire Rivers Trust
- Environment Agency

Welcome to our new newsletter.

A lot has been going on in the catchment and to celebrate this and keep everyone up to date we bring you the first Witham Catchment 'Partnership News'.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to this inaugural copy, please forward to anyone who might be interested in the work of the partnership.

You can find out more about the Witham Catchment and our plans for the future at lincsivers.org.uk/caba/witham-catchment-partnership

Greater Lincolnshire Nature Partnership

Water vole conservation: A small working group has been established to consider new approaches to mink control in an effort to conserve Lincolnshire's water vole population. The advent of new remote monitoring technology provides an opportunity for a wider scale, coordinated approach to mink control rather than short-term funded, ad hoc efforts which see mink rapidly recolonise once they come to an end. The group, formed out of the Rivers and Wetlands BAP Habitat Group is looking at submitting grant bids to test the new technology and understand how well it works in rural Lincolnshire before looking at how it could be scaled up across the area. The pilot will also help to provide a better understanding of water vole and mink populations as well as potential impacts on other species such as kingfisher and moorhen. Attempts are also being made to raise awareness at a national level of the need for a coordinated approach towards mink eradication.



GLNP conference: Booking is now open for this year's GLNP conference which will be focusing on net gain and natural capital. The event, Drivers of change, will be looking at opportunities and challenges presented by both of these increasingly important concepts and then looking at how they may link to nature recovery networks. The event takes place at The Showroom in Lincoln on Wednesday, 6 November. To book your place please email or call 01507 528384. [Flyer attached].

Rivercare Grantham

The Group celebrates its 15th anniversary this October. Affiliated with Grantham Civic Society, we have carried out nearly 90 clean ups since 2004. In this time, we have seen a consistent amount of litter strewn across the river banks and in the river itself, but, more recently, the quantity of detritus recovered has been reducing. We can other put that down to a greater awareness of the problem and a change in the public's behaviour, perhaps influenced by recent media reports. However, there is still a need for our regular 'picks' and a constant review of the river and it's local environs.



We have a good relationship with the Environment Agency who help with the larger, more difficult recovery operations. April saw perhaps one of biggest clean-ups. As part of the Great British Spring Clean promotion and supported by the Lincs Rivers Trust, 45 volunteers turned out for a bumper morning. This year, in addition to registering some 220 volunteer hours and collecting nearly half a tonne of rubbish, we have introduced some additional innovations. We are separating clearly recyclable materials during the pick, allowing the Council (who continue to support us) to direct them into their recycling stream.

The blight of the cigarette butts continues. Following a meeting with Jason Alexandra of Rubbish Walk recently we have also started collecting these separately. Containing micro-plastics that will only linger indefinitely in the environment, surprisingly, these can be recycled as well.

Stretching our brief slightly, a number of our volunteers have started monitoring nine sites of local rivers on a monthly basis. The Fresh Water Watch measures phosphate and nitrate levels, reporting back to a central database where monitoring allows potential pollution incidents to be spotted earlier and dealt with. This project has the support of Lincs Rivers Trust. Linking to a Biodiversity Group set up by Wyndham Park volunteers, a duck count has been carried out to monitor the resident wild fowl population. We are also evaluating the possibility of installing 'duck tubes' (early next year) on the river as it runs through Wyndham and QE Parks. It is hoped that these will reduce the predation of eggs and ducklings before they have a chance to enjoy life on the river. The next RiverCare events are planned for 21st September and 23rd November. For more information or to get in touch, find us on Facebook!

Alongside the fantastic efforts of Grantham RiverCare, in the Witham Catchment we also have volunteer clean-up teams in Lincoln, Sleaford and Horncastle. They have spent the summer battling Himalayan Balsam, alongside regular litter pollution! All of the groups are always looking for more enthusiastic volunteers, and paddlers are especially sought after. If you would like any more information, or know of someone who may be interested in one of our groups, please contact rivercare@keepbritaintidy.org"



Lincolnshire Rivers Trust

Inspiring the next generation The past 7 months have seen us engage with almost **400 children** from **9 different schools** across the county. Activities have included designing, building and racing mini rafts, stream dipping and EmRiver activities for Geography GCSE students in Scunthorpe. We have also successfully trialed both the Mayfly in the Classroom and Eels in the Classroom pilot projects.

Mayfly in the Classroom engages primary school children with their local water course to experience the outdoor classroom first-hand. This cross-curricular project enables the children to pull on their wellies and actually get into the stream to explore the river habitat for themselves, kick sampling to discover the variety of freshwater invertebrates that call the stream home.



Eels in the Classroom provided tanks of elvers in three Primary Grantham Schools and one in the Wyndham Park Visitor Centre for all to enjoy, the children (and park volunteers) are responsible for feeding and monitoring the elvers as well as cleaning the tanks.

The release event in Wyndham Park was extremely well attended with almost 200 people, including teachers and children from the

schools involved as well as their families and friends, coming along to see off the elvers as they embark on the next phase of their life cycle.

HLF Success! We are really excited to have been awarded our first Heritage Lottery Fund grant. Our project 'Reconnecting the Witham' will give the people of Grantham the opportunity to learn more about the Witham and the wildlife that lives there, we are also building a rock ramp fish pass in Queen Elizabeth Park and undertaking some habitat improvements alongside Dysart Park, update in the next issue.

With the help of our volunteers we have...

- Planted over 1500 plug plants and sown 1kg of wildflower meadow seeds
- Improved almost 200m of Lincolnshire's Limestone Becks – installing berms and deflectors to improve flow and habitat
- Created the Branston Bird and Bat Box Trail – installing 15 nest/roost boxes around the village
- 'Bashed' hundreds of Invasive Himalayan Balsam plants along Nettleham Beck in Sudbrooke and Riseholme
- Tidied up a 'jungle' in Branston

Environment Agency

Floating Pennywort The Environment Agency are continuing to work to eradicate the highly invasive floating pennywort within the Lower Witham system. So far we treated and surveyed and treated more than 50km of the main river and its tributaries. The good news is that treatment is working and there is a general decrease in the volumes we've recorded. However, we still need to focus our efforts to ensure we achieve total eradication. We'll continue to work in house and with partners to deliver this crucial work. If you spot and floating pennywort please report this to our incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60". The photo shows Pennywort before treatment on the River Till upstream of Lincoln. The attached leaflet may also be of interest to anyone who wants more information.

Sustainable tree management on the Upper Witham The Environment Agency are also working with partners and our own delivery teams to look at more sustainable ways of managing trees on the Upper Witham. This looks at ways of balancing the need to keep channels clear where conveyance is required with protecting the valuable habitat that tree provide for the river. The photo shows a hinged tree, one of the techniques that can be employed. This provides great marginal habitat for fish and invertebrates while keeping the center of the channel free from obstructions. For those who would like to find out more, please see the attached guide.

