

Subject:	WODC Waterways Day
From:	Peter Kenrick
Date:	30 th November 2022
For information/discussion	
Summary of decisions or actions requested (including timing):	
Contact Thames Water, MP, Environment Agency etc. re: state of rivers (already agreed)	
General encouragement and support for community outreach events and volunteer initiatives including citizen science, working with Evenlode Catchment Partnership (ECP), Earthwatch, Wychwood Forest Trust and others.	
Financial implications: [please explain any costs associated with decisions or actions, and whether these have already been budgeted for]	
NONE	

WODC organised and hosted a Waterways Day on 18th November to give local residents the opportunity to learn about the current status of our watercourses and to engage with the organisations that are responsible for their management.

The all-day event included a range of informative talks, each followed by robust Q&A sessions. The participating organisations were:

- Thames Water – Richard Aylard
- WASP – Ashley Smith & Prof. Peter Hammond
- Evenlode Catchment Partnership (ECP) – Eoghan Concannon
- CPRE – Prof. Richard Harding
- OCC – Nick Mottram
- Witney Flood Mitigation Group – William Wareing
- Riverside Gardens – Kay Jerred & Margaret King
- BBOWT (re: Chimney Meadows) – Lisa Lane
- Blenheim Estates – David Green

The Environment Agency (EA) was invited but did not attend.

There were also display stands from the above organisations plus the Wychwood Forest Trust (WFT) which provided further opportunities for asking questions and networking.

Personally, I was able to use the opportunity to gain support from the ECP and WFT for a further community outreach event in Charlbury in 2023.

Water quality and sewage pollution were a major focus but there was also considerable coverage of flood risk and mitigation as well as details of excellent initiatives in progress and planned in many areas, often with major involvement of volunteers.

Predictably and justifiably, Thames Water (and water privatisation generally) came in for a high level of criticism. However, there was also general agreement that the problems extend beyond this into

failures of regulation (principally the EA), the planning system, building regulations and enforcement.

A few examples:

- Water companies are not statutory consultees on planning applications (but they are consultees on local plans). Leading to:
- Failure to plan for the provision of drainage infrastructure to support major new housing developments.
- Development of new sewage treatment capacity requires detailed information about the location of future housing that is not available from the planning system
- Developers cutting corners by feeding rainwater runoff into foul sewers, often without penalty due to lack of regulation and enforcement
- Government failure to implement proposed legislation to ban wet wipes that do not meet “flushable” standards.
- Etc. etc.