

Dear Member/Supporter,

Welcome to the latest issue of *Flow*, the newsletter for *MW* members and supporters of the Maidenhead Waterways project.

First Boat on the waterway (!!) - As part of an exercise to survey the interim channel depths north of the A4/St Cloud Way, we launched *MW's* recently acquired service boat "Marmalade" at Town Moor and rowed down the first section of the enlarged waterway. Although there remain barriers to through navigation, and the downstream water levels remain very low pending construction of the weir, we believe this is the first 'proper' small boat to use the waterway.



Chapel Arches Phase 3 - With demolition of the Colonnade complete, Shanly Group has commenced piling on the site, for the enlarged channel and underground (two storey) car park for the flats that will surround the new water basin. We have asked Shanly Group to cut some windows in the hoardings and to provide another *MW* display case that we can use to report progress as the development proceeds.

Our request to lower the hard invert under the open eastern arch in conjunction with Phase 3 is now a matter of public debate, with neither RBWM nor Shanly Group currently willing to fund the works. We will see if there is movement on this, but unless urgently resolved it is likely to become a *permanent limitation* to navigation in the York Stream, frustrating *MW's* long term strategy for the maximum size of boats which will eventually be able to use the waterway.

Weir tender - Tenders for the Green Lane weir, fish pass and boat roller have been received by RBWM who will now select a contractor. However, a delay by the Environment Agency in granting the necessary Impoundment Licence means the build is unlikely to get underway before the end of the year. In the meantime, water depths in the channel will stay as they are and the final environmental enhancements similarly must wait until the water levels are fully lifted.



Fish in the channel - We are delighted to see shoals of fish have already returned to the York Stream, even before the water has been lifted by the weir and fish/eel pass to achieve full water depth. Recent thunderstorms have stirred up sediment and make it harder to see what lies below, but last month these two 1-ft long Pike could clearly be seen - lying perfectly still and ready to strike - in the channel alongside Hines Meadow car park. Mink (a predator) have also been seen at Chapel Arches.



'Fishing' for Trolleys (..!) - An *MW* team recently spent a happy hour hauling out shopping trolleys from the enlarged channel by Hines Meadow car park. Four Sainsbury's shopping trolleys (predating the £1 deposit system - so no funds raised..!!), two contractors' safety fences and three large sandbags were recovered. All had been there a long time, reinforcing the need for a sustainable maintenance plan for the waterway, an issue we are pursuing with RBWM.

Borough Local Plan (BLP) - The draft BLP is currently undergoing public inspection. In the first hearings the inspector focused on the legal soundness of the plan, the role of the Green Belt and duty to cooperate (with adjoining authorities). The concerns *MW* raised in its submissions - protecting the water supply, a firm strategy for the waterway, etc - have yet to be discussed but could appear in the next round of hearings in the autumn.

Oldfield School/ Bray Cut Bridge - It is good to see the new footbridge over Bray Cut (next to Oldfield school) is finally now in place, with just the approaches to finish off. The build was delayed whilst slow worms (a protected species) were relocated. Once complete, it will improve access to and from the lower waterway, Braywick Park and the Nature Centre, while also providing a safe walking route for pupils from the Stafferton Way area to the school.



AGM Date - Please provisionally diary 6th November for this year's AGM. Full details and the final 2017/18 accounts will accompany the notices beforehand.

Magnet/St Cloud Way - Countryside ran its first consultation event last month on the emerging plans for the RBWM owned Magnet/St Cloud Joint Venture site. The plans are very sketchy at the moment and exclude the leased Ivy Leaf Club, which would prevent the restored waterway channels from being integrated into the development. *MW* is pressing for the site to include the water's edge and to maximise public access to the waterway - however, the Ivy Leaf does not wish to move.

MW subscriptions now overdue - If you haven't yet paid your 2018/19 subscription, please do so now either by post or directly into *MW's* bank account - instructions are on the web site. We can advise if you have already paid this year.

Volunteers - We always need more volunteers to join our regular channel clearances, which restart next month, and to help with other tasks. If you can offer just *a few hours a month* to help with any aspect of the group it would be appreciated, we can usually match interests to needs. Please get in touch at ***EMail:*** contactus@maidenheadwaterways.org or via the ***Web Site:*** www.maidenheadwaterways.org

Best regards,

Richard Davenport
Chairman of the Trustees

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