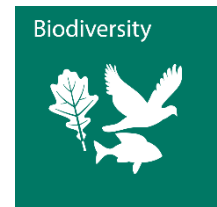




Meeting Summary:

Biodiversity Working Group Meeting – 08 May 2024

(was Wetlands Committee)



Attendees: William Newhouse (WN), Hester Sharpe (HS), Ceri Williams (CW), Dave Keating (DW), Iain Webb (IW), Claire Rogerson (CR), Sabine Eckhart (SE)

1. Trout Club Update (WN)

- WN talked to the group about the value of chalk streams, such as the River Cam, which are rare and ecologically significant waterways fed by springs emerging from chalk aquifers. These streams are characterised by mineral-rich water, particularly high in calcium, which maintains a stable temperature year-round. This unique environment supports a diverse ecosystem, including a wide variety of invertebrates, fish (especially trout), and larger predators like otters and herons, as well as rich plant life along the banks and in the water.
- The UK is home to approximately 80% of the world's chalk streams, with Cambridgeshire and East Anglia containing a significant portion of these. The River Cam, running through the heart of Cambridge, is not only an important natural resource but also has historical significance, as evidenced by features like Hobson's Conduit and Nine Wells Springs, which have supplied water to the city since the 1700s.
- Conservation of chalk streams is crucial for maintaining biodiversity. Trout populations serve as indicator species, reflecting the overall health of the ecosystem. Conservation efforts, such as those undertaken by the Trout Club, focus on improving habitats to support all stages of the trout life cycle, which in turn benefits the broader ecosystem. These efforts highlight the importance of chalk streams to local biodiversity and underscore the need for ongoing protection of these rare and valuable natural resources.
- The Trout Club works to improve habitats for different stages of the trout life cycle: a) Fingerling stage: Creating brushwood along banks b) Juvenile stage: Managing weed cutting to provide shelter spots c) Adult stage: Installing flow deflectors and creating deeper areas
- Recent improvements to breeding gravels have resulted in increased numbers of baby trout, but water quality and quantity remain a concern, with over-extraction and sewage treatment impacts noted.
- WN shared 3 files with the group that are viewable here: [Trout Habitat](#), [life stage images](#) and [Chalk Stream](#) video to explain more about this valuable habitat.

2. Grounds Team Update (HS)

- HS provided a grounds team update noting the plans for managing tree belts, meadows, and hedgerows across the Campus. Particular attention is being given to areas around the cricket pitch and Conference Centre. The team is also reviewing ditch management for flood prevention and biodiversity purposes, and developing replanting plans for areas disrupted by recent lighting projects.

3. Wildlife Trust Activities (IW)

- IW proposed introducing river fly monitoring on Campus as a citizen science initiative. He reported that wildlife walks have been well-attended, with notable sightings including a grass snake and a rare small yellow underwing moth. Glow worm walks will be taking place in June. The butterfly survey is currently in progress, with four participants. Results will be analysed and compared with the previous year's data. Things to consider are recruiting volunteers for river fly monitoring and to review wetland management from the Autumn.

5. Post meeting Updates:

- **CW provided a post meeting update about River Phosphates:**

"The water recycling centres (aka sewage treatment works) at Quendon and Newport are both to have Phosphorous removal included in their respective discharge permits. This means that they will have to meet a certain level of Phosphorus before any treated effluent is discharged into the river. The Newport site will have to comply with new limits by December 2024 and the Quendon site by 2027. There is nothing in the pipeline for Great Chesterford at the moment but I expect that at some time in the future the site will be required to remove more Phosphorus."

- **Urban & Civic (Rocio de la Chica) provided a post meeting update on the DA2:**

"Main hard and soft landscaping works are completed in the southern area (stockpile), only awaiting grass seeding works in the floodplain area, and wildflower planting for the BNG works for Thornton Building (the [attached plan](#) shows the spec of this planting and location). The contract for these works includes 12 months maintenance and this will be completed by Whitings

Landscape works to the areas around Thornton Building will start in October 2024, with a piece of earthworks being completed in late September once Kier has demobilised from site."

6. Next Meeting: 28 August 2024