



The Welland Rivers Trust is a charity dedicated to conservation, restoration, and education within the Welland Catchment Area



The Welland Rivers Trust Newsletter

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Aviva Community Fund Submission

by Geoff Gilfillan

We are pleased to announce that the Welland Rivers Trust have recently submitted a funding application to restore the Stamford Millstream and create a wonderful new heritage tourist attraction for Stamford town, as well as important wildlife habitat.

Background

The Stamford Millstream is an historic site. It was first mentioned in the Domesday Book in 1086 and the current river channel was cut around 1640. It originally fed Kings Mill, a corn mill, and the present Grade 11 Listed building dates to the 17th century. From here, the Millstream flowed alongside the Stamford Meadows, and formed an important part of the identity of this beautiful historic town.

However, work in the 1970s to divert water into Tinwell Pumping Station and up to Rutland Water (an important source of drinking water for much of South Eastern England), meant that the Millstream was cut off from the main River Welland that feeds it. A small water pump was built by Anglian Water to try to keep the Millstream flowing through Stamford. Despite great efforts by several local charities and businesses, over the years the Millstream has become completely silted and clogged up in some places, and although Anglian Water have rehabilitated the pump and its pipe to the Millstream, the stream is not



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flowing because of backup caused by debris in the stream. The stagnant water now provides little amenity or biodiversity value to the town and surrounding areas.

Our Request

We have applied for a grant of £6,000 to help us restore the Millstream to its former glory by:

-Clearing out intrusive plants within the stream that are creating a blockage.

-Coppicing and cutting back the trees, hedges and plants on the banks of the Millstream, some of which are now growing in the Millstream or overhanging the Millstream leading to leaf fall and blockage.

-Dredging the sections of the stream that have become silted and clogged up.

-Flail mowing of the Millstream bank to smooth out the bank alongside the footpath.

-Restoring a healthy water flow through the stream that can support a wealth of native riverine plants and animals.

After consultations with various authorities and landowners, it is clear that while there is local support and land access permissions for the work to take place, this work is beyond the abilities of local community volunteers. Considerable volunteer effort has already been put in, but it has floundered because of the scale of the clearing needed. A private contractor will need to be employed to cut back, coppice or



remove the trees that are blocking and overhanging the stream, and a digger will be needed to dredge and dig out the stream basin to allow the water to flow once more, taking care not to damage the historical clay lining of the stream.

As well as restoring a healthy stream for the community to enjoy, these improvement works will be important in improving the area for biodiversity as well. Clearing away invasive plants will encourage native riverine plant species to grow once more, and these plants will help re-oxygenate the now flowing water. In turn, the re-oxygenated water will encourage invertebrates back into the stream, which will also help support healthy fish, bird, and mammal populations. We hope our work will improve the area for nature and nature-lovers alike.

We will find out whether our funding bid was successful on January 16th. Fingers crossed!!

While our partnership between a local community and a rivers trust has already made great steps to improving the Stamford Millstream, we are immensely grateful for the chance of receiving Aviva's help to take the final step in improving the area as a community amenity and a better wildlife habitat.



Catchment Sensitive Farming Update

by Georgina Wallis



2017 has been a turbulent year for farmers and advisers alike. With volatile markets and BREXIT on the horizon there is a lot of uncertainty within the industry at the moment. Regardless, a good number of farmers across the catchment are engaging with the Catchment Sensitive Farming Project, which has been actively working with farmers across the Welland catchment to deliver advice on a range of topics, including Countryside Stewardship, pesticide handling, farm infrastructure and many more subjects. There have also been a number of events for farmers, including a Grassland Management event and a Cross Compliance update, both of which have been well attended by the local farming community.

2018 promises to be as much of a year of change. We hope to continue to provide practical guidance to farmers throughout the catchment and run a series of workshops and events to keep farmers up to date with any changing policy and practices.

Details on the New Farming Rules for Water have been released this month. From 2 April 2018, all farmers in England must meet some new rules to protect water quality. These rules are about standardising good farm practices that many will already be performing and offering a new

approach to regulation. Farmers will be able to use the knowledge of what is best for their land, for example by deciding when it is safe to spread fertilisers. The new farming rules are aligned with Basic Payment Scheme cross compliance rules to simplify the requirements for farmers already familiar with these rules. Farmers already meeting GAEC 4 (minimum soil cover) and GAEC 5 (minimise soil erosion) rules should comply with the new rules for soils. Guidance on this can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/farming-rules-for-water-from-april-2018>.

The Countryside Stewardship Scheme, originally launched in 2015, is also set to change for 2018. The scheme is being simplified with four new, simpler packages being made available to farmers: Lowland Grazing, Online Arable, Mixed Farming and an Upland Offer. Farmers will only need to select a small number of core options (minimum of 2 or 3) from between 7 and 14 options to secure a 5-year agreement. The Arable package will be piloted as

an online only application form and should be very quick to complete.

The Hedgerow and Boundaries Grant Scheme which allows farmers to use small capital options to improve farmland hedges, will be open again from 15th January 2018 and will close on 30th April 2018. Ensure you read the small print of the guidance - applicants for the lowland grazing, mixed and uplands packages will not be able to apply for the Hedgerows and Boundaries capital grants as well BUT the online arable package applicants can. Don't get tripped up.

For further information on Catchment Sensitive Farming and what is available, the new Farming Rules for Water or the new schemes becoming available, please contact Georgina Wallis, Catchment Sensitive Farming Officer on 07921 941734.



**A clear solution
for farmers**
CATCHMENT SENSITIVE FARMING

Community Tree Planting

by Geoff Gilfillan



Planting trees along the banks of a river is beneficial for both the people and wildlife who rely on the river.

For the wildlife living within and alongside the river, the trees will grow to create shade for the water, which will lower water temperatures in the summer months and increase dissolved oxygen in the water. This in turn will create better habitat for freshwater biodiversity. In addition, the trees will also grow to create riparian habitat for birds and mammals, including otters and kingfishers.

For land owners next to the river, and people who rely on the river, planting trees can bring about a range of different benefits, from life-saving shelter for livestock, combatting soil erosion, warming the soil to extend the growing season, and slowing surface water run-off to reduce flood risk. The trees will also provide habitat for game birds, attract vital pollinators, and provide an extra income through wood-fuel.

In addition, riverine tree planting presents a fantastic opportunity for the Welland Rivers Trust to work with local community groups, and to get people engaged in the conservation of their rivers.

On December 9th, the Welland Rivers Trust ran the first of several planned community tree planting events along the banks of the River Welland.

On a chilly Saturday morning, around 20 community volunteers helped to plant 50 tree saplings. The volunteers were mostly based in the Bringham and Great Easton villages, and included both young and old. The trees were of native British species that were appropriate to thrive in the wet

soils of a river bank (e.g. English oak, Aspen, Alder).

The planting took place near Harringworth, and overlooked fantastic scenes by the famous Viaduct. Afterwards, the whole group adjourned to the local pub for some well-earned refreshments and good company.

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The Welland Rivers Trust



UP-COMING EVENTS

Community Tree Planting

Location: Gretton

Date: January 27th

Community Tree Planting

Location: Duddington

Date: February 10th

Rivers Trust Spring Conference

Location: Dublin

Date: March 21st