

WRPS - Note to the GW PC Meeting 21 March 2024

Approximately **100 members**

Website **www.thewrps.org**

The aim of the WRPS remains “To restore all year round water and flow in the “Wilbraham River”*

This year has seen continuing engagement with the Environment Agency regarding how to improve the management and performance of the “Lodes-Granta Groundwater augmentation scheme”. This remains the only practical way to improve the river status until meaningful reductions in local public water supply abstraction occur – which will take at least 5-10 years or longer.

In addition we have engaged with the Cam and Ely Ouse Catchment Organisation (CAMEO) who are planning to collaborate with multiple interested parties to develop a “Cam Catchment Plan”. This will summarise the history and status of the catchment along with identifying current challenges and potential solutions.

Locally a meeting of “stakeholders” (local parish councils, farmers, landowners) has been held to discuss how to increase the profile of the river and further encourage the Environment Agency to improve support for the Wilbraham River.

The WRPS has organised several well attended public events – primarily the annual river walk, annual lecture and screening (with the Wilbrahams Environmental Group) of “Pure Clean Water”. This film highlights the challenges locally facing our chalk streams with the expansion of Cambridge housing and industry - and the shortage of water.

On a positive note the unusually high rainfall over the winter, along with clearance of the river weed and reed, has seen restoration of strong flow along the river and the return of some wildlife. There have been sightings of an otter and water voles near to Wilbraham Fen – demonstrating how the wildlife might be restored if all year round flow was achieved.

We encourage interested villagers to join us and help protect our river. There will be a WRPS plant sale at the GW Farmers Market on 13th April and a 2024 Annual river walk is planned for Sunday May 19th.

** The WRPS define Wilbraham River as the EA defined “Main river” from Hawk Mill AND the two tributaries from the headwater springs at Wilbraham Temple and Shardelowe’s Well Fulbourn.*