

Chair: Stephen Tomkins Secretary: Alan Woods Editor: David Brooks

Please email davidbrooks@btinternet.com with any items for him to consider for the next newsletter or to request that your address be taken off (or added to) the emailing list. Do forward this newsletter to anyone who may be interested.

The 'River' Beane, in the Chilterns



Charles Rangeley-Wilson

Where have all our rivers gone? Like the proverbial swan, the CVF may have been presenting a picture of serenity lately. Make no mistake, there has been strong paddling below, especially by our Secretary Alan Woods. The CVF statement Let it Flow! has been widely circulated and recognised as a landmark. We are much aided by the state of Chalk streams having caught a national mood. **Feargal Sharkey**, the widely-known pop singer has been using his voice to widen awareness with telling argument. There is now an **All Party Parliamentary Group on Chalk Streams**. **MPs Daniel Zeichner** (Cambridge) and **Anthony Browne** (South Cambridgeshire) are both members.

The time is ripe to send a handwritten letter to your MP expressing your despair at the state of our Chalk streams, asking him or her to take up your concerns with **Rebecca Pow, MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at Defra**. Whether your interest is over-abstraction, ecology, pollution, or whatever, you can be brief and to the point. For example: *I'm worried about phosphate from sewage works discharges causing eutrophication in our Chalk streams. I gather that current legislation, from 29 years ago, requires phosphate to be stripped out only from those sewage works that serve more than 10,000 people. This threshold should be reduced dramatically, to include all works serving more than 2,000 people, at least where sewage works discharge into Chalk streams. Please can you press the Minister, Rebecca Pow, to strengthen the relevant Regulations?*

Anthony Browne MP is working closely with us and Water Resources East, raising our concerns with Ministers and calling for a Defra Chalk Streams Task Force to develop a Chalk Streams Strategy. A new policy framework is needed to ensure that Chalk streams flow naturally, every year, throughout the year, in all weathers. He is also helping us to take our case to the regulators and water companies.

There is good news from the **Chilterns** (see photo above). **Affinity Water** has confirmed their commitment to stop or reduce groundwater abstraction from several catchments by 2024. Their future work will presumably be informed by the joint **Affinity Water/Thames Water/Arup project** to determine exactly what 'near-natural' flows they should aim for. **Dr Joe Stallard** is the CVF representative on their Advisory Panel. All we need now is for Affinity to extend its policy northwards to our groundwater supplying our upper Cam tributary springs. And for **Cambridge Water** to follow.

CVF has been in consultation with a wide range of organisations ranging from the EA (e.g. misuse of glyphosate) and the Chalk Aquifer Alliance to the Wild Trout Trust and Salmon & Trout Conservation. Powerful and robust responses have been submitted relating to a range of proposals from the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy, the Greater Cambridge Integrated Water Management Study, and the Defra Environmental Land Management policy discussion document, to the proposed relocation of the Milton sewage works.