

Chairman's Annual Report

(2021-2022)



We mark another year in which the support of our members has been welcome and deeply appreciated. We do need to believe that by taking action on environmental issues we really can bring about change.

Two and a half years ago we were able to raise the public's concern, locally, at the mismanagement of our Cam valley's ecosystem. For this historic abuse we have only ourselves to blame and that includes an element of climate change which is now making our soils even more depleted of water, with longer and hotter summers. Our local response to our political masters in 2020 was to supply them with a solution to the ills of the river Cam! This we did with *Let it Flow!* Since then much has changed locally and nationally.

Last year, the consultation on the National Chalk Stream Restoration Strategy was launched and its author Charles Rangeley Wilson spoke at our AGM. He has now reported and our key Cam valley streams are firmly on the map. He reminded us all then that it is (a) loss of flow and (b) physical channel modifications and (c) damage to water quality that are the **big three** that all need to be remedied. So these are now our prime focus.

After two years of pandemic we have all learned to count our blessings! So first, it has been greatly encouraging to us that our local politicians, of all parties, have supported restraint in development pressure and the intention at least to achieve 'water neutrality' with respect to further demands on the aquifer. This arrests the incremental historic harm to flows but still does not, of course, reverse it. The Environment Agency has, at last, declared us to be in a 'water stressed area' and has insisted that our local water companies must cut their present abstraction by 60-70%. Water Resources East and our three local water companies have all taken much more notice of our pleadings. We need to keep up the pressure. Cam Valley Forum can only influence change by both critiquing and participating in such bodies on the national stage. This we have tried to do.

On the second focus, (channel modification) we were cheered by the Greater Cambridge Partnership investing in a report on the physical ways of improving our local Chalk streams. This was largely the work of Rob Mungovan and Ruth Hawksley. GCP have also now started to find the needed money. We may need to help them raise more. We have heartily supported the Wildlife Trust inputs to Grantchester Meadows.

A year ago Michael Goodhart set up the 'Cam Safer Swim Initiative' with the hope of not only reviving the local swimming interest but enhancing greater awareness of neglected water safety issues for swimmers. It became clear that Sheep's Green (which is a Nature Reserve) could not alone take the expected pressure of a mass swimming focus there, but from our surveys and discussion it became clearer to us that, in the absence of evidence, an objective focus on water quality *was what was most needed* and there is still widespread support for improving the performance of what was then alleged to be an unsafe water environment.

Mike Foley then stepped up to begin our 'Citizen Science' programme of water quality testing. We are presently sampling (amongst other things) for two types of pathogenic bacteria – *E. coli* and intestinal enterococci – both recognised as good indicators of the presence of faecal contamination. Initial results do confirm that the greatest source of such pollution is indeed our upstream small rural sewage works. We are seeing a pattern of summer bathing waters being relatively safer than our waters in winter - when the levels might totally fail safe bathing water tests. Members will also know that Mike's successful work on eradication of Floating Pennywort has been famously effective as far down river as Bottisham Lock at Waterbeach. The Pennywort explosions, in summer months, were largely driven by river nutrient enrichment with phosphate. Now that these disgraceful phosphate pollution levels are becoming clearer we can make our evidence-based call to Anglian Water to up their performance. This problem is now both acknowledged by them and is hopefully driving their own ambition for improvement. Our members have been very supportive, in their volunteer time and physical monitoring effort. Members and businesses have also generously supported the considerable costs of our professionally conducted water quality analysis.

Your committee has been hugely supportive this year, not only through those mentioned above but also by our Hon Treasurer, Bruce Huett, keeping the books. Our Membership Secretary and Newsletter editor, David Brooks, has plied you with no fewer than 9 newsletters. Anne Miller has most ably and faithfully improved our now extensive webpages.

No report on this past year would be complete without a major tribute to **Alan Woods**. In the two years that he has served as our Hon Sec he has been masterly in his management of his brief, assiduous in detail, and immensely successful in influencing not only the Environment Agency, our three local water companies, the CABA catchment partnership and Water Resources East. Importantly he has also quietly influenced the national debate on saving Chalk streams as well. With his departure from Cambridge and his full-time job, to his well-earned retirement in Suffolk, he leaves behind a huge gap in our capacity. We wish him well.

Your committee also says farewell to Jean Perraton, Lawrence Wragg and Clive Brown, each of whom have been hugely supportive over very many years. We welcome some new committee members and are keen to engage those others whose skills we need and whose time they are able to give.

Stephen P Tomkins:
Chairman

March 2022

Appendix

The following CVF documents have been produced or published by us in the past year

(see <https://camvalleyforum.uk/reports-consultations/>)

- *Evidence submitted to House of Commons Environmental Audit Committee inquiry into Water Quality in Rivers (February 2021)*
- *Response to the OFWAT consultation paper PR24 and Beyond: Future Challenges and Opportunities for the Water Sector.(February 2021)*
- *Response to Greater Cambridge Chalk Streams Project (March 2021)*
- *Tentative Proposal for a Bathing Water on the River Cam (March 2021)*
- *Updating the EA determination of water stressed areas in England (March 2021)*
- *The Cam from Grantchester to Cambridge: A much loved river in need of our care. (April 2021)*
- *Response to the Environment Agency 2021 Herbicide and 'Weed' Management Programme (June 2021)*
- *Response to the proposal for East West Rail (June 2021)*
- *Recommendations to Anglian Water for improving sewerage infrastructure in the Cam Valley (July 2021)*
- *Response to Affinity Water drought management plan. (July 2021)*
- *Response to OFWAT: PR24: Creating Tomorrow Together (July 2021)*
- *'Cam Safer Swim Initiative' - Proposals for QR Signs for Upper River Cam (August 2021)*
- *Report on Water quality monitoring and testing in the Cam and its tributaries: bacterial indicators of faecal contamination, and phosphate and nitrate analysis (Batch 1) (August 2021)*
- *Response to proposal to relocate Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant (August 2021)*
- *Response to Cambridge Water drought management plan. (August 2021)*
- *Response to the Review of the Water Industry National Environment Programme (WINEP) (September 2021)*
- *Response to DEFRA consultation paper: The Government's Strategic Priorities for OFWAT (October 2021)*
- *Report on Water quality monitoring and testing in the Cam and its tributaries: bacterial indicators of faecal contamination, and phosphate and nitrate analysis (Batch 2) (November 2021)*
- *Response to the Greater Cambridge Local Plan Consultation (December 2021)*
- *Cam Catchment Partnership (discussion paper) - Towards a River Enhancement Strategy (January 2022)*
- *Response to the Environment Agency Flood Risk Management Plan Consultation (January 2022)*
- *Response to Cambridge City Council riverbank public art consultation(February 2022)*
- *Response to the Water Resources East Emerging Water Resources Regional Plan (February 2022)*

CAM VALLEY FORUM

FINANCIAL REPORT FOR 2021

The end of year position is healthy with an excess of receipts over payments resulting in a fund and bank balance of £ 18,413.81 on December 31st 2021. The accounts have been approved by the auditor.

	2021	2020
	£	£ (rounded)
OPENING FUND BALANCE	17,958.15	17,789.00
RECEIPTS		
Annual Membership (including corporate membership 2019/20)	1,087.00	750.00
Life Members	1,350.00	550.00
Donations	2,858.00	1,432.00
Interest on matured bond		174.00
TOTAL RECEIPTS	5,295.00	2,906.00
PAYMENTS		
Administration	72.00	106.00
Room Hire		72.00
Insurance	672.36	641.00
Website	105.00	105.00
Auditor	40.00	40.00
Tools and Equipment		524.00
Bacterial Water Testing	1,582.92	
Phosphate Testing	217.04	
Pennywort clearance	40.62	
Himalayan Balsam Clearance	9.40	
Donations	2,100.00	1,250.00
TOTAL PAYMENTS	4,839.34	2,738.00
EXCESS OF RECEIPTS OVER PAYMENTS	455.66	168.00
FUND BALANCE	18,413.81	17,958.15
REPRESENTED BY:		
BARCLAYS BANK BALANCE 31 DEC	18,413.81	18,416.00
PLUS PREPAYMENTS		672.00
LESS UNPRESENTED CHEQUES		-1,130.00
CLOSING FUND BALANCE	18,413.81	17,958.00

BALANCE SHEET

CURRENT ASSETS	£
Cash at bank current account	18,413.81
CURRENT LIABILITIES	0.00
NET ASSETS	18,413.81
REPRESENTED BY:	
Accumulated fund b/fwd	17,958.15
Surplus for year	455.66
Fund balance c/fwd	18,413.81

Report of the auditor:

I have examined this balance sheet and Income and Expenditure Account prepared from the records of Cam Valley Forum.

I certify that, in my opinion, they give a fair and accurate statement respectively of the financial position of the Cam Valley Forum as of 31st December 2021 and its income and expenditure of the year then ended.

N. F. Heath

Nicolas Heath

MA, ACA, ATII

Hon Auditor

25th February 2022