



# Staffordshire Trent Valley Catchment Partnership

## Update: Spring 2019

### Introduction

Welcome to the latest update from the Staffordshire Trent Valley Catchment Partnership and hope that you enjoy the following updates from some of our partners. Thanks to all who have submitted articles and ideas. If there is anything that you would like to hear about in future updates, or have anything to include, please send over.

*Thanks, Mel*

### An annual review

The catchment hosting by Staffordshire Wildlife Trust is funded by a Water Environment Improvement Fund (WEIF) from the Environment Agency; DEFRA have approved funding for a further year.

Part of the conditions of the grant are that we have to undertake an annual evaluation and monitoring of the activities which the partnership have carried out during the previous year. It's quite an undertaking!

So thanks to all the partners for their support in helping to complete this. It's a great way to reflect on what the partnership has achieved by working together, so we wanted to share some of the highlights.

- ☺ 16.39km enhanced
- ☺ Engaged with 1458 new people
- ☺ £374,961 received and spent on project delivery
- ☺ 11 different projects delivered
- ☺ 21.4ha habitat created

### We have a logo!

The partnership have now decided on a logo for the Staffordshire Trent Valley Catchment Partnership, it was designed by Lynne Morgan from one of our partners Groundwork West Midlands - thanks Lynne. It will now be used to create some more publicity materials to help spread the word about our partnership.



If you would like to know more about any of the articles featured - or would like to get involved - contact Mel the STV coordinator at: [m.westlake@staffs-wildlife.org.uk](mailto:m.westlake@staffs-wildlife.org.uk)

# Re-naturalising the Tad Brook

One of the projects which has recently been completed is a joint project between South Staffs Water and The Environment Agency, details from Emma Smail below.

## Re-naturalising Tad Brook

South Staffs Water has started a £29,000-scheme to improve biodiversity, whilst reducing diffuse pollution along Tad Brook near Blithfield Reservoir.

Supported by the National Environment Programme fund from the Environment Agency, the scheme has diverted the existing Tad Brook from its current course, which was very straight, so that it now meanders and creates an improved habitat for otters, brown trout and invertebrates.



The work involved felling the old non-native trees, which had been badly damaged by squirrels. The channel profile was then graded out and the spoil material spread out over the woodland floor that had been scraped clear of lying brash.

The Brash was piled to create wildlife refuges and for easy future replanting. Poplar rootplates were excavated and placed into the channel to encourage the waterflow to move and begin a natural erosion/deposition process.

The rootplates have already begin to accumulate woody debris which will provide vital habitat for invertebrates and fish species. A thick gravel stream was exposed during the excavation. This was placed back into the channel once the profile had been created. This will be excellent spawning substrate for Brown Trout. Two large living goat willows were placed at the downstream end of the new channel to trap and hold any floating debris moving down the channel.

Native willow and alder trees will be planted later in the year to create a new wet woodland, complimenting the biodiversity of the brook.

Richard Whiting, Blithfield Estate Warden with South Staffs Water, said:

*“The Blithfield Estate includes a Site of Special Scientific Interest, supporting an abundance of birdlife. Its mosaic of habitats, including semi-natural ancient woodland, provides habitats for a huge variety of local wildlife.*

*It’s really important that we do all we can to ensure the biodiversity of the area is maintained and improved where possible. We’re working closely with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust to make sure that the re-naturalisation of the brook, encourages a wide range of wildlife such as otters and brown trout.”*

To see and hear more about the project visit:  
<https://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk/news/re-naturalising-tad-brook>

# Inspiring the next generation of farmers

The partnership works with a wide variety of different people and groups, Jo Baird who works for Natural England on catchment sensitive farming tells us about a recent event designed to inspire the next generation of farmers.

Staffordshire Trent Valley young farmers were invited to attend and share ideas and to learn from some experts. This year marks the 8th Great Farm Challenge. The Great Farm Challenge is a joint partnership, led by Natural England, Defra, Environment Agency and regional water companies. As a collective, the partnership continues to nurture the next generation of farmers and encourage strategic solutions for our young farmers to carry throughout their careers.



Natural England's Catchment Sensitive Farming team, the Environment Agency and Severn Trent Water organised a day for students from South Staffordshire College, Rodbaston campus to learn about water issues on the farm.

The young farmers worked together on projects to assess and address the impact of different farm practices on their local natural environment and the farm business.

These projects were then developed into plans and later presented to a panel of judges, comprising representatives from Natural England, Environment Agency, water companies and Young Farmers' Clubs. The participants demonstrated how they would care for the environment and run a successful farm whilst protecting local water and air quality. South

Staffordshire College were placed second in the West Midlands competition.

Part of the training was a visit to a local farm to look at how the farm is managed and to come up with recommendations to improve the management of issues on the farm such as water, slurry, run off and soil. The college students visited Manor Farm in the Whiston Brook catchment where farmer Steve Cox was the host for the afternoon.

This is an intensive dairy farm where managing water pollution on the farm is challenging, especially as it is very close to Motte Meadows which is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a European Special Area of Conservation. Manor Farm is a good example of a commercial farm where the students could identify best practice as well as coming up with suggestions for improvements.



**A clear solution  
for farmers**

CATCHMENT SENSITIVE FARMING



**Environment  
Agency**



# News from our Friends Groups

We featured stories from some of the Friends Groups that we worked with in the last update and will feature more articles in the future. A few quick updates.

## Friends of Lyme Brook – one year old!

Working in partnership with Groundwork West Midlands and part funded by the Cash for Catchments fund from Severn Trent (as featured in the last update). The group have been really busy carrying out a range of tasks including RiverLife monitoring, vegetation clearance and woodland management, to name a few. They have just celebrated their 1st year as a group. So happy birthday and we look forward to hearing more from them in the future. To find out more have a look at their facebook site, search Friends of Lyme Brook. Alternatively contact Alex from Groundwork: alexander.jones@groundwork.org.uk

## Friends of Bucknall Park need you!

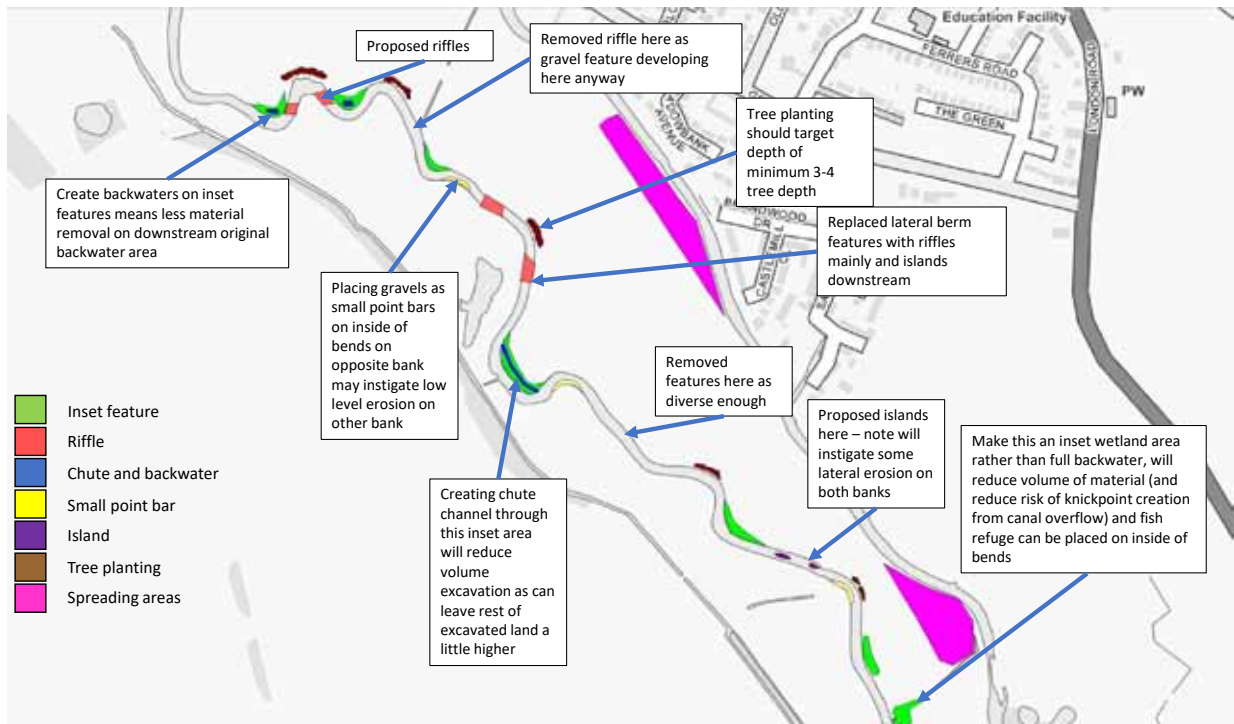
Bucknall Park is one of the very few locations in Stoke-on-Trent with safe public access to the River Trent. A lot of improvement works have been completed and more are planned for this year specifically in the park. As part of the ongoing work the group and Staffordshire Wildlife Trust carry out RiverLife testing four times per year, where we check which invertebrates are present in the water, which gives us an idea of what the quality of the water is and if there are any issues with pollution. By scoring the different invertebrates present we can check this and monitor for any changes on an ongoing basis.

To carry on with this testing we need more help! You will only need to commit 2/3 hours 4 times per year and own a pair of wellies! All equipment is provided and training given. So do please get in touch with Mel if you are interested in joining the group. Contact Mel: m.westlake@staffs-wildlife.org.uk.

## A project by The Rivers Trust

The Rivers Trust have secured some funding to be able to deliver a series of projects, one of which is at Weston near Stafford. Ruth Needham explains the work being carried out on one stretch of the River Trent.

This is a 1.2km stretch of river with very few natural features within the channel. The flow is slow and uniform resulting in the river having limited capacity to 'self-cleanse' and breakdown pollution. The diagram below shows what the interventions will be during the delivery of this project. Watch this space and we'll tell you how it's going in the next newsletter.



# Funding News

There are a number of opportunities to apply for funding, some of our own partners have opportunities to apply for funding through their biodiversity funding streams. Details of these below as they are now open for application – go for it and if successful let me know so we can share your success story.

## Boost for biodiversity fund from Severn Trent

This year's Boost for Biodiversity fund is now open for applications! Application window closes 31 May 2019 - total fund of £100,000 available.

Applications open to:

- Schools
- Community groups
- NGOs
- Farmers and landowners



### How to apply:

- Download and complete the application form available here: [www.stwater.co.uk/biodiversity](http://www.stwater.co.uk/biodiversity)
- Submit your application to [catchment.team@severntrent.co.uk](mailto:catchment.team@severntrent.co.uk) between 5 April and 31 May 2019
- Applications will be scored against criteria set out in the full terms and conditions which can be found on the website link above
- The five highest scoring applications will be allocated their requested funding. These top candidates will then be invited to increase their award by pitching for further funding to enhance their project to a 'Dragons Den' style panel.

## PEBBLE

PEBBLE is the biodiversity improvement fund from South Staffs Water. Funding of up to £10,000 is available for community projects within their supply area that create, restore or improve habitat.

Three levels of funding ranging from £500 to £10,000 is available to organisations keen to enhance biodiversity within the South Staffs Water area of supply. Applications window is 1st May – 31st July, with work to be completed by March 2021.



More details can be found here:

<https://www.south-staffs-water.co.uk/environment/biodiversity/pebble-fund>

## If you see it report it!

Whilst out carrying out walkover surveys I spotted this → which was on the side of a grassy embankment and with vegetation now growing really quickly was of great concern. The site is a very popular open space used by walkers, families and dog walkers so potentially an accident in the making.



This was called in to the Environment Agency hotline as an issue, it took 2 minutes. So a reminder to all if you spot it report it!

**Incident hotline: Free 24 hour service: 0800 80 70 60.**

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