



Green Ixworth

April 2024

www.greenixworth.org.uk

What's on

This month's edition contains a number of references to water and its importance to biodiversity, safety, food prices and pollution. Climate heating is behind both excess of water and drought due to more energy in the atmosphere and thus more extreme weather. A hotter atmosphere is able to hold more water and we have just had the hottest ten months ever recorded. Record rainfall should therefore come as no surprise. It also creates more wind. All caused by more energy in the seas and atmosphere, both created by our global warming.

A recent GI Management Committee meeting decided on two campaigns this year. In the spring and summer we shall be raising the issues on water which feature strongly in this issue and in the autumn and winter a focus on cutting our energy costs and simultaneously cutting our carbon output.

Water presents a number of problems as this Newsletter illustrates: Flood, drought, waste and pollution. Some of these we can improve, so it is in our hands.

Do come and visit our stall on display with "water" as the main message at:

The Ixworth Village May Fayre on 5th May 11.00am to 8.00pm.

The Bury St Edmunds Folk Festival, Nowton Park, on 29th June. 11.00am to 21.30 Information and advance tickets at: [Bury Folk Festival 2024 - Bury Folk Festival - A family-friendly folk music festival in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk](#)

We have more chance of our homes being flooded than burgled.

This is the position today and global warming will only make it worse. The Mickle Mere has been flooded recently for longer than before. This period is probably going to increase and lead to much higher winter levels in the Black Bourn.

Action to Reducing flooding

- Land management – e.g. permeable surfacing to maximise infiltration, planting trees to increase evapo-transpiration, or making green space where flood waters are most likely to flow or collect, or where rivers and their meanders are likely to migrate;
- [River restoration](#) – e.g. removing culverts and other capacity restrictions, such as weirs, reintroducing meanders to provide additional storage and naturalising river beds and banks to slow the flow;
- Coastal management such as creating salt-marshes, sand dunes and the realignment of coastal risk management structures to absorb wave energy, reduce the impacts of tidal surges and adapt to rising sea levels.

Natural flood management techniques, including beavers, can also contribute to the delivery of biodiversity and environmental net gains and support the implementation of [river basin management plans](#) and the [public body duty](#) to have regard to them.

“Understanding Your River” was the subject of a recent course run by the Suffolk Wildlife Trust, helping to galvanise attendees' thoughts on what was needed to bring our rivers back to a healthy natural state. SWT's Wild River Officer, Alice Wickman, made a big subject so uncomplicated, just work over a lengthy period, but with plenty of advice and guidance available. GI have made a start but I am sure we can do much more. See what just two years work can do by looking at the Save our Deben site: [Campaign Group by Save The Deben](#). Also read and please comment on our Vision for the Black Bourn on the GI website.

We also had the treat of a guided tour of the Eastern part of Redgrave and Lopham Fen where we were within a few metres of a pair of March Harriers hunting to feed their young.

If you would like to support our work on the Black Bourn project then please let us know at: ginocarbon@hotmail.com

UK food production is forecast by Britain's farmers to be severely reduced as record breaking rainfall over the past 18 months has submerged fields, preventing sowing and harvesting of food and fodder.

It has been an exceptionally wet 18 months. The Met Office says, 1,695.9mm of rain fell from October 2022 to March 2024, the highest amount for any 18-month period in England since 1836 when records began. Because of yields being drastically reduced last year and this, the UK will be relying on imports of wheat which will increase prices. Grain based goods including milk, beef, pork, poultry, beer and bread, have already risen in price and are likely to continue to do so, according to the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB). Production of Wheat, Oilseed Rape, Winter Barley are all down by 15%, 28% and 22% respectively.

At the same time there are predictions in many areas of the UK for drought conditions, largely due to the shortage of water storage, not rainfall. Areas with rivers modified to “reduce flooding” by speeding water into the sea often have no or few means of storing drinking water and often no underground sources. In East Anglia we generally use underground sources but these are already fully exploited, with the result we have a water crisis, demand is higher than supply. We do however have a new reservoir under development near Chatteris in Cambridgeshire. Due for completion in the early 2030s it will supply Cambridgeshire and Suffolk plus some neighbouring areas. Whether this will be sufficient for the planned doubling of the Cambridge area population plus the needs of the rest of the region remains to be seen.

Whilst the oil companies and government push hydrogen production, it is an additional demand for water as it splits fresh water with electricity in very large quantities, into hydrogen and oxygen.

Possible drought

Poor manufacturing, building, processing and farming methods are major users of fresh water and polluters of our rivers. As residents we also contribute by making surfaces impermeable to rain, not making use of rain or grey water and generally using too much water. Some of these things **we as citizens** can correct but many require better building standards, stricter planning requirements, rivers improved to retain flood water - all areas requiring government action.

So urgent is the need to make changes, Green Ixworth are using this summer and our attendance at various events (see below) to make the arguments about water, using less and storing more at home and in reservoirs and rivers.

Some good news

One useful move has come from Government confirming policies that will address water inefficiency in existing homes and buildings whilst tightening standards in new development. The statement also confirmed ministers intend to amend legislation to support dual pipe supplies to new homes to unlock communal rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling systems.

The polluter pays but not if you are a pharmaceutical firm in the UK. The EU is introducing a charge on pharmaceutical companies to clear their products from European waterways, the UK Government has no plans to do the same. However the new rules will apply to Northern Ireland under the Brexit arrangements.

[England won't adopt EU river pollution rules for pharma and cosmetics firms | Rivers | The Guardian](#)

What a surprise! Sewage storm overflows have nearly doubled.

In the Black Bourn river catchment there are over 22 waste water treatment plants all discharging treated sewage into the river. In addition during 2023 there were 275 storm discharges of untreated sewage into the river. We are pleased to see that Anglian Water is to reduce its abstraction at the Ixworth Water Works to provide extra water by borehole into the summer Black Bourn. It will help to dilute the treated and untreated sewage

[Sewage deluge: latest storm overflow data released! \(mailchi.mp\)](#)



An easy to use indicator to the spills in your locality all you need is insert your first part of your post code to identify your river basin. To show the river basin for the Little Ouse and Black Bourn enter an IP31 or 32 code.

[England's sewage crisis: how polluted is your local river and which regions are worst hit? | Rivers | The Guardian](#)

Very recent information from whistle blowers after the above information was compiled shows at least two water companies not only use storm overflows but directly discharge

unmeasured raw sewage into waterways before even it goes through the treatment plant.

No more excuses for Dairy Farmers.

69% of dairy farmers inspected by Environment Agency between 2020 and 2021 were not compliant with anti-pollution regulations. It seems that supermarkets determined to maintain profits are paying less for their milk than in the recent past. This means that farmers seeking to protect their incomes are overstocking on what their land can comfortably accommodate and pollution of waterways is the result. According to River Action, a herd of 50 cows is capable of emitting as much pollution as a town of 10,000 people.

Inadequate enforcement action, results from reductions in government funding.

The US tightens their requirement for sustainably fuelled vehicles

In a move being hailed as one of the most significant climate rules in US history, the Biden administration recently announced new regulations on exhaust emissions. The rule, calling for a 56% reduction in fleetwide (Car manufacturing companies) average carbon emissions by 2032, constitutes the strictest-ever limit on pollution from the US cars and light trucks. EVs made up just 7.6% of new car sales [last year](#). But by 2032, the standards will mean EVs make up 35% to 56% of sales, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Brexit fulfilled!

Yes it is true, the ability to set our own rules has resulted in a host of environmental protections being removed from the UK. [The UK environmental protections dropped since Brexit | Green politics | The Guardian](#)

Keep the home fires burning. Oh Dear!

A recent article reports on three separate pieces of research in Germany, Ireland and Slovenia showing that cancer and respiratory diseases are higher in rural areas as a result of burning wood, peat or coal. The reported levels are similar to those found in the UK.

[How one German village exemplifies the cancer risk from wood burning | Environment | The Guardian](#)

Hempyard Bridge

Restoration work is due to commence by 8th July, perhaps sooner. The bridleway closure for three months has drawn attention to the lack of Public Rights of Way in the parish. We had hoped extra paths would be added in the long delayed Neighbourhood Plan but it seems to not include them but SCC does seem to be working on it. Neither does it include the GI proposal to extend the existing Bridleway through the playing fields and up Crown Lane to the new bridge (if and when built).

Planning. Two pieces of good news.

The West Suffolk Plan requires Persimmon to retain the existing tree boundary and hedges around its Crown Lane site, responding to the GI response to WSC consultation and our campaign with Persimmon. The Neighbourhood Plan excludes the Langridge site from development thus potentially losing Ixworth a new Village Hall and up to three miles of new footpaths with an A1088 underpass. The plan has not been available to public view for a year but should come before us shortly for further and final consultation. The 2020 consultation generally welcomed the Langridge development with a new village hall and a retail outlet plus the footpaths including one along side the river, providing public access. The site was in the Neighbourhood Plan until the Parish Council decided to remove it.

Jaynic's planning application for Shepherds Grove has been rejected by 10 to 4.

The main grounds were:

- Massive increase of traffic on the A143, with no consideration of cumulative traffic from other developments on the road.
- Car breaking with a customer still likely to be convicted polluter Copart, inappropriate for a rural environment.
- The Air Quality Management Area at Great Barton is having problems limiting pollution levels with existing traffic will not be helped by extra heavy vehicles.

Over 100 objections were received and all surrounding Parish Councils, except Stanton objected. Stanton was in the position where its consultation showed the overwhelming majority objected but none the less the PC supported the application. There was a significant reason for this as the development would have provided relief from heavy vehicles using the village roads for accessing the existing commercial estate. However, the Jaynic site is already approved for development and any particular development of the site/s will be required to provide the relief road.

Green Ixworth played an important role helping to distribute information to and from the PCs along the A143 and particularly worked with Ixworth PC. We were also able to make presentations at the Development Control Meetings.

It is likely that Jaynic may appeal but advice from an ex planning inspector to the meeting demolished the fear of the Planning Officer that the council could face huge costs if the appeal succeeded.

Please note: A GI meeting previously advertised for 2nd May has been cancelled due to the unavailability of the speaker.

Late news: <https://theriverstrust.org/take-action/the-big-river-watch> Join in with a free app to watch your river and identify what action is taking place. 3rd to 6th May.