



# ***September Newsletter 2018***

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## ***Words from the Chair: Dr Richard Cresswell (MBE)***

### **Welcome to the Autumn 2018 Newsletter.**

I hope you all had a good summer. It has certainly been a busy period.

It was great to see so many members of the public engage with the Festival of Nature during June. Harriet Alvis (Bristol Avon Rivers Trust) attended the Bath-based event in Green Park (next to the River Avon) to promote the Bristol Avon WaterBlitz 2018, resulting in an excellent uptake by participants this year (see article below for more information).

In July, the Catchment Partnership organised a meeting to review the Governance arrangements of the BACP. Many positive suggestions were provided and the Partnership will continue to review and improve its structure to continue to meet the constantly changing environment and challenges.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome the Bristol Avon Rivers Trust (BART) as Co-Host of the BACP for 2018/19. In May 2018, the Steering Group supported BART to take on this role as Co-Host with Wessex Water.

It is also great to see the Bristol Frome Feasibility Work (*River Frome Reconnected*) starting up; Liz Kinsey has recently been appointed as the Project Officer to lead on this Feasibility work over the next year. A Project Steering Group has been established, with South Gloucestershire Council, Bristol City Council, Environment Agency, Wessex Water and the BACP all providing financial support for the Feasibility Stage. Liz will be engaging with a wide range of stakeholders in the Bristol Frome sub-catchment over the coming year to identify how we can develop a more strategic partnership programme of work to improve the water environment.

Zoe has been promoting the BACP to various groups over the past few months, in particular attending the Operational Flood Working Group- North (Wiltshire). It is encouraging to see conversations being held between the BACP and flood-related leads within the catchment. Zoe also presented to the Bradford on Avon Climate Ready Group with Alasdair Maxwell (EA- NFM Coordinator), drawing a large turn-out of local residents who were keen to hear more about the BACP and Natural Flood Management in the catchment.

Finally, Zoe and Eloise are busy preparing for the BACP's first Annual Forum to be held on Wednesday 7th November. To register a place, please see the article below. I look forward to seeing you there!

***Dr. Richard Cresswell MBE***

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# ***News and Events***

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## ***Dates for the Diary***

### ***Saturday September 15th - Saturday October 6th 2018***

As part of Marine Conservation Society's big beach clean weekend, many organisations throughout the Severn Estuary and up into the far tidal reaches of the Severn are organising clean up events. This is a great partnership effort and it is thanks to the Severn Estuary Partnership for coordinating and promoting these events with Natural Resources Wales. <http://www.severnestuarypartnership.org.uk/sep/big-beach-clean/>  
Find out more [HERE](#).

### ***Wednesday October 31st 2018***

Caring for the Cotswolds Grant Application Deadline

See article below for more information

### ***Wednesday November 7th 2018***

BACP - Annual Forum 2018

See article below for more information or get tickets [HERE](#).

### ***Wednesday November 21st 2018***

The Rivers Trust Autumn Conference - focusing on the Government's 25-Year Environment Plan

9:30am - 4:30pm

Watershed, Bristol

[Book here](#)

To find out more about similar events please visit the [CaBA website](#) and sign up to their newsletter.

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## *Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership*

### *Annual Forum 2018*

The BACP Annual Forum will provide an opportunity to hear more about the great work being delivered to improve the water environment in the Bristol Avon Catchment. A range of organisations will be providing updates on various partnership projects that are being developed and delivered across the catchment.

There will be the opportunity to re-cap on what the Partnership has achieved over the past 3 years and also provide your feedback on how the partnership should continue to develop in the future.

Places are limited therefore please remember to book onto the event by using the EventBrite link below.

[Register to attend Annual Forum Here](#)

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## *Caring for the Cotswolds*

### *Call for Projects - Grants Available!*

Caring for the Cotswolds is the visitor giving scheme for the Cotswolds, managed by the Cotswolds Conservation Board.

Visitor giving is a method by which companies collect funds from their customers for local environmental projects. It is associated with the tourism industry (though not exclusively) and is based on the premise that visitors may wish to contribute something towards the conservation of the wonderful place they have come to see and enjoy.

The scheme has five primary objectives and projects grant aided should support at least one of these. These objectives do of course overlap and many projects will support more than one;

"The money raised goes to support projects across the Cotswolds, delivered by the many committed organisations who are working hard to look after the things that make the Cotswolds special. Projects that;

- Conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape,
- Manage and restore habitats for wildlife,
- Manage and improve footpaths and bridleways
- Look after the area's distinctive historical heritage
- Provide countryside access information and/or improve the public's understanding of the things that make the Cotswolds special.

The deadline for applications is the 31st of October 2018.

To find out more or to apply, please click "Find out more".

[Find out more](#)

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# *Project Updates*

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## *Bristol Avon WaterBlitz 2018*

### *Results*

The Bristol Avon WaterBlitz is a citizen science project that is run annually to assess the health of the rivers and the streams within the catchment. As part of the WaterBlitz, participants test the water quality by taking samples to find out the levels of nitrate and phosphate in their chosen river or stream.

This year's Bristol Avon WaterBlitz was run by the Bristol Avon Rivers Trust between the 23rd-29th of June. The event engaged with over 260 participants to take 120 samples within the Bristol Avon catchment.

The WaterBlitz uses these results to assess the levels of excess nutrients in the rivers/streams in the catchment. Nitrate and phosphate occur naturally in rivers and are nutrients for plants and essential for wildlife. Excessive amounts of these nutrients may cause toxic algal blooms which harms aquatic insects and fish by decreasing oxygen levels and increases the cost of treating drinking water.

This year's results shows that there is an increase in phosphate from last year, with 0.1mg/l, with an average of 0.16mg/l which is slightly above the agreed levels for a healthy river. However, nitrate levels have decreased with an average of 3.1mg/l compared to last year's 4.2mg/l. Nitrate has no official standard for levels in rivers/streams.

To see more results please see the Bristol Avon River Trusts Interactive Results Map below:

[Interactive Results Map](#)



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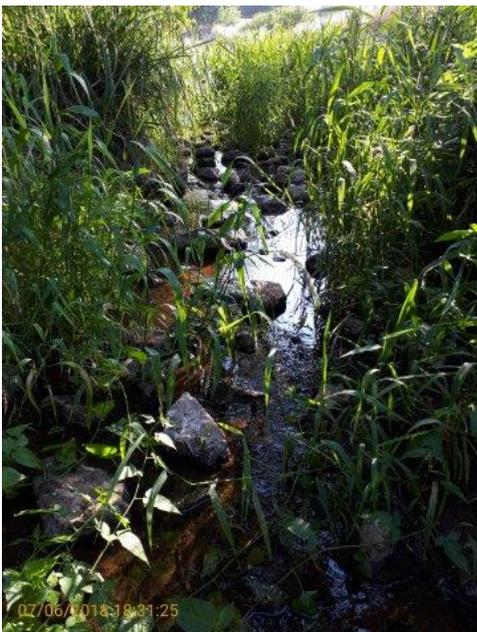
## *Bristol Water Flow Trials*

Bristol Water is currently undertaking investigations on the River Chew, which is downstream of Chew Valley Reservoir; and the River Yeo (Congresbury Yeo), which is downstream of Blagdon Reservoir.

The work is part of Bristol Water's ongoing project programme which will extend to the end of 2025. The investigations will allow Bristol Water to find ways to improve the ecology in both rivers within the Bristol Avon Catchment by evaluating if and how the rivers have been impacted by the reservoirs and their operations. Assessments based on macroinvertebrate data have shown that the rivers are impacted in terms of a lack of flow variation and siltation.

Bristol Water has developed options to trial which they hope will improve the ecology in the rivers. These include a proposal to alter the current compensation flow regimes to patterns which more closely resemble natural flows, with higher flows in the winter than the summer, and a more gradual transition between seasons. Short duration flushing flows will also be released in the autumn. In both Rivers, Chew and Yeo, the total volume of water released per annum is unchanged.

On the River Chew, the company is moving the compensation flow outfall 350m upstream to enable restoration of a stretch of the river which currently only receives flow when the reservoir spills. On both rivers, the company is working with landowners to improve river habitat quality and reduce the amount of silt washing into the river from fields and roads.



Bristol Water will be continually monitoring the river ecology to understand if the changes made have had a beneficial effect. Depending on the data, the compensation flows will be refined under a process known as 'adaptive management'.

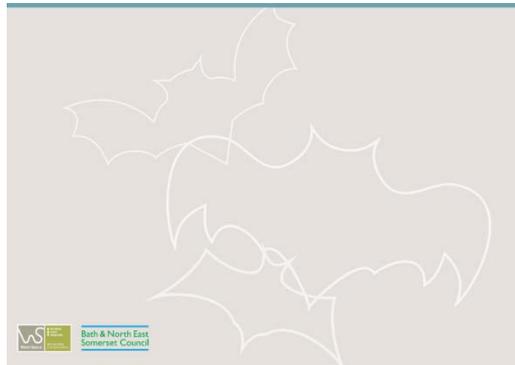
A public notice has been placed in local newspapers (Chew Valley Gazette and North Somerset Times) to ensure that awareness is raised of the trial which Bristol Water plan to start on the 3rd of September 2018. Local residents and groups have also been contacted.

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## *Protecting Bats - Waterways Design Guidance*

The WaterSpace Design Guidance for protecting bats in waterside development was published by the Planning Department's Environment & Design team at Bath & North East Somerset Council in June 2018. The document provides guidance for use by developers and planners when dealing with planning applications in close proximity to the River Avon and Kennet and Avon Canal. These waterways are recognised as providing supporting habitat for the Bath and Bradford on Avon Bat SAC to which the Habitat and Conversations Regulations (Habitat Regs) apply.

[Find out more](#)



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# ***Useful Links & Relevant Information***

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## ***WEG Funding Update***

The Water Environment Grant (WEG) scheme will provide funding to improve the water environment in rural England. It is managed by the Environment Agency and Natural England and is part of the Rural Development Programme for England.

The application window for WEG closed on 11 May 2018. Three projects were submitted to the WEG Scheme in the Bristol Avon Catchment this year. Overall, on a national level there was a superb response with a total of 316 applications received from across England, totalling £85m.

Natural England are assessing 99 applications relating to delivery of designated sites objectives and the Environment Agency are assessing 217 applications relating to delivery of Water Framework Directive objectives.

Natural England and the Environment Agency are currently undertaking technical assessments and prioritisation of the applications. For those projects that are successful it is currently expected that agreement offers will be made in late September 2018. Unsuccessful applicants will be notified in mid-September. The Scheme end-date of March 2021 remains fixed.

For more information please click "Find out more"

[Find out more](#)

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## *CaBA NFM Portal*

CaBA have released a new portal on their website with information relevant to Natural Flood Management (NFM) and Working with Natural Processes (WWNP).

This portal includes tabs about engagement, data and evidence, delivery, funding and monitoring with links to external videos, websites and documents. The purpose of this portal is to support partners in developing, delivering and learning from projects.

If you wish to learn more about NFM please click on "Find out more":

[Find out more](#)

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## *The Multiple Benefits of Natural Flood Management*

A useful infographic, sent in the August 2018 CaBA Update, to help catchment partners communicate to communities about the multiple benefits of Natural Flood Management. Created in Cumbria by Newground supported by Natural Course.

<http://naturalcourse.co.uk/publications/>

[See Infographic](#)

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## *Code of Good Agricultural Practice for Reducing Ammonia Emissions*

On Friday 27th July, DEFRA published new best practice guidance for reducing ammonia emissions from farms in England.

This is a direct result of the recently published draft Clean Air Strategy and “sets out simple steps all farmers can take” to reduce ammonia emissions, such as using a nutrient management plan to calculate fertiliser application rates. It also includes more significant changes to slurry storage, spreading equipment and infrastructure, alongside innovative techniques such as slurry and digestate acidification and separation. The guide includes information on how to reduce emissions when storing organic manure; applying organic manure; applying manufactured nitrogen fertiliser; feeding livestock & housing livestock.

Alongside the guidance, Defra is also providing funding and technical advice - £3 million will be made available over the next three years to fund a “specialist team of experts who will offer support, advice and guidance on the most effective ways to reduce emissions from ammonia on their land”, as well as demonstrations of the latest low-emission spreading equipment and one-to-one advice on reducing ammonia emissions from CSF by the end of this year. In addition, the RDPE Countryside Productivity scheme is currently offering 40% grants towards much of the manure management equipment recommended in the COGAP to reduce ammonia emissions. This includes low-emission spreading equipment, slurry and digestate storage bags, digestate processing equipment and mild acidification equipment. Farmers in priority catchments for reducing water pollution may also be eligible for grants towards covers for slurry stores and lagoons under the Countryside Stewardship scheme.

[Find out more](#)

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# *Forestry Commission - South West Update*

## *August 2018*

The Forestry Commission has released an update on the following:

- LEADER funding
- Change of email for Forestry Commission Staff
- Website moving to Gov.uk
- Useful woodland websites
- Drought Advice

Please see click on "Find out more" for more details.

[Find out more](#)

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# ***What's Going on Nationally?***

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## ***Sussex Flow Initiative***

The Sussex Flow Initiative is an innovative project in the River Ouse catchment developed by the Sussex Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency and the Woodland Trust. The Bristol Avon Catchment and the Sussex Catchment face similar issues regarding river quality.

The Sussex Flow Initiative is a good example of looking holistically at a catchment scale and doing lots of small interventions through partnership working to deliver multiple benefits.

To see what the Sussex Flow Initiative are celebrating about the past 5 years please click on "Find out more".

[Find out more](#)

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The logo for the Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership is a dark blue square with a wavy top and bottom edge. The text "Bristol Avon Catchment Partnership" is written in white, stacked in three lines. Below the dark blue square is a light blue wavy shape representing water.

Bristol Avon  
Catchment  
Partnership



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