

Report on Stream Project

On 21st August Tony Crabb and I met up with Nicola Hopkins of The Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) in the village to examine three sites where we felt we might be able to plant up some reed beds, which would not only serve to slow the flow of the stream, but also clean the water of silt run-off from the road. We visited one privately owned site where the natural vegetation in the stream and on its banks has been allowed to grow and we observed the slowing effect this had on the flow of the stream. However, it became apparent that reed beds require larger areas of land than those we were contemplating.

We identified a couple of sites where run-off from the road and from farm tracks is particularly bad. In both cases we discussed the benefits of creating ditches – sometimes called swales – running from the road into a hedge or field and so diverting the water from running on down the road or track. In both areas run-off was found to cause a lot of silt and debris to enter the stream and are one cause of flash flooding. Recent incidences of torrential rain clearly showed how run-off can cause problems in the valley bottom. We would need to talk to Highways and the owners of the land affected before being able to take any action on the creation of ditches.

Meanwhile Nicola is masterminding a village plan, which will show the particular areas where run-off is a problem and can be used to prioritise areas where action is most needed. Video footage of run-off and its origins would be very useful. This information can be sent to me at the email address below.

We are currently evaluating the benefits of measuring the depth of the stream just below and above places where run-off is most problematic and marrying up this data with rainfall measurements. If you would be interested in getting involved with this, please do contact me. In the spring we hope to be able to give a practical demonstration of invertebrates living in our stream, with a view to launching a Riverfly Monitoring survey in which you can become involved, the findings of which will be an indicator of the health of the stream.

We would like to thank the villagers who were kind enough to give up their time to talk to us about stream management on their property and also all of those who sent in or posted photographs and video footage illustrating the run-off, areas affected by flash flooding and of debris carried by the stream. We are always pleased to receive these as they are valuable evidence.

If you are interested in getting involved with the stream in any way, please contact me.

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