

calder future

Calder Future looks forward to a stronger future!

In my introduction to last year's newsletter I described the challenges we were facing then: reductions in funding; therefore reductions in staffing as well; and a pressing need to deliver our targets for the youth volunteering grant we had previously won (something of a lifeline). For the last three years we've had to make some painful changes, and focus on keeping our little boat afloat. So how did we do?

Well, we succeeded - of course! – so, with that period behind us we're able at last to plan some new initiatives. At the end of March we successfully completed the V project - which broadened the range of volunteering opportunities we offered, to now include young people – with all its objectives met; see pictures on pages 2 & 4. Calder Future is exceptionally proud that its principal achievement and lasting legacy is some important environmental improvements around Rake Bank in Ovenden & Mixenden in deprived North Halifax. Our thanks are to Gavin and Paul Birchall who led that work, and our partners in the Neighbourhood Management Team, BBC Open Spaces and Landfill Tax grant; and to Heather Morgan who managed our other Calder High project.

And a special thanks to Calderdale Council who maintained their core funding (at a reduced level, but that's because we also cut our staffing costs) in a period of financial difficulties.

In 2011, in addition to established features like 'River Week' in early June, we're planning some new projects - tackling invasive species at the head of the Calder catchment, increasing the opportunities for environmental volunteering across Calderdale – with, we hope, some new partners (including Calderdale Youth Offending Team) as well as some old ones such as British Waterways who want to rejuvenate their own volunteering programme; and we hope some new funding as well! Calder Future is now a smaller organisation but we're still determined to make an impact.

So if you're interested, want to find out more or take part, please do contact Gavin or me.

Anthony Rae - chair, Calder Future & Calderdale Sustainability Forum

River Day events in June

The annual River Day will take place again at several places up and down the valley – this year there will be activities during the period Saturday 4th June to Sunday 12th June, so that it coincides with national Volunteers Week. We have dates for two events already (see page 3) & information about others will be sent out nearer the time!

River Day details will also be posted on the Events page of our website www.calderfuture.org.uk



River Day 2010

Above: Sponsored by CSV Action Earth to clean up the Calder at Eastwood – see how much rubbish we got on the last page of this newsletter!



What has Calder Future been doing in 2010?



We have done some more v work with young people in North Halifax ...



Carried out woodland management with Calder High...and cleaned up the Calder at Sowerby Bridge three times (below)



What is Calder Future?

Calder Future is a partnership between the local community and agencies with responsibility for waterways within the Calder Valley. The organisations involved together with our volunteers work to improve the River Calder, its tributaries, the Rochdale canal and the Calder & Hebble Navigation. The main aims of Calder Future can be divided into three areas:

Environmental - to protect and enhance biodiversity through implementing sustainable improvements beside the waterways.

Results of the British Waterways wildlife survey are in!

(From the BW website:

www.waterscape.com/wildlifesurvey - where more information about these fascinating sightings and this year's survey can be found)

Between March and September 2010, water-loving nature enthusiasts took to the country's canals and rivers to record more than 40,000 sightings of the wildlife they spotted there.

The results showed that kingfishers, newts, toads and otters had all been spotted in record numbers on Britain's canals and rivers. Sightings of these much-loved British species soared, with records of our celebrated river royalty, the kingfisher, jumping by more than 200%.

(NB – The River Calder in Elland is a good place to spot the blue flash of a kingfisher – Ed.)

Encouragingly, sightings of house sparrows, a declining species, which is vanishing from our towns and cities, increased by 23% on 2009 making it the fifth most sighted species.

The sightings also found:

- Several endangered birds were spotted on canals including curlews, merlins and songthrushes
- The number of water voles sighted increased by 33% on 2009
- The number of mink spotted fell by 36% which could be related to the recent increase in the number of otters in the UK, as our native otters out-compete mink for territory.

Below: Crossing borders: Employees from Axa Insurance cleaned up the River Spen (in Kirklees) with us in July



Economic - to act as a focus and catalyst for regeneration of the river corridor and to identify opportunities for leisure and tourism.

Social - to increase access to waterways by involving local people in improvement activities.

The partnership is made up of: British Waterways, Calderdale MBC, Calder Future Ltd, Calderdale Friends of the Earth, Environment Agency, Green Business Network, Halifax Canoe Club, Northern Naturefriends, Treesponsibility, and Yorkshire Water. However, critical to the work of Calder Future are our volunteers, the people who are actively involved in river enhancement and are the real custodians of our local waterways!!

Pocket Park for Bailiff Bridge – a transformation

Beginning in 2008 we have been working with the Bailiff Bridge Community Assoc. to create a 'pocket park' to complement their new library and community centre. The site is where a mill used to be located on the banks of Clifton Beck in the centre of what locals refer to as 'the village'.

During the two years that we have been working on the new park a host of local residents and businesses have helped out, including the Punchbowl Pub (conveniently located next door!) which has provided refreshments. We have also been assisted in the project by the Probation Service and employees of the Lloyds Banking Group. The first phase of the scheme is almost complete, the groundwork taking place in 2009 and last year a new footpath was laid by willing volunteers to invite access into the becks area and the woods beyond. Last summer we also laid the hard-standing and put in some fencing for a picnic bench, which we hope to install this year. A gate will then be hung at the roadside entrance, which will be a suitable finishing touch to an area which has really been transformed from its original barren state – we have done a lot of wildflower planting as well and laid out bedding plants (donated by CMBC Parks).

Malcolm Silkstone, from the Community Assoc., has plans for a second phase, which will involve constructing a walkway from this side of the beck across to the new community building, so that our 'pocket park' will act as a garden for the centre users. So there is still more to do - keep an eye on our website's 'events' page for details of workdays coming up at Bailiff Bridge.



TRIG Events for 2011 (Todmorden Riverside Improvement Group)

Monday April 4th: Litter-picking and site clearance

Monday May 9th

Saturday June 4th – *Volunteering Week* community event at Tipside

Monday July 4th – Controlling Himalayan balsam

Monday August 1st – Himalayan balsam

Monday September 5th

Monday October 3rd

Monday November 7th

Monday December 5th

All events start at 10.30 unless otherwise stated, look out for details in the press and local shops too. We meet on Tipside, just down from the Rose Street footbridge at the back of the market hall in Todmorden.

For further information contact Penny Bennett on 01706 812480.

Sowerby Bridge river clean-ups

The dates for the clean-ups at County Bridge this year with the Halifax Canoe Club are:

Saturday 11th June (**River Day**) – will include optional balsam pulling!
Saturday 8th October

The meeting point will be underneath the railway bridge (off Station Road) by the cab office portakabin, and the tasks will commence at 10am.

Have you visited the website yet?

Go to www.calderfuture.org.uk and surf through our latest news pages, see the best photos of the last year's activity and have a look at the interactive Calder Valley map.

And remember – as new volunteer activities are planned, the dates will always be posted on the website.

Youth programme at Calder High

As part of the v youth project in the Upper Calder Valley we have been working with the Calder High School Sixth Formers, in an environmental volunteering project, since September 2009. Most of the tasks have a river theme – building steps down to the Calder behind St. Michael's Church in Mytholmroyd, low-scale woodland management in the riverside Brearley Woods and also balsam pulling at that location. The students have also done some tree planting and gardening on public spaces around Mytholmroyd village.

The project has been supported by Pennine Housing – they donated woodchip for us to use on the steps, and we worked with them on the tree planting activity. The 2009/10 students constructed the wooden steps down to a cobbled river walkway – an idea suggested by the Reverend James Allison – and then next year's group carried on, creating some more steps and a short length of path to make a complete circular.

By inviting the young people back into Brearley Woods at the end of the summer term (to pull some balsam!), they were able to appreciate how different the woodland environment can be at that time of year, compared to the wintertime when they did the cutting back.



The Autumn Term 2010 Sixth Formers – ready for action!



Balsam pulling in the woods at the end of the school year



This is what it's all about – a full skip at Eastwood on River Day 2010

Please contact Gavin at Calder Future
5 Town Hall Street, Sowerby Bridge
HX6 2QD Tel: 07772 318 566
email: enquiries@calderfuture.org.uk
www.calderfuture.org.uk

You can contact Anthony Rae,
Chair of Calder Future, at:
email ar@anthonyrae.com or
tel: 01422 845061