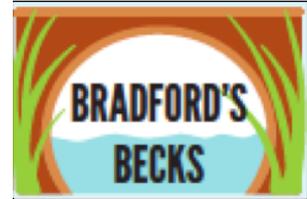


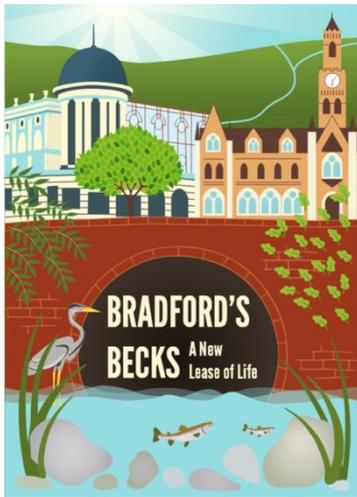
Friends of Bradford's Becks summary of activities 2018-19



Friends of Bradford's Becks report to Regeneration and Environment O&S Committee, April 2019

Introduction

The Friends of Bradford's Becks (FOBB) is a community group of Bradford based residents and ecologists. We are keen to see the eventual restoration of the Bradford Beck river system as a contribution to the quality of the city. FOBB was formed to achieve the six visions in the catchment management plan¹ which



was written after widespread consultation during 2011. The visions are:

- clean (i.e. free of pollution)
- visible
- accessible
- thriving (i.e. good ecologically)
- cared for becks
- in a water wise city

The catchment plan was supported by the Environment and Waste O&S Committee in 2013, and officers were requested to give FOBB assistance with the resulting projects. We have reported back to the Committee in April each year since, and this is our report for April 2019.

Highs and lows in 2018-19

Pollution



Let's start with the lowest low we have had on Bradford Beck since FOBB started in 2012. All fish and most invertebrates below the city centre were wiped out in August. A major malfunction of Yorkshire Water's sewage system diverted large amounts of raw sewage into the Beck which turned black and was carpeted with sewage fungus. We think the leak happened intermittently for several weeks. The Environment Agency did not do a satisfactory investigation and so was unable to gather sufficient evidence to pursue YW, and just issued a formal warning letter. We are contesting this outcome – we do not intend to let it rest!



¹ Aire Rivers Trust, 2012. Bradford's Becks: a new lease of life. Available from <https://bradfordbeckdotorg.files.wordpress.com/2013/02/bradfordbecksfinalweboptimised.pdf>

In the same vein, we continued to see sediment pollution of Pitty Beck from the Keepmoat development on Allerton Lane. When planning permission is given for housing (or other developments), a condition should be imposed requiring the installation of sediment trapping **before** work starts. On a recent visit (15th March), it looks as if they are finally putting in the right equipment, but this is years too late.

High points

Two really good things have happened in the last year. And we have had good engagement with Council Officers in many areas.

Renaturalisation of the Beck is finally getting started! A collaboration between the Environment Agency, Bradford Council (mainly Landscape), ourselves and the Wild Trout Trust will see work begin in 2019 to improve the ecology and riverside of the Beck between the River Aire at Shipley and Briggate. Weirs and bridges will be altered to make it easier for fish to pass upstream, the morphology will be improved to enable fish and invertebrates to live there more easily, and bankside improvements will be



(Picture to the left shows how a bridge can be modified with green oak sleepers to enable fish to swim up more easily)

Investigating Bradford’s sewage system. As a result of FOBB’s evidence gathering on pollution over the last few years, Yorkshire Water are required to carry out two investigations of the Bradford sewer system in the next business cycle; these will start in in April 2020. The first is called “Bradford Beck catchment investigation” and

The objective of this catchment scale study is to understand the polluting inputs to the Bradford Beck system and their impact on the ecology, working in partnership with local interest groups, and to produce a detailed strategy for reducing pollution and improving ecological status.

The second study is to analyse whether the system meets the standards for intermittent discharges (ie in wet weather) and will be done by numerical model of the response of the system.

Both of these projects are investigations. It may be the business cycle later (2025-29) that any significant improvements are made, but at least we are moving in the right direction.

News
28th November 2018

New project will bring more fish into Bradford beck

By Jo Winrow | [JoW_Tanda](#)
Reporter



A project is taking place to encourage more fish into Bradford Beck

[f](#) [t](#) [in](#) [m](#) 6 comments

THREE organisations are to work together on a project to encourage more fish into Bradford Beck from the River Aire.

Fish, such as trout and minnows, are able to ascend the river, but it remains difficult due to obstructions on the bed.

There are three weirs and several sills under road bridges that the fish have to jump over in order to access parts of the beck.

made.

Most read Com

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- 4  Structural assessme after Grea Road mill
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- 6  Here's ho two frienc their way

Other FOBB activities in 2018-19

We continue to raise **Awareness** of the Beck, for example:

- Four guided walks.
- Three litter picks.
- Taking part in Bubble Up, opening a city centre manhole to show the hidden Beck.
- Miss Connection, our storyteller, has delivered six sessions on mis-connected drains and pollution to schools, reaching 1500 people.
- Giving talks to community groups about the Beck.

We restarted **Japanese Knotweed** treatment along the Beck and will continue this year.

And our **Pollution Hunting** continues, reporting multiple problems to the Environment Agency. Most of these have been sewage misconnections, with others being sediment from constructions sites.

We have commented on several **planning applications**, notably on the proposed development off Leaventhorpe Lane. Fortunately this application was turned down, as the 3-4 m high access road proposed would have destroyed the continuity of the green corridor along Pitty Beck.

To the future – review of FOBB priorities

Because we have successfully got two major projects underway (see Highs above), we decided to review what our priorities should be for the next few years. With the support of the BEGIN INTERREG project, we held a workshop for FOBB members and several CBMDC officers on 1st February. This was followed by a vote amongst the membership, which resulted in the following projects:

Project	What is it?	What is needed from CBMDC?	Finance?
Signposting Footpaths.	A set of about 20 finger-posts to help people find the becks and follow our walks.	Stop giving us the run-around and have one officer sort out permissions!	£2500 from the Co-op.
Information boards.	Create and install information boards at selected locations with some history, ecology and pollution prevention advice!	Permission to install, advice on what would be appropriate and how to proceed	£3500 from Co-op
Wild Flower Planting.	We were given 250 m ² of seeds by Bradford beekeepers to plant along the beck.	Liaison with Landscape and Countryside over locations and permissions.	None.
Litter picking.	A series of mornings' litter picking in the becks (if safe) and on the banks, followed by a hot drink and biscuits. March and April are best months, when plants are low.	Collection of waste – this is in hand	None.

Project	What is it?	What is needed from CBMDC?	Finance?
Natural Flood Management for Pitty Beck.	Develop a plan for NFM in the Pitty Beck catchment, to reduce flooding risk downstream and improve water quality. May involve: tree planting, fencing off horse paddocks from beck, slowing runoff with little dams, rain planters and soakaways for houses.	Close liaison with Drainage (in hand) and Estates. Will be linked to Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme, and developed jointly with the Environment Agency.	None for initial planning. Will require funds to carry out.
Sediment control on New Builds.	Work with local construction/development companies (and EA and Council) to educate on best practice to prevent silt entering the Becks and damaging wildlife. Likely to develop into a training programme and preparation of a guidance document. Quite a large project, maybe 20 companies to engage with over time.	A CBMDC project champion to assist with development and delivery of the project.	Probably needs funding for a project officer to set up and deliver visits and training.
Beck Buddies.	Riparian land owners are those who own the river banks, they also own the bed up to the beck centreline. Work with them to develop an interest a) in monitoring the water quality and reporting issues, b) preventing pollution and litter from their own sites, c) reducing runoff.	A CBMDC project champion to assist with development and delivery of the project.	Small funding for leaflets and signs; we have sufficient.
Plastics.	An educational campaign to prevent wet wipes and other sanitary materials getting into the becks. Focus on stopping people flushing stuff down toilet. Carry out in cooperation with Yorkshire Water which has a campaign underway (Wipesaur).	Nothing at present (although support always welcome!)	None for initial planning.
Pollution monitoring.	A Citizen Science approach to finding misconnections and irregular CSO discharges. Designing, making, installing and testing a new low-cost sensor which alerts volunteers to check the becks for pollution.	A project leader to liaise with YW and develop a plan – currently underway.	Expecting YW funds.

Support in the coming year

We ask for continued support in our campaign to improve Bradford's Becks for both the city's and the environment's benefit. Council Officers and FOBB are working well together on large projects such as renaturalisation and pollution campaigns.

However, we have more difficulty on smaller projects, such as the signposts for footpaths. Having reached agreement on this with the Council 4 years ago, we are now being asked to deal separately with three or four separate departments.



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