

Eardisland Parish Council Environment & Sustainability Working Group

Report for Annual Parish Meeting - May 2025

Can Our River Survive Talk

At the end of May last year Andrew McRobb from the Campaign for Protection of Rural England gave a talk explaining the issues behind the declining water quality of the river Arrow. The event was well attended, with the village hall full of concerned residents and representatives from our business, farming, fishing, building and tourism sectors, as well as parish councillors from six parishes, and three county councillors. There was lots of lively and friendly chat afterwards.

We were pleased that following the talk the PC wrote to all Arrow Ward parish Councils, Herefordshire Council and our MP suggesting the need for a catchment wide approach.

Water Testing Training

Following on from the talk, we arranged a session to train around 25 volunteers to be able to test water quality across the catchment. Regular testing is now happening at 5 sites in Eardisland, as well as Pembridge, Shobdon, Weobley and Titley.

Throne Farm visit

At the beginning of June around 30 people from Eardisland, and Weobley went on a guided tour round Stephen Ware's farm. It was great to see how the farm is capturing phosphates in wetland filter to prevent it reaching the river and using wildflower buffer strips to catch soil runoff from fields.

Himalayan Balsam

In June a handful of volunteers helped pull up a large amount of this invasive species from the 'Old Ford' riverbank. Large infestations can increase riverbank erosion and reduce native plant species and wildlife.

We're doing the same at 10am on Saturday.

Septic Tank Advice

After concerns were raised from parishioners the group worked with the PC to produce an article in the PM advising residents of their responsibilities regarding septic tanks.

Biodiversity Statutory Duty

We helped highlight and then clarify the PCs responsibilities regarding this legislation. HALCs advice is that the Parish Council should 'take biodiversity into account in all their decisions and actions'.

Six Inches of Soil Film

At the end of November, a full VH enjoyed a festive feast provided by the Community Shop and Wendy Cross, as well as watching the fascinating film looking at British farmers standing

up to the industrial food system. In collaboration with the Herefordshire Food Network there was a lively discussion afterwards including Guy Tudge and Stephen Ware.

Plastic Free Eardisland

Eardisland WI signed up as a 'Community Ally' to the Plastic Free Eardisland project and have committed to stop using single-use plastic items such as milk bottles, coffee packets, biscuit wrappers.

The E&SG and Eardisland Community Shop collected a large number of cardboard boxes for use at this month's Plant Fair, and will be working with the Craft Fair team to try and reduce single use plastic bags at October's fair.

Discover Parks have now obtained Plastic Free Champion status across all three of their local holiday parks, bulk buying cleaning products, not laminating posters, and moving to glass milk bottles and a milk vending machine.

Litter Pick

Held as usual in March, with around 15 people collecting over 20 sacks of rubbish from 10 miles of road and enjoying free refreshments afterwards from EVHMC.

Most of the litter is single use plastic.

Visit to Natural Flood Management scheme

Earlier in May a visit was arranged to the Mowley Valley. An unfortunately low turnout for what was a fascinating guided walk looking at measures which will be already having an effect on reducing river pollution and mitigation against flooding along the Arrow.

Wye and Usk Foundation event

The group had started to arrange an event in collaboration with WUF promoting the uptake of Sustainable Farming Incentives across the Arrow catchment. These are schemes where landowners get subsidies for nature friendly farming, often measures that will have an impact on river pollution and flood mitigation.

Unfortunately the new government cut the schemes at short notice, so we've postponed any event until a replacement scheme is available.

Kew Gardens Grow Wild Youth Grant

We helped Ella Curry successfully apply for this £500 grant to research and document native plant species that live in and around the river. This is being managed in association with Herefordshire Wildlife Trust who are providing some training. Ella put in a great application and was one of only 20 selected nationwide. Keep an eye out over the summer for what she is up to.

Other Grants

Other members of the group have been involved in the EVHMC grant applications looking to improve the energy efficiency of the village hall. Hopefully good news coming up.