

Hemingford Abbots -River Warden's Report for the period ended 11th April 2023

To the Annual Parish Meeting 19th April 2023

RIVER GREAT OUSE – Hemingford Abbots

- The EA have been more proactive in dealing with navigation problems in the period
- The closure springs on the gates leading to the walkway over the weir at the west end of Hemingford Meadow from Houghton Lock need re-tensioning
- The use of the River for recreational purposes continues to increase particularly by Canoeists, Paddle Boarders and Swimmers
- River users should be aware of the advice recently received from EA in the following terms:

current regulations for rivers and open waters in England protect wildlife and are not designed for the protection of human health – with bacteria found in pollution from sewage and animal slurry posing the two biggest risks.

I recommend HAPC put notices effect at the Black Bridge and the start of Footpaths leading to the River at Chapmans and the Regatta field. It is not possible to ask EA to designate that area for swimming unless Public Toilets are available

- Generally speaking reed growth has been cut back
- The frontage (and fallen trees) around Battocks Island are not maintained and properly dealt with. Thanks to the efforts of the Jubilee Pageant co-ordinator EA have carried out some clearance but quite rightly maintain it is the responsibility of the owner of Battocks Island who has been reluctant to respond
- Fishing posts (and some stages) have been put up on the main River and Backwater and are well used

GENERAL

I would like to record gratitude to the farmers and riparian rights owners who look after the land surrounding our river and also to those who allow wider access than the footpath itself. Lack of control of dogs by owners is poor recompense which is why I continue to believe notices should be provided by HAPC. I repeat my suggestion of warning notices to swimmers of sudden depth changes and the danger of Weils disease (see comments above)

Iain Muspratt
River Warden
Hemingford Abbots Parish Council
11 April 2023