

Friends of Fobney Island – Project update

The Environment Agency led phase of conservation works will soon be complete on Fobney Island, Reading.

This partnership project, supported by the Environment Agency, Reading Borough Council, Thames Water, and the Thames Rivers Restoration Trust, has transformed the site to enhance the island for nature based recreation.

The first phase of the project has lowered the land to create wetland features that, at certain times of the year, will be in connection with the river. This will improve the site for birds, bats, fish, reptiles and amphibians.



Creation of the eastern wetland features which will provide ideal habitat for birds, reptiles and amphibians.

The river itself has been restored to a more natural state through the introduction of two new riffle features. Riffles are areas of shallow gravel substrate which provide ideal spawning grounds for fish species such as chub, dace and barbel.



Introducing clean gravel to create new spawning grounds for fish species such as chub, dace and barbel.

On the south bank of the river tree works have been undertaken to let more light into the river channel. This will help plant species such as water crows foot to become established.

Five trees have also been dropped into the river channel to create 'woody debris' features. These features will create more diverse flows within the river, and provide refuge habitat for juvenile fish.



View of an enhanced section of the River Kennet showing the new riffle feature and woody debris.

A new footpath has also been installed on the site, and two bird hides are soon to be created to provide views across the new wetland features.

In mid to late November the site will be handed back to the landowners, Reading Borough Council, who will continue to manage the site to maximise its value for nature and recreation.

In the spring of 2012 Reading Borough Council will begin to seed and plant the site with wetland and wildflower seed mixes. They will be calling on volunteers to help with this work, and to be involved with ongoing maintenance. However, the site will not be reopened to members of the public until the seeding is established.

If you are interested in being part of the '**Friends of Fobney Island**' group please respond to this email or call Reading Borough Council's Parks department on 0800 626540.