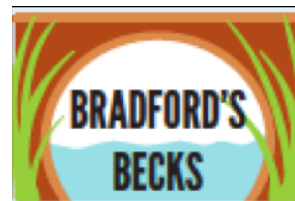
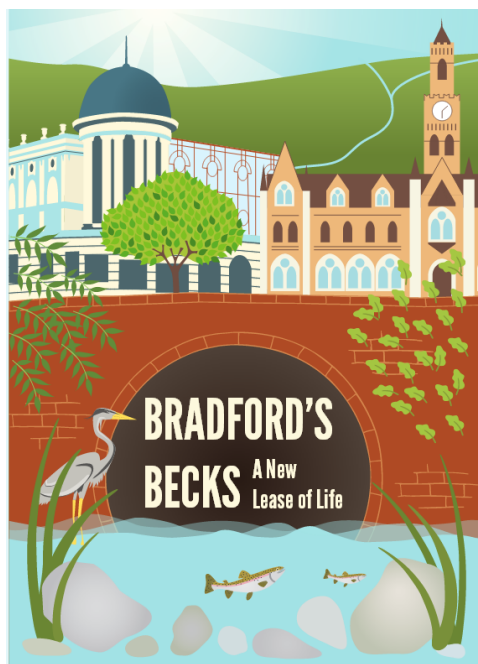


Friends of Bradford's Becks summary of activities 2015-16



Friends of Bradford's Becks report to Environment and Waste O&S Committee, April 2016

Introduction



The Friends of Bradford's Becks (FOBB) is a community group of Bradford based residents and ecologists who are keen to see the eventual restoration of the Bradford Beck river system. 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 reported

back to the Committee in April 2014 and 2015, and this is our report for April 2016.

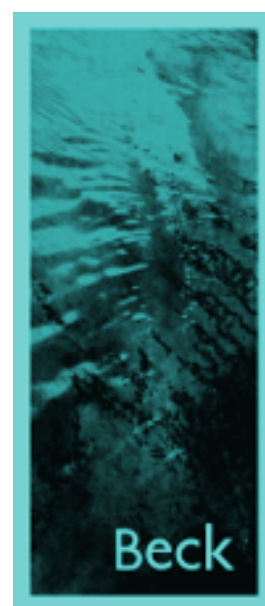
FOBB activities in 2015-16

FOBB has been running **Awareness** and **Improvement** projects during this year, as well as working towards renaturalisation project.

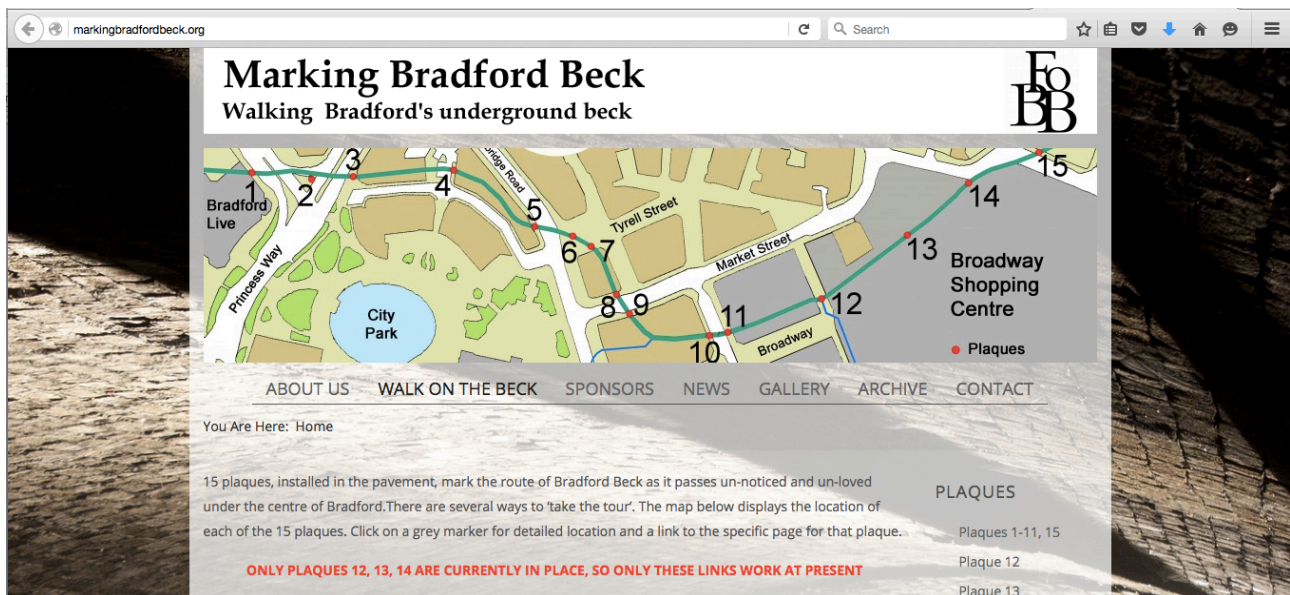
In order to raise awareness of the Beck, we have had 3 litter picks, 2 guided walks, worked further with the poetry competition held last year, and started practical work on Marking Bradford Beck, the plaques project.

Poems. The book of the 29 entries to the poetry competition was published, and launched at an event with the Deputy Lord Mayor at the Pavilion café on Burns night. Copies are available for £4 from www.Newfiretreepress.co.uk. We've had good coverage in the T&A, BCB and Radio Leeds Breakfast programme. The poems have all been recorded by the poets or diverse local voices, courtesy of BCB, and will be available on the new website.

We created a travelling exhibition which toured the city's libraries.



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

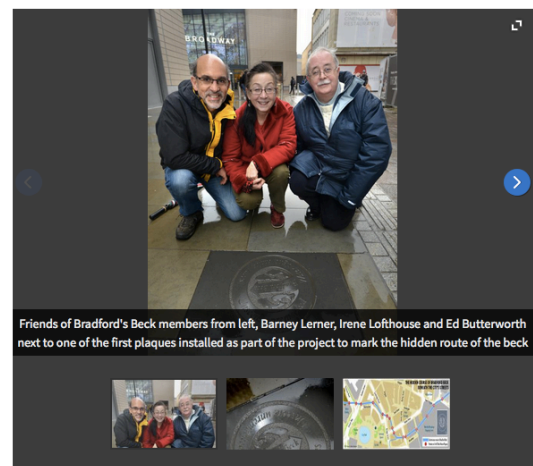


<http://markingbradfordbeck.org/>

Marking Bradford Beck: Our major awareness project is to mark the course of the Beck where it runs under the city centre with a set of 15 pavement plaques. They are being carved by Pat Walls and each will carry a line of the poem by Jane Callaghan which won the poetry competition. All are sponsored by companies and individuals. Three are in place, 3 more are carved, and all will be complete and installed by late summer. We have had excellent support from Council officers with this project and are discussing how we can have the route flagged up for tourists, for example on the new electronic display boards.



Plaques unveiled to mark the route of Bradford city's hidden beck



Friends of Bradford's Beck members from left, Barney Lerner, Irene Lofthouse and Ed Butterworth next to one of the first plaques installed as part of the project to mark the hidden route of the beck

29 Dec 2015
Jo Winrow, T&A Reporter [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#)

Pollution monitoring: We were pleased to receive funding from the Environment Agency, via the Aire and Calder Catchment Partnership, to enable FOBB to formalise the pollution monitoring project using a new technique developed by the University of Sheffield. Volunteers took over 150 measurements in Bradford and Keighley using the simple method to determine at which locations and times misconnected drainage was polluting the Becks. About 8 locations were found and reported to the EA and YW. The tampon technique can also be used in sewer systems to help locate the source of the pollution. YW and Bradford Council are responsible for ensuring that the misconnections are corrected.

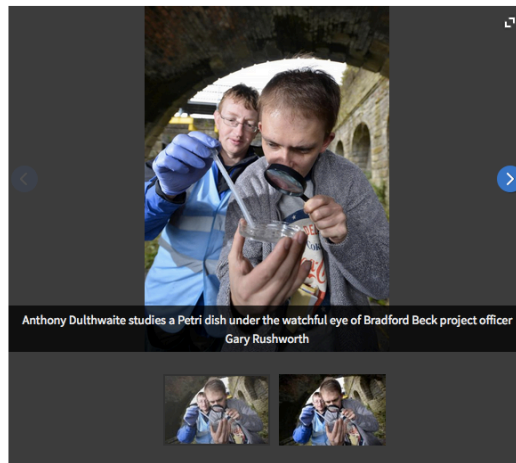
We are concerned with the amount of sanitary debris that

spills into the Beck from the 50+ Combined Sewer Overflows, and will be seeking to discuss this with Yorkshire Water and The Environment Agency in the coming year. Is it within the consents? Can it be reduced because it is almost impossible to clean up.

As part of the pollution monitoring project, we did some fieldwork and education with Bradford People First (see cutting above).

We are currently developing some educational materials around river pollution, working with a local school and Yorkshire Water.

People with learning disabilities hear how Bradford Beck can enhance city's environment



Anthony Dulthwaite studies a Petri dish under the watchful eye of Bradford Beck project officer Gary Rushworth



29 Sep 2015

Rhys Thomas, T&A Reporter [Twitter](#) [RThomasTandA](#)

Activities planned for 2016-17

We will continue with our awareness projects, with the addition of publication of a booklet of walks related to all the main and tributary becks, if we can raise the funding. Marking Bradford Beck with the continuing assistance of the Bradford Council.

The major projects for the coming year are (1) a Listening sculpture, (2) Launch of the Marking Bradford Beck trail, (3) a culvert survey drone, (4) working towards renaturalisation of a river reach.

News Local National Crime Education Health Behind The News Business Awards 2016

Listening sculpture will allow people to hear the sounds of Bradford's underground beck



Chairman of the Friends of Bradford's Becks Barney Lerner outside Lower Kirkgate where one of the first plaques marking the route of the underground beck has been installed



8 Mar 2016

Jo Winrow, T&A Reporter [Twitter](#) [JoW_TandA](#)

Listening sculpture: The idea is to have Beck-related sculpture in the city centre which is connected through the pavement into the Beck below and allows passers-by to hear the water running below. There will be a design competition (we have a sponsor for the prize) launched in April, with the results announced in Sept. Then we will have to get planning permission, and fund raise to actually construct the sculpture.

Launch of Marking Bradford Beck trail: We have booked City Park for World Rivers Day (25th Sept) and will hold a public event to launch the trail, tell people about the Beck, and announce the winner of the listening sculpture competition.

Culvert survey drone: FOBB and the University of Sheffield were jointly offered Defra funding to develop an autonomous drone that could explore and survey culverts. This would be a nationally leading project, which would provide cheaper, safer information. It would provide condition surveys, help to design flood schemes and spot pollution and misconceptions. Unfortunately we ran into some issues around IP (Intellectual Property) which prevented the University signing the contract. Defra are considering some contract modifications which would be acceptable to the University and the project might go ahead in the coming year – subject to funding. The Drainage Dept has offered to help with field testing if the project goes ahead.

Renaturalisation of a reach: Our big ambition to get renaturalise the Beck wherever possible. We propose to start with the reach between Poplar Rd and Briggate, alongside Canal Rd. Our plan is to submit a Heritage Lottery Fund bid within 2 years. As a first step during 2014-15, we had an outline design and costing prepared by JBA, a local firm on Consultant Engineers. The study was co-funded by the Environment Agency, and they have been very supportive as the project fits well with their strategic ecological and flooding objectives. However, Bradford have prime responsibility as it is an “ordinary watercourse”.

During the past year, progress has been very slow. Bradford agreed to put some of the environmental funding from the Canal Rd widening (which covered over part of the Beck) towards an initial contaminated land site investigation for the renaturalisation. This has yet to take place.

We suggest that it would help Councillors and Council Officers if they could see how other cities have successfully revitalised their waterways, enhancing the city, reducing flood risk, and improving ecology. Fairly local examples include Burnley, Rochdale and the River Medlock in Manchester. We would be pleased to organise a day trip, and could pay for transport if that we useful and acceptable.

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. We are not asking for Council funding, just for a little time of officers to guide and support us. In particular:

- Marking Bradford Beck. Support has been excellent here, and we foresee no problems.
- Listening Sculpture. We hope for a sympathetic and low-cost approach to planning permission, and support with fund raising.
- Drone. Help with field testing, if the project goes ahead.
- Renaturalisation. Is our offer to organise a day of site visits to successful urban river renaturalisation projects of interest? If so, how do we proceed?
- Please invite FOBB to report back in a year’s time.

David (Barney) Lerner
Chair, Friends of Bradford’s Becks
barney.lerner@gmail.com