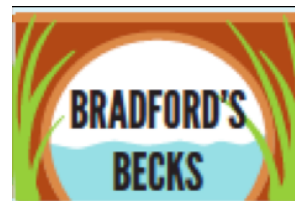
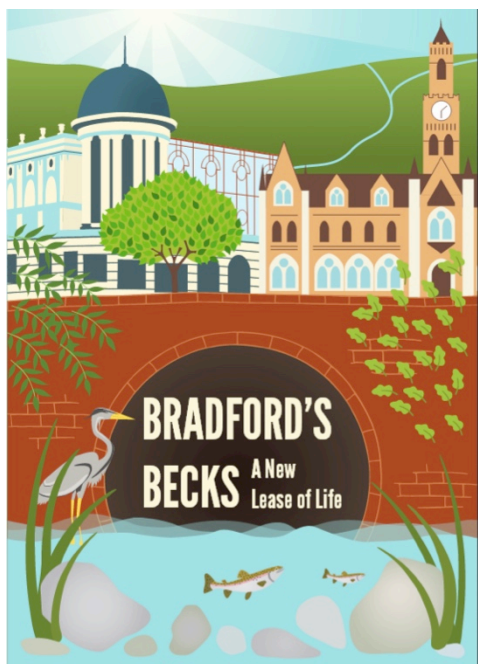


Friends of Bradford's Becks summary of activities 2016-17



Friends of Bradford's Becks report to Environment and Waste O&S Committee, April 2017

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, 2015 and 2016, and this is our report for April 2017.

FOBB activities in 2016-17

FOBB has had a busy and successful year with **Awareness** and **Pollution Hunting** projects this year, with good support from Council Officers in many areas.

Our Awareness projects have included:

- Plaques walk
- Listening sculpture (ongoing)
- World Rivers Day
- Walks booklet
- "Miss Connection"
- two litter picks and some guided walks

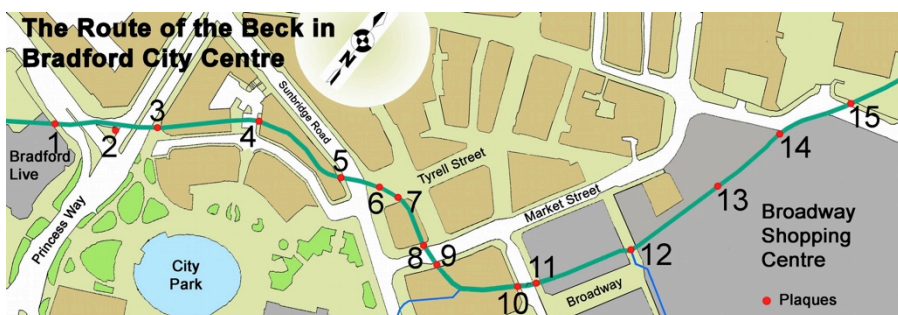
A great new scheme, which we had not anticipated, is the River Stewardship, and we still hope to get a renaturalisation project going!

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

Sadly, our project to develop a culvert survey drone has been stymied by a combination retirements of key personnel and IP issues.

Marking Bradford Beck: The project to mark the course of the Beck where it runs under the city centre with a set of 15 pavement plaques is now complete. (Actually, plaque 1 is a facsimile attached to the hoardings at the Odeon;

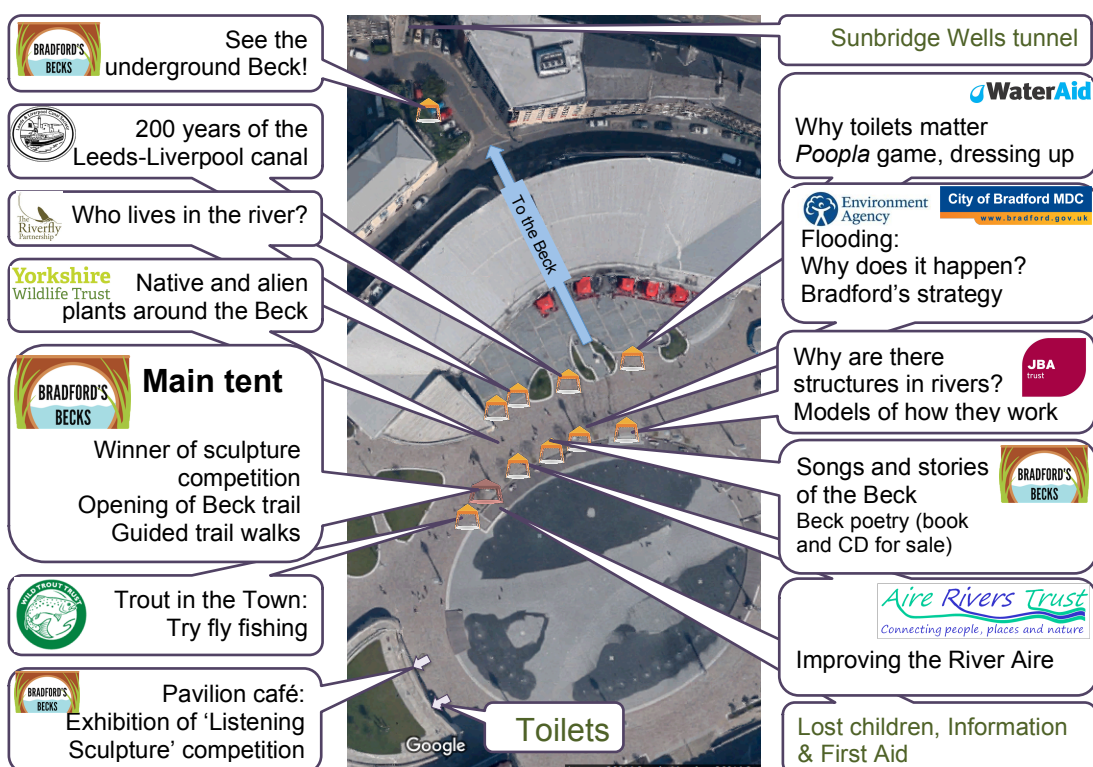
we've stored the real plaque until the Odeon is finished.) The Lord Mayor officially opened it. Details on the website <http://markingbradfordbeck.org/>, where a walk guide can be downloaded. Chris Bedford has been a great help with this project.



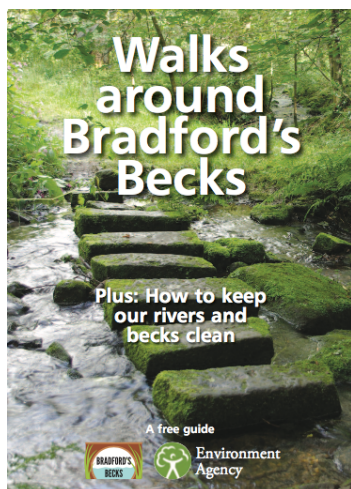
Listening sculpture: The idea is to have a Beck-related sculpture in the city centre which is connected through the pavement into the Beck below and allows passers-by to hear the water running below. A design by Alex Blakey of Slaithwaite was chosen through a national competition. We believe planning permission will be granted soon, and then we can start on serious fund-raising – about £45000 is needed, including a maintenance fund. Chris Bedford, Sonja Kielty and Dave Oldfield's team have supported us well on this project. More at

<http://markingbradfordbeck.org/listening-sculpture/>.

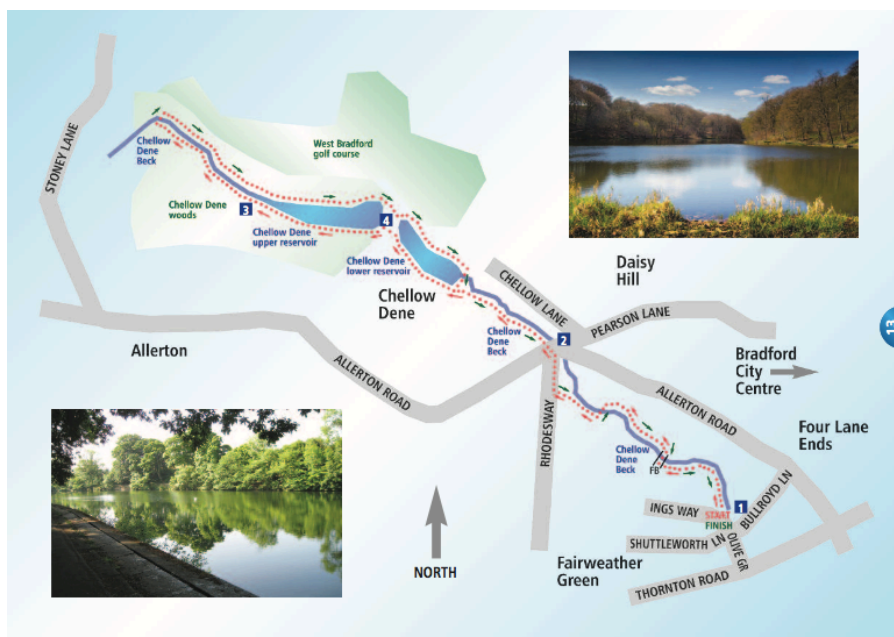
World Rivers Day: We held a public information event in City Park on 25th Sept. As well as launching the Plaques Walk and announcing the winning sculpture, we had stalls from many partners (see graphic)



including the Drainage Dept (Kirsty Breaks). The biggest draws were (a) guided walks on the plaques trail and (b) seeing the beck at the manhole we lifted in Almondsbury. The City Park team helped us.



Walks booklet: We have produced a 32-page booklet with six walks around the becks with the support of the Environment Agency. It includes background on the becks, flora and fauna, and a guide to identifying and reporting pollution. We have 5000 copies to distribute!



Miss Connection is our educational project for schools. Our storyteller, Irene Lofthouse, is going into primary schools to give them assemblies about mis-connected drainage and why it is important to only put *rain down the drain*. She would be happy to deliver the session to any school or community group.



We have also developed a sticker for children to take home to label the drains, and a 10-point plan to help their families to understand how to avoid pollution the river.

Pollution Hunting: Pollution by industrial discharges, failures in the sewer network and misconnections continue to be serious problems. They are often intermittent, making it harder to locate the sources. We have continued our pollution hunting activities of last year by employing someone to inspect outfalls and open sections of the becks at frequent intervals. We have found and reported a large number of incidents in just 4 months at 15 locations, as in the table.

Table 1: Bradford Beck pollution incidents reported 1/11/16 – 29/3/17

Type	Frequency
Sewage	8
Construction	6
Abuse of Drains	4
Fly Tipping	3
Industrial	2
Domestic Mis-connections	2
Agricultural Slurry	1
Total	26

We are pleased by the response of the Environment Agency. As a result a major problem in Allerton was partially rectified some 6 years after we first reported it and at least one major factory has had several visits and warnings.

However there still remain many problems that we cannot identify because they are in the culverted becks. This is shown by the contrast between the upstream (almost) clear water (at YMCA, Thornton Rd) and downstream polluted water (Ambler Mill); photos taken on the same day. This shows the need for a systematic review of all of Bradford's sewers and outfalls; CBMDC and the Environment Agency must put pressure on Yorkshire Water to include such a survey in their next investment plan, via PR19.



At YMCA, Thornton Rd, 17th Feb 2017



At Ambler Mill, near Forster Retail Park, 17th Feb

Activities planned for 2017-18

We will continue with our awareness projects:

- distributing the walks booklet
- completing the Listening sculpture
- more educational visits

Our Pollution Hunter will be in post until late May and we will continue to report problems and press the Environment Agency and Yorkshire Water to take action, including planning a systematic review of all sewers and outfalls.

We will continue to support the River Stewardship project, which is being driven by the Aire Rivers Trust with financial and other support from the Environment Agency and CBMDC.

Renaturalisation of a reach: Our big ambition continues to be renaturalisation of the Beck wherever possible. We propose to start with the reach between Poplar Rd and Briggate, alongside Canal Rd. As a first step during 2014-15, we had an outline design and costing prepared by JBA, a local firm of Consultant Engineers. This reach has now been identified by the Environment Agency and CBMDC as requiring deculverting; it is also part of the BEGIN EU project in which CBMDC is a partner, and the focus of a feasibility study funded by local levy funding. There are developer interests just downstream with the Skipton Properties activities on the Crag Rd site. This confluence of interests should enable us to develop a partnership and work together to achieve significant gains include an HLF bid.

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 some time of officers to guide and support us. In particular:

- Listening Sculpture - support with fund raising and help with installation.
- Help with distribution of the Walks booklet.
- Support for our campaign against pollution.
- Partnership working on the Canal Road projects.

Resolutions from the Environment and Waste O&S Committee

We ask the Committee to consider the following resolutions:

- Recommend that Yorkshire Water and the Environment Agency undertake a full investigation of sewage related pollution sources in the Bradford Beck catchment in the next investment cycle (AMP7, which starts with PR19).
- Recommend that FOBB and CBMDC work jointly on studies and proposals for the Canal Rd area.
- Invite FOBB to report back in a year's time.

Barney Lerner
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