

## **Long Preston Floodplain Project News Release**

**Date of issue: 15 April 2019**

### **River Ribble Spring Clean**

People are invited to show their support for the environment by joining local volunteers for a clean-up operation along the River Ribble near Settle, to help restore the natural beauty of the area.

Following on the success of last year's clean-up, a number of Settle-based voluntary groups are getting together again on April 27 for a mass litter-pick to clear plastic and other rubbish from a section of the River Ribble.

The river course slows down as it passes through Settle, and as a result litter is deposited on its banks between Settle and Long Preston.

The flat, often waterlogged, area of land can be seen by car from the A65 and by train as you approach Settle from Long Preston.

Known locally as 'The Deeps', the Long Preston Floodplain area is managed by local farmers and landowners for livestock and wildlife. In 2004, a consortium of charities and conservation groups, led by Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust (YDMT), formed the Long Preston Floodplain Project and part of their purpose is to re-create and enhance the rare wet grassland habitat found on The Deeps, together with restoring the River Ribble and reducing flood risk downstream.

The area attracts a lot of interest from local and national conservation bodies including Natural England and the Environment Agency because it is an important haven for wildlife. A significant part of the area is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and many nesting and migratory birds rely on the unique floodplain habitat.

Adrian Shepherd, Long Preston Floodplain Project Officer at YDMT, said: "The Ribble is a fast flowing river in its upper reaches and carries all sorts of rubbish downstream until it reaches The Deeps, at which point the flow slows and the River begins to meander. When this happens rubbish - especially plastic waste - is deposited along the river bank. It is particularly bad just south of Settle, where the Ribble passes under the A65.

"Whilst we cleared much of the rubbish last year the flooding last month washed down masses of new waste, which is not just unsightly, but also poses a real hazard to wildlife and to farm animals that graze nearby. The Floodplain is important to many different groups, including farmers, landowners, local businesses, conservationists, bird watchers, anglers and walkers. I am pleased that this event will bring the local community together to help restore a unique Yorkshire habitat."

Ensuring that the river continues to support healthy fish populations is central to the conservation work of the Settle Anglers Association, who own the fishing rights over much of the Ribble in Settle.

Chairman Steve Rhodes says: "Settle Anglers' Association are delighted to be involved in this initiative on the Association's water along the River Ribble. Fishing clubs, anglers and conservation organisations do a huge amount of work, monitoring, maintaining and improving the health and wellbeing of rivers and streams which not only benefits fish and other aquatic life but wildlife and the environment generally. Anglers are very often the first to alert the Environment Agency to potential problems or pollution incidents. Litter, especially plastic, is just another form of pollution."

Jack Spees, Chief Executive of the Ribble Rivers Trust, one of the Project's key sponsors, has worked with Adrian and other local groups to organise the clean-up. Jack added: "Rivers are the conduit along which not just water flows but, sadly, much of our pollution too, including litter and plastic. Clean-ups are a great way to improve our rivers and make them a more enjoyable place to visit, but also to protect our seas, which are becoming increasingly clogged with plastic. This event allows the local community to take an active part in improving their environment and we are pleased to be a part of it."

Paul Kelly, a member of the Churches Together Justice & Peace group in Settle, added: "All the local churches, as part of their core values, share a commitment to caring for the environment and living sustainably on our world."

"Some are involved in specific schemes such as Ecochurch and LiveSimply. The litter pick is a great opportunity to show care for creation through practical working together that improves our local environment. Time and again I see how small actions repeated over and over can have a huge impact."

If you would like to take part in the River Ribble litter pick on April 27, please meet under Runley Bridge (where the A65 passes over the River Ribble) at 13:45 for a 14:00 start. Gloves, rubbish bags and pick sticks will be provided by the Ribble Rivers Trust. Dress in suitable clothing, wear wellington boots and bring your own drink and snack. Children are very welcome, if accompanied by an adult.

It is anticipated that the 'pick' will end at 17:00.

For more information, contact [admin@ribbletrust.com](mailto:admin@ribbletrust.com)

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**IMAGE:**

River Ribble clean up volunteers, by Mik Cardus.

**NOTES TO THE NEWSDESK:**

For more information, please call Mike Appleton at YDMT on 015242 51002 or email [media@ydmtd.org](mailto:media@ydmtd.org)

**About Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust:**

Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust (YDMT) is a small charity doing big things to support the people, landscape and wildlife of the Dales.

To date the charity has helped to deliver inspiring projects worth around £28 million in the Yorkshire Dales and surrounding areas. These projects cover areas as diverse as countryside apprenticeships, supporting local communities, education and outreach, restoring woodlands and wildlife habitats, and improving access and understanding of this special place.

The Trust has recruited more than 50,000 supporters to date. Find out more at [www.ydmtd.org](http://www.ydmtd.org)

**About River Ribble Trust:**

For more information on the River Ribble Trust: [www.ribbletrust.org.uk](http://www.ribbletrust.org.uk)

**About Settle Anglers Association:**

Settle Anglers' Association (SAA) was established in 1920 and is therefore looking forward to celebrating its Centenary next year.

The Association has 150 "ordinary" paying members and owns or leases around 9 miles of the River Ribble in the Settle area, around 2.5 miles of the River Wenning in the Clapham area and Winterburn Reservoir.

Unusually for a Yorkshire Dales based angling club the SAA are not only able to offer its members excellent fishing for wild brown trout and grayling but also the opportunity to fish for salmon and sea trout.

To find out more: [www.settleanglers.co.uk](http://www.settleanglers.co.uk)