Melton & Oakham Waterways Society

Registered Charity No 1078752

MOWS Newsletter

Autumn/Winter 2026

Mick's Musings

Initially Correct

I am, by nature, a curious person, always have been, always will be, and so when the initials WFD cropped up for the umpteenth time at one of our committee meetings, I thought I should investigate.

As a previous chairman of MOWS, I had a basic awareness of the Water Framework Directive (WFD), but knew little about it save for the fact that it is a document we must get agreed and signed before our latest ~~dredging~~, sorry, silt removal escapade can begin. I therefore decided to give Mr Wikepedia and his mates a visit and see what I can learn, so if you are sitting comfortably, I will try and convey the gist of it to you, dear reader.

So, the Water Framework Directives (WFD) are documents pertaining to every area within the larger River Basin Management Plan (RBMP), which in our case (as the Wreake/Eye is a tributary) is the Trent (RBMP) and must, by law be reviewed every four years … Still with me? Good, let's continue.

At present, the legislation forces the RBMP to monitor the surface waters in their area, and the problems they are looking for are set out in the Environment Quality Standards Directive (EQSD) in accordance with WFD Article 4.

Similarly, the list of pollutants and standards in Annex 1 of the Groundwater Directive (GWD) must be reviewed every six years. Still reading? (yawn).

The list of water pollutants includes certain PFAS "forever chemicals" (such as TFA?) along with pesticides and pharmaceuticals. Surely you are not still reading? You must be a glutton for punishment!

Anyroadup, in conclusion this is what I have discovered (read on at your peril).

So, if you have PFAS/ TFA in your watercourse during the time when the six-year review of the GWD is taking place and these are on the EQSD wanted list then the RBMP may say you are contravening things and your WFD may not get signed. Oh dear!

So, now that has been cleared that up, I just have the following to say: WFD ……. WTF?

Mick

[As always, the opinions expressed here are my personal ones and do not reflect the views of anyone else within the society.]

Work Parties

Recent work parties have seen us using both of our open top work boats in tandem, as this seems to be the sensible way to move large volumes of vegetation.

This has turned out to be a fortuitous move on a couple of recent work parties, as engine trouble manifested itself in, firstly, the newest engine and, secondly, our old trusty 2.3hp Honda. In each instance, the boat with the working motor, towed its sibling back to base. I am happy to report that a service revealed fuel starvation in the newer engine and recent events ave prompted us to get the older engine serviced.

We have been pleased to welcome members of The Melton Wombles to our work parties and hope this cooperation can continue into the future.

Several new faces have made appearances at our regular Sunday get-togethers, culminating in at least seven bodies manning the two work boats on the most recent expedition.

Messing about on the river on a sunny day … what's not to like? Why not come and join us?

Galliford Try

During the recent building of the MMDR, the contractors, Galliford Try, attempted to endear themselves to the local population by offering "man hours" to improve local infrastructure and projects. MOWS was one such group who discussed using their help to extend our present moorings. Sadly, now the road is built, it seems the offers of help have been withdrawn, so all we can say is: Galliford … Try harder!

EK Lock Feasibility Study

Two of our volunteers, Stuart and Mick, met with the Rothern Group representative and assisted him initially and then left him to get on taking detailed measurements and photographs of Eye Kettleby Lock and its surroundings. This data has now been passed on and a full report is expected soon as an enquiry made recently revealed that it was in the latter stages of completion. We will chase them up in the forthcoming weeks, but then the hard work begins convincing grant-givers that this is a worthwhile project that will benefit, not only the society, but the wider community.

Don't Call It Dredging … It's Silt Removal!

We have recently reached an agreement with Melton Mowbray Town Estate as to the area where our contractor will be allowed to relocate the silt which will be removed from the river bed during the forthcoming work to be carried out by Equatic Solutions. However, with agreement in hand, their representative has approached the Environment Agency asking that the water framework directive (see Mick's Musings) be completed – but please don't hold your breath.

Who's for a Bag of Chips?

No, our new delivery is not an air fryer, although this produces lovely chips … not that you would want to eat these – well, certainly not the chips we mean anyway.



This is our newest acquisition and is one of the more useful bits of kit we own – a wood chipper. We used it initially at our first Sunday work party in November and it gave us the idea for a further MOWS income stream.



The Sunday session produced 16 bags of fresh chippings, which could be used as a mulch for plants or spread out to make paths in the garden. So, if we decide to market MOWS fresh chips, we will let you know.

Solar … So Good

I am pleased to report that one of our Footpath Rangers, Rod Axon, has come back to us with positive news about Footpath No 156 in the area of the solar farm close to Syston and Cossington (see Summer/Autumn 2025 Newsletter).



You may remember that the solar farm site looked as if it would completely cut off a major path, whilst there was also the possibility of encroachment onto the riverside path. However, since walking the routes, Rod reports that things are not as bad as we feared as most of the paths remain extant with a slight deviation to just one. So, if you are in the area, why not go and check it out – it's certainly an interesting thing to see.

2026 AGM

Notice was given of the 29th Annual General Meeting of the Melton & Oakham Waterways Society. It will be held at the Best Western Sysonby Knoll Hotel, Melton Mowbray, Leics LE13 0HP, on Saturday 14th November 2026, commencing at 10.00am.

The normal AGM business will be concluded with a short break followed by an open discussion and the opportunity to ask questions, after which light refreshments will be available and a chance to meet and talk to committee and other society members.

New Treasurer Wanted

Do you have a little time to spare?

We are looking for a new society Treasurer.

If you think you may like to help the society and volunteer for this role, but wish to know more, please contact one of the committee members listed opposite. Training could be given should you be interested.

Society Contacts:

Chair: Sharon Butcher
e-mail: sharonbrown987@icloud.com

Secretary (Acting): Jerry Filor
e-mail: jfilor@talktalk.net

Treasurer: Position vacant

Membership Secretary: Position vacant

Website: http://www.meltonwaterways.org.uk

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