

DRiPS AGM 10.07.14

Chairmans Report.

A difficult year for all those involved with the rivers of this country. The high rainfall (300% LTA) certainly caused some problems. On the plus side the water table was above the LTA with a corresponding rise in river levels, how long that will continue remains to be seen..

The European Water Framework Directive (WFD) is being enacted. Whether or not it is good for the rivers concerned is a matter of opinion. In many cases it is not. All rivers are not the same, they must not be treated as such. The management of our rivers must not be decided on by the EU and our politicians.

We have a delegate on the DCIG but it is not easy, we are not party to all decisions being taken. We will continue to oppose the removal of impounding structures and the cutting of V notches in existing structures, There has been very little time to assess what effect the multi million pound Darent Action Plan has had on the river. We should establish that before considering altering structures and a flow regime that has been in place for centuries. It must be right for the Darent and all those that enjoy the river .(At Hawley the daily mean flow for June is said to be notably high at 0.5 cumecs)..

I had hoped to bring you news of the reorganised EA, sadly they still seem to be in turmoil. I sincerely hope it brings an improvement to their performance. I do not criticise the individual members of staff that have worked very well with us over the years, sometimes above the call of duty. It is the one size fits all mentality of the management that is so ridiculous together with the box ticking approach. Sadly all the indications are that they will be much as they were before the reorganisation albeit without the Regional Offices, but with fewer staff .

I ask all of you to give DRiPS your support, if you or your club are not members then make sure you join. Since we introduced group membership (£10 pa.) two clubs have joined us increasing our membership.. We need your support if we are to keep the river Darent for the future generations to enjoy

Finally I thank my fellow officers and committee for their work and support over the past year.

Alan Williams

Chairman