Welcome to the July newsletter from all at the BFER partnership.

This month I feel like it really is Partnership with a capital 'P', as so much has been happening to reinforce the fact that everything we've achieved in the scheme so far, and hope to do over the remaining 18 months is centred around the fact that there are so many of us working together to make it happen.

Our celebration of the Viking Brecks has been at the forefront recently, with the ending of the Viking exhibition at ancient house museum. It was hosted by the wonderful Norfolk Museums team, curated with help from the Teenage History club, supported by volunteer researchers from the Breckland Society and included workshops and activities for local communities, volunteers and schools.

Soon to be replaced with our next exhibition focussing on the industrial heritage of the River, the Viking project has been a great example of collaboration creating a wonderful outcome. But don't worry if you missed it, we will shortly be unveiling a digital 360° tour that you can enjoy in your own home, and hopefully as part of the new digital interpretation provision at the museum. We also hope to provide a sneak preview at the upcoming launch of the 'Viking and Anglo-Saxon Breckland' research report – see below.

Collaboration across the partnership features heavily in our schedule at the end of June with the 4th partnership collaboration workshop in which we aim to understand how collaboration is working for everyone, and discuss how BFER can best support the development of skills and legacy for the future. We will be offering a new series of collaboration skills workshops as a result of this, over the next few months.

We were also delighted to be able to introduce Alison Farmer (Alison Farmer Associates), and Mike King (Resources 4 Change), who will be working with us over the next 5 months to deliver a 'Brecks options Study' which will look at opportunities for supporting collaborative working to support the Brecks' Heritage in the long term. For more information on that work you can visit the website: https://brecks.org/bfer/projects/working-waters-heritage-skills-for-the-future/3-5-supporting-sustainability/brecks-options-study/
Guest Blog: Summertime swimming (out in the wild!)

By BFER Volunteer Laura Lovelock

I love wild swimming. It's a re-discovered love, for me. I spent my childhood summers in France, swimming in gorges and lakes and rivers. And so, last summer, when I started swimming outdoors again, it felt like coming home.

My favourite place to swim at the moment is in the Lark. It's a chalk stream, where the water runs clear and cool, emerging from under the shade of a bridge to form a flowing pool which gets shallower further downstream. When I'm swimming there, I feel like a frog, propelling myself against the current. There are almost always people there. It's a nice feeling, sharing a wild space with strangers. And there's something uninhibited about swimming outdoors, something which transcends the usual self-consciousness. In the river, we're all small parts of something bigger. We swim alongside the fish; we share the air with the dragonflies and the wagtail. And we all belong there. The river is for us all.

Of course, I haven't mentioned the cold water part yet. The truth is, cold water swimming is all the things people who love it say it is (and I'm sure you'll know all the research). It is relaxing. It is addictive. And it really does feel amazing afterwards. There is nothing else quite like sitting quietly on the bank at dusk in summer after a swim, your skin cold under a sweatshirt.

But really, you have to experience it for yourself. You have to go and find that nervous feeling just before you step into cold water, and take that first gasp when you get your shoulders under. And when it is done, when you are immersed and swimming, smile to yourself. This is a good place to be.
Some good resources to get you started with wild swimming in Suffolk:

- Wild Suffolk Swimmers
- Outdoor Swimming in Breckland on Facebook
- Imogen’s River Swims website
- Outdoor Swimming Society website
- Wild Guide to London & South East book
- Wild Swimming Walks - South East book

Project Focus

3.5 - Supporting Sustainability

Towards the end of June we co-hosted a collaboration fundraising workshop at the Guildhall in Thetford alongside Resources for Change and CamEo. The event was attended by partners involved with BFER and CamEo with the aim to bring as many partners together as possible to better understand how we collaborate effectively in the pursuit of new opportunities and projects and identify training opportunities.

The workshop began with a presentation in the morning sharing results of a collaboration survey presented to our partners. After a quick coffee break, the participants split up into small groups to discuss areas such as fundraising, volunteering and public engagement with a focus on how BFER can help with these areas.
4.4 - Healing Waters: Breathe in the Brecks

At the start of June, BFER and Run Breckland marked National Volunteers Week with an event day on Thetford’s riverside. The event celebrated healthy outdoor activity, with a 2k and 5k riverside route which was walked, jogged, or ran by 89 participants. As a thank you to the many amazing volunteers that support both Run Breckland and BFER, volunteers were invited to join in free of charge, and received a goody bag. Following the activity, participants enjoyed a picnic on the riverside green.

"Thank you to everyone involved in the organisation - such a fantastic event! Lovely event for my comeback run! Loved every minute of it!" (Participant feedback)

Following from its launch last year, Run Breckland held the second annual Mildenhall 2k and 5k Riverside Run. 70 participants braved the warm weather for this friendly community event which took place at Jubilee Fields and along the River Lark. Find out more about Run Breckland’s autumn events HERE

"Such a lovely friendly event...no pressure and a really lovely relaxed feel...thank you all involved"

"As a proud resident of Mildenhall it was great to see an event here in the town and along the river" (Participant feedback)

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4.5 - Volunteer & Engagement Programme

In June BFER and theatre company Magic Floor Productions launched a brand-new play, The Vikings of the Brecks. Taking audiences back in time, the play tells the story of how Vikings came to live and rule in the Brecks through a fun and interactive performance. The play held its debut performance on Thetford Market Place, and even the Mayor of Thetford donned a Viking helmet for the occasion. The play was also performed at West Stow Country Park and Anglo-Saxon Village at the popular family event weekend, Dragon Fest. Not had a chance to see the play yet? Fear not! The play will be performed on Saturday 15th July at Lark in the Park, Mildenhall.
In addition to the public play, Magic Floor Productions have developed a KS2 education pack about the Viking history of the Brecks. Stanton Community Primary School have been using the pack, and pupils recently received a surprise visit from Vikings Odger and Ulf to their classroom. The pupils were fully engrossed by the time travelling Vikings, who helped to embed their learning. If you are a school in the Brecks, and are interested in finding out more about how to get involved with the education pack for autumn 2023, please contact BFER at: bfer.admin@suffolk.gov.uk

“IT was nice, inspiring and interesting - we hope you got back to Denmark safely”
“It was marvellous because they were so old and knew so much!”
“I liked the Vikings visit because they really brought the history to life”
(Pupil feedback)

(Vikings Odger and Ulf engaging pupils at Stanton Community Primary School)

In Other News

Get River Positive Funding

Webinar on how to apply for funding: Friday 14th July 2023.
Anglian Water have joined forces with Severn Trent to Get River Positive by 2030, working collaboratively to drive real action and make the changes we all want to see for a better future for our rivers and environment.

More detail on Get River Positive can be found here: https://www.anglianwater.co.uk/environment/river-health/

The Get River Positive partnership has committed to:

- Ensure storm overflows and sewage treatment works do not harm rivers
- Create more opportunities for everyone to enjoy our region's rivers
- Support others to improve and care for rivers
- Enhance our rivers and create new habitats so wildlife can thrive
- Be open and transparent about our performance and our plans

**The Five Get River Positive Commitments** are outlined below:

![Commitment icons]

Commitment 1: Ensure storm overflows and sewage treatment works do not harm rivers
Commitment 2: Create more opportunities for everyone to enjoy our region's rivers
Commitment 3: Support others to improve and care for rivers
Commitment 4: Enhance our rivers and create new habitats so wildlife can thrive
Commitment 5: Be open and transparent about our performance and our plans

Our Get River Positive commitments are among many important drivers for our work on water resources and wastewater management. Our pledges will be fully reflected in critical plans and programmes, including those for Water Resources Management, Drainage and Wastewater Management, Pollution Incident Reduction, and for the Water Industry National Environment Programme.

**Get River Positive Fund:**
As part of the Get River Positive initiative, we have a Get River Positive Fund that can be applied for to carry out work within the Anglian region that helps us to meet one or more of our Get River Positive Commitments.

**Q: What is the deadline?** Currently there is no deadline - the panel meets monthly to review and approve applications, and you should expect to have an update within 28 working days. Depending on the number of applications, submission windows may be introduced, but we will ensure this is communicated.

**Q: Can organisations apply for more than one project?** Organisations can apply for more than one project.

**Q: What are the funding requirements?** Projects are asked to be match funded of an equal amount with other partners, so that Anglian Water is not the sole funder.

**Q: When does the money have to be spent?** This is subject to legal agreement, but generally we would expect the money to be spent within the year requested. However, you could apply in this year and ask for the funds in the next business year.

If you have any questions about Get River Positive or the fund, ring: 07773 62372 or email getriverpositive@anglianwater.co.uk for more information.
We are looking for volunteers to join us, see a list of our current opportunities:

**BFER Blogger Volunteer** - BFER is launching a new blog as part of its website and is seeking Blogging Volunteers to assist in writing engaging articles and content. BFER will use blog posts to reach both new and existing audiences. The BFER Blog will report on the diverse range of exciting heritage, wildlife, wellbeing, and art projects and events taking place across the BFER scheme.

**BFER PR & Social Media Volunteer** - We are looking for a driven PR & Social Media Volunteer to attract and interact with new and existing audiences. Volunteers should have a solid understanding of how each social media channel works and how to optimize content so that it is engaging on those channels.
**BFER Video Editor Volunteer** - Can you create and edit videos suitable for websites and social media? We are looking for a video editor to help create, edit and deliver content for our social media platforms, YouTube and Website.

**BFER Events & Activities Helper** - Events and Activities Helpers assist with one-off BFER events and activity opportunities throughout the year. Participants of these events hugely benefit from and value their interactions with volunteers. Volunteers serve as a 'friendly face' representing BFER: engaging visitors and participants, and generally being warm and helpful.

If you are interested in any of the above volunteer roles, please get in touch: BFER.admin@suffolk.gov.uk

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**Other Volunteer Opportunities**

**West Stow Country Park** are looking for volunteers!

If you are interested contact [West Stow Anglo-Saxon Village](mailto:WestStowAngloSaxonVillage@westsuffolk.gov.uk)

Our Partners below are recruiting volunteers for a variety of exciting projects in the Brecks:

**Bush Adventures UK** - Events Volunteers and Garden Volunteers

**Charles Burrell Museum** - Front of House Volunteer, Main Display Area Guide, Café Staff and Engine Specific Volunteer

**Tales from the River** - Research Volunteer

**Run Breckland** - Volunteer Marshals
Little Ouse Headwaters Project (LOHP) – Practical Conservation Volunteer

The Icknield Way Association - Officers and Wardens

The River Lark Catchment Partnership - Volunteer Opportunities

Thetford Town Council - Conservation Volunteers

For more information on the opportunities visit: https://brecks.org/bfer/resources/volunteer-hub/

If you are recruiting volunteers in the Brecks area and would like to advertise your opportunities here, please email: bfer.admin@suffolk.gov.uk

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**Upcoming Events**

We are really excited to share with you some of the wonderful outdoor events and activities that are in the pipeline.

**BFER Events**

**July 8th - Dragonfly Walk**
West Stow Country Park: 11am & 1pm
Join us at West Stow to explore the world of the Dragonfly as they start to emerge across the Country Park! [Book Here]

**July 11th - Introduction to Yoga**
West Stow Country Park: 6pm
If you have been wanting to give yoga a try but not found a suitable class or nerves have prevented you from starting then this is the session for you. [Book Here]

**July 11th - Introduction to Meditation**
West Stow Country Park: 7:15pm
For those who would like to enjoy meditation but think it’s not for you (it is!). [Book Here]

**July 15th - Vikings of the Brecks: Lark in the Park**
Jubilee Fields, Mildenhall: 11am - 4pm
Experience a brand new fun packed family performance about the history of Vikings in the Brecks, at Lark in the Park. **FREE**

**July 15th - Early Morning Yoga**
West Stow Country Park: 8am
A hatha influenced, moving yoga session combining movement with the breath to calm and energise ready for the day ahead. [Book Here]

**July 25th - Introduction to Yoga**
West Stow Country Park: 6pm
If you have been wanting to give yoga a try but not found a suitable class or nerves have prevented you from starting then this is the session for you. [Book Here]

**July 25th - Introduction to Medication**
West Stow Country Park: 7:15pm
For those who would like to enjoy meditation but think it’s not for you (it is!). [Book Here]
July 29th - Early Morning Yoga  
West Stow Country Park: 8am  
A hatha influenced, moving yoga session combining movement with the breath to calm and energise ready for the day ahead. Book Here

July 29th - River Dipping Discovery Day, Thetford  
Discover the unseen world of amazing river wildlife at this family river dipping activity. Find out more and book at brecks.org/events

Ancient House Museum Events

Knit and Knatter  
First Tuesday of the month 10am to 12 noon: Come and knit, natter and enjoy a tea or coffee and a biscuit. You can bring along your own knitting or crochet or get involved in one of our projects.

Mardle and Make  
First Tuesday of the month 2pm to 4pm: Bring your craft projects and spend some time working on them in good company with a cup of tea or coffee and a biscuit.

History Club  
Every Wednesday during term time from 4-5.15pm: After-school club for children aged 6 to 11 years old.

Teenage History Club  
Every Friday during term time from 4-6pm: Free after school club for teenagers aged 12 and over.

Heritage Open Day: Made by the River  
Saturday 9 September 2023, 10am to 5pm

First World War in Thetford  
Tuesday 24 October 2023, 10am to 4.30pm: Discover the industries along the rivers in Thetford and how they contributed to the war effort.

Second World War in Thetford  
Saturday 24 February 2024, 10am to 3.30pm: Discover Thetford's important role in the Second World War and find out why Churchill's secret papers came to Thetford.

Family Trails at Ancient House Museum of Thetford Life  
10am to 4pm  
Included in museum admission: Adults: £5.70; Concession:* £5.50; Child: £4.80; Adult in a family group: £5.20; Twilight (last hour before closing): £2  
Click here to book https://norfolk-museums.arttickets.org.uk/ancient-house

Made by the River Trail  
Saturday 22 July to Friday 8 September 2023: Fill your boat with cargo made in Thetford to win a small prize.

First World War Trail  
Saturday 21 October to Thursday 23 November 2023: Find our Burrell G Company Frist World War soldiers hidden in the museum to win a small prize.

For more information on the events & to book: Click here to view our events page
Do you have an event you would like us to promote on our newsletter, on our website, or across our social media pages?

Please complete the form for us to share your event:

Event detail form

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**Social Media**

Are you following us on social media? Click the icons below to follow us!

[Twitter]  [Facebook]  [Instagram]

Are you subscribed to us on YouTube?

We will be creating more video content this year so make sure to subscribe to us on YouTube and hit the notification bell!

While we are out filming videos for you, you can watch our latest video here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-iD_0hPF2r4

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