



11 November 2016

Rain gardens, clean rivers and new leadership

ARK 2016 AGM – Press Release

On Monday Action for the River Kennet held its AGM. Landscape Architect , Kevin Barton demonstrated how rain gardens in towns and villages can prevent river pollution and protect river flows. There are many applications for these ‘Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems’ along the Kennet Valley to improve and protect our River.

Entomologist Dr Cyril Bennet explained the importance of understanding exactly the condition of our rivers today so that we can protect them for the future, using the latest techniques in invertebrate monitoring.

Thames Water reported on progress to build the water pipeline that will allow them to abstract less water from the Kennet at Axford and Ogbourne. Work is progressing well, with an expected completion date of April 2017.

ARK speakers summarised another busy and successful year working to improve the river with the help of many volunteers. ARK’s President Sir Nigel Thompson expressed his thanks to all the volunteers, who this year have donated over four and a half thousand hours of time. The ‘volunteer of the year’ prize was awarded to Glyn Horn.

2016 marks a change of Chairmanship for ARK. Geoffrey Findlay stood down after six years in the role, during which he guided ARK from a small local charity, to a full River Trust working throughout the Kennet catchment. Richard Clarke was elected as the new Chairman. Richard brings a wealth of experience in the environmental sector in addition to a great love for the River. ARK was delighted to announce that Lord Kennet has agreed to be the charity’s patron. Lord Kennet said ‘I’m very pleased to become Patron of ARK. My late parents were early, active and useful supporters of the project and both would be thrilled with the achievements of the ARK team and their volunteers. I am happy to lend our family name to support ARK’s continuing and important work to return the Kennet to her natural glory along the full distance from Swallowhead Springs to Reading’.

The meeting, held in Hungerford’s Corn Exchange, was attended by nearly 70 people representing members, supporters, funders and partners

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<i>President</i>	Sir Nigel Thompson
<i>Chairman</i>	Richard Clarke
<i>Hon. Treasurer</i>	Martin Gibson
<i>Technical Adviser</i>	John Lawson
<i>Ecological Advisers</i>	Peter Marren, John Hounslow
<i>Committee</i>	James Dallas, Sean Dempster, Don Harris, Kevin Light, Dr Rodney Owen-Jones
<i>Director</i>	Charlotte Hitchmough, Upper Office, The Dutch Barn, Elm Tree Park, Manton, Wiltshire, SN8 1PS