



LDAS NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER 2026

We are still taking steps to protect our fisheries during this hot weather, and your continued support is very much appreciated.

IMPORTANT FISHERY UPDATE

Temporary closures due to low water levels

- **Long Copse – Small Pond CLOSED**
● Top Pond remains open.
- **Ashtead Park – BOTH LAKES CLOSED**
Closed until further notice.
- **The Splash – OPEN**
- **River Mole – CLOSED**
Young Street to Mickleham Bridge.

Our fisheries officer, Stuart Stafford, is keeping a close eye on this situation, and we will advise when each of the waters are open again, after we have had some substantial rainfall.

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As previously reported, we have carried out some major work on the small pond at Long Copse, which has now been completed. Thanks you Stuart and the team.



- We are aware of the trapped fish on the **Top Pond** the other side of 'the bridge'. We are taking measures to repatriated them very soon. Please do not attempt to catch them yourself.

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NEW FOR LDAS MEMBERS – TILLINGBOURNE FISHERIES

We are delighted to announce a new fishing opportunity for LDAS members at **Tillingbourne Fisheries, Abinger Hammer.**

Frog Island Lake offers quiet coarse fishing for silvers, roach, tench, perch and carp.

Members' rates:

-  Day ticket: **£5 – HALF PRICE**
-  Night fishing: **£13**
- Maximum **4 LDAS members per day**
- Booking via the **Clubmate App or LDAS website**

We hope this new partnership will provide a valuable additional benefit to members.

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'Parents of junior members are politely reminded that under 12's may only fish on our waters if supervised by a responsible adult at all times.' The **responsible adult** **MUST** be 18 years minimum to supervise any member under 12. **THIS WILL BE ENFORCED BY OUR BAILIFFS**

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As all members are aware, **Anti-Social behaviour** at any of our waters will not be tolerated. There is the Incident Report found on the App to send a report to our bailiffs, but the committee have introduced a faster way of alerting us of anti-social behaviour by calling a dedicated phone number where immediate action can be taken. This number is **07395 835986** It can also be found on the App. in a new Icon called **ANTI-SOCIAL REPORTING**

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CLUB MATCHES FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE YEAR:

1. Sunday October 11th Long Copse - Both Ponds. DRAW: 8.00am MATCH: 9.00am to 3.00pm **BOOK NOW**
2. Sunday Nov. 22nd Long Copse - Both Ponds. DRAW: 8.00am MATCH: 9.00am to 2.00pm **BOOK NOW**
3. Sunday December 20th XMAS MATCH Long Copse TBA

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CRAYFISH

It is illegal to put a live signal crayfish back into any UK water if you catch one. Do remember to fully sanitise your kit as any egg can stay alive out of water for a considerable time and are easily transferred from water to water!

While the small pond is not being used we have put in traps.

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RATS AT LONG COPSE:

We are aware of the reports of rats at Long Copse, and we have been looking at solutions. Unfortunately the Council will not help, so we have to fund this ourselves. Members can help by ensuring **NO BAIT** is left at your 'swim'. Rats will devour any scraps, no matter how small, so please keep all areas free of food and bait. Our fisheries officer is planning to have a visit from a professional exterminator during October.

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BUYING TACKLE

We do appreciate that not all members will want to invest in new tackle, especially rods and reels, and even poles. However, we would urge you to consider carefully what you need to suit your budget. We have a good relationship with **Surbiton Angling**, who offer 10% discount on all purchases when showing your **Clubmate App**. If you are a new member, or a junior, we may have some tackle that has been previously donated to the club, so please enquire first before buying something that may not last too long.

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Please see the following report from Paul Fidgeon on the continuing development of the River Mole.

HELPING THE RIVER MOLE RECOVER

Could gravel cleaning help bring more young fish – and possibly barbel – back to the River Mole?

LDAS, working with the Environment Agency, the River Mole Angling Alliance and other local clubs, is preparing a programme of gravel cleaning at Mickleham.

The aim is simple: to restore clean spawning gravels and give fish eggs and fry a better chance of survival.

In previous releases we have indicated efforts by the club to undertake a co-ordinated effort to trap North American Mink along our Mickleham and Fetcham Splash fisheries together with a summer fish rescue programme designed to mitigate the worst effects of the summer drought.

In this release we report on our work with the Environment Agency, River Mole Angling Alliance and other local angling clubs to revitalise the riverbeds.

The Need for Gravel Enhancement

In recent years there has been a noticeable decline in the number of juvenile fish along the River Mole and the almost complete absence of certain species from our fisheries. This is a pattern repeated on many of the UK's smaller rivers. If the only fish being caught are the occasional large chub, it can be a sign of worrying times ahead.

Pollution, predation, low summer flow rates and poor habitat all have a negative effect on natural recruitment. However, perhaps the most problematic of all is the lack of clean spawning beds due to over-siltation. Fish like chub and dace need clean gravels to spawn successfully, as without them, their eggs stand little to no chance of survival. To combat this issue, our club together with others in the River Mole Angling Alliance (RMAA) have been active with the Environment Agency (EA) in identifying known spawning areas along the Mole, looking for sites where habitat could be improved.



The poor environmental quality of much of the Mole makes fish spawning difficult

Learning from the Best

The RMAA have reached out to Trevor Harrop, one of the anglers behind the groundbreaking 'Avon Roach Project' for help and advice regarding gravel cleaning. Gravel cleaning began on the Avon in 2022 with encouraging results. He reports a noticeable increase in the number and diversity of small fish including the much-prized Avon Barbel. Trevor and his team operate under a permit system using a combination of rakes and forks to clean gravels under the watchful eye and supervision of the EA. LDAS have sought permission from the EA to rake up to six potential sites at Mickleham. We hope to start in the spring of 2027 and then rake every spring and fall thereafter.



Gravel Cleaning on the Avon

Assessing the Risks

Members of the committee have already carried out a risk assessment with the EA to identify safe entry and access points to the river. Work will be carried out on a voluntary basis with clubs sharing manpower, equipment and expertise and co-ordinated by the EA. Weather and river levels in the days leading up to gravel cleaning will be monitored. Ideally low-flow conditions are preferred as this ensures better visibility enabling volunteers to clearly see the substrate and work safely.

From Silt to Survival

The main aim of raking is to significantly desilt and loosen the gravel, creating well-oxygenated, silt free gravel beds. This has the effect of sterilising the area, allowing for greater egg survival and subsequent fry recruitment.

Rakes are used to vigorously agitate the substrate. From billowing clouds of silt, eventually clean gravels are revealed. Typically a line of two or three volunteers are employed and gradually work their way downstream. One hour is usually enough to clean one bed.

A sense of improvement is quickly noticeable in terms of feeling under foot. Indeed, every single draw of a rake will have a positive impact, and every ounce of silt removed will enable fish eggs to survive where they otherwise would not. Clean

gravels also allow larvae to hide deep within the riverbed substrate and harbour hatchlings during the most critical days of their lives.

From silt to a clean river



Measuring Success

The question everyone wants answered is 'Does gravel cleaning work?' Trevor Harrop believes the answer is yes. For LDAS, the logic suggests it will unquestionably boost the survival of fry and as we know nature is ultimately a numbers game.

Over time we hope to see an upturn in the number of juvenile fish joining the resident population and perhaps even see the emergence of species that have been conspicuously absent from our waters most notably Barbel.



The holy grail for angling at Mickleham?

Want to become involved? Contact any member of the committee or ***Paul Fidgeon*** via Clubmate.

The author acknowledges the work of ***Phil Waddicor*** a member of Dorking AC helping to produce this article.