

[News story: Brown trout return to Newcastle-under-Lyme](#)

This follows successful work to improve the ecology and habitat of the brook.

The Lyme Brook runs through the heart of the town, and has suffered from poor water quality from as far back as the industrial revolution when new industry and development had an impact on the brook.

Since the 1980s water quality in the Lyme Brook, one of a number of brooks that form the headwaters of the iconic River Trent, has dramatically improved. In recent years, using the Environment Agency's Environment Improvement Fund, a partnership called the Staffordshire Trent Valley Catchment Partnership has been working to improve the habitat of the brook, mainly through Lyme Valley Parkway.

This volunteer-led programme that brings together Groundwork West Midlands, the Wild Trout Trust, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and the National Citizen Service has been making all sorts of improvements to encourage brown trout to return to their ancient spawning grounds. And the partnership is excited to say, brown trout have been found.

Stephen Cook from Groundwork West Midlands said:

It's great to see that the years of hard work by local people have paid off.

The fact trout are in the brook means that other species will be thriving too and the quality of the habitat must be improving which is so important. It was also great fun creating the new berms, shifting the gravel and teaching children about their waterways so this news is just the icing on the cake.

Councillor Ann Beech, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council cabinet member for operational services, added:

The Borough Council is proud to be involved in a partnership project which is already reaping the rewards of work to improve the water environment at the Lyme Brook.

It's great news that brown trout have returned – it's a clear indicator of the brook's renewed health as high quality water and a good habitat are vital requirements for them to spawn. Where they thrive, other wildlife will too.

Although the Environment Agency has found brown trout, the work doesn't stop.

The partnership is continuing to work on further habitat improvements so the brook can sustain trout breeding populations.

It is currently looking to recruit members for a 'Friends of the Lyme Brook' group to safeguard this work and lead on future improvements. If you are interested, please call Groundwork on 01782 829914 or email Stephen.cook@groundwork.org.uk.

Mel Westlake, Catchment Coordinator from Staffordshire Trent Valley Catchment said:

This is fantastic news as brown trout are an indicator that the work being carried out by the Staffordshire Trent Valley Catchment partners is having a real and lasting effect on the water quality and habitats for fish.

The brown trout is synonymous with Newcastle-under-Lyme for a number of reasons including appearing on [the borough's coat of arms](#) as well as featuring on the statue on the roundabout in the centre of the town.

We hope to be able to continue with more of this restoration work throughout the whole of the Trent Catchment ensuring that brown trout are once again a common site in our local rivers and brooks.

Hopefully in the near future, brown trout will again be a common sight in Newcastle.

Background

The trout were found on an Environment Agency fish survey of the brook. The trout were measured and returned unharmed to the water.

Improvements led by Groundwork West Midlands were carried out through a series of volunteer-centred events using volunteers from the local community, Friends of Lyme Valley Parkway, Environment Agency and National Citizen Service.

These improvements have involved the creation of shallow sloping 'berms' along the bank side using brushwood from the pollarding and coppicing of suitable trees nearby. Opposite each 'berm', sections of the bank side have been removed with a mini-digger allowing the brook to 'wiggle'.

In addition, gravel spawning areas (riffles) have been created by placing gravel at locations in the brook, together with pinned woody debris, which has been fixed into the banks. Woody material becomes home to invertebrates and is a good hiding place for young fish.

Yellow flag iris and sedge have been planted along this section of the bank and in the muddy pockets within the berms. These plants will provide shelter and shade for developing fish and for adult fish. [Further details of the](#)

[project](#) are online and there are films showing the making of the Lyme Brook wiggle.

[Lyme brook: road to recovery](#)

[Second phase and fish survey](#)

Press release: Opportunity for residents and business to find out more about plans to reduce flood risk in Otley

Otley residents and businesses are being invited to come along and meet the team at a drop-in event on Tuesday 17 October.

Visitors to the drop in will have an opportunity to meet representatives from Leeds City Council, Environment Agency, Yorkshire Water and WSP (consultants undertaking survey and investigation work). It will also be a chance to find out more about plans to reduce the risk of flooding in the historic market town and provide feedback, which the team hopes to use in the early stages of the programme to develop the Otley Flood Alleviation Scheme.

The drop in will be held at The Core Otley, Unit 11 Orchard Gate, Otley LS21 3NX, on Tuesday 17 October between 4pm and 7pm.

The town suffered flooding on three occasions between November and December 2015, which saw 74 properties affected. In the Autumn Statement 2016, Government announced £2 million to invest in a scheme to reduce the risk of flooding to homes and businesses.

The scheme is being led by Leeds City Council working closely with the Environment Agency.

Leader of Leeds City Council Councillor Judith Blake said:

We are firmly committed to taking a whole catchment and citywide approach to flood prevention in Leeds, which is why the plans for the Otley Flood Alleviation Scheme are so important to help provide confidence and reassurance to our communities who currently live in areas of flood risk. We would encourage as many people as possible to attend the drop-in session to find out more and give us their views, as local people have a key role to play in helping us to get this right.

John Woods, flood risk management advisor at the Environment Agency said:

We're committed to keeping the people of Otley updated on progress around the development of a flood alleviation scheme for Otley. The drop-in event not only serves as a way for residents to meet the team, but also as a means for us to gather their feedback to help us develop the best possible scheme for the town.

Work to pull together data to better understand the potential paths of flood water as well as collating historic and recent flood information began earlier this year. The information from these investigations, carried out by consultants, WSP, will be used to update an existing digital model of the River Wharfe which can then help form potential options for a scheme.

The Otley Flood Alleviation Scheme is one of several schemes that is adopting a catchment-wide approach. This means the entire River Wharfe catchment area will be considered to help reduce flood risk. This approach looks at a combination of natural processes and engineered options to help slow the flow and catch water further up the catchment so that flood peaks are reduced further downstream.

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[Press release: Badsey Brook flood scheme open day](#)

The open day will be held on Wednesday 25 October between 2pm and 6pm at:

West End Lane (access via site entrance)

Broadway

It will give visitors the opportunity to see the construction works in action and the progress made so far. Members of the Environment Agency project team will also be available to provide information and answer questions people may have.

Broadway, Childswickham and Murcot were severely flooded in 2007 following record-breaking rainfall across the area. The £4 million flood storage area in Broadway will be able to hold up to 135,000 cubic metres of water during times of flood and will only allow a set amount of water to flow downstream at times of intense and high rainfall. This will reduce flood risk along the Badsey Brook downstream of Broadway.

The scheme, which will reduce the risk of flooding to around 290 homes and businesses, is due to be completed in spring 2018.

Dan Wilkinson from the Environment Agency said:

This is a significant scheme for residents living in Broadway, Childswickham and Murcot who know only too well the devastating impact flooding can have. The open day will give them an opportunity to see the work in action and see for themselves how, once completed, the scheme will help reduce the risk of flooding.

Councillor Barrie Parmenter, Chairman for Broadway Parish Council, said:

Broadway Parish Council are delighted that the project is progressing well and which when completed, will improve the lives and alleviate the worries of many residents of Broadway and the surrounding area.

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