

WATER SUMMIT REPORT

The latest Water Summit on 7 February was well attended. Hosted by the 2 local MPs and receiving presentations from Anglian Water, the Port of London Authority(PLA), the Environment Agency.

All agencies appear to be working hard to improve our waters and are investing time and not inconsiderable funds into this.

Anglian Water for example have a £105m investment for the next 5 years as part of the water industry national environment programme (WINEP). This will include natural flood protection techniques, such as at Two Tree Island, as part of the Catchment to Coast project.

SAVS will administer grants to community groups for their own projects. Supported by £200,000 from Anglian Water for such projects as pocket parks and sustainable drainage systems. Whilst the PLA has £50,000 for environmental projects along the Thames.

The quality of the Thames water has greatly improved in recent years and is now populated with seals, sharks, Rays, Herring, Salmon and Bass.

Saltmarsh has diminished considerably over the last 160 years but there are projects to reestablish this and also seagrass on Leigh Marshes. All of this will improve the quality and habitat of the river.

There are some major projects affecting the river coming up such as the Thames Estuary Tunnel due to be complete soon, and this should help with cleaning the river.

A major issue is still the littering with wet wipes – some drastic action needs to be taken by Government as the industry doesn't seem to be doing much. The 2 MPs were tasked with taking this forward.

Obviously Two Tree was a landfill site and this has its own unique issues.

There are things we can do ourselves like disposing of fats and oil responsibly.

An issue not often discussed when talking about water quality is the shipping in the Thames and particularly the effects of emissions from ships such as bunker oil which needed to be tackled.

There was a call to set up a community committee so that the issues avoided politicisation and allow open discussion. Presentations were useful and allowed scrutiny but debate and community involvement were equally important.