



September 2026 Newsletter



It was a frustrating start to the season for Dorking anglers. The closure of the River Mole was something none of us wanted to see, but it was absolutely necessary in order to protect our precious fish stocks. As we navigate increasingly unpredictable climate patterns, sustainable fishery management remains a top priority to ensure the longevity of our waters. With the intense, stifling heat of the summer

now behind us, we can look forward to more comfortable and highly productive days on the bank. Autumn is widely considered to be the pinnacle of the coarse fishing calendar. As water temperatures drop into the ideal 12° to 16°C range and the dense summer weed growth finally dies back, fish begin aggressively feeding to build up fat reserves in readiness for the winter. Species like roach, chub and barbel are switching on, giving anglers their best chance of the year to land a specimen fish ><>

CLUB CONSERVATION EFFORTS FEATURED IN ANGLING TIMES

Dorking AS recently celebrated a memorable milestone when the Angling Times ran a feature on our ongoing conservation projects. The comprehensive coverage by the fishing fraternity's favourite weekly publication perfectly reflected the tireless dedication of our volunteers.

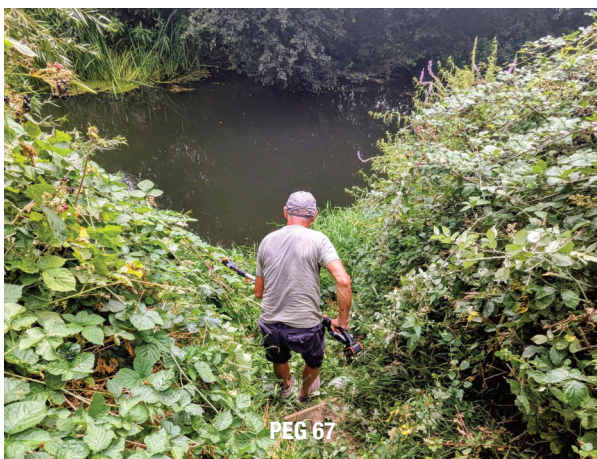
The article details our essential environmental work, showcasing our extensive efforts in mink trapping, gravel cleaning, and water quality testing, alongside our many other club initiatives.

Crucially, the piece emphasised how modern angling has evolved beyond the pursuit of simply catching fish. It demonstrated how community engagement, through local litter picks and Himalayan balsam bashes, challenged negative public perceptions of our sport - proving that anglers are the true guardians of our waterways.



CLEARING THE WAY FOR THE MOLE'S REOPENING

Prior to the reopening of the River Mole to our members, a dedicated team of volunteers had been busy getting the banks into top shape. Thanks to their hard work, several pegs were cleared of thick vegetation, overhanging branches, fallen trees, and unsightly litter. While this vital work often goes unnoticed, maintaining Dorking's waters would be impossible without the selfless efforts of those who attend regular work parties. They truly are the heartbeat of our angling club.



MEETING THE CHALLENGE OF CLIMATE CHANGE TOGETHER



The Mole is a classic 'flashy' river, known for its sudden rise and fall. Now, climate change is intensifying these cycles, leaving our waters caught between harsh winter floods and intense summer droughts.

Both fishing and, more crucially fish, have borne the brunt of these relentless weather patterns. Winter spates do more than render a river unfishable; they also cause widespread habitat destruction, fish displacement, and accelerated ecological degradation through pollution.



Conversely, summer droughts present an entirely different, more critical set of challenges. Low flow and rising water temperatures strip rivers of the essential dissolved oxygen fish need to survive. As river levels drop, fish can become isolated in dwindling, shallow pools - a crisis witnessed all too recently at Norbury Park.

ADAPTING TO EXTREMES

These unpredictable, seasonal extremes are rewriting the rules of traditional coarse fishing, leaving anglers and clubs with no choice but to adapt to what is the new normal.

Angling clubs need strict protocols for flash floods and summer droughts to protect fish populations, maintain river health, and keep members safe. This requires tracking real-time river levels and conducting water quality testing to spot early pollution surges. Clubs should also monitor changing environmental conditions by taking routine air, water, and oxygen readings. Finally, a member-alert system must notify anglers of severe weather events or sudden fishery closures.

For their part, anglers must commit to a responsible model of self-regulation during intense heat. Fish cooler early mornings or late evenings when water temperatures drop and oxygen levels rise. Replace the prolonged photographing of fish with rapid, in-water releases, and suspend the targeting of sensitive species, like pike and barbel, when the mercury is soaring.

Safeguarding our fisheries in these more challenging times will require a unified effort, with clubs using data-driven operational monitoring and anglers practicing vigilant, ethical stewardship on the river bank.

MINK TRAPPING SCHEME HITS THE AIRWAVES

Anglers help tackle killer mink on Surrey river



[CLICK IMAGE TO VIEW ARTICLE](#)

The reporting highlighted the key role local anglers play as the 'eyes and ears' of the river. It conveyed our collective battle against the invasive American mink - a species that environmentalists rightly call the countryside 'killing-machines'.



Phil Waddicor, our fisheries officer, and WRT project manager Rob Martin, emphasised the scale of the threat, pointing out the devastating effect mink can have on the local ecology and wildlife.

With eighteen mink having been trapped to date, the results are truly inspiring. Anglers and walkers have reported a noticeable return of native waterfowl, with thriving kingfisher populations.

The BBC coverage shines a welcome spotlight on the role angling clubs like ours play beyond just wetting a line. By working with neighbours to expand the trap network, which Leatherhead AC has now joined, we can make a mink-free Surrey a very real prospect. We only have to look to East Anglia for inspiration. A major conservation milestone was reached there in 2024, when it was announced that four years of intensive trapping had completely eradicated mink from a core area.



[CLICK IMAGE TO LISTEN](#)



Most importantly, this crucial environmental project could lead to the comeback, or reintroduction, of our much-loved water voles. UK water vole numbers have fallen by roughly 97% since the 1950s, largely driven by predation from American mink.

The work carried out by our club volunteers is vital to ensuring that native wildlife can once again thrive safely along our waterways.



[CLICK IMAGE TO VIEW POST](#)

KEEPING THE BANKSIDE SAFE AND CLEAN



Please report any fishing line you see hanging from trees or bushes around Dorking waters. This will enable our team to arrange for its safe removal and protect local wildlife. Birds can easily become entangled in line or snagged on a baited hook. These incidents reflect poorly on the angling community, so please notify the club before discarded line causes harm.

Whether it's a tin of luncheon meat, a plastic bottle, or a crisp wrapper, we've all seen litter left on the bank by a small minority of irresponsible anglers - casting us all in a negative light. In recent years, the club has demonstrated a strong commitment to the environment by actively removing litter from our riverbanks via the 'Anglers Against Litter' campaign.



Let's show the public we're the solution, not the problem, by taking old tackle and litter home (even if it's not ours) and disposing of it responsibly. Keeping our banks clean ensures they're safe and welcoming for both people and animals.

PARKING & DROPPING TACKLE OUTSIDE THE PUMP-HOUSE

In spite of repeated reminders, a few thoughtless anglers continue to park their vehicles by the pump-house before going on to fish Castlefields. Some members are also dropping off their tackle and returning to go fishing. This is a big no-no with both the club and the residents of Castle Gardens. The committee has been quite clear on the issue: anyone found ignoring this strict ruling could face dismissal from the club.



RESPECT THE ENVIRONMENT OR FACE A BAN



The committee has recently been made aware of several concerning incidents involving individuals defecating in the immediate vicinity of Castlefields Lake, resulting in human waste and toilet paper being left directly on the pathways. Please be reminded that the club has a zero-tolerance policy regarding this sort of unacceptable behaviour. Offenders face an immediate, permanent ban.

NO FISHING TACKLE IS WORTH A LIFE



Despite previous warnings about entering the water to retrieve fishing rods, anglers continue to put themselves in harm's way. A recent incident on Castlefields Lake saw a senior member get into difficulty when he became stuck in the silted lake bed. Although he was given a very nasty scare, he fortunately recovered from his ordeal.

Please remember that beneath the calm surface, water temperatures drop drastically just a few feet down. This triggers cold water shock, which can paralyse muscles and induce involuntary gasping. Submerged branches, dense weed beds or even discarded line could trap or trip you.

To prevent tackle loss and protect fish welfare, never leave your rod unattended. Stay within reach, or better still, use a baitrunner reel. Under no circumstances should you enter the water to recover gear. Instead, contact a club official who will make every effort to safely reunite you with your rod.

PUDDENHOLE - THE NEXT STAGE

Kenward has now completed the groundwork on Puddenhole, moving us to the next stage of development. To create a truly viable, thriving fishery, we recently hosted site visits from various specialists, including the EA biodiversity team, a fishery design consultant, an aquatic plant specialist, and an environmental enhancement officer.



During the excavation of the lake extension, an underwater spring was discovered that promises to act as a natural, self-sustaining water source. Going forward, it will help keep the lake cool during the summer, improve water quality, and increase dissolved oxygen levels - massively benefitting the future fish population.

In order to progress work on the lake, a baseline water level first needs to be established. Practically, this is unlikely to be achievable until September 2027 at the earliest, as it would require a winter for it to fill up. Only then can pegs be mapped out, profiling be conducted, and marginal vegetation be planted.

Dorking members will be kept fully informed as work on the Puddenhole project continues.

GRAVEL ENHANCEMENT SET TO RESUME ON THE MOLE

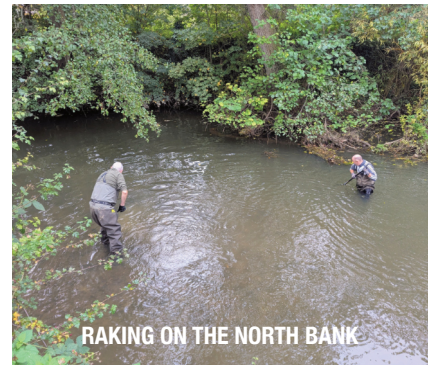
We are about to begin our third year of gravel cleaning on the River Mole. From the beginning, we had one clear objective: to improve natural recruitment among the barbel population. By raking the substrate and desilting the gravels, fish eggs have a far greater chance of survival.

As time progresses, we would hope to see an upturn in the number of juvenile barbel coming through on the Mole. With this in mind, the club is keen to keep a log of any catches of small barbel on the North Bank.

We need the help of our river anglers to report any baby barbel caught by emailing the following information to:

juvenilebarbel@dorkingas.co.uk

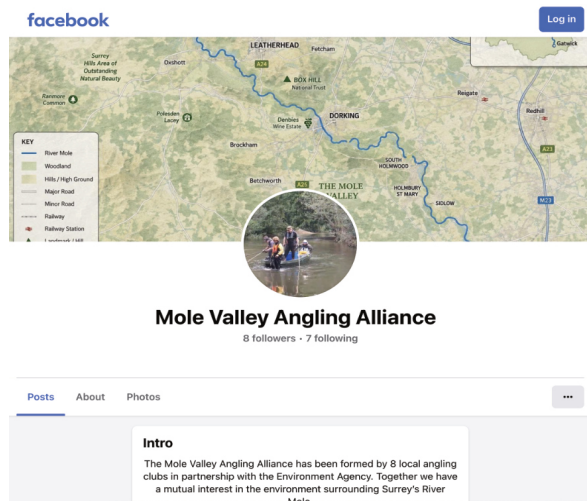
- Date & Time
- Location (peg number)
- Size or Length (an estimate of measurement)
- A clear picture (ideally next to a coin or object for scale)



MOLE VALLEY ANGLING ALLIANCE

Thanks to the establishment of the new 'Mole Valley Angling Alliance', other clubs on the river will soon be following our lead by taking up the gravel cleaning initiative. Spawning areas across eight club waters along the Mole have now been identified and the Environment Agency hopes to have a catchment-wide permit in place for Spring 2027.

Needless to say, the efforts of multiple clubs working in unison on the River Mole will have a much bigger impact on spawning success. If you'd like to take part in this vital conservation project to grow our barbel population, please email: volunteer@dorkingas.co.uk



MVAA FACEBOOK PAGE

As the Mole Valley Angling Alliance gathers momentum, we are excited to launch our official Facebook page. This new interactive hub will enable river anglers to stay updated on news and key events across the catchment, while giving followers a space to engage and contribute to our community. To join up and follow, simply click on the image opposite.