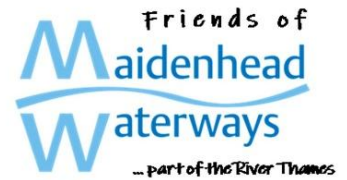


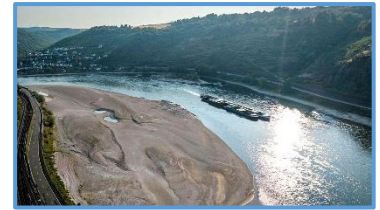
Dear Member/Supporter,

Welcome to the August 2026 edition of [Flow](#), the newsletter for [FoMW](#) members and supporters.



[Hot, hot, hot !!](#) - July was extremely dry, with 1.3mm of rain for the entire month... just **3%** of the climatological average...!! It was the driest July locally since 1859, and the warmest and sunniest July since 1953 with ten days of 30C plus. Despite 2026 starting with above average rainfall, the cumulative position has fallen back month by month and year to date rainfall is now just 87% of average. The combination of very low rainfall and very high temperatures (increasing evaporation) has led to slow flows and low river levels everywhere, aggravating weed growth.

If you think we have it bad, take a look at Europe's major rivers. The Rhine (pictured) is severely affected, with ships forced to limit loads and river cruises cut short due to record low river levels.



[BLP Update](#) - RBWM has launched a Scoping Consultation for the updated Borough Local Plan, reflecting new government guidance and [even higher..!!] housing targets. The new Plan will refresh policy on matters such as housing, economic development, transport and infrastructure, plus environmental protection and enhancement. RBWM will also review the Community Infrastructure Charge (CIL) system, which requires developers to contribute to local infrastructure enhancements.

[FoMW](#) will respond but members can also comment individually. Our priority is to ensure the new Plan retains support for the key roles of the 'Green and Blue' waterway corridor as Maidenhead grows, and for completing the [...still only half built] waterway 'Ring'. We also aim to remove the current Nil-CIL status of Maidenhead town centre, so that all developments contribute to infrastructure enhancements.



[Azolla Outbreak](#) - We are helping the National Trust tackle an outbreak of invasive Azolla at Widbrook Common (pictured). Azolla is a floating water fern that grows extremely quickly in warm weather, doubling in days and forming dense mats up to 30cm thick that smother other plant life and de-oxygenate the water. Specially bred Canadian weevils - that eat only Azolla - have been supplied by CABI and deployed as larvae. The larvae hatch, multiply rapidly and seek out the Azolla until it is all gone. It is not much of a life, but it is a very effective 100% biological solution.

[Bund tampering](#) - We have again had to repair the sandbag bund under Stafferton Link road bridge to keep up water levels at the weir and allow the eel and fish passes to work. If anyone knows the motive for repeatedly damaging the bund, please let us know - is it a misguided attempt to fill Moor Cut, or simple vandalism? We all want Moor Cut filled of course, but unlike York Stream it is not lined, so water spilling into it simply escapes through the porous bed.



Channel Maintenance - As we approach the end of the nesting season, we will shortly be restarting regular channel maintenance sessions. If you are not already on our maintenance volunteer list and can help, please Email us at contact@maidenheadwaterways.org. In the meantime some work has been done to clear silt and debris accumulated in the shallow open channel through Chapel Arches, to reduce the risk of prop damage to our outboards. We also have Weedcutter booked for 1st September to professionally clear the excess weed seen in York Stream after the recent hot/dry weather.

Gas works at Chapel Arches - Cadent has finally confirmed its schedule for removing the redundant gas main that runs in the services area behind all three arches at Chapel Arches. The works are due to commence 24th August, with a programme lasting up to 6 weeks. Work is needed both inside the arches and from scaffolding suspended from the bridge above. Our decision to cancel the Waterways Fun Day scheduled for 12th September looks to have been the right call, but we have instead agreed to offer boat rides as part of Rotary's Live and Local event in Waterside Quarter on 22nd August.

In the meantime we are closely studying Cadent's Method Statements for the works to establish the unavoidable extent of disruption to **FoMW**'s activities. It is possible we will have to move some of our canoes and service boats from the arches for a time, to avoid clashing with the works.

Canoe Club - Club meetings and training sessions have continued through the summer, with free canoe tryouts also offered at public events in association with our occasional public boat rides.

Two special events were held as part of our community outreach activities. On 15 July a class from Forest Bridge School at Braywick enjoyed a day on the water learning about river safety. They enjoyed a ride along York Stream in our maintenance boat Yorkie, followed by an opportunity to try canoeing and kayaking at Chapel Arches. On 4 August, 25 parents and children from The Autism Group in Maidenhead took part in a canoe day. In different groups they paddled our double Canadian canoes or sit on top kayaks, supervised by one of our qualified coaches. Both events were very successful and helped with our mission to share the waterway with the community.



Membership Subs - Subs are now overdue for the 2026/27 membership year but have again been held at £20 for **FoMW** membership (single or family). A further £20 per person is applicable for optional Canoe Club membership. With RBWM's finances still stretched, income from member subs is important to help us maintain and improve the waterway. Please check your payment status with Mark Loader via treasurer@maidenheadwaterways.org.

Best regards,

Richard Davenport

Chair of the Trustees

August 2026