

LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN AND AROUND NOTTINGHAM, DERBY, NEWARK-ON-TRENT, GAINSBOROUGH, SCUNTHORPE AND ILKESTON



Combating canal pollution

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progress



## Blue ducks help to protect nature reserves

Two important partnership projects have been launched in the last year, both with the aim of preventing pollution at nature reserves – one at Pennytown Ponds, in Somercotes, and the other at Martin's Pond, Wollaton.

Pollution from the surface water drains of the industrial estates surrounding the two sets of ponds has led to a number of serious pollution incidents, some resulting in fish mortalities and extensive environmental damage. Both locations are important to local people and offer precious natural habitats to wildlife.

The partnerships have developed mini campaigns to highlight the issues to local businesses and individuals. Posters have been developed to show the link between the drains in the estates and the ponds. They provide simple guidelines which should help to protect the ponds' important habitats and wildlife:

- never flush anything down a surface water drain or any drain that is not connected to the foul sewage system
- prevent any spillages going down the drains by containing them within the yards and roadways



John Brewington stencilling the blue ducks

- ensure all trade discharges go to the foul sewer system
- contact the Environment Agency if you suspect that any pollutant has inadvertently gone down the drains (call the EA Emergency Hotline on 0800 80 70 60).

Welcome to the second Focus
Newsletter for the Lower Trent
and Erewash catchment. This

Foreword

and Erewash catchment. This newsletter style will, we hope, introduce more people to the Agency and allow a greater sense of partnership in local environmental issues.

Partnerships will play an ever more important role in the years to come if we are to achieve sustained environmental improvement locally. I hope you will find this newsletter of interest. If you have any comments, or views, or you wish to become involved in addressing local environmental issues, we would be delighted to hear from you.



Mark Sitton Lower Trent Area Manager Environment Agency

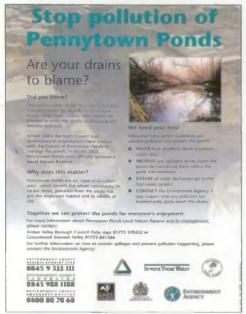
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#### Focus

## Blue ducks help to protect nature reserves continued.



Pennytown Ponds poster

The campaigns have also taken innovative steps: by colour-coding the drainage systems, both at Pennytown Ponds and at Martin's Pond. Stencils, in the shape of a duck and the words 'To Pennytown Ponds' or 'To Martins Pond', have been produced. The blue ducks have been spray-painted onto the ground next to some of the drains that lead to the ponds, which should carry only clean surface water.

Watching where waste liquids are poured is a simple action everyone can take and the ducks will be there to remind everyone exactly where the drains lead to.

#### Pennytown Ponds

Pennytown Ponds are owned by Amber Valley Borough Council, and are surrounded by Cotes Park Industrial Estate. They were officially declared a Local Nature Reserve in March 2002 and Groundwork Erewash Valley are working on the council's behalf to manage and enhance the amenity of the ponds. A local voluntary group, the Friends of Pennytown Ponds, is also actively involved in protecting the ponds and a local fishing club uses the largest pond.

The partnership to protect the ponds has been formed between the Environment Agency, Amber Valley Borough Council, Groundwork Erewash Valley, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust, Severn Trent Water Ltd, and the Friends of Pennytown Ponds. The Agency also investigates pollution incidents and attends the Friends of Pennytown Ponds' liaison meetings.

Neil Ratcliffe, Environment Officer for the Agency, said: 'We have been working in the area for a number of years now. Unfortunately, there have been a number of serious pollutions of the pond and hopefully companies on the industrial site will join the project and take active steps to prevent pollution.'

David Brown, who manages the reserve for Groundwork Erewash Valley, added: 'This is a thriving environment with a number of species of plants, birds and animals. It is also an important amenity for local residents.'

#### Martin's Pond

Martin's Pond nature reserve, which is home to fish, birds and amphibians, has surface water drains from the Glaisdale Drive estate feeding into it – these have also brought pollution instead of just rainwater. This was putting this important habitat and its wildlife at risk, but the signs featuring the blue ducks were painted on pavements and roads next to the surface water drains last Autumn. By showing where the drains lead, they remind people not to pour pollutants down them.

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'Often people don't realise that there are separate drains for surface water and foul water...

John Brewington, Environment Officer for the Agency, working on the Martin's Pond project says: 'Often people don't realise that there are separate drains for surface water and foul water. Foul water is treated to remove pollutants such as sewerage or chemicals before it is allowed back into the environment, but surface drains are only intended to carry clean water and often lead directly into ponds and streams.'

The Agency has also been working in partnership with Nottingham City Council. Four boards have been placed near to the waters of Martin's Pond, Raleigh Pond and Dunkirk Pond, which publicise the Agency's emergency contact number. These should help to achieve early detection of pollution and fish distress.

For more information, please contact: Neil Ratcliffe (Pennytown ponds) or John Brewington (Martin's, Dunkirk & Raleigh ponds), Environment Officers at the Environment Agency, Nottingham office.



Martin's Pond



# New signs to help combat canal pollution

The Oil Care Campaign has sponsored 1,000 new signs to help the Environment Agency and British Waterways fight the damaging problems of oil pollution on inland waterways in the Midlands. The signs, which remind people to 'Keep your oil off the canal', have been placed on canal-side totem poles on stretches of canal where oil pollution is a particular problem.

Initially, 400 signs have been placed on the Nottingham and Beeston Canal, the Erewash Canal, the River Soar and the northern stretch of the Grand Union Canal from Northampton up to Leicester. It is hoped that their use will spread across the Midlands and, eventually, throughout the country. As well as the reminder, the sign carries numbers for the Environment Agency Emergency Hotline (0800 80 70 60) and the Oil Bank Line (0800 66 33 66), which can provide callers with the location of their nearest oil bank where people can take waste oil for recycling.

The Agency developed the signs after responding to a spate of oil pollutions on the Beeston Canal in Nottingham.

Although one of the incidents was caused by a poorly maintained boat and another from a spillage of oil directly into the canal, it became obvious that many boats using the waterways leave a trail of oil in their wake. Mechanical problems or past onboard spills appear to be the main reasons behind the discharge of oil in bilge water or engine cooling water.

John Brewington, Environment Officer for the Agency said: 'I find it ironic that some people who decide to live on the canal are damaging the very beauty which attracts people to the water. Everyone is aware that large oil spills can be damaging to wildlife and the environment but even small amounts of oil look unsightly and can cause distress to fish and bird life.'

He added: 'The signs are designed to attract the attention of the general public as well as boat owners and ask them to think more carefully about how they handle oil. For example, something as simple as washing down an oily surface or emptying contaminated bilge water can have a serious effect on water quality and wildlife in the canal if the oily water is not handled properly.'

Alan Powell, British Waterways Business Development Manager, Grand Union Canal North, says: 'The Midland's canals and rivers are visited millions of times a year and the vast majority of boat owners and towpath visitors take care to leave the unique waterway environment just as they found it. Properly maintained boats should not be a problem, but there are a small number of people who do allow oil and fuel to pollute the water, often by accident, and this can have disastrous results for the waterway environment.'

The Oil Care Campaign is a national partnership involving the Agency, the UK Petroleum Industry Association, the National Household Hazardous Waste Forum, the British Lubricant Federation and the OSS Group. It aims to reduce oil pollution from all sources.

The Oil Care Campaign has this advice for boat-owners:

- when refuelling, do not overfill the tank
- when servicing the engine, collect used oil and take it to a recycling bank



- don't mix used oil with other materials such as paints and solvents as it makes recycling difficult
- place a drip tray under the engine and keep it clean
- if oil is split in the bilge, remove it using absorbent material, such as a sheet or pillow. Never use hoses or detergents to deal with spills.

An information leaflet entitled 'Oil care on your boat' can be obtained from the Oil Care Campaign on 0845 933 3111. More information is available from www.environment-agency.gov.uk/oilcare.



'..some people who decide to live on the canal are damaging the very beauty which attracts people to the water..'

### Greening for 'greens'

'Mind your own business' is a new sign-posting guide that has recently been published by a partnership led by Broxtowe Borough Council and uniting the Environment Agency, Government Office for the East Midlands, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Local Authority Energy Partnership and Nottinghamshire Agenda 21. 'Mind your own business' is designed to provide businesses with simple, cost effective measures to:

improve commercial efficiency and effectiveness

increase profits

• enhance their environmental image.

The booklet contains facts and figures, ideas of where to start and contacts for more advice and sources of funding. It covers the issues of water, energy, waste and transport simply, clearly and concisely.

If you would like to get hold of a free copy, please contact: the Customer Contact team at the Environment Agency, Nottingham office.



The business guide

#### FOCUS

### Clubbing together for fish



The open channel between the river and the pool

A partnership between the Environment Agency and Derby Railway Angling Club has resulted in the creation of a refuge for young fish, known as fry, together with a fishery and conservation area at the Glazebrook Pool on the banks of the River Trent near Shardlow.

To create the habitat, a 1.5 metre pipe has been dug into the riverbank, which has been protected against erosion by adding large rocks.

Subsequently, an open channel has

been created between the river and the pool so that water levels are equalised between the two. This equal level of water will allow fish to migrate in and out of the pool at different times of the year, and will assist the growth and survival of fish and protect them from winter floods. It is also hoped that birds and other water species will use the channel to access the gravel pit.

The work to create the habitat was carried out as part of a long-term plan to improve the fishery on the River Trent. The first success of this plan was reported in Issue 1 of the Lower Trent & Erewash Focus newsletter. The Agency's River Trent Bankside Project Officer, Keith Easton, worked with the Derby Railway Angling Club and its secretary Richard Anderson to develop the plans to connect the fishery, Glazebrook Pool, which is owned by the angling club, to the River Trent.

The Agency provided partnership funding from its Collaborative Project Fund and the club matched this. The Agency carried out the design,

consents and engineering works and the connection was completed mid-March this year, and is now working with the angling club to plan how the site should be managed.

Keith explained the value of this work, 'It is important that fish have the opportunity to access calmer, protected waters to breed and to allow fry to grow. The benefits are two-way, as once the fry mature, they can enter the river and boost its fish population. An added bonus is that other species will also benefit from the work, making the river a richer, more varied environment.'

For more information, please contact: Keith Easton, River Trent Bankside Project Officer, at the Environment Agency Nottingham office.

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'to assist the growth and survival of fish and protect them from winter floods..'

### Action for sustainability

The Environment Agency is a partner in a Nottinghamshire based funding initiative aimed at supporting local groups in the borough of Broxtowe. The Action for Sustainable Communities Fund (AFSC) has successfully helped community-based projects, tackling issues of sustainability, carry out their good work for the past three years.

The AFSC fund awards grants of between £100 and £2000, to non-profit making organisations and community groups for projects that benefit the social, economic and environmental well being of the borough. Other partners involved in the AFSC fund include Broxtowe Borough Council who administer the fund, Broxtowe College, Broxtowe and Hucknall Primary Care Trust, the Boots Company, Government Office for the East Midlands, Maplebeck Holdings Ltd and the Co-operative Group. This year, a total of £14,800 has been awarded to groups in the borough towards projects totalling £52,642.

Applications for grant aid are appraised by a panel of fund contributors against established criteria, which includes a sustainability checklist. The checklist covers 11 themes, from the natural environment, pollution and transport to community involvement, crime and community safety and social exclusion.

The groups who received this year's awards included the Biodiversity Action Group for the Broxtowe Barn Owl Project, Broxtowe Women's Project to produce a domestic violence newsletter, The Toy Cupboard from Chilwell and Beeston to publicise their toy lending service, and Cooky's Pond Preservation Group to purchase some nesting boxes and install a new bench by the pond for residents.

For further information on the AFSC fund, please contact: the Community Development Team at Broxtowe Borough Council on 0115 917 7777.



Successful applicants of the AFSC fund

#### Nottinghamshire's Green Guardians

The Environment Agency are pleased to be supporting Nottinghamshire's Green Guardians Environmental Awards scheme. The aim of the scheme is to recognise, encourage and reward good environmental practice in the County's communities and businesses.

Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, working in partnership with the Nottingham Evening Post and the East Midlands Development Agency (emda), launched the Green Guardians Environmental Awards scheme in 2000. Since then, the awards have become very successful.

For over two years these awards have recognised the achievements of organisations, schools, community groups and individuals who have worked to protect and enhance the environment, whether or not they are already linked to the Wildlife Trust. It is open to all sectors of society and recognises and rewards the County's unsung heroes. Over 100 entries have been sent in over the last

two years, including from prominent local companies such as Ericsson and Center Parcs, who were among the winners. Some of the East Midlands' leading businesses and statutory bodies are also on board as sponsors.

There are six awards:

- Education and the Environment
   New Initiative Award
- Education and the Environment
   Ongoing Initiative Award
- Environmental Community of the Year Award
- Environmentalist of the Year Award
- Environmental Business Process Award
- Environmental Business in the Community Award.

The Agency is sponsoring the 'Environmental Business Process Award' in 2003, which recognises and rewards a company that has introduced sustainable changes to their business processes to protect the local environment with

tangible and demonstrable results. Supporting the award will help to promote improving environmental performance in the business sector.

This year's awards are also being sponsored by Cottam Power Station (see separate article below) and Severn Trent Water Ltd.

Dubbed the 'Notts Oscars', the Green Guardians Awards have attracted much publicity. Support from key businesses operating on a County and regional level has ensured the awards' high profile and highlights the mutual benefits to be gained by this kind of partnership.

The closing date for applications this year was the end of May 2003. There will be a gala dinner and presentations ceremony in July 2003.

For more information, please contact: Alan Dicks, Corporate and Community Affairs team at the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust, on 0115 958 8242.

## Cottam gets the clean, green FGD treatment!

Cottam Power Ltd, situated in Retford, Nottinghamshire, is to install flue gas desulphurisation (FGD) plant at its 2000MW coal-fired power station.

FGD is a process whereby the flue gasses pass through an absorber where they are mixed with a limestone slurry spray. A chemical process takes place where the Sulphur Dioxide (So<sub>2</sub>) reacts with the limestone. The flue gasses are then released via the chimney; having had at least 90% of the SO<sub>2</sub> removed. In addition to the environmental benefits, the chemical process of the FGD plant will produce the by-product gypsum (calcium sulphate), which can then be dried and sold to the building products industry.

Consent has been issued under Section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989, which has involved close liaison with the Environment Agency, Nottinghamshire County Council, Bassetlaw District Council and the local community. This means that they will now be able to deliver long term environmental benefits. The FGD plant is predicted to remove at least 90% of the SO<sub>2</sub> emissions from the combustion gases, from two of Cottam's 500MW coalfired units, which will improve air quality and reduce our country's overall contribution towards the creation of acid rain.



Cottam Power Station

The project is likely to cost up to £70m and work on site has recently commenced. The new plant is predicted to extend the life of the power station by approximately 15 years.

The UK has set targets to reduce emissions, including SO<sub>2</sub>, and installing FGD plant like that proposed at Cottam will help in achieving these goals.

West Burton Power Ltd, Cottam's sister plant within the London Power Company, has already installed FGD on all four of its 500MW units.

For further information, please contact: Tanya Montgomery, Regulatory Officer (PIR), at the Environment Agency, Nottingham office.

# Raising awareness to protect from flooding

Each year, the Environment Agency runs national public awareness campaigns, which are targeted at people who may be at risk from flooding. The overall aim of these campaigns is to deliver the message of self-help: suggesting individuals prepare for flooding by taking measures to protect their property from the threat of flooding. Comparisons can be made to having a smoke alarm to alert you to the risk of fire damage to your property, or having a burglar alarm to protect against theft, so why not take measures to protect your property from flooding?

Flood warnings are communicated to homeowners and businesses directly by telephone or fax where possible, through the broadcast media and directly to local councils and emergency response services.

Prior to any flood and in the event of flood warnings being issued, there are various measures that people can take to help themselves:

- put together a waterproof flood container with a torch, radio, batteries, mobile phone, wellies, plastic gloves, warm clothes, blanket, food, water, documents with important telephone numbers such as emergency services and Floodline, etc
- fit removable flood boards to your home including blocks for airbricks
- have sandbags available at a nearby location, i.e. shed, garage, etc
- know where your water, gas and electricity supply is and where to turn it off when flooding of your property is expected
- have electrical sockets moved to a higher level if your property has flooded in the past
- move priceless items to a level away from potential flood water e.g. family photographs, videos, etc
- telephone the Agency's Floodline (0845 9881188) to obtain advice and documents to prepare for flooding, and to find out the level of risk to your property from flooding (low, medium or high).
- look on the Agency's website for useful information. (www.environment-agency.gov.uk)
- contact the Agency to find out if you can be included in the Automatic Voice Messaging (AVM) flood warning service, to receive direct flood warnings.

For a copy of the Agency's regional flooding newsletter, 'Floodlink' (Issue 2, winter 2002), please ring Floodline - 0845 9881188.

#### The warnings

The Agency has a flood warning system, operational in England and Wales, which is used whenever there is a risk of flooding from rivers or the sea. This includes the issuing of a general early alert, which has proved to be very beneficial.



Making a flood kit is essential

The system comprises four levels of flood warning; Floodwatch, Flood Warning, Severe Flood Warning and All Clear. It has been successful in helping those at risk of flooding to understand the situation, and what they need to do to minimise the impact of flooding when a warning is issued.

The Agency is committed to improving the flood warning service to give local people as much warning of impending flooding as possible, and so specific flood warning areas have been set up for households at risk. The Agency is working to add new flood warning areas to their service on a continual basis. The River Erewash (from Pinxton to Long Eaton) is one such flood warning area. Warnings for this area are based on river level readings at the Pinxton gauge and on forecasts from the Sandiacre gauging station.

Agency investigations showed that there are more than 4000 people at risk of flooding from the River Erewash, however, the majority of these are protected by flood defences so the probability of any flooding occurring is considered low. Currently, 144 people have joined the flood warning service in this area.

For more information, please contact: Tim Pierce, Flood Warning Officer at the Environment Agency, Nottingham office.

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'Comparisons can be made to having a smoke alarm to alert you to the risk of fire damage to your property, or having a burglar alarm to protect against theft, so why not take measures to protect your property from flooding?'

#### Beckingham estate update

Beckingham Marshes is a 488 hectares Agency-owned site that adjoins the west bank of the River Trent at Gainsborough. Once a rich wet grassland habitat, the site was drained in the 1960's. Since then, this flood storage area has been used predominantly as arable farmland, let by the Agency to five tenant farmers. Three hectares are let to an oil and gas company, which pumps a number of wells on the estate. The Environment Agency is currently working to develop a wet grassland creation project here.

The principal aim of the project, in partnership with the farmers and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), is to create in excess of 400 hectares of lowland wet grassland, and therefore, provide an enhanced environment for wildlife, as well as an attractive site for recreational activities.

In the last year, the following progress has been made:

- information is being gathered by the Agency in order to compile a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA)
- Atkins Water, part of the Atkins Group, has been appointed to prepare an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
- the final phase of the combined footpath/cycleway, from the Trent Port to Trent Wharf, was completed in autumn 2002. This work will form part of the overall visitor plan to be produced in conjunction with the RSPB
- two new lockable barriers have been erected on the oil depot road, by Pentex Oil & Gas, to restrict unauthorised vehicular access, particularly by fly-tippers. In the near future it is anticipated that this road will form part of the improved public access facilities



'the project is for the benefit of the whole community and will contribute 4% of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) target for Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh..'



**Beckingham Marshes** 

 as part of the improved access and educational information, which is being developed for visitors, a partnership project is being finalised with the British Geological Survey (BGS). The BGS is producing scientific text and artwork on the oil and natural gas-producing geology within the Agency's land, and this will be re-produced in leaflets and on site interpretation boards

It is intended that the RSPB will manage the site, whilst the Agency will be an active partner.

The project is for the benefit of the whole community and will contribute 4% of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) target for Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh (creating lowland wet grassland), as well as to other targets within the BAP.

The Beckingham Marshes will also form a cornerstone of 'OnTrent' (see separate article on page 8).

For more information, please contact: the Environment Agency, Nottingham office.

#### The frontline in environmental protection

The Environment Agency and Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service have signed up to work together to reduce environmental hazards in the county.

Jeff Dolby, the Agency's Lower Trent Environment Manager, and Paul Woods, Nottinghamshire Chief Fire Officer, signed an agreement early in February to consolidate local working arrangements. The Agency has provided the fire service with equipment and training to enable them to respond quickly to pollution spills and other hazards. An Environment Protection Unit, based at Stockhill Fire Station in Nottingham, is equipped to deal with a variety of threats to the environment and fire appliances are equipped with 'grab packs' containing absorbents and other kit to deal with smaller scale problems such as minor diesel or chemical spillages.

Paul Woods, said: 'Firefighters are often called to incidents that involve trying to contain materials that could be hazardous to

the environment and have always worked closely with the Agency.'

Jeff Dolby said: 'As they are often the first on the scene of an incident, the Fire and Rescue Service can take immediate action to protect water supplies by containing spilled materials such as chemicals and fuels. This makes them an important partner in the ongoing work to protect the environment from the risks posed from many different hazards.'

'A strong relationship has built up between the Agency and Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue and this agreement indicates that this relationship will continue to grow and develop, benefiting both the people and the environment of Nottinghamshire.'

For further information, please contact: Ian Firkins, Environment Officer at the Environment Agency, Nottingham office.

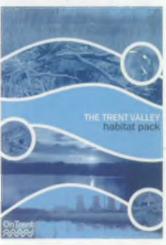
### FOCUS

#### OnTrent starts to flow

In the first Lower Trent and Ereswash Focus newsletter published in July 2002, we reported on progress with the OnTrent initiative which aims to benefit local people and the natural and cultural heritage in the parishes along the River Trent.

At the end of last summer, the partnership recruited a Project Manager for the initiative - Ruth Hering. Having a project manager in post, who is supported by Defra's Environment Action Fund, has given the project a real boost, and provides a main point of contact to help move the project forward.

The OnTrent Forum met at the end of January in Nottingham. The meeting is held annually to provide an update on the project and invite people/organisations to become involved. It is used to gather opinions and to discuss some of the more difficult issues the project needs to address. This year the event was very successful with 120 people attending from over 60 organisations. It was good to see so much support for the project from community, wildlife, governmental and non-governmental groups.



The Trent Valley Habitat Pack

Feedback from the forum endorsed the focus that the initiative is taking. It was also useful in highlighting some of the issues that need to be addressed in the future, such as public awareness, promoting the socio-economic benefits of floodplains and community involvement.

The other big success so far has been the launch of the 'Trent Valley Habitat Pack'. This is an information pack designed to encourage farmers and other land managers to look for opportunities to create wetland habitats, which are important for wildlife along the Trent Valley. As well as being packed with useful information it contains a leaflet on 'Planning your project' and a list of organisations that can provide more advice.

Over the forthcoming months a baseline study will be produced. This study will report on the assessment of the natural and cultural assets that exist within the Trent Valley today, and identify the issues and priorities that need to be addressed by the initiative and the partner organisations. An OnTrent website will be developed later this year, which will include the completed baseline study.

Ruth Hering, OnTrent Project Manager, is based at the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust. Please phone 01773 881195 for further information about OnTrent or for a copy of the Trent Valley Habitat Pack.

The Environment Agency is the leading public body protecting and improving the environment in England and Wales.

It's our job to make sure that air, land and water are looked after by everyone in today's society, so that tomorrow's generations inherit a cleaner, healthier world.

Our work includes tackling flooding and pollution incidents, reducing industry's impacts on the environment, cleaning up rivers, coastal waters and contaminated land, and improving wildlife habitats.

We would be delighted to receive your feedback. For further details on any of the articles in this newsletter, to give us your views on the newsletter or to get involved, please contact:

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This newsletter covers the Lower Trent and Erewash catchment area. Other catchments covered by the Lower Trent Area office are: Idle and Tome, Derbyshire Derwent and Soar.

environment agency general enquiry line 0845 933 3111

Environment agency F L O O D L I N E 0845 988 1188

Environment agency Emergency Hotline 0800 80 70 60

Environment Agency Website: www.environment-agency.gov.uk