



## Botesdale Streams Project - January 2012 Update

### Activities for the winter 2011/12 maintenance season

After a six month spring and summer break, work re-commenced on the project in September 2011. The year 2011 had been very dry and for the first time in living memory the beds of two of the spring fed streams were exposed and had started to dry out. This represented an opportunity to remove some of the sediment from the stream beds and this was partially achieved by utilising once again the services of the Community Payback teams. Unfortunately the weather intervened and the bed in the top stream became waterlogged once again, thus preventing the team from removing any of the large deposits of silt present. The team did however take down and remove a streamside fence that had continually been vandalised over the past few years.

The other major task for this winter's activities was to excavate a drainage ditch alongside Fen Lane, the road having flooded on many occasions over the last few winters. This initially involved digging out a number of gullies on either side of the lane in order to take the water from the tarmacked road and to allow it to soak away. This was only partially successful and it was decided that a proper ditch be dug following the line of an earlier excavation. Heavy rainfall in early January proved the worth of this exercise as the lane did not flood at all as a result of this deluge.

As part of this exercise, the borders either side of the lane, from the Bowls Club entrance to the brick bridge at the foot of the lane, have been widened by approximately 60 cm by removing the build-up of soil which over time had infiltrated onto the roadway proper from the verges.

Apart from these activities, an on-going maintenance schedule is in place. This involves two strimmer cuts per annum to the nettles that border the pathways, and a spring and autumn 'tidy' to remove litter and dead timber from the water courses, pathways and their borders.

Finally the Payback teams have been tasked with re-excavating an old ditch that served to drain a plot of land just to the north of Fen Lane. The ditch is approximately 40 metres in length and should be completed before the 2011/12 season comes to a close.