

WeBCan is a community group which has been established following public meetings attended by hundreds of local residents after the drying out of the Lady Bay and part of the Gamston sections of the canal during the drought of 2022.

WeBCan's management committee comprises 3 local councillors and representatives from the Gamston & Holme Pierrepont Parish Council, and the community associations of Abbey Park, Lady Bay, and Central West Bridgford. We also work closely with the Canal and River Trust, the Environment Agency, and the Grantham Canal Society.



**Fish Rescue in late July**

The Lady Bay section of the Canal dried out during the summer of 2024 after a period of just 6 weeks without significant rain, and it remained dry from the end of July until mid-September. Our immediate priority was to try to rescue fish trapped in diminishing pools of water. We successfully transferred a couple of dozen to the Gamston stretch of the canal where the level was barely affected by the dry weather. Sadly (for the fish) the vast majority were preyed upon by heron, egrets and a beautiful kingfisher.

It is unlikely that this section of the canal will be home to mature fish in foreseeable future if the drying out occurs nearly every year.

The drying out was probably caused by a combination of problems specific to this section of the canal, such as the general degradation of the

canal's clay bed, the very high water demands of prolific vegetation such as reedmace and Norfolk Reed (phragmites), and tree-root damage.

The most obvious remedy for these problems would be a complete replacement of the bed of this section of the canal with a new clay bed. However, the likelihood of this ever happening is infinitesimally small given the high costs involved and the many other calls on the budget of the Canal & River Trust.

So, WeBCan focusses on areas where we can actually make a difference without the need for significant funding. These include:

Identifying and campaigning for the repair of leaks in the supply of water in the stretch between Gamston and Stragglethorpe;

Cutting reed and thereby controlling water loss through transpiration (as well as improving the view of the water from the towpath);

Unblocking culverts which are full of mud, branches and general rubbish;

Identifying and campaigning for connections to additional supplies of water from 2 streams which run beneath the canal in Gamston and Thurlbeck Dyke.



**Cutting reed**



**Clearing Culverts**

If you would like to join WeBCan's weekly workparties , please visit our facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/924282821910150> or email [paulabel@ntlworld.com](mailto:paulabel@ntlworld.com) .