

*What's happening to the River Mimram?*





# Agenda

- Introduction
  - Tony Last – Chair of Friends of the Mimram
- The drought situation
  - Rob Sage – Asset Manager for Veolia Water
- What next for the Mimram
  - John Bryden – Biodiversity Officer for Environment Agency
- ‘Living Rivers Officer’
  - Tim Hill & Charlie Bell – Herts & Middx Wildlife Trust
- Make your opinion heard
  - David Cheek – Friends of the Mimram



## Comparative water usage in 'swimming pool' units per day

Thames at Teddington Weir	2880
London area forecast deficit	280
Veolia customer supply	300
Total flow of Mimram	20
Total Veolia abstraction from Mimram	7
Veolia leakage	45
Proposed Abingdon reservoir	50
Desalination plant	90
Severn – Thames pipe?	140



# Make your opinion heard

David Cheek

Friends of the Mimram



# Big range of issues

- Drought management
  - Water metering?
- Supplying water
  - – increasing housing levels
- Alternative water sources
  - National grid? Desalination?
- Immediate issue is the amount of water taken out of the Mimram aquifer
  - Reduces water flows in the river
  - Reduces unique wildlife & habitats
  - Reduces our enjoyment and value of the area





# Abstraction Licences

- The water company's have to produce a Water Management Plan every 5 years
  - The next period starts in 2015
- When Veolia bought the company, they bought the existing licence
  - 25m litres per day
- The Environment Agency have stated that
  - that level takes too much water from the Mimram
  - degrades the ecology and environment



## To reduce the licence

- EA has to compensate Veolia
  - for reducing its asset
- EA has to get a Business Case agreed which
  - Is a cost/benefit analysis
  - Shows what value the Mimram is to the community
  - Shows how an increase in water flow would improve the wildlife and the environment
- Has to be agreed by
  - EA locally, regionally & nationally,
  - Under-Sec for Water, Minister for the Environment



# Proving the case for wildlife

- FOM regular surveys at Tewinbury SSSI show
  - **The number of kingfishers decreases by 7 for every meter drop in the aquifer**
  - **The number of reed warblers increases by 20 birds for every foot rise in the SSSI lagoon water level.**
- Tewin Flyfishers Club have been monitoring frequency of trout, other fish, crayfish, mayfly and other invertebrates for last 3 years
- EA own regular water surveys
- Incidents reported to EA Hotline





# Benefit to the Community

- EA survey into usage, frequency and value that locals put on the Mimram
- FOM survey to update key questions
  - Please fill in the questionnaire on you seat or on-line
  - Ask your friends to do it too
- Be seen to '*value*' the Mimram
  - Raise the profile of the issue amongst the decision-makers
  - Write to your MP, councillors, the EA, the Ministers



# Competing Chalk Streams

- All chalk streams are rare
- All are over abstracted including
  - Beane, Ver, Misbourne & Chess
- But there is only a limited compensation fund
- So the Mimram is in a competitive situation
- We need to demonstrate a *greater 'benefit'*
  - by reducing the abstraction level in the Mimram



## Timing – it's *now!*

- The Business Case has to be agreed by December 2012
  - By EA locally – August
  - By EA nationally – September
  - By Defra & Ministers – December

**We have 3 - 7 months  
to show the decision makers  
how much we all care**



# Who to write to

- Your MP & Councillors
- Julia Simpson, EA
  - Area Manager, Hatfield
- Howard Davidson, EA
  - Regional Manager, Reading
- Ian Barker, EA
  - National Director, Bristol
- Chris Benyon,
  - Parliamentary Under-Sec for Environment & Fisheries, DEFRA
- Caroline Spelman
  - Sec of State for DEFRA
- Any other influencers you know!



# What to say?

- Why the Mimram is important to you
  - Activities? Local amenity? Knowing it is part of the locality
  - Unique chalk stream & habitats worth preserving - WWF
  - Endangers Tewinbury SSSI
- Low levels of flow – not just drought period
  - Has reduced birds – kingfishers, heron, egret
  - Has reduced fish – trout, grayling
  - Has reduced water voles
- Improving the flow, by lowering the abstraction will help restore the unique character, habitats & wildlife
  - Supported by EA and WWF



# Where to say it

- MPs - [www.writetothem.com](http://www.writetothem.com)
  - Free email service to their inbox
  - Response monitored
  - Or local surgery
- Ministers – [www.theyworkforyou.com](http://www.theyworkforyou.com)
  - Letter to DEFRA
- Environment Agency addresses
  - Letters to Hatfield, Reading & Bristol
- All addresses [www.friendsofthemimram.co.uk/lobby](http://www.friendsofthemimram.co.uk/lobby) website



## We have a short time to show how much the Mimram means to us

- Write to your MP, Councillors, EA & Ministers
- Complete the questionnaire
  - On your seat or online
- Join us to add your weight to the lobby
  - Tonight or on-line
- Encourage your friends to do the same
- We will send email updates or 'like' us on Facebook to see 'posts'



*Thank you*

Any questions, thoughts or ideas?