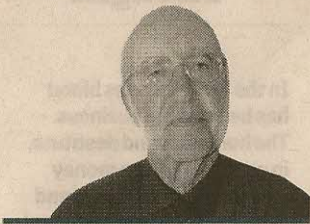


# David Moore: Water - too much, too little but never enough?



Water in the wrong place at Partridge Green last week. Photo by Luke Hull.

**I**t's funny how talk about a drought always seems to lead to torrential rain. You may recall that it happened in 1976, when Dennis Howell was made the Minister for Drought after we had experienced the driest period for 200 years.

Within a few days of his appointment, we had lots of rain and it wasn't long before he was appointed Minister for Floods.

It's happened again and we have just been told that the recently-imposed hosepipe ban has been lifted. Mind you, there's other ways in which water can have an effect on us

and the current proposals for our two nature reserves serve to demonstrate the choices that we sometimes have to make.

The mill pond at the Warnham Nature Reserve has become a problem

due to recent changes in legislation. It falls within the remit of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and the pond is classed as a reservoir.

Action has to be taken to mitigate the risk of flooding

of residential properties and it has been decided that this can best be achieved by removing the sluice gates and filling in the reservoir bed.

A different situation exists at Chesworth Farm, where the Arun is causing major erosion to the Riverside Field and something needs to be done to protect this area for the future.

The current proposal is to create a wetland area by channelling water from the Arun through the field.

Both these proposals would result in the creation of a floodland plain and an increase in the biodiversity of the sites.

It just goes to show how water has a major impact on our life. We complain if there's too much or too little but rarely do we seem to have just enough.

However, to a great extent we can control water to our

advantage, as demonstrated by the proposals that have been made for the future of the two nature reserves. What we have to expect is that the same thought processes will be applied to the availability of water for our personal use.

We don't want this continual "now you've got it, now you haven't" approach.

We need a proactive approach, which is not just driven by short-term profitability considerations.

We are not a Third World country and we should expect as our right a reasonable supply of clean, fresh water.

As a starting point, we should demand that the water companies deal with the leakage problems in the distribution system once and for all.

Clearly, we have a part to play in this as individuals and we should be expected to use

our water supply sensibly.

However, we should only be seen as part of the solution to the water supply problem and not the only solution, which is easily controlled by price, at the expense of basic hygiene requirements.

Don't let's kid ourselves that we can build more than 10,000 new homes in our area over the next 20 years without finding a viable solution to this long-running problem.

*The Horsham Society is concerned about the past, present and future of the town. It seeks to promote good planning and design for the built environment and open spaces.*

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