



Toddbrook Reservoir Update

Latest news



A message from the
Canal & River Trust
North West Director
Daniel Greenhalgh

Much activity has been taking place behind the scenes at Toddbrook Reservoir over the last few months.

We have commissioned our own independent expert inquiry into what happened from one of the 32 UK Government-appointed dam inspectors, Dr Andy Hughes, and we will be sharing the findings when it is completed.

Running parallel to this, DEFRA has launched an independent Government Review, headed up by Professor David Balmforth, former president of the Institution of Civil Engineers. This is due to be delivered to the Secretary of State around the end of the year.



In the coming months we will be working with our contractor Kier to carry out temporary works to the Todd Brook inlet channel and the auxiliary spillway as we prepare for its long-term repair. This will continue to ensure the reservoir presents no risk to the local community, regardless of the winter weather we may experience.

The full design and repair process is likely to take at least two years before the reservoir is fully and safely restored.

We recognise this situation is frustrating for many people, particularly those who use the reservoir on a regular basis like

the Sailing Club and local anglers. Whilst we are conscious of the desire to re-open the reservoir as quickly as we can, we are also committed to ensuring that this is done carefully and safely.

Thank you again for your amazing patience and support. We will keep you updated as the project progresses with more newsletters, public meetings and open days.

More details will be posted on our website
[www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/
Toddbrook](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/Toddbrook)

Thank you.

Protecting the environment



Toddbrook Reservoir is a special place for wildlife – designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) since the 1960s.

Fish Rescue

In mid-October, our fisheries manager Paul Breslin led a second major fish rescue. Coarse fish, such as bream, roach, perch and pike, were captured in large nets and then transported to another Trust reservoir, Upper Bittell Reservoir, near Birmingham. Upper Bittell, which is also a SSSI, was drained and refilled after major works two years ago and is in a good position to re-home large numbers of fish.

It is estimated that about 30,000 fish (5 tonnes) were in Toddbrook reservoir. Many were rescued in an emergency operation as the water levels were lowered in August. As fish can become distressed in the heat, it was decided to wait until October to move those not in immediate danger. During this second phase, a few weeks ago, a large number were again moved to Upper Bittell Reservoir. With sufficient water remaining in Toddbrook, we have decided to return for a final fish rescue, which is likely to take place in December. This allows us to catch the remaining fish evading capture in the very bottom of the reservoir so they are safe if the water levels are drained down even further.



Trust ecologist Tom King with dwarf bladder moss.



Why has the reservoir bed turned green?

If you have seen the reservoir recently, you may have noticed some of the exposed mud flats have turned green. This is thanks to a rare moss – “dwarf bladder moss” (*Physomitrium sphaericum*) – a tiny plant which measures only 5mm high. Draining the reservoir has allowed millions of these tiny plants to blossom and enjoy their one month life cycle, as the seeds have been exposed to the air. They don't live underwater but the spores can lie

dormant in the mud for decades, ready to spring into life when the water disappears.

This rare plant only grows in a dozen sites in Britain including two other places in Derbyshire – at Combs and Ladybower reservoirs. It is the reason for Toddbrook's SSSI designation.

Short films about the moss and fish rescue are posted on our website [Toddbrook pages](#).





Still smiling despite the atrocious weather are tour guides Paul Breslin (Trust fisheries manager), John Ward (Trust head of project delivery), Peter Downes (Kier) and Rob Jowitt (Trust Toddbrook project manager)

Public Open Days

Many thanks to more than 400 people who booked onto four public open days in October. On a couple of days this coincided with torrential rain which provided a chance to see the high volume reservoir pumps in action. Despite exceptionally high rainfall, the pumps quickly removed the rainwater that fell, keeping the reservoir near empty.

Visitors heard about the fish rescues and rare moss covering the reservoir floor, as well as maintenance works keeping the dam wall safe.

More public open days are being planned for 2020.

Big thanks to the Sailing Club for allowing us to use their clubhouse.





Transhipment Warehouse
at the canal basin

How do I find out more information?

We are posting regular updates on our website at www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/Toddbrook

Weekly Wednesday Drop-in Sessions

If you would like to find out more about what is happening at Toddbrook or in the surrounding area, please come and see us at one of the weekly surgeries hosted by the Trust's special community liaison manager for Whaley Bridge, Gillian Renshaw.

These are held every Wednesday at the Transhipment Warehouse by the canal basin, from 10am–3pm. Gill will also be supported by specialists from the Trust on the following dates:

- Nov 27:** repair project manager
- Dec 4:** environment & volunteering
- Dec 11:** youth engagement and events
- Dec 18:** communications
- Jan 8:** volunteering and waterway operations
- Jan 15:** local volunteering opportunities
- Jan 22:** local environment & ecology
- Jan 29:** repair project manager

We'd ask that those who attend these drop-in sessions do respect that the Trust employees and volunteers are there to help and should not have to suffer abusive and aggressive language or behaviour. We know how vital it is that we maintain open communications with the local community but we cannot tolerate any threatening or hostile behaviour.

Thank you.

Alternatively, if you cannot make it along to the drop-in events, you can contact the Trust by email toddbrook@canalrivertrust.org.uk and we will do our best to respond as soon as we can.



Gillian Renshaw

Derbyshire Fire & Rescue Service has warned people against the dangers of exploring the deep muddy bottom of the reservoir. Please don't get stuck in the silt.