

WATER VOLES

You may have heard recently that The Environment Agency and Wildlife Trusts are very concerned about the decline in water vole numbers. Alistair Driver of The Environment Agency has pointed out that water voles are part of our waterway systems, part of the food chain and of the ecosystem. The EA are working to create more vole-friendly waterways and of course for several reasons canals are ideal habitats for these delightful creatures.

The two elements to successful vole conservation are mink control and habitat management.

The Trust is aware of correct habitat management and, together with the canal owners, endeavour to follow all the guidelines when re-profiling the banks of our canal.

Should mink become a problem for us on our canal volunteers would be able to use mink rafts, which record the presence of species from footprints left on a clay pad. They can then be removed from the area.

As Alistair Driver said 'people love walking along a canal and hearing the plop of a water vole into the canal'. As you know, Ebridge has already become a wonderful place for nature-lovers, bird watchers and family picnics beside the clear waters of our canal. Dog walkers can assist our voles too because when dogs jump into the water to retrieve sticks and balls they create a lot of water turbulence which water voles do not mind - but mink hate the disturbance!

This surely must be another very good reason for us to continue working towards restoring our unique and historic canal!

Article by M. Black