

## **SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING**

**DVTF undertakes ongoing monitoring to help maintain a healthy river habitat. This includes the following:**

### **Invasive species**

**Himalayan Balsam** – this large annual plant, which is a native of the Himalayas, was introduced by a botanist in Victorian times. It has now become naturalised and widespread across river banks where it can replace the native fauna and cause the breakdown of river banks. This in turn leads to silted gravels and loss of spawning habitat.

The control of this plant is an ongoing project that we are tackling with the help of the North West Kent Countryside Partnership.

**Mink** – this carnivorous mammal is highly destructive to native wildlife and has been the cause of the decline of water fowl, water voles and fish stocks on many rivers. Our stretch of the river is involved in a mink control project which extends along the Darent and is part of a wider initiative in the South East to replicate the success in Norfolk and Suffolk of eradicating mink from the area.

**Insect surveys** – We undertake regular aquatic insect sampling using the approach developed by the Riverfly Partnership. Our results are uploaded to the Partnership website and displayed on an interactive map alongside results from other monitoring sites on the Darent and across the UK. Access to the map requires a login which is available from the Partnership on request. Aquatic insect life is highly sensitive to pollution so this surveying helps us to monitor the health of the river.

**Water monitoring** - We also monitor the quality and chemical consistency of the river water for nitrogen, phosphorus and turbidity. This is part of a broader initiative to monitor water quality along the length of the Darent.

**Burr reed** -This perennial marsh plant is widespread along the river and can spread progressively if not controlled and cause silting up and narrowing of the river. We have an ongoing program of control.