Nene River Chronicles

June 2026

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The World We Live In Now...

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I really love this time of the year. This is the month when we acknowledge the natural world in the shape of World Environment Day. A date which provides all us 'greenies' with an opportunity to shout about all our accomplishments and the commitments we are making for the future.

Later in the month comes the solstice so for now, at least, the days are still lengthening and all the promise of summer lays right ahead of us. We are surrounded by bursting buds, flowers, birdsong and the hum of insects, the home-grown strawberries are abundant, and we have an excuse for ice cream.There is simply nothing like a British Summer.

And so, to another aspect of a typical British summer. It's raining as I write this. Good rain, what's known as 'land rain' where I live. Neither too heavy nor too light. Just right to infiltrate the ground refreshing and recharging the landscape and the aquifers. We don't see rain like this very often anymore. Lately rain is either absent for weeks or months at a time or it arrives all at once, in deluges of big fat drops that bounce off the ground and spill across the surface carrying soil and detritus to swollen rivers and eventually the sea.

While I revel in the sound of this gentle rain and appreciate the way it is nourishing the land that nourishes me, elsewhere in the country people are without water, with services suspended due to 'higher than anticipated demand' because of a heatwave.

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Relying on shipments of bottled water, water gathered elsewhere and transported in neat plastic packaging.

This is the world we live in now. A world of uncertainty and of contrasts. A world that is shifting under our feet, demanding that we adapt and that we find novel ways of attending to our responsibilities. Historically we have done very well at developing technologies and processes that worked effectively to address the challenges we faced and that supported our needs. But, as the rate of change accelerates, as uncertainty grows, we must also grow. We must put aside our ideas of the 'way it has always been done' and we must lean out into broader spaces with softer edges being prepared to try new and novel ways of addressing our challenges, ways that can adapt and shift as the world changes.

The climate and nature emergency can be overwhelming, the idea that we now exist in a world with less certainty naturally induces anxiety. While all the public discourse remains focussed on mitigation, we are well past time for conversations about adaptation and resilience.

The month of June also contains resilience week. So here are some thoughts on resilience based on lessons that we here at Nene Rivers Trust have learned during our, at times, perilous journey.

- Resilience is built in connection.
- Resilience is not about getting things right, it's about how we recover with things go wrong.
- Resilience is being ready for whatever may come next.
- Resilience is taking responsibility.
- Resilience is quiet flexibility and response-ability.
- Resilience is something we all can build for ourselves and in the communities in which we live.

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