

February 2023 weather summary

Exceptionally dry mild and near normal sunshine

Rainfall: 3.3mm (7% of normal).

It was an exceptionally dry February, the driest since 1932 and 1934 (both 2.8mm) and therefore the 3rd driest in at least 102 years.

The 0.5mm on the 15th was the first measurable rainfall since the 0.2mm on 26th January and the whole period between 16th January and 28th February has recorded only 4.5mm in 43 days. When the same period is compared to previous years, it becomes the driest 43 days (Mid-January to end February) in over 102 years.

The wettest day was 2.2mm (21st), the lowest daily total for the wettest day since 1998.

The number of rain days (0.2mm or more), were 4 (9 less than average), and the lowest in at least 102 years (equal with 1934). The number of wet days (1.0mm or more) was 1 day (9 less than normal), again the lowest in at least 102 years (equal with 1934).

The longest period with no measurable rainfall was 17 days (27th January to 12th February).

3 - months (December – January – February (Winter))

The last 3 months total, covering the Winter season of December 2022 plus January and February 2023 totals 148.0mm 80% of normal. Although the Winter of 2021/22 was slightly drier the 2022/23 winter has been the driest since 2017, with a very wet 2nd half of December and 1st half of January.

December first half of the month with only 1.1mm was the driest on record going back 101 years. The second half of the month began in the grip of the Arctic cold snap, but rainfall totals soon mounted up from 18th when the Atlantic influence took control and was the wettest December period since 2013.

January 1st to 15th totalled 74.4mm making it the 2nd wettest start to a January in at least 102 years. However, the 16th to 31st only recorded 1.2mm making it one of the driest in the same period.

February was the 3rd driest in 102 years and included a 43 day period with no measurable rainfall, the longest in 102 years.

The monthly totals were December 69.1mm (102%), January 75.6mm (110%) and February 3.3mm (7%)

12 months (March 2022 to February 2023)

The 12-month period (March 2022 to February 2023) is quite alarming as the total 537.8mm (77%). This is now within the same percentage last year when hose pipe bans were introduced.

Temperature:

The mean maxima were 10.0c (+1.8c above normal). It was the 5th mildest this millennium and the 7th mildest in 42 years.

The highest maximum temperature was 14.3c (15th). The lowest maximum was 6.8c (7th). Although lower than 2022, it was the highest since 2014.

The mean minima were 2.3 (+0.3c above normal). This was the 10th mildest since 2020 and 15th in the past 42 years.

The highest minimum was 10.4c on 18th. This was the 5th highest temperature in the past 42 years.

The lowest minimum was minus 5.6c (8th), the lowest recorded since 2019, but some way short of the minus 11.9c in 1986 or the minus 11.5c more recently in 2012.

The mean temperature was 6.4c (+1.1c above normal), the 13th mildest in 42 years.

The lowest grass minimum recorded was -8.9c (9th). There were 16 ground frosts this was highest since 2019.

There were 11 air frosts, which is 2 days more normal, and 9 other years had a higher number of frosts this millennium and 16 more in the past 42 years.

The last 3 months (December – January – February (Winter))

The mean maxima for the winter season were 8.5C (+0.1c above normal). Being close to average it was the 11th mildest. This millennium. The mean minima for the same period were 1.7c (-0.5c below normal). This was the lowest since 2018 and the 8th lowest this millennium.

However, there were some significant contrasts within the season. It was the first December to have a mean maxima below average since 2010 and was the 7th lowest mean maxima temperature in the past 41 years. An 11-day Artic cold snap (7th to 17th) there were two freezing days with a maximum on 12th of minus 0.3 and 11th minus 0.1c This period included almost 70 hours of continuous air frost ending at 1142 hr on 13th.

December also had the lowest mean minima, since the very cold 2010 and the 5th lowest in the past 41 years.

January had the 3rd mildest start, but 6th coldest end in 42 years.

Sunshine: 86.1 hours (106% of normal)

Sunshine was just above normal, and the 12th highest total since 2000. There were 7 sunless days (3 more than normal) and the highest since 2017.

There were 8 days with 5.0 hours or more (which is normal), and the highest since 2019.

The sunniest day was 9.0 hours (19th).

Thunder; there were 0 days with thunder heard.

Hail; there were 0 day with hail (<5mm).

Snow falling 0 days with snow falling (4 days below normal). **Snow lying** at 0900 GMT 0 days (1 day below normal)

Fog; at the 0900am observation there were 3 days with fog observed (2 days more than normal).

Storms

There was one named storm during February, OTTO on the 17th that impacted on the north of the UK. However, its influence provided the highest wind gusts of the month 50km/hr (WSW).

Wind direction (at 0900am observation GMT)

N	7.1%	E	0.0%	S	3.6%	W	0.0%	Calm	17.9%
NNE	14.3%	ESE	3.6%	SSW	14.3%	WNW	3.6%		
NE	0.0%	SE	3.6%	SW	14.3%	NW	3.6%		
ENE	3.6%	SSE	0.0%	WSW	10.7%	NNW	0.0%		



Photo: Fog clearing on the 7th February in Finchampstead. Credit to Paul Richards.