

Spelthorne Partnership Assembly Meeting 04.11.24
Questions for Environment Agency with EA answers

Environment Agency contact information:

General enquiries

Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

Email: enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk

Telephone 03708 506 506

Telephone from outside the UK +44 (0) 114 282 5312

Minicom (for the hard of hearing) 03702 422 549

Environment incident hotline

Telephone (24 hour service) 0800 80 70 60

<https://www.gov.uk/report-environmental-incident>

Floodline

Telephone (24 hour service) 0345 988 1188

Type talk (for the hard of hearing) 0345 602 6340

<https://check-for-flooding.service.gov.uk/>

Ashford Resident

1. “Why is the previously attractive River Ash now in large part almost totally covered in weeds? *The section I am particularly concerned about is the extensive stretch from Fordbridge Roundabout to Wellington Road*”.

EA: The Environment Agency have carried out hand cuts to specific locations along the River Ash. We can confirm that this location was included recently (late August 2024).

Limited funding is affecting many of our priority areas on our maintenance programme, so engagement with the riparian owners will be important. We will be engaging with some of the larger landowners along the River Ash to think about future maintenance.

2. “Given predictions of a wetter than usual autumn and the disturbing reports on the dire state of thousands of flood defences can we be told authoritatively how many of the latter are in the perilous Datchet to Teddington area”?

EA: For the assets located on the Colne watercourses in proximity of the Thames there are no immediate concerns but if there are questions about specific assets then we would be happy to provide more details.

We have now completed the post-Storm Henk recovery of debris and boats on weirs along the River Thames. There are no immediate concerns regarding assets located on the River Thames, which are primarily considered “fair” to “good” but if there are questions about specific assets then we would be happy to provide more details. Following last winter there has also been a full condition survey of the Jubilee Channel as per our procedures and the Jubilee Channel was operated as per procedures this September.

Member of Creek and Wheatleys Eyot Res Assoc.

3. We live along the Creek, in Sunbury on Thames.
The River Ash flows into the Creek, which then joins the River Thames at Sunbury Weir.

“In 2014 - the worst floods for decades - it was discovered - too late - that a sluice nearby on the Ash had been neglected by the EA and was not functioning - so could not regulate the flow of flood water into the Creek. Can you guarantee that this sluice and other structures and banks of the Ash will in future be kept in good working order?

EA: This asset, owned by Thames Water, sits on the Thames Water aqueduct that runs between Hythe End and Kempton Park. Following the issues with this asset in 2014, this has been replaced and a multi-partner procedure operates to make sure that this asset operates when levels are high in the local river network (Colne, Ash and Thames).

We are aware that this meeting is not designed to cover the Thames itself - but the Ash and the Thames are inextricably linked - and both are the responsibility of the Environment Agency - which we no longer believe is capable of maintaining any of the rivers. Can we have any faith that this Agency will ever improve? - especially as they will be tasked with maintaining all the fabric of the proposed River Thames Flood Relief Plan?

On Friday 11th October we were witness to and some of us involved in the tragic accident at the Creek weir which resulted in the death of a local rower. That weir has had two broken ropes for more than a year. It also now has a live-aboard wreck wedged against it. Did this lack of maintenance contribute to the accident”?

EA: We cannot comment on an ongoing investigation at this stage.
With hope for the future?

Shepperton Residents Association

4. “Gardens of residential properties bordering the river Ash continue to be flooded daily” ? Connected with Thames Water discharging waste from the Ashford Treatment works into the River Ash three times a day during summer months as the demand for drinking water for London increases, which causes flooding into back gardens and out buildings of a number of residents for quite a number of years.

EA: We are aware of this and have been engaging via a flood risk perspective with Thames Water and Spelthorne Borough Council. Our Environment colleagues in the Environment Agency are working with Thames Water around their discharge licence.

Question from Sunbury Resident

5. “It would be great if Douglas (EA) could explain a bit upfront (if he isn't already planning to) of where the Crane catchment also fits in (alongside the River Colne & River Ash), and the Portlane Brook Water Body within it.

We, in Sunbury, are trying to understand where the water from Felthamhill Brook has gone and have been working towards gaining a better understanding with some of his team amongst others. We understand the Felthamhill Brook feeds into the Portlane Brook around Kempton Park, which then runs along the electoral border with Greater London, first with Hounslow borough and then Richmond borough, before running down to the River Thames next to Lower Hampton Road by Stain Hill West Reservoir. See two screenshots below”.

Screenshot 1: Catchment Data Explorer – Portlane Brook Water Body (part of Crane Rivers and Lakes Operational Catchment)

Screenshot 2: Google Maps – outflow of Portlane Brook by Stain Hill West Reservoir (London Borough of Richmond)

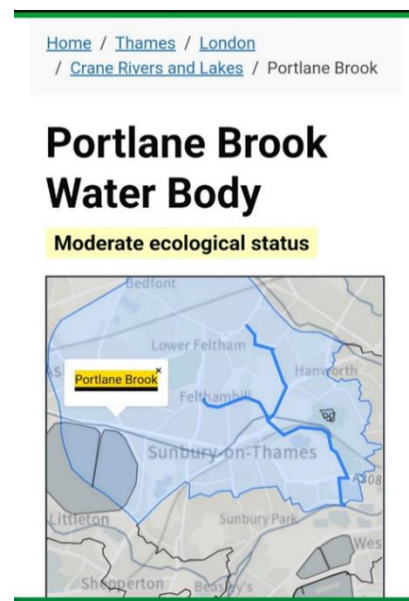
A few specific questions:

- i. Is the catchment map for the Portlane Brook Water Body a true reflection of how the drainage in the area works in practice?
EA: Yes for the fluvial catchment area
Is Portlane Brook also currently mostly dry?
EA: The reports we have been given (from a flood risk perspective) is that areas of the Portlane Brook have been highlighted as dry or low to no water.
- ii. Who is responsible, please, for maintaining Portlane Brook and Felthamhill Brook and keeping them clear of vegetation and any debris (flytipping)?
EA: Riparian owners are responsible for their sections of the river. From a flood risk perspective, the Environment Agency will have a strategic responsibility.
- iii. Who is responsible, please, for undertaking any enforcement actions against riparian owners next to Portlane Brook and Felthamhill Brook?

EA: The Environment Agency can use enforcement powers under certain legislation such as Water Resources Act 1991, Environmental Permitting Regs 2016, Flood Risk Management Byelaws, Flood Water Management Act 2010.

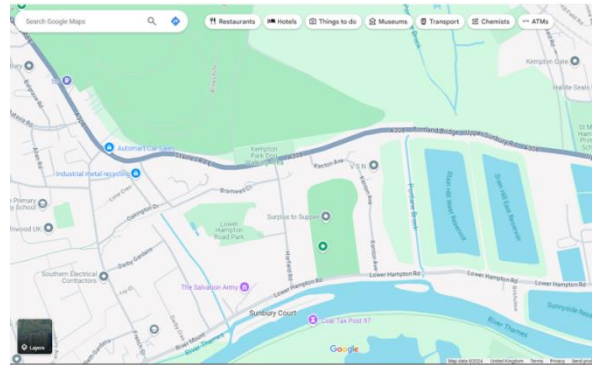
EA: The Environment Agency can use enforcement powers under certain legislation such as Water Resources Act 1991, Environmental Permitting Regs 2016, Flood Risk Management Byelaws, Flood Water Management Act 2010.

If there is any concern about anything this can be reported via the [Environment agency's Incident Line 0800 80 60 70](#) so it can be assessed and if deemed necessary will be passed across to an enforcement officer for further investigation.



- iv. Do you keep records of who the riparian owners are for the Portlane Brook Water Body (including Felthamhill Brook) and can these be provided by FOI or other means?

EA: No, as this can be changing, we would carry out land registry when required.



General asset information Portlane Brook:

There are 2 debris screens on the Portlane Brook. The first is on Snakey Lane (the Portlane Brook screen) and the second is just south of Hydes Field just off the Upper Sunbury Road (the Kempston Park screen), these have CCTV to support monitoring of the screens. To maintain conveyance there are a series of grass cuts that include the stretch of the Portlane Brook from the A308 to Poplar Way. The upper reaches of this look to be the Lower Feltham Brook.

Further Qs from the 4th November Spelthorne Partnership Assembly Meeting.

Question from residents living on one of the islands

There is a concern about maintenance into the future. Can more information be given around Tumbling Bay Weir?

EA response: There are no immediate concerns regarding assets located on the River Thames, including Tumbling Bay Weir, which are primarily considered “fair” to “good”. If there are specific questions, then we would be happy to provide more details (please use enquiries email at the top).

Question from resident at Old Charlton Road re River Ash discharge

We are worried about the rate of discharge causing ongoing flooding to our properties that back onto the River Ash. Can rates of discharge be reviewed? Can further maintenance be completed further downstream; land registry indicates that the park area is owned by Surrey County Council?

EA response: We will work with the other riparian owners in this section to think about maintenance, as well as follow up with Thames Water about their support for this. As answered above, we will feedback information from our Environment teams about the ongoing discussion with Thames Water regarding their discharge licence.

Question from Staines village resident

There has been ongoing high-water levels and flooding around Staines Moor and specifically to allotments in this area. Is the EA area of this?

EA response: We are aware of the concerns here and are investigating what could be influencing this. The following are some ideas, higher groundwater levels in this section of the Colne, vegetation in the Moor, as well as hydraulic complexities between the river systems here. We are working with partners to think about the issues and will update as investigations continue.