

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Environmental Forum held virtually via zoom, on Wednesday 09 June 2021, 7.30pm.

Meeting finished: 9.35

Councillors Jon Tankard (Chairman), Phil Williams, Stephen King, Alex Michaels, Alison Wall, Lisa Hudson, Reena Ranger and one representative from each of the following organisations:

Abbots Langley Parish Council	- Parish Councillors Jon Tankard
Chorleywood Parish Council	- Parish Councillor Tony Edwards
Watford Rural Parish Council	- Parish Councillor Stephen King
Bedmond Residents' Association	- Wendy Ball
Colne Valley Fisheries Consultative	- Tony Booker
Education for a Sustainable Future	- Bob Sherren
Friends of Stocker's Lake	- Russell Ball
Maple Cross & West Hyde Residents Association	- Carolyn Weston
Maple Lodge Conservation Society	- Keith Pursall
Rickmansworth Waterways Trust/Croxley Green Parish Council	- David Montague
Rickmansworth & District Residents' Association	- Ash Pattni
Sustainable Three Rivers	- Rosi Jordon and Annabel Foley
Watford & Three Rivers Friends of the Earth and Friends of Croxley Common Moor	- Graham Everett

Guest Speakers

Sustainable Three Rivers	- Rosi Jordon and Annabel Foley
Affinity Water	- Ed Barnes

Officers: Elen Roberts, Joanna Hewitson, Rebecca Young

Apologies for absence were received from Matt Dodds (Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust), Cllr Chris Lloyd, Michael Stimpson (Rickmansworth and District Residents' Association) represented instead by Debbie Wheeler and Ash Pattni, Roger Bangs (South West Herts Cycling Groups), Stephen Cox substituted by Lisa Hudson.

	Action	Lead Organisation
1.	To receive the Notes of the Meeting of the Environmental Forum held on Wednesday 3rd March 2021.	Minutes agreed.
2.	<p>Matters arising:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Graham Everett asked about a forum for environmental groups to discuss this issue, an idea which was discussed at the previous Environmental Forum in November 2020, however nothing has happened since – is this something to be organised by the council or outside of the council. Chris Lloyd said there will always be space for it here. <i>Elen discussed with Graham outside of the meeting. This appeared to form organically during Covid due to increasing issues, and currently appears to be little appetite for this outside of the meeting, so it will remain as a standing item here.</i> 2. Graham also stated there is no bridleway across Croxley Common Moor for cyclists to use - therefore people should have permission of the land owner which is Three River District Council who seem ambiguous on the issue. Tony Bradford: Would like to develop the work programme with TRDC to include cycling. <i>Graham Everett, Tony Bradford, and TRDC. This continues to be considered as part of walking and cycling strategies.</i> 3. Roger bangs says Edbury Way path has been beneficial for the local community but Bollards have been removed in the area which were put in to prevent parking. The Council has been contacted and communicated that they were not officially removed, so this needs to be reviewed. <i>Roger Bangs and TRDC. This has now been resolved.</i> 4. Roger Bangs: Paths around the site of the new hotel and Travis Perkins around lower Church Road has become dark, narrow, and uninviting for walkers. It was improved 20 years ago but has recently declined. Proposal put forward to change the route to be more open and friendly to use. <i>Roger Bangs and TRDC. Chris Lloyd asks to be copied in on any emails regarding this issue. Any suggestions around walking and cycling strategies should be sent to the Council and will be considered.</i> 5. Stephen King emailed Mike Simpson and asked him to check calendar against Parish Council meetings as there was cross over this evening. 	

	<i>Action for Clerk of Parish Council to consult with TRDC Clerk.</i>	
3.	<p><i>Save Our Streams – A talk from Affinity Water</i></p> <p>You can find a copy of the presentation in the Associated links portion of the notes. https://www.saveourstreams.co.uk/</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Graham asked why Ed Barnes didn't mention sewerage discharge in Affinity Waters plans. Ed Barnes said that is down to Thames, not Affinity water. 2. Alison Wall asked why we use more water in this area. Is it due to weather? Ed Barnes: There is no single answer, we have some well off areas so financial implications of wasting water isn't much of an issue – therefore they are trying a more targeted approach to work for the residents in this area rather than focusing on savings to be made. Leaky loos and gardening are some of the top water users/wasters. We have free loo repair services to stop leaky loos and free water saving tech available as well as people to install them. We are asking people to share what devices they have implemented on social media to encourage others to follow suit. Second question from Alison Wall: Planning applications – with a growing number of houses do you have the power to say you cannot supply them all with water? Ed Barnes: We have a duty to supply new homes and are aware of the development issues - some water efficiency measures are in place for new builds, and they are asking for stricter ones to reduce water use in new homes to try and reduce pressure on water resources and reduce the need for behaviour changes. OfWat bid for funding to have a water neutral development. 3. Phil Williams thanked Ed Barnes for the talk and showed support for stopping abstraction from two points! If you are reducing abstracting from rivers, where will water for the almost 1million new homes come from? Will it be the Abingdon reservoir? Ed Barnes pointed out he had not said they will stop all abstraction from rivers, but that they will stop unsustainable abstraction from rivers. Affinity are currently developing their next water plan which will take them through the next few years looking at infrastructure and water sources etcetera across the South East. Phil Williams questioned what about industrial use of water? That is huge too, are you targeting them too – for example the water footprint of milk production. Ed Barnes noted they are linking up 	Affinity Water

with water retailers, but don't oversee industry use as their water comes from a retailer, so Affinity is not responsible.

4. Alex Michaels asked Ed Barnes if there any more funding for leaking pipes which is a big water waster. Ed noted Affinity Water have significant targets when it comes to leaky pipes, which they are addressing through maintenance and reducing leakage, these targets are the 2nd highest in the industry as part of their upcoming plan. You said you are stopping abstracting from aquifers in Three Rivers. Ed Barnes pointed out he had not said they will stop all abstraction from rivers, but that they will stop unsustainable abstraction from rivers. *Ed Barnes to follow up with more detail to Jo Hewitson.*
5. Tony Booker thanked Ed Barnes for the talk and joining us tonight and stated any abstraction should be done at the bottom of the catchment area to allow the rest of the rivers to utilise the water before it is taken – this would be in the Thames River area. Tony Booker thanked Affinity for the significant number of projects they are supporting and working on together, for example taking river water samples together. A significant water chemical issue has been identified which Affinity are testing for chemical loading – these chemicals do not disappear – they are either going into the silt, or with low ground water and into the aquifer for abstraction and human consumption. Tony thanked Affinity for working with them to detect where these chemicals are entering the water system.
6. Wendy Ball thanked Ed Barnes for the presentation, and asked what the impact of abstraction and water use on these areas – it looks like the water is disappearing but could be seasonal or related to climate change or some other natural reason, Wendy questioned how we measure the impact and changes in water levels? Ed Barnes stated Affinity Water do measure water quality and water levels and suggested one of their Hydrologists could come to the Forum in the future to discuss in more detail.
7. Russell Ball questioned why schools weren't mentioned in the campaign and asked in Affinity Water if they are targeting schools to educate kids for them to go back to parents with the information. Ed Barnes noted while it was not discussed here, PTAs and school league tables for water saving and signups were used in the St. Albans trial, although school interaction has been difficult due to Covid. Affinity are also looking at other campaigns and activities using influencers and gamification e.g. through Twitch to reach a younger audience in a different way. Russell

	<p>asked if Affinity will need to follow this up with another campaign in a few years' time and questioned how effective they see this being in the medium and long term. Ed Barnes agreed longevity is a concern, and have been measuring consistency from the pilot scheme in St. Albans to understand this better. People who sign up will continue to be engaged with long term and the devices reduce need for long-term behaviour changes therefore reducing the need for ongoing interaction. There will be a number of other approaches over time to maintain momentum and continue to reduce water usage in the future.</p> <p>8. Jo Hewitson asked Tony Booker if he was aware of who is discharging the chemicals and if there is anything the Council can do to assist. Tony responded: No, one of the reasons for doing all the tests is to identify a point of entry. <i>Jo and Tony to discuss outside of the meeting how the Council can assist.</i> Jo Hewitson noted the Council have started working on an action plan at a county level which is coming out soon, so lots is going on across councils and private sector.</p> <p>9. Jon Tankard thanked Ed Barnes for joining us but noted that when he signed up the website made him feel the water issue was his fault, and would like it to give more of a focus on what Affinity are doing themselves too, for example he was unaware they were working on leaky pipes and sustainable abstraction, more community awareness is needed. Wendy Ball added residents are seeing the water levels drop locally but we are unsure why.</p> <p>10. Alex Michaels stated that national flow data demonstrates that gravel abstraction takes a significant amount of water, the issue is not just with water companies, but all roads lead back to residents and consumption of water and resources that consume water.</p> <p>11. Jon Tankard questioned whether grey water being used for flushing toilets was actually beneficial as by entrapping water he is preventing it going to the aquifer through groundwater flows. Ed Barnes noted that Affinity are looking at rainwater harvesting for new developments, the classic system is a water butt which they encourage and support residents with funding.</p>	
4.	<p><i>Talk by Rosi Jordon, Annabel Foley from Sustainable Three Rivers</i></p> <p>The Sustainable Three Rivers website is now available for use so please spread the word! https://www.sustainablethreerivers.org/ . Big thank you to everyone in this group who has contributed to the building of this website. Sustainable Three Rivers really want to encourage local residents to influence</p>	Sustainable Three Rivers

	<p>government decisions, link local groups, and begin local events to encourage residents to live more sustainably. Please email Sustainable Three Rivers if you would like to join the group, or if you have any ideas of things you would the group to do hello@sustainablethreerivers.org</p> <p>All information is in one place for people to find events and projects – so if you are running any events, please get in touch so they can advertise them through our site. The website also has a ‘using our voice’ section to encourage people to contact their Local MP, work with the Council, get involved in the conversation, and get involved in other local groups.</p> <p>Please join our social media channels and engage with our posts to spread the message and receive updates – you can reach all social media channels through the website.</p> <p>On the website there is also a list of local organisations and businesses who are involved in sustainability locally, so please contact Sustainable Three Rivers if your organisation, or one you know of, is not on there but would like to be.</p> <p>In addition to all this, there is a section of the website showing what changes people can make in a few different areas; energy, waste, transport, food, biodiversity, water and fashion. This section of the website lays out the issues, what you can do about it, and further resources.</p> <p>Sustainable Three Rivers is only a small group of three, so would be very happy to welcome anyone who would like to join, those with website skills in particular! Any resources you think would be helpful to residents/the community – please share them with hello@sustainablethreerivers.org.</p> <p>Now the website is done they can begin events and projects, but need more volunteers first!</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jon Tankard thanked Sustainable Three Rivers for joining the meeting tonight and expressed his excitement over the new group and their website which will hopefully inspire and support lots of residents. 	
5.	<p><i>Misuse of nature reserves</i> Standing item.</p> <p>Graham Everett raised the matter arising of Croxley Green bridleway – TRDC is remaining ambivalent. <i>Graham Everett to discuss with Elen Roberts outside of the meeting.</i></p>	

	<p>Pleased to say numbers of people using the sites has decreased now Covid regulations have been relaxed resulting in the negative impacts reducing. There are now monthly litter picks which are showing reduced litter. Graham Everett would like input from anyone who has dealt with these issues.</p> <p>Russell Ball stated Stockers Lake also struggles with litter. They are also having issues with people going out and disturbing chicks on the island which are protected and therefore this act is illegal – people will be prosecuted if they are caught doing this. Is this something local groups can share information on to raise awareness of please?</p> <p>Jon Tankard questioned whether rubbish increased due to Covid or if it is always worse on bank holidays. Russell Ball stated it is always an issue, and more people using the area produces more litter, although it is probably a minority of people, it gives a bad impression and finds its way into rivers. Has got worse recently due to increased use due to Covid.</p> <p><i>Wendy Ball would like attendees to help to raise more awareness of harm to wildlife from misuse of nature reserves.</i> Jon Tankard questioned whether people possibly don't see walking in a local field as being in the countryside and worrying about nature.</p> <p>Tony Booker confirmed there is no doubt the problem of litter has increased during Covid in Stockers Lake area, but is not a new issue and suggested land-owners need to do more to tackle the issue. Suggestion of a new working group to see what we can do.</p> <p>Russell Ball asked if we could we get an enforcement officer in this area to the Forum to discuss with the group the rules and consequences?</p> <p>Tony Booker said contacting wildlife officers in police forces in reality is wasting time as response is slow. At the moment the angling trust could make the kind of presentation Russel Ball suggested. Tony last reported people in October last year who had been using spear guns and the response was not effective.</p> <p>Phil Williams noted that police are stuck between a rock and a hard place on this issue – unless they catch them red handed, there is very little they can do.</p> <p>Wendy Ball suggested we need a multi-agency approach. Likes the idea of a working group to tackle this range of issues.</p>	
6.	<p><i>Member Exchange.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Elen Roberts noted that Three Rivers District Council has adopted the new Climate Emergency and Sustainability strategy which was consulted on last year and presented at this Forum at 	

previous meetings. You can read the full strategy here: <https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/egcl-page/climate-change>

- Russell Ball questioned where the tree strategy consultation link gone? Phil Williams responded with a timeline for the consultation as the initial consultation has just ended, the 8 week public consultation will commence at the start of August 2021. Is this something Sustainable Three Rivers could put on their website when the consultation begins to get further reach?
- Alex Michaels has put a proposal forward to Three Rivers District Council to move from amenity to semi-improved grasslands to bring back lost biodiversity which he hopes will be heard on the 18th of August and asks for support from attendees. Russell Ball stated he went door to door to ask residents if they would like a wildflower meadow on the roundabout local to where he live, to which all said yes, however HCC still rejected the proposal. Jon Tankard suggested people in the Landscape team in Three Rivers Council have a job description which does not include biodiversity, so we need a system change to include biodiversity in people's jobs. Can we put something together to put to HCC rather than multiple small proposals, so we can we go a Forum group with an area-wide strategy. Phil Williams is very disappointed by a lack of responses from Three Rivers District Cllrs with only 3 out of 38 responding and so encourages people to forward rewilding area suggestions to their County Councillor for collation and passing to HCC to drive policy. We need to engage Cllrs. Alex Michaels clarified the motion on the 18th of August is specifically about TRDC owned land.
- Tony Booker stated local water bodies have been impacted by floating Pennywort recently, however they believe they have eradicated this from the top of the catchment which should prevent it appearing further down the river in Three Rivers – Affinity Water partially funded this project.

“There have been two Maple Lodge discharges (CSR events) which prevented recent filming with Countryfile and creating devastating impacts on wildlife. These discharges could be linked to HS2. Tony Booker has been unable to get a response from either HS2 or the Environment Agency on where the HS2 runoff is going, because at present it does not appear to be going to the agreed settlement ponds.”

Phil Williams stated some is going into West Hyde stream where he has been for visits – *Phil to talk with Tony outside of the meeting*. Tony is aware of this but does not account for all runoff.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carolyn Weston stated HS2 is having a water webinar Tony Booker and others could attend to ask questions. You can sign up to the Webinars here: HS2 & Align Environmental Webinar - Water in the Chilterns and Colne Valley Tickets, Multiple Dates Eventbrite - Wendy Ball requested information from Phil Williams and Alex Michaels regarding HCC planning to remove 100 trees and would like a list of where these trees are. <i>The information is attached at the bottom of the meeting notes.</i> - Keith Pursall noted Maple Lodge nature reserve has now been reopened with Covid restrictions. Three Rivers new local plan is due to be sent out for consultation imminently, and while everyone will be focusing on site allocations, we also need to look at management policies for planning permission policies which could have a significant environmental impact. - Andrea Fraser questioned when the correct Local Plan sites will be going online. Jon Tankard stated these will be live when the plan is released for consultation. Jon suggests people look at sites in their areas and respond to the consultation to raise concerns, and discuss here as a group as corridors are important and we cannot think of these spaces as individual areas. Andrea Fraser asked if there is an environmental body that should be used to look into a local plan. Keith Pursall stated he was putting together a group of leading environmental groups to form a joint response to the consultation. If you would like to contribute to this joint consultation response to the Local Plan, please contact Keith at Keith.Pursall@ntlworld.com. Phil Williams noted that they are looking to do some smaller homes in the Local Plan, which may mean the number of homes have increased this time around, but the areas of land may remain the same - Wendy Ball submitted questions and is still awaiting responses. Elen Roberts said these had not been received yet, but they will be answered in through the official process. Wendy additionally suggested that environmental concerns regarding the new Local Plan should be raised individually in addition to coordinated group responses. Wendy Ball questions whether the terms of reference for this Forum needs to change to encourage discussions and group responses around the Local Plan. 	
7.	<p>AOB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stephen King stated some of the Forum dates clash with Parish Council meetings and raised a concern that Three Rivers organisers don't look at 	

	<p>Parish Council meetings before planning Environmental Forums. Parish council meetings are set in stone, so could the Environmental Forum dates be changed. <i>This will be looked into outside of the meeting.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carolyn Weston said there is an area in local plan which has not been put up by the landowner so suggested it must be a TRDC decision. Jon Tankard reminded members that anyone can put the land forward for planning consideration, not just the land owner and Three Rivers District Council. - Joanna Hewitson reminded attendees there is a biodiversity audit happening across Hertfordshire, so if have areas of land you would like considered for rewilding or reduced mowing, please forward them to Elen.Roberts@threerivers.gov.uk so we can collate them and we can put them forward to the audit for analysis. - Wendy Ball says she has put forward questions although they haven't been received by Elen. These questions were generally in regards to planning, to which Jon Tankard advised these should be submitted as part of the Local Plan consultation response. There must be strong reasoning why this an area of land cannot be used for housing as part of the Local Plan. Jon Tankard suggests Wendy Ball works with Keith Pursall on a joint consultation response to address these issues and questions. Wendy Ball notes the questions were only sent yesterday, so may not have reached Elen Roberts in time for the Forum, the questions should be answered through the official channel. - Russell Ball noted unless a site has a special nature area which cannot be moved, nature will not stop development local opposition is needed to stop it. - Stephen King said HCC are spending a fortune on a Little Fur school site in his area to relocate slow worms to Chorleywood common. He asked how many have been relocated to Chorleywood Common. Phil Williams said over 100 had been relocated so far. Alex Michaels is a volunteer on this project. 	
8	<p><i>Suggestions for future speakers – Please contact Elen Roberts.</i></p> <p><i>Suggestions received after the meeting:</i></p> <p><i>1: An introduction to the National pollution reporting app that CVFC has developed for the Angling Trust by Tony Booker.</i></p> <p><i>2: Environmental impact of signal crayfish by Tony Booker.</i></p> <p><i>3: Presentation on the Local Plan.</i></p>	

	<p>4: Hydrology/Geology by Affinity Water</p> <p>5: Hertfordshire Constabulary Wildlife Officers</p> <p>6: A talk on respecting nature e.g. litter and livestock.</p> <p>7: Friends of the Earth Watford and Three Rivers.</p> <p>8: Abbots in Transition.</p> <p>9: Sunnyside Rural Trust.</p> <p>10. London Green Belt Council.</p> <p>11. Campaign for the Protection of Rural England.</p> <p>12. Hertfordshire County Council.</p> <p>13. Croxley Common Moor by Graham Everett.</p>	
9.	Cllr Tankard thanked everyone for attending the meeting.	

EF06/19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Forum noted that the date of the next meeting was Wednesday 3rd November 2021.

Associated documents/links related to meeting and action points:

Associated Links

1. Affinity Water – Save Our Streams



SOS SaveOur
Streams Campaign -

2. HCC tree removal plans.



Rickmansworth
West East Oxhey - 2



Rickmansworth
East and Oxhey.pdf

Action Points

1. Joanna Hewitson to get more information from Ed Barnes of abstraction from local rivers.
2. Joanna Hewitson to discuss how the Council can help with the issue of chemical discharge into our rivers.
3. Elen Roberts to discuss Croxley Common Moor bridleway with Graham Everett
4. Wendy Ball asks attendees to raise more awareness of harm to wildlife from misuse of nature reserves where appropriate/possible.
5. Again suggested that a misuse of nature reserves working group is formed.
6. Phil Williams requests people send areas they would like rewilded to their County Councillor.

7. Phil Williams to talk with Tony Booker about HS2 discharge sites.

8. Stephen King and Three Rivers to discuss moving the dates of the Environmental Forums as they clash with Parish Council meetings.