

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Environmental Forum held virtually via zoom, on Wednesday 09 March 2022, 7.30pm.

Meeting finished: 9.40

Councillors Chris Lloyd (Chairman), Stephen King, Alex Michaels, Alison Wall and one representative from each of the following organisations:

Batchworth Community Council	- Parish Councillor Craige Coren
Watford Rural Parish Council	- Parish Councillor Stephen King
Colne Valley Regional Park	- Stewart Pomeroy
Countryside & Rights of Way	- Tony Bradford
Friends of Chorleywood House Estate	- Tim Veneer
Friends of Stockers Lake	- Russell Ball
Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust	- Matt Dodds
Rickmansworth Waterways Trust/Croxley Green Parish Council	- David Montague
Rickmansworth & District Residents' Association	- Michael Stimpson
Spokes (South West Herts Cycling Group)	- Roger Bangs
Sustainable Three Rivers	- Gillian Watt
Watford & Three Rivers Friends of the Earth and Friends of Croxley Common Moor	- Graham Everett

Guest Speakers

Duncan Fallon and Lauren Dell from Align JV

Officers

Elen Roberts, Joanna Hewitson, Rebecca Young

Apologies for absence were received from Jon Tankard (Chairman), Bob Sherren (Education for a sustainable future), Keith Pursall (Maple Lodge Conservation Society), Andrea Fraiser to be represented by Cllr Craige Coren for Batchworth Community Council), Tony Booker (Colne Valley Fisheries Consultative, to be represented by Stewart Pomeroy), Cllr Phil Williams, Angela Arnold, Cllr Paula Hiscocks

	Action	Lead Organisation
1	<p>To receive the Notes of the Meeting of the Environmental Forum held on Wednesday 9th June 2021.</p> <p>Minutes agreed</p> <p>Andrea Fraiser's attendance at the previous meeting was not noted.</p>	
2	<p>Matters arising:</p> <p>Cllr Michaels said the reduced mowing motion has been through the Council but there is a report for the next meeting which only promises for 21% of the land rather than the original 50%, which is less than TRDC is already doing. Cllr Michaels would like to know why this is, no one in the meeting was able to provide further information. The question is noted and will be raised. Russell from Sustainable Three Rivers says it appears to be kicked down the road and asks that this is put on the agenda for the next meeting to discuss. <i>Rebecca Young can't go into detail but a report can come back to the forum after the LEC committee and we will bring someone from the team to the next meeting to answer questions.</i> Russell says Rosi Jordon, also from Sustainable Three Rivers has written a strong letter to the Council and is keen to discuss it at the next Forum.</p>	
3	<p>A talk by Duncan Fallon and Lauren Dell from Align JV: <i>Progress update and overview of environmental mitigation at HS2's Chiltern Tunnel South Portal and Colne Valley Viaduct construction sites.</i></p> <p>Duncan and Lauren are based at the South Portal site at West Hide. The presentation shows the location of the works, and the original landscape they are working on. The large site means carrying out more functions on site, and keeping traffic off roads and limited to the motorway. Maps show a significant number of trees planted after construction to replace trees lost and create a diverse habitat including patches of grassland, woodland and wetland creating a wildlife reserve. There will be a reuse of materials – the chalk landscapes created will be made using the materials dug from the tunnel space which has already commenced. Concrete and limestone will also be reused within the new landscape. 65,000 trees and shrubs to be planted in the area. Signature species and planting zones – Chalk hill blue butterflies and Corn Bunting birds are being encouraged back through targeted landscaping. More information about this is available online (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1042491/1MC05-ALJ-TP-REP-CS02_CL03_compressed_1_1.pdf). Opportunities to re-wild using livestock and cattle to roam the site to sustainably manage areas. We recognise there is an issue with mud on roads and this is being monitored daily and road sweepers have been hired to maintain the roads. Lighting has been a sensitive issue and a report is pending with actionable items they can take to reduce lighting issues. Anyone who is currently concerned should contact Duncan. Issues with noise are also an area they are keen to address and redistribution on soil noise. Control measures include swapping tonal</p>	Align JV

beeping alarms, removal of bulldozers from site, drivers are regularly re-briefed and water troughs are now used on site to reduce dirt outside the site.

Ecology: Soft start piling methods to minimise impacts on fish so it is done over time and reduce immediate impact and shock, regular ecology checks are done to check for sensitive species. Spill management: spill kits, chemical storage, containment oil and silt booms around the lakes and frame dams and silt management around the river Colne to ensure any immediate sources of pollution were immediately contained. Dust: any works which will create dust are phased to take place in damper periods to minimise dust, stabilising platforms and wheel washes are also used.

Project commitments are in place.

Noise monitoring reports are available online.

Duncan asks people to contact immediately if there are any issues.

Lauren

Water management: Risk assessment began long before work began and still continues and is constantly reviewed to minimise and remove risk.

There is continuous analysis of water samples which are compared to a baseline taken before any works commenced.

Mitigation measures: Looking for changes to water chemistry Any chemicals coming onto site and reviewed and analysed and they have been replaced by safer chemicals previously over concerns for the water environment. Pollution control pan, treatment of abstracted water,

treatment of run-off water and toolbox talks with staff. Surface water management: booms are used to section water, if there is any contamination, it will be limited and cannot spread. In-field measuring to get on the spot results for some indicators and will trigger response plans.

Lots of groundwater monitoring (around 250 boreholes), in field measurements are done as well as samples taken for more detailed lab analysis. Continuous visual analysis of flows, levels and colours or water are done too.

Questions:

Cllr Lloyd: How many incidents have you had triggered and how have you dealt with it?

Duncan Fallon responded saying they have had a few very small spikes in changes which has changed back very quickly, and have picked up existing contamination in some areas which are ongoing through boreholes. EA are aware of historic pollution and they haven't seen many changes to water in this area.

Michael Stimpson: Presumably a fence will be put in place to prevent wild animals getting onto the track – will there be tunnels or bridges for wildlife?

Duncan Fallon to provide a written response: A comprehensive report on the full development and environmental plan for the South Portal site (known as the Colne Valley Western Slopes has been published at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1042491/1MC05-ALJ-TP-REP-CS02_CL03_compressed_1_1.pdf

It is a long document but I recommend anyone interested in the location to take a look as it may answer and reassure residents to know the level of detail and care that has gone into the landscape design and ecological planning for the site.

	<p>Cllr Michaels: EC levels seem high – is there a reason for it? Duncan Fallon: That kind of activity is usually higher in that area naturally due to the nature of the land. Are you monitoring the water in the swimming lake next door? Duncan Fallon: There are two samples sites which are in the swimming lake and regularly chemical tested.</p> <p>Cllr King asked about the cake soils discussed during the presentation. Duncan Fallon explained the process of the cake it's self will create the landscape without a layer of topsoil so there will not be a further operation to cover it. Work is also being undertaken to test soils to ensure species will thrive in the calcareous soils.</p> <p>Jan Smith questioned if there was a maintenance schedule for the large number of trees planned as many done on this scale end up neglected and die off. Duncan Fallon explained they will be planted as young trees rather than more mature ones as they tend to survive better. Align will be gone, but maintenance is of concern – <i>Duncan Fallon will provide a written response. After the meeting, Emma Brading asked who will be responsible for the land after the habitat has been created in 15 years time? Is ownership transferred over to the Local Authority and who funds the ongoing upkeep? Duncan Fallon to provide a written response: Discussions regarding land transfer and long-term management are still to be finalised, but there are a number of options that may be followed in terms of the upkeep of the land. Potential arrangements may involve management by TRDC, or the Wildlife Trust, or even management by HS2 or DfT contractors. More information on the exact arrangements will made available as proposals and discussions progress.</i></p> <p>Cllr Wall: As you mentioned returning chemicals which do not meet your standards, is it more reactive than proactive approach? Is there not a specific list of chemicals that are permitted there rather than sending them back to exchange? You work with Affinity Water, but do you work with any other water companies? There is a strict list with requirements and regulations, but these are checked again on site and exchanged for more suitable products where possible. They are primarily working with Affinity Water as they work in the area in a regulatory role and sign off on their works to ensure their assets aren't impacts their water works. They do have contact with Thames too but regular communication isn't needed.</p> <p>Roger from Sustainable Three Rivers asked when Towerhouse Lane will reopen. August this year is the planned date.</p> <p>Cllr Chris Lloyd thanks the presenters and asks that the presentation be made available.</p> <p>The presentation is available at the end of the meeting notes.</p>	
4	<p>An update on Three Rivers Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy by Joanna Hewitson and Elen Roberts.</p> <p>The presentation is available at the end of the meeting notes.</p> <p>Questions:</p>	

Jan Smith: Asked what we meant by funding for grasslands improvements, Elen Roberts clarified that we have done the biodiversity, the funding we are offering is via our community sustainability grant with Watford and Three Rivers trust. Jan Smith stated there is a valuable area of grassland in Bedmond, a rare area of lowland meadow which has now been put forward for the local plan and wanted to know if we were aware of this. The Officer present did not have information regarding planning and the local plan. Jan Smith asks that the area is protected. Jan Smith also says plastics recycling is often rejected at Waterdale Recycling Centre and put into refuse, why is this happening when we should be trying to recycle more. It was noted this has happened at other Recycling Centres too Elen stated this was a question for HCC – *Elen to ask HCC for a response.* Tony Bradford says they have had some real issues with holding the materials and are over capacity, which is when they may divert the plastic to the refuse stream. *Written response from Linda Whitehead at Herts County Council: Capacity for plastic recycling on site can at times be an issue. (We deal with over 30 different types of waste streams). This would be one explanation for a site to direct users to the general waste container instead, as our customers tend to prefer this option rather than to taking their waste home again until we have the relevant capacity. Also, most residents have access to a kerbside collection of house hold plastic packaging, so during particularly busy periods at the RCs, we may require the container to accommodate another waste stream which is more prevalent (E.g. green waste during the summer season). We would therefore suggest that customers use the ‘What bins are available’ tool on the Wasteaware website (site homepage) for a better indication of current site capacity for all materials including plastic.*

The off-takers for rigid plastic (Pearce RG) can sometimes change the specification of what they can accept, due to market forces. This may be another reason for not being able to accept certain types of plastic. Items which are manufactured to include several types of different plastics can be a challenge to recycle and may not currently be an economically viable option.

The RC do not currently accept low grade plastic (e.g. bags and film), but I am aware that the larger supermarkets such as Tesco & Sainsbury’s have reintroduced collection points.

Chris Lloyd thanks other groups for taking up the challenge, engaging and organising events.

Michael Stimpson: Asks that HCC is also asked about Fly-tipping. Builders fly-tipping is an issue, could they be allowed to tip for a small amount to reduce the issue?

Written response from Duncan Jones at Hertfordshire Waste Partnership: DIY wastes – reported in Waste Data Flow terms via the construction / demolition / excavation category – made up 11.6% of the reported fly tipping incidents in Three Rivers during 2021/22 – and averaged 8.6%

	<p><i>across the county as a whole from 2014/15 to 2020/21. Provisional numbers for 2021/22 indicate fly tipping reduced across Hertfordshire by around 12%.</i></p> <p><i>The type of people that fly tip such wastes are not only looking to avoid paying for their waste disposal they are also looking to avoid regulatory oversight of their activities linked to waste carriers licensing requirements and Duty of Care. As a result even allowing small free tips would not materially impact on the levels of fly tipping in Hertfordshire. It is also not the role of the county council to subsidise private business. However, one thing that could be done is for householders to make better efforts to ensure they only engage with legitimate traders who have properly accounted for any waste disposal needs as part of any construction jobs they are quoting for.</i></p> <p><i>Householder failing to do this result in a chain of unplanned decisions which can result in a fly tipping incident. Many householders are also told by their contractor that any wastes generated during construction jobs by paid contractors are the responsibility of the householder – this is not correct – under the Duty of Care regulations such wastes remain the responsibility of the trader doing the job. When I do the fly tipping presentation I pose the question – if the trader doesn't understand their legal obligations when it comes to waste disposal what other 'corners could they be cutting' and would you really be happy letting such people work on your house ?</i></p>	
<p>5 .</p>	<p><i>Misuse of nature reserves</i> Standing item.</p> <p>Chris Lloyd asks Graham Everette if the issue has stabilised.</p> <p>Russell: Has regular litter pickers who have no problem filling bags when they go picking. There are also issues with Hyde's being vandalised, so they are trying to re-do them to make them look fresher and darker and are therefore less likely to be vandalised. 1st Sunday of every month a litter picking event is held on Croxley Common Moore</p> <p>Michael Stimpson: Croxley Moore: Fly-tipping and littering are issues and would like more messaging regarding taking litter home. Elen suggests litterlotto could be of use to groups (www.litterlotto.com).</p> <p>Nicola from Stockers Lake: KFC and Alcohol bottles/tins are the main culprits. Can we put more pressure on them? Cllr Lloyd said this is usually an issue with planning for take-away.</p> <p>David Montage is looking at getting point of sale messaging out in all local shops to encourage people to dispose of litter responsibly. This includes counter-top and window posters and displays. They are also looking at biodegradable stickers which can be put on packaging in store.</p>	
<p>6 .</p>	<p><i>Member Exchange.</i></p> <p>David Montage: Rickmansworth Festival 21st/22nd May. There is a partnership with Affinity Water this year with the Save Our Stream Campaign including comedians and the giant bath. There will be significant presence for TRDC climate change team and Sustainable</p>	<p>Rickmansworth Waterways Trust</p>

<p>Three Rivers within the Environment Tent to engage with residents. The programme is available online here.</p> <p>Tony Bradford: The 2022-27 management plan for the Aquadrome is upcoming and will involve community engagement and consultation starting in May. There will also be an update to Oxhey Woods's management plan. The green spaces audits have been run by ourselves with a significant number of site visits. The Horse's Field is undergoing fencing project to enable conservation grazing. <i>You can find more information on our management of smaller green spaces including a map here.</i> Just completed woodland management work Carpenders Wood and Croxley Hall Wood in partnership with TRDC. We have undertaken active travel resurfacing work on footpath 7 on Croxley Common More have been undertaken. EA agreement signed to do some detailed design work for river restoration on the River Chess at Scottsbridge Mill. Volunteers have been pretty active across the District over the past year, including advising and coordinating the hedge restoration project at Woodoaks farm, which was very well attended and overwhelming numbers of volunteers are joining! Having a significant influx of new volunteers from a range of different backgrounds. Which has been overwhelming at times and a new volunteer rota has been put in place to ensure new volunteers get opportunities to get involved. There is pressure on the local nature reserves and is the same on the rights of ways areas across the District following an x4 increase in footfall during COVID – combined with saturated soils has caused issues. They have now won COVID recovery funding to help address issues including kissing gates. Health walks are now well up and running again at around 50% capacity compared to pre-COVID.</p> <p>Russell Ball: Stockers Lake has a newly launched website (https://www.fosl.org.uk/). Two new turn rafts coming this year, and one placed last year. Cattle will be returning this year to continue conservation grazing. You can join our working parties to get involved in volunteering which are from 10am on the first Sunday of every month.</p> <p>Roger Bangs: <i>Submitted three questions prior to the meeting which were submitted too late to have written responses prior to the meeting.</i> Question one: Will this Forum & TRDC encourage Herts County Council to repair footpath 65 between the River Colne and the Aquadrome which is in a poor state. This is particularly relevant with the upcoming Rickmansworth Festival. Tony Bradford to provide a written response from the relevant Officer. <i>Response given after the meeting: My Officer was out on site two days before the meeting so was able to update me immediately. The path has suffered from some over-winter flooding – the safety concerns this has raised will be addressed immediately (spring 2022). The Access Officer is keeping TRDC Officers apprised on this work. Concurrently, review of the path as a whole and bridge to the western end are underway in conjunction with developing proposals for the Aquadrome that will feature in the forthcoming Greenspace Action Plan. The Access Officer for the area and Land Management Officer are in discussion with TRDC colleagues on this and other matters. Once this planning work is completed more significant works will be resourced and delivered. This is expected to be in summer of 2023.</i></p> <p>Second question: At this year Rickmansworth (Canal) Festival will TRDC be sponsoring the Environmental Tent as in previous years? If so, how will local organisations be contacted/informed? Answer is yes. David Montage</p>	<p>Countryside Management & Rights of Way</p> <p>Friends of Stockers Lake</p> <p>SPOKES</p>
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	<p>– Kelly doesn't have a mailing list of all groups who have attended in previous years. Anyone who is interested in having a stall to contact Kelly Barnard from TRDC and <i>Chris Lloyd asks the information is put on the website.</i></p> <p>Third Question: Rickmansworth end of Edbury Way has become very unattractive and dark due to the building of the Travis Parkins, the path is now in a dangerous condition due to tree routes and I have been told it is on the Canals and Water Trust land but previous discussions with TRDC have happened and SPOKES with Sustrans have proposed a diversion which will be on TRDC land – has there been any progress on this? The alternative route is on adjacent land next to the accommodation. A report was sent to Cllrs about a year ago and Peter Simons is aware of the proposal. Elen to chase again and provide a written response.</p> <p>Michael Stimpson emphasised the Edbury Way path is an ongoing issue particularly for cyclists using the path.</p>	
7	<p><i>AOB:</i></p> <p>None.</p>	
8	<p><i>Suggestions for future speakers – Please contact Elen Roberts.</i></p> <p>Elen suggested WasteAware talk may be of interest with a focus on fly-tipping issues. Tony Bradford seconds the WasteAware talk.</p> <p>Chris Lloyd says any suggestion to be sent to Elen.</p>	
9	<p>Cllr Lloyd thanked everyone for attending the meeting.</p>	

EF06/19 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Forum noted that the date of the next meeting is Wednesday 8th June 2022.

Associated documents/links related to meeting and action points:

Associated Links

- [TRDC Grassland management on smaller sites.](#)
- [Rickmansworth Festival](#)

Action Points

- Request for reduced mowing to be discussed at the next meeting, and for the meeting to be attended by a relevant Officer for an update from the LEC committee and answer questions.
- Elen Roberts to gather written responses from Duncan Fallon and Lauren Dell.

- Elen Roberts to request a written response from Duncan Jones at Herts County Council in regards to issues around plastics recycling at Recycling Centres and construction based fly-tipping.
- Elen Roberts to chase a response from Transport Officer regarding ongoing issues with Edbury Way path.

Guest Speaker information

Should any further questions be forthcoming for either myself or Lauren, please do ask them to contact the HS2 Helpdesk email address HS2Enquiries HS2Enquiries@hs2.org.uk or communityengagement@alignjv.com.

If any members of the Environment Forum would like to visit the main site, please do ask them to get in touch – we would be happy to schedule a tour around the South Portal site.