

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Environmental Forum, held virtually Microsoft Teams, on Wednesday 02 November 2022, 7.30pm.

Meeting finished: 9.20

Councillors Jon Tankard (Chairman), Anne Winter (Vice-Chair), Sarah Nelmes, Allison Wall, Andrea Fraser, Shanti Maru, Reena Ranger, Chris Mitchell, Rue Grewal, and a representative from each of the following organisations:

Abbots Langley Parish Council	- Parish Councillors Jon Tankard
Batchworth Community Council	- Cllrs Andrea Fraser/Craige Coren
Chorleywood Parish Council	- Parish Councillor Harry Davies
Affinity Water	- Melissa Ahmet
The Chiltern Society	- Piers Brown
Chorleywood Residents' Association	- Angela Killick
Colne Valley Regional Park	- Stewart Pomeroy
Countryside & Rights of Way	- Tony Bradford
Friends of Croxley Common Moor	- Graham Everett
Friends of Stocker's Lake	- Russell Ball
Herts Ecology	- Martin Hicks
Maple Cross & West Hyde Residents Assoc.	- Carolyn Weston
Maple Lodge Conservation Society	- Keith Pursall
Rickmansworth Waterways Trust	- David Montague
Rickmansworth & District Residents' Assoc.	- Ash Pattni
Spokes (South West Herts Cycling Group)	- Roger Bangs
Sustainable Three Rivers	- Rosi Jordon
Watford & Three Rivers Friends of the Earth	- Graham Everett

Guest Speakers

Jennie Probert from Three Rivers District Council

Officers

Elen Roberts, Joanna Hewitson, Jess Hodges, Alex Laurie

Apologies for absence were received from Angela Arnold from Watford Rural Parish Council, Cllr Chris Lloyd, Cllr Phil Williams, Cllr Stephen King, Jan Smith from the Bedmond Residents Association, Jane Lay from Abbots Langley Parish Council.

Joanna Hewitson introduced the meeting and asked for a nomination for this evenings meeting. Jon to nominate a vice chair – Anne Winter.

	Action	Lead Organisation
1.	<p>To receive the Notes of the Meeting of the Environmental Forum held on Wednesday 8th June 2022.</p> <p>Meeting notes agreed</p>	
2.	<p>Matters arising:</p> <p>Roger Bangs – Spokes: Issues with Ebury Way has been arising at the previous two Forums. There have been a number of discussions about it. What is TRDC doing about it? It has become dangerous due to tree roots and darkness due to the planning. Cllr Tankard to chase.</p> <p>Tony Bradford: Countryside and Rights of way management plan are looking at a management plan for Ebury Way. The work has only just begun. Spokes will be involved.</p>	
3.	<p>A talk by Jennie Probert from Three Rivers District Council: S.C.R.A.P Fly Tipping</p> <p>Power point from Jennie</p> <p>Russell asked what aggravated to the Principal meant and for the point to be expanded on. Answer from outside the meeting: <i>Enforcement officers are often engaged with landowners who have suffered the consequence of illegal waste dumping. This includes the risk to stock and machinery (on farms), the loss of trade and the expense of the clear-up. This is usually at their own cost. Offenders are rarely made to make reparation when sentenced. The cost of clearing and proper disposal of waste can be extensive. In many cases this comes into hundreds of thousands of pounds. Often gates or fences are also damaged as well as the land or crops.</i></p> <p><i>What we've lobbied for is for the legislation covering illegal dumping, the Environmental Protection Act and the Environmental Permitting Regulations should be amended to include an aggravation to the principle offences. This should then be added into the guidance for sentencing courts on environmental convictions. This aggravated offence should include where waste is deposited by a person who has entered as a trespasser, and be further aggravated if damage is caused in order to, or in the commission of such an offence.</i></p>	

	<p><i>This new offence would set apart those incidents where waste is dumped on public spaces where the cost is routinely born by the local authority and reflect on the emotional and financial damage done to individuals and traders.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - David Montague asked whether there was a correlation between charging for use of recycling centres and fly tipping numbers. Answer received from outside the meeting: <i>None that has ever been identified. Similar concerns have been raised with respect to restricted hours as well as the use of booking systems. However, in all 3 scenarios an increase in fly tipping has not been shown.</i> - Alison said there is significant tipping at the end of Rousebarn Lane, would it be effective to add CCTV/cameras to prevent this? Jennie said we can look at hot spots and look at signage/cameras. Jennie has noted the site and says Officers will keep a close eye. Cllr Nelmes said the area is having bollards put in place to prevent vehicle access, part of this is due to the issues with Fly Tipping. 	
4.	<p><i>Misuse of nature reserves</i></p> <p>Standing item - nothing to raise.</p>	
5.	<p><i>Member Exchange.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tony Bradford, Countryside Management Service: We provide land management advice and support volunteer events, health walks, Friends Of Groups and manage rights of ways. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This financial year we are undertaking management planning at Chorleywood House Estate, Bishops Wood and Batchworth Heath. • New management plan for the Aquadrome has just been approved by Cllrs at TRDC, and a Woodland management contract covering Oxhey Woods and Bishops Wood has started, work includes removing non-native, invasive species. We are working to encourage more wildlife in the areas and woodland regeneration. • New grazing project being undertaken at the Horses Field. • Holding introductory sessions at South Oxhey playing fields with the view to create a new 'Friends Of' group there. • Across Hertfordshire a new Green Space Opportunities Audit has been undertaken, looking at over 500 sites to increase and adapt management to increase biodiversity. • Over the winter in Three Rivers there are a number of tree planting sessions people can get involved with. • Scrub management contract at Croxley Common Moore undertaken in September to manage the SSSI site. • Currently engaging with land owners to gain their support for river restoration projects for the Rivers Chess and Scotts Bridge Mill with funding from the Environment Agency. • Beginning a 5 year Green Space action plan for the Edbury Way site. 	

- Health Walks are now back up and running following COVID, there are now 12 walks across Watford and Three Rivers, many of which happen weekly.

Roger Bangs, SPOKES: Asked a question about the status of the LCWHIP prior to the meeting. Watford Council have submitted their response to HCC, but nothing from Three Rivers Council. Cllr Nelmes has seen the draft and will provide an update via the notes. The consultation will be circulated when published. *Answer provided outside the meeting:* The Infrastructure, Housing and Economic Development Committee (IHED) at Three Rivers DC considered a report on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) on 11 October 2022 and agreed to progressing a full public consultation on the Plan. A public consultation on the proposed LCWIP is therefore due out soon. Officers are currently continuing work with Hertfordshire County Council in developing this consultation. The LCWIP has been developed jointly with the County Council (a requirement) and Watford Borough Council (a logical partner given the distribution of settlements in the District around the Watford conurbation, and a partner which was required by the County Council).

- Cllr Chris Mitchell: Would like to know what others are doing about litter and a possible partnership. Cllr Sarah Nelmes has been enquiring about employing a private firm for enforcement and looking to develop some comms work/campaigns around the issue. Croxley Parish Council have been working on the issue and would like to partner with other groups. Signage had been designed as part of a campaign, however it conflicted with TRDC signage at the time so were unable to put it up. Most litter is coming from local businesses, so local establishments were contacted and asked to have stickers placed on all take away containers as well as posters at point of sale. Enforcement is difficult in parks and open spaces. Is this something the District Council would support alongside the other Parish Councils? Have budget to put into this work but would like support and coordination. Cllr Sarah Nelmes is in discussions with the comms team on a suitable campaign, so will make introductions. Schools currently compete to see how much litter they can collect, there's huge local resource. *To be discussed outside of the meeting.* Cllr Sarah Nelmes is the Lead Cllr for communications, Cllr Phil Williams is the Lead Cllr for Environment.
- Stewart Pomeroy, Colne Valley Regional Park: Coming to the end of the £2.5million lottery landscape partnership project and looking for new projects to build on this work. We have found funding to work with The Wildlife Trust, who are going to commission research on the local gravel pits and how they are used by water birds, which will inform funding applications for the area, and possible future protection designation. We also have funding for acting as advocates for the positive impacts the Green Belt comes, the money will go on a planning resource with good local knowledge.
- Melissa Ahmet, Affinity Water: INNS Out is an invasive species support programme. Anyone can apply for support with invasive species, offering both funding and volunteers. The applications

are now open, and open until January. You can apply here:

<https://www.affinitywater.co.uk/corporate/environment/inns>

- Rosi Jordon, Sustainable Three Rivers: We are now a Community Interest Company, so can now apply for grants. Our first project is planned to be a community garden in Rickmansworth. There is already a community Orchard which we are hoping to begin with using raised beds. In contact with TRDC and Batchworth Community Council and are drafting a proposal. Already have a petition with over 400 signatures for a community garden. Russell Ball has been working on getting trees in Rickmansworth High Street which is a very complicated issue. Russell Ball says they are currently talking with Herts County Council and Batchworth Community Council. Updates will be provided at forums as they have them. Cllr Sarah Nelmes said they are looking at how to make the Orchard more accessible to the public.
- Jess Hodges, Community Biodiversity Officer for TRDC: -
 - Rickmansworth Aquadrome has had the new management plan approved and they are now seeking funding opportunities.
 - We are running a number of events this year including the Queens Green Canopy events, which also tie in with the Opportunities Audit findings.
 - Nature Recovery Strategy is going to Committee this month and Public consultation will begin early next year so please have a look and comment.
- Elen Roberts, Climate, Sustainability and Recycling Officer for TRDC: Herts WasteAware/Sustainable Hertfordshire have launched a new pilot project to help local residents to reduce their edible food waste. It is estimated families can save around £780 per year by cutting out food waste. All are encouraged to sign up to the challenge and share with their communities/contacts. You can sign up here: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/recycling-and-waste/wasteaware-campaigns/worth-saving.aspx> Please do share with any contacts who live within Three Rivers – it's a huge source of carbon emissions and will help people save money. If the pilot is successful, it will be rolled out County-wide next year.
- Cllr Reena Ranger: Rickmansworth High Street is very narrow and options for trees are limited and is Hertfordshire's land. The High Street is currently mostly closed to vehicles and HCC are looking for feedback – this is being done to encourage active travel. If the high street remains pedestrianised, there is a better chance of getting trees onto the high street.
- Cllr Sarah Nelmes: Tree planting is happening on the 30th November and 3rd December at Denham Way Playing Fields and the Horses' Field, Leavesden Country Park respectively. Species being planted include hazel, English oak, hornbeam and walnut.
- Joanna Hewitson: We are trying to contact land owners in the District and struggling to do so to look for biodiversity opportunities and connectivity. If anyone is a land owner, or can share other contacts, please do. Please contact Joanna.Hewitson@threeivers.gov.uk

6.	<p>AOB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Joanna Hewitson: The Terms of Reference for the EF must be reviewed every two years, this work is currently beginning, so please refresh yourself on there and let us know if you have any comments or suggestions. You can contact Elen.Roberts@threerivers.gov.uk - Stewart Pomeroy, Colne valley Regional Park: Thank you to the Council for delaying the Local Plan, we look forward to the new development of this. Cllr Sarah Nelmes says we still do not know if the top down numbers will change, but they are continuing to fight the issues. Current changes in central government are causing further issues and delays. - Cllr Jon Tankard: Biodiversity Opportunities Audit is underway – we asked residents to send images of what residents were finding in local uncut areas. We are trying to build up a knowledge base and improve on what’s already there, so please continue to document and share what is present at uncut sites. St. Albans Wilderhood Watch – this gets neighbourhoods to look at their immediate area and the nature in the area and how to improve it, this needs to be looked at on a Parish level, so please contact Cllr Jon Tankard if you are interested in running this in your area/street. Local plan – we are limited in terms of sustainability, so if anyone has experience of working around central government guidelines, please contact Cllr Jon Tankard. We were told capacity was going to be increased at the Chesham Sewerage Works in 2023 – is there an update on this? Joanna Hewitson notes there is no update, but there is an upcoming Water Partnership meeting, Joanna to send an update when there is one. We have a draft Three Rivers Recovery strategy coming to the Policy and Resources meeting this month. - Cllr Chris Mitchel: Councils have set higher standards within a Local Plan previously, however none seem to be doing it currently. We are closely following a local council in Elbridge who putting lower numbers. - Cllr Reena Ranger: Cllr Jon Tankard said Batchworth Heath looks to have had a pond or similar based on the nature in the area which may have been there to alleviate flooding – could we look at this to help water flow? Could more natural management used to deal with water flow issues? Cllr Tankard encourages all to send in photographs of local nature on uncut verges and ask other residents to do the same. Joanna Hewitson said we are working Adaptation plans for the district, blocked ditches would be of interest to this work, and this will be noted. Tony Bradford said the current Batchworth Heath management plan includes a pond which has issues with non-native species and carries a large number of issues with restoring it https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/download?id=50677. Cllr Ranger believes this is a different pond. <i>Issue to be discussed outside of the meeting.</i> 	
7.	<p><i>Suggestions for future speakers – Please contact Elen Roberts.</i></p>	
8.	<p>Cllr Winter 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 March 2023.

Associated documents/links related to meeting and action points:

Action Points

- Cllr Nelmes to make introductions between TRDC comms team and Croxley Green Council in regards to a litter campaign.
- Joanna Hewitson to send update on the 2023 plans for increasing capacity at Chesham Sewerage Works.