

**ALTON TOWN COUNCIL  
RIVER WEY (INCLUDING FLOOD MEADOWS AND KING'S POND)  
STEERING GROUP  
THURSDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2020 at 10AM**

**Due to current government regulations this meeting will be held remotely using video conferencing. For meeting security, the meeting code and password to log in will be sent to Members separately and any member of the public wishing to attend is asked to e-mail [townclerk@alton.gov.uk](mailto:townclerk@alton.gov.uk) and log in details will be sent.**

**MEETING AGENDA**

- 1) Welcome
- 2) Updated Terms of Reference.
- 3) Friends of King's Pond & Flood Meadows (update)
- 4) Contamination and water flow, Brick Kiln Lane.
- 5) Project -state of the riverside paths in Flood Meadows (CK)
- 6) Project – gravel recharge at Flood Meadows (GS)
- 7) Project – River along Weyside Walk (GS)/(CK)
- 8) Update on river and Wey walk plans for the Brewery Site, (inc. Silt trap King's Pond)
- 9) River Wey Monitoring
- 10) Management Plan actions for Flood Meadows and King's Pond
- 11) Future plan for the river to include Wey catchment plan.(Scoping)
- 12) Date of next Meeting

**NOTES**

Item 8 – Included in with the agenda is the report from the Environment Agency in respect of the CALA application. In addition, below, are some concerns raised by Glen Skelton, for discussion.

I spent much of yesterday afternoon, getting up to speed with the development proposal for the brewery site. I was concerned to see the proposals for the river, as it enters the site from Draymans Way. It's great that this section will be de-culverted and daylighted again however the arrow straight course of the channel and the hard surfaces on the left hand bank pretty

much go against everything we are trying to achieve for getting Alton's chalk stream back into a more natural state. Alton's stretch of the Wey will always suffer from the pressures of urban development but it seems so counterproductive to put the river back into a heavily modified channel when we have this one time opportunity to restore its natural function.

There are only 200 chalk streams globally making them one of the rarest habitats on earth. Thanks to their crystal clear and mineral rich water, and low energy flows, chalk streams support a huge diversity of plant and invertebrate life and are often referred to as the UK's rainforest. We are incredibly lucky to have one here in Alton.

A healthy chalk stream has a meandering course that maintains natural processes within the river, resulting in a variety of habitats including deep/shallow areas and, fast/slow flowing water over a clean gravel bed. These natural processes are key to supporting the richness of biodiversity that are associated with these streams. When we put rivers down artificial channels, such as the one proposed, we lose all of these natural functions and processes. Hard banks constrain the river and severely limit these processes, whilst straight channels lack any of the natural processes required to support a diversity of species and habitats (as can be seen along the stretch behind Costa Coffee).

As you are aware, there is a lot of energy now within the local community to get our chalk stream back to a state that, not only supports thriving wildlife habitats, but is something for the town to be proud of. If we are to avoid having another stretch like the one behind Costa, we need to give the river more space where it enters the brewery site, allowing for a meandering course with soft landscaped natural banks.

Would you be able to take these concerns to East Hants when you speak to them next? I will also send them an email with my concerns.

Many Thanks

Glen

**Glen Skelton** - Wetland Landscapes Officer  
Surrey Wildlife Trust  
07800991438

