

# NEWSLETTER

<https://www.newriverrenewal.co.uk>



## RESTORATION OF THE NEW RIVER PATH TO REDUCE RISK OF FALLS AND ENABLE ACCESS FOR ALL IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE EQUALITY ACT 2010

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Thames Water has raised an order with its contractors to re-lay the path from Seven Sisters Road to Finsbury Park. Thames Water is working with the London Borough of Hackney to achieve an agreement to place a temporary works area on an adjacent site. This is needed to allow safe access to the site, to carry out the work and allow access for delivery of materials.

If the London Borough of Hackney can get this matter sorted quickly, work could begin to renew the path in the near future – with the hope that it will be completed before Christmas.

Type of material used is yet to be decided but will be 'environmentally friendly'. The Thames Water's 'Water Quality Team' will decide on the material.

## DANGEROUS SECTIONS OF THE PATH – ESPECIALLY FOLLOWING RAIN ...

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Our emphasis is on compliance with the Equality Act and Duty of Care by the London Borough of Hackney and Thames Water. We are particularly concerned about enabling access to the river paths for people who are disabled

Duty of Care – requires actions to be taken to protect path walkers, plus installation of signage regarding potential hazards.

Responsibility for path maintenance must be accepted by Thames Water and LBH.

No action has been taken since the gravelling of the paths, despite the development of deep puddles after rain.

## IDENTIFY WHICH PARTS OF THE NEW RIVER ARE CONTAMINATED AND REQUIRE REGULAR REMOVAL OF RUBBISH IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN AND RESTORE THE NATURAL WILDLIFE ENVIRONMENT.

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The Coal House Café could be the place where walkers report anything of note – e.g. contamination of the New River. We suggest that posters in the Café should advise walkers how to report contamination of the River, and show the mobile number of the person on duty at that time, so that an immediate report can be made.

Agreement needs to be established between the London Wildlife Trust and Thames Water, so that the Trust can be paid to check the River regularly – in order to remove rubbish and to clear rubbish from the proposed Gauge House grill.

Currently rubbish collection from the New River only takes place when there is heavy contamination and many complaints. This is carried out by the London Wildlife Trust but only on the section adjacent to the East Reservoir.



## INSTALLATION OF A GRILL ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE GAUGE HOUSE

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We have proposed to Thames Water that a grill be fitted on the Gauge House, to prevent rubbish flowing down the River from Newton Close bridge.

To the east of the Gauge House water reeds grow well and it is a prime site for nesting ducks and swans.

We have had no response to this request.



## RISK TO VOLUNTEERS REMOVING LARGER ITEMS FROM THE NEW RIVER

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Consideration should be given to the risk to volunteers removing heavy items from the river, e.g. mattresses and trolleys, and the importance of these activities being undertaken by experts, who would not be at risk of harm.

Legal advice will be sought in relation to the role of volunteers in cleaning up the river. A progress report is anticipated from Thames Water.

## JAPANESE KNOTWEED IS GROWING ON A FEW SECTIONS OF THE PATH BY THE FOOTBALL PITCH ON THAMES WATER LAND

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The London Borough of Hackney will not take responsibility for the removal of the Japanese Knotweed from the Thames Water path. As the Council employs a Japanese Knotweed expert, we recommend that Thames Water pays the London Borough of Hackney or the London Wildlife Trust to remove this harmful weed.

## APPROPRIATE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE PATH AND RIVER TO DEVELOP WILDLIFE AREAS TO CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT THAT IS SAFE FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF RESIDENTS AND VISITORS

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Each of the four bodies with accountability for the river and path, have been asked to be clear about their responsibilities. A proactive approach is required from these bodies, not just responding when the birds are nesting in plastic.

A **Memorandum of Understanding** is required so that the responsibilities of each body become transparent

**Rapid reporting and rapid action are required in order to protect the wildlife.**



## CURRENT CONTAMINATION

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The river beneath Lordship Road is heavily contaminated, despite this issue being raised several times over the past months with Thames Water and local Councillors. Rubbish was removed nearby, but the rubbish under the Bridge was left.

We have asked Thames Water on several occasions to remove a mattress in the river near Newton Close bridge, but no action taken. Other items of junk have also not been removed, e.g. plastic cones and wooden boards.



## THE STERILE RIVER – CASTLE TO LORDSHIP ROAD

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Part of the New River west from the Castle to Lordship Road is sterile. This is because of the dye put in the water by Better.com. The dye kills river-bottom plants and is intended to make the West Reservoir safer for swimmers and boaters.

We are concerned about the impact on fish and other wildlife. We did discuss with Better.Com whether the dye could be put in at another location where it would impact less heavily on wildlife, but they said this would make no difference. Better.com have told us that Dyofix is not harmful fish.

The Head of Conservation at the London Wildlife Trust has suggested that we raise the issue with the Environment Agency. LWT has raised the issue with Thames Water.



**COMMUNICATION WITH LOCAL RESIDENTS**

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Bulletin Boards are needed to share with local people the best ways of reporting contamination of the river and path, and deep mud after heavy rain.

A coherent strategy is needed that ensures that the paths are safe throughout the whole year, and contamination of the river dealt with rapidly

**PUBLIC MEETING TO BE HELD**

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Thames Water has agreed to speak at a Public Meeting about the development of the New River. Date and location to be agreed.

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**GLOSSARY:**

LBH	London Borough of Hackney
LWT	London Wildlife Trust
TW	Thames Water