

NEW RIVER RENEWAL CAMPAIGN

January 2023

NEWSLETTER UPDATE

We had a very constructive meeting with James Townsend from Thames Water on December 5th, 2022. This newsletter will update you on what we have achieved - you can see our meeting notes on: www.newriverrenewal.net

PRIORITY ONE: NO UPDATES OR INFORMATION ABOUT RESTORATION

OUR REQUEST FOR THE PLANTING OF WILD MEADOW FLOWERS ON THE FAR SIDE SLOPE OF THE PATH REFUSED, WITH NO RATIONAL EXPLANATION.

RESTORATION OF NEW RIVER PATH - SEVEN SISTERS ROAD TO FINSBURY PK

REDUCE RISK OF FALLS AND ENABLE ACCESS FOR ALL

Thames Water has raised an order with contractors to re-lay the path from Seven Sisters Road to Finsbury Park. The London Borough of Hackney has agreed to provide a location for Thames Water to place their materials and equipment during the work, which will take about 11 weeks. We still don't know the date when the work will start but expect it to begin in January 2023. We have asked Thames Water to use an 'environmentally friendly' material to relay the path, but we haven't been able to find out what material will be used. They have told us that they will use a non-toxic material as the runoff will be into the New River – our not yet treated drinking water.



PATH FROM SEVEN SISTERS ROAD TO FINSBURY PARK

PRIORITY TWO: NO ACTION

RELAYING OTHER SECTIONS OF THE PATH WHICH ARE HAZARDOUS TO WALKERS – ESPECIALLY FOLLOWING RAIN

Our emphasis is on compliance with the Equality Act and Duty of Care by both the London Borough of Hackney and Thames Water. We are particularly concerned about enabling access to the river paths for people who are disabled, The Duty of Care requires action to be taken to protect walkers, plus installation of signage regarding potential hazards. Responsibility for path maintenance lies with Thames Water and LBH.

Some of the paths were improved through gravelling in 2021, but since then no further action has been taken, despite the development of deep puddles and thick mud after rain. The path of both sides of the Newnton Close Bridge and the path near the large children's playground are prime sites for upgrading to reduce deterioration of the path.



PATH NEAR THE CHILDREN'S PLAYGROUND

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PRIORITY THREE: NO ACTION

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

Our meetings with James Townsend have led to agreement that TW will remove a large mattress laying in the river near Newnton Close, and other collections of rubbish and debris along the section from Finsbury Park to the Castle. We have provided TW with precise locations for areas of river contamination and obstacles that need removal.

We would like to see an agreement established between Thames Water and the London Wildlife Trust for the removal of collections of rubbish as they occur. The LWT currently carries out these activities on an ad hoc basis when there is heavy contamination. We would like to see a contractual relationship between TW and the LWT for these activities to be carried out regularly when needed, along the whole section of the path within the LBH. The alternative is for TW to commission their 'ground maintenance contractor to carry out this activity on a quarterly basis.

We would like to see the Coal House Café as a location where walkers and visitors can report anything of note – e.g. contamination of the New River or deterioration of the path. We suggest that posters are placed in the Café to advise walkers how to report problems with the river and path, and show the mobile number of the duty staff member, to facilitate immediate reporting, and action taken quickly. Bulletin boards are also needed along the river path for this purpose and to display our newsletters.



PICTURE OF RUBBISH UNDER THE LORDSHIP ROAD BRIDGE

PRIORITY FOUR: JKW TREATED BUT NOT REMOVED

JAPANESE KNOTWEED IS GROWING ON A SECTION OF THE PATH BY THE FOOTBALL PITCH

The LBH will not take responsibility for the removal of the Japanese Knotweed because it is growing on the Thames Water path near Newnton Close. As the LBH employs a Japanese Knotweed expert, we recommended that Thames Water works with the LBH to remove the harmful weed.

We have now provided the exact location of the JKW to James Townsend TW, and he has agreed to have it removed.



JAPANESE KNOTWEED NEAR THE FOOTBALL PITCH, NEWNTON CLOSE

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PRIORITY FIVE: NO ACTION

RISK TO VOLUNTEERS OF REMOVING LARGER ITEMS FROM THE NEW RIVER

We want consideration given by TW and the LBH to the risk of volunteers removing heavy items from the river, e.g. mattresses and trolleys. We think it is important that these activities are undertaken by experts who would not be at risk of harm because they have the expertise and equipment to carry this task. TW has agreed to deal with the current issues, e.g. removal of double mattress, but we need a more responsive system for the future that enables rapid response to the removal of trolleys, bikes and mattresses from the river.



PRIORITY SIX: NO ACTION

DISPOSAL OF WASTE ALONG THE RIVER PATH

There is a serious shortage of dustbins along the river path from Green Lanes (Finsbury Park) to the Castle and this leads to heavy contamination of the path and the river. We have emphasized the importance of having well located fixed dustbins along the path to prevent rubbish being dumped on the path and blowing into the river. Dustbins need to be regularly emptied by the LBH. Right now, the only bins which are emptied regularly are on the section owned and organised by the LBH.

We have suggested to TW that they install fixed bins at key points along the river path and arrange for LBH to empty the bins regularly. We have given a list of key locations for dustbin location to TW, our Councillors Selman and Young and Bianca Rembrandt

(Community Safety and Enforcement Officer – LBH) We would like LBH and TW to collaborate on the installation of bins at the locations we have identified.



PRIORITY SEVEN: NO ACTION

DEVELOPING AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN TW, LBH AND THE LONDON WILDLIFE TRUST TO DETERMINE WHICH BODY SHOULD BE ACCOUNTABLE FOR ACTION WHEN THE PATH OR RIVER ARE CONTAMINATED OR UNSAFE TO WALK ON – PROTECTING WILDLIFE AND PEOPLE

We want to develop a signed Memorandum of Understanding, which clarifies the responsibilities, duties and actions of TW, LBH, LWT and Better.Com. These 4 bodies have responsibility for sections of the New River, reservoir or paths within the Borough of Hackney. We want the responsibility by each of these bodies to become open and transparent and them to take action when issues are reported. We want these bodies to develop a proactive approach to keep the New River and Paths clean and safe for wildlife and local communities – **Rapid Reporting and Rapid Action**



Before and After Cleaning Up the River by the London Wildlife Trust – May 2021

PUBLIC MEETING, RUBBISH COLLECTION & EAT WITH THAMES WATER –

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 14th @12.30pm – MEETING TOOK PLACE BUT NO ACTION
POST-MEETING**

Thames Water representative James Townsend will talk to local people about their approach to maintaining the New River. The meeting to be held on January 14th at 12.30 at the Redmond Community Centre, Kayani Avenue, N4 2HF. The meeting has been organised by **Ward Councillors: Caroline.Selman@hackney.gov.uk & Sarah.Young@hackney.gov.uk** They have arranged for food to be provided by the London Development Trust. The meal will be followed by a clear up of the New River path. Equipment will be provided for removal of rubbish from the river path. Everyone welcome but children must be accompanied by an adult. Please wear clothes and shoes suitable for outdoor activities.

CONTACT US – NEW RIVER RENEWAL CAMPAIGN
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