

# What's left for our Chalk streams?



Our local chalk streams, the River Rib and River Quin, face a number of challenges, despite their unique and precious nature.

## ABSTRACTION

Over 60% of the water supply in Hertfordshire is sourced from the chalk aquifer below our feet. This is drying out our rivers and decimating the biodiverse wildlife that depends on them. Elsewhere in Hertfordshire, including in the Beane valley to the west of us, abstraction has either ceased or reduced. However there are no current plans for reductions in our catchment, despite our rivers being dry in their upper reaches for significant parts of the year.

## ABSTRACTION

2019 - 2020

CHIPPING	952.18
HARE STREET	393.07
STANDON	1541.07
THUNDRIDGE	3247.63
WADESMILL	1973.02

Annual total in Mega Litres

Source: AFFINITY WATER

**22 MILLION LITRES A DAY FROM OUR CATCHMENT**



## UNTREATED SEWAGE DISCHARGES (duration - hours)

	2019	2020
<b>RIVER RIB</b>		
Therfield	0	273
Buntingford	16	61
Standon	0	3
Chapmore End	80	57
<b>RIVER QUIN</b>		
Barkway	175	547
Braughing	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>271</b>	<b>961</b>

Source: The Rivers Trust. Discharge duration in hours

## POLLUTION

The latest pollution data released by the Environment Agency indicates that not one section of our river system reaches good ecological status. As well as toxic chemicals being present, nitrate and phosphate levels are also shown to be at damaging ecological levels. Our rivers also receive regular doses of raw sewage, spilled directly into the rivers at times when the system cannot cope.

## INVASIVE SPECIES

Whilst our rivers provide important corridors for our native wildlife, they also permit invasive species to spread. Two plants of particular concern locally are Himalayan Balsam and Giant Hogweed, both clearly identifiable but presenting different problems. Giant Hogweed is toxic and

causes blistering to the skin, whilst Himalayan Balsam spreads quickly and chokes out native species along our river banks.

Several species of invasive crayfish are now in UK rivers. Locally we have the North American Signal Crayfish, which has driven out our native species through disease and burrow into river banks increasing erosion and turbidity of the water column. Mink is also a concern and needs to be monitored if water voles are to make a return.



## MAKING CHANGE HAPPEN

Friends of the Rib & Quin is part of the Chalk Aquifer Alliance, a network of chalk stream river groups campaigning for the end of abstraction in the upper reaches of catchments, better water



quality and enforcement of environmental protection and legislation.

This is underpinned by our work raising awareness locally as to the plight of our chalk streams through schools, public events and council engagement.

We are introducing a network of riverfly monitors and river wardens to monitor the river and its health and have volunteer working groups ready and able to help with river and bank maintenance and improvements, supported by our close involvement and collaboration with the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust.

## Supported by



**Standon**  
Parish Council

