

Making changes to your local watercourse

August 2019



Welcome to our final newsletter for this series designed to communicate our proposed changes to the way your local watercourse is maintained and regulated.

We are delighted to inform you that selected watercourses in the Stour Marshes have now officially changed from main river to ordinary watercourse.

This means that the ten watercourses and twelve water level control assets being transferred will now fall under the authority of the River Stour (Kent) Internal Drainage Board who will be responsible for their maintenance and management going forward.

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How has the decision been made?

The Environment Agency is looking at new and innovative ways to deliver more for the environment by changing our ways of working and how we use our resources. We have been working closely with the River Stour (Kent) Internal Drainage Board who were keen to take more responsibility for maintaining and regulating some local, low flood risk, watercourses in the Stour Marshes Rivers.

De-maining: how do we decide?



Areas have been chosen to be part of the Rationalising the Main River Network project because:



All watercourses have low flood risk



Watercourses are not major rivers or near major population centres.



We have consulted to seek the views of individuals, groups and organisations, who are affected by, or interested in the proposals



Only where IDBs or lead local flood authorities/district councils are willing and the local community is supportive.

It was important for us to understand the benefits de-maining would bring to the Stour Marshes Rivers so, in addition to working alongside our partners at the River Stour (Kent) Internal Drainage Board, we also invited the community to have their say via a public consultation and drop-in events.

This online consultation ran from January to February 2018. Overall feedback indicated support for de-manning with the majority of respondents in favour of more localised decision making around flood risk management.

We also held drop-in events throughout September and October 2017 with partner organisations to ensure that members of the public could inform our approach to the project.

The responses gathered from the consultation were thoroughly considered and used to finalise the proposals. We thank everyone who took part in the drop-in sessions or responded to our consultation.

What does the change mean for my community?

The Environment Agency has made this transfer as a 'determination' under section 193C (1) of the Water Resources Act 1991. This determination represents a formal decision to change the main river map.

By transferring these watercourses and assets to our local partners, we can focus our resources where they are most needed, retain our strategic overview of flood risk management, and ensure that the right people are managing the right watercourses and assets in the right places.

For local communities, who have welcomed the change, this re-designation also represents more choice in how their watercourses will be managed with decisions on watercourse maintenance being made at a more localised level.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your support during this project. If you have any further questions or concerns, then please do get in touch.

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