

The Mill Brook from Blewbury to Wallingford: Have Your Say



Overview

Mend The Gap funded an evening in May 2025 organised with Thames21, Environment Agency and Action for the River Kennet. The aim of the event was to bring together organisations, local groups and local community members with an interest in the Mill Brook/Bradford's Brook sub-catchment, share information into a holistic location as an initial step to baseline current knowledge, identify opportunity areas and drive future action / funding.

Agenda

- Welcome & Housekeeping – *Sarah Thornley, Thames21*
- Introduction to Mend the Gap – *Ruth Staples-Rolfe, Mend the Gap*
- Introduction to the Catchment Based Approach – *Pippa Tucker, Environment Agency*
- Sharing Success from a Partnership Approach – *Charlotte Hitchmough, Action for the River Kennet*
- Facilitated Discussions - *Sarah Thornley, Thames21*
- Feedback, Round Up & Next Steps - *Sarah Thornley, Thames21*

For more details on the presentations given at this event, please see the presentation slides sent alongside this document.

Collated Information from Facilitated Discussions

1. Collection of Opinions

What would you like to see happen out of this consultation event/group of people?

- Development of an agreed vision for the sub-catchment and list of priorities through a co-developed catchment action plan.
- Projects focused on local issues on sub-catchment scale with concepts developed to the point where funding can be sought – e.g., improving water quality, 'slowing the flow'/exploring natural flood management interventions, citizen science baselining, public access, education opportunities.
- Cohesive multi-stakeholder approach to managing water within the sub-catchment – i.e., water company, local authority, eNGOs, local organisations, community groups, landowners etc, with one organisation taking leadership over future development.
- A drive for action and securing further funding to continue the momentum in this sub-catchment.
- Representation of the sub-catchment at relevant stakeholder meetings – e.g., Thames Water, South Oxfordshire District Council, Parish Councils.

What is special or important to you about the Mill Brook?

- Value of chalk stream habitat
- Species of interest - otter, brown trout, water vole, kingfisher, mayfly, black poplar
- History and heritage – e.g., agriculture, mills and archaeological features.

2. Priorities & Data

What are the priorities for the catchment?
• Flooding/Flow: extraction rates, nature-based solutions to flooding e.g., wetlands. • Biodiversity: address barriers to migratory species, riparian management, river restoration work to increase the diversity of river habitats e.g., pools, riffles, surveying for invasive species. • Water Quality: establish a riverfly/citizen science monitoring network, monitoring of ammonia/nitrates around specific locations known to be polluting within the sub-catchment i.e., upstream and downstream of South Moreton Sewage Treatment Works, greater understanding of role of road runoff and silt accumulation. • Access & Education: working collaboratively with landowners, provide information on riparian management, raise awareness of common issues facing rivers, links to school engagement, history of the sub-catchment.

What data do we need to collect to evidence and address these priorities and how?
• Baseline water quality data and monitor diffuse and point-source pollution sources through citizen science • Monitoring of water levels • Land use mapping • Mapping of public access and landownership • Mapping of paleo channels • Suggestion to link up Cholsey and Mill Brook sub-catchments with this approach

3. Mapping of Stakeholders

List of potential future stakeholders	
Parish Councils	Farmers
Councillors	Equestrians
Parish Path Wardens	Local Artists
MPs	Well Barn Estate
Thames Water	Network Rail
Environment Agency	Wallingford Sports Park
Action for the River Kennet	Wallingford Wildlife Group
Thames21	North Moreton Community Group
The Rivers Trust	South Moreton Flood Group
Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust	Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre
UK Centre For Ecology & Hydrology	Cholsey Environment Champions
National Landscapes	Springline Project
Riparian Landowners	Didcot Ramblers Association
Mill Owners	Local Archaeology & History Groups
Dog walkers	School Network
Swimmers	Ashton Outdoors
Anglers	Voice of the River
Boaters	Sustainable Blewbury
Sports clubs	

4. Existing Projects/Activity and Known Issues

What are the existing projects and activities in the area?
• South Moreton Parish Council Flood Group – evidence building and suggestions for flood alleviation work and natural flood management • Planting of black poplars • Sustainable Blewbury Mill Brook project ideas • Creation of flower meadows in Cholsey and Moreton • Springline Project • Chalk grassland restoration on Blewburton Hill Local Wildlife Site • Farming in Protect Landscapes (FiPL) projects across the protect landscape area • Surveys at Wallingford Sports Park • Mend the Gap tree planting and mitigation works

What are the known issues in the sub-catchment?
• Flooding/Flow: flooding, lack of maintenance at mills (e.g., sluice gates). • Biodiversity: highly shaded riparian areas, litter accumulation, felling of mature trees. • Water Quality: septic tanks, South Moreton Sewage Treatment Works, sediment accumulation, road runoff, agricultural pollution, high bacteria. • Access & Education: lack of sub-catchment wide understanding of the issues that these rivers face.

5. Opportunity Mapping

Suggestions of opportunity areas and areas of interest across the sub-catchment:

Site Specific (Map1):

1. Land behind Cholsey Hill up to the Hithercroft as a potential wetland site, the area regularly floods and holds water.
2. Potential wet woodland creation/restoration at Caps Lane, Cholsey.
3. Potential wetland site at Blewbury Cleve.
4. Upgrades and improvements required at sewage treatment works – i.e., South Moreton.
5. Natural flood management opportunities and flood water storage areas.
6. Astons flood plains and drainage ditches.
7. Current old water meadow and potential wetland restoration.
8. SuDS in Wallingford
9. 'Farm for Water' and potential wetland creation.
10. Potential wetland creation
11. Chalk grassland recovery

Sub-Catchment Wide:

12. Project surrounding the history and use of the sub-catchment – e.g., agriculture, mills and archaeological features.
13. Videography and narrative telling project and communications.
14. Flood action group that covers the sub-catchment.
15. Footpath access with signage and interpretation panels along the route.

Map 1 – Site specific opportunity mapping

