

Volunteer River Reporting Guide

Rediscovering
the River Colne



WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL

This guide has been produced by Groundwork East as part of the Rediscovering The River Colne Project.
For more information about the project please visit <https://www.rivercolnewatford.co.uk/>
Groundwork East registered charity number: 293141 | www.groundwork.org.uk/east/

Welcome wonderful Watford volunteers!

This short field guide provides resources for reporting various environmental issues that you may see while walking along your local stretch of river.

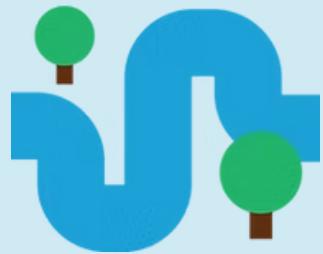
While you can make notes and report these issues at home, we recommend having a smart phone with you to allow for good quality photos and GPS positioning, and these tools should work from any modern mobile browser.

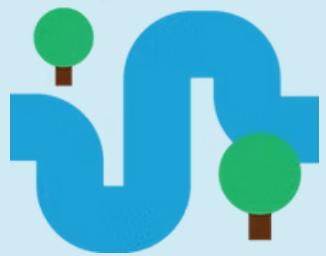
This guide has hyperlinks, so you can click them from your phone and open the sites.

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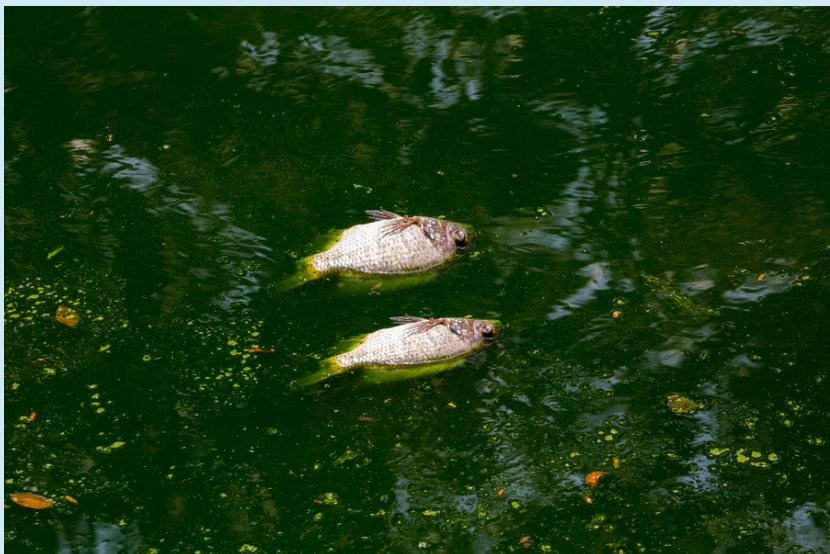
1. Fish Kills

If you see fish dead in the water or gasping for air in the river, this is an emergency

You should contact the Environment Agency via their Incident Hotline at 0800 80 70 60.

They will ask for details such as location, descriptions and they may ask you to send them some pictures too.

This is really important as it alerts the Environment Agency to issues and in some cases they can get out and dispatch aeration machinery to help with the situation, or monitor the area going forward.



2.Litter and Fly Tipping

Watford council have an online reporting tool for litter and litter related problems available here:
<https://www.watford.gov.uk/clean-streets/litter-litter-bins>

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You can fill these either with or without an account (you can track your issue with an account).

Choose from the list what type of issue you are reporting - i.e. 'fly tipping' or 'waste accumulation'.

Choose location 'street' or 'park' (most river locations will be park) and choose a location.



Mark on the map as accurately as possible the location of the issue.

Add any relevant notes and good quality pictures.

Outside of Watford, you can find the local council's reporting tool by using <https://www.gov.uk/report-flytipping>



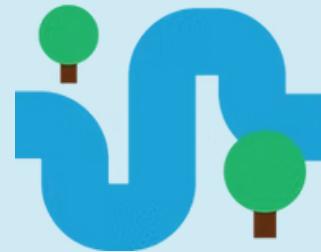
3. Polluting Outfalls

If you have spotted a polluting outfall in Watford, you can submit this online via <https://cvfc.org.uk/outfalls/>.

If you want to see the map of records or enter a new report, click the 'hamburger' button in the top right



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To enter a new record on the system, you will need to login using the details provided during a training day.

This password should not be shared outside of the volunteering group to maintain the quality of the dataset and to prevent active pollution incident data being shared in the public domain.

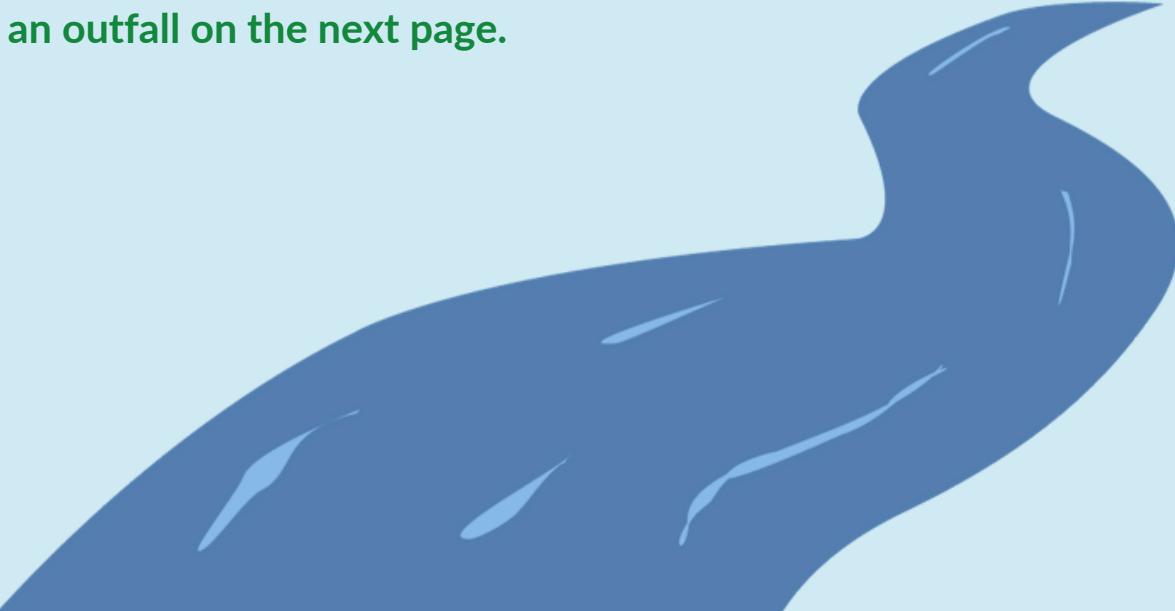
When logged in, you will be presented with these two boxes.

Outfall Reporting

Reference	Latitude
What Three Words	Longitude
Bank when looking downstream	Date/Time
Select Site (required) Please select one of the following sites.	
Discharge (required) See Examples Ranking of the discharge coming out of the outfall	
Visual (required) See Examples Ranking of the visual impact of the outfall	Aesthetics (required) Ranking of the aesthetics of the outfall
Description: (optional) (Maximum 2000 characters) <small>If you have seen sewage, other types of pollution or have noticed anything note worthy such as the outfall being hidden by foliage, please leave a description.</small>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Tick box if you have contacted TW (Add description). <input type="checkbox"/> Is there any sewage related debris visible? <input type="checkbox"/> Any other signs of pollution? (Add description)	
EA Reference No. (optional) EA reference	

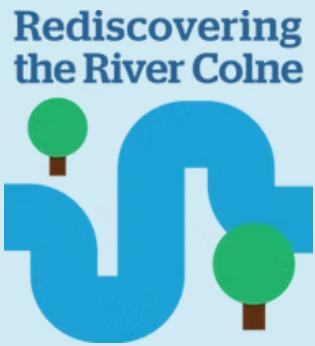
The top one fills in automatically when you select a site from the dropdown box under 'Select Site (required)'. Use the report map landing page before this stage to find the name of the outfall that you wish to update.

The other dropdown boxes require you to select the most appropriate category for discharge, visual and aesthetics. There are pictorial guides to the different options you can select for an outfall on the next page.



Discharge types

Trickle	Low flow	Moderate flow



Aesthetics

Visible foam/scum	Sewage related debris or 'rag'	Plumes of discoloured water	Grey fungus

The scoring system for the categories of visual impact and aesthetics determines the reporting process. These are presented at the start of each option.

Any combined score of ≥ 10 will throw up a prompt to [ring Thames Water on 0800 316 9800](#).

Select option #2 and then #3 and be prepared to share location information (postcode, latitude and longitude or what3words) and additional information from the form.

The Environmental Agency should only be called on 0880 807 060 if a serious event is occurring, and Thames Water should inform them.



4. Invasive species

Various invasive species can be found along our rivers, whether plant species or animals.

The most likely to be seen are Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed, Himalayan Balsam and Signal Crayfish.

For Invasive Species reporting, we use INNS Mapper, which is available via their app or their website at <https://innsmapper.org/>

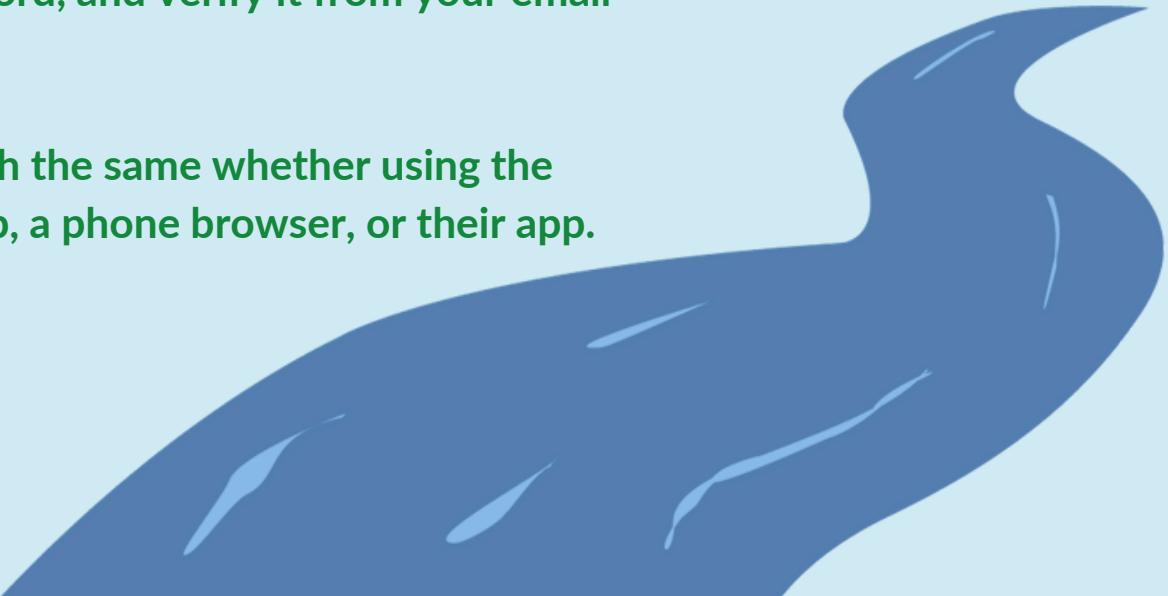
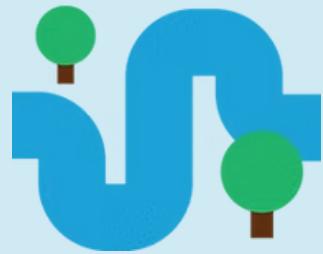
If you think you have found an invasive plant or animal, you can click 'ID Guides' on the INNS Mapper website.

If you aren't sure, or want further information, it can be a good idea to cross reference against another ID guide at the Non Native Species Secretariat website: <https://www.nonnativespecies.org/non-native-species/id-sheets>

To enter a record, you need an INNS Mapper account - this will only need to be set up the first time and takes a minute. You just need to input an email address and password, and verify it from your email account.

The process is much the same whether using the website on desktop, a phone browser, or their app.

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First you will be asked for the species, and then if you would like to upload a picture. This is not mandatory but can be useful to show how much the invasive has spread, what the surrounding conditions are, and so on, as well as helping the verification process for each record.

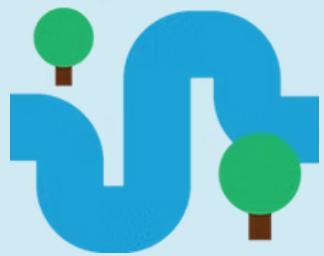
You will then be asked for a point on a map, this can be GPS data from your phone or you can choose your own spot. You can also draw an area or a line.

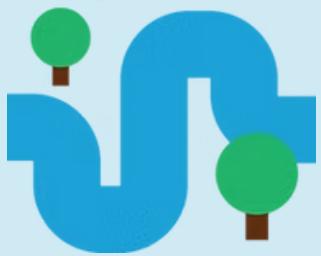
You are then asked for number of plants/animals, or an area if it is spread over a large scale.

You can also add level of certainty and any notes to clarify your report before submitting.

Once submitted, your data will be verified by another user and fully submitted into the dataset!

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5. Other useful information

Further Invasive Species identification sheets are available at the Non Native Species Secretariat website:

<https://www.nonnativeSpecies.org/non-native-species/id-sheets>

Thames water have an online reporting tool for reporting pollution as well as other issues like leaks and blockages.

<https://www.thameswater.co.uk/help/report-a-problem#/view-and-report-problems>

