



View our tips to beat the winter chill [here!](#)

Environmental Newsletter

Winter 2024

Welcome to the winter edition of our Environmental Newsletter. As ever our aim is to share updates and the latest news from across Thames Water.

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Report a problem using your smartphone



Tim Beech
Environmental Partnership Lead



Josie Daman
Catchment Co-ordinator

Contact us at: Partnerships@thameswater.co.uk

Improving our performance

£11 million upgrade to Ascot Sewage Treatment Works

This upgrade has expanded the treatment works **flow capacity by 30%**, from 180 to 220 litres. This will greatly reduce the risk of storm overflows during periods of heavy rainfall and longer periods of groundwater retention.



£6 million upgrade at Bentley Sewage Treatment Works

The installation of a **new storm tank** at Bentley STW was completed 6 months ahead of schedule. This will allow the site to hold additional wastewater, the equivalent of 2 hours of storage at maximum flow rate.

This site is also undergoing a **phosphorous reduction scheme**; with an expected completion date of 2025.

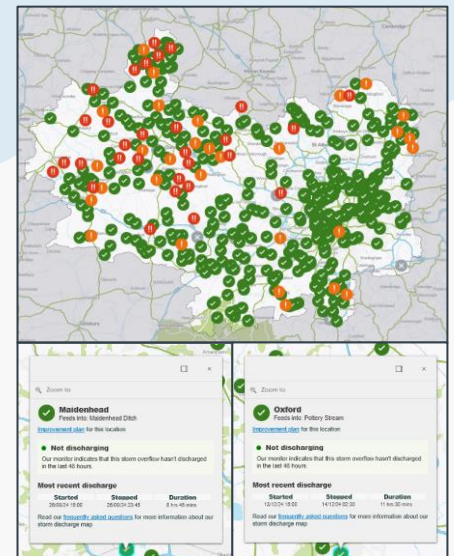


Keeping you updated

During the final two years of our current business plan, we're investing **£1.12 billion** in our sewerage system. This includes £650 million to improve resilience and provide extra capacity at many of our sites; as well as £470 million on the wider sewer network.

To meet the government's new targets for storm discharges, we're planning for a **£13.4 billion investment over the next 25 years**.

You'll find more specific detail on our [investment](#) and [storm overflow reduction plan](#) pages.



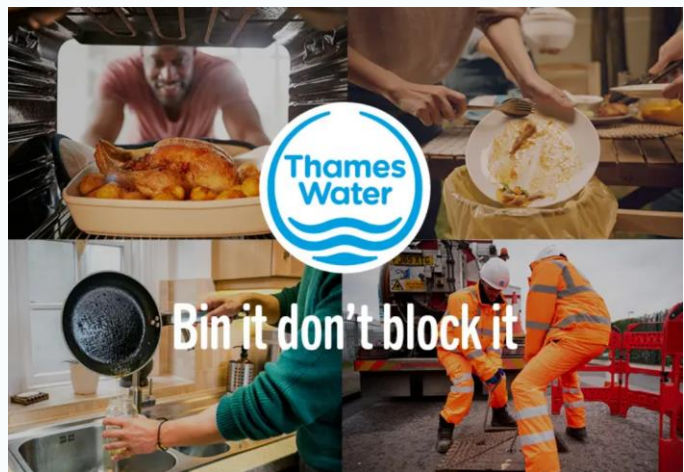
The final determination for the Price Review 2024 is due tomorrow (19th December). We will consider the implications it will have on our ability over the next 5 years to deliver our ambitious plan for customers and the environment. We anticipate it taking several weeks for us to digest and assess all the information we'll receive, so it's unlikely we'll be able to provide any additional information related to the final determination during this time. We will provide further updates as soon as they are available.

Bin it don't block it

Help reduce sewer abuse

We are urging customers and businesses to dispose of their waste correctly this festive season, after **80% of blockages** in 2024 were caused by items which should not have been thrown down the sewers.

- ❖ This year we have cleared around **52,000 blockages** from sewer abuse.
- ❖ We have visited **4000 restaurants** since April, to educate business owners on the dangers of throwing fat, oils and grease down the drains.
- ❖ We have also proactively **cleaned over 1100 km** of sewers this year.



Tips for the Festive Season

- ❖ **Save or freeze** left over gravy. If you don't have much left, use kitchen roll to soak it up and throw it in the bin.
- ❖ **Collect** fats, oils and grease using tin foil, a jar or a yoghurt pot. Once it hardens you can wrap it up and throw it in the bin.
- ❖ **Plan ahead!** When doing your food shopping, spare a minute to think about how to dispose of your waste to help the big day go smoothly and check if your local council accepts fats as food waste.
- ❖ Get a **sink strainer**. This will help to catch any bits of food that end up in the sink which can then be thrown in the bin.
- ❖ **Spread the word** with friends and family to help make sure yours and their pipes are protected.

London Tideway Tunnel

London's super sewer is part of a three-part scheme designed to protect the River Thames from sewage pollution both now and into the future. The first part was the upgrade to five of the Sewage Treatment Works in 2015 (Mogden, Crossness, Beckton, Riverside and Long Reach), the second was the construction of the Lee Tunnel in 2016 and the third and final part is the Tideway Tunnel being delivered by Tideway.

In May 2024, the new 25km super sewer was connected to the 6.9km Lee Tunnel – completing the full 'London Tideway Tunnel' network, which has a combined capacity of **1.6 million m³** helping to protect the River Thames from sewage overflows in London. In October 2024, the first of the Tideway Tunnel sites were switched on, beginning the testing period, with the rest coming online in the coming months.

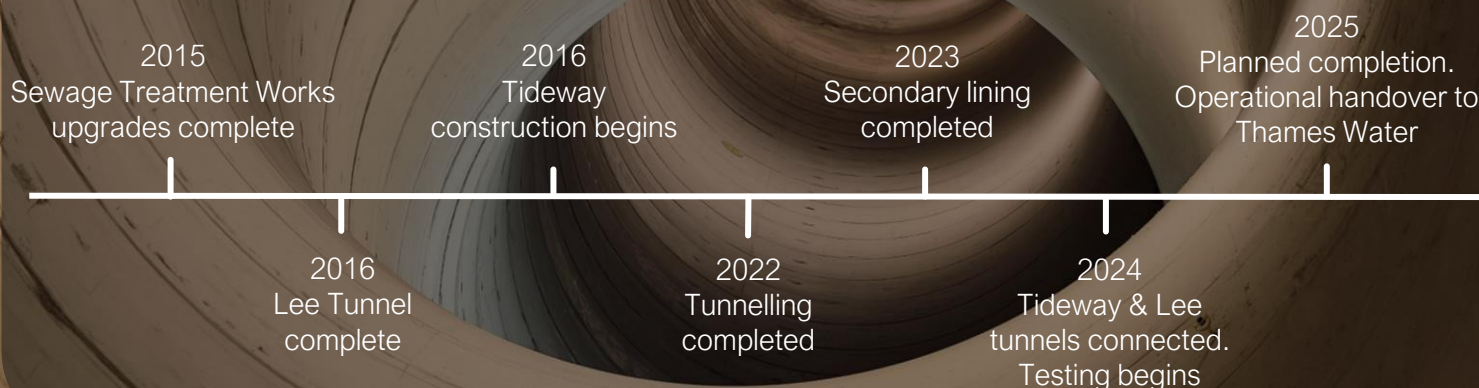
In November 2024, the London Tideway Tunnels Network captured nearly **850,000 tonnes of storm sewage** in a single 24-hour period.



The new system will have a capacity equivalent to **640 Olympic-sized swimming pools**.



London Tideway Improvements Scheme Timeline



Find out more at Tideway's website [here](#).

Catchment Partnership Support Fund

In March 2022, Thames Water announced a £5 million commitment to a river health improvement package over the next five years (known as the Catchment Partnership Support (CaPS) fund). In partnership with The Rivers Trust and Thames Rivers Trust, the CaPS fund has sought to strengthen the Catchment Partnerships in our operational area, providing the necessary skills, tools, and resources for Catchment Partnerships to take the leading role in understanding and improving river catchments. We are working with our partners to agree the future direction of this fund. Below, we reflect on the programme's successes to date;

Provided **£2m funding** (spent or planned spend before March 2025) from Thames Water



Contributed towards the creation of **7 new** roles, as well as supporting **23 existing** roles



Directly funded **25 projects** across **22 Catchment Partnerships**



Facilitated **14 training workshops** for **234 attendees**



Seen **19** Catchment Partnerships update and publish their **Terms of Reference** and **15** update and publish their **Catchment Plans**



Seen a **250% increase** in average time per week hosts have allocated to partnership activities*



*Comparison of July 22 to Sept 22 to July 24 to Sept 24.

CaPS fund Competitive Bids

Since 2023 we have committed to support **£483,112 towards 25 different projects** across **22 Catchment Partnerships**, focused on improving the knowledge of the catchment. They have also provided opportunities for Catchment Partnerships to work across boundaries, with six of the projects being co-ordinated by 2 or 3 Catchment Partnerships. This funding has also allowed Catchment Partnerships to utilise approximately **£600,000 of match funding** from other organisations.

Beverley Brook and Hogsmill
Bridging the Data Gap: Physical habitat assessments and water quality
£29,084

Beverley Brook, Darent & Cray & Hogsmill
Catchment Scale Mapping of Invasive Himalayan Balsam from Satellite Imagery to Inform Partnership Eradication Strategies
£37,020

Brent
Citizen science programme to identify water pollution sources through integrated water modelling and Road Run-Off Testing, with a Particular Focus on Tyre Wear
£30,000

Cherwell & Ray
GovAqua and PACIFIC in the Cherwell & Ray
£15,000

Colne
A Spring Clean for the Colne Catchment and 'A Starter for 10': Using a fungal agent for the biological control of Himalayan balsam in the Colne catchment'
£30,000

Kennet
Fabulous Foudry! – a sub-catchment plan and restoration strategy for the Foudry Brook
£14,000

Loddon
Investigating sources of poor water quality in the Loddon and Loddon under a microscope: expanding citizen science in the catchment
£29,958

London Lea
Ching & Dagenham Brook
Citizen Science Programme: CaSTCo Expansion
£15,000

London Lea, Lower Lea, Upper Lea
Lea fish migration; towards a permeable catchment by 2050
£45,000

Luton Lea
River Champions
£15,000

Maidenhead to Teddington
Road Pollution Solutions – incorporating roadside interventions and a citizen science monitoring programme on a catchment wide scale and Citizen Science and Monitoring Strategy
£30,000

Marsh Dykes & Thamesmead
Citizen Science Programme
£15,000

Mole and Wey
Surrey Water Quality Monitoring Initiatives Integration and Management Partnership and A Surrey-wide Riverfly Reboot
£58,093

Ock and Thame
A targeted approach; developing a project pipeline that delivers the best gains for freshwater wildlife
£30,000

Ock
GOVAQUA in the Ock Catchment
£15,000

Ravensbourne
The Ravensbourne Catchment Improvement Tool
£15,000

Roding, Beam & Ingrebourne
The Roding Pollution Officer
£15,000

South Chilterns
Improving Our Understanding of Water Quality
£15,000

Thame
Community Currents: Building Capacity in Citizen Scientists for Improved Understanding and Action on Water Quality & Use
£15,000

Wandle
Assessment of River Restoration Opportunities on the River Wandle
£14,957



Fisheries and fishing opportunities

Will Barnard is our Fisheries Officer and has worked for Thames Water for 13 years, originally starting with us to deliver a project at Walthamstow .

He would like to spread the word about the exciting coarse and game fishing opportunities provided by our reservoirs, suitable for everyone from beginners to experts!



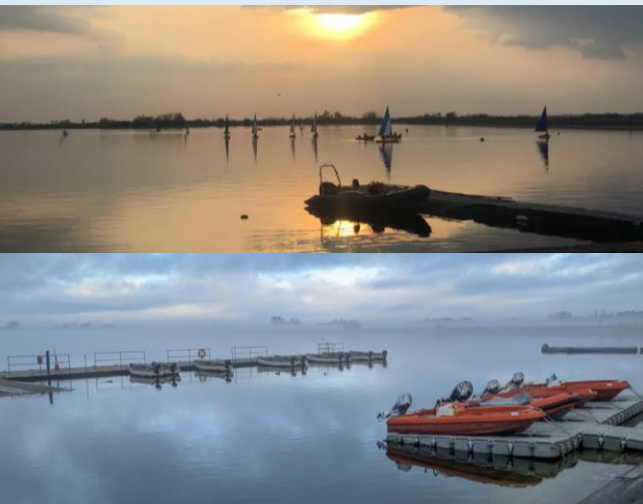
Farmoor Fishery

[Farmoor Fishery](#) is a favourite spot for anglers from across the UK and Europe. It's open year-round and has a range of angling options.

There are two reservoirs to choose from: one catch and release, the other with the option to take trout home.

The fishery is well known for its spring and summer buzzer fishing, and dry fly fishing in the warmer months. Lure patterns work all year, and boat fishing during the winter provides great sport, as the fish sit deep.

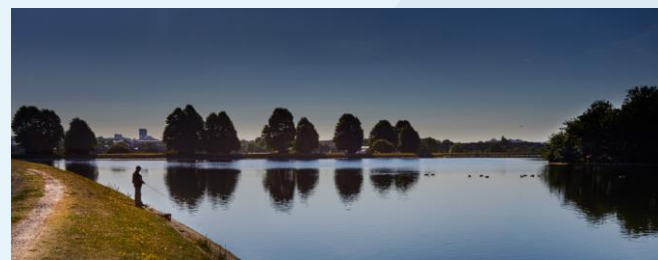
This award-winning fly fishery has 40lb pike, 18lb trout and 5lb perch to test your fishing skills.



Walthamstow Fishery

[Walthamstow Fishery](#), the largest fishery in London, has 12 reservoirs and a family-friendly Angling Academy. You can buy a fishing day ticket on the day or sign up as a member and visit with a season ticket.

Our partners, the local [Walthamstow Fly Fishers](#), welcome new members!



The fisheries aim to create a hub which promotes social inclusion, ownership and utilises green and blue space for wellbeing!



Working with farmers

Over the last four years, the Catchment Projects team in Thames Water have offered advice and funding for landowners and farmers in high-risk areas to reduce the risk of diffuse pollution to rivers and groundwater from farmland.



Event for farmers

Since 2021, the Catchment Fund has had an impact on around **109,723 football fields** worth of agricultural land.

The fund allowed for one successful application per farm business per calendar year.



GPS equipment in use for precision pesticide application

The fund has supported **270 applications** over the last four years, most frequently including the below types of activity;

- New livestock and machinery tracks
- Winter cover crops
- Farmer innovation
- Precision pesticide & fertiliser application technology



Winter cover crop

They also ran farmer events each autumn and spring to raise awareness about water quality.



Two-year legume ley

Projects have been delivered in the following Catchment Partnerships;

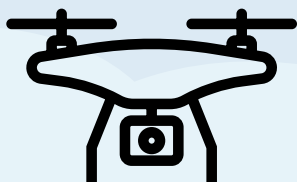
- Cherwell and Ray
- Evenlode
- Kennet
- Ock
- Thame
- Upper and Middle and Lower Lea
- Upper Thames
- Wey



Farm walk at one of our events

Unstead Wetland Nature Reserve

As part of our AMP7 Biodiversity Net Gain Performance Commitment, Thames Water and Unstead Nature Community Group (UNCG) have been working collaboratively since 2020 to successfully restore and enhance **11 hectares of habitat** at a site now known as Unstead Wetland Nature Reserve, located adjacent to the operational Godalming Sewage Treatment Works (STW). The reserve is owned by Thames Water and managed by UNCG.



In just 4 years the project has seen an incredible response, with the UNCG now 180 members strong and more than 15 different specialist individuals and organisations helping to monitor wildlife at the site. The project has been recognised for consistently contributing to nature's recovery while mobilising the local community, with UNCG winning the 2023 Surrey Wildlife Trust "Rising Star" award at the Community Champion Awards.



Works to date have included;

- The creation of **1.2 hectares of lakes, ponds and wetland** (designed and crafted by Aquatic Engineering with input from Surrey Wildlife Trust to make sure they were suitable for a wide range of local wildlife);
- The planting of nearly 4000 trees to create a Miyawaki Forest, an orchard, a hazel copse, blackthorn copse and 400m of hedgerow;
- Creation of a meadow;
- Installation of a Sand Martin bank as well as bat boxes and bird nest boxes; and;
- Installation of information boards, a pond dipping platform, boardwalk, an upgraded bird hide and site cabin for volunteers.



Keeping taps flowing for the future

We recently published our final Water Resources Management Plan (WRMP24), setting out the actions and investment required to deliver secure and sustainable water supplies for the next 50 years and beyond.

For the first time, environmental needs have been included in both our regional plan and our WRMP. By 2050, water companies must reduce water abstractions by up to **1.3 billion litres per day** to protect sensitive water sources like chalk streams.



Illustrative renders of proposed reservoir

DID YOU

KNOW?

A new reservoir could boost the economy by generating over 900 jobs during its construction phase, including a variety of apprenticeships.

South-East Strategic Reservoir Option

The South-East Strategic Reservoir Option (SESRO) continues to make significant progress and forms a key part of our plans to deliver much needed water resilience for the region.

Building a new reservoir in Oxfordshire would allow us to store **150 billion litres** of water from the upper River Thames that would otherwise flow out to sea. It would be capable of supplying up to **271 million litres per day** to around **15 million people**.



NEXT STEPS

We intend to apply for a Development Consent Order (DCO) in 2026, seeking permission to construct and maintain the new reservoir. We will continue our investigations and carry out a statutory public consultation in Autumn 2025.

Questions? Contact our SESRO engagement team at info.SESRO@thameswater.co.uk or visit www.thames-sro.co.uk/sesro



Teddington Direct River Abstraction (TDRA) Project

Water abstraction

Abstraction is the process of drawing water from a river, or groundwater, for drinking water and other uses. It's crucial for maintaining water supplies but must be carefully managed to avoid negative environmental impacts. Our sustainable approach considers flow, ecology and water quality, and will typically only be used during periods of prolonged dry weather.

In October 2024, we began our new tertiary treatment water quality trial for the TDRA project. For this project we would abstract water from the River Thames, upstream of Teddington Weir. A pipeline would move this to storage reservoirs in the Lee Valley to be treated to become drinking water. A new water recycling facility at Mogden STW would then transfer highly treated wastewater back to the River Thames to replenish what was taken.

How clean would the water be?

Typically, wastewater undergoes primary and secondary treatment to ensure it is safe to be released to watercourses. We propose to introduce additional "tertiary" treatment which enhances the removal of suspended particles and impurities such as dissolved organic substances.

DID YOU KNOW?

It's estimated that a severe drought could cost London's economy alone as much as £500 million a day.



The project could provide up to...

75

million litres of water a day (75MI/d)

...that's equivalent to



30 Olympic-sized swimming pools

...or enough water for approx 500,000 people

PROJECT TIMELINE

October 2023

Non statutory public consultation on site options

Autumn 2024

EIA scoping submission to the Planning Inspectorate

Spring / Summer 2025

Statutory public consultation

Summer 2026

RAPID Gate 4 submission

Autumn / Winter 2027

Estimated date for development consent

Project operational

2024

2025

2026

2027

2029

2033

Design refinement

Design refinement

December 2024

RAPID Gate 3 submission

Summer 2026

Submission of application for development consent to the Secretary of State

Start of construction

STOPPING POLLUTION IS VERY IMPORTANT TO US

With over **108,000 KMs**
(that's nearly 2.5 times round the world) of sewers,
your help is invaluable in helping us spot
when issues occur.

If you spot a potential pollution, contacting us promptly enables us to respond and mitigate any environmental impact as soon as possible

And to support our learning from incidents, we will also capture details of what happened, supported by water analysis and photographic evidence, which we must share with the Environment Agency.

We've made contacting us easier with our new Report a Pollution Online page. Available online 24/7, 7 days a week. Use this QR code to access it:

Or alternatively calling us on 0800 316 9800 to speak to our Pollution Desk Hotline.



It's everyone's water