



Little Stour & Nailbourne River Group

Minutes of The Annual Meeting

**Held in
The Lounge, at Littlebourne Village Hall
9.30am Saturday 7th December 2024**

1. Welcome & Introductions

Martin Twyman, the Chairman welcomed everyone and thanked them for their attendance which was particularly high today. He then requested each to introduce themselves and the organisation that they were representing.

2. Present (27):

Brian Hurlow (*Treasurer - LS&N River Group*), **Mick Giles** (*Littlebourne PC*), **Andy Barnett** (*Stourmouth PC*), **Diane Tatt** (*Barham PC*), **Ken Shaw** (*Riparian owner, Littlebourne*), **Michaela James** (*Catchment Advisor Environmental, South East Water*), **Andrew Walker** (*Kentish Stour River Countryside Project*), **Simon Pooley** (*Barham PC*), **Hilary Scott** (*Ickham & Well PC*), **Chris Riddell** (*Stour Downstream Interests Group*), **Paul Blackwell** (*Southern Water*), **Martin Allen** (*Elgars – Chartered Surveyors*), **Hugh Ellingham** (*Ickham & Well PC*), **Tom Reid** (*Technical Specialist, Fisheries Biodiversity, Environment Agency*), **David Taplin** (*Riparian owner, Patricbourne*), **Max Kimber** (*Fordwich Town Council*), **County Cllr Mike Sole** (*Kent County Councillor for Canterbury South & Canterbury City Councillor for Nailbourne*), **Cllr Lee Castle** (*Canterbury City Councillor for Little Stour & Adisham Ward*), **Roger Martin** (*Bishopsbourne Flood Warden*), **David Goff** (*National Flood Forum and Chair Kent Flood Action Group Forum*), **Tim Bostock** (*Citizen Scientist, River Water Quality Assessment, Littlebourne*), **Ian Nunn** (*FCRM Operations Manager, Environment Agency Kent, South London & E Sussex*), **Joe Williamson** (*River Stour Internal Drainage Board*), **Alan Atkinson** (*Bridge PC & vice chair LS&N River Group*), **Graham Duplock** (*Bekesbourne Flood Warden*), **Martin Twyman** (*Chair - LS&N River Group & Farmer*), **Geordie Hayward** (*Secretary - LS&N River Group*).

3. Apologies for Absence

Hazel Walters (*Kent CC, Highways Manager Canterbury Area*), **Louise Smith** (*Flood & Water Manager, Kent CC*), **Catherine Hughes** (*Lyminge PC*), **Sarah & Chris James** (*Littlebourne Mill*), **Rob Green** (*Fordwich PC*), **Jonathan Worrall** (*Elham PC*).

4. Minutes of last Meeting held on 9th March 2024

Passed as a correct record.

5. **Matters Arising not covered elsewhere on The Agenda**

None

6. **Treasurer's Report**

Brian Hurlow reported that there was £496.13p in the bank and virtually all website costs were paid up for 2025.

The last donation from the Parishes was in 2020. We will be OK in 2025 and probably the Parishes within the catchment area of LS&NRG won't be needed to be asked for any funds until 2026.

7. **Review (led by the Chair) of our situation since the last Annual Meeting in March 2024**

a) **The last 12 months of weather conditions in our area**

As a farmer a close watch is kept on the local streams and rivers. No sign that there is any re-charging of the Bournes except for one - The Bourne between Bishopsbourne and Bridge.

b) **Recent Rainfall –**

Sept-Oct 2024 – 100mm

Nov 2024 – 60mm

Dec 2024 – very little so far (as at 7/12/24)

Thus there is no alert on flooding at the moment.

c) **Current Nailbourne flow**

No current flow through Ealham.
but Bourne Park is flowing.

d) **The Little Stour**

The by pass channel was closed in April 2024.

Drill Lane was closed for a while because of algae in the ford but is now opened having been cleaned (and since 7/12/24 the ford resurfaced).

From Littlebourne onwards the river is low and not in the best looking condition. It was reported that there seems to be a lot of silt in places especially from the A257. **Tom Reid from the EA** said that he would be happy to have a look but needs a report lodged before he can action - *(Any interested parties please send to tom.reid@environment-agency.gov.uk)*

With the low flows at the moment there was concern at run off of soil into the water courses. **Ken Shaw** a Riparian owner in Littlebourne wished to share this effective and very low cost method of removing aquatic growth – throw a litre of wild bird seed into the river, ducks then eat it and pull all the aquatic growth out! **Ian Nunn** of the EA said he had not heard that one before. The meeting chuckled and the secretary interpreted this as implying that the cash strapped EA might be interested in rolling that out widely!

There was a discussion regarding the water flow through the mills and the amount of flow is important in cleansing the river. Silt is building up; too slow a flow and there is no

‘cleaning’, too fast a flow and flooding can result. This can also impact upon fish mortality. The Chairman requested that when the by-pass channel is opened and closed could the local community be informed. It was agreed by **Ian (EA)** that an email would be sent to the group’s email address when this occurred. It was felt that not enough clearing of the dykes and waterways was being done. **Ian** said EA budgets have not been raised for 10-15 years. Regarding Riparian Owners – There is a booklet that might be of interest regarding *Owning a Watercourse*. (Further to the meeting the Secretary has suggested that this could be the booklet – see this link <https://www.idbs.org.uk/2024/07/environment-agency-your-watercourse-rights-and-roles-new-guide-for-main-river-riparian-landowners/> .

Diane Tatt (Barham) requested information on riparian owners’ rights and suggested that this should be circulated round this group and for the parish councils. **Ian** thought that this was a very good idea. **Tom Reid (EA)** said he would send a link for the minutes. **David Taplin (Patricxbourne)** asked for action and reporting in the autumn concerning blocked watercourses (in this case The Nailbourne) to the EA so that work can be done early in ‘the season’. **Ian** suggested a day’s workshop. This was thought a good idea. In response to a question from **Hilary Scott (Ickham)**, **Joe Williamson (IDB)** said they carried out work on behalf of the EA. FYI The IDB have been active clearing in late November/early December in and around the watercourses where the Wingham River joins with the Little Stour and the dykes in that vicinity.

e) The Great Stour

Chris Riddell (Great Stour) reported that because of the financial constraints the river below Fordwich was not in good shape. He then gave the following report:

“ In view of the budgetary and environmental constraints facing the Environment Agency, a series of meetings are being held between a small group (driven by The Grove Ferry Boat Club) representing commercial and leisure interests on the river and various managers from the EA, including Ian Nunn, to explore ways in which the Navigation in the tidal Stour can be protected and maintained through a properly funded independent organisation. Our first meeting was also attended by Sir Roger Gale MP, whose constituency abuts the north bank of the river and who is taking a keen interest in the project. Our next meeting is in January 2025 and I will keep this committee updated on our progress. We hope that if we are able to achieve progress in terms of river maintenance, within the current legislation, it will be to the benefit of all”.

Martin Allen emphasised the silt problems of the river.

Mike Sole reported on The Grove Ferry Bridge. It is failing and will be replaced sometime in 2026. The bridge and thus the road will be closed, likely for several months which will cause some traffic issues.

f) Future EA abstractions, possible restrictions and their implications

The Chairman reported on a meeting in March 2024 through the NFU about abstraction licences. **Michaela James** stated that SE Water was involved with this and especially the allocation of water. She mentioned water abstraction groups and their potential role. In response to a question **Michaela** said that the Broad Oak reservoir is still going ahead. Smart Meters for water usage was also mentioned and there are trials beginning to start.

g) The still awaited 2016 EA modelling survey

Ian explained that it is waiting in a queue which itself is waiting for funding! **Alan Atkinson** (*Bridge*) asked about this circular progress. Ian explained that as there hasn't been full funding allocated, the modelling survey had not been carried out. The Little Stour is not the highest of priorities as we do not live in an area of high population. So whilst the modelling survey has not been stopped we are just waiting for funding allocation. This was leading to a certain amount of frustration as it had been originally promised in 2016 and it is now 2024.....

h) Progress of any Meetings with EA

No meeting yet with **Sally Harvey** (*Area Director for Kent, South London and East Sussex Environment Agency*) despite being asked.

8. Environment Agency update – Ian Nunn

(Many points relevant to this section had been covered earlier)

Ian talked about the levels on Little Bucket which is between Sterling Minnis and Waltham. **See Appendix One.** Ian took us through the graphs. Interesting points to note but things are about average at the moment. He emphasised the importance of flow - it is not all about the ground water levels.

The ground is wet but not as bad as early in the year. Rainfall is important. Rain gauges are quite sparse and there has been considerable difference in rainfall totals between short geographical distances. It was concluded that there have been more heavy showers rather than widespread bands of rain.

IDB are currently clearing with their winter work.

Tankering starts at level 75 and at the moment Little Bucket is 65.

9. Southern Water Report on the water supply & sewage system in our Area

Paul Blacklock gave his report. He is responsible mainly for sewage. His area of responsibility is split between Lower Nailbourne and Upper Nailbourne. No plans for over pumping but maybe tankering in the near future (ie this winter)

Flows in sewers reflect the figures from Ian (*again see Appendix 1*). Tankering stopped in June which is quite late. Sealing of sewers is progressing in Littlebourne, Barham and some in Bridge. More than 12 kms has been sealed since 2013. Scanning has been completed in Ealham. Checks on pumping stations being made and jetting is in progress. Tankering was happening at same time as last year. Not happening yet though parts of Ealham are being closely monitored at the moment.

In response to questions there were worries about the capacity of the system to cope with increased house development. Paul acknowledged that the impact of the Gladman development of 300-400 units (if approved) would be problematic. It would impede sewage conveyance within the network, thus increasing the need for tankering. There may also be an

enhanced risk of overpumping. **Tim Bostock** pointed out that although SW is legally obliged to fit capacity to demand, their recent report which stated that **only 20%** of the necessary remedial works in Upper and Lower Nailbourne (wrt groundwater infiltration) would be funded before 2030 (ie within AMP8). FYI, the doc TB referenced for this information is: *SRN50 Resilience - Infiltration Enhancement Business Case* Oct 2023). Subsequent to the meeting Tim has written to Canterbury City Council planning department specifically about this issue. **(See Appendix Two).**

Mike Sole asked about the future of tankering. Would it still continue for ever if the infrastructure was not improved. There are 90-100 kms in Lower Nailbourne of pipes of which 12 kms have been relined. The rhetorical implication was that it would....!

10. South East Water Report on the water supply system in our Area

Michaela James reported that there is a SE Water chalk stream project and this is on the River Stour. There are issues of water availability and quality. Working with the NFU Waters Trust. There are rising nitrates trends at Kingston. EA looking at chalk stream projects in the Nailbourne area.

See Appendix Three for information regarding the temporary Stream Chalk Monitoring Programme.

There will be some potential for citizen science support with the project and it is likely to have app to allow photo and flow data to be included.

Further details will become available from the EA in due course. The exact monitoring points are not set in stone yet, but are very likely to be in North Elham, between Bridge and Patixbourne and Old Palace Road (Bekesbourne).

In addition see **Appendix Four** by way of information regarding SE Water's responsibility in our (LSNR Group's) catchment area.

<https://theriverstrust.org/our-work/our-projects/castco-catchment-systems-thinking-cooperative>

11. Reports from Organisations

a) Canterbury City Council

Rory said he had checked local drains and sand bag stores. Outfield pipes. He had checked and all ready.

Lee Castle had no reports that had not already been mentioned except there is planning on a rebuild of Weir cottage.

b) Kent County Council

Mike Sole reported on Out Elmsted lane closure and when there are floods at the bottom of the valley it will always be closed. There have been discussions on the improvement of the junction but this will not happen partly to do with the regulations associated with junction improvements.

On city council where roads are closed because of flooding in Barham and Out Elmsted lane there will be purple bags supplied as an alternative.

c) Highways Reports,

None

d) National Flood Forum & Kent Action Flood Forum

David Goff Chairman of upper Medway IDB and chairman of National Flood Forum. Also Kent Action Flood Group Forum with flood groups working together. He is also linked into Parliamentary groups. He said that things are getting worse. The new flood maps are coming out in March under NAFRA. Ian praised NAFRA groups.

It was decided to co-ordinate with Richard Geoff's National Flood Forum.

e) Waterlife Recovery Trust

Tom Reid from said that the Waterlife Recovery Trust is up and running. More information concerning the WRT can be found here <https://www.waterliferecoverytrust.org.uk/>

12. Reports from Around The Parishes

Stourmouth - issues with bridges

Barham - Diane Tatt said bits last year were being dumped river material on roads now working. Thanked Mike Sole re Out Elmsted Lane. National Highways good. We

Fordwich - Max Kimber Reported on concerns on bio diversity and nutrients

Ickham - Hilary Scott thanked the EA for work having been done in Ickham and Well.

There were a couple of issues

Bridge - Alan Atkinson - all had been reported on

Bishopsbourne - Roger Martin - the swamping of our foul sewers with ground water, and months of pumping out, is a much greater problem than the threat of flooding which, since the creation of a second culvert below Frog Lane after the disastrous 2000/01 flood, is remote

13. Any Other Business

a) **Tim Bostock** said that there were considerable increases of phosphates and nitrates in the Wingham River.. Paul of SW said that there reductions in phosphates from Dambridge in Wingham.

b) **Andrew Walker** of Kentish Stour River Countryside Project said that there were lots of groups collecting data on Little Stour

14. Date/Time of Year for Next Meeting

Sometime in November 2025

The meeting closed at 12.35pm.

APPENDICES

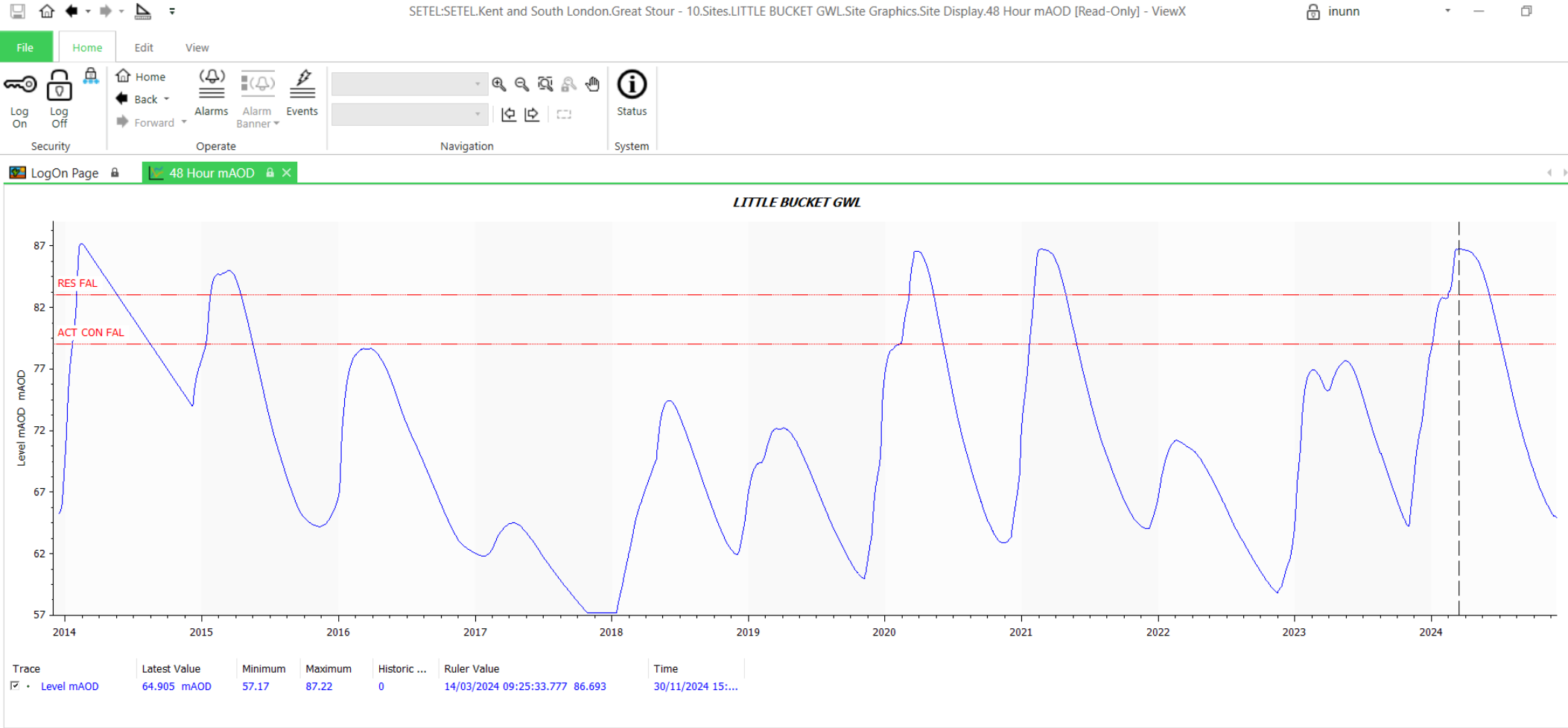
1 – Little Stour & Nailbourne River Charts 2014-24

2 – Letter to Canterbury CC re Gladman Development & Southern Water

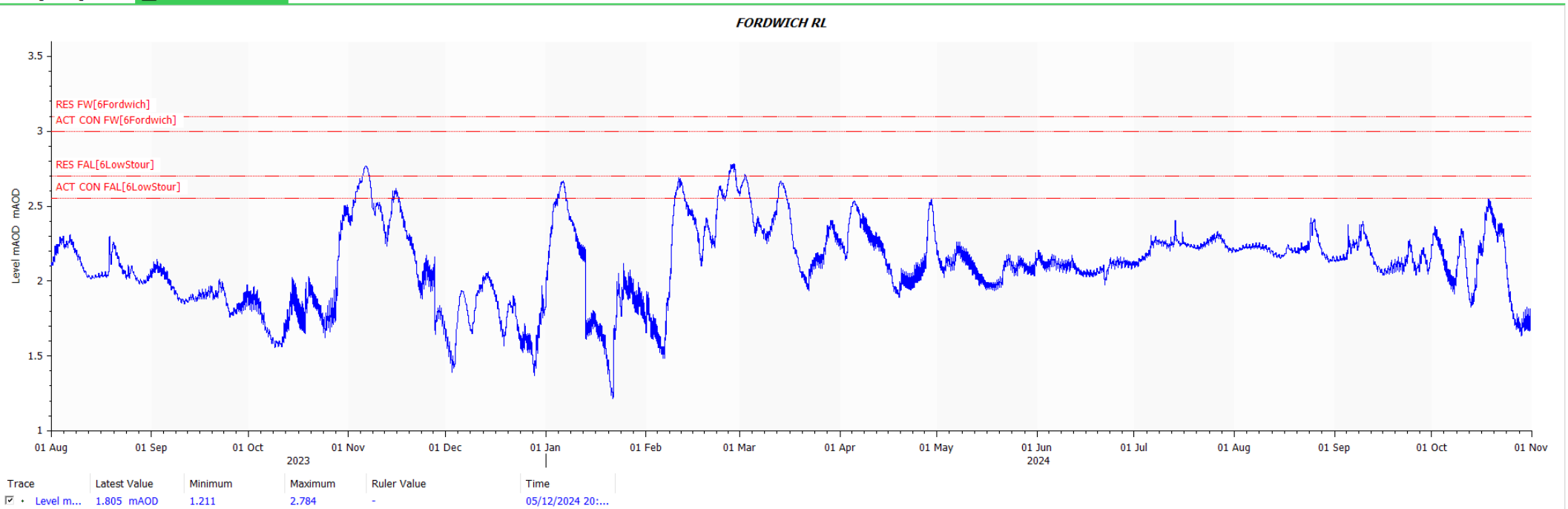
3 – Temporary Chalk Stream Programme Network across England

4 – SE Water's Area of Responsibility in relation to the LSNR Group's catchment area.

APPENDIX ONE



Fordwich River Level Aug 23 to Dec 24



Littelbourne GS Aug 23 to Dec 24



Elham River Level Dec23 to Dec 24

SETEL:SETEL.Kent and South London.Little Stour - 12.Sites.Elham RL.Site Graphics.Site Display.48 Hour mAOD [Read-Only] - ViewX

FileHomeEditView

Log OnLog Off

HomeBackForward

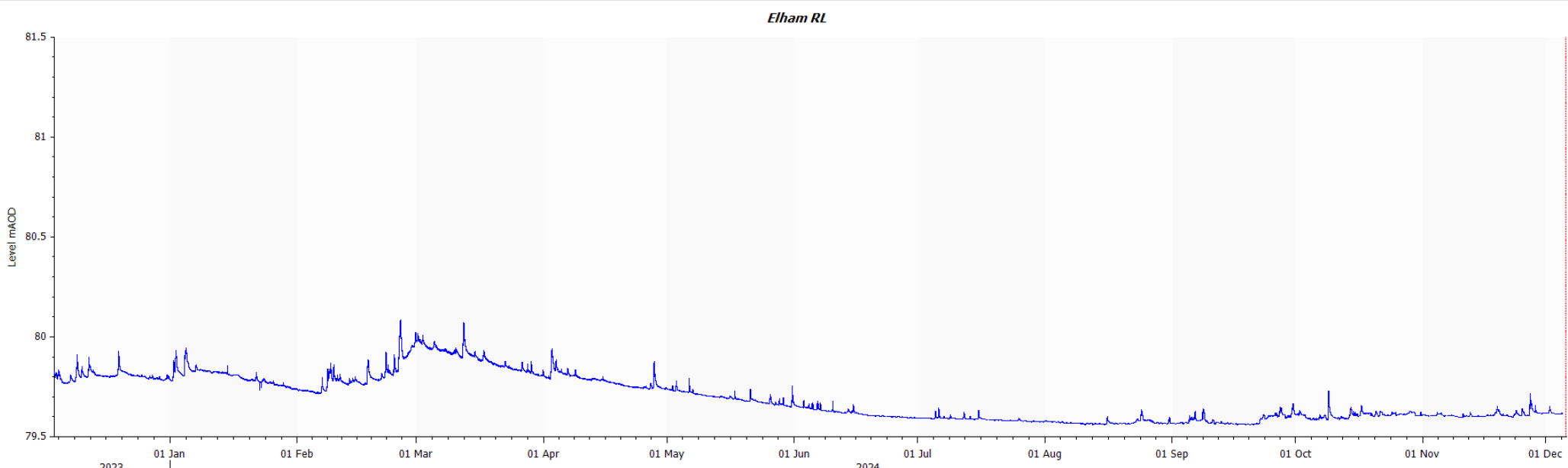
AlarmsAlarm BannerEvents

Navigation

StatusSystem

LogOn Page48 Hour mAOD48 Hour mAOD

Elham RL



Trace

Latest V...MinimumMaxi...Ruler ValueTime

☒ Level m...79.617 ... 79.55880.083 -05/12/2024 04:...

Severity	Time	Source	Message	Category	Area Of Interest	Suppressed Alarm Co...	Alarm Description
297 321 F	05/12/2024 20:17:57...	...Outstation.Outstation	Communications stat...	Outstation Comms	World	0	DENGE TBR
	05/12/2024 20:17:52...	...Outstation.Outstation	Scheduled connectio...	Scheduled Dial In	World	0	Wolverton GWL Outst...
	05/12/2024 20:17:32...	...STATION Outstation	Communications stat...	Outstation Comms	World	0	EBONY PS
	05/12/2024 20:00:00...	...PS.Level 1.mAOD.AI	State changed from N...	Point State	SETEL KSL.SE Kent....	0	JESSON PUMPING...

Display Trend Menu

SETEL.Kent and South London.Rother Lower - 16.Sites.TILLINGHAM GA... 05/12/2024 20:47:07 GMT

12°C Rain

Search

9+

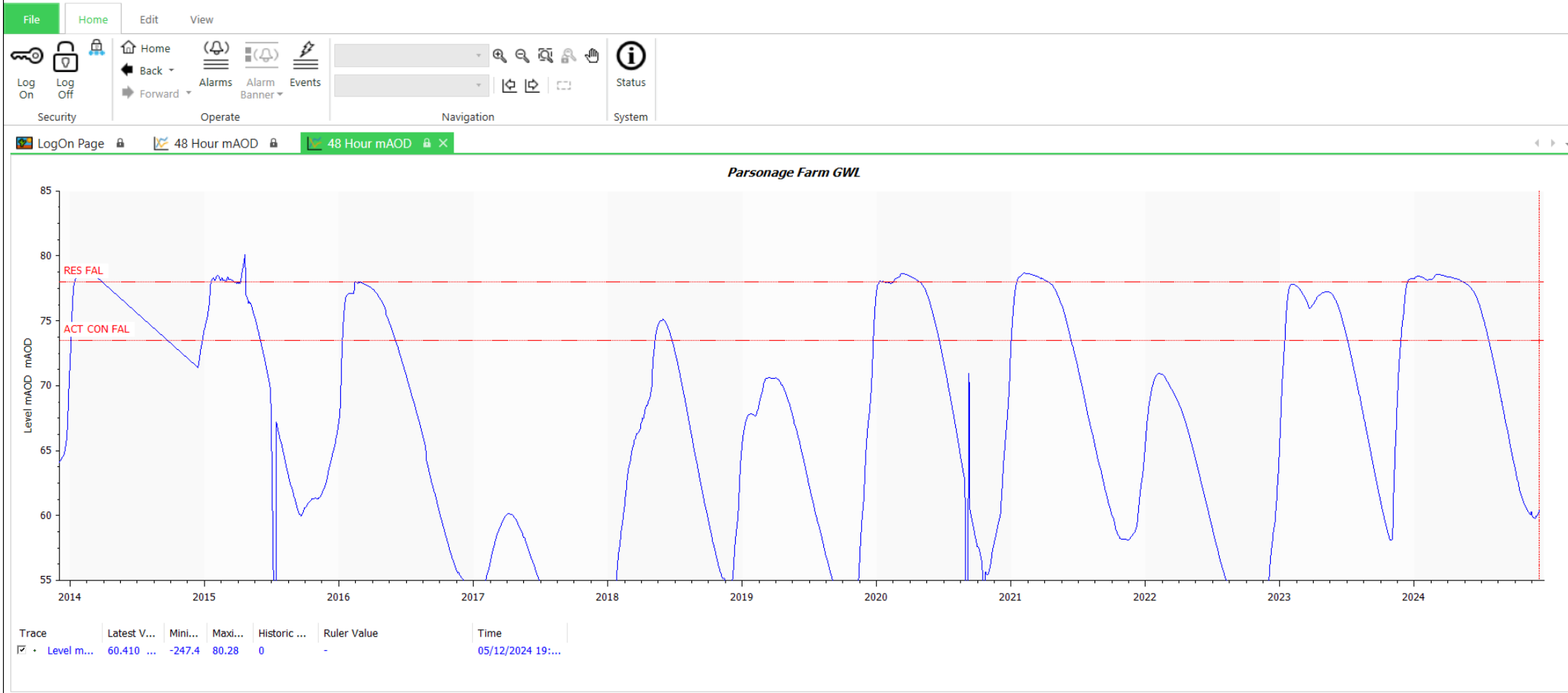
20:47

05/12/2024

Parsonage Farm Jan 14 to Dec 24

SETEL:SETEL.Kent and South London.Little Stour - 12.Sites.Parsonage Farm GWL.Site Graphics.Site Display.48 Hour mAO [Read-Only] - ViewX

inunn



APPENDIX TWO

To Canterbury City Planning

20/12/24

As an input from our Littlebourne Action Group, we felt it would be useful to send you some additional information that has just come to light and that is pertinent both to this application and to Southern Water's response to CCC Planning dated 9/12/2024 ref DSA000023004.

The information follows from the Annual Meeting of The Little Stour and Nailbourne River Group held here in Littlebourne on 7th December. This was a very well attended meeting with some 30-40 participants. These included representatives from the water authorities (incl Southern Water, SE Water and Affinity), CCC (Mike Sole and Lee Castle), most local parish councils from Lyminge through to Stourmouth including all our villages, Environment Agency, Internal Drainage Board, and members of the public including: farmers, citizen science groups (myself and others linked to KSCP), as well as committee members. Topics were wide-ranging and minutes are currently being prepared.

In the meantime we'd like to draw your attention to the considerable discussion at the meeting related to the proposed Gladman developments in Littlebourne.

At the Meeting, Southern Water's representative, an expert on wastewater, confirmed that the addition of 300–400 houses would significantly strain the sewerage network's capacity to convey foul water to the treatment works, primarily due to existing groundwater infiltration issues. He said this increased pressure would heighten the risk of surface flooding and lead to greater reliance on tankers to manage excess wastewater. Participants at the meeting expressed alarm at this, particularly regarding tankers and the potential for over-pumping sewage into vulnerable chalk streams. While SW is legally obliged to match capacity to demand, it was pointed out that their recent report (*SRN50 Resilience - Infiltration Enhancement Business Case*, October 2023) highlights the long-term nature of remedial works. The report notes that only 20% of the necessary groundwater-related upgrades in Upper and Lower Nailbourne will be funded before 2030 (i.e. within the current AMP8 period). SW acknowledges that the remaining 80% is deferred to an unspecified future AMP period.

It is therefore evident that if these houses are built, the community will face increased tanker activity, escalating the risk of pollution from surface flooding / over-pumping, and compounding the environmental and infrastructural challenges already present in this and nearby villages.

Referring to SW's written response (noted above) we believe this is useful in that it aligns with their concerns expressed at the meeting reconfirming: (a) the existing lack of infrastructural capacity, (b) that any new housing will impact the network and could lead to sewer flooding, and (c) that commitment to remedial works are uncertain. In fact the latter is understandably caveated with a range of constraints including time-scales and technical complexity in defining 'reinforcement' needs.

Further, we have significant concerns about SW's stated proposal to collaborate with the developer “*to review network reinforcement plans to meet the developer’s occupancy needs.*” While this may align with the water company’s obligations, it is also misleading. This approach reduces critical discussions on impacts and outcomes to a bilateral exchange, excluding meaningful engagement with stakeholders.

As consumers of water and water services—the primary stakeholders—we face a potential 53% increase in bills to “*accelerate the delivery of cleaner rivers and seas and secure long-term drinking water supplies*” (source: [Ofwat](#) 19 Dec 24). However, any private discussions between SW and the Developer are unlikely to transparently address these long-term environmental concerns.

We strongly believe that deferring such significant issues to an uncertain future under an "All Matters Reserved except Access" procedure is highly inappropriate, given the complexity and importance of the matters raised to date.

As you know, over the past 2–3 years, a wide range of stakeholders has raised substantial concerns about this and the previous similar application by Gladman (see in particular, recent representation from Henry Fitch) and in light of this, we strongly urge CCC Planning to determine to reject the application without further delay.

Tim Bostock
Citizen Scientist, Little Stour
Acting for Littlebourne PC Action Group

APPENDIX THREE

Temporary Chalk Stream Programme Network across England

Who are we?

We are from the Environment Agency. Part of our role to protect and improve the environment is to understand how clean and healthy our water environment is. To do this, we collect and assess samples of water, macro-invertebrates (e.g. insects, snails, worms), fish and plants from rivers and streams.

Why are we here?

We are setting up a new network of monitoring sites, called the Temporary Chalk Stream Network. This network will aim to give us an understanding of the current condition of temporary chalk streams (i.e. chalk streams that periodically dry up) across England and how water resources activity, such as abstraction, is influencing the wetting and drying and, in turn, the ecological communities of temporary chalk streams.

We are trying to identify sections of chalk streams that wet and dry in response to changing groundwater levels. For groundwater-fed rivers, such as chalk streams, very low groundwater levels can cause drying of the river channel; it can happen at the top or in the middle of a river, depending on the structure of the geology deep in the ground that underlays a river channel. Some chalk streams dry in late summer and early autumn every year – these are called winterbournes; whereas other chalk streams dry up less frequently, and the length of flowing river may change from year to year. Environmental pressures such as land use and water abstraction can alter these drying patterns. We are therefore designing a monitoring programme that will aim to collect data to help us understand how the ecological communities of chalk streams respond to stream drying and other environmental pressures.

For this new network, we have identified monitoring sites using local knowledge alongside groundwater modelling data, where available. The monitoring sites are spread across England, following the chalk geology. The network will include chalk streams with varying degrees of physical degradation (from natural to very impacted), in order to assess the impacts of drying across a gradient of environmental pressures.



What exactly are we doing while we are here?

Initially, our staff will be visiting these sites for the first time and need to see how feasible it would be to access and sample the watercourse.

Examples of questions our staff are asking themselves include: “Is this site physically accessible?” and “Is this site suitable for all types of data collection – can we monitor water chemistry, invertebrates, plants and habitat?”

What will be recorded at the regular visits

If a site is suitable for sampling, monthly flow observations will be recorded at each site. This will help to capture patterns of wetting and drying at each site.

Our staff will also record basic water quality parameters (such as dissolved oxygen and temperature) using a hand-held probe. This will help us understand the water quality at the site each month.

A photograph also will be taken to document any change in the channel over time.

Does this mean we will need to come back?

If a site is suitable for sampling, then it will be incorporated into the 50-site network across England.

Our ecologists will visit sites on a monthly basis to record flow observations, and once in spring to collect invertebrate samples and once in the summer to conduct plant and habitat surveys.

Where can I get more information?

Information about chalk streams:

- [Chalk Streams | Engage Environment Agency \(engagementhq.com\)](https://www.engagementhq.com/chalk-streams)

Natural England Open Data – Map of English Chalk Streams:

- <https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com>

For more detailed information on the drying up chalk streams you can contact a member of the Pan Area Chalk Team by emailing your questions to patrycja.meadows@environment-agency.gov.uk or rosalind.brown@environment-agency.gov.uk.



Further questions:

How healthy is my local river?

Visit our Catchment Data Explorer at: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/catchment-planning>

The Catchment Data Explorer helps you explore and download information about the water environment. You can find catchments and water bodies of interest using a map or searching by name. You can also view summary information about catchments, and follow links to other useful sites.

It supports and builds upon the data in the River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs). For more information search “River Basin Management Plans” on our .gov.uk website.

What if I see water pollution or problems with my local river?

We rely on members of the public to report any environmental problems or incidents to water or land that you may spot while out and about. We will either attend the incident or record the details and use it to build an evidence base of persistent problems.

To report any environmental incidents (e.g. grey water, dead fish, nasty smelling water, oil or other chemicals, unusual changes in river flows, blocked main rivers) please call our incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60 (24-hour service, freephone) or visit: www.gov.uk/report-an-environmental-incident.

APPENDIX FOUR

SE Water's Area of responsibility in relation to the LSNR Group's catchment area.

As can be seen from the maps below, South East Water only cover a small part of the LSNR catchment which is outlined in red. South East Water covers the blue area for supply only, Southern Water supply water to the pink area and Affinity the yellow. Southern are the waste provider for the whole area where it is serviced by a mains sewerage system.

Apologies the maps are quite basic, but I have also included the WRSE link below which allows you to do a postcode search.

<https://www.wrse.org.uk/activity-in-your-area>

Michaela James

Catchment Advisor

Environmental

SE Water

