

From: AreaDirectorThames

Sent: Thursday, March 28, 2024 5:43 PM

Subject: River Windrush Flood Alleviation Works, Witney- THMCU21369_CT24796

Dear Mr Clapton,

Thank you for your letter of 21 February 2024, addressed to Caroline Douglass, regarding the River Windrush. Caroline has read your letter and asked me to respond on her behalf. Caroline will receive a copy of this response and I apologise for not being able to respond sooner.

I am grateful to you for bringing this important matter to my attention and I understand the concerns of many communities who are now affected by more frequent flooding.

We are not responsible for main river watercourse maintenance in England. We do, however, use our permissive powers and Defra grant on aid to undertake certain activities on behalf of riparian landowners, who remain legally responsible for all maintenance along the watercourse they own. Riparian landowners are expected to maintain their watercourse in an appropriate, responsible manner that does not increase the flood risk of others. This includes, but is not limited to, the control of in-channel vegetation and sediment accumulations, the repair of banks and the removal of any blockages. Riparian landowners are also expected to operate and maintain structures such as culverts, bridges, weirs and sluices in a similarly responsible manner. Further information relating to riparian responsibilities can be found [here](#).

We invest the funding received from Defra in the highest flood risk areas for the benefit of the wider community. Our work along the River Windrush normally consists of in-channel weed cutting, the cutting back of marginal vegetation and the removal of blockages such as fallen trees. This is subject to change depending on in-year priorities and the level of funding we receive. My operational staff are currently preparing our programme for 2024-2025 and expect the River Windrush to be visited in August 2024. Any work we undertake does not reduce or remove the riparian landowner's responsibilities.

We are aware of silt accumulating near the bridge that you have identified, but do not have any current plans to remove it due to the limitations in our available resource. The riparian landowner or bridge owner could undertake this work as long as they obtained an environmental permit from our regulatory team. This team would be happy to advise on how to progress an application and more information on this can be found [here](#).

My local flood risk management team wrote to riparian landowners along the River Windrush in August 2023 to remind them of their responsibilities regarding watercourse maintenance. This included the offer of self-help advice, which we are still happy to provide if that would be helpful.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at areadirectorthames@environment-agency.gov.uk if you have any further queries.

Yours sincerely,

Colin Chiverton
Acting on behalf of Anna Burns
Area Director Thames
Environment Agency