Frequently Asked Questions

What is a chalk stream?

Chalk streams are globally rare habitats; they are rivers that rise from springs in landscapes with chalk bedrock which naturally filters the water; it is often described as 'gin clear'. It is full of dissolved minerals that support many species of plants and animals – from shrimp, dragonflies, and snails to water voles, kingfishers, and otters.

Do you abstract directly from the river?

No, we abstract water from the chalk aquifer (ground water).

Can you reduce your local abstractions to help the river?

Over the last 25 years, we have reduced our abstraction in this catchment - most recently in 2018. But there are more reductions are planned by 2024 to support increased flows and ecological health.

What can I do to help my local chalk stream?

Everyone can play their part by reducing their water use; which will leave more water in the environment. Check out the links below to explore our water saving initiatives:

Save Our Streams

Take the Water Footprint Quiz

Water Saving Tips

When will the works take place?

Tree works took place in February, and river restoration work is planned for Summer 2023. Although we planned for works to take place sooner, permitting delays have pushed our timeline back.

Following the works, the site may look muddy and disturbed, but the site will become established over the summer. The link below shows an indicative project timeline, designs for Barn Meadow and Pondwicks Meadow and a stakeholder presentation.

Affinity Water River Misbourne Restoration Project: Barn Meadow

How will you control silt/debris during the works?

Mitigation will be in place to stop the transportation of silt downstream.

How do you know the river has improved?

Affinity Water Catchment Management team collects data from rivers in our supply area all year round and our projects are included in this monitoring. It will take some time for aquatic animals and plants to establish and for the benefits to be reflected in our environmental monitoring.

However, once established, this project is expected to support the River Misbourne in meeting the Water Framework Directive (WFD) objective of 'Good Ecological Status'.