EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
For the community, by the community. A not-for-profit service

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River “Bogsmill” blights Borough

The **River Hogsmill and the Green Lanes Stream** are becoming no go areas for dogs and humans. Residents are calling for private utility company **Thames Water** to act on sewage polluted water courses in the heart of the Borough of Epsom and Ewell. Local **activist Mark Todd** states: “Thames Water should not be using the Green Lanes Stream and the Hogsmill River in Epsom & Ewell and Kingston Boroughs, as open sewers. The Hogsmill is one of only 200 chalk streams in the world and used to be teeming with wildlife, yet it is now so polluted barely any fish live in it.”

“The rivers are delicate streams and cannot accommodate sewage overflows. The pollution affects Epsom, Ewell, Tolworth, Surbiton and Kingston. It then enters the Thames affecting London and the Thames Estuary. The sewage is killing the rivers: destroying wildlife, poisoning animals, and makes it unsafe for kids or animals to play in them. Some local residents who live by the river say it now stinks. In 2021, the South East Rivers Trust calculated that a total of 159 hours of sewage went into the rivers across 47 incidents. That is one incident per week. The causes of the discharges are faulty sensors by Green Lanes Stream; insufficiently large sewage tanks at Manor Rd, Ewell; and comms failures at the outdated Hogsmill A Waste-water Works in Kingston.”

Mark has established a petition to put more pressure on Thames Water to stop the issues at source by investing some of its profits in upgrading the sewage infrastructure in the area. See Petition HERE

In response to **Epsom and Ewell Times**, a **Thames Water spokesperson** said: “Our aim will always be to try and do the right thing for our rivers and for the communities who love and value them. We regard all discharges of untreated sewage as unacceptable and will work with the government, Ofwat and the Environment Agency to accelerate work to stop them being necessary and are determined to be transparent. We recently launched our river health commitments which includes a 50% reduction in the total annual duration of spills across London and the Thames Valley by 2030, and within that an 80% reduction in sensitive catchments.

“In addition, the Thames Tideway Tunnel, which is the third phase of a comprehensive environmental improvement programme of the tidal Thames for our customers and river users, is due for completion in 2024. The tunnel is a total investment of more than £4 billion that will deliver a huge reduction in the discharges to the tidal River Thames in London, and further improve overall health of the river.

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“We have a long way to go – and we certainly can’t do it on our own – but the ambition is clear.”

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