

Press Release

24 May 2021

New 'Sparkling Streams' project provides opportunities for local people to improve their rivers

Work on an exciting new partnership project on the Rivers Dun, Shalbourne and Kennet begins this month, with opportunities for people to get involved.

Residents in Shalbourne, Hungerford and surrounding areas are encouraged to take part in improving their local rivers and learning more about nature. Activities will include improving wildlife habitats on the River Dun, Shalbourne and Kennet, woodland and hedgerow planting, water quality testing and guided wildlife walks.

ARK's Sparkling Streams project officer James Laurence King said 'we are fixing problems on the river as well as problems on the land that affect the river, so we are working with the whole community including residents, farmers and schools. That means there are plenty of tasks to help with over the coming months, from planting trees to fixing footpaths and looking for water voles.'

'The next opportunity to help is the construction of a Rain Garden at Shalbourne CE Primary School, Tuesday 1st – Sat 5th June 2021. Please come along and volunteer!'

Rain gardens reduce and slow down the flow of storm water into the drainage system. This helps to prevent untreated waste overflowing into our rivers. Shalbourne's rain garden has been designed by Wendy Allen, and whether you are a keen gardener or just want to spend some time outdoors, you'll have the chance to learn about rain gardens, work alongside an RHS Gold Medal winning garden designer and a skilled conservation officer to create a beautiful new green space at Shalbourne CE Primary School. Tools and equipment are provided, you just need to book in advance.

The Sparkling Streams project is a partnership between Action for the River Kennet, the Town and Manor of Hungerford and the Southern Streams Farmer Group, co-ordinated by North Wessex Downs AONB. This project is funded by the government's Green Recovery Challenge Fund. The fund is being delivered by The National Lottery Heritage Fund in partnership with Natural England and the Environment Agency.

Volunteering opportunities can be found at www.riverkennet.org or by emailing james@riverkennet.org. For more information contact James Laurence King 07918701545

Notes to editors

Image 1: Outline raingarden design.

Image 2. The River Shalbourne.

Image 3. Volunteers working on the river.



3.



Background

The Sparkling Streams Project aims to improve the condition of the rivers in the Kennet catchment with a distinct focus on the Shalbourne stream, the River Dun and the River Kennet. The project is adopting a 'catchment based approach' whereby work is done both in the rivers and in the wider landscape. This builds on years of previous catchment based work in the area from organisations such as ARK, the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Kennet Catchment Partnership. An important part of this approach is working with stakeholders across the catchment including farmers, riparian owners and local communities. The work itself will be focused on achieving 'nature based solutions'. This means utilising and enhancing natural processes for the benefit of the rivers. The project will run from now until the end of March 2022.

The project is formed on a partnership between the following organisations - each organisation plays a unique role in the delivery of the project and contributes specific knowledge and expertise.

Action for the River Kennet (ARK) is the rivers trust for the Kennet and the Pang catchments www.riverkennet.org

North Wessex Downs AONB www.northwessexdowns.org.uk

Southern Streams Farmer Group www.southernstreams.co.uk

Hungerford Town and Manor www.townandmanor.org



Action for the River Kennet



Green Recovery Challenge Fund



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

The
National Lottery
Heritage Fund



Environment
Agency

