

Restoring our rivers in Tonbridge

The Environment Agency and the Upper Medway IDB are carrying out work to improve the health and biodiversity of the Pen Stream, through Higham woodland walk.

Over time, modifications to the river have degraded its biodiversity, making it a less attractive place for people and wildlife to enjoy. This can cause problems such as silting up riverbeds and harming habitats for fish, plants and other aquatic wildlife.

We will be working to enhance the Pen Stream over the next 3 years. Our work will include:

- **Removing weirs** that have degraded or no longer serve a purpose (see right), helping water and gravel to flow freely, and fish to swim upstream
- Selective **tree thinning to increase light to the river** to help aquatic plants grow back
- **Helping the stream to 'wiggle'** where it is straight and silty (see example below). Securely fixing tree limbs and brushwood bundles to the riverbed will create pools and riffles, and help to flush away silt covering the riverbed
- Protecting riverbanks and plants from erosion by installing **dead hedges**
- Installing **dog access points** to allow pets to swim, whilst protecting the river from erosion

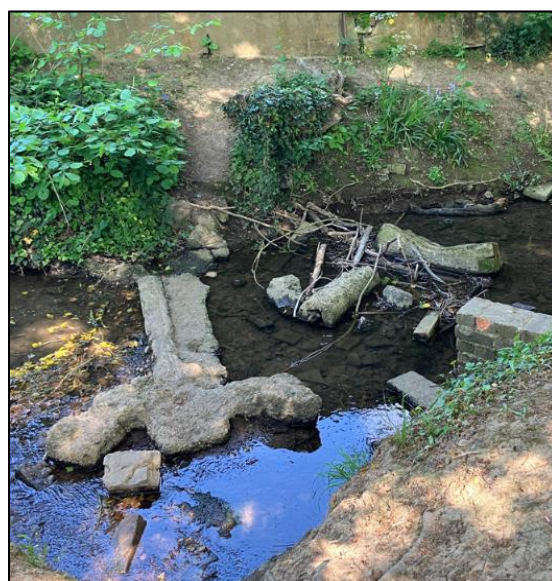


Image: The Environment Agency

This work won't increase flood risk and will improve the environment so that more wildlife can return to the Pen Stream and local people can enjoy the enhanced green space.

Before and after: River restoration on the River Wandle at Carshalton, south London.



Images: South East Rivers Trust.