

News release

20 July 2018

Hemel river and park set for refresh

One of the main parks in Hemel Hempstead will benefit from new footbridges, better facilities for walkers and improved conditions for wildlife, in proposals announced today.

The Environment Agency has joined forces with Dacorum Borough Council and Affinity Water to put forward plans to revive Gadebridge Park and the River Gade.

The improvements, which are being consulted upon, include altering the course of the Gade to help brown trout, plants and insects flourish through increased water flow. The chalk stream will support healthy ecology, which helps rivers contribute to wellbeing and recreation.

A number of other environmental benefits are also proposed:

- Reconnecting the Gade with the floodplain, to allow water that currently sits in pools on the ground following heavy rain to disperse more quickly.
- Improved grassland and new wetlands to allow habitats to prosper, and reducing the frequency of grass-cutting to help flowers bloom.
- Footbridges and footpaths to improve access around Gadebridge Park.

Residents and others can read more about the plans and make comments from today, until 30 September: <https://consult.environment-agency.gov.uk/hnl/gadebridge-park-river-restoration/> or they can e-mail comments to gadebridgepark@environment-agency.gov.uk or regeneration@dacorum.gov.uk.

Simon Hawkins, Environment Agency area director for Hertfordshire and north London, said:

“Our plans will breathe life back into the River Gade, providing restored chalk stream habitats and more wildlife, as well as offering a more enjoyable place for people.

“These ideas are yet another excellent example of the Environment Agency working in partnership with local authorities and water companies like Dacorum and Affinity, as part of Revitalising Rivers, a programme of chalk stream restoration across Hertfordshire.”

Councillor Janice Marshall, portfolio holder for environmental services at Dacorum Borough Council, said:

“This is a great opportunity to make the River Gade in Gadebridge Park more wildlife-friendly, as well as making it easier for local residents and visitors to get closer to the river and enjoy nature.”

Celina Rajanayagam, project manager for Affinity Water, said:

“As part of Revitalising Rivers, we are making steady progress on the River Gade. This project will build upon the river improvements we recently carried out a short distance upstream, which together, will improve rare chalk stream habitats. These projects are helping reconnect our valuable chalk streams with the local community for all to enjoy.”

If the project receives planning permission, it is hoped work can start on the improvements in the second half of 2019.

Ends.

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