

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL LETTER FOR PARISH & TOWN COUNCILS

LETTER SUPPLIED BY HCC FOR DITCHES AND WATERCOURSES (DEC 2023)

Not to be amended

Dear Owner/Occupier

Maintaining Ditches and Watercourses at your property

I would like to advise you that we have recently (observed/been contacted about), a ditch/watercourse within or bordering your property which is in need of maintenance.

A watercourse is any natural or artificial channel above or below ground through which water flows, either year-round or only periodically. Watercourses are classified as either an 'ordinary watercourse' or 'Main River'.

Ordinary watercourses are watercourses that are not part of a Main River, including streams, ditches, drains, pipes, culverts etc. through which water flow. Main Rivers are typically larger streams and rivers, but some are smaller watercourses of local significance. To identify whether your watercourse is a Main River, search online for 'EA Main River Map'.

Landowners with watercourses on or adjacent to their land are called 'riparian landowners' and have a responsibility to maintain these watercourses. Main Rivers are managed nationally by the Environment Agency, with Hampshire County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority managing ordinary watercourses. In both instances, these organisations have the power to enforce a landowner to maintain the watercourse on or adjacent to their land.

The Parish Council note that the ditch/watercourse is in a condition such that the proper flow of water is being impeded and is no longer functioning as an efficient drain. We understand that you may be the owner of the adjacent land and consequently you are responsible for maintaining the ditch.

It would be appreciated if you could look at this to help manage flood risk in the area and arrange to clear this ditch/watercourse as soon as practicable in order to reduce the flood risk to your neighbours and residents of the parish.

In the meantime, if you would like any further information on ditch/watercourse responsibilities please contact the Parish Council in the first instance. If you need to make any alterations to existing ditches or require further help and advice, please visit Flood and water management Hampshire County Council (hants.gov.uk) or contact the Flood & Water Management team at FWM@hants.gov.uk

Please note that if you don't take action, this issue will be reported to Hampshire County Council, and they may be in contact to request action be taken.

Thank you for your understanding and co-operation.

Yours sincerely