

Welcome to the Medway navigation newsletter where we will keep you informed of all things to do with the Medway navigation from Allington to Tonbridge. We will be featuring the latest news, project updates and features from businesses and partners along the Medway. It is a chance for us to keep you informed of exciting new projects and an opportunity to showcase the marvellous medway through the eyes of the navigation team.

Operational Works

By Nick Dundon, Senior Navigation Officer

During the winter months we worked with our fisheries and field teams to carry out essential maintenance on our eel passes at multiple sites along the river to comply with the updated fish and eel regulations.

In a new initiative we are changing how we manage our sites to maximise the benefits to wildlife. We have commissioned an ecological management plan which will help guide how we do this. The plan will contribute to off-setting our carbon footprint as part of our Net Zero by 2030 plan.

Some initiatives we have carried out already include planting 850 trees and have a further 75 Kentish variety fruit trees to plant in December. We created a wildlife corridor at Eldridge's lock by planting 750 trees (picture top right). We have created several wildflower areas. To celebrate 25 years of the Environment Agency our team planted a hornbeam tree at the Allington site, alongside a bench constructed from a tree that was pulled out from the river (picture bottom right).



Enforcement

By Josh Roots, Waterways Development Officer

The team and I have been working on increasing our enforcement and compliance rates along the Medway. We patrolled the river to check the registration status of all vessels along the Medway including marinas and basins. We took timestamped photographs of each vessel to create a digital database of the river to help us to work more effectively in the future.

There are 712 boats on the river, of the boats checked 216 were unregistered and required a warning letter. Where it has not been possible to contact the owners or a boat has been a repeat offender of non-registration we have the power to seize the boat from the waterway. Before we went out our compliance rate was 64% compared to our usual end of year rate of 95%. We have now increased our rate to 81.2%, we are receiving more registrations every day.

This year we have issued removal notices to 10 boats, of those 10; 7 have complied with the instructions of the warning notice; 2 have not reached their 28-day deadline to comply; and 1 has been seized and is being prepared for sale.

In July, we worked with Kent Police on their first anti-social behaviour awareness week to help educate people about the dangers of jumping into the river. We continue to work closely with the Kent Marine Police on joint patrols.



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Updates to ongoing work

By Jon McArthur, Waterways Asset Lead

The team have been very busy working on a programme of works along the navigation. We have been successful in getting funding for the following projects. All of which are in need of work to help maintain their operability.

Allington Sluice Refurbishment Project

Works to the value of £1.1 million are currently underway at Allington Sluice to improve the condition and usability of the three sluice gates. These gates maintain water levels for the navigation and abstraction between Allington and East Farleigh. The project is being constructed by our delivery partners VolkerStevin and JBA consulting. The works will be taking place one gate at a time and will be spread over two years to avoid working during the autumn and winter period where flooding is more likely. Once complete, the investment in the new Mechanical upgrades will make the structure easier to operate for our dedicated team, and will safeguard its operation for years to come.



Allington Sluice

East Farleigh Sluice Emergency Works

Earlier this year, the sluice at East Farleigh developed a fault in the gate raising mechanism, meaning that the twin gate structure can only operate on a single gate. To restore our ability to manage water levels upstream of Teston, we will be carrying out emergency works to repair the fault, and safeguard the operation of the structure for the next 5 years. We hope to carry out these works during September and October 2021, and to be off site for the winter when high flows are more likely. As the sluice reaches the end of its life, it is inevitable that it will become more unreliable and expensive to maintain, so once the emergency works are complete we will begin investigating how best to replace the sluice in the long term.



East Farleigh Lock

Hampstead Sluice Work

At the end of the year we will start work on decommissioning Hampstead sluice, currently the sluice (located 40m upstream of the lock) poses a health and safety risk to the navigation and if the sluice failed we could lose water levels in the Yalding river section. We are currently looking into different ways to access the sluice from land. This may involve some road closures to Hampstead Lane while the works are carried out. We are working with our partners to minimise the disruption from this. Updates will be posted locally and on our website.

For more information about our projects please visit our [capital works page](#) on our website.

News

The Mayor of Maidstone's annual court of survey cruise took place on Saturday 7th August 2021. There were 10 boats in a flotilla departing from Maidstone Town Centre stopping at Allington Lock. The Mayor of Maidstone Fay Gooch officially reopened our refurbished Lock (pictured right). The navigation team would like to thank all those that attended on Saturday and the Hampstead and Yalding Cruising club for organising the event.



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An update from our partners: Medway Valley Flood Partnership

By Andrea Griffiths, Senior Partnership Officer



Working in the Medway Valley, the Medway Valley Countryside Partnership (MVCP) undertake a wide variety of work to promote, protect and enhance the local countryside and wildlife, to provide an opportunity for local people to access and benefit from the holistic value of nature.

At Allington Lock, MVCP have been working with Zoological Society of London for many years to monitor the migration of elvers (juvenile eels) from the tidal reaches into the freshwater river. With trained volunteers, the elver trap is emptied and any elvers measured are recorded before being released upstream. The elver count so far in 2021 is 404 elvers/eels over 52 surveys or with a current Catch Per Unit Effort (CPUE) rating of 7.8.

Medway Catchment Invasive Non-Native Plant Control Project

MVCP work across East Kent into East Sussex and Surrey to control Riparian plants such as giant hogweed and floating pennywort, liaising with over 200 landowners to ensure effective control of these plants on a catchment scale. The project works in partnership with the Environment Agency, Kent County Council Public Rights of Way, Local Authority and volunteers. This work ensures access for navigation and reduces invasive species which would otherwise outcompete native flora, increase flood risk and impact human health. In 2021, MVCP treated over 3000 giant hogweed plants in the Medway navigational stretch alone.

Litter is also something on MVCPs radar and for many years they, and their MVCP and their River Warden volunteers have removed litter from the river and adjacent tow paths. They are working with South East Rivers Trust on their Preventing Plastic Pollution project. MVCP are continuing to arrange litter collecting events with local volunteers.

To get in touch with the partnership please visit their website www.medwayvalley.org or their Facebook page @MedwayValley



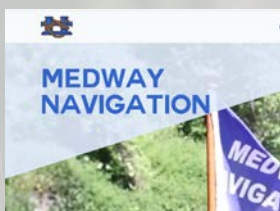
Elver catch at Allington Lock © MVCP 2021



MVCP controlling giant hogweed © MVCP 2021

Have you seen our new website?

We have updated our Allington Lock website. You can find information about all things to do with the navigation.



Find out more about our website by visiting therivermedway.co.uk

Let us know what you think of the newsletter, if you have any suggestions for articles or information you would like to be included please contact us!

Contact us

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