

Charlton Flood Action Group

Riparian ownership

If you own land or property alongside a river or other watercourse you are a 'riparian owner'. This is a brief guide to your rights and responsibilities.

If you are a riparian landowner there are certain responsibilities, which under common law, you are legally obliged to fulfil. The aim of these laws is to help manage flood risk and protect the environment.



Your rights

- You are presumed to own the land up to the centre of the watercourse – unless it is known to be owned by someone else.
- Water should flow onto your land in its natural quantity and quality.
- These rights will be affected by your duty to other riverside landowners, to the rest of the community and to the environment.

Your responsibilities

- To pass on water flows without obstruction, pollution or diversion.
- To accept flood flows.
- To maintain the bed and banks of the watercourse and also trees and shrubs growing on the banks.
- To clear any debris even if it did not originate from your land.
- To keep the bed and banks clear of any matter that could cause an obstruction, either on your own land or further downstream, if it is washed away.
- To protect water quality riverbanks are not an appropriate place to be used for the disposal of any form of garden, or other waste where there is a danger that it will be washed into the river. This includes grass clippings as these are highly polluting.

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environment and make it a better place –
for you and for future generations.**

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the water you drink and the ground you
walk on. Working with business,
government and society as a whole, we
are making your environment cleaner
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**The Environment Agency. Out there,
making your environment a better place.**

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**or visit our website
www.environment-agency.gov.uk**

**incident hotline 0800 80 70 60 (24hrs)
floodline 0845 988 1188**

The Environment Agency's role

Protecting the river environment and managing flood risk are part of our job. This means that some of our duties and powers affect riparian owners.

Under the Water Resources Act 1991, the Environment Agency have permissive powers to maintain and improve main rivers, in order to ensure the efficient passage of flood flow and to manage water levels.

These powers allow us to do work; they do not oblige us to carry out either maintenance or construction of new works on main rivers.



For more detailed on this or any other aspect of the Environment agency please visit www.environment-agency.gov.uk

What does this mean for the Riparian Owners in Charlton?

In Charlton we are working with landowners upstream of the village to reduce the amount of water flowing into the Merry Brook. The Environment Agency and the Charlton Flood Action Group would like to encourage riparian landowners to help minimise the risk of flooding in Charlton by paying close attention to their riparian duties to maximise the flow that can be taken by the watercourse, including:

- Maintaining the bed and banks of the brook. Woody growth should generally be kept cut back. It is preferable to keep the watercourse free of grass/other weed growth but where flow would not be restricted a limited amount is fine.
- Areas upstream and downstream of bridges need to be kept free of weeds and other growth to ensure maximum flow of water during floods. Any grass on the banks either side of bridges should be kept short with any mowings removed to avoid seed heads getting into the brook.
- The watercourse under bridges should be kept free from silt, weeds and rubbish.

- Keep the floodplain clear of items that would restrict the flow of water. This is so flow can easily pass from one riparian owner to the next without restriction minimising blockages and creating extra capacity in the floodplain.
- Any items in the floodplain that could be washed away should either be removed or securely fastened so they do not cause blockages elsewhere.

Later this year the Environment Agency Maintenance team will work their way through the village and be available to offer further advice.

Contacts

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