



Tests reveal high pollution in two allotment streams

By Margaret Crockett

“It’s invisible pollution,” declares Judith Ryan, Secretary of the Fuel Land Allotment Management Committee, when asked about contamination of two streams running through their East Finchley site.

As reported in July’s Archer, the streams run under the county roads and Creighton Avenue before going above ground in the East Finchley Allotments, off Plane Tree Walk, and coursing on towards and through the neighbouring Fuel Land site.

The streams conjoin before flowing in turn into Strawberry Vale and Bounds Green Brooks. They end up in Pymmes Brook, a tributary of the River Lea.

action on the known misconceptions upstream which result in domestic waste from toilets and washing machines draining into the ground water. They cited a likely timeframe of ten years for litigation needed to force householders to undertake the replumbing necessary to rectify the situation. It is unclear whether the householders concerned have been made aware of the role their misconceptions



Testing kit: East Finchley Allotment volunteers learn how to check water quality. Photo Ben Nathan

Although suffering polluted water, Fuel Land allotment holders have been untroubled by the related noxious fumes affecting their neighbours as the streams have already broken to the surface in the East Finchley site.

Misconnections

“You would expect the water close to the North Circular to be polluted due to traffic fumes, but not where the water runs through allotments,” says Ben Nathan, a volunteer pressing for action to identify and fix the cause of polluted streams.

He reports that Thames Water admitted during a recent meeting with allotment holders that they are powerless to take

play in polluting our community’s watercourses.

Water testing

Last month, volunteers from the two allotment sites attended water quality testing training provided by Thames21 at East Finchley Allotments. The tests conducted by the team revealed that ammonia and phosphate levels are in the highest category for both streams which is no improvement on previous test results.

Thames21 provided the team with water testing kits and the plan is to gather evidence on the extent of the problem to support pressure on Thames Water and other authorities to take action.

Road humps, lower speeds

Work began last month to install speed bumps and new 20mph zones in the county roads in East Finchley. As we reported in May, Barnet Council approved the traffic-calming works following concerns that the previous 30mph limit was too fast for these narrow roads.

Hertford Road and Bedford Road were completed first with Huntingdon, Leicester and Lincoln scheduled to follow closely behind.

At the same time, tactile pavement crossing points were installed on all roads at their junction with Durham Road.



Over the hump: New signage in the County Roads



Garden allies: Siân Moxon at her compost heap with friendly slugs

Redress the natural balance

By Ruth Anders

East Finchley resident Siân Moxon admits to being “completely obsessed” with counteracting environmental destruction and ameliorating the effects of climate change.

“London is losing its domestic outdoor spaces at an astonishing rate, through changes for the worse in people’s gardens,” Siân told the Archer. “Nationally one in ten lawns is being changed to plastic grass and a quarter of households are paving over their front gardens. We must try to reverse this.”

The Archer first met Siân in February 2020, and since then she has become Associate Professor of Sustainable Architecture at London Metropolitan University. Now, with many partners, advisers and funders, she and a colleague have developed an important initiative called Wild Ways, a complex five-year study that has emerged from Siân’s award-winning Rewild My Street urban-rewilding campaign.



Siân and her twig pile

Combining design research with behavioural-change methodologies, Wild Ways aims to

address the issue of declining vegetation and biodiversity in city gardens by understanding behaviour in London’s residential back yards. Small changes to our gardens can create significant wildlife habitat, vital in a time of increasing urbanisation and ecological crisis.

Four stages

The project comprises four stages focusing on different aspects of garden owners’ behaviour: these have included a workshop with 20 London residents to develop an intervention strategy, and a testing of that strategy through Rewild My Street. The response from residents across the London boroughs suggested a more positive reaction from those who belong to conservation organisations. Siân’s crusading efforts

continue in all sorts of areas and last December she visited Martin Primary School in N2 to talk to senior children about how they can make our environment greener. She recently featured in a story about her work on ITV London News.

In her own garden, the innovations continue. Siân grows her own sugar snap peas, rocket, nasturtiums, herbs, blackberries and strawberries, while wildlife enjoys the benefit of gaps in her fences, nesting wool, bird feeders and boxes, bee baths, and bug hotels.

Siân’s monthly newsletter provides tips for people wishing to adapt their homes, gardens and streets to encourage wildlife and stop cities going grey. For further details and updates visit rewildmystreet.org



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