Hello all,

The outfall reports continue to come in thick and fast from the volunteers and we’re beginning to build up a really good picture of the pollution on the Hogsmill river. Lots of investigations into the misconnections have begun and a few have been completed so I’m hopeful that we should start to see a real improvement soon. The outfall reports also make it much simpler to discuss specific issues at the steering groups and the task and finish groups and help us prioritise our resources where they are needed most. Thank you all for your continued support!

Steph Illsley, Environment Officer for the Hogsmill

1. The flow in the Hogsmill
In July we received reports of low flows on the Hogsmill. Sutton and East Surrey Water augment the flow of the upper Hogsmill by abstracting groundwater in Ewell and pumping it out of the fountain in Bourne Hall ponds. This helps to maintain the flow in the river in dry weather. Sutton and East Surrey Water investigated the augmentation and found that it had not been operating correctly for a number of weeks. It is now up and running again. Our gauging stations and spot sampling have not shown anything unusual since and flows are now at the expected level for this time of year.

2. Epsom and Ewell storm tanks
Water quality data is now being collected up and downstream of the Epsom and Ewell storm tanks. We will be able to compare this with the rainfall and storm tank discharge data that the South East Rivers Trust are currently collating which should give us a good idea of the impacts that the storm tanks have on water quality in the Hogsmill and Green Lanes Stream.

3. Green Lanes Stream
South East Rivers Trust’s Toby found that the Green Lanes Stream was littered with sanitary towels whilst he was wading through the channel. He traced them back to a couple of specific outfalls which, when looked at on the drainage maps, were both part of the same sewer. A representative from Thames Water met me out on site and immediately began tracing the pollution. Within a few hours they had found a whole cafe that had been misconnected into the surface water sewer. Thames Water has since received the good news that the misconnection has been rectified so hopefully this will have solved the problem!

4. Cox Lane outfall
This outfall has been photographed discharging foam and grey water by a SERT volunteer on several occasions over the last few months. This is despite my team and I conducting a ‘pollution prevention campaign’ on the Cox Lane industrial estate a couple of years ago and trying to educate business owners about the impacts that they can have on the Bonesgate Stream and the Hogsmill. The outfall is on the Thames Water polluted surface water outfall programme
(SWOP) waiting list and investigations are due to begin early next year.

5. Wentworth Close sewage pollution

Sewage was reported in a ditch behind Wentworth Close, Surbiton in September. This ditch eventually flows into the Surbiton Stream which joins the Hogsmill in Berrylands. Thames Water investigated and found that there were tree roots growing into the walls of the surface water sewer which was allowing sewage to cross contaminate the surface water. The tree roots have been removed and the sewer cleaned so this should have resolved the problem.

6. Ewell by Pass north and south outfalls

The outfall into the Hogsmill north of the Ewell By Pass was grossly polluted earlier in the year. Thames Water have now investigated and found two misconnections which have both been rectified and our SERT volunteer has not reported any pollution incidents since. We will continue to monitor this outfall until we are certain it is ready to be closed on the pollution hotspot list. The outfall south of the Ewell By Pass has been obscured by vegetation for the last few months which has made volunteer monitoring very awkward. Hopefully we can build up a better idea of the issues on this outfall over the winter when the vegetation has died back.

7. Sheephouse Way and Knollmead

The outfalls on the east and west bank of the Hogsmill at Sheephouse Way and Knollmead are still contaminated with sewage. Thames Water are continuing to trace so I hope to have more of an update in my next newsletter.
8. Malden Way
Thames Water have begun conducting surveys on the 6437 property catchment that drains into the Hogsmill via the Tolworth Box Culvert on the north side of the A3 road bridge. An assessment is also planned to start looking into the polluted outfall on the south side of the A3 bridge. At least the local kingfisher is still happy—he was spotted last week and was photographed perfectly earlier in the year by volunteer Peter.

9. ‘The Bridge’, Green Lane, New Malden
The fungus at the outfall by the footbridge off of Green Lane, New Malden continues to get thicker, and the riverfly invertebrate monitoring reports more trigger level breaches. Thames Water have traced some of the pollution to misconnected appliances at a property belonging to an elderly lady who does not have the financial capability to rectify the plumbing. Thames Water will be working with Kingston Council to determine the best way forward. Investigations into other pollution sources in the catchment are continuing.

10. Portland Road
Portland Road continues to be a regular polluter with a thick build up of sewage fungus. Thames Water have now traced the misconnections to a specific area and are beginning to narrow down individual properties.