



## The South East Rivers Trust

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Dear Canterbury Planning Authority

14th October 2025

I am writing as Director of Water, Land and Catchments at the South East Rivers Trust (SERT). Together with the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership (KSCP), we coordinate the East Kent Catchment Improvement Partnership (CIP), which works to deliver a shared strategic vision for the Stour catchment through collaboration with local partners and communities.

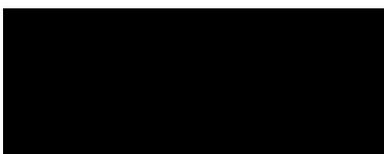
The Great Stour — including the Upper and Lower Stour, Stour Marshes, Little Stour and Wingham, and North and South Streams — comprises 17 Water Framework Directive (WFD) waterbodies. Of the 12 monitored for fish, nine were failing in 2019. The primary reasons include barriers to fish passage, flood and land drainage management, low flows, and urban development impacts.

Previous analysis by SERT has identified the weirs at Chartham Mill as significant barriers to fish movement, particularly for Wild Brown Trout and Sea Trout. The elevated sluice gates beneath the mill and the Horton Stream off-take structure completely block fish passage due to their vertical design. While a fish pass exists, Environment Agency footage (2021) shows fish struggling to locate and use it effectively, suggesting it does not provide adequate connectivity.

As these structures no longer serve a power generation purpose, their removal would bring substantial ecological benefits, including improved fish migration and overall river health. We understand that housing development is being considered at the Chartham Mill site, and we would strongly encourage the council to ensure that, should development proceed, appropriate funding is directed towards barrier removal and associated habitat restoration.

Thank you for considering this important opportunity to enhance the ecological condition of the Great Stour.

Best Wishes



Dr Neil Bailey, Director of Water, Land and Catchments

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