

Tom Hawkes

From: Mark Nieman [REDACTED]
Sent: 25 October 2025 11:04
To: Consultations
Subject: Chartham development alongside the stour

--Email From External Account--

Dear Sir

I realise the formal date for the consultation has passed but please allow me a few remarks about this very special opportunity to preserve and hopefully enhance one of the world's rarest ecological biospheres. A chalk stream is one of the rarest ecological habitats known to humankind. There are fewer than 300 chalk streams in the entire world, and around 85% of them are found in England and a beautiful one flows through Chartham. They are not only exceptionally rare but are also uniquely important ecological systems, combining hydrological stability with extraordinary biodiversity found almost nowhere else on Earth.

Could the development of 160 houses not include a restoration of the river and provide long term measures to conserve this habitat? The river at Chartham Mill presents a superb opportunity.

The mill and its associated structures have been in place for centuries, but many are now counterproductive and act as barriers to the river's natural processes. The removal of the many structures put in place to facilitate the operation of the now redundant mill would enhance the rivers resilience to flood and drought and enable re-naturalising of the bank and introduce wetland features.

The Stour has important populations of Wild Brown Trout and Sea Trout, with occasional Salmon still present. These species are key indicators of river health, yet their ability to move freely along the river to spawn and disperse is constrained by existing barriers. At typical flow levels, weirs and culverts prevent upstream migration, leading to fragmented fish populations and degraded habitat. Removing such barriers, rather than relying on engineered fish passes, would provide a sustainable and self-restoring solution.

With the enhancement value to the river potentially from restoration measures comes the additional value to the community and its ability to enjoy this rare habitat. Please consider adding requirements to enhance and protect the river with any development planned alongside the river and bear in mind the value it would add to the houses proposed.

I would appreciate being kept informed of future consultations or developments relating to the Kentish Stour.

Mark Nieman

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