



March 2026

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Save the date for a CARA event: Improving Biodiversity along our Riverside



Please join us at **Canbury Pavilion on Thursday 16th April at 7:00pm** to hear Georgina Fauconier (Royal Burrough of Kingston's Biodiversity Officer) and Alex Leaver (Thames Landscape Strategy Strategic Project Officer) give an illustrated talk on the re-naturalisation of the riverbank beside Canbury Gardens and how this will enhance the biodiversity at the water's edge.

The TLS emphasise the value of early stakeholder involvement: *"Coordinated engagement can turn necessary interventions into enhancements rather than impositions. With shared planning, these engineering works can simultaneously improve public access, enrich riverside habitats, and reinforce the cultural identity of each area."*

This is one not to be missed.

Note: The Environment Agency have granted the licence for the works to re-naturalise stretches of the riverbank beside Canbury Gardens. We understand the council's contractors will begin work ASAP.

Support Good local Water Quality in the Thames

We are pleased by the Government announcement that a local stretch of the Thames at Ham and Kingston is being designated for Public Bathing Status. But it will only be approved if there is support from the current [Defra consultation](#), which closes on 23rd March.

If this site is designated it will help protect and enhance water quality. The routine testing of the river for Bathing Quality above Teddington Lock would deter Thames Water from releasing inadequately treated sewage into the river as part of their TDRA plans.

As the campaign group [Solar](#) says: “Once a site is designated, the Environment Agency is legally required to:

- Monitor Water Quality: Regular testing for harmful bacteria (like E. coli) will take place throughout the bathing season (May to September).
- Provide Transparency: Results must be displayed publicly, allowing swimmers, paddleboarders, and families to make informed decisions about entering the water.”

Please add your support by responding to the consultation today, at the [Defra consultation](#) and give your support to the site “**River Thames at Ham and Kingston**”.

The Half Mile Tree

The Father Thames Trust is funding replacement of a number of TLS Information Boards. The first is by the Half Mile Tree. On 13th March the revised design was sent to Kingston Council ‘for their approval’.

The timing of the replacement bench and tree planting will be explored at the Canbury Gardens Working Group meeting on 27th March. Watch this space ... and the Half Mile Tree space.

Bird Flu is here



This information was researched and written by Richard Mobbs and Dr Peter Higgins (CARA Committee members).

A substantial number of swans have died recently along the Thames, so we need to take precautions to avoid the spread of Bird Flu.

Technically you may have heard Bird Flu referred to as Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) of the H5N1 subtype. This virus has been causing a pandemic among birds since 2020. It has devastated poultry production worldwide. But... HPAI also infects multiple wild bird species. Over the past five years spillover into a range of mammalian species including cattle, sheep, dogs, cats, and humans has also been documented.

HPAI H5N1 was first identified in Great Britain in 2021. It has since been associated with thousands of reported cases in wild and domestic birds. National mandatory housing measures first came into place early in November 2021 in an effort to control disease transmission. Veterinary Surgeons get a daily newsletter on the latest situation with HPAI from Defra.

These housing regulations and enhanced biosecurity measures have remained the cornerstone of disease control for all subsequent HPAI outbreaks in Great Britain.

If you are worried about your dog or cat, signs to look for are:

1. Respiratory issues: Coughing, sneezing, nasal discharge.
2. Conjunctivitis: Eye discharge and redness.
3. Lethargy: Unusual tiredness or reluctance to move.
4. Loss of appetite: Losing interest in food or water.
5. Fever: A higher than normal body temperature.
6. Neurological symptoms: Rare but may include wobbliness or seizures.

A few preventative measures can help transmission to dogs.

These include:

1. Keep dogs on leads when near the river.
2. Do not feed wild waterfowl – swans, geese, coots, and so on.
3. Do not touch dead or sick birds.
4. Do not touch bird feathers or the riverbank where there are bird droppings.
5. If you find any dead wild birds report them.

Report dead wild birds to Defra on:

03459 33 55 77 (select option 7);

or report online at: [GOV.UK Report Dead Wild Birds](#).

For anything urgent relating to the wildlife in [the Royal Parks](#), call: 0300 061 2000.

So you like gardening...

The Canbury Gardens volunteers are now back into their springtime swing. It's a happy group, taking pride in upholding the Green Flag status of our lovely local park. There are jobs and a welcome for everyone: young, old, active: even those just wanting to meet new friends.

All are welcome. No binding contracts!

Do come along – 10:00am each Saturday, meet by the children's playground.



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