

ELMBRIDGE NEWSLETTER

Update on the River Thames Navigation

November 2024

Welcome to the Environment Agency Waterways update for Elmbridge Borough. This newsletter provides information on current activities related to the River Thames navigation. We had planned to publish this newsletter in October. However, due to the improved river conditions, priority was given to performing river operations and progressing enforcement actions, which led to a delay in publication.

Local Success

Operation Riverside, conducted in Molesey on 24 September 2024, was a coordinated effort by multiple agencies to address unauthorised boat moorings.

Operation Details: The operation involved collaboration between the Environment Agency, Elmbridge Borough Council, Surrey Police, and Surrey County Council, with a focus on Hurst Park and Cigarette Island.

Objectives and Actions: The primary objectives were to ensure compliance with boat registration requirements, remove unauthorised vessels, and dispose of specific boats as necessary. This included issuing various enforcement notices and undertaking legal actions.

Results and Future Plans: The operation led to the removal of three vessels, the issuing of 137 enforcement notices (47 Unregistered, 14 Wreck or Abandoned, 16 Requiring Information, 60 Trespass), plus 58 Advice & Guidance packs, and the provision of housing advice to boat occupants. Moving forward, efforts will concentrate on monitoring the situation and escalating enforcement actions as required.



Additional communications and engagement led to positive media coverage and a favourable response on social media.

<https://www.getsurrey.co.uk/news/surrey-news/illegal-boats-removed-river-thames-30001084>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cvql981vkz1o>

We continued our collaboration with partners, including Elmbridge Borough Council, and carried out a follow-up multi-agency operation on October 8th. This operation involved the next step of enforcement, which included the removal of over a ton of waste from the riverbank at Cigarette Island, Saddlers Ride, and Hurst Park.

Despite facing significant challenges by the strong stream conditions, we have successfully maintained our compliance checks and enforcement actions in the Elmbridge Borough. We have conducted follow-up enforcement actions in priority areas on six separate occasions.

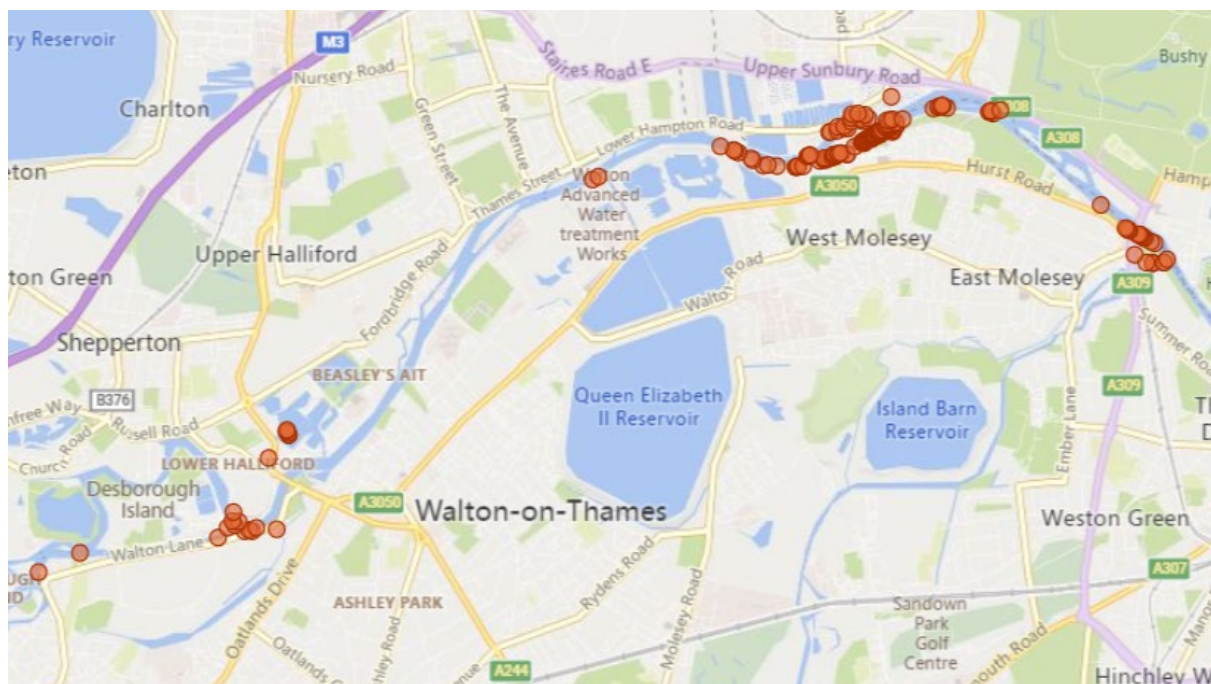
1. 24 September - Multi-agency Op Riverside including the removal of Hui and RoR.
2. 8 October - Multi-agency Op to check compliance and remove waste (1 tonne of waste removed by Elmbridge BC)
3. 28 October - Compliance checking
4. 30 October - Hurst Park Compliance & Enforcement, and serving of notices
5. 8 November - Desborough Cut compliance, enforcement & trespass
6. 20 November - Contract surveys for vessels removal from Cigarette Island to Weybridge Mooring including Desborough Cut as part of tendering process and funding agreement.

These actions included serving Trespass, Section 16 Wreck & Abandoned notices, as well as providing advice and guidance notices at Desborough Cut. We are now evaluating our next steps in these cases to ensure that the Thames riverside remains an area that can be enjoyed by everyone.

We have sent a clear warning to unregistered boat owners on the Thames that we do take action against owners who have failed to register their boats despite advice and guidance and warnings. There are more boat owners due to face court in coming months:

[Unregistered boats on River Thames: fines and costs total £18,000 - GOV.UK](#)

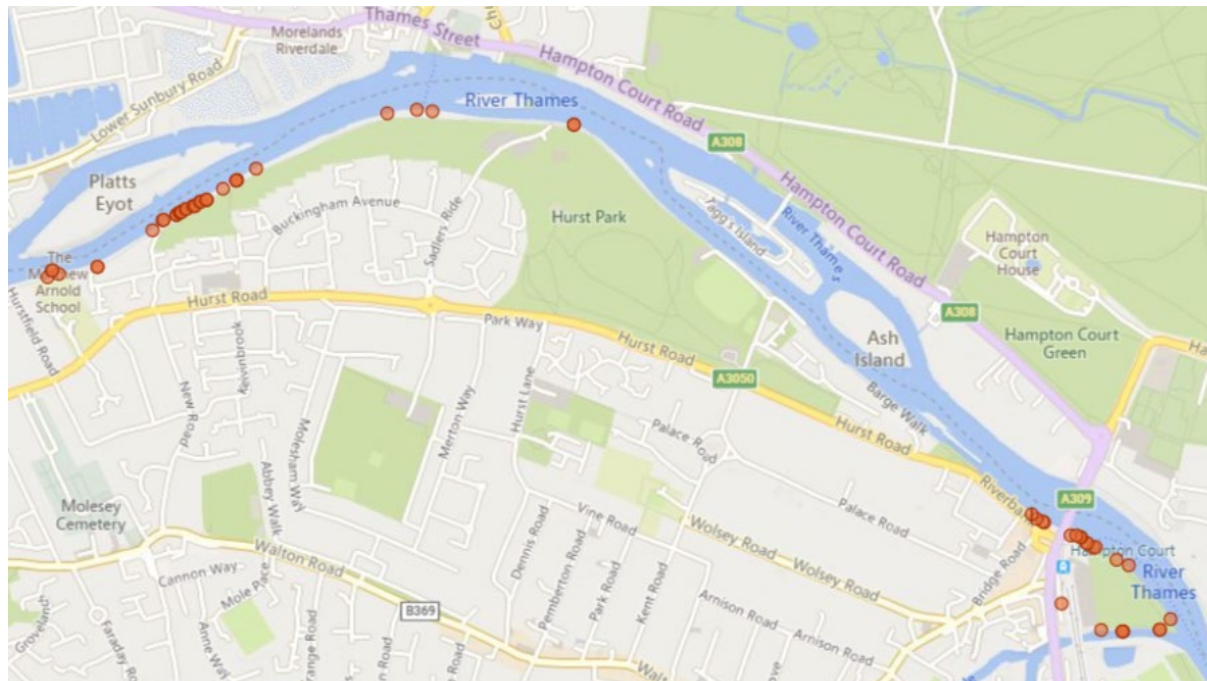
Figure 1: Vessels moored on the River Thames in Elmbridge (total 243)



NB: This map includes vessels moored to the north bank and therefore in Richmond or Spelthorne. Future maps will just be vessels in Elmbridge.

Please see Appendix 1 for a breakdown of vessel numbers by area.

Figure 2: Vessels moored at Hurst Park and Cigarette Island (total 74)



Strong stream conditions limited our activities from September to mid-October. During this time, we focused on compliance and enforcement actions. This preparation allows us to continue case work without interruption during future strong stream conditions.

Our next newsletter will be issued by the end of **February 2025**.

Breakdown of vessel numbers by area (inc. sunken vessels)

Location	Number	Hurst Park & Cigarette Island Vessels	Number
Steps D/S Cherry Orchard Gardens to Sunbury Lock	54	Adjacent to Ferry point at Hurst Park	4
U/S Sunbury Lock to Gridley Miskins	20	Hurst Park - Opposite tail of Platts Eyot to D/S end Hurst park short stay public mooring	22
Gridley Miskins short stay mooring	5	Hurst Park short stay public mooring	9
Anglers Walton short stay mooring	3	U/S Hurst Park Public Moorings to D/S End Cherry Orchard Gardens	6
Walton Bridge to D/S Desborough Cut	3	East Landings (Hampton Court Bridge)	12
Desborough Island	5	Cigarette Island	15
Desborough Channel between D/S & U/S bridges	31	Total	68
Total	162		

