



ISSUE 1 · JAN 2023

ALT CROSSENS NEWS



Official Newsletter of the Mersey Rivers Trust

Happy New Year! As we start a new year we take a look back at all the great work that has been delivered in the Alt Crossens catchment over the past 12 months and the exciting new projects we will be delivering in 2023.

We wish all our partners, stakeholders and volunteers a very happy and healthy 2023.

Headbolt Lane BNG



Network Rail commissioned Mersey Rivers Trust to scope interventions to reclaim the biodiversity credits associated with the construction of a new train station at Headbolt Lane, Kirkby. Habitat improvement works will be delivered in 2023 at 6 public parks in Kirkby. Works will include creating new wetlands, hedgerows and wildflower meadows, re-naturalising a river by removing a concrete half-pipe and invasive species control. This project is a pilot of the new Biodiversity Net Gain scheme which comes in later this year. You can read more about BNG here: [Biodiversity Net Gain](#).

Lessons learned and findings from this project are important to help to shape future projects in the region.





RIVER ALT WEIR REMOVAL FEASIBILITY STUDY



We have been awarded £30k from the Open Rivers Programme to undertake a feasibility study for the removal of a weir on the River Alt in Aintree.

The removal of the weir in River Alt will restore the natural river ecosystem and will potentially open up 29km of river to allow the movement of fish and eels throughout the system. This will improve the value of river habitats for protected species such as otters. The removal will contribute to the aims set out in the River Basin Management Plan for barrier removal and km enhanced, which will deliver against the Water Framework Directive aims of achieving Good Ecological Status. The lower reaches of the river from the estuary to the dam at Aintree have a good population of fish and associated wildlife, including recent otter sightings.



WELCOME ABBEY!

In January 2022 we welcomed a new member of staff to the Merseyside team. Abbey Andersen Hides is a Project Manager delivering projects and events in the Lower Mersey and Alt/Crossens catchments.

We took a trip to a very sunny Mersey estuary on her first day...



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WONDERFUL WETLANDS

The wetland at Croxteth Park has been a great success. It has greened up, full of life and helping to reduce flooding and improve water quality in our local rivers.



Nov 2020



May 2022

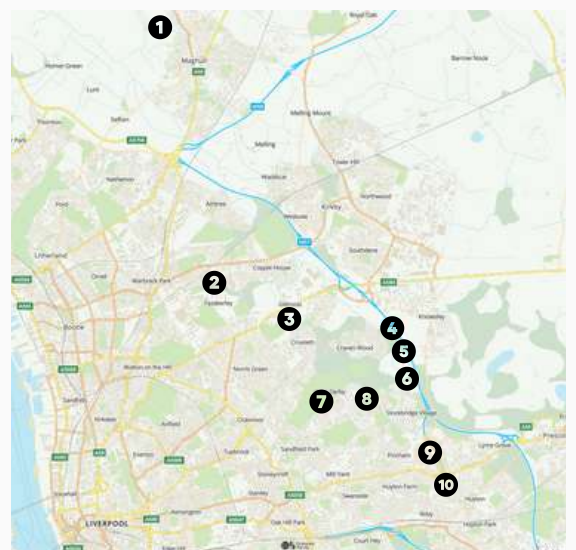
Upper Alt Water Quality Improvements



Following the success of the Croxteth Park wetland project, another project using the same delivery model is being delivered. In 2022/23 we have been undertaking a feasibility study to highlight possible interventions in new locations that will have multiple benefits, including improving the water quality in the River Alt, helping to reduce flood risk, boosting biodiversity, improving access to blue/green spaces and providing volunteer opportunities. A long list of 32 sites was produced and prioritised based on benefits achieved, cost and landownership. A short list of 10 sites are being taken forward for delivery.

This project has been funded by Environment Agency WEIF. We have submitted a bid for a second round of funding for 2023/24 to deliver several of these projects.

- ❶ Maghull Brook
- ❷ Fazkerley Brook
- ❸ Alt Meadows
- ❹ Howard's Pits
- ❺ Meakin's Pits
- ❻ Little Wood
- ❼ Croxteth Park South
- ❽ Mab Lane
- ❾ Woolfall Heath
- ❿ South Alt Greenway





WATER RESOURCES COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT



Mersey Rivers Trust is continuing to work with the farming community in the Alt Crossens to increase understanding of water resource issues in the catchment. This work has helped us gain knowledge on local attitudes and how water is managed currently and ways we can work together towards a more sustainable future for water efficiency in the future.

In 2022 we were able to hold two workshops at the National Farmers Union offices in Skelmersdale discussing funding options, abstraction issues and the pressures of climate change and climate resilience facing the agricultural sector in the upcoming years. In July we worked alongside the Environment Agency and Netafim to host a demo day on a local farm showing a set-up of drip irrigation as an alternative method for water management for water loving arable crops such as celery.



We will continue to work with our incredible partners and local stakeholders, special mention to Adam from NFU, Michael from Catchment Sensitive Farming and Simon from the EA who help us and our farmers understand catchment initiatives for water resources in the Alt Crossens.

We will be hosting more events until the end of March 2023 and getting out in the area to view potential intervention locations, to focus on alternative options for sustainable resource management.

ALT PESTICIDE SAMPLING



This project aims to deliver a monitoring package on the Alt Crossens to analyse for Pesticides and Herbicides.

Biocide monitoring is not routinely completed by EA so monitoring and analysis on the Alt Crossens will gauge levels of these chemicals in the watercourse. The evidence will be used to engage farmers in these catchments to improve farming practices through CSF engagement and to direct future EA resource.





Mersey Rivers Week 2022

The annual Mersey Rivers Week was held in July and kicked off with a 30 mile walk and 45 mile cycle along the River Mersey, finishing at the iconic Royal Liver Building. We raised lots of money and awareness for the trust.



Day 4 of Mersey Rivers Week was a Balsam Bash at Millbrook Millennium Green in Kirkby with the Knowsley Council Greenspaces Ranger.



Day 6 was our big event of the week, a BioBlitz at Croxteth Park. This family event encouraged people to get out and explore nature. We had scavenger hunts, crafts, pond dipping and walks/talks led by our experts. It was a wonderful day and we hope to run another BioBlitz in the region next year.





JOURNEY TO THE MOUTH OF THE ALT

The Merseyside Team took a trip to Hightown to see the lower reaches of the River Alt. Lots of bird life was recorded including Little Egret, Cormorant, Twite, Dunlin, Curlew, Mallard, Long Tail Tit, Greater Black Backed Gull, Blue Tit and Buzzard.

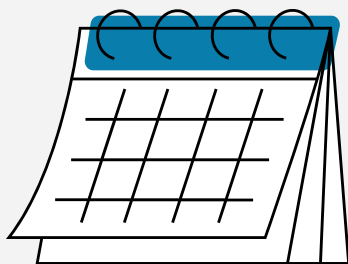


KNOWSLEY FLOWER SHOW

More than 25,000 people visited Court Hey Park for the Knowsley Feelgood Festival and Flower Show weekend. We held a stall at the flower show to talk to the public about our work, including the wetland we created on site. We also took along some river invertebrates to show what lives in a healthy river.



Key dates for 2023



- 2nd February
- 22nd March
- 22nd April
- 21st May
- 5th June
- 8th June
- 3rd - 9th July**
- 28th July
- 24th September
- 5th December

- World Wetlands Day
- World Water Day
- Earth Day
- World Fish Migration Day
- World Environment Day
- World Oceans Day
- Mersey Rivers Week 2023**
- World Nature Conservation Day
- World Rivers Day
- International Volunteer Day