From: Samantha Ho <samantha.ho@environment-agency.gov.uk>
Sent: 15 October 2025 19:53:36 UTC+01:00
To: "Planning.Compliance" <Planning.Compliance@horsham.gov.uk>
Cc: "Bethan.Tinning" <Bethan.Tinning@horsham.gov.uk>
Subject: Requesting a call to discuss a way forward to handle a complex and sensitive situation
Importance: High

Hello Good people of Horsham planning department,
I am a Biodiversity Technical Specialist from the Environment Agency, and I am currently handling a tricky situation that has become sensitive. I require your help please!

It involves the landowner and works approved under DISC/25/0187 | Approval of details reserved by condition 3 to approved application DC/25/0125 | Land North of Prestwood Lane Ifield Crawley West Sussex RH11 0LA

I have been working positively with this landowner for just over a year now on responding to a found DEFRA Invasive Non-Native alert species (eradicate status) Water Primrose population immediately upstream. I was aware of plans to build some kind of wetland/water retaining feature and was surprised to hear he had planning approved and was booking contractors to build this summer (as we had not seen any planning or Environmental Permit applications).

At the time of construction (about a month ago) I had brief conversations with him about it and intervened to advise on pollution control best practices and managed to gain his agreement to implement pollution risk measures immediately.

In summary of my discovery, there appears to be discrepancy between the planning detail and what has been built. But the biggest complication is that I have confirmed it was done without an EA Flood Risk Activity Permit, there may be some implication from planning advice which considered it as ordinary watercourse. Although, this does not excuse his actions for not having a Permit.

As a side, he has some deep negative feelings and PTSD in terms of his experience with the planning process, and this bias has impacted upon how we influence for an environmentally sound outcome. Sadly, the build is not an optimally functioning wetland feature and we have gained his willing to have our geomorphologist support with a site visit for technical review and advice. Good progress and direction.

We are meeting next Wednesday (22nd) our aim is to impart a better understanding of restoring habitat function and gain his agreement for the adjustments (which do not have to be delivered urgently), and we will request that he achieves it via a FRAP. We know the EA position on the works and I'm happy to discuss.

However! The next biggest hurdle and complication in continuing toward an agreeable outcome will be the fact that our design tweaks will require alteration of the planning scheme. This therefore comes into your territory and we need to marry the two processes. There are many nuances and facts to discuss, and the outcome we seek is dependent on your assessment and to know what action, if any, Horsham would take or be willing to support.
The ideal would be to achieve this without posing blockers or negatively forcing an outcome (and to particularly leave my rapport intact – to continue delivering the eradication work). But I really need to find out your thoughts on this and I appreciate your time.

Please can I request two things:

1. That the compliance department refrain from immediate contact or investigation with the landowner until we have our site visit and until we have discussed a respective organisation work-through?

2. Would anyone have the time to discuss this *before* next Wednesday? I appreciate it may be last minute. I am available:

   Tomorrow (Thursday 16th) - 1pm
   Friday (17th) - 1pm or post 4pm

   Tuesday (21st) – 2pm
   Friday (24th) – 12pm or post 4pm

Very much appreciated,

Samantha Ho
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Work pattern: Tuesday to Friday

Facebook – Please visit Environment Agency - Kent & South London Fisheries Team





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