

STATEMENT FROM SEVERN TRENT WATER FOR PUBLIC MEETING HELD ON 09 MAY 2024.

“I promised to write to provide you with a short overview of the progress Severn Trent is making at reducing our footprint on rivers, including the River Amber, for your parish council meeting on 9 May.

As you know, there are many factors that affect the health of rivers. Broadly in order, the biggest three are:

1. The impact of agriculture (pesticides and sludge running off fields into rivers)
2. The impact of water companies (primarily the impact of effluent from waste water treatment works, but also CSOs and, rarely, water abstraction)
3. Run off from highways and other hard services (the water generally contains oils, parts of tyres and other pollutants).

Severn Trent has committed to eliminating the harm our operations cause rivers by 2030 (measured by the EA’s Reasons for Not Achieving Good Status methodology) – we know of no company in Europe going further or faster. Two years or so ago we were responsible for about 24 percent of harm to rivers in our region; today that figure is 17 percent. We still have a long way to go, but we are making fast progress.

Concerning the River Amber, the EA says there are eight reasons why the river near Ashover is not at Good status. Severn Trent is responsible for one of these, which we will address through our planned investment. We are currently finalising these plans, but we expect them to include the following elements:

- A project to increase the proportion of phosphate we remove at our Ashover Sewage Treatment Works, something that will help improve water quality in the river.
- A similar project at our Kelstedge Sewage Treatment Works, for similar reasons.
- A project to work with the agricultural sector to manage nutrients throughout the catchment, trying to reduce the amount of nutrients flowing into the river after heavy rain (which causes harm as it leads to the starving of oxygen from the river).

These projects will also help to improve water quality in Ogston reservoir, which is also being affected by excess nutrient levels.

We are very hopeful these projects will successfully address the one reason the EA assesses we cause harm to the River Amber. We want to see the river in the best health possible – and we are doing everything we can within our area of responsibility to do just that.

We wish you well for your meeting and look forward to hearing any feedback.”