

# NATURE IN *Kingston*



MARCH 2026

Over the last four months, the Kingston Biodiversity Partnership has been working hard, taking action to enhance nature in line with the targets set out in the Kingston Biodiversity Action Plan.

## Bats



Bat box installation at St. Andrew's Square.

Let's start with our bat work, because they're cute and misunderstood mammals that keep mosquito levels low in the summer! Four new bat boxes went up in the Canbury Gardens wildlife garden last summer, providing much-needed day roosting spots. Also, ATS tree contractors helped us install 3 boxes at St. Andrews Square on the 18th March, while Citizen Zoo are lining up installations at Tolworth Court Farm. The council is also supporting new boxes near the backwater at Elmbridge Meadows. So much love for bats! We've also kept up our Daubenton's monitoring thanks to a brilliant session at Elmbridge Meadows led by bat expert Alison Fure.

And speaking of Elmbridge, the brand-new backwater there is already adding huge value for foraging bats. Built as a fish refuge after pollution events, it's also becoming a five-star restaurant for bats thanks to the boost in insect life. The new wetland at Tolworth Court Farm is doing the same – and we're now reviewing management plans across other reserves to spot even more opportunities.

## Rivers and Streams



The backwater at Elmbridge meadows.

Our rivers and streams work has been just as strong, particularly as we champion the Hogsmill, an internationally rare chalk-fed stream and a vital wildlife corridor for Kingston. The Hogsmill catchment plan remains a live document to ensure the strategy stays responsive, and it has recently been updated to reflect evolving goals. Central to this progress is the collaboration between Kingston council and South East Rivers Trust, who are now initiating a "State of the Hogsmill" report and driving essential in-channel river restoration. By introducing woody debris and re-naturalising the river's flow, SERT is creating the complex habitats and clean gravel beds that rare chalk stream species depend on. Within the Partnership, we are also working to establish the best way to maintain Elmbridge Meadows going forward, while continuing to push for sustainable urban drainage with planners. Finally, we are keeping the pressure on fish and eel barrier removal, including the now-scheduled removal of the King's Meadow weir in autumn 2026.

Check in next time for further updates on the work being done by the Kingston Biodiversity Partnership.

**Paul Jennings (CEO Habitats & Heritage)**

