

## **Friends of the Rhee, Update for Haslingfield PC, April 2026**

Cambridgeshire's rivers are under pressure from pollution, sedimentation, low flows, and habitat loss. The impact of these pressures on economic growth has been widely reported. Various funding initiatives are emerging to mitigate these issues. They take a science-led, data-driven approach to guide restoration efforts. Community involvement is encouraged.

Friends of the Rhee are a local group established in Haslingfield in 2020 and are part of the [Haslingfield & Harlton Eco Group \(hheco.co.uk\)](http://hheco.co.uk).

Friends of the Rhee provided their last update to Haslingfield PC in August 2025. This update covers the following

1. Actions from PC meeting August 2025
2. Update on Ecoli river monitoring
3. American Signal Crayfish
4. An advisory report from Rob Mungovan of the Wild Trout Trust
5. An idea for River Restoration
6. Meetings with Land Owners and Farmers
7. Upcoming activity

### **1. Actions from PC meeting August 2025**

Friends of the Rhee supplied an article for the PC Magazine and provided information for the PC website.

### **2. Update on Ecoli river monitoring**

Haslingfield PC agreed to fund the next phase of Ecoli river monitoring. Monitoring for Ecoli during the winter period has been slow with just three monitoring events between September 2025 and March 2026. The group has met recently and is re-energising efforts into the late spring and summer 2026.

### **3. American Signal Crayfish (ASC)**

The stretch of the River Rhee between Haslingfield and Harston is currently inundated with the non-native ASC. Crayfish burrows can be seen along the banks. There is a hypothesis that the ASC are significantly contributing to the turbidity of the water [https://camvalleyforum.uk/murky\\_cam/](https://camvalleyforum.uk/murky_cam/). There is no easy way to remove ASC from the river. Some people are trapping ASC for consumption. Trapping must be under license and with a trap which is otter friendly. For more understanding about these creatures view this video <https://biologicalrecording.co.uk/2023/11/29/american-signal-crayfish/> and attached email about efforts on the Bourn Brook.

### **4. A report from Rob Mungovan of the Wild Trout Trust**

An ecological advisory report has been written for Friends of the Rhee for a stretch of the Rhee between Harston and Haslingfield. This report is provided, for info, with this update. The report encourages the Friends group to think big for river restoration ideas.

## **5. An idea for River Restoration**

With support from the Wildlife Trust, Cam Catchment Partnership and the Wild Trout Trust, Friends of the Rhee have developed an outline idea for River Restoration along the stretch between Haslingfield and Harston. The pack, included with this update, is for initial discussions with various stakeholders including landowners, farmers, the Environment Agency and possible funders. Friends of the Rhee recognise that this area is in the lower river and river restoration is ideally started in the headwaters.

## **6. Meetings with Land Owners and Farmers**

Friends of the Rhee have met with land owners and farmers to discuss river monitoring and restoration, including Newton Farms, Burwash Manor Farm, Jesus College and the Haslingfield United Charity Trustees.

## **7. Upcoming activity**

In 2026 Friends of the Rhee plan to ....

- Continue to deliver river quality monitoring, specifically for Ecoli
- Initiate small scale, volunteer-led, in-channel works in partnership with Newton Farms and the Wild Trout Trust
- Connect with others working in the Rhee catchment and deliver Mudspotter monitoring. Assess the applicability for Riverfly monitoring in this stretch.
- Explore how Friends of the Rhee might engage in Catchment Scale Planning for the Rhee
- Engage with local ecology and water stakeholders and regulators e.g. Environment Agency, Wild Trout Trust, Wildlife Trust BCN, Cam Catchment Partnership
- Engage with land owners, land managers and farmers
- Find funding and deliver a feasibility study e.g. JBA Consultants, FishTek or River Restoration Centre, Cranfield
- Engage with key funders e.g. Anglian Water A-WINEP

### Accompanying documents

- Email re ASC from Vince Lea, Bourn Brook
- River Rhee Advisory visit\_Wild Trout Trust\_Oct2025.pdf
- Friends of the Rhee - River Restoration of the Lower Rhee - Feb26.pdf

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