

**Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames**

**HOGSMILL VALLEY WALK STRATEGY  
PENRHYN ROAD TO HERON COURT**

**PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS TO THE WALK**

**OCTOBER 2002**



**Devendra Saksena BSc Eng FIE MBA  
Director of Environmental Services  
Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames  
Guildhall II  
Kingston Upon Thames  
Surrey KT1 1EU**



## 1) Introduction

The Royal Borough of Kingston adopted the Hogsmill Valley Walk Strategy in June 2002. The Hogsmill Valley provides a chain of open space from Kingston Town to the South of the Borough, following the course of the Hogsmill River. The Strategy aims to identify potential action points to establish the Hogsmill Valley Walk along the length of the river in order to promote both long and short distance walking in the borough through improving accessibility, as well as enhancing the borough's landscape and biodiversity.

The Hogsmill meets the River Thames in Kingston Town Centre, in an area which is now known as Charter Quay. This area has seen massive redevelopment over the last few years, and as a direct result the mouth of the river has been enhanced, and accessibility to it has been improved. This has enabled a greater degree of enjoyment of the river and provides a strong focus point at which to start the river walk or do a linked walk along the Hogsmill and the newly completed Thames-side path.

Following its departure from Charter Quay it is possible to follow the river upstream to the Guildhall complex, immediately adjacent to Guildhall 2. The river walk here is well maintained, with carefully managed landscaping, and unobtrusive fencing which complements the urban feel of the river in the town centre.

The river then runs underneath college roundabout, until it emerges at the Reevethorpe Garage site (Proposal Site 21 in the Unitary Development Plan) to which the first Site Specific Action in the Strategy is addressed.

The current entrance to this section of the Hogsmill Walk is next to the garage site, meeting the river as it emerges at the back of a residential area. The walk then follows the river until it meets the end of Heron Court, where it is forced to leave the river to circumnavigate Agar House and its grounds. It is here that the second Site Specific Action in the Strategy is encountered as it recommends trying to gain access to the back of Agar House so that the walk does not need to deviate from the river.

Between these two sections the walk is in place, but the street furniture, and the scenery have become run down and unattractive. Through careful maintenance of the area, management of vegetation, and improved street furniture this portion has the potential to draw the public from the new Charter Quay development, through the Guildhall complex, and up further along the Hogsmill, thus meeting objectives of promoting walking through accessibility and safe design.

## 2) The existing problems on the Hogsmill Walk between Penrhyn Road and Heron Court

### a. Signage on to path

*The existing signage on to the path is extremely limited, and unclear, particularly in terms of following the river from the Guildhall across Penrhyn Road, towards Heron Court. This sign needs to be improved, and where possible incorporated with other existing signage to reduce clutter.*

### b. Wall

*The wall at the entrance to this section of the walk is badly graffitied, and has a number of weeds at its base. This is not an inviting entrance to this section of the walk.*



### c. Vegetation growing through pavement

*On the opposite side to the wall at the entrance to this section there is a well-developed hedgerow, but it is starting to spread and find cracks in the tarmac path from which to grow. Limited management would prevent future problems.*

d. Harm to trees

*A tree at the entrance to this section has had a number of branches ripped off and broken, and left on the path. The tree needs to be properly maintained and the area tidied.*



e. Graffiti on wall of house

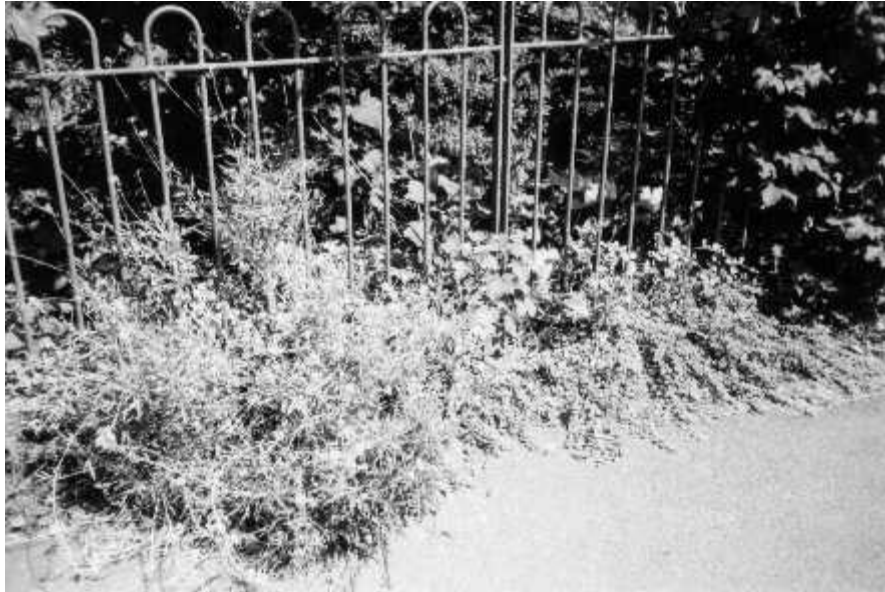
*The side of the terrace which faces the Hogsmill has been graffitied. This needs cleaning off, or repainting in partnership with others.*



f. Low level vegetation against wall of house

*Again, the vegetation is unkempt, and therefore attracts rubbish. This needs clearing, and re-planting, with the potential for keeping some of the existing vegetation, again with the agreement of the owners.*

- g. Plants growing through bars  
*This needs cutting back, with the potential for replanting. It will have to occur if the railings are to be either repainted, replaced or removed.*



- h. Bars need repainting  
*The railings need repainting as the paint is peeling off and adding to the overall degraded appearance of the area.*

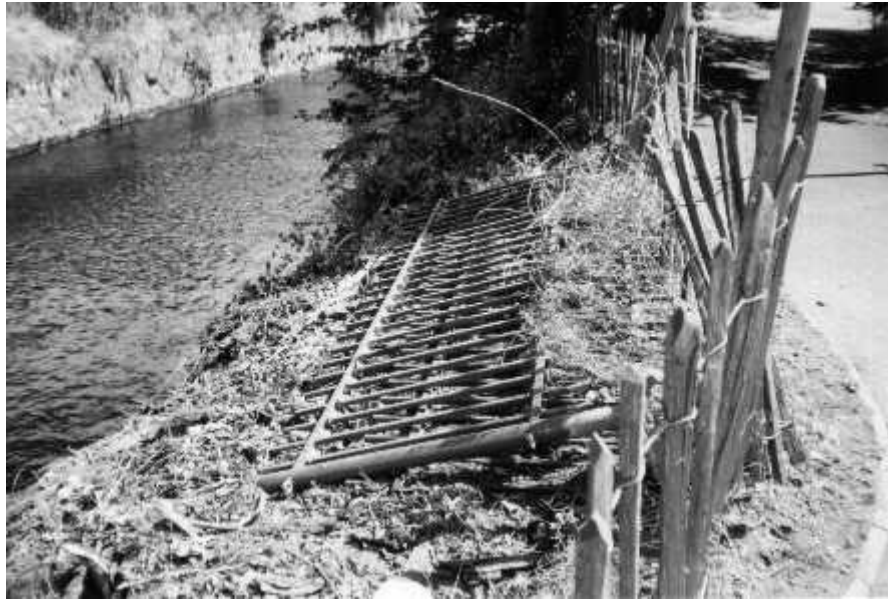


- i. Litter  
*There is a litter problem along this stretch with the flower beds being prime targets for litter droppers.*
- j. Graffiti  
*Graffiti is a common occurrence along here, and needs to be cleaned off (potentially painted over) and managed to ensure that it doesn't continue to develop.*

- k. Planting along banks  
*Planting along the banks is unkempt and untidy. There is not much ecological value in the existing vegetation, which needs to be cut back and re-landscaped in order to improve the overall appearance of the river. Maintenance will be necessary to ensure this does not recur.*



- l. Rubbish bins  
The rubbish bins are mostly cracked, and badly graffitied. Replacements will be needed soon, which gives the potential to replace them with bins that are more in keeping with the area.
- m. Seating areas  
*The seats along this section are again graffitied, and also in need of repair. It may be possible to repair them without need for replacement.*
- n. Bridge  
*The bridge appears to be structurally sound, but the paint is peeling, and some of the netting, which provides a safety guard, is starting to pull away.*
- o. Different heights of railings  
*The railings along this stretch vary in height, size and type. It adds to the general confusion in the appearance of the overall area.*
- p. Lack of railings where tree cut down  
*These railings are proposed to be replaced; to ensure long-term safety.*



- q. Articles dumped in river  
*There are a number of items that have been dumped in the river, they are unsightly, and need to be removed.*



- r. Brick pillar  
*There is a brick pillar in the middle of the row of railings close to the Penrhyn Road entrance. It does not seem to have a purpose, and could be easily removed.*
- s. Fencing around allotment gardens, Grange Road – leads alongside river ultimately, better shorter and well managed  
*The railings around the allotments are in need of better maintenance, and repainting. If possible replacement of these railings in line with those proposed for the other side of the walk would lead to a uniform approach along this stretch.*

- t. Manure / composting bin for allotments about to fall in river  
*The manure heap at the edge of the allotments close to the river is in danger of falling into the Hogsmill channel due to unsteady railings.*



- u. Motorbikes using the path across the footbridge  
*Motorbikes use the passage from Grange Road through to the Penrhyn Road side of the river. Although they are not ridden, they are large and prevent other members of the public travelling the other way. Width restriction measures, particularly from Grange Road, would prevent this from happening.*
- v. Street furniture – particularly lights (security)  
*Existing street furniture is in need of repair and maintenance.*
- w. Rubbish stuffed in tree  
*Litter is a problem along this section of the walk, but it has also been dumped in the branches of a number of trees along the path. This needs to be removed.*



### 3) Potential improvements

- i. New railings (anti graffiti paint) along both sides of river  
*Along the allotments and the length of the path – will improve the overall design of the walk.*
- ii. New bins  
*Replace the existing bins with ones that are more sturdy and in keeping with the overall design of the area.*
- iii. Cut back existing vegetation  
*Re-landscaping of the area is necessary, some areas of existing vegetation need management, but there are also bare patches of soil which need replanting. Identify the most suitable types of planting.*
- iv. Improve seating areas – new benches  
*Currently the seating areas are unattractive, and the benches need maintenance or replacement.*
- v. Improvements to the bridge  
*The bridge needs repainting, both to protect it, and enhance it. The netting on the side of the handrails also needs to be more firmly fixed to the bridge in some places.*
- vi. Get rid of graffiti – either through painting walls (brick, especially by garage) or sanding off woodwork  
*Graffiti is one of the major problems in this area. Painting is mostly needed. There is potential to create a mural on the wall alongside Reevehorpe Garage (proposal site 21 – identified for affordable / special needs housing)*
- vii. Sweep paths  
*The paths need to be cleared, and the rubbish in the area gathered.*
- viii. General Management plan  
*In order to ensure that any improvements to the area are long term, a management plan must be developed.*
- ix. New lights (more attractive to area)  
*The existing street lighting in the area is sufficient, although painting is required. It would be ideal to chose new, lower lights, which are more in keeping with the riverside setting.*
- x. New pole to stop motorbikes cutting through  
*A pole at the footpath from grange road would ensure that motorbikes cannot access the river walk. However, this may lead to exclusion of young families with pushchairs or prams.*

- xi. **New planting and Landscaping**  
*As previously identified, a new regime of landscaping needs to be employed to enable painting / renewal of the railings to go ahead, and to improve the overall character of the area. This would need to be included within the management plan as an ongoing task.*
- xii. **Improved signage (all part of school logo project)**  
*The signage from Penrhyn Road, and from Heron Court onwards is not comprehensive or easily legible. A new logo for the walk will be developed, and this should be displayed along this section once this occurs. It should be in keeping with other new signage along the walk.*

#### 4) Proposed Timescales

No.	Proposed Improvements	Timescale
i	New Railings along both sides of the river	Medium Term
ii	New Bins	Short Term
iii	Cut back existing vegetation	Short Term
iv	Improve seating areas – new benches	Medium Term
v	Improvements to the bridge	Medium Term
vi	Remove graffiti	Medium Term
vii	Sweep paths	Short Term
viii	General management plan	Long Term
ix	New lighting	Long Term
x	New pole to stop cut through of motorbikes	Medium Term
xi	New planting and landscaping	Medium Term
xii	Improved signage	Medium Term

#### 5) Funding

All money for these improvements will come from the borough's spending budget for implementing the Hogsmill Walk. There is no potential for section 106 funding along this stretch, or for achievement through planning obligations. It will therefore form part of the overall spend for the 2002/2003 budget year.

#### 6) Influence upon the overall implementation of the Hogsmill Valley Walk Strategy

It is hoped that through implementation of these proposals the Hogsmill Valley Walk will grow in its significance to the borough, through increased accessibility. This should give more emphasis to the strategy, and encourage alternative funding sources from elsewhere to assist in implementing many of the other proposals contained in the adopted strategy, including Strategy 1

(Reevethorpe Garage Site) and Strategy 2 (Agar House). These strategies are fully associated with this section, and relate to the way the walk deviates from the river at the Penrhyn Road crossing, and after Heron Court. The strategies aim to ultimately implement the walk closer to the river.

## **7) Promotion**

This scheme will promote the Hogsmill Valley Walk, and encourage people to begin to use it for their daily leisure activities. It should therefore raise the profile of the walk, and will assist in enhancing public awareness with regards to other schemes contained in the strategy, and their imminent implementation.