

# Watercourses

on or next to your property



Watercourses help manage surface water, prevent flooding and improve habitats for wildlife so it's important to keep them clear and well maintained.

Rivers, brooks, streams, culverts and roadside ditches are all watercourses even if they don't contain water all year round. If you have any of these **running through, underneath or next to your property** it's your responsibility to look after them. The legal term for this is Riparian Ownership.

## What are your rights and responsibilities as a riparian owner?

As a riparian owner you must:

- keep structures that you own, such as culverts and trash screen weirs, clear from debris.
- maintain the bed and banks of the watercourse, including shrubs and trees.
- clear away debris, even if it did not originate from your land.
- allow water to run through your section of the watercourse without any obstruction, pollution or diversion.
- not impact the rights of your downstream neighbour which in turn means that you will not be impacted by your upstream neighbour.



## What are the common problems that can affect a watercourse?

- Installing culverts/pipes that are too small and create a blockage.
- Not keeping culverts/pipes/trash screens clear.
- Allowing silt to build up, which can reduce the capacity and block the watercourse.
- Failing to keep vegetation under control.
- Disposal of garden waste and domestic rubbish, either on the bank or within the watercourse.



## Further information and contacts

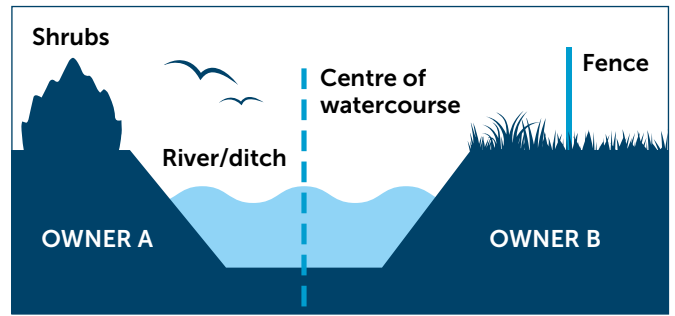
There are a number of authorities and organisations that have statutory powers over the condition of, and work on, watercourses in Nottinghamshire.

**Nottinghamshire County Council** is responsible for the management of Flood Risk from surface water run-off from groundwater and smaller watercourses (known as Ordinary Watercourses). As Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), the County Council has permissive powers and statutory duties to manage and co-ordinate local flood risk management activities in Nottinghamshire.

Contact [flood.team@nottscc.gov.uk](mailto:flood.team@nottscc.gov.uk), visit [www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk) or telephone 0300 500 80 80.

**The Environment Agency** manages the risk of flooding from main rivers, reservoirs, estuaries and the sea.

Contact [enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@environment-agency.gov.uk) or telephone 03708 506 506.



## What happens if I don't undertake my riparian responsibilities?

Nottinghamshire County Council will give you the opportunity to carry out any necessary work in a timely manner. If the work is not carried out, you could face legal action under the Land Drainage Act 1991. If a road floods because of an obstruction in a ditch, then the Highway Authority may take legal action requiring you to clear it.

## Can I make changes to a watercourse?

Yes, however you must obtain the correct **CONSENTS** and/or **PERMITS** from the relevant authorities (see below) before carrying out changes to a watercourse. More information on how to submit an application can be found online at [www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/flooding-help-and-advice/waterway-changes](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/planning-and-environment/flooding-help-and-advice/waterway-changes)



**Via East Midlands**, wholly owned by Nottinghamshire County Council, manages the highway network. This includes gullies, bridges and culverts within the highway. This does not include roadside ditches as they are the responsibility of the adjacent riparian landowner.

Visit [www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk](http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk) or telephone 0300 500 80 80

**Internal Drainage Boards** manage select watercourses and pumping stations in low lying fen and valley areas. Contact:

**Trent Valley Internal Drainage Board**  
by email: [info@tvldb.co.uk](mailto:info@tvldb.co.uk)  
or telephone 01636 704371

**Isle of Axholme and North Nottinghamshire Water Level Management Board**  
by email: [enquiries@lmdb.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@lmdb.co.uk)

**Seven Trent Water** owns and maintains the public sewage system. Further information and contacts. Visit [www.stwater.co.uk](http://www.stwater.co.uk)

For more information visit:  
[www.gov.uk/guidance/owning-a-watercourse](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/owning-a-watercourse)