

Action for Silk Stream community and business engagement

Mid-Project Evaluation Survey Results

[Action for Silk Stream](#) (AfSS) is a major £6m partnership project led by Barnet and Harrow Council's. It aims to tackle the effects of climate change by making space for water, reducing flooding, and improving water quality in the Silk Stream catchment for the benefit of communities and the environment. The 6-year flood resilience project launched in 2021.

The Action for Silk Stream project is funded by Defra as part of the [£200 million Flood and Coastal Innovation Programmes](#) which is managed by the Environment Agency. The programmes will drive innovation in flood and coastal resilience and adaptation to a changing climate.

In October 2021 the project team worked with Engage Barnet to host an online survey that sought to understand residents and businesses thoughts on project delivery and the work with local communities to date to help inform the mid-project evaluation and further shape the project in its final two years.

We asked

We enabled the community to have their say by completing an online questionnaire and by doing so the project team gathered data on the following aspects related to the project:

- awareness, knowledge, and experience of flooding
- locations where flooding / pollution incidents are taking place
- support for methods of managing flood risk
- levels of resident flood protection methods
- engagement with rivers, watercourses and wetlands and the project
- improvements the project can make.

You said

We received 92 responses to the project survey and saw a good spread of responses from residents across the Silk Stream catchment.

The results are summarised in the infographic and key findings include:

Knowledge and Experience of Flooding

- 73% of respondents are aware of the causes of flooding.
- Only 34% of respondents know where to seek advice / keep updated about the local flooding situation.
- Only 40% know how to protect their homes and local area from flooding.
- 76% agree that we all have a part to play to reduce flooding.
- 60% have experienced flooding and 28% believe their property is at risk.
- Common sources of the risk cited were:
 - Rainfall (51%)
 - Sewer blockages (43%)
 - Local river (40%)
- 26 locations and descriptions where flooding and pollution are occurring were submitted.

Support for Managing Flood Risk

- 99% agreed that managing flood risk in the Silk Stream Catchment is important.

- There was high support for increased maintenance and nature-based solutions as methods for managing flood risk.

Resident Flood Protection Methods

- To reduce their own flood risk:
 - 55% have kept ditches and drains clear around properties to improve flow.
 - 45% have installed a water butt / planter in their garden.
 - Others had also taken out flood insurance, created a wetland in their garden, removed/reduced hard paved areas and installed permeable (free draining) driveways.

Engagement with Rivers, Watercourses and Wetlands and the Project

- 30% have volunteered, and 31% attended events, 83% enjoyed them.
- 45% have learnt something new.
- 67% feel their health and wellbeing has improved as a result.

Suggested Improvements

- 38% suggested improvements to / new events and volunteering sessions.
- General themes included longer sessions, more regular events, more outreach, work with businesses and inclusive activities. River restoration, arts and crafts, wildlife walks and exercise sessions were suggested as potential new events.

More general points

- 66% indicated that they would like project / event updates and to volunteer for AfSS.
- There was an underrepresentation of responses from males, young people and ethnic minorities.
- Social media is the main platform people use to find information.
- People would like more information on boards and signage.

We did

The online survey is a key step in the project's interim evaluation process and has enabled local people's observations, thoughts and ideas to feed into future project delivery. The project team will use the engagement findings to help to further shape the project and the engagement programme in its final two years.

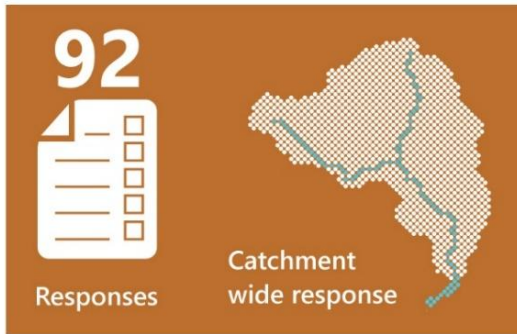
The outcomes of the survey have shown the project team that we need to:

- Broaden participation and increase promotion.
- Enhance education on flood advice and mitigation, nature-based solutions, water quality and river ecology (the latter being topics people want to know more about).
- Provide more accessible and inclusive opportunities for residents to learn more / get involved.

The project team will therefore look to:

- Increase education and awareness, increase inclusivity, enhance engagement, and promote the project and opportunities for involvement.
- Continue implementing nature-based solutions (e.g. wetland creation, river restoration) and promote community involvement in initiatives like habitat creation and tree planting.
- Encourage residents to adopt flood protection measures, such as permeable driveways and water butts.
- Review the reported flooding incidents and use this information to further inform the hydraulic modelling and the engagement programme.
- Promote regular maintenance of rivers, streams, and drainage systems.

Mid-Project Community & Business Survey Results



Knowledge and experience of flooding



Aware of causes



Know how to protect homes



Know where to seek advice

60% have experienced flooding
99% agreed that managing flood risk is important



Use and enjoyment of rivers

Suggested source of flood risk

