

# **THREE RIVERS ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK**

## **Terms of Reference October 2025**

Version 2.2

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# 1. Purpose of the Three Rivers Environmental Network

The Three Rivers Environmental Network (TREN) exists to improve the quality of the environment, support the climate and nature recovery agenda, and help create a healthier, more sustainable future for everyone in Three Rivers.

It brings together community voices, environmental interests, and local knowledge to:

- **Connect** people, ideas, and initiatives
- **Inspire** behaviour change and collective action
- **Educate** with expert insight and lived experience
- **Influence** Council decision-making through community-led input

The TREN provides a space for organisations, charities, community groups, businesses, and residents to:

- Share updates, best practice, and success stories
- Collaborate on joint projects and campaigns
- Give and receive feedback on environmental priorities and initiatives
- Help shape new Council and Partnership strategies, such as the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy

TREN is not a decision-making body or formal Council committee. It is hosted and administered by Three Rivers District Council.

# 2. Objectives of the Three Rivers Environmental Network

In order to achieve the above, the Three Rivers Environmental Network will:

- a) Be an **inclusive network** of organisations, groups, and individuals active in Three Rivers
- b) Work in **partnership** to improve the environment, tackle climate change, and build resilience
- c) Provide **leadership** and act as a community voice on environmental issues
- d) Consult and engage with residents, community representatives, and local businesses in a meaningful, accessible way
- e) Ensure activities align with national and countywide priorities, including the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership
- f) Promote **sustainability**, provide practical advice, and raise awareness of the impacts of climate change locally
- g) Support biodiversity by sharing expertise and encouraging measures to protect and enhance nature
- h) Champion a more **resilient natural environment** for Three Rivers

### 3. Meetings

TREN will run a **hybrid programme** of in-person and online engagement:

- **Three themed in-person meetings per year**, hosted in rotating locations across Three Rivers (one at Three Rivers House, two elsewhere)
- **Additional webinars or online talks** in winter months or where accessibility is a concern
- An **ongoing communication hub** for updates, events, campaigns, and resources

#### Format

- **Standing Agenda Items:**
  - Welcome and introductions
  - Feedback on previous actions and impacts
  - Updates from the Council and community groups
  - Announcements of upcoming events or campaigns
  - Community motions or asks to Council
- **Variable Components:**
  - Mini talks from residents or community groups (e.g. heat pump owner, GUCE, Transition Streets participant)
  - Expert sessions on topics such as retrofit, biodiversity, air quality, waste, food systems, water, or climate finance
  - Themed workshops and small-group discussions
  - Sharing of campaign materials and toolkits

#### Access & Inclusion

- Hybrid and alternative formats for those unable to attend in person (e.g. parents, carers, disabled residents)
- Informal set-up (no rigid seating, refreshments provided, plain language used)
- Rotating venues such as parish halls, schools, or community spaces to reach different wards

#### Administration

- Meetings organised and supported by Three Rivers District Council
- Questions for updates to be submitted at least 10 days before meetings for full responses; ad-hoc questions welcome during meetings
- Out-of-meeting requests will be answered in writing and shared with the network
- Meeting papers shared in advance where possible.

### 4. Position of Chair of the Three Rivers Environmental Network

- a) The Chair of the Three Rivers Environmental Network shall be a Councillor who is appointed at Annual Council.
- b) The role of the Chair will be to:
  - Promote collaboration and shared purpose
  - Ensure meetings remain relevant, inclusive, and action-focused
  - Work with the supporting Council Officer Group
  - Resolve conflict and promote constructive problem-solving
  - The Vice-Chair, also appointed at Annual Council, will deputise in the Chair's absence.

## 5. The role of Members and Attendees

Members are expected to:

- Actively contribute to discussions and share updates from their networks
- Share best practice and raise local environmental issues
- Stay informed on emerging policy and best practice in their area
- Identify resources (financial or in-kind) that could support joint projects
- Attend meetings regularly and share network updates within their own organisations
- Consider the needs of socially excluded or disadvantaged groups in their contributions
- Treat all members, staff, and the public with dignity, respect, and inclusivity

## 6. Financial Procedures

Current financial implications for TREN are minimal and will be covered by the current Climate Change budget. Administrative support is provided by Three Rivers District Council. Should TREN receive Council-allocated funds or secure external funding, it will follow the Council's Financial Standing Orders and Procedures, with all expenditure reported through the Council's Annual Accounts.

## 7. Review of the Terms of Reference

Three Rivers District Council will review the terms of reference every three years.