

You are crossing...

The Aylesford Stream

This bridge crosses a little known river called the Aylesford Stream. It starts its journey six miles east of here, near the village of Brabourne, flowing through farmland before entering urban Ashford.



The Aylesford Stream at Aylesford Green

of acidic grassland, veteran trees and ponds. The nearby wood pastures contain many magnificent pollarded trees, which support rich communities of lichens and insects.

The stream soon encounters its first major road, flowing under the A20. The Aylesford Stream has a history of impacts from transport infrastructure, diverted and culverted to make way for the Newtown Railway Works, the M20, the HS1 railway and now junction 10a of the motorway.

The Aylesford Stream is fed at its source by water from small springs. From Brabourne it flows west through a rural landscape of fields and small woods. Place names like Waterside and Fords Water indicate the presence of the stream.

Three miles from its source, the stream passes through Hatch Park - a Site of Special Scientific Interest. In the deer park, a herd of around 100 fallow deer roam through an ancient landscape



Fallow deer at Hatch Park, Mersham

A much smaller man-made structure has affected the stream at Sevington Mill. Like many rivers, the Aylesford Stream was once used to power water mills (it carried more water than it does now). Old mill weirs disrupt natural flow and prevent fish migration. In 2018 the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership partially removed the weir at Sevington, restoring more natural conditions.



The weir at Sevington before partial removal

The stream flows on into the Ashford Green Corridor, a network of riverside green spaces, which includes the area you are standing in. Nearby, a drainage channel called Waterbrook joins the stream - a reminder of how important urban rivers are for draining the land we live on. The stream then passes through South Willesborough Dykes, a large area of marshland, before reaching the East Stour at the end of its journey.



Banded demoiselle - thrives in the Ashford Green Corridor

Looking after this river

Surprisingly, some urban stretches of the Aylesford Stream are more natural than the rural ones, because riverside habitats have often been lost to intensive agriculture in the countryside. Some forms of agriculture are known to be impacting on water quality - agrochemicals and dairy effluent pollute run-off and groundwater. In urban areas, misconnected sewage pipes and household chemicals are a problem. The Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership is working with Ashford Borough Council and private landowners throughout the Ashford Green Corridor to help manage urban wildlife habitats and improve water quality.

How you can help

Use less water – our domestic water comes from the same sources that feed the Aylesford Stream.

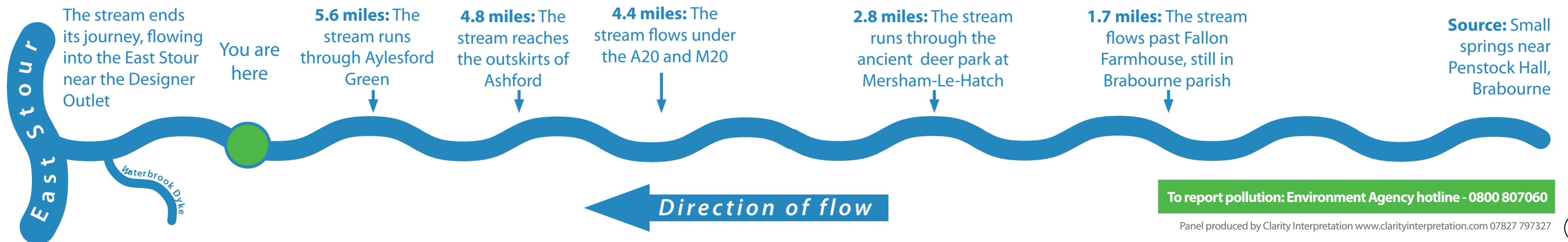
Check your plumbing – make sure water from your bathroom and kitchen goes into the waste water and not the surface water drain.

Volunteer – join the Kentish Stour Countryside Partnership in looking after rivers.

Find more information and download a leaflet about the Stour Catchment from our website www.kentishstour.org.uk



Total length: 6.8 miles



To report pollution: Environment Agency hotline - 0800 807060