

River Arrow and River Alne Charter for Alcester

1. Preamble

Alcester sits at the meeting point of the River Arrow and River Alne.

These rivers shape the town's landscape, history, ecology and flood risk. They run through its parks, fields and neighbourhoods, connecting the surrounding landscape to the communities along their course and contributing to Alcester's distinctive character, including its historic buildings, green spaces, sense of place and local economy.

They support wildlife, provide space for walking, learning and gathering, and contribute to the health, wellbeing, beauty and identity of the town.

They are not separate from Alcester. They are part of how the town functions.

This Charter recognises the rivers as living systems and sets out a shared commitment to protect and restore them as central to Alcester's future, for current and future generations.

2. The rivers have the right to

Flow

To move through Alcester with space for natural processes including flooding, sediment movement and channel adjustment.

Be clean

To be free from sewage, chemicals, excess nutrients and avoidable pollution.

Be alive

To support diverse and functioning ecosystems.

Be connected

To remain linked to floodplains, tributaries, wetlands, soils and green spaces.

Be protected

To have their corridor, floodplain and ecological function protected for the benefit of future generations.

3. Our responsibilities

Charter Supporters agree to support:

The protection and enhancement of the continuous River Arrow and River Alne corridor through Alcester, including Jubilee Fields, Westbury Park, Abbey Field, Priory Meadow, the River Arrow Nature Reserve and connected floodplains, open spaces and river margins

Natural flood management and restoration across the catchment

Development that accommodates the rivers, mitigates flood risk where possible and protects their natural function

Sustainable drainage and reduction of surface water runoff

The reduction of pollution from roads, drainage systems, land use and infrastructure

The restoration of river habitats using natural processes and locally appropriate materials

Monitoring, citizen science and shared understanding of the rivers

Learning, access and meaningful engagement with the rivers for residents, schools, children and families

The provision of meaningful public access while protecting wildlife and sensitive river habitats

Collaborative working across all stakeholders including but not limited to residents, landowners, public bodies, local organisations and community groups

4. River guardianship

River Arrow and Alne Revival CIC will steward this Charter and work with Charter Supporters to develop a local river guardianship partnership involving organisations, community groups, residents and other stakeholders.

The partnership will support the Charter by:

- representing the rivers in local discussions
- sharing knowledge and evidence
- supporting practical action
- reviewing progress over time

5. From Charter to action

This Charter will help inform discussions, projects and decisions affecting the River Arrow and River Alne, including flood resilience, habitat restoration, land management, public spaces and development affecting the river corridor and wider catchment.

It will evolve as understanding grows.