

Riparian Ownership

Residents and landowners whose property adjoins a river, stream or similar watercourse are likely to be riparian owners, which carries important legal rights and responsibilities.

Riparian owners may access and use the water flowing through or over their land, including for recreation, but they must also maintain the watercourse, keeping it free from obstructions and pollution.

North Kesteven District Council mainly has an advisory role unless the watercourse is adjacent to NK-owned land, where it would be the riparian owner. In these cases, the Council must cut and maintain the banks, so the water flows without restriction.

Parish councils take an interest because riparian ownership affects the maintenance of local watercourses, which are vital for environmental health and community wellbeing. Parish councils may also have responsibilities where they own adjoining land.

Responsibilities of riparian owners include, but are not limited to:

- Not obstructing water flow
- Keeping structures clear and unobstructed
- Seeking permission before using herbicides near water
- Preventing pollution
- Stopping invasive species spreading

The Environment Agency and Council work closely with landowners to encourage good management. The lead flood authority (LCC) and the Internal drainage boards (IDB) are the enforcing agents for riparian ownership.

By taking care of these waterways, it helps protect homes, habitats and our wider community.

Failure to maintain a watercourse can have serious consequences - including increased flood risks to neighbouring properties, damage to infrastructure and possible enforcement.

Read more information about riparian ownership from Lincolnshire County Council on their [website](#). Lincolnshire Community Resilience News also has a useful article on rights and responsibilities in their [newsletter](#).