



River Wandle, Wandle Park, Croydon

The story so far

The River Wandle boasts the best chalk stream in London. It springs from the foot of the North Downs and runs north to join the Thames. Sadly, in many places it has been relegated to underground channels (culverts) to make way for roads and housing.

However in Wandle Park, the council worked in partnership to regenerate the area and bring 250m of the River Wandle back to the surface and into the light. Now anyone walking through the park can witness the river meandering and functioning naturally, flowing diagonally across the park within its floodplain. This project has gained considerable recognition being Highly Commended at the 2015 Landscape Institute Awards.

The river was restored by

- Removing the underground channel
- Creating floodplain wetlands
- Creating meanders to mimic a more natural environment
- Replenishing natural river gravels
- Creating recreational green space

How has it helped wildlife?

- The new wetland habitat is attracting new plant and animal species.
- Uncovering the river has improved water quality by increasing light, oxygen and plants, all of which remove pollutants.
- An abundance of gravels in the river will attract freshwater shrimp.

How has it helped people?

- More than 7,000 visitors of all ages have been drawn to the Park since it re-opened in 2012 to enjoy the sound and sights of running water and get up close easily through new viewing platforms.
- Local schools are using the Park for educational sessions.

Partnership organisations

London Borough of Croydon, Environment Agency, Heritage Lottery Fund, The Big Lottery, The Mayor's Help A London Park Scheme, Friends of Wandle Park, Royal HaskoningDHV, LDA Design



AFTER - The rewilded river meandering through the park



BEFORE - How site used to look – the river is nowhere in sight



Nearest Station: Wandle Park on route 3 Tramlink service