



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Robert Taylor
Chief Executive Officer
Portsmouth Water Ltd.
PO Box 99 West Street
Havant PO9 1LD

10 August 2023

Dear Bob,

I am writing concerning the River Ems, part of which flows through Emsworth in the Havant Constituency, and the impact which abstractions by Portsmouth Water upstream are having on its future health and viability.

Some of my constituents have expressed concerns about the water levels in the River Ems, especially at times of acute water stress. I am grateful to local councillors Richard Kennett and Lulu Bowerman who have worked with local community groups to bring this issue to wider public attention.

As a locally-based company, I am sure Portsmouth Water appreciate how precious chalk streams like the River Ems are. The unique habitats they sustain are rare, and their destruction would represent a profound loss to biodiversity. I am therefore grateful that Portsmouth Water have already acknowledged the seriousness of these concerns and are undertaking investigations into the health of the Ems.

I welcome the recommendations of your River Ems River Baseline Report (December 2022), which calls for greater monitoring of the River. However, given the ecological imperative of protecting the Ems, it would be prudent to take more protective measures now. I am therefore calling on Portsmouth Water to undertake the following actions:

1. Take steps, in the short-term, to reduce the environmental impact of abstractions from the Ems (I acknowledge that all abstractions take place upstream and outside the Havant Constituency);
2. Produce plans, as an interim measure, to minimise the impact of abstractions on the River and its ecosystem, especially during times of water stress; and
3. Develop, for the long-term, a plan to progressively reduce and eventually eliminate abstractions from the Ems entirely.

In the meantime, I would be grateful if you could share with me Portsmouth Water's current strategy to safeguard the River Ems for future generations. In particular, I am keen to know the extent to which additional storage capacity from the construction of Havant Thicket reservoir might be employed to reduce and eliminate future abstractions.



Thank you for your consideration and assistance. Given the public interest in this issue, I will be putting this letter and your response into the public domain including on my website.

Yours sincerely,

Alan Mak

Alan Mak MP
Member of Parliament for the Havant Constituency

cc: Cllr Richard Kennett; Cllr Lulu Bowerman