# Thames Water faces fresh criticism after bottled water delivery in Oxford amid unexplained low pressure



Residents of Roger Dudman Way and Venneit Close in Oxford were taken aback last Sunday morning when they noticed a significant drop in their water pressure. This unexpected disruption prompted Thames Water, the UK's largest water supplier, to deliver bottled water to homes in the area as a precautionary measure. John Howson, a 78-year-old resident, was among those caught off guard by the situation. He described the moment he received the bottled water delivery, noting the lack of information provided by Thames Water regarding the low pressure issue.

Howson indicated that the local community was initially alerted about the water problem through a Facebook post, where residents began discussing their experiences. Shortly thereafter, a Thames Water representative knocked on his door with supplies, but the lack of a clear explanation for the deliveries left many residents bewildered. “They did not tell me why,” Howson said, expressing concern over the disconnect in communication. He noted that the low water pressure was primarily affecting upper floors of his building, suggesting the impact of the leak was somewhat limited.

Thames Water later clarified that the disruption stemmed from a leak in a private water main near Station Bridge, which they completed repairs on by midnight. Despite their prompt action, the company did not disclose the specific cause of the leak, leaving residents, including Howson, with unanswered questions. He highlighted that the local community is particularly sensitive to infrastructure issues at this time, as they are already grappling with the consequences of the ongoing closure of the Botley railway bridge. Initially shut in April 2023 for significant upgrades costing £161 million, the reopening has now been postponed until autumn 2026, compounding the inconvenience for local residents.

The recent incident in Oxford is not an isolated case. Thames Water has faced multiple challenges related to water supply issues in the area. Notably, during previous disruptions caused by repairs, bottled water stations were established at various locations, such as Thornhill Park & Ride and Headington Car Park, allowing residents to collect water in response to planned pipe repairs. Following a separate incident involving air ingress into pipes during an upgrade, crews worked overnight to restore supplies, even affecting facilities as critical as the John Radcliffe Hospital.

These recurrent problems underscore a growing scrutiny of Thames Water, which has been the subject of public concern following significant environmental incidents. Just last year, the company was fined £3.3 million after a major sewage leak polluted the Hinksey Stream, causing immense ecological damage and raising alarms about its management practices. Such incidents have further strained the relationship between Thames Water and the communities it serves, calling into question both its infrastructure reliability and commitment to transparency.

As communities like Roger Dudman Way and Venneit Close continue to navigate these challenges, local residents remain hopeful for clearer communication and more reliable water services moving forward.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25208387.oxford-people-shocked-thames-water-provides-bottled-water/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25208387.oxford-people-shocked-thames-water-provides-bottled-water/?ref=rss)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25208387.oxford-people-shocked-thames-water-provides-bottled-water/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25208387.oxford-people-shocked-thames-water-provides-bottled-water/?ref=rss)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/24281500.bottled-water-banks-set-oxford-taps-stop-running/), [[4]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-68911366)
* Paragraph 4 – [[5]](https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/23633268.thames-water-fined-3-3-million-pollution-incident/), [[6]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-59351696)
* Paragraph 5 – [[7]](https://www.shropshirestar.com/uk-news/2024/12/24/sewage-scandals-and-bill-increases-mark-year-of-woe-for-water-industry/)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25208387.oxford-people-shocked-thames-water-provides-bottled-water/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/25208387.oxford-people-shocked-thames-water-provides-bottled-water/?ref=rss> - Residents in Oxford's Roger Dudman Way and Venneit Close were surprised on June 1, 2025, to find low water pressure. Thames Water responded by delivering bottled water to affected residents, including John Howson, 78, who criticised the lack of communication accompanying the deliveries. Thames Water later clarified that the issue was due to a leak on a private water main near Station Bridge, which was repaired by midnight. The company did not disclose the cause of the leak. Residents are also dealing with the ongoing Botley railway bridge closure, which has been delayed until autumn 2026.
3. <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/24281500.bottled-water-banks-set-oxford-taps-stop-running/> - In response to water supply issues in Oxford, Thames Water established bottled water stations at Thornhill Park & Ride and Headington Car Park. The disruptions were caused by problems following planned work to repair a pipe, leading to low water pressure and outages in areas including OX3, OX4, and OX44. Thames Water worked to restore the supply throughout the day and overnight, urging customers to collect bottled water from the designated stations.
4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-68911366> - Thames Water crews worked through the night to restore water supplies in Oxford after a 24-hour outage affected properties, including John Radcliffe Hospital. The disruption was caused by air entering the pipes following work to upgrade a water main. Thames Water assured that everything should now be back to normal and advised customers that any cloudiness in the water was due to harmless air bubbles that would disappear if the water stood for a while.
5. <https://www.oxfordmail.co.uk/news/23633268.thames-water-fined-3-3-million-pollution-incident/> - Thames Water was fined £3.3 million after an estimated 500,000 litres of raw sewage leaked into a stream in Oxford. The Environment Agency reported that the leak, which lasted 30 hours, polluted a 1.8-mile stretch of Hinksey Stream and resulted in the death of approximately 3,000 fish. Thames Water admitted that the system responsible had not been checked for 10 years and expressed deep regret for the incident.
6. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-59351696> - Thames Water was fined £4 million after an estimated 500,000 litres of raw sewage leaked into a stream in Oxford. The Environment Agency reported that the leak, which lasted 30 hours, polluted a 1.8-mile stretch of Hinksey Stream and resulted in the death of approximately 3,000 fish. Thames Water admitted that the system responsible had not been checked for 10 years and expressed deep regret for the incident.
7. <https://www.shropshirestar.com/uk-news/2024/12/24/sewage-scandals-and-bill-increases-mark-year-of-woe-for-water-industry/> - The water industry faced significant challenges in 2024, including sewage scandals and bill increases. Research found high levels of E. coli in the River Thames, affecting the annual Boat Race between Oxford and Cambridge. Additionally, United Utilities faced claims of illegally dumping over 100 million litres of raw sewage into Lake Windermere over three years. In Devon, South West Water was forced to provide bottled water to households for up to two months due to a parasite contamination crisis in Brixham.