

River Char Community Project (RCCP)

Report to the Parish Council Meeting – June 2024

1. Nick Gray (Dorset Wildlife Trust) and Ian Rees (Dorset National Landscape) led a river walk from Stockham Bridge on the evening of Thursday 23rd May. Very many thanks to Cllr. Sue Johnson for making it possible, giving us permission to do the walk and for answering our questions so openly.
2. Nick and Ian will lead the next river walk at Revelshay from Stockham Bridge on the evening of Thursday 4th July (after councillors have voted).
3. We started sampling at 5 sites on the River Char and Monkton Wyld Stream this Tuesday (4th June). Sampling will continue every fortnight for at least 6 months. Wessex Water are conducting the following tests for us:

Bacteriology

Total coliforms	<i>E. coli</i>	Enterococci
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General Chemistry

Suspended solids	TON (nitrogen)	Chloride
Ammonia	pH	Aluminium
Nitrate	Turbidity	Total Phosphorus
Orthophosphate	Conductivity	Manganese
Total phosphorus	Alkalinity	Iron

At one site they are also testing for:

Cypermethrin (agric. biocide)	Glyphosate (weedkiller)	PBDEs (forever chemicals).
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We are doing our own matching tests using kits supplied by Wessex Water and John Kenward's lab and equipment, so that we can validate our measurements and then continue to do tests in future.

The tests are designed to show the impact on the river of:

- Treated and untreated sewage – and chemicals contained in the sewage – released from Wessex Water's Sewage Treatment Plant and from its Combined Sewer Overflows
- Domestic and Commercial (campsite) Septic Tanks and Sewage Treatment Plants
- Agricultural outputs – Slurry tank spills; runoff from fields; pesticides and insecticides.

This testing programme was negotiated by RCCP via the Clean Rivers of West Dorset group and is a really important step in understanding the state of our river and the underlying problems it faces and opportunities for improvement. Wessex Water has trained us and is paying in full for all the tests on samples taken downstream (near their assets). It has also supplied us free of charge with the testing kits that we are using to conduct our own tests. (Total Wessex Water contribution approx. £5,000).

Dorset National Landscape has paid for the bacteriological testing equipment used by John Kenward to replicate the *E. coli* and enterococcal tests and is paying approx. £800 in costs for upstream tests in the CVPC area. (Total DNL contribution approx. £1,500).

That leaves costs of max. £840 (for the Cypermethrin, Glyphosate and PBDE tests). These will be incurred over the next 6 months. RCCP asks CVPC to consider funding some or all of this amount from the reserve set aside for RCCP costs in its current budget. RCCP members would pay the costs and seek itemised reimbursement from CVPC.