

# CROWD: Clean Rivers Of West Dorset

FRIDAY 27TH FEBRUARY 2026 MEETING

WOOTTON FITZPAINE VILLAGE HALL, WOOTTON FITZPAINE DT6 6ND – 11:00AM-1:00PM

## AGENDA + QUESTIONS

Apologies:

- INTRODUCTION
- UPDATES –
  - **DORSET NATIONAL LANDSCAPE / BRIT CATCHMENT NFM PROJECT UPDATE** – Ian Rees
  - **WESSEX WATER** (**SEE CROWD QUESTIONS (OVERLEAF); UPDATES**) – Julian Okoye
  - **ENVIRONMENT AGENCY** (**SEE CROWD QUESTIONS (OVERLEAF); UPDATES**) – Yasmin Guler
  - **WEST DORSET CONSTITUENCY** (**SEE CROWD QUESTIONS (OVERLEAF); UPDATES**) – Edward Morello MP
  - **NEWS FROM CROWD** INCLUDING
    - RIVER BRIDE – Debbie Legge
    - RIVER CHAR – John Kenward
    - RIVER WINNIFORD – Paul Ramsden/Lee Ramsden
    - RIVER MANGERTON & RIVER ASKER – Chuck Wilmott/ Margaret Morgan-Grenville
    - RIVER SIMENE – Bob Hamblett
    - BRIT VALLEY PROJECT – Dana Assinder
    - ANY OTHER RIVERS AND BEACHES
- **FUTURE PLANS AND DIRECTIONS** – [A Dorset-Wide Rivers Initiative?](#)
- NEXT MEETING AND AOB

Invitees:

- **River Winniford (Winniford River Action Group):** Lee Ramsden, Paul Ramsden, Peter Stapleton
- **River Char (River Char Community Project):** Andrew Carey
- **River Char (River Char Action Group & Riverfly Testing Coordinator):** John Kenward
- **River Mangerton and River Asker (River monitor):** Chuck Willmott
- **River Mangerton (River monitor):** Margaret Morgan-Grenville
- **River Axe (Little Axe Group, Broadwindsor):** Sheila Hawkins
- **River Bride:** Deborah Legge
- **River Brit (Upper River):** Rosemary Rychnovsky
- **River Brit (Lower River):** Caroline Pearce
- **River Simene (Parish Councillor):** Bob Hamblett
- **West Dorset Wilding:** Dana Assinder
- **West Dorset Rivers and Coastal Streams (Catchment Officer):** Ian Rees
- **Litter Free Dorset:** Emma Teasdale
- **West Dorset Constituency:** Edward Morello MP
- **Wessex Water** – Julian Okoye
- **Environment Agency** – Yasmin Guler

*Overleaf: Reports in Brief*

**Reports in Brief: FULL versions of these reports are [online](#):**

**Winniford River Action Group (Lee Ramsden, Paul Ramsden) [Update on EA contact](#)**

In late December there was a significant fuel pollution incident at North Chideock. When notified, the EA said it would not respond because the Winniford is not a main river. Lee and Paul will give us an update.

**River Brit (Upper River) (Rosemary Rychnovsky) [Questions for Wessex Water](#)**

1. I can find no details of a schools' SUDS programme, which was mentioned at the last meeting. Are any school projects being run by WW (other than their grant scheme)? Our school, like many, has a big roof, leaking gutters, tarmac and lots of green space. Connecting the roofs to the green space would be great.
2. In response to Bob's questions about phosphate and lead pipes last time, mention was made of WW-supported programmes to remove domestic lead piping. I can find no details. Can you tell us any more?
3. Does WW plan to educate the public about reducing domestic water use during heavy rain? Is it a priority?

**River Simene (Bob Hamblett) [See full report attached and [online](#)]**

1. **The lake at Foundry Lea** seems to be having a positive flood mitigation effect.
2. New monitoring points on the Simene – where it enters the parish and where it leaves Symondsbur Estate by the Old Bridport Foundry – show the same level or less **silt in the water** at the lower site.
3. Dorset Wildlife Trust are building **soggy dams** on the Simene.
4. **RVSP (Restoring Vegetation to Simene Project)** is balsam bashing+ (to encourage regrowth of native species).

**Question for Wessex Water:** Would Wessex Water offer a tour of the Water Recycling Plant at Powerstock?

**River Bride (Debbie Legge) [See full report attached and [online](#)]**

1. **Designation of East Beach at West Bay as a bathing water beach**

The West Bay Swimmers Action Group's application for bathing water status for East Beach has moved to a public consultation which closes on 23rd March. The form is easy to fill in and takes less than two minutes: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/water/13-proposed-bathing-water-sites/> Please help us and complete it.

2. **The River Bride Group**

I have spoken to Burton Bradstock Parish Council and to Puncknowle, Swyre and W. Bexington PC. We have set up a group to represent the River Bride – Ian Rees is liaising with DWT to provide Riverfly training. 12 people have signed up. I have set up a WhatsApp group, with 19 members so far. Our first aim is to get a view of the state of the river, first in terms of the water quality, then taking a wider view including wildlife, etc.

3. **The Action for Justice Freshwater guide**

I attended the launch of this guide. It covers the primary causes of water contamination and details the legal strategies available to stop pollution and seek remedies for affected communities. You can find it here: [https://action4justice.org/legal\\_areas/freshwater-pollution/](https://action4justice.org/legal_areas/freshwater-pollution/)

**River Char (John Kenward) [See full report attached and [online](#)]**

- We have published two reports on our work in 2025, including data on pollution measurement and Riverfly testing. They were launched at a public meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> February.

**Headlines:** It is often unsafe to swim at the Lagoon ~ Storms drive the worst pollution ~ Phosphate is a pressure; ammonia not ~ Our bacterial tests produce decision grade data ~ WW's works at Newlands Bridge reduced spills from 20 in 2024 to 5 in 2025 ~ The River Charter, Dragon Festival, etc. are changing people's view of the river.

**Next Steps:** Monitor the Lagoon frequently for *E. coli* and publish the results ~ Investigate pollution at east beach ~ Continue to identify key problem sites and outfalls along the length of the river ~ Take the first steps towards a Natural Flood Management programme of leaky dams ~ Extend Riverfly monitoring ~ Work towards a 'Rivers of Dorset' initiative: Festival, River Charter and other initiatives.

**Question for Wessex Water:** How many spills have there been at Newlands Bridge in 2026?

**Question for Edward Morello:** Are you in touch with other Dorset MPs on river matters? Do you sense any momentum at constituency level for a 'Rivers of Dorset' approach?