

**Dorset CAN**  
Climate Action Network

[www.dorsetcan.org](http://www.dorsetcan.org)



## Bright Blue Dorset - Cleaning up our Rivers Together – Results from the 30<sup>th</sup> Jan. Zoom meeting

**Recording available at:** <https://www.dorsetcan.org/rivers.html>

**Strategies/Actions that have worked well:**

**Data gathering** in as many ways as possible is seen as the most effective way to make a difference. It provides the detailed facts to speak with conviction and authority to the relevant agencies as well as creating a field of 'working together' rather than 'against' those agencies. The situation is complex.

**Data gathering/monitoring methods quoted** (with links for info where possible - thanks to Ian Rees)

*Monitoring helps to develop a love for the river*

- Westcountry Rivers Trust CSI (done by several Rivers) - <https://wrt.org.uk/westcountry-csi/>
- Riverfly monitoring (several Rivers) – Training provided by Dorset Wildlife Trust. Reporting is online. It takes approximately one hour per sample. Samples are collected monthly between April and September. <https://www.riverflies.org/>
- *E-coli* data – provided by the EA (River Lim)
- AONB baseline study of river (Upper Char/River Asker)
- Scientific equipment that tests for phosphates, nitrates and ammonia (Queen Thorne)
- Trail cameras & mink rafts. (Rivers Asker & Mangerton) Training could be given by Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust [www.gwct.org.uk/wildlife/research/mammals/american-mink/](http://www.gwct.org.uk/wildlife/research/mammals/american-mink/)
- Observation - <https://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/things-do/volunteering/water-guardians>
- Same day monitoring. (River Sid)
- Gathering precise information about how the local sewage system works and what goes into the river. Suggesting realistic solutions based on detailed knowledge. Info at [www.riverchar.org](http://www.riverchar.org)

Ian Rees has since mentioned 2 other forms of monitoring not included above:

- **Invasive Species monitoring – plants:** not a formal scheme, but keeping an eye out for invasive non-native species, such as Himalayan balsam or Japanese knotweed when out and about. No access to the river is required.
- **Water Vole survey:** looking for signs April-June. Training by: People's Trust for Endangered Species (<https://ptes.org/get-involved/surveys/countryside/national-water-vole-monitoring-programme/>). Access to the river bank required, with landowner's permission. Reporting is to PTES.

**Contact: Ian Rees, Dorset AONB Countryside Officer - 01305 228235 - [ian.rees@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:ian.rees@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk).**

**Public Engagement** Offering a wide variety of different activities to volunteers eager to help clean up the river engages more members of the community and empowers individuals. Going door to door to ask if people in the village were concerned about the loss of biodiversity on many levels. Create fun, light, celebratory and engaging activities.

Getting agencies to work together has been successful: eg SWW, Wessex Water, Town or Parish Council, EA, WRT, AONB and River Action groups. Councils may provide some funding for e.g. equipment for ecological survey of river.

**Catchment Partnerships** – Join them!

<https://www.dorsetcatchments.co.uk/>

<https://catchmentbasedapproach.org/get-involved/east-devon/>

### **Challenges:**

If you are a stream, there is no EA monitoring.

If you are a designated bathing beach, the EA take monitoring more seriously.

How to engage 95% who are not engaged, and all of this is being done in the face of disappearing biodiversity/never enough?

Time – every river group could have a paid coordinator to keep it going.

Weirs - stopping fish.

Having a strategic view and coordinating volunteers.

Public accessibility to detailed data e.g. from SWW.

Lobbying: A wish for river groups to coordinate more pressure for better data to be made available to the general public.

*'Keep Going! Keep challenging agencies! The importance of what you are doing is being recognised nationally!'* (Simon Browning)

Thanks to all

Sandra Reeve

On behalf of DorsetCAN

Stronger Together!



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