

CROWD: Clean Rivers Of West Dorset

Notes and action points from the meeting of 9th August online

Attending:

- **River Char (River Char Community Project, RCCP):** Andrew Carey
River Char (Lower Char Community Project, LCCP): Dana Assinder
- **Winniford River (Winniford River Action Group, WRAG):** Lee Ramsden
Winniford River (Winniford River Action Group, WRAG): Paul Ramsden
- **River Mangerton (River monitor):** Chuck Willmott
- **River Asker (Riverfly Testing coordinator):** Howard Atkinson
- **West Dorset Rivers and Coastal Streams (Catchment Officer):** Ian Rees

1. **Debriefing CROWD meeting (23rd June) AND summary of local EA meeting (8th Aug):**

From the previous day's EA meeting with Fiona White and John Taylor (EA's Analysis & Reporting Team Leader and Member respectively), it was evident that there were some difficulties with the Analysis & Reporting Team working on data gathered by the *national* monitoring team and the separate *national marine* monitoring team.

Data and sites they referred to are [here](#) and on Dana's [Water Quality Resources document](#)

Fiona had followed up with [an email](#) addressing several questions asked on the day. We have clarified the note on testing – the EA still tests for *E. coli* but not for total coliforms. Her [note on phosphate testing](#) is useful. She reiterated that riverfly testing is more useful to the EA than other CSI testing or even acquiring a sonde for our own testing purposes.

We await more news of the new EA Data & Evidence role and the person appointed (Harry?)

We noted that Jim Flory had been more enthusiastic than Fiona about CSI testing and wondered if this reflects CaSTCo's current work on Citizen Science (see below).

Lee reported that Jim Flory had said EA would test once further east on Seatown beach than their usual point. She is waiting for results. **ACTION: Lee to follow-up with Jim if no results received.**

We noted that the EA is not concerned with public health issues (as opposed to environmental ones) and is unlikely to be helpful to us regarding bacteriological monitoring. But they *have* been monitoring the River Lim for *E. coli* – so public or political pressure might encourage them to test on other CROWD rivers (see below). **ACTION: Howard offered to find out from the Health and Safety Executive what their response is to the human health risk in CROWD rivers and beaches.** **ACTION: Ian offered to do the same with Public Health Dorset.**

2. **Review CROWD's founding aims and future direction:**

Lagoons

We agreed to call on Chris Loder to press the EA to test the lagoons at Seatown and Charmouth weekly for the full 2024 bathing season. (The EA tested the lagoon at Charmouth until 2019.)

In the longer term we agreed to try to get the lagoons designated as part of the neighbouring (marine) bathing waters or to get them designated as bathing waters in their own right.

Whole-of-River Testing

We agreed to develop an Integrated Monitoring Strategy for the CROWD area to enable us to establish a baseline from which we can track environmental changes, good or bad. This data will support CROWD's communications with EA, WW, other public and private bodies and our MP. Ian

suggested that we ask for [CaSTCo](#) support on this and we agreed to invite Simon Browning from the Rivers Trust to talk to an interim CROWD meeting about this (**ACTION: Andrew and Dana**). Dana pointed us to [Simon's presentation to Dorset CAN](#) (starts at 17:06). Ian pointed us to the [Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative](#) also. Ian offered to include a presentation on his Citizen Science project in the River Brit Catchment at that same meeting.

Based on this strategy we would run a pilot scheme (perhaps on the Winniford) to identify types of pollution present at specific points along the river and the sources of that pollution. We would seek CL's support to obtain targeted help from EA. We noted that Wessex Water had not ruled out helping us with this. Howard stressed that microbial testing should be at the heart of it as the EA already tests for 'environmental' pollutants on some rivers. He reminded us that WW do PCR testing on the origins of microbial pollution.

In the meantime, WRAG have three sets of *E. coli* test results for the Winniford and have found a leaking drain/sewer. WRAG will continue to work with WW on this issue. **ACTION: Lee and Paul to prepare a report on what they have done so far.**

Rainwater separation at source

We noted that Chris Loder is keen on the Isle of Wight Project and on getting WW to extend its Chippenham & Bridport trials. We will ask him to pursue WW on this at the Sept. CROWD meeting.

We agreed that, for CROWD itself, the first target should be larger projects (campsites, holiday parks, schools, etc.). We agreed to press WW to work with these sites in the CROWD area (with Parish Council or River Group support) to identify opportunities for large-scale rainwater separation and to implement them.

Other work with Wessex Water

ACTION: Andrew to chase Andy Mears for a) their response to our long list of questions, b) an update on Chippenham, and c) other action points – including importantly their plans for additional stormwater storage at key locations.

Other points

ACTION: Howard to do more work on gathering evidence for the scale of the risks associated with microbial and viral pollution of sand (as opposed to bathing waters).

ACTION: Ian to ask Dorset Coast Forum for their further thoughts and contacts who we might be able to work with.

3. Agenda and asks for the September CROWD meeting.

We agreed to include the following points:

- Take stock and agree future priorities
- At the meeting, ask CROWD representatives to compile a list of who's testing for what at which points on each river.
- Propose new roles and responsibilities for (willing) individual CROWD members
- **Lee and Howard (ACTION)** to research and prepare a brief report for the meeting on the various chemicals and metrics (e.g. the difference between the three types of phosphate, the relevance of turbidity, etc.)
- **Andrew and Dana (ACTION)** to draft a revision of CROWD's stated aims and a statement of how it will issue press releases and public communications (for agreement by all involved, including Chris Loder).
- Invite Andy Mears, WW, to report on our long list of questions and other action points.
- Ask all, including Chris Loder to follow up and report on any outstanding actions.