

CROWD: Clean Rivers Of West Dorset

Notes and action points from the meeting of 8th February at Wootton Fitzpaine.

Attending:

- **Winniford River (Winniford River Action Group, WRAG):** Peter Stapleton
- **River Char (River Char Community Project (RCCP):** Andrew Carey
- **River Char (Lower Char Community Project (LCCP):** Dana Assinder
- **River Mangerton (River monitor):** Chuck Willmott
- **River Asker (River Asker Project):** Geoff May
- **River Asker (Riverfly Testing coordinator):** Howard Atkinson
- **West Dorset Rivers and Coastal Streams (Catchment Officer):** Ian Rees
- **River Simene (Parish Councillor):** Steve Evans
- Harry Coutts (Constituency Assistant)

Apologies: **River Asker:** Margaret Morgan-Grenville, **Litter Free Dorset:** Emma Teasdale

Name: We agreed the group name: Clean Rivers of West Dorset (CROWD).

We discussed the possibility of adding the words health, coasts and action. They are, in fact, broadly covered in the group's description (agreed at the January meeting) and quoted on the [CROWD webpage](#).

Ian Rees Update:

- Ian had invited Emma Teasdale to join CROWD
- He was considering options for who to invite to represent the River Brit. Geoff suggested Dave Rickard (leader of Bridport Town Council). **Action: Ian to contact and continue to seek a Brit representative.**
- Ian had talked to the Water Guardians project and looked at its survey method. We agreed that this wasn't the right survey for CROWD to use to report to Chris Loder but would be helpful for local river action groups. **Action: Ian to circulate the survey method to local river groups (via CROWD)**
- He mentioned two Dorset AONB surveys (one for the River Char Project, one broader, map-based one. Both could be a template for other river groups). **Action: Ian to share the details of both with CROWD.**

Harry Coutts Update:

- Chris Loder had sent the request we agreed in January to Colin Skellett at Wessex Water to:
 1. *provide details of its Asset Management Plan, budgets, priorities and schedules over the next 5-year period as they relate to our rivers*
 2. *identify any areas or opportunities for community engagement where the Group or its members could work effectively with WW to achieve local improvements*
 3. *supply sewage release data (events and duration by location and date) for the CROWD area for 2022 and the same data each month from January 2023 onwards.*

Harry said Wessex Water preferred to send someone to the next meeting to answer these in person.

- The River Lim Action Group is not participating in CROWD but does send information direct to him.
- Harry had met South West Water, Wessex Water and the Environment Agency. All were willing to attend a future meeting of CROWD.
- The River Lim Group is starting the process of getting Church Beach redesignated as a Bathing Beach.

Dana Assinder Update:

- Dana had prepared a sheet of [sewage and water quality resources](#).

News from the Rivers: (key points only)

- River Char Community Project has [a meeting on the evening of 24th February on farming, septic tanks and insecticides in relation to the river](#). Please circulate to contacts and do come if you can.
- Lower Char Community Campaign has finalized and launched its [campaign to clean up the river](#). Details may be helpful for other river groups.
- Lower Char Community Campaign has a [community engagement River Festival](#) on 27th May.
- Chuck Willmott is investigating SOs on the Mangerton & Asker and collating Riverfly & CSI monitoring points. In January, we agreed to do this for all CROWD rivers. **Action:** Ian generously offered to collate [details of monitoring work on CROWD rivers](#) (alongside a programme he runs to do this in Bridport).
- The River Asker group is investigating how to measure nitrates and *E. coli*. **Action:** Howard to share what he finds out, please.)
- Geoff May mentioned liaison with an important local farmer as a key part of work with Dorset AONB.
- Steve Evans had prepared maps of the River Simene and aims to identify infiltration sites/sources. He also described the lack of plans for handling sewage from the Foundry Lea estate. We agreed that Chris Loder could usefully be briefed on this and could support necessary action. **Action:** Steve to gather [notes on Foundry Lea water issues for discussion in CROWD with a view to briefing Chris Loder](#).

Other matters:

- We talked about separating rainwater from foul water as a long- and short-term priority for the WASCs and for CROWD. This needs further discussion. As no meeting is planned before April we propose an early evening pub meeting in March (perhaps at the Clock House in Chideock) to discuss this and other topics in a less formal way. All interested CROWD members welcome. A separate Doodle will suggest dates.
- We agreed to continue to send Andrew information and resources to add to the CROWD webpage. **Action:** Peter to send his notes of the Chideock STW tour for upload.
- **Action:** Andrew to upload details of the Charmouth STW and arrangements for sewage in the village.
- Howard stressed the need to get the CROWD rivers prioritised for action and we briefly discussed the part that UNESCO, SAC, AONB and shellfishery status can play in this. Howard has since submitted a note on this for discussion.
- Howard had submitted a briefing – [Towards an Evidence Base for CROWD](#) – on wastewater management, legislative requirements, the role for CSI, etc. He summarised this for us. Please read it.
- Howard has since submitted an excellent report on [Bathing quality and bacteria in the coastal waters off the CROWD area](#). Please read it. It will be on the agenda for our next suitable meeting.

Future meetings:

- We agreed that meetings would continue at Wootton Fitzpaine, chaired alternately by Andrew & Dana.
- The next meeting (with CL) is **Friday 14th April** at 11:00 at Wootton Fitzpaine. We will invite Wessex Water once we have finalised questions we want to ask WW beyond those already sent. **Urgent Action:** All: please submit by 16th Feb any questions you think Chris should submit to Wessex Water.
- **Action:** Andrew to collate questions and forward to Harry for him to get Chris to submit to Wessex Water along with the invitation to attend on 14th April.
- We agreed that, once approved by participants, we would be free to share meeting notes within our river groups and parish councils, but would not post them publicly online or share with the media.
- Steve cannot attend on 14th April.