

# CROWD: Clean Rivers Of West Dorset

Notes from our online meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2023

## Attending:

- **River Char (River Char Community Project, RCCP):** Andrew Carey  
**River Char (Lower Char Community Project, LCCP):** Dana Assinder  
**River Char (Riverfly Testing Coordinator):** John Kenward
- **River Asker (Riverfly Testing coordinator):** Howard Atkinson
- **River Brit (Upper River):** Rosemary Rychnovsky
- **River Brit (Lower River):** Caroline Pearce
- **West Dorset Rivers and Coastal Streams (Catchment Officer):** Ian Rees
- **Winniford River (Winniford River Action Group, WRAG):** Peter Stapleton
- **River Mangerton and River Asker (River monitor):** Chuck Willmott
- Apologies: **River Mangerton (River monitor):** Margaret Morgan-Grenville; **River Asker (River Asker Project):** Geoff May; **Winniford River (Winniford River Action Group, WRAG):** Lee Ramsden, Paul Ramsden; **River Simene (Parish Councillor):** Steve Evans; **Litter Free Dorset:** Emma Teasdale

## CROWD aims, focus and publicity

The meeting was largely devoted to discussing CROWD aims, focus and publicity. Attached is the draft wording that we agreed at the meeting. We will put this forward for approval by the whole group at the CROWD meeting in January.

It says that we will continue to gather and submit Riverfly and CSI data (if possible, gathering more data at more points on more of our rivers). At the same time, we will create an overarching Integrated Monitoring Strategy (which might include monitoring the intertidal zone on beaches and/or bacteriological testing in our rivers and/or testing our rivers for other chemicals – e.g. ammonia, glyphosate, etc.).

- **Whole-of-River testing:** We agreed that this should form an important part of our Integrated Monitoring Strategy. We await a decision from WW on whether it will do this, help to do it or fund us to do it. We agreed that a pilot Whole-of-River test would be best run first on the Char (it's a longer, more complex river system with more potential issues upstream and a round-the-year lagoon). **ACTION:** Andrew and Dana to discuss with Andy Mears his suggestion that WW has elsewhere offered training, equipment and sample testing to volunteers who are keen to undertake sampling.
- **Water quality in the river lagoons:** We continue to see this as a priority. We should restart bacterial testing ourselves (see below). If data shows a serious problem with *E. coli* and Intestinal Enterococci (as there was when the EA was testing the lagoons) we should use that to pressure the EA to resume testing. (Under pressure it has restarted bacteriological testing on the Lim this year.) **ACTION COMPLETE:** Ian has spoken to Public Health Dorset and says the agency does no monitoring itself. It would get involved in any outbreak control, with either Office of Health Improvement (non-communicable issues), or UK Health Security Agency (contagious disease outbreaks). A response would be triggered by notification from GPs. If the disease isn't notifiable, it may fall in the gaps....
- **Intertidal Zone pollution:** With Portugal putting beaches into its Blue Flag Scheme and the WHO saying that beach pollution is an issue, we agreed to press the Environment Agency to investigate the issue and to press for the UK Blue Flag system to be extended to include beaches. **ACTION:** Howard to draft a resolution for January. **ACTION:** Ian to talk to DCF about a pilot testing programme for contaminants in the intertidal zone.
- **Bacterial monitoring:** Ian updated us on the offer of a 3x3m demonstration lab. He will talk to Pineapple Farm owners about hosting it, liabilities, maintenance, etc. We also discussed getting Dipslides tests (£16 for ten) which need an incubator. Rose and John both have one. Howard suggesting getting a small number to practise on. Ian said DNL might fund this. **ACTION UNDERWAY:** Howard and John are

discussing bacterial monitoring (which may need to include a filtration step) and intend to compare Dipslides with pre-prepared agar plates for relative sensitivity. Howard has sent Ian an estimate of costs. Hopefully, periodic checking along the R. Char and elsewhere will not prove too expensive. They hope to develop a simple protocol that is sufficiently sensitive and free of unacceptable levels of contamination and hope to have made all necessary progress before 18th January.

#### Other matters

- Dana reported that SWW has confirmed in writing that it will fully fund the clean-up of biobeads and nurdles at Charmouth in Spring 2024.
- **ACTION COMPLETE:** Simon Browning will talk about the CaSTCo model at a meeting on 14th December in Bridport (St Marys Hall, South Street, 7.30pm). CROWD members are urged to attend. Contact Caroline (caroline.pearce@bridport-tc.gov.uk) if you would like to attend.
- Help with obtaining **reliable water quality data** was and is CROWD's high priority request: see Action Point 1 for further discussion of this with Andy Mears.
- **Charmouth Emergency overflow at Newlands Bridge PS.** Andy Mears has reported that an improved 6mm screen will now be fitted in December. Engineers visited Newlands Holiday Park in late November to discuss ways of keeping stormwater out of the combined sewage system – and alleviating pressure on the Pumping Station.
- **Maps.** Andy Mears (Thank you!) has supplied us with two clear, high-res maps – of [WW waste assets](#) in the CROWD region, and of [discharges](#) (agricultural, sewage, trade and misc.) in the area. The maps are on the CROWD webpage.
- **Chippenham Rainsavers water butt / soakaway trial.** Andy has also supplied us with [a summary of this trial](#). See it here.

**Next face-to-face meeting of CROWD (including Chris Loder) Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2024, 11-12.30, Wootton Fitzpaine Village Hall.**

#### ACRONYMS

CaSTCo: Catchment Systems Thinking Cooperative

DCF: Dorset Coast Forum

DNL: Dorset National Landscape (formerly Dorset AONB)

DWT: Dorset Wildlife Trust

EA: Environment Agency

PS: Pumping Station

SWW: South West Water

WHO: World Health Organisation

WW: Wessex Water