

Sewage Motion (draft) for CDC

This Council notes that:

- Chichester Harbour and local rivers are particularly threatened by continuing sewage discharges.
- Southern Water were sentenced to pay a record £90 million in fines for widespread pollution after pleading guilty to 6,971 unpermitted sewage discharges.
- Every river in England is now polluted beyond legal limits.
- The Environment Agency rated only 14% of rivers as 'Good' in 2019.
- In England, water companies released untreated human waste directly into our waterways over 400,000 times for a total of 3 million hours in 2020 alone.
- Government funding to the Environment Agency to monitor river quality, and regulate farms and water companies has dropped 75% since 2010/11.
- In 2020 just 3.6% of pollution complaints made to the Agency resulted in penalties.
- Farms are now almost never inspected, water quality is not tested enough, and water companies can pump raw sewage into rivers and seas with virtual impunity.

Council believes that, as host nation of the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26), the UK Government should now commit to:

- Restoring Environment Agency budgets to deliver the necessary oversight.
- Increasing inspection regularity of water companies and farms, and rigorously prosecuting offenders through the Environmental Audit Committee and Ofwat.

Council resolves to:

- Formally ask Southern Water to install live update signs at each sewage outfall site in the District to enable residents to make informed choices about using the water.
- Should Southern Water refuse to do so in a timely manner, investigate the cost of Council doing it, to be considered within the Future Services Framework prioritisation exercise.
- Agree with the Conservancy an improved Testing regime in Chichester Harbour with tests undertaken as close as possible to Southern Water discharge points immediately after high tide.
- Publicise the testing results on the District Council website.
- Include a link to the Southern Water "Beachbouy" warning system on the District Council website.
- Write to The Chairperson of the Parliamentary Environmental Audit Committee to advocate for greater enforcement of existing regulatory powers.
- Write to The Chief Executives of Southern Water and OFWAT calling for urgent action to address the impact of waste-water discharges on our local rivers and harbours.
- Write to The Regional Director of the National Farmers' Union requesting clarification on the action being taken locally by farmers to prevent nutrient run-off.
- Write to the charities River Action and The Rivers Trust expressing this Council's support for their campaign to restore the health of Britain's rivers.
- Require the Chichester Water Quality Group to make a quarterly report to the Environment Panel.