

River Wye Statutory Officers Group Meeting Slide Deck



26 September 2024

River Wye SOG

Purpose

A collaboration of the statutorily responsible organisations operating within the catchment to restore the Conservation Status for the River Wye Special Area of Conservation.

The group as a whole does not have any formal powers or resources and as such cannot make any decisions collectively but it's members can on behalf of their individual organisations and Government. The purpose of this group is for members to reach agreement (subject to ratification within their own organisations as necessary) on how they will collectively use their powers and resources to improve the catchment condition. The SOG will share this via a revised Nutrient Management Plan.

Operating Principles

- Meetings will be held quarterly (monthly initially) in order to allow the SOG to task work resulting from its discussions. Ad-hoc meetings can be called if needed.
- Meetings will be held privately with updates and progress against the plan being shared publicly – this will be reviewed after 6 months.
- The group will work openly and collaboratively with the NMB, seeking and taking into account the NMBs views in its decision making and seeking collaboratively discussion.
- Individual officers will make decisions on behalf of their organisations in line with delegated powers for specified remits and spend.

River Wye SOG

Membership

Voluntary forum made up of officers from the bodies with relevant statutory responsibilities within the catchment.

- Bannau Brycheiniog Brecon Beacons National Park
- Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru Natural Resources Wales
- Dwr Cymru Welsh Water
- Environment Agency
- Forest of Dean District Council
- Herefordshire Council
- Monmouthshire County Council
- Natural England
- Powys County Council

SOG - Meeting Headlines

Date of latest meeting: 26 September 2024

Headlines

1. Upper Wye Restoration Project newsletter has now been published by Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru Natural Resources Wales (NRW) with the project formally launched at the Royal Welsh Agricultural Show on 22 July 2024.
2. Dwr Cymru Welsh Water confirmed that further storm overflow sites have been added to their Storm Overflow map with further sites being added up until March 2025.
3. Environment Agency confirm that the Wye Diffused Water Pollution Plan, which serves as part of the Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) for England is on track to be completed by end of March 2025.
4. SOG discussed the need for a focus on River Lugg nutrient data and its failing targets compared to the River Wye.
5. Herefordshire County Council is finalising the paper on what Welsh Government funding will be spent on – supporting NRW in developing their part of the NMP – and will be going out to tender shortly.
6. Powys Council has awarded tender for Enabling Nutrient Neutrality in Powys.

Date of next Meeting

18 December 2024

River Wye SOG – September Updates

Updates from:

- Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru Natural Resources Wales
- Dwr Cymru Welsh Water
- Environment Agency
- Herefordshire Council
- Natural England
- Monmouthshire County Council
- Powys County Council

1. Upper Wye Restoration Project

This 5-year project aiming to protect species and enhance habitats by addressing a range of pressures affecting the Upper River Wye has now published its first newsletter – link below if you would like to sign up to receive this newsletter

[Natural Resources Wales / Upper Wye restoration: Ambitious new project launched to help restore beloved river](#)

2. Amended Planning Advice now published on NRW Website (v4 28/June 2024)

This advice now covers ammonia as well as phosphorus and a move to referring to nutrient sensitive rivers. Advice on agricultural developments is also covered. [Natural Resources Wales / Advice to planning authorities for planning applications affecting nutrient sensitive river Special Areas of Conservation](#)

3. Completion of review of Environmental Permits

Our review of phosphorus limits on Environmental Permits for waste water treatment works discharges which exceed a dry weather flow of 20m³/day has now been completed – 28 of these permits are within the Welsh Wye catchment. [Natural Resources Wales / Phosphorus limits on environmental permits for waste water treatment work discharges](#)

4. NRW Financial Position

- In September NRW started a consultation with Trade Unions and the process of engagement with staff on how we propose to reduce our grant in aid staff budget by £13 million for the 1 April 2025.
- The purpose is to refocus resources on the activities that will have the most impact on nature, climate, and minimising pollution, as well as the statutory work that only NRW can do. The aim is to mitigate job losses as much as possible.
- Some of these changes, if implemented, will impact our partners, customers, and stakeholders.
- Following our consultation, the NRW Board will make a final decision on changes and at that point we will explain what the changes mean in the delivery of services.

5. Position on citizen science data published

Following a number of requests and to provide some reassurance to all of our citizen science groups. [An assessment of the use and acceptability of citizen science data to support better water quality for Wales \(naturalresources.wales\)](#)

Asset Management Plan AMP 7 (2020 – 2025)

- Work has been completed to support Natural Resources Wales' Review of Permits (RoP) programme.
- Majority of AMP 7 schemes are complete ahead of schedule. Outstanding work is on course to meet the permit requirement dates.
- Dwr Cymru have accepted new protective P limits at 28 Wastewater Treatment Works (WwTW). Many of these have already come into effect but five will require further work on site to ensure we can meet the new requirements, limiting the amount of phosphorus in our effluent further.

Asset Management Plan AMP 8 (2025 – 2030)

- We expect our phosphorus removal programme to achieve a reduction of approximately 13kg/day as part of our fair share commitments, this builds on the P load removed over the current AMP 7 period.
- Whilst we continue our programme, we do expect further changes in future, in line with an updated compliance assessment of SAC rivers from NRW due in 2025.
- Following [link](#) to NRW's website shows when revised permits with new Phosphorous limits will be scheduled.

Storm Overflow Map

- In September 2024, further storm overflow sites were added to the DCWW Storm Overflow map. We now have over 900 assets reporting near-real time data and shared publicly. Additional sites will be added up until March 2025. Link can be found [here](#).

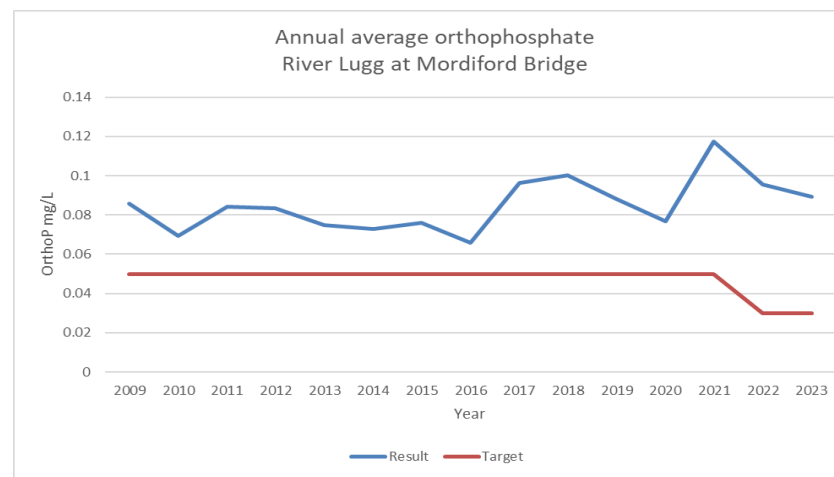
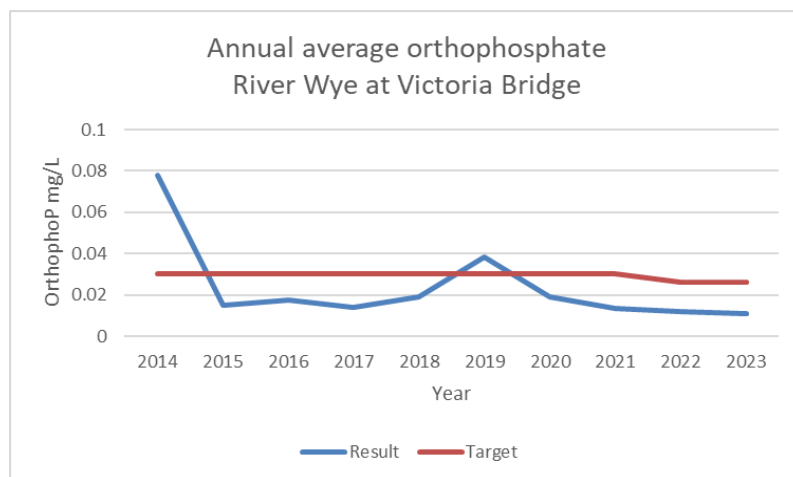
Diffuse Water Pollution Plan

The Diffuse Water Pollution Plan (DWPP) will serve as the review of Nutrient Management Plan for England and is on track to be completed by 31 March 2025 – this will be an iterative process after this date.

Task	Indicative timescale
Modelling (source apportionment update)	Winter – Spring 2024
Modelling of current work/measures within catchment*	Spring – Summer 2024
Review of model outputs	Summer 2024
Options appraisal of phosphate reductions	Summer - Autumn 2024
Updated Action Plan	Winter 2024 – Spring 2025
Sign-off of DWPP	Spring 2025

*England only

The River Wye is not failing its nutrient target, but the River Lugg is:



- Following on from our Options Appraisal workshops with partner organisations in July, we held a second workshop with farmers through the Herefordshire Rural Hub in September. At both workshops, participants considered what additional measures and mechanisms could support nutrient reductions.
- Many constructive ideas were presented, including wanting to see a more level playing field in terms of farming standards, better tools for nutrient budgeting, and more information about how farms might be contributing to nutrient issues.
- We are now reviewing the outcome from both workshops and considering the range of investigations and mechanisms that may be needed to deliver water quality improvements.

Strategic Mitigation:

- The Design and Build contract for Tarrington has been awarded and the construction of the site is due to commence in Spring 2025.
- We are seeking to acquire a further site in the north of the county for the construction of a wetland.
- Investigative work is also underway around the phosphate reduction obtained from seeking upgrades to Package Treatment Plants.

Homes Released

- To date 739 homes have been released within the Lugg catchment. The Council has recently published the updated allocations list of credits which extends to November 2023 of this list a further 300 units have been allocated credits, with a further 50 awaiting allocation.
- The specification for the update of the Welsh catchment evidence base and the delivery of a catchment wide Nutrient Management Plan has been drafted and reviewed by members of the SOG. The tender is due to be issued shortly.

Luston Monitoring

- Monitoring undertaken at Luston wetland during the first 12 months of the site being operational is indicating a 68% reduction in Total Phosphorous.

Rivers Conference

- The Council is hosting a second rivers conference on 21st November with a focus on sustainable practices for arable farming.

Farm & land management advice

Both Landscape Recovery schemes are making progress in the 2-year development phase.

- **Ridge to River** now 6 months in are commencing Whole Farm Plans and agreed contracts for baseline work eg peat monitoring, deer and hydrological surveys etc.
- **Wyescapes** has commenced baseline assessments (carbon, biodiversity and carbon) on farms and is scoping out land options with some example case studies. Consultants in place to progress the 'blended finance investors' required for the project.
- **38 farm visits** during the last quarter . Top 3 topics – Nutrient Management (25%), Soil Management (16%) and Land Use (10%).
- RPA data on SFI: 771ha of buffer strip in place, which is equivalent to 800 miles of grass margin in the county. 22% of land covered by SFI soil management plan and 25% of grassland managed as low input.
- **SSSI Monitoring** The River Habitat survey and macrophyte survey was conducted over the summer, other aspects of the assessment will continue over the next year.
- **Consents and Planning** 28 consents issued for the Wye and Lugg and attendance and engagement at Wharton Farm event to ensure collaborative and efficient process in place.
- **LNRS** Ongoing support with the development of the LNRS strategy, including targeted landowner engagement via CSF officers.

Updates from MCC:

Flood: Natural flood management works have now commenced at three locations within the Wye Catchment in Monmouthshire as part of our Welsh Government grant funded project that runs until March 2025.

Nature Recovery: The Public Consultation for two Strategies that form part of the Climate & Nature Emergency response has been launched.

The Monmouthshire Local NRAP, produced by MCC on behalf of the Monmouthshire Local Nature Partnership, will be a guide to conservation work in Monmouthshire to deliver outcomes to benefit nature recovery.

The Monmouthshire Green Infrastructure Strategy sets out the Council's approach to enhancing biodiversity and increasing ecosystem resilience through Green Infrastructure. It also sets out the Council's approach to improving health and wellbeing outcomes and seeking to deliver climate action through landscape scale projects and partnerships.

<https://www.monlife.co.uk/outdoor/green-infrastructure/local-nrap-and-gi-strategy-consultation/>

Nature and Sustainable Food: We are holding a Nature & Sustainable Food Celebration at County Hall on Friday 27th September (hosted jointly by the Sustainable Food Partnership and the Local Nature Partnership).

The event aims to bring together nature recovery and sustainable food practitioners, showcase the wonderful work being delivered, share best practice, and create opportunities for future collaborations through networking.

Latest Information

- Awarded tender for Enabling Nutrient Neutrality in Powys. This will cover:
 - Wetland feasibility study.
 - Private Treatment Works investigation / feasibility.
 - Policy and regulations review.
 - Credit / Trading schemes.
- The new “Powys River Special Areas of Conservation” webpage: [River Special Areas of Conservation](#) This has three sections: background, implications for development and other actions and regulations
- Continue to play a role in collaborative working through meetings like the All-Wales SAC Rivers Planning Sub-Group and Nutrient Management Officers Meetings.
- Continue to support the Usk Catchment Partnership across the Core Group, Knowledge Hub and various Task and Finish Groups.
- Continue to monitor Environmental Permit (phosphate limit) changes which may impact development across Powys.