

Partnership Meeting

Supplement to the agenda for

Wye Catchment Nutrient Management Board

Wednesday 28 September 2022

2.00 pm

4. UPDATES FROM PARTNERS

Pages

3 - 6

Update from Natural Resources Wales for Wye Nutrient Management Board
28 September 2022

1. River Pollution summit at the Royal Welsh Show

On the opening day of this summer's Royal Welsh Show, the First Minister convened a summit to discuss the phosphorous pollution of Welsh rivers and how the situation can be improved. NRW and a wide range of stakeholders were invited. The emphasis was on collective responsibility for reducing excessive use of phosphate on farmland, discharges from the sewerage system and from septic tanks. Details of the First Ministers written statement to the Senedd can be found [here](#).

2. Wye Catchment activities

- Work over the summer is targeting permitted intensive poultry units (>40 000 birds) now avian flu restrictions are lifted. 12 inspections have been completed and 3 are planned for October.
- Follow-up work continues on Dairy farms to ensure recommendations from previous visits under Dairy Project have been completed as new Control of Agricultural Pollution (Wales) Regulations 2021 continue to be implemented with extended requirements for manure storage and containment coming in. Guidance on the new regulations can be found [here](#).
- Due to the drought status across Wales, priority this quarter has been to inspect abstraction licences. 13 inspections have been completed in the catchment.
- 1 breach has been reported to the Rural Inspectorate Wales following a cross compliance inspection.
- The Monmouthshire Opportunity Catchment Officer is now in post and starting to work on the Trothy and Monnow catchments in the Wye. Over the course of the 3-year plan, the project aims to work with farmers and land managers to deliver interventions that will include:
 - Herbal leys and rotational grazing systems that enhance productivity, reduce pollution, mitigate climate impacts, and bring biodiversity benefits
 - fencing to prevent livestock encroachment, bank erosion and pollution, restoring riparian habitat and buffer strips
 - riparian planting to reduce land-related run-off and pollution
 - invasive non-native species control to reduce INNS spread and enable the recovery of endemic habitats and species
 - instream barrier feasibility assessment and/or removal to improve fish passage and restore natural processes

- other green infrastructure and nature-based solutions (e.g., floodplain woodland/grassland, SUDs) to reduce flood and pollution risk, improve floodplain connectivity and water storage, and enhance biodiversity and overall resilience

3. Incidents

- Low flows have led to an increased number of incident reports over the summer months. It is believed that up to 40 adult Salmon may have been lost on the lower Wye from end July to present. Monitoring has shown that temperatures on the lower reaches exceeded 25C on several occasions and this, along with fluctuating dissolved oxygen levels is believed to be the most likely cause.
- Report of silt pollution to the upper River Wye but delay between the incident and the report so investigation was limited, and no cause found.
- Significant slurry incident on the Ithon resulting in a fish kill (approx. 30-40 minnow, bullhead and stone loach, no salmonids found), cause was umbilical slurry spreading and the umbilical pipe split. Formal investigation is progressing.

4. NRW's SAC Rivers Project

A project has been running in NRW for the SAC rivers water quality issues we first reported in 2020. This project is required to enable NRW to fulfil its statutory obligations for the sustainable management of natural resources and our well-being duties with respect to the 9 Riverine SACs listed in the Habitats Directive. Tackling water quality in Wales is also a key priority for Welsh Government.

Latest update

- Our Planning advice has been updated on our web site. The link to the guidance is [here](#).
- We are developing nutrient neutrality principles which we are hoping to publish on our website soon. We have commissioned further work to develop a guidance note for staff on nutrient calculators which started in March.
- The first meeting for the Cleddau, Teifi and Tywi NBMs occurred in mid-March with further meetings planned this Autumn.
- Review of permits in Welsh SAC rivers
We are planning to carry out permit review on discharges of 20 cubic metres and over in the Welsh SAC rivers. We continue to plan to share information on which wastewater treatment plants already have a permit that is sufficiently protective of the SAC with the Planning Authorities on a SAC-by-SAC basis as early as possible. This plan is heavily dependent on NRW verifying the DCWW source apportionment work Their draft summary for the River wye is [here](#).

5. Additional Water Quality Monitoring on River Wye

- All six locations at NRW hydrometric stations on the Wye and its tributaries have had sondes installed following the pilot and they will remain in place for 8 weeks until they are replaced, and the data downloaded. Sondes measure temperature, conductivity, dissolved oxygen, nitrates,

total algae and pH every 15 minutes. We are working on an open data solution to allow the evidence to be shared with external partners.

The first round of intensive diatom and invertebrates monitoring has been completed. Wye and Usk Foundation are collecting the samples for Stantec Consultants.

6. Other work

- We have reviewed various evidence and information about the River Wye SAC and are currently developing a River Restoration project.

This project will look to address multiple pressures by delivering key interventions in the locations where they are needed.

We are investigating funding opportunities and will keep you updated as these progress.

