

River Wye Statutory Officers Group Meeting Slide Deck



18 December 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: 18 December 2024

Headlines

1. ToR for SOG reviewed by the group and changes agreed.
2. Discussion held following meeting on the River Wye with Minister Hardy and Cabinet Secretary Irranca-Davies.
3. Updates provided on progress with plan development arrangements.

Date of next Meeting

26 March 2025

River Wye SOG Updates

Updates from:

- Dwr Cymru Welsh Water
- Environment Agency
- Herefordshire Council
- Natural England
- Powys County Council

Asset Management Plan AMP 8 (2025 – 2030)

- Awaiting Final Determination from Ofwat on 19th December 2024. Our plans for AMP 8 will be shared once this detail is available.

Storm Overflow Map

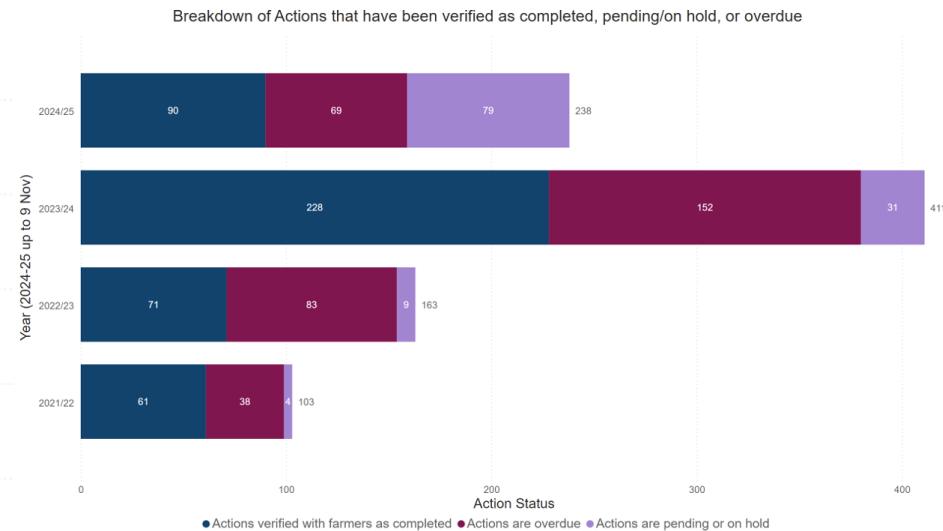
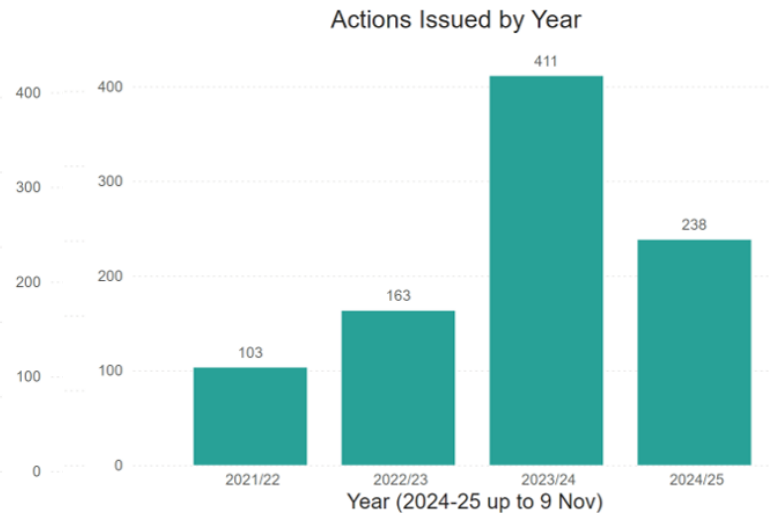
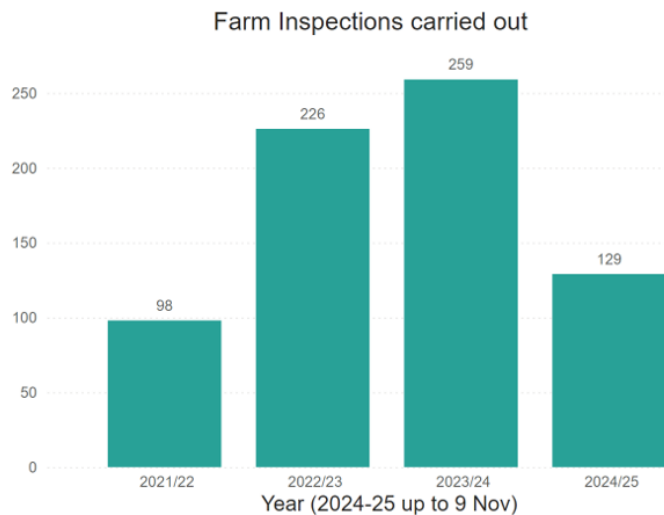
- As of 19th November, we have nearly 1500 assets reporting near-real time data and shared publicly. Additional sites will be added up until March 2025. The next batch will be added late January. Link can be found [here](#).

Citizen Science Fund

- Awarded 4 applicants with funding in 2024 to support and undertake citizen science work in the Wye catchment. A further 2 applicants have been successful in gaining funding for 2025.
- Applicants have included citizen science, wildlife trusts and farming groups.

Farm Inspection Data

- Data has been extracted from 9 November 2024 to show the work the Environment Agency has carried out in farm inspections work over the past 3.5 years.
- The data consists of the number of farm inspections carried out in the past three and a half financial years; the percentage increase in inspections over the previous year; the number of inspections which recorded at least one area of non-compliance; the number of actions issued to address these non-compliances; the count of complete and overdue actions and the top 5 actions issued for each year.
- The full document produced is attached separately to this Slide Deck



Future engagement – compliance

- ‘Grass roots’ compliance engagement work being carried out to complement Environment Agency inspections and enforcement work.
- Working with agri colleges to simulate farm inspections to help educate the next generation of farmers
- Visiting livestock markets to engage with harder to reach farmers to discuss inspection work
- Creating short videos, including one of ‘what to expect from an inspection’ to help educate and influence the farming sector and how to remain compliant.

Strategic Mitigation

- To date release 752 homes trading Phosphate Credits from Luston and Tarrington Wetlands. A further 450 houses offered Phosphate Credits.
- Seeking to progress a third wetland site and an upgrade to waste water system in a school to release further Phosphate Credits in 2025.
- We have been selected by PAS to participate in a pilot scheme to contribute to an evidence base on strategic mitigation schemes for MHCLG.

River Restoration

- Held a Rivers Conference in November, on sustainable arable farming practices, with speakers including ReGen Ben, Phil Gorringe a tenant farmer with the Duchy of Cornwall, Mark Green Two Farmers crisps. Attendance from field of academic research, agronomy, food supply chain, regulatory and landowning sectors. Videos of speakers will be published shortly.
- The tender for the Welsh catchment baseline evidence to develop a catchment wide Nutrient Management Plan has been issued and we with NRW and Powys are currently reviewing bids.
- We have been supporting the Wye Catchment Partnership in developing a specification for the Wye Catchment Management Plan, now prepared and are currently seeking funding via the Cabinet Commission and with Ministers to commission this piece of work.

Farm & land management advice

In the last quarter of 2024 the Wye Catchment Sensitive Farming Advisors (CSFA'S) have:

Carried out 30 1:1 farm visits, and have provided advice to a further 51 holdings through group events. These have resulted in 360 practices being recommended : 44% of these on Fertilizer and Manure management, 24% on soil management, 14% on Land use (i.e cropping systems and grassland restoration) and 16% on farm infrastructure (i.e. yard improvements.) All of these will reduce diffuse water pollution.

- Through various events spoken to 104 Wye farmers about how to get the best out of SFI for nature, which should increase uptake across the catchment.
- Funded and run 2 farmer events (75 farmers attending) with WUF and Herefordshire Meadows focusing on livestock/ upland farms discussing relevant actions and encouraging uptake of SFI especially in relation to the grassland actions from herbal leys to species rich grassland.
- Working to compliment WUF's work with a number of Arrow farmers using CS Higher Tier .
- 2 maize events run as a follow up to the Village Hall maize events earlier this year explaining the benefits to soils of under sowing maize.
- Spoken at DEFRA led SFI events at Worcester and Ludlow Markets and at the Herefordshire Farm Secretaries association.

Landscape Recovery

Providing advice to Ridge to River Project relating to farmstead management and habitat connectivity.

Ongoing support for the Wyescapes Landscape Recovery Project as they wait for decision from Defra for project expansion to 5,000ha.

LNRS Ongoing support with the development of the LNRS strategy, including targeted landowner engagement via CSF officers, support at initial farmer/ landowner engagement event and input to species longlisting. First draft of opportunity mapping has been published on Herefordshire Councils Website and engagement is underway, following an initial farmer landowner workshop.

Update on Nitrogen Target- see separate document

- Commissioned Feasibility Study “Enabling Nutrient Neutrality Development in Powys”
 - This covered:
 - Integrated Constructed Wetland, Upgrades to Private Treatment Works
 - Policy and regulations review
 - Delivery and funding options
 - Three workshops held
 - Draft Reports received – potential opportunity identified for upgrading Private Treatment Works.
- UK Government Funded Research into Nutrient Recycling in Powys [NutriReValorise](#)
- Collaborative working:
 - All-Wales SAC Rivers Planning Sub-Group
 - Nutrient Management Officers Meeting
 - Usk Catchment Partnership
- Powys Replacement LDP (2022-2037) – concluded Preferred Strategy consultation Oct 2024. Deposit Plan expected late 2025 will be subject to HRA / AA
- Powys River Special Areas of Conservation” webpage: [River Special Areas of Conservation](#)