

River Wye Statutory Officers Group Update



10 Oct 2025

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.

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 Summary

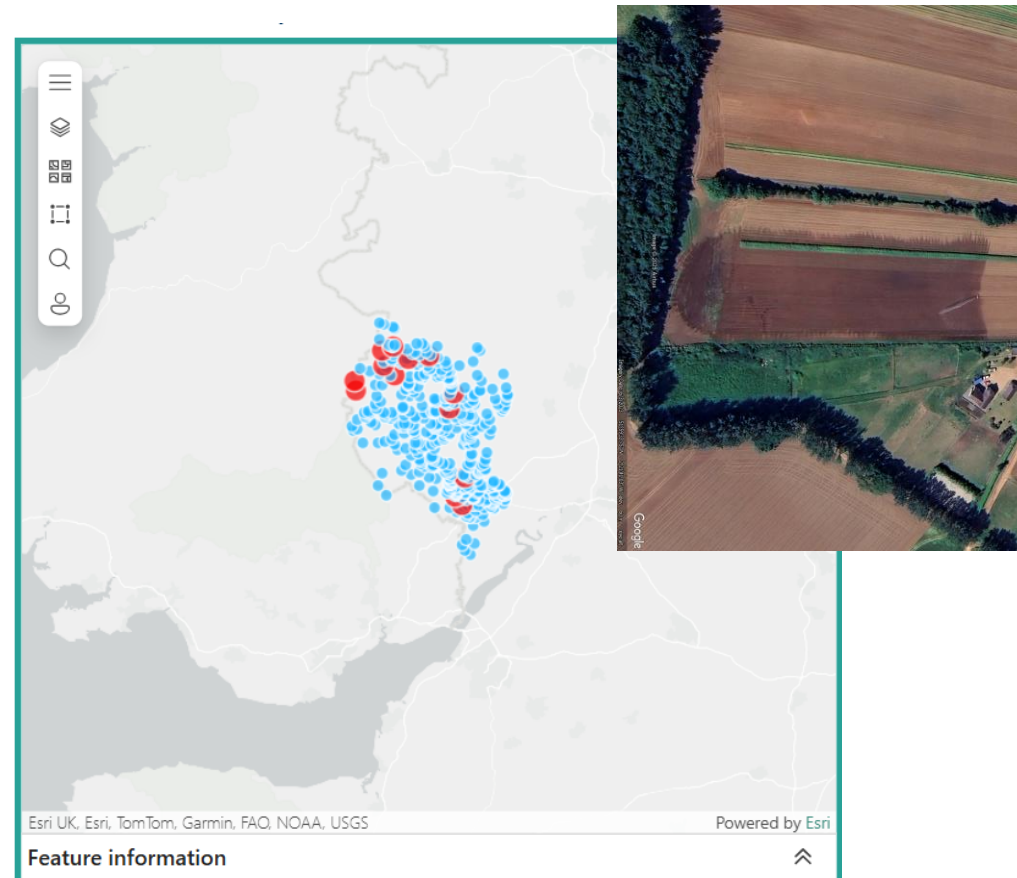
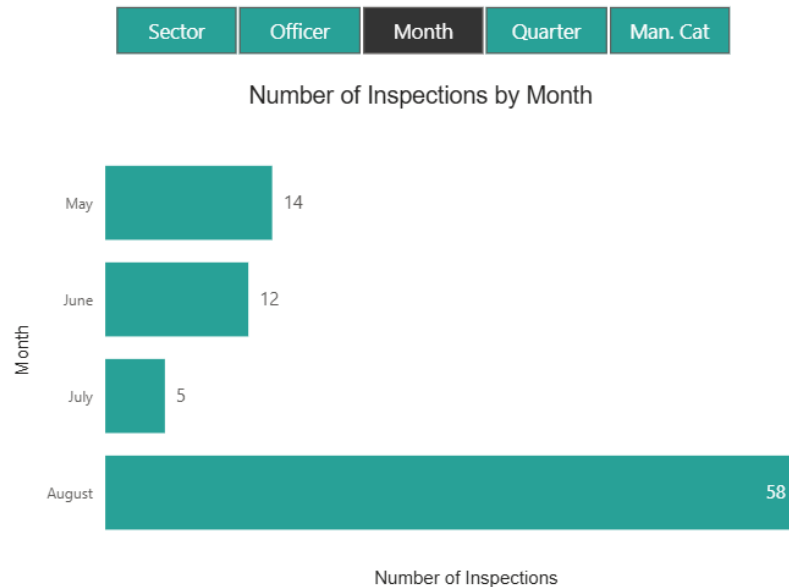
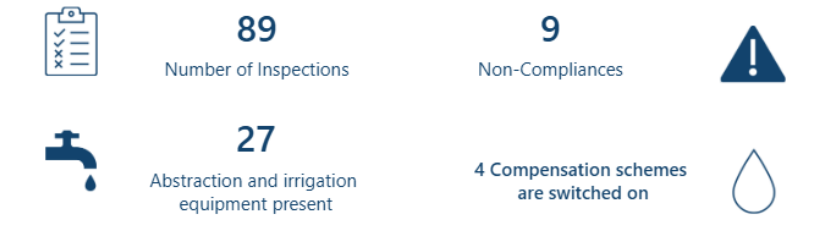
Date of latest meeting: 24 September 2025

Headlines

1. EA reported that they are hopeful DWPP will be published in October .
2. NRW explained that there have been IT challenges in finalising the Welsh Evidence Base .
3. NRW to explore with HCC the possibility of producing a summary document that sets out the key recommendations from DWPP & WEB.

Date of next Meeting 6th Jan 2026

- On 15 July 2025, the West Midlands moved into drought status
- We have prioritised Water Resources inspections in the Wye, supported with remote sensing technology



- Our ecological monitoring has identified localised Water Crowfoot recovery in the Wye and Lugg
- We are collaborating with Citizen Science ‘mudspotter’ and Herefordshire Council to identify and address causes of soil loss
- Riverfly training for citizen scientists on River Wye - practical kick sampling on the Dulas Brook, yielding all eight Riverfly invertebrate groups



AMP 8 (2025 – 2030)

Majority of enhancement schemes are currently in the planning and design phase, where additional information is being collected before we can progress into delivery. Updates on named schemes will be shared as we progress.



Increased treatment quality

Phosphorus

33 WwTW's to accept
new tighter permit
conditions

Sanitary Determinands

*(Ammonia, Biological Oxygen Demand
and Suspended Solids)*
14 WwTW's to receive
improvement schemes.



Storm Overflow improvements

12 overflows to receive
improvement schemes.

Co-delivery and co-design

Following the Codelivery event held in April 2025, we are identifying potential partners for partnership working to deliver multiple benefits. Will also be looking at how we start to co-design future AMP cycles with partnering organisations.

SMNR Framework (Sustainable Management of Natural Resources)

Dwr Cymru have set up a 2-year trial that enables projects to be delivered by a select group of eNGO's that applied via a tender process. Our procurement team have assisted in setting this in place, with the hope of supporting our delivery need and encouraging consistent longer-term funding for our partners.

Several learning points but overall very positive relationships are being built and great input from the associated eNGO's.

Farming Advice

- Capital grants delivering 50 approvals for water quality grants since July.
- Focus on farm visits to maximise environmental opportunities including opportunities to deliver Higher Tier River options, with a number now progressing.
- Engagement with Farm Herefordshire, Rural Hub and Wye Catchment Partnership groups including delivering whole farm nutrient balance visits and joint events

Landscape Recovery

- Support for both Ridge to River and Wyescapes as they enter latter stages of their 2 year project development phase. Both projects will submit their 6 plans to DEFRA for negotiation early in 2026.
- Ridge to River engagement - 19 farm visits, making over 285 recommendations to improve water quality.

Natural England Update

DWPP working with EA to finalise

Farmscoper 2 This report which we have shared previously with the Board is now published and publicly available <https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/4829314657550336>

LNRS

Panel date set for 10th November, with public consultation planned for January 2026.

SSSI Monitoring

- Lugg site monitoring progressed over the summer with site visits now completed.
- Drawing together of evidence and analysis will now begin, alongside the data collected from the Wye survey last summer.

Advice on Sustainable Development and Nutrient Neutrality

Ongoing advice to the planning department regarding the need to demonstrate that growth proposed in the new local plan and related plans can be accommodated without causing nutrient targets on the River Lugg and the River Wye to be exceeded.

Welsh Evidence Base for NMP

- Final draft document now with NRW and being reviewed prior to sign off
- This will be used to inform a version of the Wye Nutrient Management Plan together with information from EA DWPP.

Citizen Science Update

- Wye Alliance (WA) & NRW annual meeting took place on 30th September
- Shared examples of NRW use of the data and potentials for data quality improvements.
- Further discussions on future collaboration between citizen scientists across the Wye and NRW.

Upper Wye Restoration Project

- **Project celebrated 1st anniversary sharing successes so far.**
- [Natural Resources Wales / From hidden invaders to 2,000 new trees – celebrating a year of wins on the Upper Wye](#)

NRW's SAC Nutrient Project (previously SAC Rivers Project)

- Updated Planning Advice soon to be issued to incorporate revised screening criteria for new connections to mains.
- Also to improve clarity over NRW's advice ensuring that LPAs seek confirmation of WwTWs compliance with permit conditions as a material planning consideration, to ensure capacity to receive and treat additional wastewater in accordance with existing permit conditions.

Nutrient Trading

- WG are exploring a mechanism, working with NRW and LPAs, for a potential nutrient trading scheme in Wales. This will be relevant for P mitigation as well N.

Water Quality Summit

- WG Water Quality Summit took place in September with focus on the Control of Agricultural Pollution Regulations review, commercial opportunities and sustainability.