

## **Motion to Full Council**

Proposed by: Dixie Darch

Seconded by: Gwil Wren

This Council notes that:

- Every river in England is now polluted beyond legal limits.
- The Environment Agency rated only 14% of rivers as 'Good' in 2019.
- This chemical pollution is mostly caused by sewage discharges from water companies and the run-offs of nutrients from farms.
- 36% of English rivers have been damaged by water companies.
- 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 rarely tested, and water companies can pump raw sewage into rivers with virtual impunity.
- In addition, tyre particles, metals from brake pads, and hydrocarbons from vehicle emissions wash off road surfaces and into rivers introducing potentially carcinogenic material into the water supply.
- Our LOCAL RIVERS are particularly threatened by further sewage discharges.

This Council believes that the UK Government should 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.
- Funding local and highways authorities to introduce systems to prevent road pollutants from entering our water courses.

Council resolves to request the Leader of the Council write to:

- The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs calling for the Government to make these commitments as host nation of COP-26.
- The Chairperson of the Parliamentary Environmental Audit Committee to advocate for greater enforcement of existing regulatory powers.
- The Chief Executive(s) of LOCAL UTILITY COMPANY(IES) calling for urgent action to address the impact of waste-water discharges on our local rivers.

- The Regional Director of the National Farmers' Union requesting clarification on the action being taken locally by farmers to prevent nutrient run-off.
- The charities River Action and The Rivers Trust expressing this Council's support for their campaign to restore the health of Britain's rivers