



Minutes of a meeting of the **Calstock Parish Council**,
ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE EMERGENCY COMMITTEE, held on **Tuesday 28 June 2023**, in the
Tamar Valley Centre at 1900

Those present were; -

COUNCILLORS: Richard Newton Chance (Chair), Andrew Brown, Phil Spurr, Alex Polglase, Jim Wakem, Jim Flashman, Sarah Ashley

Public : Peter Bloomfield, Jude Wood, Jane Risdill
Miss Clare Bullimore (Deputy Clerk – *minutes*).

1. APOLOGIES

Gill Court, Alison Freshney, Mark Warwick

2. ELECT THREE COMMUNITY MEMBERS WITH VOTING RIGHTS

Proposal/resolution: Peter Bloomfield, Gill Court and Jude Wood. Proposed: Richard Newton Chance, seconded: Phil Spurr. Unanimous.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Members of the public were present.

5. APPROVE MINUTES OF LAST MEETING – 23-05-2023-2023

Proposal/Resolution: the minutes be approved – all agreed by those present at the last meeting – proposed: Phil Spurr, seconded: Jim Wakem.

6. UPDATE FROM WORKING GROUPS

Recovering Nature – no change to the objective:

The aim is not just to preserve what we have now, but to recover the flora and fauna we have lost, to expand the natural world around us for its own sake and in doing so to create a much richer and more diverse environment for people to enjoy.

Andrew Brown reported on the focus of the Recovering Nature work – included in appendix.

Reducing Impact no change to the objective:

Our collective impact on the world we live in has lead not only to a severe climate crisis, but also a crisis across the natural world with pollution, severe species loss, poisoned oceans and increasingly infertile lands. If we are to address this we have to reduce our impact.

Richard Newton Chance reported the following:



Summary and dissemination of Cornwall Council's Emergency Development Plan - included in appendix

Continuing to campaign for improved river quality – summary document included in appendix

Topics to address:

- Reducing recycling and reducing packaging
- Public transport – in particular the Tamar Valley Rail Line
- EV vehicles which will be addressed in the Emergency Development Plans for new developments
- Looking at new renewable energy sites and reviewing the Neighbourhood Development Plan
- Managing traffic flow on the A390
- Encouraging to shop locally
- Looking into Procurement policy and sustainability
- Footpaths

Improving Health – no change to the objective:

As well as impacting the natural world, our activities are ruining our own health and well being. Whatever we aim to do should be measured against its impact on our health.

Devon and Cornwall Food Action Group are setting up a network in the Parish – food and goods parcels will be offered across the parish, all items would end up in landfill – see leaflet and progress report in appendix

The tendering process will shortly be undertaken for a new skate park in St Ann's Chapel to replace the old one

Playparks are being assessed and financial planning will be undertaken to ensure all parks are functional and diverse, catering for all ages

7. GENERAL UPDATES

Tamar Catchment Partnership

Next meeting 23/08/2023 with workshop to enable people to communicate and share data more effectively. A briefing note from Simon Browning is included in the appendix and a summary of the meeting is included.

Bathing water, Gunnislake – Andrew reported that the Lower Gunnislake Fishing Club have offered the Parish Council the possibility of a bathing spot above the Gunnislake Bridge for a peppercorn rent to Calstock Parish Council for the benefit of Gunnislake Parishioners. The idea would be solidify a right to swim with no obligation. However long term it would impose a health and safety obligation on the polluters.



Planning Applications – Richard suggested that the Council should object to all new builds that would be connected to the sewage network as the infrastructure clearly cannot support it.

Fish Pass – the stance from the Committee is to object to this application on the grounds that there is not enough scientific evidence that the shad are not breeding; there will be too much disruption during the construction– both to residents and to wildlife (particularly the horseshoe bats)

Actions:

Clare to set up a meeting with Hansons Aggregats

Clare to set up a liaison meeting with South West Water

Documents in Appendix

Recovering Nature Starter Document

Planning Committee Notes

Calstock Sewage Briefing

Devon and Cornwall Food Action Leaflet

Tamar Catchment Notes

Simon Browning meeting notes

Next meeting:

Working Groups – 25-07-2023, 1900

Signed: Date:

Recovering Nature

The aim is not just to preserve what we have now, but to recover the flora and fauna we have lost, to expand the natural world around us for its own sake and in doing so to create a much richer and more diverse environment for people to enjoy.

This aligns closely with the Cornwall Nature Recovery plan and AONB plans.

Further we should identify nature projects which are easy to execute finance and generate action.

Peter Bloomfield -hedgerows.

Alison Freshney- art education.

Steve Wood - Calstock Arts and beyond.

Andrew Brown– recovering nature-rewilding.

To encourage, support, sponsor, and partner to act to restore flora and fauna in the parish through:

- Encouraging wildflower meadows
- Re-wilding marginal land
- Extending wetland environments
- Extending woodland and encouraging its natural management
- Protecting hedgerows and encouraging sensitive

management thereof Encouraging:

- Beavers
- Badgers (inoculated)
- Hedgehogs
- Willow tits and other endangered bird species
- Wetland birds
- Pine martins
- Goshawks
- Bats

Discouraging:

- Pheasants
- Feeding of species which predate those at risk.
- Grey squirrels

Potential partners: Tamar Valley AONB, National Trust, Cornwall Council, Cornwall Wildlife Trust, Tamara Project, Woodland Trust, and other local environmental groups.

AONB Actions

Cornwall AONB are leading a pilot application to the National Lottery, with Lizard local farmers and Wildlife Groundswell. This should give us some insight into ANOB projects to align with.

The objectives of their project, Lizard Farm for Nature, will be:

Tree planting and aftercare

Fruit tree grafting and pruning.

Soil carbon testing and benchmarking Cornish hedges carbon storage and sequestration

Cornish hedge building

Sowing heather seed

Scrub cutting around heritage sites.

Seed collecting

Coppicing and charcoal making

Sowing herbal leys and plug planting pastures.

Participating in on-farm walks, talks and education events.

Building bird, bat, and hedgehog homes

Digging and planting up new ponds

Ditch blocking to restore wetlands.

Nature recording and monitoring, botany, birding, and invertebrates (iNaturalist)

Nature filming and photography

Farm trail access creation

Some ideas being looked at.

1. Hedgerows. Parish- Peter Bloomfield
2. Willow Tit project Cotehele quay 22nd April.
3. May 23rd presentation to environment committee -ANOB – Valerie Darwall- Project manager -brief. Nature Enhancement and Recovery Plan.
4. Derek Gow, IF NOT NOW, WHEN? Species Reintroduction & Rewilding UK Fri 28th 29th 30th July 2023.
5. Community Bioblitz with iNature- Pollinize. May organise sponsorship for seed packets. August -September collect wild flower seeds. August -September onwards sow wildflower seeds. Presentation from More Meadows? Calstock Arts?
6. Pheasants and partridge fact finding exercises.
7. Tree and hedge planting November – February
8. Orchards. Benedict Macdonald A Year in England's Eden, Talk at Calstock Arts to coincide with National Trust grafting weekend next year?
9. Dormice box project.
10. Bird box, Barn Owl box and Pine Martin work shops.
11. March 2024 collect mistletoe berries from Cotehele and plan workshop at Cotehele implanting mistletoe.
12. Steve Wood, Sophie Pavelle, to speak at Calstock Arts.
13. May swift boxes. Nick Bentham -Green willing to advise. <https://www.swift-conservation.org/Contents.htm>

Cornwall Climate Emergency Development Plan

Notes for Planning committee in considering applications

The Cornwall Climate Emergency Development plan has been adopted in full for implementation on 15/6/23. It covers a great deal of ground which we might need to refer to for exceptional applications, but I have picked out the policies most likely to be relevant to us in considering our normal applications. I have grouped them under the headings from our E&CE Strategic Plan, which the new policies greatly support.

From now on, all applications for new builds will need to be judged against the following and recommended for refusal if they don't meet the new requirements.

Reducing Impact

SEC1 - an Energy Statement, which will need to be a detailed report + Excel Summary Tool to demonstrate:

- Space heating demand less than 30kWh /m² /annum
- Total energy consumption less than 40kWh /m² /annum
- On-site renewable generation = total energy consumption (preference for roof-mounted solar PV)

The policy does not dictate construction materials, techniques or technologies but the following will typically help in meeting the requirements:

- Heat pump
- High performance glazing
- High specification insulation
- Designing out complex junctions and thermal bridging
- Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR)
- Maximising available roof area for solar PV (policy wording covers orientation)

Does the application clearly meet the SEC1 requirement?

T1- sustainable transport - new development should minimise need to travel and support modal hierarchy.

Does the application at least acknowledge the issue in applications and preferably not be reliant on car transport?

In addition, under the new Building Regulations, new extensions to existing buildings will have to have a SAP calculation proving the design meets the Fabric Energy Efficiency Standard
Does the D&A statement for extension proposals mention this and is there an accompanying SAP calculation?

Electric vehicle charging points – The new Approved Document S requires all domestic new builds to have the preparatory work completed for the future installation of an electric vehicle charge point. *Is this shown in the plans?*

Recovering Nature

G2 - Applications need to include a statement showing bio diversity net gain of 10% - this will cover all developments by April 24 - pre-commencement condition - *Is this included in the application?*

G3 - In addition major developments (10 or more units) will need tree canopy calculator - at least 15% canopy, less than that will have to be justified. *Dies the application meet this requirement?*

In addition to the above all local authorities are now required to develop Local Nature Recovery Strategic Plans which will be the basis for:

G4 – Local Nature Recovery Network

Where development is sited within or adjacent to an adopted Local Nature Recovery Network it should demonstrate how the proposal will maintain and enhance the integrity and connectivity of the network and support the principles of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. *This is likely to mainly affect larger developments, but we will need to bare in mind with all new developments.*

Improving Health

New building regulations cover:

Ventilation and indoor air pollutants - new Approved document F - *is this addressed in the D&A statement?*

Prevention of overheating – new Approved Document O introduces glazing limits in new build homes to reduce unwanted solar heat. It also stipulates new levels of cross-ventilation required to remove excess heat. *Does the application consider this issue and address it?*



Can you help us, and we help you?

Many people are finding it difficult with the increasing costs we are all facing. Sometimes it seems difficult to know what to spend money on. We are also all aware of the crisis the environment is under. Trying to reduce our impact can seem too costly when we are on a budget. With an initiative from Devon and Cornwall Food Action you can make a difference. For £20 you can purchase goods worth over £80 and the produce does not end up in landfill.

Devon and Cornwall Food Action started in 2010 with the aim of helping people experiencing food poverty by redistributing donated surplus produce via food boxes. Through links with food manufacturers, supermarket chains and independent food suppliers the food is still perfectly fit for consumption and would otherwise have been sent to landfill or disposed of. Last year the equivalent of 200 tonnes of food was redistributed.

Devon and Cornwall Food Action's aim is to help any individual, family or community who are experiencing food poverty, or financial instability. They distribute to charities, schools and preschools. By so doing they help to reduce the impact of waste on the environmental.

You spend £20 towards the cost of supplying food to receive all this.



Please contact Calstock Parish Council to register your interest:

clerk@calstockparishcouncil.gov.uk

01822 748847

Briefing note: Unacceptably high levels of sewage discharge and wholly inadequate monitoring of water quality in the upper reaches of the tidal Tamar at Calstock.

The part of the Tamar between Gunnislake weir and Halton Quay is in the Tamar Valley AONB, a World Heritage Site, a Marine Conservation Zone with multiple SSSI Designations and sites, multiple priority habitats, important bird areas, important plant areas and includes the National Trust property of Cotehele.

The same quality of water is required for spawning grounds of the Allis shad, the sea lamprey and for bathing water. There is absolutely no point in contemplating spending £1,000,000 altering the fish pass if the waters are not fit for the river bathers at the three bathing spots above the Calstock weir, the ones at Calstock Quay, Cotehele Quay and Cotehele Weir and if the same waters are not fit for the Allis shad and the sea lamprey.

The Tamar Catchment Partnership vision - "A healthy, functional ecosystem that provides a healthy and productive landscape now and in the future," is promising. The Action Plan for Water Quality in identifying failing STWs & developing descriptive consents and monitoring during low river flow sounds like the right place to start in the upper reaches of the Tamar estuary.

Summary

Water company data from 2021 revealed that over 20,000 hours of raw or partially treated sewage were discharged into the Tamar and tributaries in the Calstock area. Updated figures for 2022 show a reduction to 12,373 hours (likely partially due to lower rainfall – 1,255 mm at Gunnislake in 2022 vs 1,421 mm in 2021).

There are six sewage treatment works that continuously discharge treated sewage into the same area. The level of sewage pollution into a sensitive and important habitat remains wholly unacceptable.

At the same time the Environment Agency were not undertaking *any* regular monitoring of water quality in this area.

Given the high number of sewage spills and continuous discharges in a relatively confined area it should be subject to comprehensive regulatory monitoring in order to ensure water company assets are being operated correctly and to ascertain any deleterious impact on the estuary.

CSO Spills and other 'emergency' discharges.

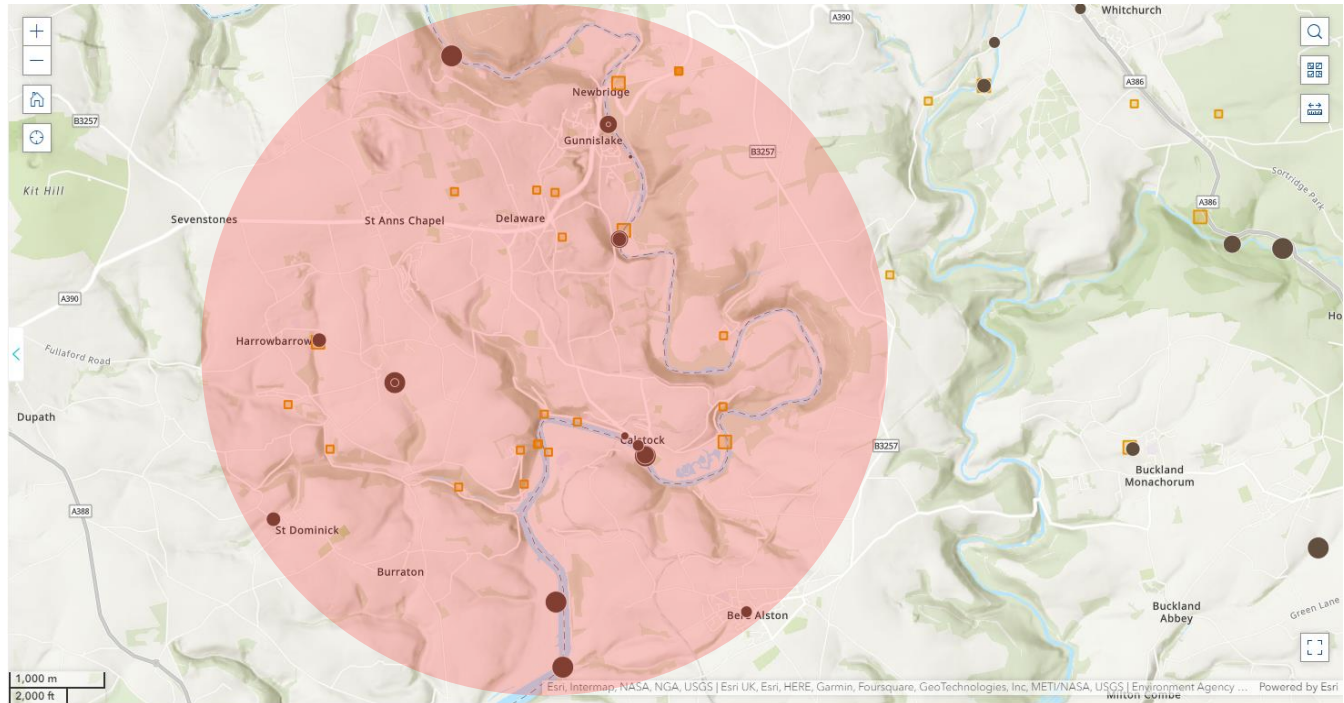
Discharges from combined sewer overflows "combine raw sewage with what runs off the urban environment", potentially comprising "a huge chemical cocktail: faecal microbes, hydrocarbons, industrial chemicals, plastics, pharmaceuticals [and] personal care products"

– Dr Rob Collins, The Rivers Trust (giving evidence to the Environmental Audit Committee for the Water Quality in Rivers report – January 2022)

"[Sewer] overflows are intended to be used infrequently and under exceptional circumstances"

– 'Water Quality in Rivers' – Environmental Audit Committee report January 2022

- In 2022 15 South West Water (SWW) assets spilled raw sewage into a 15 km stretch of the Tamar estuary close to Calstock **1,224 times**, for a combined total of **12,373 hours**
- **That's equivalent to more than 3 spills a day for a combined 33 hours each day!**
- The worst offenders were **Bere Alston (3,510 hours)**, **Metherell WWTW (2,503 hours)**, **St Dominick (1,932 hours)** and **Chilsworthy (1,670 hours)**
- Since the Tamar is tidal at this point, sewage discharged into the estuary does not flow 'away' as it would in a river – it will return on the next high tide and can circulate for days or even weeks



Extract from The Rivers Trust 'sewage map' showing storm overflows and consented discharges in the Calstock area (red circle)

Sewage Treatment Works Discharges and SWW monitoring

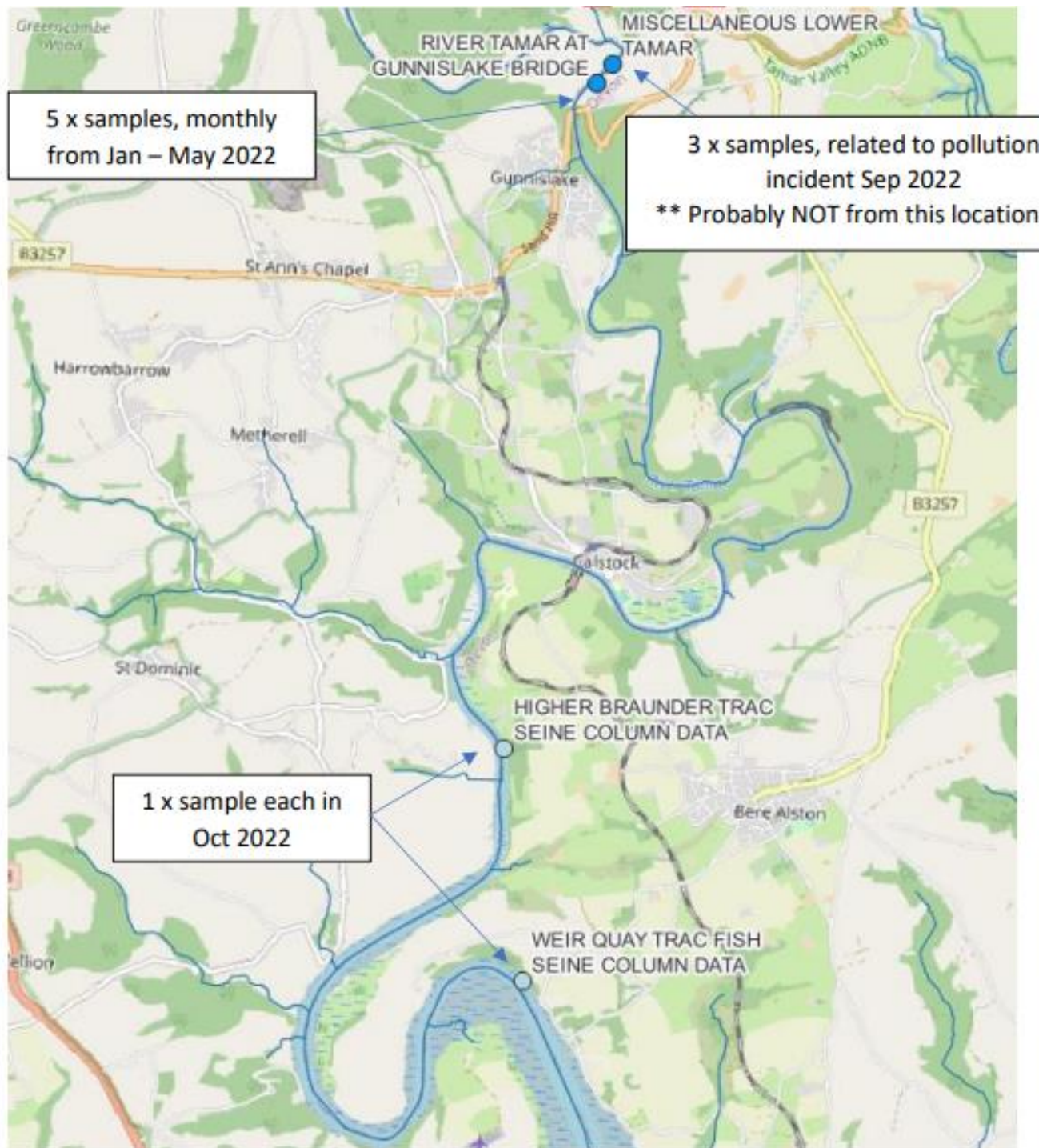
- In addition to the 15 SWW assets (CSOs, pumping stations, Waste Water Treatment Works) that have a licence to discharge under 'exceptional circumstances' there are a further 6 continuous discharges of treated sewage associated with the local Sewage Treatment Works (St Dominick STW, Metherell STW, Harrowbarrow STW, Bere Alston STW, Calstock STW and Gunnislake STW)
- Monitoring of the quality of the final effluent of these discharges is carried out by South West Water with results reported to the Environment Agency
- Despite the potential for a wide range of pollutants (including nitrate, phosphate, faecal bacteria, heavy metals and pharmaceuticals) to be present in treated sewage, **only a very limited range** of substances are tested for – see below.

	BERE ALSTON STW FE CALSTOCK STW FE GUNNISLAKE STW FE HARROWBARROW STW FE METHERELL STW FE ST DOMINICK STW FE					
Ammonia	12	12	0	9	11	0
Biological Oxygen Demand	16	16	10	9	11	4
Suspended Solids	12	12	6	9	11	4
Phosphorus	----- NOT TESTED -----					
Faecal Bacteria	----- NOT TESTED -----					
Hydrocarbons	----- NOT TESTED -----					
Pharmaceuticals	----- NOT TESTED -----					

Number of sample results submitted to the Environment Agency by South West Water in 2022.

Environment Agency monitoring

- During 2022 the extent of EA water quality monitoring in this area appears to have been:
 - o **5 x samples** collected from Gunnislake Bridge (Jan – May 2022) analysed for a wide range of determinands (inc. nutrients, metals, PCBs, dissolved oxygen, pH, sediment etc.)
 - o **1 x sample** (6 Oct 22) at Higher Braunder tested for temperature, salinity and dissolved oxygen only (perhaps associated with a fish survey?)
 - o **1 x sample** (7 Oct 22) at Weir Quay tested for temperature, salinity and dissolved oxygen only (perhaps associated with a fish survey?)
 - o **3 x samples** (23 Sep 22) collected from the Lower Tamar as ‘Unplanned reactive monitoring (Pollution incident)’ – the precise location of these samples is not known, neither is the nature of the pollution incident
- There appears to have been **no regular, monthly monitoring of water quality** by the Environment Agency in the upper reaches of the tidal Tamar in 2022.



Extent of Environment Agency water quality sampling in 2022

What is needed now

- South West Water to provide status report of all assets listed – treatment type, performance, plans for improvement, discharge consents, internal monitoring regime and data
- Environment Agency to explain how they are monitoring impact of sewage inputs to upper reaches of the tidal Tamar
- Environment Agency to instigate suitable monitoring programme to ascertain degree of impact from sewage discharges into the upper reaches of the tidal Tamar

Simon Browning meeting
7/6/23

RNC, AB and SB via Zoom

Agreed that Simon would help prepare Andrew for the Tamar Catchment Partnership meeting by preparing a simple presentation of a few graphs based on the recently released 2022 data to demonstrate the overspill issue from SWW WTW in the parish. This could then be used with other interested parties, the press and Robin Teverson, who is willing to raise the issue in the HoL.

Basically, EA don't monitor our section of river so SWW have no incentive to clean up their act. There is absolutely no doubt that they discharge as overspill on more occasions than there are very wet days:

(Gunnislake. EA rainfall data 2021

1818 hours when there was any rain at all. out of 8760

368.5 hours with greater than 0.5mm

31.25 hours across 43 days greater than 1.5mm

Gunnislake WTW spill data: 100 events totalling 1690 hours, so a massive disparity between rainfall events and spill events, therefore they are discharging from CSOs when there is no rain.)

This will be reinforced by the allis shad issue as they require clean water to B standard. The Natural England project for SWW at Gunnislake weir raises the stakes on this considerably - nobbling them about the state of the river though the TCP and direct routes AB was suggesting (friends of his) may get results. Need representation at the SWW meeting about fish pass on 20/6/23.

As for monitoring the quality of water, SB suggested getting Plymouth Marine Laboratory interested and then maybe recruiting Citizen Scientists to provide them with samples - AB has contact with Tony Hawkins there and will follow up. Carol Cadman has been recruited from Cornwall Wildlife Trust by SWW and maybe worth contacting - invite to SWW liaison meeting`/

Aims:

Pressure the EA to monitor the river below Gunnislake Weir

Then for them to pressure SWW to radically improve their WTWs

1. SB to provide simple presentation based on latest data
2. AB to take to TCP meeting on 22/6/23
3. Use as basis for press release after that
4. Use as basis for discussion at SWW liaison meeting (TBC)
5. AB to approach contact at PML re establishing monitoring project

Tamar Catchment Partnership Quarterly Meeting on Thursday 22nd June 2023

Plymouth Marine Laboratory

Agenda

Rob Price (Environment Agency Catchment Co-ordinator)

Westcountry Rivers Trust / TCP Hosts Introduction - Ben Gallant (TCP Chair)

Catchment to Coast Research - Andy Rees (PML)

Calstock wetlands - Vas Kitidis (PML)

Trade-offs analysis for farms and coast interactions - Keila Guillen Onate (PML)

Local and remote observation techniques to monitor (optical) water quality in lakes, rivers, estuaries and coastal zones - Stefan Simis and Elizabeth C. Atwood (PML)

The history of beavers in the Tamar – Holly Barclay (Tamar Beaver Management Group, Devon Wildlife Trust)

Nature based solutions – Theo Nickols (Plymouth City Council)

Work shops.

- Water Quality
- Water Quantity
- Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change
- Recreation

Andrew Brown represented Calstock Parish Council and made the Calstock sewage briefing notes available to the major stake holders present.

It became evident very early on in the day that Calstock is at the centre of the Tamar catchment partnerships activity. The environmental agency, Plymouth marine laboratory, Devon Wildlife Trust, National Trust and Lower Gunnislake Fishing club are very active in the Parish and the Parish is the centre of the ANOB.

A huge amount of detailed data is being collected in the Parish and its environs for research purposes. Additional research needs to focus on the questions that would lead to better water quality for water users and natural. Variables and actors need to be identified and pressured to effect positive change.

Rob Price (Environment Agency Catchment Co-ordinator) reached out to converse with us. Positive public engagement is important, and I see several opportunities for symbiosis. Rob agreed to meet up with Richard N-C, Andrew Brown, and Simon Browning to discuss the briefing notes. I have asked Rob for some literature and research which might frame the discussions and provide opportunity or limitations.

Andrew Brown reached out to Devon Wild Life representative Holly Barclay, to offer future help with Beaver rehoming on private sites.

Andrew Brown continued a conversation with George Hulme NT about wild flower seed collection at his small holding of Newton Farm. Newton Farm is a donor site for wild flower seed collection to the National Trust wild flower meadow creation program. Some of the seeds being collected will be available for use by the Parish and Parishioners. The yellow rattle seed can be used in the management of verges and grass.