

Meeting Notes

Title of meeting:	Wales Water Management Forum
Location:	Virtual via MS Teams
Date of meeting:	19/10/2022
Attendees present:	Steve Ormerod (chair) Ceri Davies (NRW), Ceri Jones (NRW), Francesca Sanchez (NRW), Sian Williams (NRW), Seth Johnson-Marshall (Afonydd Cymru for WEL), Sue Ginley (NRW), Laura Moss (DWI), Mark Charlesworth (NRW), Andy Morritt (Coal Authority), Richard Blackwell (WRW for United Utilities), Sarah Clark (HD), Natalie Hall (NRW), Stephanie Pullan (HD), Tony Harrington (DCWW), James Dowling (WG), Alison Edwards (DCWW), Anthony Geddes (Confor), Paul Hurcombe (HD), Suzanne Hearn (NRW), Dennis Matheson (TFA Cymru), Bob Gilchrist (CCW)
Apologies:	Gail Davies (Affonyd Cymru) and Seth Johnson-Marshall will be covering, Elizabeth Franks (HD Cymru) and Paul Hurcombe will be covering, Phil Stone (Canoe Wales), Fraser McAuley (CLA)
Secretariat:	Ceri Jones

Item 1 Open meeting

As Chair, Professor Steve Ormerod opened the meeting setting out logistics for holding the virtual Forum. New members were welcomed.

Item 2 Review minutes and action log

Agreed minutes and actions from the last meeting subject to including Dennis Matheson (TFA Cymru) to the attendee list.

ACTION CARRIED OVER: CJ to check with WG to check Water Strategy and value of water work in relation to STT

ACTION CARRIED OVER: CJ will provide a regular update on Citizen Science in the NRW Briefing Update papers for forthcoming meetings.

A final version of the May 2022 meeting notes will be made available on the NRW website page for WWMF <https://naturalresources.wales/guidance-and-advice/business-sectors/water/wales-water-management-forum/?lang=en>

Item 3 Member's contributions and Update paper – highlights and open discussion

WWMF had an open discussion on matters relevant to the forum, this included member updates and a discussion on the Update paper. Points to note included:

- **Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive**– EU is revising the rules on treating urban waste water to include all cities over 1000 inhabitants, pollution caused by storm overflows, and micropollutants such as residues from pharmaceuticals and cosmetics. The revised Directive also sets an energy neutrality target for the sector and introduces better control of individual systems such as septic tanks, stricter standards for nutrients, and standards for micropollutants.
- **Chemicals/ pharmaceuticals research** – brief discussion regarding pharmaceuticals in water environment particularly arising from hospitals. In Holland, they treat their hospital waste water before it enters the sewage system as pharmaceuticals are harder to remove at the end of sewage works. Also, veterinary pharmaceuticals need consideration.

ACTION: SW and TH will contact Royal Pharmaceutical Society Wales and Public Health Wales about health and environmental implications of anti-microbial resistance and pharmaceuticals in the water environment

ACTION: CJ to include pharmaceuticals as a forward look meeting item for a substantive discussion

- **Farming Rules for Water in England** – Defra in discussions on tightening when manures can and can't be recycled. This will place restrictions on the dairy industry and recycling biosolids.
- **Water Mark 2022** – CCW has [published](#) its annual grading of water companies.
- **Reedbed waste in England** – Coal Authority has been in discussions with EA about waste codes of reedbeds that treat mine water. Coal Authority now understand that reedbed waste (cut reed as well as sludge) will need to be disposed of by incinerator or landfill, instead of brownfield remediation.
- **TFA Cymru** – TFA raised concerns about the risk that the new WG SFS will not be equally accessible to tenant farmers compared to landowners as land-use changes need a long-term commitment. There is also a risk regarding tenant farmer's ability to invest in improvements required to comply with the Water Resources (Control of Agricultural Pollution) (Wales) Regulations 2021 for slurry storage. Roughly 27% of land in Wales is farmed by someone other than the landowner.

- **Canoe Wales (provided by email for the meeting) -**
 - a. Membership now stands at just over 4,500, up from 2,700 in March 2020. CW members have shown us that they want more information on our aquatic and riparian environment. CW has appointed a new part time member of staff who will take the lead of some of our environmental and sustainability work. CW members are unhappy with the general quality of our rivers. CW continues to champion the Check Clean Dry initiative with messaging about this sent to all of our members. CW are teaming up with [Wales Resilient Ecological Network](#) (WaREN) and CRT to raise the awareness of invasive species.
 - b. CW members joined in with the [Big Paddle clean up](#) and provided clean up kits to 30 of our clubs so that they could get out to a number of rivers around Wales. The clubs continue to clean up and bring rubbish and litter off the rivers whenever they paddle.
 - c. CW provided input into the newly launched [Paddlers Code](#) this has been produced to sit beside the already established countryside code and follows the same Respect Protect Enjoy strapline. There is also a [video](#) that goes with code, if you look closely you'll see paddlers from Llandysul enjoying the Teifi.
 - d. CW's latest edition of the quarterly magazine, [Ceufad Autumn 2022](#), has a piece written by NRW's Ben Wilson on the plight of the Welsh Salmon and Seatrout.
- **Water Resources West** – Richard Blackwell (WRW) shared some slides to update on the WRW work, they expect to publish their water resources plan for public consultation in November 2022, in line with the water company's WRMP timeline. Once the consultation responses have been reviewed, it is expected that the final WRW Management Plan will be published in September/ October 2022. The Plan has considered environmental designations, demand reductions to 110l p/d, reducing leakage, and the Severn Thames transfer. WRW engaged with stakeholders during the development of the plan. They are also exploring mandatory labelling for white goods on water efficiency.
- **DWI** – research, taken before this year's dry weather, indicated that customers felt that water resources were plentiful, and that climate change was a long way off. Updated surveys are planned. DWI also carried out customer research on water recycling which received some positive feedback from customers. DWI emphasized how important it is to get the messages right when engaging with the public on water recycling.
- **Drought update in Wales** – Wales is still in drought, and it has been the driest summer for 150 years. Although there has been recent rain, which has alleviated pressure to some extent, the short sharp showers that we've been having don't penetrate the ground and have led to flood alerts instead. NRW has shifted to an Incident Management response for drought.
- **NRW Updates** - were provided in Paper 1: Briefing Update.
- **Water Capital Programme** - NRW has been funded £9 million for 2022/23 by Welsh Government to undertake a programme of capital works to deliver improvements to water quality and the wider water environment. Metal mine remediation and a

programme of works to improve spatial distribution of breeding fish populations and a greater uptake of restored and optimal habitat in upper catchments for fish production will also be undertaken. The programme of work will put in place interventions that will help increase the resilience of ecosystems, so that the water environment can, over time, respond to pressures by resisting, recovering and adapting to change, whilst continuing to provide multiple benefits to society. The works should aim to enhance the attractiveness of areas, thus improving quality of life and bringing wider well-being and health benefits.

ACTION: CJ to provide RLD with the NRW contact for the person dealing with the SAC Rivers work

- **NRW Corporate Plan** – Sue Ginley (NRW) provided the latest update from NRW who are developing their latest Corporate Plan which will set out objectives to 2030. It will be guided by the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act so will set wellbeing objectives and steps that will meet those objectives. The three wellbeing objectives are: nature emergency, climate emergency and preventing pollution. The plan is due to launch in spring 2023.

ACTION: SG to send a short questionnaire to WWMF participants in November

- **Forward look for WWMF is currently:**
 - a) Pharmaceuticals
 - b) Groundwater trends
 - c) Evidence including data – integrating various approaches including citizen science
 - d) Inland Bathing Waters
 - e) Drought Lessons Learnt

ACTION: All to send forward look suggestions to CJ before the next meeting

Item 4 Water Environment (WFD) Regulations Classification

Mark Charlesworth (NRW) gave a presentation on the most recent (2021) classification of water bodies under the Water Environment (WFD) Regulations. In 2021 nitrogen standards were introduced for lakes, new chemicals were added, river acidity standards changed and there was a change to the estuarine fish classification tool. Main message of 2021 classification is: 40% of all surface and ground water bodies are at good or high status which is an improvement of 3% since 2015.

At an elemental level: 93% of elements overall are at a good or high status. However, total P in rivers and lakes are failing in certain water bodies; there are widespread failures for the Mitigation Measures Assessment (MMA); and in TRAC water bodies, there are concerns about DIN.

Chemical status: 300 water bodies reported on copper. Information has been derived from a DCWW pesticide dataset and Chemical Investigations Programme. Three main categories: a) Metals from redundant metal mines, b) UPBTs, which are largely tackled through source control but are so ubiquitous they can take time to see positive changes

from actions in the classification data, and c) pesticides, particularly from sheep dip disposal.

All classification data is available to download on Water Watch Wales and there will be a new Power BI app which will allow easy access to classification data and downloadable GIS maps.

There was a discussion on: how well we are communicating the improvements in the water environment and not just the failures?; the benefit of showing all the standards, including Protected Areas, in one place in future; and reference was made to [New Zealand](#) as an example of collaborative working to improve water quality.

The EA have recently published their [State of the Water Environment Report- long term trends, river quality](#), which concluded:

- a. The following changes to average concentrations of the selected parameters between the mid-1980s and the present day (2019):
 - i. ammonia concentrations have reduced to about 15% of average concentrations in 1990
 - ii. BOD concentrations have reduced to 55% to 60% of average concentrations in 1990
 - iii. orthophosphate concentrations have reduced to 15% to 20% of average concentrations in 1990
 - iv. nitrate-nitrogen concentrations show no clear trend

Item 5 Drainage and Waste Water Management Plans (DWMP), DCWW

Alison Edwards (DCWW) gave a presentation on the development of their DWMP. To develop the plan, DCWW carried out customer research with households and businesses. Public consultation on the DWMP ended on 7 October 2022 and DCWW intend to produce a statement of response. WG will decide whether the DWMP is sufficient to publish, or whether all or some parts of it will need to be re-worked.

HD are looking at a catchment-based approach for DWMP, in particular looking at Newtown and Welshpool.

ACTION: AE will meet with SW separately about the DCWW assumptions in the DWMP

Item 6 AOB

ACTION: FS/CJ to send a questionnaire to WWMF about what opportunities there are to improve internal and external communications.

- SO gave an overview of the Biodiversity Deep Dive (BDD) recommendations

ACTION: CJ to circulate the links of the BDD recommendations to the WWMF

- **Water quality targets revised for SAC rivers –**

- a) Following advice from the JNCC, NRW has revised the water quality targets for all water bodies within the nine Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) rivers; Cleddau, Eden, Gwyrfai, Teifi, Tywi, Glaslyn, Dee, Usk and Wye.
 - b) The revised water quality targets in the Core Management Plan (CMP) for each of the nine SAC rivers have now been published. SAC Core Management Plans outline the site vision, features and what is required to bring the features into favourable condition. Each feature has a set of conservation objectives which are an expression of the conservation aspiration for each site in the context of favourable conservation status. The new targets form part of the conservation objectives and targets are included for a range of water quality attributes including phosphate, total ammonia, unionised ammonia, dissolved oxygen and biochemical oxygen demand. The plans have also been significantly improved by incorporating re-branding, better formatting, accessibility improvements and some other updates on content.
 - c) You can now view the full list of updated water quality targets for the 127 water bodies within SAC rivers on our [website](#). The Core Management Plans are available to view in full using the filters on our [designated sites page](#).
- **WWMF site visit** – CJ is considering arranging a WWMF site visit to a water capital project near Cardiff.

ACTION: CJ will send some site visit suggestions to the WWMF

Item 7 Date of next meeting

ACTION: CJ will send an email with the date for the next meeting in March 2023