A Community Guide to Your Water Environment

NFU enzygo environmental consultants FWAG Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group ccri countryside and community research institute

acre ACTION WITH COMMUNITIES IN RURAL ENGLAND

This guide has been produced with support from Defra and the Catchment Based Approach. Your community will be in one of England's river management catchments, where organisations are working in partnership with communities to help deliver a better water environment.

For further information on catchment partnerships in your area, please visit **www.catchmentbasedapproach.org**

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Introduction

Water is something we tend to take for granted and this guide aims to help you understand the importance of the water in your local environment; how you can take action to become more prepared for extreme weather events of flood and drought while protecting the purity and biodiversity of your waterways.

Our natural water systems have been affected and changed by human activity and infrastructure, such as the building of houses and roads.

However, if we begin to understand how water impacts on our local community we are better able to take targeted action to reduce risks from flooding and drought and protect important environmental aspects, such as rivers, lakes, ponds and streams.

Flooding, water quality and biodiversity are intrinsically linked and building your knowledge of how one affects the other will help you to develop understanding, resilience and preparedness, and deliver a wider range of benefits to the local environment and community.

Why is managing water important?

Managing the water environment means managing the coast, estuaries, reservoirs, lakes, rivers, run-off, groundwater, highways and sewers.

Natural weather patterns and events are unpredictable. Extreme rainfall can result in flooding in different ways from all these elements, and all of which can be devastating for local communities.

However, infrastructure and systems can be designed to manage their effects safely, and these need to be based on a good understanding of local conditions and should involve the systems put in place locally by communities on the ground.

What's involved?

This guide aims to help you understand how your actions can protect this vital resource by helping you identify and record local issues, understand the shared governance of the water environment and help you develop the preparedness and resilience of your community.

Here you will find practical help for communities to carry out local projects that identify local pressures and opportunities in the water environment. It is designed to help you understand who has responsibility and capacity to act to address local issues and what actions you can take yourself.

The principles of community planning will be used

Importantly, this guide also provides information to help communities carry out projects with the local farming community, who are often pivotal in the management of water in the area.

The principles of community planning will be used and communities which have prepared Parish Plans or community-led plans will recognise the key principles involved:

- Addressing local issues at the right scale, most often at parish or ward level.
- Valuing local knowledge and sharing this within the community
- Mapping resources, responsibilities, assets, opportunities and risks that exist locally.

VALUE LOCAL KNOWLEDGE AND SHARE IT WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

A very useful approach is known as Integrated Local Delivery (see Water with Integrated Local Delivery (WILD) case study) developed to enable local knowledge to lead local solutions, with all organisations working in a coordinated way in support.

It is a simple framework, that works at parish or ward level, which enables communication with all the people who live within that area. This ensures that anyone who wants to can offer knowledge, local resource and observations that can be included in the plan.

You can also find out who the partner organisations that have an interest in the area that could come together in a coordinated way to help the community with expertise, funding and resources. This is done through a simple exercise to create the local team relevant to your area.

Who has a say on the water in your community?

Knowing who owns and manages land is the starting point for involving everyone in a community project. There are many bodies that regulate and manage the water environment and on occasion there can be a conflict between groups where they have differing objectives. In order to pull together the wide range of national and local bodies, the Government has called for the adoption of the Catchment Based Approach.

This new approach aims to ensure that action to safeguard and improve the water environment should bring 'multiple benefits' to ecology, communities and the economy.

River or stream bank ownership (riparian owners) – You are known as a riparian owner if you own land or property adjacent to a watercourse or a watercourse runs through your land. There are a wide range of responsibilities associated with being a riparian owner including; the responsibility to pass on flow without obstruction, pollution or diversion; accept flood flows through your land; responsible for maintaining the bed, bank and biodiversity of the watercourse and for clearing any debris, while not causing any obstructions to the free passage of fish.

Local Authorities – are responsible for ordinary watercourses i.e. those which have not been designated as main rivers and which are not within Internal Drainage Board areas.

The Highway Authorities – are responsible for effective drainage of roads on the local road network, in so far as ensuring that drains, culverts and gullies, which are their responsibility are maintained.

The Highways Agency – are responsible for managing road drainage from the trunk road network in England, including the slip roads to and from trunk roads.

Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) - are independent bodies created to manage land drainage in areas of special drainage need. These areas include agricultural land but also large urban areas.

INVOLVE EVERYONE IN A COMMUNITY PROJECT

The Environment Agency – is the principal flood defence operating authority, and has permissive powers for the management of flood risk arising from designated main rivers and the sea. The flood defence functions of the Environment Agency are overseen by Regional Flood Defence Committees.

Sewerage Undertakers – are responsible for surface water drainage from development via adopted sewers which are indicated on the public sewer record maps, copies of which are held by the local authority. Sewage undertakers are not, in many cases, responsible for domestic household drains.

Emergency Services and Multi-Agency Emergency Planning – Resilience Forums, which include representatives from the emergency services, Local Authorities and the Environment Agency, should ensure that risks from flooding are fully considered, including the resilience of emergency infrastructure that will have to operate during floods.

Developing a community project to manage your water

Choosing where to start is an important decision. Guidance from ACRE Network members (Rural Community Councils) on Community-Led Planning and a process called Integrated Local Delivery provides help specifically on this issue. The following considerations are a step by step approach and will enable you to control the pace of development of your plan.

Step 1 – What geographic area will your project cover?

Communities know most about their local area and have a clear sense of where they feel boundaries lie.

However, it is very useful to understand how other people, Local Authorities and Government agencies see the area. Generally, it is best to work with a Parish boundary.

On top of this, you may need or want to work with other Parishes that are connected by local rivers, streams or drainage so that you can understand and manage the water environment in a more joined-up way – it may also help with accessing resources and sharing the work.

Communities know most about their local area and have a clear sense of where they feel boundaries lie.

STEP 2 - Engage with all of the community to begin assessing knowledge

Communities often have every type of knowledge and resource to offer, so start by giving all the people that live within the chosen area the chance to offer their knowledge, and contribute. By talking with local people it is possible to bring together the community's collective knowledge of the water environment on a large-scale map. Making contact with your local Rural Community Council or Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group member, will ensure you have the right advice on what processes you can use.

Every national, regional and local agency of Government will have someone who is responsible for some aspect of the local environment in every locality.

2a Know what assets you have – Start by taking note of and mapping where water is stored and flows. Organised walks across the parish can also be a useful exercise to make a note of features and identify local issues. This can involve working with people who have local knowledge – local farmers, local council officials, other experts who may be living in the community.

It is a good opportunity to talk to people who have lived in the community the longest – their knowledge of how things work, or used to work, could be invaluable. The result is a wealth of local knowledge captured, which should be mapped at large scale for ease of reference.

ORGANISED WALKS ARE A USEFUL WAY TO NOTE FEATURES

Every national, regional and local agency of Government will have someone who is responsible for some aspect of the local environment in every locality. Every patch of land is owned by someone - another task is to understand land ownership and responsibilities as a first step to creating dialogue and build a team with the right people.

2b How do we collect the data and in what form? This is very much up to you, but a simple way is to collect the information in a central place held by the parish or ward council. Information can be stored in a simple document, with notes and possible actions identifying people or organisations that you might need to contact. A photographic record might also be worth making to document all the issues in a Parish Record with grid references using an Ordnance Survey mapping website. XY coordinates can also be useful for uploading issues/actions onto mapping systems.

It is important to remember that wildlife is protected and that some actions will require a survey in case any protected species are present. Recording the presence of protected species can also help to get funding for actions from different sources.

STEP 3 – Put your locality in context

Every piece of land and its management has a potential role to play in improving the environment, supporting communities and driving the economy. Looked at the right way, the things a community decides to do can deliver important Government policies locally; this can unlock Government money not otherwise available. Understanding where local actions contribute more widely can help community plans gain support and resources for local projects.

3a Establish common ground - Establishing common ground between different bodies and community and private interests is a key step. No one should have to act against their own interests, but a key challenge is for participants to recognise others' priorities and to have some flexibility in how they carry forward their objectives. Skilled specialist facilitation support can be important.

3b How do we connect with 'Government'? It is an important early step to find out who has the duty for managing rivers, ditches, drains, and water supply in your area. The Government has launched the Catchment Based Approach (CaBA) to help the Environment Agency, Water Companies and Local Authorities get the support for partnership projects being developed at a catchment scale.

Other organisations will have priorities that may align with yours. Check what they are and get in contact with them to see if they can help.

For example, Natural England might have an interest in improving biodiversity, the Local Authority might be interested in drainage onto land from their highway, or it could be a developer who wants to develop land. These interests also need to be mapped and further information about your parish/ward can be found in useful links section.

STEP 4 – Think creatively in problem solving

It might be possible to provide multiple benefits in a number of ways. For example, different management practices on the land could help resolve issues. Also, investment in local schemes could be designed to provide multiple environmental benefits with the involvement and support of relevant agencies. Wider economic and social benefits could be gained by connecting local people back to the management of the water environment – for example by linking diversified farming to changes in land management; by improving recreational access to land; by economic development with environmental and social benefits; by recreating or establishing new links in the community linked to community resilience.

STEP 5 – Prioritising actions and opportunities

The most important job, having mapped everyone's knowledge and interests, is to prioritise actions and opportunities, and find a way of tackling them. Imagination and creativity are required to identify perhaps novel solutions. This is the way communities can deliver improvements for their local environment. For example, a traditional response to a local flooding problem might be to ask the Environment Agency or Local Authority to fund works. Funding constraints might make this a difficult thing to achieve. A novel solution (only possible because communities have captured local knowledge and agreed on where problems lie) could be in some changed land management practice by a local farmer, or some other source funding from a different agency who might be happy to contribute because it can meet their objectives too.

STEP 6 – Find project sponsor and Catchment Host

Finding capable project sponsors is an important task and the aim should be to spread responsibility amongst key partners. These can be in the community, the Parish Council, Local Authorities in the area or other bodies.

Resources

There are a wide range of resources available that will help you to develop a good understanding of your area and build a picture of the water resources. There is an additional document produced that sets out in more detail how to access the following resources. Please visit **www.acre.org.uk**

Parish Maps

To obtain a map and information on your area you can visit the **GOV.UK** website and access **www.magic.gov.uk** which provides authoritative geographic information about the natural environment from across Government.

Interactive maps: Environment Agency 'What's in your backyard?'

For up-to-date, interactive maps and environmental information for England and Wales. Find out if you live in an area that is at risk from flooding.

Farmers can use the tool 'What's In My Back Yard (WIMBY) for farmers' which has been created to help farmers find out if the land they farm drains to water bodies (groundwater, streams, rivers, lakes and estuaries) that are thought to be affected by agricultural pollutants.

VISIT MAGIC.GOV.UK TO OBTAIN A MAP OF YOUR AREA

You can click on the map to view information about each area and follow the on-screen instructions to read guidance on what actions would improve or minimise the impact of farms on water quality in your local area.

Catchment Mapping Portal
A new mapping portal has been created specifically to support the Catchment Based Approach.

The tool provides quick access to environmental information in an interactive Geographic Information System (GIS), including help and how to videos and an interactive layer summarising local CaBA activity. Follow the link below in order to register as a user.

www.catchmentbasedapproach.net

Case study 1: Water with Integrated Local Delivery

The Water with Integrated Local Delivery (WILD) project

The WILD project is a partnership project in the Cotswold Water Park working with 20 parishes and towns to demonstrate integrated local delivery to improve the water environment.

Siddington is a medium-sized parish of about 600 homes, situated on the southern side of the market town of Cirencester in Gloucestershire.

After publishing its Parish Plan in 2009, Gloucestershire Rural Community Council (GRCC) alerted Siddington to an opportunity to work with the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group South West (FWAG SW) the Cotswold Water Park Trust and the Countryside and Community Research Institute to launch the Water Integrated Local Delivery project (WILD).

All flood-risk areas in the parish identified and solutions proposed.

Siddington was invited to become a pilot parish; it was felt that the project could help to resolve some of the issues raised in the Parish Plan that related to water management, such as flooding and poorly maintained water courses.

As a result of this collaboration, the following activities were successfully undertaken by members of the community in Siddington:

- Mapping of the direction and general condition of all the water courses and footpaths in the parish.
- All flood-risk areas in the parish identified and solutions proposed. Some solutions have been implemented and successfully reduced the severity of flooding from surface waters.
- Conservation volunteers worked with FWAG SW and the Parish Council to sensitively manage ditches and streams, allowing water to flow naturally.
- A large number of historic meadows remain, from as far back as the 17th century, were found and recorded for the first time and the information is now included in the Historic Environment Record.
- Footpaths were cleared and re-signed with the help of the Gloucestershire Rights of Way Manager and local volunteers.
- A plan was developed for the potential use of derelict farm buildings.
- This project has re-engaged landowners, farmers and residents with the land and they are now reaping the benefits of good land management and a better understanding of roles and relationships and better husbandry of the River Churn and its tributaries.

ILD DELIVERED 200,000 HECTARES OF ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Poulton village has been developing a Parish Plan and, with the support from GRCC and the WILD Project, a village survey was carried out and flooding, water quality and fish habitats were identified as issues in the parish. The NFU farmer champion for the village also worked with FWAG SW and Catchment Sensitive Farming to look at water flows across farmland above the village and identify actions to help mitigate and prioritise actions.

The Parish Council also met with landowners and mapped rivers, streams, ditches, road culverts and drains in the village. The Parish Council discovered that much of the ditch infrastructure was not well connected in enabling water to flow along a natural path, resulting in water flowing to a central point in the village. They identified 40 issues, such as the lack of suitable culverts and some ditch networks being filled in or disconnected.

The community now understands how the water is flowing and who owns and manages the land. Furthermore, the greater understanding of the governance of river, ditches and streams has created an opportunity for shared problem-solving and a tighter-knit community.

Case study 2: Operation Watershed

Operation Watershed was set up by West Sussex County Council primarily to repair damaged highway and drainage infrastructure caused by extreme weather. In addition to this, it has also enabled and supported communities to take responsibility for local issues.

It has done this through the allocation of funds, in return for a longer-term commitment from community groups to help prevent flooding in the future.

Approximately 400 members of the public, along with parish, district and county councillors and the local MP, attended the event

In a number of cases, Active Community projects have encouraged local groups to come together, and make that commitment; £1.25m has been allocated to the Operation Watershed Active Communities Fund.

There has been an extremely high level of interest generated across the county by parishes and community groups. The joint work established with local communities has created a legacy of collaborative community working, which can be developed further.

£1.25M HAS BEEN ALLOCATED TO OPERATION WATERSHED

A good example of the activities supported by the Active Communities Fund is the Ouse & Adur Rivers Trust 'Steyning Water Fair' held in March 2014. This event brought together the community of Steyning with groups and organisations working in the South East to improve all aspects of the water environment from flooding through to water quality and water usage.

Approximately 400 members of the public, along with parish, district and county councillors and the local MP, attended the event. A number of organisations also gave short talks on the work they were doing and their plans for future resilience in the water environment.

Over 300 questionnaires were returned by the residents of the Steyning Parish, which were analysed and written up into a report to guide further action.

In West Sussex local communities have joined forces to work with the county council to help prevent flooding in Operation Watershed

Case study 3: Water Care Partnership

A catchment based approach to the Old Bedford and Middle Level Catchment

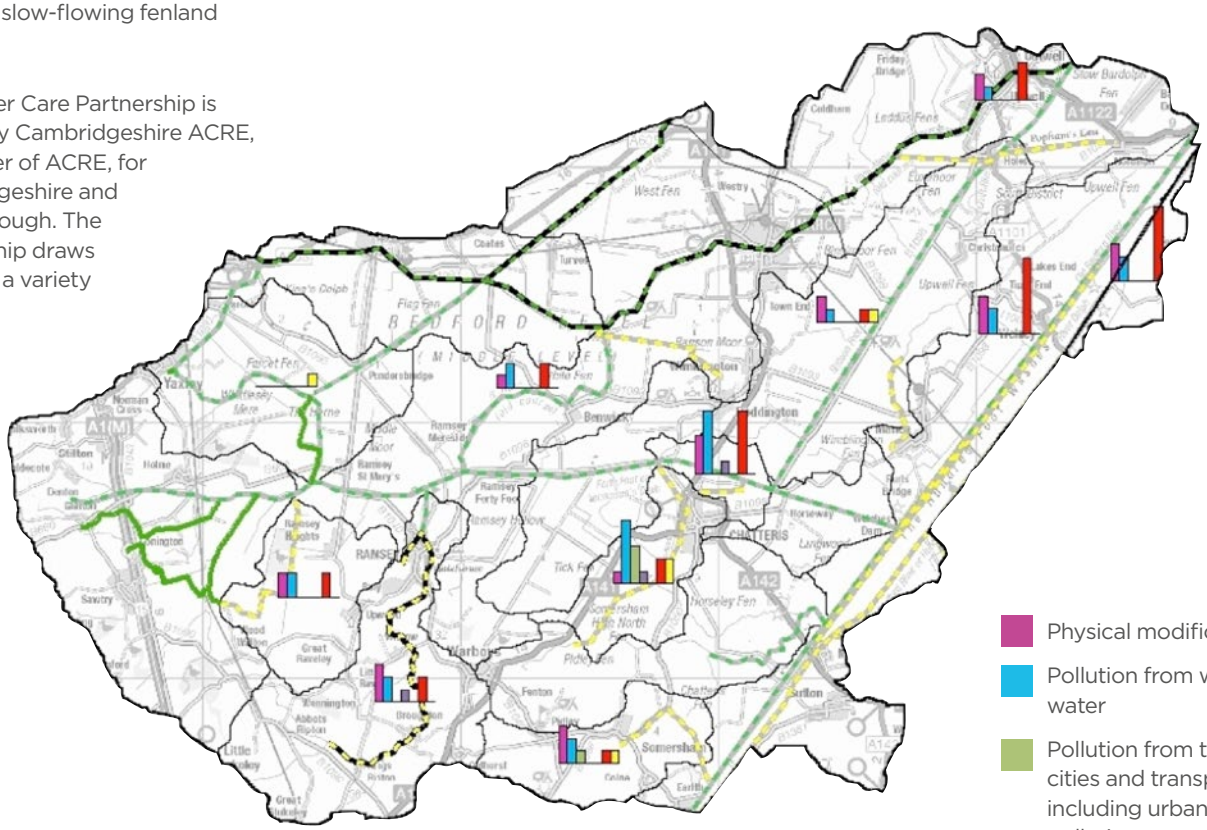
The Old Bedford and Middle Level is a predominantly rural catchment, located in the Cambridgeshire Fens. The issues of the catchment include pollution from specific sources, such as spillages and diffuse pollution such as fertilizers being washed off the land. There are also problems relating to lack of dissolved oxygen due to the naturally slow-flowing fenland rivers.

The Water Care Partnership is hosted by Cambridgeshire ACRE, a member of ACRE, for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The partnership draws together a variety of key stakeholders from within the catchment; key partners are the Environment Agency, Natural England, National Farmers Union, Angling Trust, Internal Drainage Boards and the RSPB.

The partnership is working on the review of documentation provided by the Environment Agency and is determining how this combines with local knowledge and identified priorities.

COMMUNICATE AT A LOCAL SCALE

The partnership aims to communicate with communities at a very local scale, inviting them to get involved with the agencies to help improve the water environment in the catchment. The partnership hopes to use GIS (Geographic Information Systems) to be able to connect partners and communities together by evaluating overlapping areas.



Water Framework Directive (WFD) Rivers
2009 Ecological Status/ Potential, Morphology Designation

- Good, Natural
- Good, Artificial
- Good, Heavily Modified
- Moderate, Natural
- Moderate, Artificial
- Moderate, Heavily Modified
- Poor, Natural
- Poor, Heavily Modified
- Bad, Heavily Modified

- Physical modifications
- Pollution from waste water
- Pollution from towns, cities and transport including urban diffuse pollution
- Changes to the natural flow and level of water including abstraction
- Invasive non-native species
- Pollution from rural areas including rural diffuse pollution
- Other

Case study 4: Eden, the River Petteril Project

The health of the River Petteril, a tributary of the River Eden in Cumbria, had declined over many years and the outlook was not optimistic. But over the past five years local people, farm businesses and organisations have come together to save their river.

Building up the Evidence

In 2010, the River Petteril 'Evidence and Measures' project (funded by Defra and the Environment Agency) was launched. The aim of the project was to bring together people with different sources of knowledge and information about the river to determine what had caused its water quality and wildlife to decline and what could be done about it.

Local people who had lived, worked and fished alongside the River Petteril, some for over 50 years, came together for an evening event, 'How good was the River Petteril?' hosted by Eden Rivers Trust. The aim of the event was to collate community anecdotal and fact-based knowledge about the river and the reasons for its decline.

The aim of the project was to bring together people with different sources of knowledge

The event revealed that the River Petteril was once an excellent wild trout fishery, known locally as the 'Jewel in Eden's Crown'. High-quality fishing had continued on the river until the late 1960s. In 1968, a tanker overturned spilling phenol onto a nearby highway. The fire brigade washed the phenol into the Petteril, in effect killing the life in the river. Local knowledge such as this is crucial to understanding why river health might have declined.

Water quality, pollution incidents, agricultural land use and ecological data were then scrutinised at stakeholder workshops. Local farmers and landowners, Eden Rivers Trust, Catchment Sensitive Farming and Environment Agency staff all worked together with independent consultants to identify the most likely causes of pollution and consider what measures could be put in place to address them.

SOLUTIONS TO REDUCE POLLUTION

As a result, a number of priority actions were agreed upon. These involved solutions to reduce pollution from agriculture and sewage, including habitat improvements to provide river bank buffer strips and improvements to farm infrastructure to reduce the amount of used water washing into the river.

By engaging with local landowners and farmers, Eden Rivers Trust then led a scoping study to discuss potential improvement projects on their farms to see what might be possible. The scoping process identified farms where projects could be implemented and helped to design schemes that were mutually beneficial for both the farm business and the river. A combination of aerial photography, environmental modelling and fisheries surveying were also used to help pinpoint areas where this work should be undertaken.

Delivering the solutions

The evidence base developed enabled funding for improving the River Petteril to be secured from Defra and the Environment Agency. Within the past five years, the local community has achieved a huge amount of success:

- 53 farm businesses within the catchment have carried out farm infrastructure and river habitat improvements.
- Improvements to farm infrastructure have prevented approximately 684,000 gallons of used water per annum entering the River Petteril from farmyards.
- Over 52% of the investment for farm infrastructure improvements has come from the farm businesses themselves.
- Over 17km of river bank has been fenced, 4,240 trees planted and 1,650m of large woody debris installed to improve river habitat for wildlife, help control bank erosion and reduce silt washing into the river.
- Three barriers to fish migration have been removed or modified to ease fish passage.
- The parish of Catterlen successfully applied to United Utilities for first-time rural sewage for the villages of Catterlen and Laithes.

As a result of this collaborative process, there is now a much more optimistic future for the River Petteril as the local community continues to work together to improve things.

You can watch a short film about the project at savetheeden.org/films

Getting your own house in order

Follow this advice to become more prepared for extreme weather events of flood and drought while protecting the purity and biodiversity of your waterways.

1 Saving Water

Water can be collected from your house drainpipes saving approximately 85,000 litres of water. This can then be used as an efficient and sustainable method of tackling the prospect of drought by providing your plants and garden with water in the summer months. Also, rain water is healthier for your plants and vegetables since it does not have the additives that tap water has such as fluoride.

2 Septic Tank

Pollution to drains, ditches, streams and rivers from effluent water leaving your septic tank is an offence under the Public Health and Water Resources Act. Overflowing septic tanks are a major source of pollution to rivers and streams and will affect the ecology of aquatic life, not to mention the bad odour it can give off. Soak away systems should lead away from the house but not directly into a water supply

The best advice for keeping a healthy tank is to take the following precautions:

- Tanks should be checked every 1-3 years until you can get a predictable pumping schedule
- Tanks should be pumped every 3-5 years depending on the size of the tank
- For further information visit www.septictanksandsewagetreatmentplants.co.uk

3 Avoid polluting streams and Water Courses

Compost heaps, grass cuttings and leaves that are deposited near or next to a waterway will cause nitrate build up and potentially pollute the water by increasing nutrient levels. Increased nutrients cause algae build up which can prevent light from penetrating the water, as the algae dies it consumes vast amounts of oxygen leaving little for aquatic organisms to breathe, thus killing them. As well as changing the water ecology, nutrients can also cause blockages further downstream. Also, be very aware of what you are putting down the drain – drains can lead directly to water courses.

- Compost heaps should be located away from water sources and on a hard surface
- Leaf mould is the best compost you can apply to your garden and will supply it with all the nutrients and microorganisms it needs to thrive
- Increased micro bacteria in soils helps to eradicate slugs and keeps your soil healthy
- Only put rainwater down drains

4 Garden Chemicals

Misuse of slug pellets and garden chemicals can cause pollution; Nutrient build up can lead to the growth of plants such as nettles and docks, both of which can leach, causing damage to rivers and streams.

- Always read the instructions on the packet before applying to your garden
- Try alternative options such as composting
- Look up the right nutrient deficiency of the your plants so you apply what is needed

5 Misconnection

Waste water from homes has two outlets; water from baths, toilets, sinks, the dishwasher and washing machine goes to the sewer system to be cleaned. Rain water from roof tops and ground surface water leads to outdoor drains. The cost of misconnection is huge; just 1% misconnection can cost £190 million, and is one of the main sources of river and stream pollution.

- If you have recently put in a new extension have your pipes been diverted to the right waste system? A booklet is available that provides information on how to check if your home is polluting the environment.

6 Blocked Drains

Every year blockages caused by sanitary towels, nappies, cotton buds, tights, fat deposits and other items of non-disposable waste have to be cleared from the systems daily – fat disposal alone has resulted in 55,000 blockages a year. Septic tanks are also at risk. The tubes that go to the septic tank can become blocked and the result is the backing up of sewage into the lowest point of your home, garden and ground water.

- Avoiding putting anything man-made but toilet tissue down the toilet
- Do not grow trees next to your septic tank or waste water pipes

Further information and support

There are a number of organisations which can provide advice and support to communities in starting projects to manage the local water environment more effectively. Contact details are provided for Catchment Partnerships from www.catchmentbasedapproach.org

Community Resources

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County Hall
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01823 355427
www.fwag.org.uk
www.fwagsw.org.uk

The National Flood Forum

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www.nationalfloodforum.org.uk

CCRI

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Sponsors

Enzygo Limited is a specialist environmental consultancy with established experience and a clear understanding of the elements required for the delivery of all forms of development and major infrastructure projects.

Enzygo specializes in hydrological risk assessment and flood protection, landscape impact assessment, landscape management and environmental co-ordination, waste contract procurement, waste treatment technologies, property and site selection assessment, waste and mineral planning, permitting and regulation and environmental impact assessment co-ordination.

www.enzygo.com

Contributors

Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) is the national umbrella body for the 38 Rural Community Councils who make up the ACRE Network and work at a local level in support of rural communities across the country.

ACRE's vision is to be the voice of rural communities and is supported by the wealth of evidence and intelligence on rural matters that we collect from our members. We use this evidence to influence national policy on rural issues, from housing health and transport to broadband, services and fuel poverty.

ACRE has a strong track record of speaking up for rural communities and our rural community councils - some of whom date back 90 years - have a long and fruitful history of making a difference at grassroots level.

ACRE was formed in 1987 to bring them together under one umbrella and harness the strength of their experience to support our national work.

For more about ACRE please go to www.acre.org.uk

The Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) is a farmer-led charity that seeks to support, enthuse & inspire fellow farmers and landowners to value the environmental assets on their land and use them to secure sustainable and profitable businesses for the future. FWAG can help farmers with all the environmental challenges on the farm.

Best environmental practice makes good business sense. FWAG understands the need to maximise environmental opportunities in order to achieve business outcomes and objectives.

Our services focus on sustainable food production, conserving species, habitats and landscape; farm resource efficiency; climate change adaption to future challenges; educating the wider community; and, help for accessing stewardship agreements and preparing for greening.

For more about FWAG services please go to www.fwag.org.uk.

The Countryside and Community Research Institute (CCRI) is the largest specialist rural research centre in the UK, having expertise in all aspects of research in policy and planning for the countryside and the environment of the UK, Europe and further afield.

Some 85% of the CCRI's research is considered, through peer review, to be of international standing and its annual research income from external contracts is in excess of £700,000' The Institute also boasts a vibrant research student community and contributes to the University of Gloucestershire's under-graduate and post-graduate taught programmes, notably the Masters in Sustainable Environments.

The CCRI has developed a clear focus of undertaking work that is academically robust and clearly within the higher education sector but also has direct relevance to its client community. Its involvement in the development of the Integrated Local Delivery framework and the related local engagement projects are an excellent example of what can be achieved through collaboration.

For more about CCRI please go to www.ccri.ac.uk

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