

## River Erme Town and Parish Councils

### Minutes of the meeting on Thursday, January 25<sup>th</sup> 2024, at 7.30pm in the Modbury Inn

**Present:** Cllr Ann Turner (AT) Chair, Cllr Barbra Price (BP) and Cllr Helen Nathanson (HN), Modbury; Cllr Jon May (JM), Ugborough; Cllr Tessa Lannin (TL), Ivybridge; Tim Poate (TP), WATER

**Apologies:** Cllr Pat Hannam, Ermington; Cllrs Harry Baumer and John Sherrell, Holbeton; Cllr Susannah Grant, Kingston; Cllr Anthony Rea, Ivybridge

#### 1. Minutes from last meeting and actions arising

The Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

There were no matters arising but it was agreed to ensure that the Group was clearly referred to as the River Erme Councils Group (RECG), to avoid confusion with other groups.

#### 2. Updates from Councils

##### Ivybridge

TL had raised issues from the RECG at a recent SHDC Scrutiny Meeting and is awaiting the Minutes of that meeting. SHDC was supportive but shared the feeling of frustration when dealing with SWW.

SWW did confirm that there is Himalayan balsam on all Treatment Sites in the catchment.

There was no update from the fisheries group which was awaiting a second quotation for the report.

##### Ugborough

Greener Ugborough and the Parish Council were planning a Sustainability Event in March with a particular aim of recruiting more people to join with CSI water testing.

##### Modbury

Water testing was ongoing, with a new site on the outskirts of the town.

AT had tried to find someone within SWW who held decision-making powers, the bureaucracy is proving difficult to penetrate.

### 3. SWW permits for permitted discharge

TL had been trying to search for relevant permits in the parish and was finding it difficult to locate the valid ones. Everyone agreed the need to push this issue more because so many permits were out of date and there was no easy way to find the current ones. The EA had been approached for help with this but they just referred it back to the SWW website, which is out of date.

#### **Actions**

- AT and TP to send to TL any information and lists they already hold to avoid duplicated effort.
- Write, as a Group, to the EA outlining our concerns and requesting copies of relevant permits.
- Invite Emma McGee (EA) to another ERCG meeting once the permits have been obtained, to ask her to explain how they work.

### 4. Template for water related planning issues

AR is in the process of adapting an existing template and will report back to the next meeting.

### 5. Nutrient Neutrality: upcoming meeting with SHDC

The proposed changes to legislation were thrown out by the Lords but it is possible that the government will look at other ways to relax the regulations other than using primary legislation.

AT and BK had written a letter (see Attachment 1) to explain the issues to Modbury PC and which they also raised with SHDC.

South Hams is not presently on the list as being affected by the nutrient rules however, it was agreed that this needed to be raised with SHDC because it was important to pre-empt the problems rather than wait for a significant development. It was also agreed that it should be part of a district-wide, strategic solution rather than judging individual developments in isolation.

AT and TL were meeting with members of SHDC on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> January at 11am in Ivybridge Town Hall and would raise this. TL agreed to extend the invitation to this meeting to all members of Ivybridge TC Planning Committee and WATER would send a representative if possible.

More information is available at:

[Nutrient neutrality: update - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

<https://www.wildlifetrusts.org/blog/ali-morse/nutrient-neutrality-works-pollution-rules-dont-block-housebuilding>

## 6. WATER: Update and future cooperation

TP gave an update from WATER (see Attachment 2).

## 7. Any other business

BP mentioned the King Charles III Charitable Fund through which small grants of up to £5k are available for sustainability projects. Parish Councils can apply and it was suggested that a website for the River Erme projects could provide a good focal point and a way of attracting more support. JM wondered whether this might overlap with Sustainable South Hams website. TP was interested, agreed that this could be of interest to WATER.

[King Charles III Charitable Fund - Transforming lives and building sustainable communities \(kccf.org.uk\)](https://www.kccf.org.uk)

## **Items for the next agenda**

Discussion was had about the need to have administrative support for the RECG, the majority of Councils have agreed to contribute to this.

HN suggested that it could be useful to discuss the benefits of employing an advisor for the Erme projects, taking the example of how the Avon Valley Project was run. It was agreed that such a role should sit with WATER, once they are established as a charity, and that this was something that needed more discussion.

## 8. Date and time of next meeting

Thursday, March 14<sup>th</sup> at 7.30pm. Venue TBC