



Press Release

21 June 2023

Sewage keeps children out of river

Pollution from untreated sewage in the River Kennet kept school children out of the water for their safety yesterday. Action for the River Kennet (ARK) had planned to run a day of river school for pupils from Preshute and Great Bedwyn primary schools, but woke to find untreated sewage pouring into the river at three points in Marlborough and were forced to tell children they should not enter the river downstream.

'It was so disappointing not to be able to show the children the wildlife that lives in the Kennet,' said Anna Forbes, 'but we can't invite children into an environment that we know is polluted with untreated human waste.'

Not only was Marlborough Sewage Treatment works spilling, but also the pumping station at Pewsey Road Bridge and the sewer at Stonebridge Lane. Sewage detritus was clearly visible. The spills were triggered by overnight rainfall.

Charlotte Hitchmough, ARK's director said 'The sewerage network is not fit for purpose, summer storms are not unusual, and treatment works and sewers should have capacity to manage expected rainfall. Serious investment to upgrade pipes, build sustainable drainage and improve sewage treatment works is needed now to prevent this unnecessary damage to fragile habitats. We need Thames Water to raise its game, and we need the planning authorities to stop allowing development until we are able to deal with the sewage we have, not keep adding to the load.'

The Rivers Trust map of sewage pollution can be found here:

<https://theriverstrust.org/sewage-map?item=4> (Click on 'near real time alerts' to see current status of spills.)

Photo: *Children from Preshute Primary School kept out of the River Kennet.*

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Notes to Editor

Action for the River Kennet (ARK) is a charity dedicated to protecting and improving the rivers in the Kennet and Pang catchments.

We are members of **The Rivers Trust** movement.

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