



ISLAND ASSEMBLY 2025

**CLEAN RIVERS
CLEAN SEAS**

BURGH ISLAND

HOTEL



Island Assembly Delegates

Facilitators Louise Wainwright, Chair Bigbury Net Zero, Avon River Champions
Nancy Singleton, friend of Avon River Champions

Keynote Speaker Monty Halls – Broadcaster, adventurer and marine biologist

Catchment Community Groups

Gary Jolliffe	CEO Force4Nature	SPEAKER
Alan Kirk	Secretary, Avon River Champions	
David Molesworth	ARC Steering Group, Vice Chair Bigbury Parish Council	
Graham Royle	Chair South Brent Island Trust, ARC River Guardian (South Brent)	
Liz Montagu	ARC Steering Group Wild About Loddiswell, ARC River Guardian (Loddiswell), ARC Steering Group	
Cllr Paul Vann	Chair Friends of Salcombe Kingsbridge Estuary	
Emma Jones	Lead Woodland Trust Avon Valley Volunteers	
Nora Corkery	CEO Devon Communities Together Devon Community Resilience Forum	
Jane Nichols	CEO Sustainable South Hams CIC	
John Puddy	Taw Torridge Estuary Forum, Steamship Fresh Spring Trust ARC River Guardian, ARC Steering Group	
Tony Hawkins	River Yealm Water Quality Group, Yealm Estuary to Moor	
Charlotte Grezo	Chair Wild About the Erme River	
Nicky Rajska	Director - Legal and Volunteer Lead Friends of the Dart	
Sarah Finch	Tidelines River Exe Estuary	
David Scott	Modbury Town Crier	

Politicians & Legal Challenges

Caroline Voaden MP	South Devon Constituency	SPEAKER
Cllr Dan Thomas	DCC and SHDC Councillor	SPEAKER
Katrina Walter	Solicitor World Wildlife Fund	SPEAKER
Cllr John McKay	SHDC Executive for the Environment	
Cllr Jacqui Hodgson	DCC and SHDC Councillor	
Cllr Lee Bonham	SHDC Councillor, Force4Nature, Woodland Trust	
Cllr Henry Wainwright	Chair Bigbury Parish Council	
Cllr John Hawkins	Chair SHDC Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
Ros Brousson	Chair Aveton Gifford PC, ARC Steering Group	
Farhana Yamin	Climate Change Lawyer, Bigbury Net Zero Committee	

Island Assembly Delegates

Scientists

Prof Andy Rees	Plymouth Marine Laboratory, Ag Zero+
Prof Pennie Lindeque	Plymouth Marine Laboratory Head of Science: Marine Ecology and Biodiversity
Prof Will Blake	River Basin Science Plymouth University, Advisory Board UNESCO International Sediment Initiative UK Committee for International Hydrology
Sebastian Mynott	Founder & GM Applied Genomics
Darren Searle	Smart Biosphere Manager

Environment Organisations

Nick Bruce-White	CEO Devon Wildlife Trust	CLOSING REMARKS
Simon Browning	The Rivers Trust Technical Lead	SPEAKER
	Catchment Systems Thinking Co-operative	
Matt Worthington	Westcounty Rivers Trust Evidence & Engagement Officer	
Dan Rubio	Public Affairs Specialist, World Wildlife Fund UK	
Clara Steiner	Community Engagement Manager, World Wildlife Fund UK	
Dr Juliette Jackson	Seadream Environment CIO, Seadream Education CIC	
Richard Powell	Habitat Group and River Guardian for Sustainable Blackawton	
Nigel Mortimer	Estuaries Officer South Devon National Landscapes	
Tom Humphrey	North Devon Biosphere Community Liaison	
Em Kendall	Senior Tutor, Slapton Ley Field Studies Centre	
Kieran Shaw-Flach	National Nature Reserve Ranger, Slapton Ley Field Studies	
Amanda Keetley	Executive, Devon Environment Foundation	

Businesses

Niki Fuchs	Co-Owner Burgh Island Hotel	SPEAKER
Giles Fuchs	Co-Owner Burgh Island Hotel	
Abbie Pearce	GM Parkdeane Resorts Challaborough	
Annika Connolly	Co-Owner Discovery Surf	
Jo Shorrocks	Board Member, Bigbury Golf Club	
Loic Doison	Founder and GM Coast to Coast Water Safety	
Russel Reid	Co-Owner Bigbury Beach Shop	

Farming Sector

Guy Singh-Watson	Founder and creator of Riverford UK-wide organic vegetable box delivery company	SPEAKER
Cathy Case	Deputy Chair National Farmers Union (Devon) Mount Folly Farm, Riverford Organics Cooperative	SPEAKER
Alice Wyness	Farming in Protected Landscapes Officer South Devon National Landscapes	
John Roberts	Avon Fishing Association Committee	
Andrew Fish	Challonscombe Farm and Lidstones Butchers	
Harry Aubrey-Fletcher	Owner, Bantham Estate	
Hazel Marshall	Higher Easton Farm	

Island Assembly Programme
Thursday 13th March 2025
Burgh Island, Bigbury-on-Sea, South Hams, Devon

Organiser: Louise Wainwright, Chair Avon River Champions, Bigbury Net Zero
Sponsors: Giles Fuchs and Niki Fuchs, Co-owners Burgh Island Hotel

INSPIRE ~ INFORM ~ CONNECT ~ ACT

- 10.30 - 11.10 Pre-Assembly Meeting Place ~ Welcome Coffee ~ Delegates Networking
Venus Café Press Interviews in advance of Assembly
- 11.15 - 11.30 Delegates assemble on the beach for drone videography before moving
promptly to Burgh Island Hotel
- 11.40 Arrive at the Nettlefold Restaurant inside the Hotel
Collect badges & delegates' bags at designated tables
- 11.55 Modbury Town Crier David Scott calls delegates to be seated by 12.00
- 12.00 **Welcome and "Get Ambitious"**
Niki Fuchs, Co-owner Burgh Island Hotel

INSPIRE

- 12.15 **Keynote Speaker**
Monty Halls, British TV broadcaster and marine biologist

INFORM

- 12.45 **Devon River Manifesto & Reviews, The BluePrint Project**
Louise Wainwright, Chair Avon River Champions and Bigbury Net Zero
- 12.50 **Challenges and Legal Obligations**
Katrina Walter, Solicitor World Wildlife Fund

CONNECT

- 13.05 Table Summits (over buffet lunch). Delegates to agree three priority actions
for the future Stakeholders in the BluePrint project allocated to each table:
- Environment Agency & Ofwat
 - South West Water
 - Estates, Landowners & Farmers
 - Parish, District & County Councils
 - Community Groups
 - Businesses
 - Households

Island Assembly Programme

INFORM

- 14.00 **Barriers and Incentives for Farmers**
Guy Singh Watson, Founder of Riverford Organics
Cathy Case, Deputy Chair of Devon National Farmers Union
Mount Folly Farm, Bigbury
- 14.15 **Evidence-based Integrated Catchment Management**
Simon Browning, The Rivers Trust Technical Lead
- 14.30 **Volunteer Workforces Supporting Farmers**
Gary Jolliffe, CEO Force4Nature

ACT

- 14.35 **Water (Special Measures) Bill, privatisation, Ofwat**
Caroline Voaden MP, South Devon Constituency
- 14.50 **Role of Community Groups and Inter Parish Water Quality Groups**
Cllr Dan Thomas, SHDC & DCC Councillor
- 15.00 **Table Captains report on priority actions by sector**
Environment Agency & Ofwat (David Molesworth)
South West Water (Cllr Lee Bonham)
Estate, Landowners & Farmers (Harry Aubrey-Fletcher)
Parish, District & County Councils (Cllr Paul Vann)
Community Groups (Graham Royle)
Businesses (Jo Shorrocks)
Households (Jane Nichols)
- 16.05 **Closing Remarks**
Nick Bruce-White, CEO Devon Wildlife Trust
- 16.30 **Leave for Sea Tractor**
High Tide (16.46) – Please do not attempt to wade/swim ashore!
Return to mainland via sea tractor (30 people per trip) 16.45 and 17.15

AFTER the ISLAND ASSEMBLY

Delegates' contributions to action throughout Devon will be invaluable. We would like you to:

- Amplify Priority Actions in your networks with hashtag #RiverActionDeclaration;
- Promote all Devon Catchment Groups on Devon Directory and keep updated.

MONTY HALLS ~ KEYNOTE SPEAKER



We are delighted to welcome Monty Halls as our keynote Speaker at the Island Assembly for Clean Rivers Clean Seas. Delegates from across Devon will be inspired by his upbeat, positive approach to the issues that face us all as global citizens. Monty will help us focus on addressing the critical question:

“What can we do collectively to ensure our rivers are restored to good health by 2027?”.

From a career in the Royal Marines, to being part of a military group assisting Nelson Mandela, to leading teams in some of the most demanding and kinetic environments on earth, Monty Halls knows about change. And change is needed to restore and protect our rivers and seas.

Monty is a President of the Galapagos Conservation Trust, the Durrell Wildlife Foundation, a Help for Heroes patron and numerous conservation organisations. He is best known for his three hugely popular BBC series ‘Great Escapes’, where he lived on the west coasts of Scotland and Ireland with his dog Reuben. Monty went on to present the multi-award winning BBC NHU blue chip series ‘Great Barrier Reef, The Fisherman’s Apprentice, again for the BBC as well as series for Discovery and Channel 5.

Since starting his own production company Seadog Productions, Monty has produced and presented three series for Channel Four. “WWII’s Great Escapes: The Freedom Trails” broadcast to critical acclaim in late 2017 and in 2018 the whole Halls family featured in a poignant conservation mission to the Galapagos for “My Family and the Galapagos”. The family revisited the islands in 2019 – and a four part prime time series aired in early 2020 documenting their time there. Seadog has just aired its fourth series, exec-produced by Monty all about the Royal Marine Commandos for BBC Two.

Monty has written several books, and is a regular contributor to magazines and newspapers, many of them communicating his enthusiasm for the natural world.

Monty will set the tone and the pace for the Island Assembly.

INSPIRE ~ INFORM ~ CONNECT ~ ACT

Organiser: Louise Wainwright

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Sponsor: Burgh Island Hotel

DESIGNATED TABLES

Environment Agency & Ofwat

David Molesworth
Cllr John Hawkins
Alan Kirk
Caroline Voaden MP
Louise Wainwright
Nick Bruce-White
Prof Andy Rees
Richard Powell



South West Water

Cllr Lee Bonham
Amanda Keetley
Farhana Yamin
Loic Doison
Nigel Mortimer
Giles Fuchs
Clara Steiner
Cathy Case



Estates, Landowners & Farmers

Harry Aubrey-Fletcher
Sebastian Mynott
Gary Jolliffe
Emma Jones
Prof Pennie Lindeque
Liz Montagu
Dr Juliette Jackson
Alice Wyness



Parish, District & County Councils

Cllr Paul Vann
Simon Browning
Cllr John McKay
Prof Will Blake
Tony Hawkins
Cllr Dan Thomas
John Puddy
Cllr Henry Wainwright



Community Groups

Graham Royle
Nora Corkery
Charlotte Grezo
Sarah Finch
Tom Humphrey
Matt Worthington
Kieran Shaw-Flach
John Roberts



Businesses

Jo Shorrocks
Niki Fuchs
Abbie Pearce
Annika Connolly
Russel Reid
Em Kendall
Andrew Fish
Monty Halls



Households

Jane Nichols
Cllr Jacqui Hodgson
Cllr Ros Brousson
Nicky Rajska
David Scott
Dan Rubio
Darren Searle
Hazel Marshall



TABLE SUMMITS for THE BLUEPRINT PROJECT

The BluePrint Project will build upon the Avon River Champions Manifesto and priorities emerging from the Island Assembly. It will be developed by Avon River Champions and their partners in the River Gara & Slapton Ley and the Salcombe Kingsbridge Estuary. This is a community-based approach to ensuring all our water bodies are of good ecological status by 2027.
(ref. Background Notes on the back cover)

For the BluePrint Project to be successful, all stakeholders in the catchment will need to play their part and take action to prevent pollution and restore our rivers to good health.

The key stakeholders who need to be involved in the forthcoming BluePrint Project are:

1. Environment Agency & Ofwat
2. South West Water
3. Estates, Landowners & Farmers
4. Parish, District & County Councils
5. Community Groups
6. Businesses
7. Households

Delegates, at designated Table Summits, are invited to propose the priority actions for each of these important stakeholders in the BluePrint Project.

During luncheon, at your allocated tables, delegates are invited to participate in a Table Summit to propose the 3 priority actions for these Stakeholders. Please score the list of suggested actions for the stakeholder group allocated to your table. Your Table Captain will amalgamate delegates' scores and feedback comments to the Assembly.


Avon River Champions will include these priority actions from the Assembly and circulate these in a public consultation in each of our three catchments: River Avon, River Gara & Slapton Ley and the Salcombe Kingsbridge Estuary.

A combination of the priorities identified by delegates at the Island Assembly and those from the follow up public consultation will feed into our River Action Declaration, which will be an agreed action list for each of the sectors in our catchments. We hope that this approach will inspire similar blueprint projects in the forgotten river catchments throughout Devon.

Table Captains

Environment Agency & Ofwat	Cllr David Molesworth
South West Water	Cllr Lee Bonham
Estates, Landowners & Farmers	Harry Aubrey-Fletcher
Parish, District & County Councils	Cllr Paul Vann
Community Groups	Graham Royle
Businesses	Jo Shorrocks
Households	Jane Nichols


Table Summit: ENVIRONMENT AGENCY & OFWAT

<p>Environment Agency & Ofwat</p> <p>David Molesworth Cllr John Hawkins Alan Kirk Caroline Voaden MP Louise Wainwright Nick Bruce-White Prof Andy Rees Richard Powell</p>	
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What are your top priorities for the Environment Agency & Ofwat?
 Score 1 to 6 scale. 1 = least important 6 = most important

	Action	Score
1	SWW continually fails to meet its own published 5 year reduction target for sewage pollution. Ofwat must prevent this by setting a legal obligation for SWW to break down the 5 year target into annual progress targets. Ofwat must apply annual financially punitive underperformance fines for failure to meet annual targets.	
2	SWW 'Event Duration Monitoring' evidence confirms continuous Combined Sewer Overspills at many of its treatment works. Environment Agency to enforce compliance with SWW Discharge Permits which define exceptional circumstances. SWW to be charged the full cost of this enhanced monitoring.	
3	SWW treatment works rarely comply with their Discharge Permits. Environment Agency to provide annual reports to SHDC focused only on updated, local relevant data to inform SHDC planning decisions.	
4	Environment Agency to review all domestic Discharge Permits for septic tanks in our catchment to ensure they are fit for purpose and annually emptied by a licensed contractor.	
5	Environment Agency to provide Water Cycle Studies to SHDC for catchments in Salcombe Kingsbridge Estuary, River Avon and River Gara & Slapton Ley, in order to assess flood risks and risks of increased sewage pollution arising due to housing developments.	
6	Environment Agency to fund a community-based River Warden to serve the three catchments (Gara, Avon, Salcombe Kingsbridge Estuary) by supporting catchment community groups and catchment Water Quality Groups working to reducing river pollution.	
	Other...	

Table Summit: SOUTH WEST WATER

<p>South West Water</p> <p>Cllr Lee Bonham Amanda Keetley Farhana Yamin Loic Doison Nigel Mortimer Giles Fuchs Clara Steiner Cathy Case</p>	
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What are your top priorities for the Environment Agency & Ofwat?
Score 1 to 6 scale. 1 = least important 6 = most important

	Action	Score
1	Fund a River Warden to coordinate Blueprint Project activities for the River Avon, River Gara and Salcombe Kingsbridge Estuary.	
2	Provide SHDC annually updated data on the spare hydraulic capacity of all sewage and wastewater treatment works to assess the risk of continued and increased pollution of our rivers due to property development.	
3	SWW denies that 50% of its failing treatment work with high spill hours are due to inadequate hydraulic capacity, claiming instead that there is an investigation. SWW should admit as a default that high CSO spill hours are due to inadequate hydraulic capacity unless verified calculations confirm there is sufficient spare hydraulic capacity at that specific treatment works.	
4	SWW treatment works have widespread insufficient hydraulic capacity for the customers it serves, leading to unacceptable sewage overflows. SWW must provide SHDC with easily understood, locally relevant data on their investment plans to increase the hydraulic capacity of underperforming treatment works.	
5	Collaborate with farmers to pay for and install 'Nature Based Solutions' to overflows from underperforming SWW treatment works before treated water and waste water reaches the river.	
6	Provide all households in the Avon, Gara and Salcombe Kingsbridge Estuary with rainwater butts to connect to roof drainage systems.	
	Other...	


Table Summit: ESTATES, LANDOWNERS & FARMERS

<p>Estates, Landowners & Farmers</p> <p>Harry Aubrey-Fletcher Sebastian Mynott Gary Jolliffe Emma Jones Prof Pennie Lindeque Liz Montagu Dr Juliette Jackson Alice Wyness</p>	
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What are your top priorities for the Environment Agency & Ofwat?
 Score 1 to 6 scale. 1 = least important 6 = most important

	Action	Score
1	Jointly develop a river-sensitive 'farm open day' with other catchment sensitive farms to teach school children about 'Nature Based Solutions' to agricultural pollution and engage our community in river-sensitive lifestyles at home.	
2	Collaborate with community-based volunteers to install 'Nature Based Solutions' to agricultural pollution.	
3	Collaborate with South West Water to install affordable 'Nature Based Solutions' to sewage and waste water pollution from treatment works not yet in the infrastructure investment programme.	
4	Collaborate with neighbouring farms to design continuous natural buffer zones along riverbanks, sponsored by local communities.	
5	A significant number of farms don't claim grants for which they're eligible. Farmers providing information to sponsored specialist teams would be able to capitalise on all catchment sensitive grants which prevent agricultural pollution.	
6	Permit community-sponsored wildlife surveys led by expert wildlife organisations to monitor and celebrate the restoration of riverine habitats.	
	Other...	

Table Summit: PARISH, DISTRICT & COUNTY COUNCILS

<p>Parish, District & County Councils</p> <p>Cllr Paul Vann Simon Browning Cllr John McKay Prof Will Blake Tony Hawkins Cllr Dan Thomas John Puddy Cllr Henry Wainwright</p>	
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What are your top priorities for the Environment Agency & Ofwat?
 Score 1 to 6 scale. 1 = least important 6 = most important

	Action	Score
1	Collaborate with the local catchment community group and all riparian parishes councils to form a local River Water Quality Group.	
2	Jointly develop a catchment-wide engagement programme (Blueprint Project) involving all sectors in river-sensitive lifestyles and business practices and enable farmers to install 'Nature Based Solutions' to pollution.	
3	Jointly apply for funding for a catchment-based and community-led programme which installs the 'Nature Based Solutions' to pollution needed to restore our rivers to good health by 2027.	
4	Before permissions are granted for more houses, prioritise river-sensitive compliance in all planning decisions for developments in our catchments ie <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sustainable urban drainage • sufficient hydraulic capacity in local wastewater and sewage treatment plants 	
5	Insist that the Environment Agency annually provides full disclosure of information about spare hydraulic capacity of SWW sewage treatment works in our catchment and evidence of SWW compliance with the Discharge Permits issued by EA.	
6	Make SWW a formal consultee for all planning applications irrespective of whether the Government has made them a Statutory Consultee.	
	Other...	

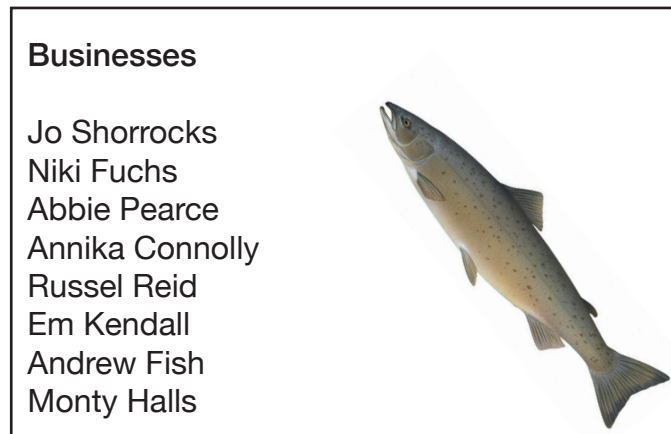
Table Summit: COMMUNITY GROUPS

<p>Community Groups</p> <p>Graham Royle Nora Corkery Charlotte Grezo Sarah Finch Tom Humphrey Matt Worthington Kieran Shaw-Flach John Roberts</p> 

What are your top priorities for the Environment Agency & Ofwat?
 Score 1 to 6 scale. 1 = least important 6 = most important

	Action	Score
1	Collaborate with community groups throughout the river catchment to design family oriented fun events that create awareness of the need to protect the river from source to sea.	
2	Create online training materials for workshops suitable for local schools, clubs and businesses.	
3	Provide workshops for schools, clubs and businesses using 'Lets Get River-Sensitive' training materials	
4	Recruit and support citizen scientists to monitor the health of our rivers through Westcountry Rivers Trust and the Riverfly Partnership (aquatic invertebrates).	
5	Link up parish magazines in all river catchment parishes to syndicate articles on river-sensitive lifestyles, promote river-sensitive businesses and advertise river-related workshops and family oriented events.	
6	Promote volunteering for groups which help farmers install 'Nature-Based Solutions' to pollution (Force4Nature, Woodland Trust, Moor Trees, DWT Avon Valley Project, South Devon Nature Trust)	
	Other...	


Table Summit: BUSINESSES



What are your top priorities for the Environment Agency & Ofwat?
 Score 1 to 6 scale. 1 = least important 6 = most important

	Action	Score
1	Create a 'River-Sensitive Business Forum' to share good practice and consider solutions to drainage and waste water river pollution from business operations - focussing on Forever Chemicals.	
2	Use all opportunities to engage customers in river-sensitive lifestyles at home by promoting your own initiatives and inspiring them to become river-sensitive too.	
3	Engage customers in funding 'Nature-Based Solutions' to pollution through point-of-sale and direct donations.	
4	Sponsor the large infrastructure needed by farms (eg covered slurry storage) to enable climate-resilient, river-sensitive food production.	
5	Create river-sensitive guidelines for visitors to holiday homes in our river catchments (eg moderate water use and considerate use of waste disposal down sinks and toilets).	
6	Engage employees in river-sensitive lifestyles in their homes by collaborating with community groups who provide river-sensitive workshops.	
	Other...	

Table Summit: HOUSEHOLDS

<p>Households</p> <p>Jane Nichols Cllr Jacqui Hodgson Cllr Ros Brousson Nicky Rajska David Scott Dan Rubio Darren Searle Hazel Marshall</p>	
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What are your top priorities for the Environment Agency & Ofwat?
 Score 1 to 6 scale. 1 = least important 6 = most important

	Action	Score
1	Develop river-sensitive thinking by reviewing online guidelines from your local catchment community group and sign up for local workshops on river-sensitive thinking.	
2	Join local volunteer groups (Force4Nature, Woodland Trust, Moor Trees, DWT Avon Valley Project) to help farmers and landowners install 'Nature-Based Solutions' to pollution.	
3	Join local community groups which are working to design and deliver river-sensitive events and workshops in our river catchment.	
4	Attend the annual public meeting organised by the proposed 'River Water Quality Group' to review progress towards getting our rivers back to good health by 2027.	
5	Share all social media river-sensitive messaging developed by your local river community group.	
6	Ask your local Councillors to confirm that all planning decisions prioritise the prevention of river pollution,	
	Other...	

FOLLOW-UP MEETINGS

South West Water and Environment Agency will be invited to a public meeting by SHDC Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 27th March 2025.

Catchment-based water quality groups in South Hams are invited to submit questions via Avon River Champions to be put to the EA and SWW at the above meeting.

BACKGROUND

The Water Framework Directive is a legally binding commitment nationally for most water bodies to achieve Good Ecological Status by 2027.

Currently only 16% of our water bodies nationally are achieving this, according to the last classification by the Environment Agency (2019).

2019 EA classifications for our local water bodies:

- River Gara & Slapton Ley (2 water bodies) POOR (1) MODERATE (1) 0% GOOD
- River Avon (6 water bodies) MODERATE (3) GOOD (3) 50% GOOD
- Salcombe & Kingsbridge Estuary (4 water bodies) MODERATE (3) GOOD (1) 25% GOOD

NB: The GES status will be updated by the Environment Agency in 2025.

The Environment Agency identifies the Reason for Not Achieving Good (ecological status) and the Sectors responsible. In the above water bodies failing to achieve GOOD status – RNAG attributable to:

- Agriculture (17) RNAG
- SWW (8) either continuous or intermittent Combined Sewer Overspills. RNAG

E-DNA water quality testing can accurately determine current pollution levels and the sources. Results within 2 days. Cost £225 per sample.

THANK YOU

Thanks go to everyone involved for their contribution to the design and development of this programme. Special thanks to Giles and Niki Fuchs for hosting the Island Assembly and to Lilly Krupa and her team for their support.

