



# LYMPSTONE PARISH COUNCIL

Clerk to the Council: Miss L Tyrrell  
c/o Minnows,  
Longmeadow Road,  
Lympstone, Devon EX8 5LF  
Tel: 07890717081

Chairman: Cllr Nick Linfoot  
Tel: 01395 265454

Email: [lympstonepc@gmail.com](mailto:lympstonepc@gmail.com)  
[www.lympstone.org](http://www.lympstone.org)

2<sup>nd</sup> April 2023

To All Members of the Parish

You are invited to attend an Annual Parish Meeting of Lympstone to be held **7.00pm on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> April 2024 in the Meeting Room at the Village Hall.** The business to be transacted is set out below.

Members of the Public are cordially invited to attend.

The agenda and all attachments can be found online at [www.lympstone.org](http://www.lympstone.org).

*N. Linfoot*

Cllr Nick Linfoot  
Chairman to the Parish Council

## **ANNUAL PARISH MEETING - AGENDA**

2024/1	<b>Apologies</b>
2024/2	<b>Minutes</b> To confirm the minutes of the APM Meeting held 18 <sup>th</sup> May 2023 (attached pgs 2-9).
2024/3	<b>Chairman</b>
2024/4	<b>Clerk</b> – financial summary 2022-23, 2023 - 24 attached (pg 10)
2024/5	<b>County Councillors</b>
2024/6	<b>District Councillors</b>
2024/7	<b>LPC Committee Chairman:</b> Assets and Amenities Committee report Environment Committee report
2024/8	<b>Phone box book swap</b> – report attached (pg 11)
2024/9	<b>Gulliford Burial Ground Joint Committee</b> – report attached (pg 12)
2024/10	<b>Heathfield Allotment Trust</b> – report attached (pg 13)
2024/11	<b>Lympstone Flood Resilience Group (LFRG)</b> – report attached (pg 14)
2024/12	<b>Lympstone Parish Charity</b>
2024/13	<b>Lympstone water Quality Group</b> – report attached (pg 15-16)
2024/14	<b>Any further questions</b>

**MINUTES OF AN ANNUAL PARISH MEETING HELD IN  
THE VILLAGE HALL AT 7.00PM ON THURSDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2023.**

PRESENT:	
<b>Councillors</b>	D Atkins, S Francis, K Hill, A Lewis, N Linfoot, M Moffatt, J Payne and L Staddon
<b>Clerk</b>	Miss L Tyrrell
<b>County Councillors</b>	R Scott
<b>District Councillors</b>	G Jung
<b>Public</b>	4 members

**23/1 Apologies**

District Cllr Ingham and County Cllr Trail due to other commitments.  
Cllr Linfoot proposed to approve the apologies. Cllr Francis seconded. Unan.

*RESOLVED that the Apologies were approved by the PC.*

**23/2 Minutes**

To confirm the minutes of the APM Meeting held 4<sup>th</sup> April 2022 (attached).  
Cllr Atkins proposed the minutes of the PC meeting held on the 4<sup>th</sup> April 2022 were accurate. Cllr Staddon seconded. Unan.

*RESOLVED that the minutes of the APM meeting held on the 4<sup>th</sup> April 2022 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.*

**23/3 Chairman**

The Chairman explained he would report in the PC meeting.

**23/4 Clerk**

The Clerk presented the last two years of LPCs finances. (Appendix A)  
Cllr Atkins proposed the finances were noted. Cllr Linfoot seconded. Unan.

*RESOLVED that the PCs last two years of finances were noted by the PC.*

**23/5 County Councillors**

Nothing to report.

**23/6 District Councillors**

Nothing to report.

**23/7 Link Cllrs**

Nothing to report.

**23/8 Phone box book swap**

Cllr Linfoot read the annual report submitted by Mary Turner regarding the telephone book swap (Appendix B). The Clerk highlighted that the work identified in the report had already

been rectified. Cllr Lewis explained that the lower shelf bracket needed replacing to strengthen it.

### **23/9 Gulliford Burial Ground Joint Committee**

Cllr Moffatt read the annual report submitted by Jane Moffatt (Appendix C).

### **23/10 Heathfield Allotment Trust**

Cllr Linfoot read the annual report submitted by Carrie Darby (Appendix D).

### **23/11 Lympstone Flood Resilience Group**

Mr Phil Corcos and Mr John Brewer were both present from LFRG. They thanked the PC, EDDC and DCC Cllrs and were most grateful for all Cllrs continued support. They outlined the current members and duties of the group in the Parish. They were also working with other external groups to support, advise and listen to flooding issues in the wider area (Appendix E). District Cllr Jung explained he would be keeping LPC and LFRG updated with the recent flooding issues in the area. A report from these incidents would be due in three months' time.

### **23/12 Lympstone Parish Charity**

Cllr Atkins read the report submitted by Dr Brian Ridge (Appendix F).

### **23/13 Any further questions**

Linda Lyons reported that the Community Hub was continuing with their monthly lunches for the community. Funding support had been gratefully received from County Cllr Scott and Vicki Drinkwater had received subsidies from local businesses.

Meeting closed at **7.26pm**

Chairman:

Date:

**Appendices**  
**Appendix A**

<b>Financial summary 21-22</b>				
<b>Current Account</b>				
Opening balance at 1st April 2021			95,828.47	
Receipts			£134,088.58	
Total receipts			£229,917.05	
less, Payments			£73,666.99	
Net balance			£156,250.06	
Unpresented cheques			£252.74	
Receipts not on statement			£0.00	
	Balance at Bank 31/3/22		£156,502.80	
Unpresented cheque info:				
23/02/22	(2945)Eric's Knob and Lock Shop - replaced lock at public toilets			£112.74
23/02/22	(2946)Gulliford joint committee - gulliford burial ground contribution			£140.00
			Total	£252.74

<b>Financial Summary 22-23</b>				
<b>Current Account</b>				
Opening balance at 1st April 2022			156,502.80	
Receipts			£235,079.11	
Total receipts			£391,581.91	
less, Payments			£226,724.44	
Net balance			£164,857.47	
Unpresented cheques			£0.00	
Receipts not on statement			£0.00	
	Balance at Bank 31/3/23		£164,857.47	

## Appendix B

### Lympstone's Gibraltar Road Phone Box Book Swap

Report to the Parish Council. March 2023.

The phone box book swap continues to be well used, with regular donations of books and generally good turnover. There are no official volunteers, but a number of local residents tidy the books as they go past.

We ask people to stack books carefully and, when the book swap is full, to bring books back later to avoid damage to the stock. Unfortunately there have been some issues over the past year with books being placed in the phone box when it is already full. The photograph below shows the worst example of this, which occurred in January.



1



2



3

*(1) The door wouldn't close, and a large number of books were irreparably damaged and had to be thrown away..*

*(2) A box containing CDs and DVDs was also left outside - fortunately this disappeared a day or two later.*

*(3) Tidy again. The clean-up took a considerable amount of time and several boxes of good quality books were donated to charities. It has remained much tidier since then.*

The Community Hub arranged and funded the original work to put the shelving in, and it has served us well through lock-down and beyond. However, it has deteriorated over the past few years (it has never been fully water-tight).

**It would be really helpful if the Community fund could be used to sort out the current issues as soon as possible.**

- **The paintwork is in a bad state**
- **A number of the 'glass' panels are no longer clear**
- **When it rains the floor becomes wet**
- **The door sticks in wet weather and becomes impossible to open**

I feel a smarter and cleaner book swap would be better looked after by the community.

*Mary Turner*

## **Appendix C: Chairman's report – Joint Committee for Gulliford Burial Ground 2023**

This year has thankfully been a quiet year for the committee after three years of hard work while the repairs to the graveyard were in progress.

Work still progresses however with future planning of ring-fenced finance so that both parishes start to accrue a small pot of money which will be needed for regular maintenance to walls and tombs. We do not want it ever to deteriorate to the extent it had reached by 2018. Many thanks to Andrew for his cooperation with the Friends of Gulliford burial site so that strimming only took place at a time when it wouldn't destroy habitat.

The friends have focused on flora and fauna on site this year. Bat boxes have been introduced and cleaned out at the end of the season with a very successful bat watching evening planned again this year. A local entomologist came and gave an enlightening talk on insect species on the site and how to encourage them. We have asked her to return this year by popular demand. Bee houses have also been introduced. Other open days and events have been planned.

The planting team have worked very hard, planting over 1000 daffodil bulbs and many other species of plant found to thrive in graveyards. I think if you have passed the site this spring you would agree that the display of flowers has been spectacular and enhanced the look of the site, making it feel well managed and well-loved. The planting team aim to concentrate on the mid section of the site this year. We are hoping that the new garden contractor will work as well with the Friends so that strimming is done at the correct times to enhance the planting carried out.

As all the research has been done and Angela's book on the history of the site and those buried in it is selling well, we have turned to making this information more accessible to those that visit the site. With this in mind, the Friends are creating a video tour of the site, giving history at each point. There will be QR codes at certain points which visitors can scan with their phones, taking them to the website with a video explaining that particular spot. This should enhance the visitor experience. The site has been included in the Lympstone History Society's map and tour which we are very grateful for.

Finally, we have been so proud of the Gulliford Burial Ground and the community support behind it, that it has been entered in the 'Best Graveyard in Devon' competition (yes there is such a thing!) We are obviously biased but fingers crossed that this little patch of loveliness gets the recognition it deserves.

Jane Moffatt  
Chairman, Gulliford Joint Committee

## Appendix D

# Heathfield Allotment Trust

REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 202075

## REPORT TO THE PARISH COUNCIL

April 2022 – March 2023

Plot holders are never happy with the weather. It's either too hot, too cold, too dry, too wet or too windy, and we had all of that last year. But despite the very hot and dry spells, our water bill – our biggest expense – stayed manageable. This was due to so many plot holders working hard to harvest their own rainwater, helped by the South West Water grant of 30 water butts the previous year. It's not only better for the purse strings and the environment – but better for the plants too.

Plots are still very much in demand, with a waiting list of over 20 Lymptone residents throughout the year and we are doing our best to keep this down by halving large plots when they become vacant.

Trustees now undertake much of the annual maintenance themselves. At the beginning of the year, we embarked on a mammoth task of reclaiming a large section of ground in the centre of the site, work largely carried out by Trustees with the help of other plot holders and volunteers from the village. This included felling a 40ft rotten non-native tree. This land now has three thriving plots.

We were thrilled to have a Lymptone Primary School visit in 2022, with over 30 children collecting fruit and vegetables to make natural dyes, part of their Ancient Britain curriculum. It was a delight to see the young ones so engaged; we all ended up with brightly coloured fingers, and we would be keen to extend our association with the local schools with further activities.

We were grateful to Reverend Steve Jones who joined us as a Trustee in 2022. This is an ex-officio role as required by our 1873 Indenture and therefore not appointed by the Parish Council.

We had a busy year of social events and we are in planning mode for the remainder of 2023, celebrating our 150 years anniversary at Sowden Lane, starting with a Cream Tea and Talk about the History of our Charity.

Carrie Darby  
Chair  
On behalf of the Trustees

**Trustees: David Atkins (Parish Council link), Carrie Darby (Chair), Reverend Steve Jones (ex officio), Mandy Mitchell (Treasurer), Ian Scott (Maintenance), Nigel Skinner (Secretary), Sue Snell (Social Secretary & Maintenance), Andy Wadhams (Maintenance), Claire Whiter (Waiting List & Plot Allocation Secretary).**

## Appendix E

### Report from the Lympstone Flood Resilience Group 2023

The Lympstone Flood Resilience Group (LFRG) was formed in late 2017 to develop a more coordinated and strategic approach to flood risk management in the village - based on understanding the risk and facilitating action to minimise the risk. In addition to the 4 members of the Flood Group, there are two teams of flood wardens, an Estuary team and an Inland and surface water team.

High tides and bad weather have occupied the Estuary Wardens and required FloodWatch on a number of tides during the year, but no serious risks of flooding resulted due to fortuitous timings, the worst weather arriving when tides were manageable. Flood gate operation has continued without difficulties.

The Estuary Warden strength remains at 12 with some re-equipping of PPE has taken place during the year. New trollies for sandbag deployment have been sourced and paid for by the EA.

Some further modification of our very much already modified flood gates has been decided upon to reduce leakage and a trial implementation will initially be undertaken on Gate.

The Inland Warden team of 10 have focused on reducing the surface water flood risk in the village by a sustained and systematic program of road drain (gully) clearing, mainly from October to March each year. Nearly 70 roadside drains have been inspected and/or cleared in the last twelve months, and a further 6 have been referred to DCC Highways for camera inspection or jetting. The 'prevention is better than cure' approach has meant that there have been no road closures in the village due to surface water flooding in this period under review.

Our tools and equipment list has been supplemented by a heavy-duty brush cutter which has been used to clear undergrowth encroaching on to highways and potentially blocking drains.

This is the first full year we have had access to our very own weather station at the Village Hall. We have used it extensively to track and record rainfall, wind speed and barometric pressure; thus far it has been a reliable and accurate source of met data. It is freely accessible on any mobile device; just download the 'Weatherlink' app, create a username and password, and follow the prompts.

We responded to the Local Plan consultation with regard to the flooding concerns raised by the proposed housing sites. We are in discussion with the County Council regarding the flood mitigation works associated with the Dinan Way extension.

A presentation updated the Council on the outcomes from our Catchment Modelling work., Preparations have started for rolling out the information to the community at a Drop - In event on Saturday 2nd September.

Costing, design and funding of an important flood wall improvement to retain waters in the floodplain, first identified by LFRG from catchment model data, is progressing, with implementation possible in 2024.

LFRG have commenced engagement on the DCC DRIP initiative which offers some funding support for environmental improvements to Wotton Brook.

LFRG would like to thank the Parish Council, County and District Councillors for their continued support.



## Appendix F

### Interim Report on the Actions of the Lympstone Charity Trustees.

#### Background:

The Lympstone Poor Fund was established in 1832 by public donation. By 1900 the Charity status was formalised by the Charity Commission. In the early days when there was a lot of poverty in the Village, the Poor Fund, and allied charities, provided coal (Symons fund), Blankets (Welch fund), Money and Dispensary Tickets (enabling free Medical Aid), for members of the Village Community. Later with the advent of the NHS the Charity provided financial help, and extra comfort for parishioners in hospital.

In 1964 the Charity was renamed the Lympstone Parish Charity. Later the Charities were amalgamated under one head. The current aim of the Charity is to help people in the parish in need, hardship, or distress. The Charity has modest funds, and is operated by the Trustees, discreetly, and as far as is possible anonymously.

#### Report covering the complete financial year 31<sup>st</sup> July 2021- 30<sup>th</sup> July 2022 and the partial year 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022 – the present.

The current Trustees are: Alderman David Atkins, ex-Councillor Jim Bailey, ex-Councillor David Tyrrell, Mr Robert Harrison and Dr Brian Ridge.

On 13<sup>th</sup> August 2022, the Charity Commission, informed the Trustees that the Charity had been removed from the Register from 5<sup>th</sup> October 2010, on the grounds that the annual income fell below the new threshold of £5,000. Our new status as a confirmed Charitable Trust was re-established by a mandate from the HMRC, so that our formal status is once more regularised.

In the last complete financial year, to 30<sup>th</sup> July 2022, the financial position is given below:  
Total assets £7,419.84, made up of £3,945.23 (Charities Official Investment Fund [COIF]) and £3,474.61 (TSB, Business Instant Access Account). Interest for the year £109.53 (COIF), and £2.01 (TSB).  
Expenditure £0.00.

In the current incomplete financial year, the following amount has been awarded: £750.00.

The Trustees will continue to carry out their duties as outlined in the Foundation document. Help in identifying Villagers in need, who might not wish to ask for help themselves, will be gratefully received by the Trustees. To this end, details of the Charity have been placed with the School, the Pre-School, the Surgery, and the Food Bank in the Church.

Clerk – financial summary:

<b>Financial Summary 22-23</b>		
<b>Current Account</b>		
Opening balance at 1st April 2022		156,502.80
Receipts		£235,079.11
Total receipts		£391,581.91
less, Payments		£226,724.44
Net balance		£164,857.47
Unpresented cheques		£0.00
Receipts not on statement		£0.00
	Balance at Bank 31/3/23	£164,857.47

### Financial Statement - Cashbook

Statement of receipts and payments between 01/04/23 and 31/03/24 inclusive. This may include transactions with ledger dates outside this period.

Balances at the start of the year 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2023	
<b>Current Account</b>	
Total	<b>£164,857.47</b>
RECEIPTS	
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>158,868.75</b>
PAYMENTS	
<b>Total Payments</b>	<b>100,366.03</b>
Closing Balances 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024	
Current Account	<b>£223,360.19</b>

## Lympstone's Gibraltar Road Phone Box Book Swap

Report to the Parish Council. March 2024.

The phone box book swap continues to be well used, with regular donations of books and generally good turnover. There are no official volunteers, but a number of local residents continue to tidy the books as they go past.

Last year I reported that the condition of the phone box has deteriorated. A repair to the door - thank you – has stopped the worst of the leaks. However, this has been a very wet start to the year, and we continue to have problems with water ingress on an ongoing basis, which damages some of the stock.

In addition to this, the state of the outside has deteriorated further and the phone box now looks very shabby. This is partially paintwork, and partially the state of the window panels. I feel a smarter and cleaner book swap would be better looked after by the community.

For this reason I would like to request that the Parish Council support this local facility by arranging the following works:

- painting of the outside
- refurbishment/replacement of window panels
- checking for leaks (possibly caused by the window panels)



Mary Turner

## **Gulliford Burial Ground Report**

The last year has seen both highs and lows for those caring for the Gulliford Dissenters' Burial ground. The high was definitely when Gulliford Burial Ground won the prestigious 'Most Original' award in the 2023 Devon Best Churchyard Competition run by Devon CPRE. Gulliford Burial Ground was one of 26 entrants in the competition and the award was accompanied with the judges statement: *-This is a surprisingly delightful small burial ground, beautifully and informatively managed. The vision of those caring for this site is commendable – it was a pleasure to visit.*

*So, in Oct 2023, the committee of FOGBG were invited to an award ceremony at Rosemoor Gardens, for the finals of the Best Devon Churchyard. We were delighted to win the "Most Original" graveyard certificate. This award recognises hours of help, planning, gardening, grant research etc, the list goes on, from the communities of Lympstone & Woodbury. Well done.*

After a wonderful display of Daffodils in spring, Gulliford got ready for summer. We have a new council gardener Jeff Morrish, who we met at Gulliford to explain where to trim and where to leave, he cuts the grass as and when needed, which is working well.

But there were many other highlights of the year. For the first event of 2023, The Friends of Gulliford was part of the "Wild About Lympstone" festival in the Parish Church on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> June, where we were on hand to explain all we have done for the environment at Gulliford.

On Saturday June 24<sup>th</sup> at 2pm, we are delighted to have Dr Mark Moffatt, who guided visitors around the burial ground identifying and introducing us to our insects. This tour was FREE, everyone welcome and all ages, no booking just turn up.

We put on our annual FREE tour of Gulliford Burial Ground, from 2pm on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> July, the tours are suited to the visitor, you say how long you want it and what interests you most whether it's the history of the site or the wildlife, we would adapt the tour to your point of interest.

We also need to say thank you to the gardening team whose commitment keep the burial ground looking tidy and a pleasure to visit. This year, we also had the sadness of saying goodbye to a stalwart of our committee, Lesley Weeks, who sadly lost her fight against cancer. The glorious displays of spring flowers and meadow blooms in the Burial ground are her legacy from hours of planting and weeding. We have a lovely gardening team, but it is small, and we are constantly looking out for more volunteers who could spare a couple of hours per month to help out.

The Joint Parishes Committee has also seen a change around of personnel with Ken Perry and Steve Parks from Woodbury PC and Andrew Minter from Lympstone PC joining our ranks. We are very pleased to have them join our team.

For 2024, we are opening for the garden festival, on Sunday June the 9<sup>th</sup> in the afternoon. With more events in the pipeline for further on in the year including a bat detecting evening.

*Jane Moffatt, Chair to Gulliford Burial Ground Joint Committee*

# Heathfield Allotment Trust

REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 202075

## REPORT TO THE PARISH COUNCIL MARCH 2024

This year plot holders celebrated 150 years of being at the Sowden End site. The charity is in fact 192 years old, having been originally sited on land near Marley House in 1832. Our sell out Cream Tea celebration event in the Village Hall was enjoyed by over 90 people, of particular note was music from Two Metres Plus, a history talk and Sue Snell's homemade scones.

Unfortunately, this was the only event of the year as all our other planned events, including our annual BBQ, were rained off.

The weather provided everyone with more challenges than normal. One of the warmest and wettest seasons on record. The very wet July, such a key month for us growers slowed things down considerably, but at least we didn't need to water so much!

The Trust is financially sound and the site remains fully occupied. We still divide full plots, when they become available, to reduce our waiting list which averages 25 villagers. Much of the maintenance including road repairs and grass strimming is managed by Trustees with occasional help from other plot holders.

We look forward to the new growing season and hopefully a little less rain.

**Carrie Darby**  
Chair of Trustees

Trustees: David Atkins (Parish Council link), Carrie Darby (Chair), Reverend Steve Jones (ex officio), Mandy Mitchell (Treasurer), Ian Scott (Maintenance), Nigel Skinner (Secretary), Sue Snell (Social Sec. & Maintenance), Andy Wadhams (Maintenance), Claire Whiter (Waiting List & Plot Allocation Secretary).

## **Lympstone Flood Resilience Group report 2024**

The Lympstone Flood Resilience Group (LFRG) was formed in late 2017 to develop a more coordinated and strategic approach to flood risk management in the village - based on understanding the risk and facilitating action to minimise the risk. In addition to the 4 members of the Flood Group, there are two teams of flood wardens, an Estuary team and an inland and surface water team .

The Estuary team is at strength and the floodgates and other assets have performed well. As ever there are outstanding improvements to our protection which are being progressed with The Environment Agency (EA) We have seen some big tides which fortunately have not combined with adverse weather conditions, although quite widespread pooling occurred in The Strand opposite The Swan on a number of high tides. We have been in ongoing discussions with the EA about this recurring problem

Since September 2023 the Inland team have cleared blocked gullies at thirteen locations around the village, and despite very heavy rainfall in January and February, no roads have been closed due to surface water flooding. We continue to work closely with DCC Highways and have requested their assistance with clearing standing water in Underhill and at the top of Strawberry Hill by improving the roadside drainage in both locations.

Much of the early part of last year was taken up with preparing for a major Drop In event about Lympstone Flood Risk This was held over two days in the Village Hall in September to raise awareness of flooding matters in the village. The event was well attended by villagers, Councillors, representatives from the agencies and a prospective constituency MP. The panels from this event can be viewed on the village website.

Considerable interest in individual property protection was generated at the event and a number of residents now have flood board protection in place or being progressed. We plan to encourage this further during the year as a door threshold height survey, that the EA undertook has given us very useful data to assist in identifying low spots which may be at higher pooling risk.

Following on from the results of the hydraulic modelling, the EA are proposing to extend the flood retention wall on the north side of Wotton Brook to prevent the possibility of flood water reaching the Strand. Several meetings have taken place to discuss this, with the EA and the residents directly affected.

We have met and made presentations to interested groups interested in flooding in Exton and Newton Poppleford to explain our activities within our community. We have also been working with the Devon Resilience Innovation Project (DRIP) and the newly formed Lympstone Water Quality Group.

We continue to be concerned about any future developments that may have an effect on flooding in the village. We have met with DCC Highways designers to try to better understand how the proposed Dinan Way extension may affect the volumes of water in the Wotton Brook. We have also expressed our concerns about developments at Thorne Farm, Strawberry Hill and Meeting Lane

We remain vigilant of rainfall levels, and Wotton Brook water levels, particularly at times of high tides and when these combine with adverse meteorological conditions.

During the course of the year, we developed a Flood Response Plan which we hope will now become part of the Parish Council's Emergency Plan. It is a double-sided document that provides concise procedures for the Estuary and Inland team leaders, flood wardens and first responders in the event of a severe flood incident.

We met with Martin Davies of the EA to express our concerns about wider tidal exposure when Dawlish Warren is either breached or allowed to erode. In common with other Estuary communities, it is recognised that improvements to our Estuary defences will need to be in place before the protection is allowed to degrade, but no firm timescales are known for this major project. In the short term any breaching of The Warren will be repaired by the EA.

Helen Dimond

## **Lympstone Water Quality Group** **Annual Report to Lympstone Parish Council, 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024**

**Objectives and scope of the Group** - The Lympstone Water Quality Group (formerly the Wotton Brook Water Quality Group) was formed in December 2023 in view of increasing concerns about the quality of the water in the Wotton Brook and Exe Estuary. Initially, the objective was to develop a project to obtain a baseline assessment of the water quality in the Wotton Brook. Later, the aim of the project was expanded – to assess, protect, and improve the quality of the water in the Wotton Brook and Exe Estuary (hence the change in the name). The geographic boundaries of the project include both the Wotton Brook catchment boundary and the Lympstone parish boundary (including nearly 200 acres of fundus in the Exe Estuary).

**Group members** - The Group brings together a mix of skills and experience, including: Cllr Lisa Staddon, Clem Davies, Sara Davies, Rebecca Abrahams (co-founder and coordinator of Wild About Lympstone), Justin Smallwood, Caroline Lewis (also a coordinator for Friends of the River Exe), and Barry Lewis.

### **Progress and key achievements**

- Consulted with key stakeholder groups on the initial project proposal.
- Secured the support of specialist organisations (Westcountry Rivers Trust, Riverfly Partnership, and Stormwater Shepherds) with sufficient existing funding to provide initial advice and guidance, training, monitoring kits, and 2 continuous water monitors for the Wotton Brook.
- Identified and collated relevant information.
- Investigated sources and pathways of pollution and specific threats and opportunities, e.g., Dinan Way Extension and Thorne Farm development project.
- Engaged with other community projects (e.g., on the Rivers Sid, Yealm, and Axe) to learn from their experience.
- Secured the support of the Environment Agency and South West Water plc.
- Engaged with other Lympstone groups, including the Lympstone Flood Resilience Group, Wild About Lympstone, Lympstone Fishery & Harbour Association, and Lympstone Primary School (meeting held on 12 February), and with the wider community (via the Herald, Facebook, and some face-to-face discussions).
- Updated the project plan.
- Recruited nearly 20 volunteers to help with monitoring the water quality in the Wotton Brook, and generally raising awareness and being alert to signs of pollution in the Brook and Estuary.
- Organised training of volunteers, provided by Westcountry Rivers Trust on 14<sup>th</sup> March.
- Held the first meeting of the Project Steering Group on 21<sup>st</sup> March.

### **Issues and challenges**

- The government organisations are under pressure, and communicating with them is harder than pre-Covid.
- So far, we have had limited success in engaging Devon County Council and East Devon District Council (despite communications with existing and new contacts at both senior and area levels). The decisions of both organisations can have a significant impact on water quality. DCC has no designated team addressing water quality issues, and it seems these issues are often overlooked by other teams. EDDC looks to the Environment Agency (EA) to identify and assess water pollution risks, and yet many planning applications are now outside of the EA's remit – consequently planning permission can be given without sufficient scrutiny and control of pollution risks.
- Climate change is increasing the risk of water pollution (since runoff is a major pathway of pollution).

- The initial project duration is one year, but the monitoring and other work will need to continue if government systems do not improve. To help ensure the efficacy of the project, a robust records management system is being developed.

### **Plans for 2024/25**

- Continue to implement the project plan, including water monitoring and investigations, and work to protect and improve the water quality in the Brook and Estuary. A preliminary report will be prepared and disseminated by December 2024.
- Collaborate with the Environment Agency, South West Water, and other Lympstone groups to develop a catchment plan and achieve benefits in water quality, flood risk, and biodiversity.
- Identify and secure sources of funding.
- Collaborate with Stormwater Shepherds and Westcountry Rivers Trust to raise awareness of pollution from road runoff.
- Ensure the drainage scheme for the planned Dinan Way Extension meets both regulatory requirements and DCC's commitments for betterment in water quality and flood risk.
- Review other planning applications when requested by Lympstone Parish Council.

### **The Parish Council's support**

We appreciate the Parish Council's support to date. Specific opportunities to support the project's aim include:

- Raising awareness about the project and issues wherever possible.
- Supporting the development of a holistic catchment plan (bringing benefits to water quality, flood risk, biodiversity, and human health and wellbeing).
- Considering the water quality risks and opportunities when reviewing planning applications and other planning documents and updating the Local Neighbourhood Plan.
- Alerting the Group to the above.
- Support our applications for funding.
- Providing any additional funding needed, e.g. for meetings and equipment.
- Providing insurance for volunteers.

***Lympstone Water Quality Group***  
***31<sup>st</sup> March 2024***