

10th November 2024

From: Christchurch Harbour & Marine Society

Christchurch Harbour is under severe pressure and we need the community to understand

Christchurch Harbour is under severe pressure. Unlike the much larger Poole Harbour, which has only one river 'The Frome' flowing into it from the Wareham direction, our much smaller Christchurch Harbour receives two large and increasingly polluted rivers. We don't think its too dramatic to say that it is acting as the cess pit for BCP.

The River Avon brings with it high levels of nitrates from the agricultural land to the north of us but just above our Town & Harbour, the severely 'under invested' Stony Lane Sewage Treatment Plant cannot cope with things as they are now. Whenever it rains heavily the outflow just above the town pumps sewage waste (phosphates) directly into the Avon.

However the phosphate levels in the Stour are consistently much higher. It's not difficult to see why. The Stour flows down from Blandford, passes by Wimborne and then crosses the whole of the BCP conurbation passing the Berry Hill Sludge Treatment Centre at Throop and the massive Holdenhurst Sewage Treatment Plant alongside the river and the A338 Spur Road as well as many contaminated landfill sites.

We, the Christchurch Harbour & Marine Society, have been measuring the Phosphate & Nitrate levels for 2 years now and the findings are frightening. Those two substantial rivers are flowing into our comparatively small harbour.

If one owns a property in the area, a business, and activity organisation or just use it for leisure purposes you need to understand the implications.

We already know from the fishing community, Christchurch Harbour Ornithological Group (CHOG), the surfing community and water users in general that the Harbour is seriously suffering. It is going to be hard to stop the damage occurring let alone reversing the damage already done. But we need to be applying the pressure now.

Imagine having to hear in a short time from now that '**Our beautiful Harbour contains no life**'. What will that do to the life our kids get to live? as well as to the value of properties or the health of our local economy. We all need to take this threat very, very seriously.

It is with enormous pleasure that we welcome Charles Watson to our November meeting being held at 'Stewarts Garden Centre' at 7:00pm on Thursday 28th November. Charles created and heads up 'River Action' (riveraction.org) the leading Charity holding The Government to account. Working with many other active organisations, such as Surfers Against Sewage, they recently organised the recent March to Westminster, 'The March for Clean Water'

Please come along to hear just how bad it is and what you, your household, your community organisation or your business can do to really help apply the pressure.

Doors open at 6:30.

We really hope you can make it.

Many thanks

Christchurch Harbour & Marine Society - CH&MS