



## It is our mission to advocate for the River Dart.

We work to minimise pollution, improve biodiversity and empower communities from source to sea. We do this through evidence based advocacy and constructive engagement.

We seek to contribute to the wellbeing of other rivers through best practice leadership and collaborative working.



# Friends of the Dart - Core Work Overview

A Community Interest Company that, through a constructive and collaborative approach, focuses on the following core areas of work:

- Community and Stakeholder Engagement
- Collation and Publication of External Water Quality Data
- Contribution to the National Review of Water Industry Policy and take action to utilise the levers for positive change that already exist, for example Bathing water designation
- Mentoring Newly-Formed Water Quality Community Groups
- Collaborative Monitoring with partner organisations eg the Environment Agency and University of Plymouth
- Water Quality Monitoring of the River Dart - Year Round
- Evidence based citizen funded science to create transparency and accountability

# Water Quality Monitoring of the River Dart

- Mirror the Environment Agency's testing protocol to monitor bacteria levels of E.coli and Enterococci, found in both human and animal faecal matter
- Samples analysed in an accredited lab (gold standard) and in accordance with a peer reviewed protocol
- Identify specific problem areas
- To inform the community on year round water quality, creating accountability and transparency, in lieu of the information being publicly available
- We use evidence based information to campaign for infrastructure improvements and updates to regulations and permits
- Supporting farmers to identify pollution issues



# Water Quality Monitoring - Special Investigations

Citizen Funded Science Testing for Emerging Pollutants.

Mapping of Patterns of Pollution (both spatial seasonal and meteorological)

## **Samples For:**

- Bacteria (E. coli)
- Nutrients (nitrates, phosphates)
- Pharmaceuticals
- Heavy Metals
- PFAS
- Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)

## **Microbial Source Tracking:**

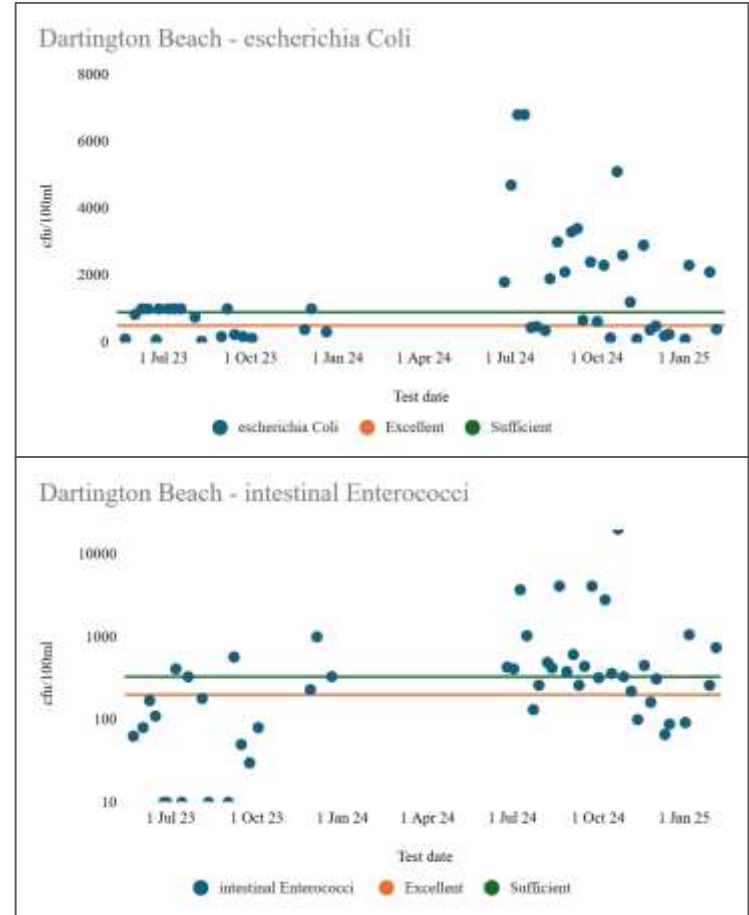
- Samples are analysed for organism specific markers which indicate bacterial sources

## **Freedom of Information requests for SWW Water Quality Data:**

- Bacteria
- Microbial Source Tracking
- Continuous Monitoring by Sondes

# Kilbury Sewage Treatment Works

- High bacterial concentrations at Dartington Beach over the summer, did not correlate with rainfall or spills
- Kilbury STW serves Buckfastleigh and does not have tertiary treatment (UV filter) South West Water have now scheduled the installation of a UV filter and an update to the storage capacity. We are awaiting the details as per our transparency template for example, timeline, investment.
- Treated effluent from Kilbury is a significant source of bacteria, the impact is higher when River Dart levels are low



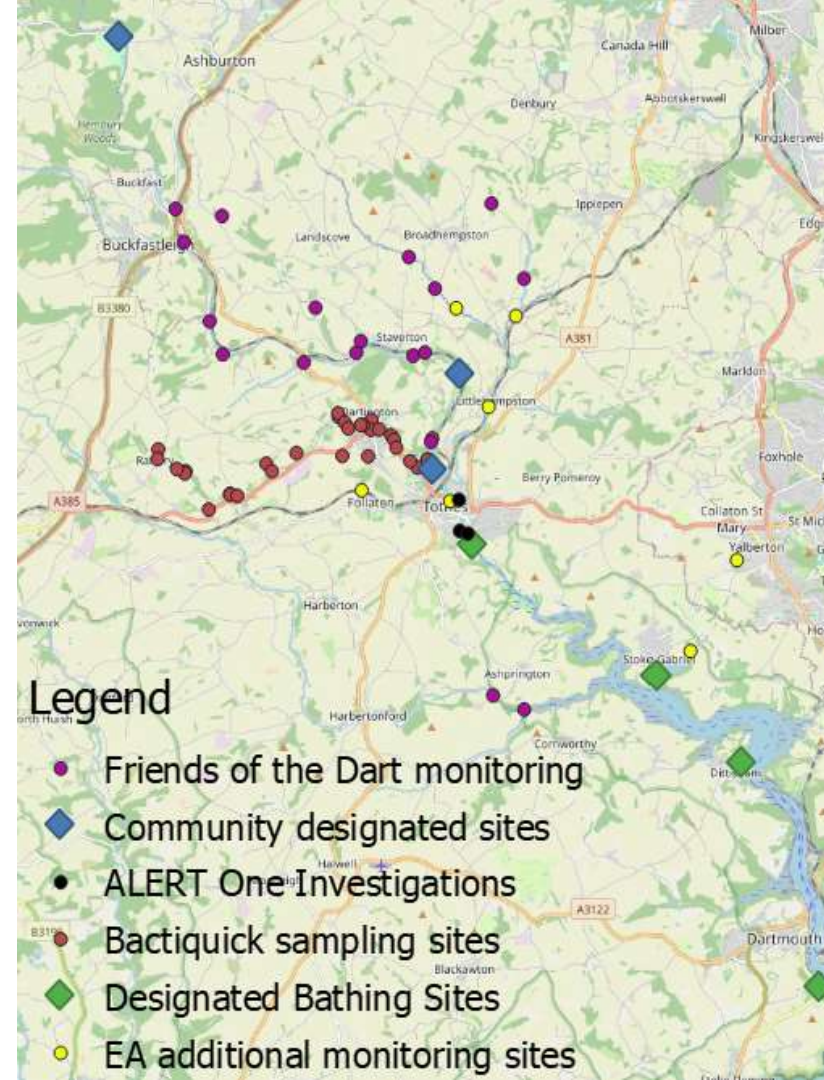




- Snap-shot example week...
- Core sampling takes place at 7 sites along the length of the Dart
- 4 Designated Bathing sites, monitored by the Environment Agency only in the bathing season (May to September)
- 3 sites which are Community Designated due to their high usage, these are not monitored as bathing sites by the Environment Agency
- NB: Based on our year-round results, all the sites would be rated as 'poor' bar Holne Weir

# River Dart Monitoring Plans for 2025

- Continuation of monitoring at both Defra Designated Bathing Sites as well as Community Designated Sites
- Investigation of tributaries within the River Dart Catchment
- Continued collaborative monitoring with partners (for example the Environment Agency and University of Plymouth bactiquick project on Bidwell brook)
- 66 sites will be monitored- over 1000 samples will be collected
- In phase three of our monitoring plan we are using a combination of testing methods.



## 2024 Event Duration Monitor Data (EDM) - released 27/03/25

**A: Indicates Number of spill events**

**B: Indicates Duration of spills**

2023      **A:** 58,249      **B:** 530,737

2024      **A:** 56,173      **B:** 544,439

There are 44 sites on the Dart and tributaries where SWW have a permit from the EA to release sewage. They are required by law to treat water “effectively” and this only permits overflow to discharge in “exceptional circumstances”





# What can I do?

- If you have care for the River, you are already a Friend of the Dart
- Join us as a FOD River ambassador as an individual or a business
- Take small actions that collectively make a difference, water saving, information sharing within your communities, effective pollution reporting
- Invite friends and family to join us too
- Become accurately informed, join our newsletter, read up on the blogs posts for example hear about our transparency template that is now being taken forwards in partnership with SHDC
- Become a monthly donor or join a sponsored event

To remedy pollution in our Rivers we must all pull in the same direction towards updates in transparency, regulations and responsibility.

The River Dart Partnership is a wonderful example of bringing together groups with varied expertise to work for the benefit of our communities and River health

# Thank you

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