

Water quality in River Erme catchment

Context: Concerns about the health of the Erme and its tributaries following reports of untreated sewage, anecdotal reports of decrease in biodiversity in Ayleston Brook, a tributary of the Erme and assessment by the Environment Agency of river health.

Rating by the Environment Agency of overall water quality as Moderate/Poor but FAILED on high levels of three chemicals found in samples: Phosphates, Mercury and Polybrominated diphenyl ethers (PBDEs). This is an environmental and public health issue.

Action: To determine contributory factors to contamination, to clarify work already being undertaken and to link with relevant organisations to look at next steps.

The main sources of phosphate contamination are discharge from water treatment works and run off from agricultural fields. We have a water treatment works in Modbury which discharges into Ayleston Brook. During periods of heavy rainfall, water quality may also be affected by animal waste being washed off the fields into rivers, and from urban drainage from roads and buildings

Discharge figures for the past three years were requested from South West Water. See pages 2-3.

Water quality is a complex issue, requiring information sharing and cooperation across a range of organisations and industries, often at district, regional or national level. However, local support and provision of information feeds into this network.

West Country Rivers <https://wrt.org.uk> is a conservation charity involved in a number of initiatives to understand and manage water quality in our rivers and estuaries. These include:

Upstream thinking in collaboration with South West Water and Devon Wildlife Trust.

The Estuaries Management Plan in collaboration with South Devon AONB.

River catchment approach: Regeneration schemes which aim to improve water quality, alleviate flooding and enhance biodiversity. Divides areas for investigation into the principal river and its tributaries. An example is recent work on the Yealm catchment area.

Information has been requested on any ongoing or planned work for the Erme catchment area.

What can we do as a Parish Council?

The Rivers Trust <https://www.theriverstrust.org.uk> is the national organisation to which West Country Rivers are affiliated: they are about to produce a new report on frequency and location and management of sewage spills. We can sign up to receive this.

Be informed about water quality issues in our area, raise issues with the District Council and other statutory organisations and businesses as appropriate.

Join West Country Rivers partnership to receive information and advice.

Ensure the Modbury community is informed and support community initiatives.

Ann Turner April 2022

Modbury sewage treatment works Storm Tank Overflow					
Intermittent Discharges 1/1/2019 to 31/12/21					
Event Start Date	Event Start Time	Event Stop Date	Event Stop Time	Duration (Hours)	Spills
09/08/2019	11:02:10	09/08/2019	11:42:19	0.67	1
16/08/2019	15:21:03	17/08/2019	07:42:56	2.3	2
27/09/2019	05:52:07	27/09/2019	08:08:02	0.54	1
28/09/2019	21:51:04	30/09/2019	09:49:52	5.68	2
07/10/2019	12:00:23	08/10/2019	09:05:12	4.85	2
13/10/2019	02:12:37	18/10/2019	16:05:30	13.02	7
26/10/2019	12:14:28	27/10/2019	10:25:53	3.05	2
29/10/2019	18:56:05	12/11/2019	04:11:45	116.36	14
23/11/2019	02:14:27	29/11/2019	17:25:23	47.72	8
08/12/2019	05:47:22	08/12/2019	21:32:41	2.48	2
12/12/2019	08:17:17	12/12/2019	13:16:09	1.13	1
14/12/2019	21:40:52	15/12/2019	00:32:01	1.49	1
18/12/2019	17:04:05	24/12/2019	16:06:35	51.3	7
26/12/2019	14:14:00	27/12/2019	12:21:17	12.08	2
30/12/2019	13:46:06	31/12/2019	09:48:05	0.35	2
09/01/2020	07:26:08	09/01/2020	09:44:35	0.79	1
14/01/2020	21:59:49	15/01/2020	05:35:23	3.02	1
16/01/2020	13:49:58	16/01/2020	23:32:18	1.16	1
22/01/2020	19:42:44	23/01/2020	11:11:27	0.37	2
02/02/2020	02:26:34	02/02/2020	10:43:21	3.52	1
03/02/2020	17:29:52	03/02/2020	17:58:28	0.18	1
13/02/2020	02:05:52	13/02/2020	13:39:16	5.88	1
14/02/2020	19:48:54	20/02/2020	21:04:19	118.79	7
27/02/2020	03:37:10	02/03/2020	01:07:33	49.3	5
04/03/2020	11:50:52	09/03/2020	23:15:07	52.62	6
13/03/2020	21:11:51	15/03/2020	19:09:32	7.28	3
09/04/2020	20:08:47	09/04/2020	23:11:29	1.88	1
05/05/2020	08:25:36	05/05/2020	08:47:42	0.37	1
11/06/2020	13:08:54	11/06/2020	14:23:37	0.08	1
19/08/2020	07:15:28	19/08/2020	12:07:39	1.86	1
20/08/2020	23:58:33	21/08/2020	11:24:49	4.24	1
25/08/2020	01:54:49	29/08/2020	11:32:29	33.62	5
21/10/2020	18:49:17	21/10/2020	19:29:25	0.16	1
23/10/2020	10:28:12	05/11/2020	10:42:06	115.03	14
14/11/2020	19:44:05	17/11/2020	03:13:35	21.22	3
08/12/2020	14:01:27	31/12/2020	06:10:41	400.54	24
16/01/2021	10:35:21	06/02/2021	23:05:46	210.92	23

Modbury sewage treatment works Storm Tank Overflow					
Intermittent Discharges 1/1/2019 to 31/12/21 continued					
Event Start Date	Event Start Time	Event Stop Date	Event Stop Time	Duration (Hours)	Spills
14/02/2021	19:52:49	17/02/2021	20:22:02	17.9	4
20/02/2021	02:05:20	21/02/2021	13:16:54	4.79	2
10/03/2021	08:43:47	10/03/2021	23:57:41	5.25	2
13/03/2021	00:02:31	13/03/2021	01:51:21	0.8	1
08/05/2021	08:36:53	09/05/2021	02:45:39	1.58	2
12/05/2021	18:19:31	14/05/2021	01:33:29	5.24	2
15/05/2021	09:35:02	15/05/2021	09:50:06	0.05	1
23/05/2021	18:16:43	24/05/2021	20:29:54	2.06	2
28/09/2021	17:42:05	28/09/2021	21:21:29	0.17	1
02/10/2021	13:12:28	03/10/2021	19:37:27	2.01	2
05/10/2021	03:08:59	06/10/2021	09:59:48	3.47	2
19/10/2021	00:03:30	21/10/2021	14:15:36	9.96	4
04/11/2021	20:12:14	05/11/2021	13:13:00	0.64	2
03/12/2021	12:43:56	04/12/2021	19:52:42	3.64	2
06/12/2021	09:06:03	09/12/2021	23:32:57	15.93	5
23/12/2021	10:16:16	02/01/2022	06:36:39	157.46	11