



Evenlode Catchment Partnership  
Third Annual Report on the Smarter  
Water Catchment initiative 2023-2024

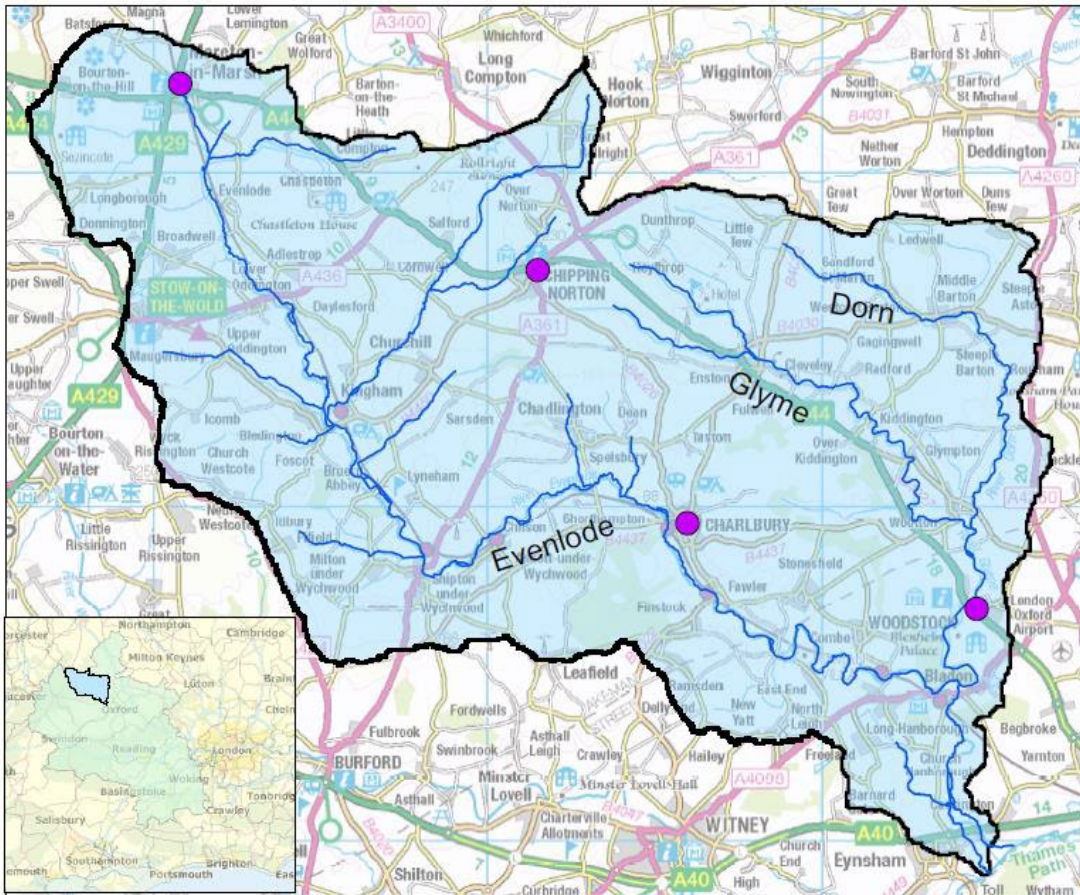


Report title: Third Annual Report on the Smarter Water Catchment Initiative 2023-2024			
Author(s)	Ann Berkeley, Wild Oxfordshire; Earthwatch; CNL; Nick Mottram, Chair ECP		
Project	River Evenlode Smarter Water Catchments Project		

This document has been created for the purposes of the Evenlode Catchment Partnership. This document will be made available to all partners associated with the project, in line with the true partnership ethos. The work detailed in this report is based on the information available at the time. Any findings and/or recommendations will inform future phases of the project.

## Evenlode Catchment

- Major Urban Areas
- WFD Rivers
- Evenlode Catchment



## Contents

1. Chairman's Report
2. Evenlode Catchment Partnership
3. Hosting and the wider Partnership
4. Water Quality
5. Biodiversity, Habitat and Landscape
6. Natural Flood Management
7. Education, Access and Recreation
8. Conclusion
9. List of Partners

# 1 Chairman's Report

Welcome to the third annual report on the Evenlode Catchment Partnership's (ECP) work in our Smarter Water Catchment (SWC) partnership programme. The SWC programme operates across four main themes: Water Quality; Biodiversity, Habitat and Landscape; Natural Flood Management; and Education, Access and Recreation.

As the Annual Report notes, ECP partners have worked extremely hard to deliver actions and improvements in all these areas. Particular highlights have included substantial river channel re-engineering works on the Cornwell estate; an incredibly busy programme of Citizen Science surveys which are building up a solid and catchment-wide database on water quality; engagement with large numbers of communities, residents, teachers and school children; and the production and publication of a video, *Beneath the Surface*. These direct improvements, data and learning will provide an important long-term legacy for the ECP and SWC programme.

Water quality remains a key issue for the Partnership. This was brought to the fore in early 2024 when it became apparent that the draft business plan for the next cycle of Thames Water's investment in the Evenlode did not include planned measures to upgrade any of the phosphate stripping capacity in sewage treatment works (STWs). This led to the decision not to seek an extension of the SWC programme after the completion of the initial five-year phase. In the meantime, the ECP will use the available resources to get the best outcomes we can across all areas of activity and seek new funds to maintain and expand our efforts to bring the Evenlode back to life.

The ECP itself continues to be most ably hosted by local charity Wild Oxfordshire which also manages the SWC programme. All partners are indebted to the hard work and commitment of the charity's staff, which underpins so much of what we do.

Nick Mottram  
Chair, Evenlode Catchment Partnership

## 2 Evenlode Catchment Partnership

Catchment Partnerships were set up throughout England in 2014 by the Environment Agency (EA) in a programme to involve communities in tackling the failure of our rivers to meet 'Good Ecological Status' under the Water Framework Directive. The Evenlode Catchment Partnership (ECP) drew together a wide range of interested people to help tackle the water quality failure throughout all 18 water bodies. These include government agencies, Thames Water (TW), NGOs, consultants, members of fishing clubs, parish councils and catchment residents. Funding from the EA has been very limited in the past so, although an active partnership, we have been limited on how much we have been able to achieve.

The Evenlode Catchment was chosen with The Chess and The Crane Catchments to pilot Thames Water's 'Smarter Water Catchment' initiative to enable catchments to achieve more. The £3 million funding over five years (2020-2025) from Thames Water has enabled us to expand our staff, increase our ambitions and resources, and concentrate on what the Partnership wants to achieve in the future.

Our vision is to achieve *Good Ecological Status* across the catchment.

We have developed a ten-year plan which identifies the four main themes under which we want to deliver our projects each year. <https://www.wildoxfordshire.org.uk/evenlode/evenlode-catchment-partnership>

Each theme is led by a Theme Lead Organisation and the work is planned by working groups which are made up of experts and practitioners, collectively shaping the direction and course of the different projects and milestones. Overall governance is directed by the SWC Steering Group consisting of representatives from all themes and key operators.

## 3 Hosting and the wider Partnership

The charity, Wild Oxfordshire, is the host for the ECP and has responsibility for bringing the Partnership together, disseminating information and for the co-ordination of the Partnership.

This year we continued to hold our quarterly ECP meetings involving the wider Partnership online, with our first face-to-face meeting since COVID lockdowns at FarmED in December.

Below is a taste of the range of projects going on in the catchment outside of the SWC-funded core.

In June's meeting we were shown a presentation by Jeremy van Ginnekin, Thames Water, on grants for protecting drinking water by reducing contaminants from runoff (<https://youtu.be/KqHzE830uqw>).

The EA gave a presentation on the Thames Valley Flood Scheme (<https://youtu.be/JW3SlSkqafE>). The scheme is in very early stages and at that time there were no plans for natural flood management in the catchment.

Heather Moorhouse gave a presentation on the work of intern Guy Mercer on the contribution of STWs to the phosphate pollution in the Evenlode (<https://youtu.be/rjMPPM2pZGo>).

Later in the year, the ECP were invited by West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) to comment on the planning consultation for the Local Plan.

The North East Cotswold Farmer Cluster (NECFC), as part of the Evenlode Landscape Recovery Pilot, have increased their workforce to include Lewis Fagence as the project manager, and Rachel Murphy to write the farm management plans. They held a workshop on Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), as it is now required as part of any development from November 2023.

Many partners attended the Water Day run by WODC in November in the Corn Exchange, Witney. There was a very full programme with several ECP members presenting.

In October, the SWC Steering Group were very disappointed to learn that, having spent many hours in meetings and discussions working-up a proposal for phosphate stripping to be included at 13 STWs on the Evenlode in the next Thames Water Business Plan, none of these improvements were included in the draft Business Plan despite previous commitments. The strong view amongst Steering Group members was that the focus for future Thames Water investment in the Evenlode should be the upgrading of STWs and the removal of phosphate from our river, and that this should take priority over other areas of work being undertaken under the SWC initiative.

**With this in mind, the Steering Group announced in October that they would not take further SWC grant funding from Thames Water after the completion of this pilot in March 2025, but would continue to meet their contractual commitments until that time.**

Our 7th December meeting at FarmED attracted a large and engaged audience of 60, where we were able to show our film about the ECP, 'Beneath the Surface', for the first time in public. We followed with presentations from the SWC, demonstrating the wide range of projects and engagement. WODC Councillor, Lidia Arciszewska, said, 'That is the first time I have properly understood what it [the ECP] is all about'. This shows that we are getting better at describing our very complex catchment work.

There was a lively exchange of questions and answers afterwards which reinforced the strength and cohesion of the Partnership. The meeting ended with a chance to network over bread and soup in the café.

During the March meeting, Clare Pitt from BBOWT gave a presentation on their 'Joining the Dots' programme of mink eradication in readiness for water vole re-introductions (<https://youtu.be/hS0wCDGaQmg>).

Since the SWC pilot has only a year until it finishes, it was felt that it was timely to examine the structure and governance of the ECP. We had a lengthy discussion and decided we needed to hold a workshop with a facilitator to really explore this topic in depth.

The ECP, through Wild Oxfordshire, were awarded £25k per year for the next three years to fund the hosting role from WODC.

The EA announced that water company inspections will increase to 4,000 per year by the end of 2024-25 and increase to 10,000 from April 2026. This has been driven by the pressure from the public and organisations like the ECP.

We said farewell to Janice Bamsey, Senior Strategic Planner with WODC, who is retiring and has been a loyal and helpful supporter of the work ECP have done since inception.

Following this brief review of another busy year for the wider catchment, we will now look in more detail at some of the SWC projects and initiatives completed over the year within the catchment plan.

## 4 Water Quality

None of the 18 water bodies in the catchment currently achieve good ecological status under the Water Framework Directive (WFD). Phosphorus is the main pollutant, of which about 65-70% comes from sewage effluent and about 28-30% from agricultural run-off. Currently only sewage treatment works (STWs) on the Dorn and Glyme tributaries are equipped with phosphorus stripping capabilities.

The high phosphorus concentration enriches the water and causes algal blooms in the late spring and summer during low flows. This severely affects the water quality and the diversity of macrophytes, invertebrates and fish.

### Citizen Scientists

The ECP, led by Earthwatch, set up a group of volunteers in 2016 to take monthly readings of nitrogen, phosphorous and turbidity upstream and downstream of some of the STWs in the catchment using FreshWater Watch kits. These volunteers, who we call *Catchment Champions*, continue to monitor.

In 2023, citizen scientists were regularly monitoring twice the number of locations as the EA. Citizen scientists monitored 32 sites in at least three of the four seasons in 2023, compared to 15 by the EA. Of the 16 river water bodies in the catchment, half have some kind of regular monitoring. All nine are covered by the EA, with six also covered by regular citizen science monitoring.

The WaterBlitz in September 2023 increased monitoring coverage to 15 out of 18 water bodies. 63 surveys were submitted that weekend.

Water body phosphate status varied across the catchment. Phosphate status determined by combining citizen science and EA monitoring was generally better in the east (Glyme/Dorn) than the west (Evenlode). The Glyme/Dorn is characterised by fewer STWs and a more restrictive permits, with STW output discharges limited to 1 mg/L.

However, there was considerable variation in the nutrient conditions of individual monitoring sites within some water bodies, which can be partially explained by differences in sampling sites being upstream vs downstream of STWs.

A distinct seasonal trend in phosphate was also detected, with phosphate concentrations highest during summer months when flows are low. Low rainfall periods reduce the dilution of any pollutants, e.g. treated sewage effluent. The increased availability of phosphate during warmer months, when algal photosynthesis is maximum, has a major impact on the ecological conditions of the receiving streams and rivers, resulting in algal blooms and growth on plants and reductions in dissolved oxygen, all of which effect the ecosystem and biodiversity.

There was considerable variation in nitrate concentrations in some water bodies. This was particularly true for the water bodies along the main River Evenlode. This could potentially be explained by the varying influence of different tributaries on the main channel; more data is needed from upstream and downstream of the confluences to confirm this. There was no discernible seasonal trend for nitrates.

A Citizen Summit was held in March at Chadlington Village Hall. 40 ECP Catchment Champions attended where Earthwatch gave an update on the 2023 data and the proposed direction for next year. It was a chance to meet fellow citizen scientists and thank them for their support throughout the year.

## Sondes

Continuous monitoring using multiparameter sondes upstream and downstream of the Chipping Norton and Milton-under-Wychwood STWs showed the clear influence of STWs on water quality. We had hoped that the planned upgrade in AMP 7 for Milton-under-Wychwood STW to increase to full treatment capacity would be something we could measure and report on, but sadly this has not happened and is unlikely now.

The data show a clear detrimental impact on the watercourses from the discharges. In the summer months with low brook flows there is less dilution, and the pollution is more concentrated.

This is exacerbated by insufficient treatment capacity at the works due to insufficient investment. Consequently, we see more frequent 'Storm Overflow Events' where raw sewage is released directly into the brooks. 12,172 hours of raw sewage were discharged into the catchment in 2023.

Sewer networks and STWs need investment for improved treatment of sewage, to reduce the phosphate and nitrate released, and to reduce the frequency and volume of raw sewage releases.

Robert Rustage joined the Earthwatch team to help with analysis and maintenance of the sondes.

The full Earthwatch Annual Water Quality and Monitoring Strategy Report 2023 can be found on the ECP section of the Wild Oxfordshire website.



ECP Annual Water  
Quality Report 2023 2

## Riverfly Training

In August another riverfly training session was held, this time in Moreton-in-Marsh, with 11 volunteers attending.

Riverfly react to the long-term pollution in the river and the types found will depend on the water quality. A healthy water environment will be teeming with aquatic invertebrates. This monitoring scheme is run through The Riverfly Partnership. Along with the EA, they set levels of riverfly that volunteers should be expecting to see. If the numbers drop below an agreed trigger level, the EA are obliged to come and take further samples.



Riverfly training [Eoghan Concannon]

## Campaigns

The ECP will continue to build the case, and campaign for change with a focus on tertiary treatment at Milton-under-Wychwood STW and Chipping Norton STW. The ECP continues to campaign for phosphate stripping and greater capacity in storm overflow tanks, and the amount STW can treat. We work closely with Windrush Against Sewage Pollution (WASP) who run a very effective campaign for better water quality.

Soraya Wooller, Earthwatch (accompanied by Jen Lanham, CNL; Eoghan Concannon, Wild Oxfordshire; and Sam Frith, Earthwatch) attended the Surfers Against Sewage Conference on Applying for Bathing Water Status on 11<sup>th</sup> November, representing the ECP.

## 5 Biodiversity, Habitat and Landscape

As well as water quality issues, changes in land management and river engineering all impact our biodiversity. Much of the catchment lies within the Cotswold Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (now called Cotswold National Landscape) and includes the remains of Wychwood Forest and the World Heritage Site of Blenheim Palace. It is a beautiful landscape that has become degraded.

Past dredging activities for drainage purposes have caused the river channels to be disconnected from the natural flood plain. As a result, natural flood meadow habitats are rare and much of the valley floor has been converted to arable land where nutrient and sediment losses are greatest during flooding.

Weirs and other barriers block the passage of fish and reduce their access to spawning grounds.

Extensive farming practises are highly dependent on high fertiliser and pesticide applications and impact heavily on water quality and biodiversity. Sustainable farming is being actively encouraged in the catchment in order to protect soil health, water quality and wildlife.

### River Restoration Project

This year, Wild Oxfordshire undertook an ambitious wetland creation and river restoration project on the Cornwell Estate. The ECP had identified the site as part of the EA funded River Restoration Pilot looking into locations for Stage Zero projects, where the river is returned to a pre-man influenced state and allowed to meander freely. The previous year we commissioned Rob McInnes, 'RM Wetlands & Environment', to design the wetland using EA WEIF (Water Environment Investment Fund) funding. We also commissioned Harvey Rodda, 'Hydro-GIS Ltd', to prepare the Flood Risk Assessment which we used to apply for an EA permit to carry out the work.

The construction funding was made up of £70,000 from EA WEIF, £65,000 from Thames Water SWC, and a £146,382 FiPL grant from The Cotswold National Landscape. A truly collaborative project.

The wetland stretches over three fields for 1km length of the Chipping Norton Brook. The existing incised and straightened brook channel was blocked in all three cases, diverted into the fields and then returned to the original course. Three different approaches were used in each field.



Cornwell Estate River Restoration: Top section involving excavation of channels and exposing subsoil and gravels. Drone footage [Wild Oxfordshire]



Cornwell Estate River Restoration: Middle section involving partial excavation of channels and removing topsoil. Drone footage [Wild Oxfordshire]



Cornwell Estate River Restoration: Bottom section involving excavation of channels to bring water into the field and return running over the original grass sward. Drone footage [Wild Oxfordshire]

The area of wetland created amounts to 3.4 ha, along with 3 ha of wildflower meadow. 14,500 aquatic plant plugs were planted in the top two fields, leaving the bottom meadow to be naturally colonised in time. The fields will be lightly grazed by cattle in the summer.

It has also been calculated that this project has created an additional 25,000 m<sup>3</sup> of flood storage area and will help with climate resilience in times of drought and high rainfall.

We have moved the sonde from above Chipping Norton STW, as it was picking up pollution from above the works, and positioned it at the bottom of the wetland. We will report the findings next year. Visually you can see the water returning into the brook at the bottom of the field runs clear.

As soon as the water was diverted into the fields, birds were seen to visit. We now have two bird surveyors doing regular surveys of these and adjoining wet meadows. Notably there were many sightings of Jack Snipe, Little Egret and a Great Egret.

The EA are now using this project as a demonstration Stage Zero site.

### Milton Eco Field, now Sarah's Meadow

Last year we created four new ponds in this community owned field.

This year we commissioned a bench in the shape of a worm to commemorate our colleague Sarah Olney who worked on this project but sadly died in 2020. Sarah was passionate about soil health and the earthworm epitomises this. The Parish Council have now re-named the field Sarah's Meadow in memory of her.



Bench unveiling [Wild Oxfordshire]

## Weir Removal

Weirs in tributaries have not been recorded by the EA, and the ECP is trying to plot as many of these as possible using the River Obstacles App (<https://river-obstacles-therivertrust.hub.arcgis.com/>).

Working with Charlbury Town Council and using the feasibility study by Fishtek on rock ramp construction, we prepared the tender documents for the detailed design of the ramp and went out to five consultants. Charlbury Town Council continues to monitor the level of water in the mill leat and at the weir.

We were successful in receiving a grant from the European 'Open Rivers' grant for the removal of Bruern small weir on the mill leat at Bruern. Due to the very wet winter and spring we were not able to complete the work this year, but it is planned for late spring next year.

## Sustainable Farming

Natural England, with their Catchment Sensitive Farming Officers, offer guidance and together with the North East Cotswold Farmer Cluster the catchment continues to work towards more sustainable farming with reduced nutrient and soil run-off.

The ECP has supported the NECFC financially in their work. The NECFC team have been successful in being awarded the first stage of the DEFRA-led Landscape Recovery Pilot and have been working on the 2-year planning stage. If successful they will start the delivery phase in January 2025.

Please see the NECFC website for further information <https://www.cotswoldfarmers.org/>

## 6 Natural Flood Management

Natural Flood Management (NFM) is a method of 'soft' or 'nature based' engineering. It aims to restore natural features of river catchments to slow water flows to protect communities from peak floods. Such features include riparian areas, instream woody material, the use of floodplains, and wetlands. This helps local communities to prepare and protect them from flood risk, while also improving the health of the river ecosystem.

NFM measures aim to reduce the maximum peak flood flow by reducing and delaying the arrival of the high water levels downstream in towns and villages. During high rainfall events, rain falling on the steep slopes in the upper catchments quickly rushes downstream along deepened and straightened ditches. NFM interrupts this flow, storing water to be released slowly when the peak flow downstream has passed. Storing more water upstream in wetlands also protects against drought, making the catchment more resilient to climate change and extreme weather events.

### Bledington NFM

After a flood event in December 2020, local residents who were flooded formed the Bledington Flood Group. They approached the ECP to try and find out what we could do to help the village. 24 properties had been flooded.

This year, Wild Oxfordshire designed and managed an NFM project funded by the EA and the ECP for a further two field corner bunds and eight leaky woody dams.



Photo of the largest of Gawcombe bunds, calculated to contain 6,000 m<sup>3</sup> water [Wild Oxfordshire]

## Batsford NFM

Moreton-in-Marsh also suffers from flooding. The surrounding hills shed water quickly from the slopes and the Evenlode river is very constrained in the town, preventing the water from quickly flowing away.

We worked up the tender documents for a field corner bund and leaky woody dam as a trial to see if the landowner at Batsford Estate, would be happy for us to implement additional temporary flood storage areas in the future. Unfortunately, just as the contractor was about to start on site, he withdrew his consent and we had to abort our plans. It is a missed opportunity, as most of the water that floods Moreton-in-Marsh actually runs off the Batsford Estate and without his cooperation there is little chance to alleviate the flooding here.

We are hoping that in future we be given permission.

## 7 Education, Access and Recreation

Based at Cotswold National Landscape (CNL) the three Education and Outreach Officers have had a busy third year of planning and delivery focusing on targeting more of the catchment.

We have delivered 39 school sessions to a total of 849 children and a further 110 young people. Six school sessions were delivered for schools outside of catchment and 22 schools are within catchment (or sit on the boundary and have significant numbers of students within catchment).

Please use this link to Youtube ([https://youtu.be/d2\\_nyBKonUo](https://youtu.be/d2_nyBKonUo)) to watch the presentation of our work and a question session given in the September quarterly meeting.

Many Oxford-based schools (some secondary but mainly primary schools) have taken up education projects on the Evenlode through science and geography classes. Shockingly there is no requirement for outdoor-based learning in science classes. The ECP hopes to encourage outdoor-based learning and enable teaching staff to feel confident to take classes to river environments.

We were fortunate to borrow Action for the River Kennet's (ARK) Emriver Table, first demonstrated at Moreton-in-Marsh Show, but the highlight was a full day event at Burford School where all the geography pupils from Year 11 were able to 'play' with the river as part of an action-packed event.



The Emriver Table at Burford School [Burford School], EM River [Wild Oxfordshire]

The Oxford University PGCE Geography training day was held on 28th September 2023. 14 students participated at Combe Mill. This initiative is to train the next generation of teachers how to plan and deliver outdoor education, including providing them with educational resources. With approximately half of the students teaching in catchment the following year, the training is an important part of the project's legacy. Interestingly, one of our previous GCSE students is now a qualified teacher and brought their geography class to Combe Mill.



Training the trainers at Combe Mill [Cotswold National Landscapes]

## Community

It was a busy summer with the ECP attending 13 fairs including the Moreton-in-Marsh Show, Charlbury Riverside Festival and Daylesford Festival as well as some others.

- Spreading the work of citizen science has really picked up and greatly increasing in numbers. We held 10 knowledge exchange and one river community event.
- Talked about the 3 P's for flushing and the use of eco-friendly products in households.
- River games with the children.



Children playing the river board game. [Cotswold National Landscape]


- Public and children wrote ECP postcards to local MP to campaign against river pollution.



I want you to help the River Evenlode because...

Because  
I want a clean  
river! from  
Sake Saunders

To: \_\_\_\_\_




The Evenlode Catchment Partnership (ECP) was set up in 2014 to restore the Evenlode to good ecological status for the benefit of all. It is a collaboration between a wide range of stakeholders, including: NGOs, government bodies, landowners, water companies, local community groups and local people, all working together to improve water quality, biodiversity, habitats and climate adaptation throughout the catchment. Find out more at [www.evlodforshir.org.uk](http://www.evlodforshir.org.uk)

I want you to help the River Evenlode because...

please look after  
our rivers for the  
future of our  
children.

To: \_\_\_\_\_




The Evenlode Catchment Partnership (ECP) was set up in 2014 to restore the Evenlode to good ecological status for the benefit of all. It is a collaboration between a wide range of stakeholders, including: NGOs, government bodies, landowners, water companies, local community groups and local people, all working together to improve water quality, biodiversity, habitats and climate adaptation throughout the catchment. Find out more at [www.evlodforshir.org.uk](http://www.evlodforshir.org.uk)

I want you to help the River Evenlode because...

MAYA (4 years old)  
would like  
clean rivers to  
swim in and a  
safe planet to  
live on!

To: Rishi Sunak  
Mr Prime Minister  
London, UK




The Evenlode Catchment Partnership (ECP) was set up in 2014 to restore the Evenlode to good ecological status for the benefit of all. It is a collaboration between a wide range of stakeholders, including: NGOs, government bodies, landowners, water companies, local community groups and local people, all working together to improve water quality, biodiversity, habitats and climate adaptation throughout the catchment. Find out more at [www.evlodforshir.org.uk](http://www.evlodforshir.org.uk)

I want you to help the River Evenlode because...

Rivers mean a lot to me  
and my family and  
many other people.  
We don't want them to  
die because of our trash  
and disgusting stuff.

Anonymous,  
12 years

To: \_\_\_\_\_



The Evenlode Catchment Partnership (ECP) was set up in 2014 to restore the Evenlode to good ecological status for the benefit of all. It is a collaboration between a wide range of stakeholders, including: NGOs, government bodies, landowners, water companies, local community groups and local people, all working together to improve water quality, biodiversity, habitats and climate adaptation throughout the catchment. Find out more at [www.evlodforshir.org.uk](http://www.evlodforshir.org.uk)

Postcards written by children and the public to their local MP to campaign against river pollution.

There have been many Evenlode walk and talks, a lot of collaboration between ECP partners on community outreach especially for the source-to-sewage public event for water quality in Moreton-in-Marsh in July. The group in Moreton-in-Marsh meet monthly, all driven by one concerned local, Sam Frith.

Social media has been increasing well, but still has quite a low following.

There have been sewage work tours (Milton-under-Wychwood and Moreton-in-Marsh), a visit to Pool Meadow wetland creation in Chipping Norton, water quality sampling events with the local public, and Earthwatch organised an event to the Pudlicote Biodiversity Net Gain project.

Talking to people about private discharges and septic tanks has become an important area of work recently, especially for water quality pollution outfalls in Moreton-in-Marsh and Chipping Norton.

We have delivered 17 community visits, including four groups from Oxford.

We have reached a total of 873 children and 1,664 adults through all these various activities.

Five guided walks were led by the CNL Wardens, proving very popular with 65 members of the public engaged. These focused on the water environment and linked with projects that the ECP have delivered to demonstrate the breath of projects that the ECP delivers.

An Outdoor Learning Network has been developed for the Cotswolds and the CNL team have been instrumental in setting this up. The team have also linked up with the Chess Catchment to share learning on best practice in Education.

Wild Wednesday sessions at Combe Mill were run by the 'Everyone's Evenlode' team – 10.5 hours over three days spent at Combe Mill, engaging with the public on the banks of the River Evenlode. We led river dipping sessions, and helped the public make willow bird feeders, on alternate Wednesdays. We engaged with approximately 122 people over the three days and had four volunteers assisting us throughout the month of August.

## 8 Conclusion

This third year of delivery has been packed with activities and environmental improvements, but disappointingly Thames Water has failed to make any improvements in water quality in our catchment. Having made the decision to stop taking Thames Water funding after this pilot finishes, we now need to concentrate our efforts on finding funding, so we can continue to operate at this high level from April 2025.

Many thanks to everyone in the Partnership who has worked tirelessly and enthusiastically on this project to very tight deadlines, and for completing a very successful third year of the Smarter Water Catchment.

## 9 List of Partners

- Atkins
- BBOWT
- Blenheim Estate
- Bruern Farms
- Centre of Ecology and Hydrology
- Coldstone Angling Club
- Cotswolds National Landscape (CNL)
- Cotswolds Rivers Trust
- Cotswold Seeds Ltd.
- Charlbury Parish Council
- Daylesford/Bamford Organic Farm
- Earthwatch Europe
- Environment Agency
- Forestry Commission
- Milton under Wychwood Parish Council
- Natural England
- North East Cotswold Farmer Cluster
- Oxfordshire County Council
- Sylva Foundation
- Smiths Bletchingdon
- Thames Water
- West Oxfordshire District Council
- Windrush AEC
- Windrush Against Sewage Pollution (WASP)
- Wychwood Flora group
- Wychwood Forest Trust



# Evenlode Catchment Partnership