**CLEAN RIVER KENT CAMPAIGN**

**WHO WE ARE**

We are a coalition of communities living along the River Kent established in Autumn 2021. We include members from Staveley, Burneside and Kendal.

**OUR AIM FOR THE RIVER KENT**

To keep the River Kent clean for water-based recreation and to protect wildlife, and submit an application to DEFRA for safe bathing status for one or more site(s).

**OUR OBJECTIVES**

1. In the first instance to significantly reduce the amount of effluent discharged into the River Kent by United Utilities wastewater treatment works and/or by storm overflows.
2. In the short/medium term to ensure that the wastewater treatment works on the River Kent are upgraded:
* To meet current needs
* To meet the needs of new housing development
* To meet the additional pressures which will result from climate change.
1. To develop our coalition by working with local people and organisations who also use the River Kent for water-based recreation eg canoeists and kayakers, anglers, swimmers and all those who enjoy spending time on the banks of, or in the river.
2. To build our campaign by working with local councils, relevant organisations and potential funders.
3. To protect the ecology of the River Kent, as a result of our actions to reduce the amount of effluent and other pollutants.

**OUR CAMPAIGN**

* There has been a lot of coverage in the local and national media about the sewage pollution of rivers, lakes and beaches across the country, and the failure of government and the regulators to prevent this happening.
* Staveley with Ings Parish Council, through its Flood and Sewage Task Group, and Burneside Parish Council are holding both United Utilities and the Environment Agency (EA) to account for the sewage overspills in Staveley and Burneside when there is heavy and persistent rain. As a result of their investigations, we now know that sewage is discharged into the River Kent on average almost once a day year-round.
* Local people have always swum in the River Kent, and it is a popular location for angling and for paddle sports. In addition many people walk along the river banks, children play in the water and families picnic. The river has been especially important for many of us during the time of the pandemic.
* Each person is at risk if the river is contaminated by sewage, and an alliance of people from Staveley, Burneside and Kendal has created a Campaign to **Clean Up the River Kent**:

**Our aim is to keep the River Kent clean for water-based recreation and the protection of wildlife , and submit an application to DEFRA for safe bathing status for one or more site(s).**

* We are learning from other places such as Ilkley which faced similar problems but has been successful in securing EA designation of a stretch of the River Wharfe as safe bathing water.
* The DEFRA application requires us to submit evidence about the locations where people access the river, how many people use the river day by day between mid-May and September 2022, and to set out the results of consultations with local individuals, communities and organisations.
* We also need to assess the level of human faecal bacteria in the river water to ensure that human health will not be at risk. We have contacted accredited labs and have identified a preferred provider.
* We will use a systematic protocol to take samples of the river water, and transport them to the lab on the day on which they are taken. We need to test the water in different weather conditions and at different times of year.
* Our project will train and deploy local volunteers to collect the samples, and at the same time record details of the weather conditions and height of the river so we can interpret the findings.
* We are in the process of creating a short promotional film to recruit volunteers, explain our aims / objectives and generate publicity.
* We will hold an open meeting in mid – late March to which we will invite all relevant stakeholders and local communities to learn more about our work, the results of our pilot monitoring and encourage sign-up from volunteers for survey/testing work over the summer.
* The overall costs of the campaign are estimated to be of the order of £5,000 - £7,500. Much of the work will be undertaken at no cost by local volunteers, including the completion of the DEFRA application (which is complex and substantial).
* The Campaign is applying for grant funds from a range of sources. In addition we are approaching each local Council, and other local groups/foundations to consider a grant of £500 towards our costs.
* To date we have been successful in receiving funds from:
	1. The Lake District Foundation (£500 for pilot testing – Feb/March 2022)
	2. Staveley-with-Ings Parish Council (£500)
	3. Burneside Parish Council (£500)
	4. Burneside Community Energy Foundation (£500)
	5. Anonymous donor (£1000) to pay for a short promotional film
* For more information, to sign-up to our mailing list, to volunteer or if you have any questions please email: senstaveley@gmail.com

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