TECHNICAL OFFICERS'
WORKING PARTY REPORT

WYE VALLEY AONB
JOINT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
5th July 2021

WATER QUALITY PRESENTATION

Purpose

To receive a presentation on the water quality of River Wye.

FOR INFORMATION

Key Issues

- The Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales will provide a presentation updating on the situation with water quality in the River Wye.
- At the previous meeting and in July 2020 the JAC received updates on the water quality and quantity issues following the extensive algal blooms on the Wye in both Spring 2020 and Summer 2019.
- Algal blooms are caused by a combination of sunlight, low flows and elevated levels of phosphate in the water.
- The Environment Agency and Natural Resources are working with Welsh Water, the Wye & Usk Foundation, the agricultural sector and other stakeholders to reduce phosphate levels across the Wye catchment.
- Each local planning authority in the catchment is having to consider the impact of proposed development on the potential to increase phosphate input into the Wye.
- the new Farming in Protected Landscapes programme may help farmers and land managers in the AONB address some of the issues and contribute to better outcomes for the environment, for people and for the place.

Reasons

A combination of sunlight, low flows and elevated levels of phosphate cause algal blooms in the river. The majority of the phosphates come from sewerage and agricultural sources.

Implications

Visibility in the water can drop less than 15cm creating significant ecological impact by shading important aquatic plants that provide habitat for fish and invertebrates. This is also damaging for the local economy, affecting both tourism and angling.

Background

The Wye and Lugg Monitoring Dashboard contains a range of data and analysis of the situation, primarily to provide an overview for members of the Nutrient Management Board: https://environment.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=1dc5b2adc99e48b095950055f2785d7a .