



TAW TORRIDGE ESTUARY FORUM

Minutes of the AGM held on Mon. 20th January 2025 in the Beechfield Centre at 7.00pm

Present:

Louise Wainwright Avon River Champions & Speaker

Mark Haworth-Booth	Westcountry Rivers Trust
Mike Teare	Bideford River Torridge Heritage Trust
Helen Cooper	Save Our Sands
Ricky Knight	North Devon Council
Martyn Bennett	Bideford Harbour
Debbie Frazer	Devon Wildlife Trust
Sandra Knight	Coastwise ND
Tom Humphreys	ND Biosphere
Sue Prosper	Love Braunton
Mark Cann	Braunton Parish Council
Roz Davies	Little Torrington WI
Ruth Chambers	Devon WI
Andy Cox	Bideford Amateur Rowing Club
Tristan Otten	Torridge District Council
Ray Turner	Devon Birds
Brian Hopkins	Bideford Sustainability Group
Tony Bown	supporter
Wendy Lo-Vel	Northam P.C,
David Dixon	Fremington P.C. & Barnstaple Gig Club
John Puddy	Steamship Freshspring Trust
Tim Jones	ND Biosphere - Nature Recovery plan
Chris Dee	BTO WeBS
Jeff Needham	Tawstock P.C. & Vice-Chair / Treasurer
Ian Crawford	Secretary
Tony Pratt	North Devon Yacht Club & Chair

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1. Welcome & Introductions: The chair welcomed everyone. Members old and new introduced themselves

Apologies for Absence: Graham Bell, Sally Ramsden, Justin Gillett, Ian Harrison, Jenny Carey-Wood, Chris Salisbury, Chris Northrop, Claire Moodie, Paul Brown, Andy Bell and Aaron Lowe.

2. Annual Elections:

- a) Officers**
- Chair** - Tony Pratt
 - Vice- Chair** - Jeff Needham
 - Secretary** - Ian Crawford
 - Treasurer** - Jeff Needham

All positions were proposed and seconded collectively and accepted by the meeting.

b) Planning & Consultation Committee: The P&CC comprises the above listed Officers who are joined by Mark Haworth-Booth, Sue Prosper and John Puddy. Chris Hassall (in his absence) retained as a consultant. Forum members wishing to attend the committee should contact the Chair or Secretary

3. Guest Speaker: Louise Wainwright, Avon Rivers Champions Louise was welcomed by the chair and opened her address confirming that a link showing her presentation would be sent to us. Using an overhead projected presentation she confirmed that South West Water (SWW) had been fined £2.2 M for sewage spills. The Environment Agency (EA) pension fund relies on investment returns from UK water companies and given EA's jurisdiction over water companies environmental infringements, she considered this a conflict of interests. Catchment Data Explorer is a EA website for river water quality monitoring. It is suggested that parish bodies could monitor water quality. Legal targets for reasonable ecological status have been set for 2027. The Office of Environment Protection are predicting that this target will be missed.

More funding is needed, farm effluent can be reduced by farmers adopting more nature based solutions and local environmental organisations such as Woodland Trust could be involved in supportive action. Inter parish groups are suggested to coordinate within water catchments.

The water companies have stated that increased hydraulic pump capacity could reduce effluent discharge into rivers. Hydraulic Capacity needs to be shared with planning authorities when considering plans for housing development.

Designated bathing waters and shellfish water protected areas can be inspected and regulated by the EA who could also enforce increased reservoir capacity to catch storm water.

Louise's presentation was supported by data on overspills and the status of the two main rivers and their tributaries.

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Questions to the Speaker included reference to the need for more regulation, Water Bills going through Parliament, DWT report to TTEF includes wetland management reducing run off into rivers and funding available from ND Council.

Louise was thanked for an informative presentation.

4. Refreshment Break

5. TTEF Constitution: Jeff Needham introduced the re-drafted constitution and invited comments. One suggestion to remove a reference to the Youth Organisation Grant was discussed and agreed by a majority vote. The constitution was adopted by a majority vote.

6. Treasurer's Report Jeff Needham explained how he had been able to reconcile the end of year accounts for 2023 & 2024: The report included a recommendation to waive subscriptions for another year. The Chair reported that neither he or Secretary wished to claim an honorarium. The Treasurer's report was adopted. A note of thanks is recorded to Jeff for his contribution in dealing with our finance.

7. Minutes of Previous Forum, October 21st 2024: Accepted for adoption.

8. Reports:

a) TTEF / P & C Committee. Report had been circulated. Tony Pratt drew attention to the White Cross wind farm planning application and that further consultation closes on **14th February**. Any further submissions by Forum members are encouraged.

TP will attend meeting at the Custom House to discuss the two rivers campaign. Succession will be an ongoing item for consideration to ensure continuity of these critical positions. particularly in view of the average age of current officers.

b) ND Biosphere. Tom Humphreys reported that coordination of increased work with community groups and training for communities is taking place. A nature recovery and water quality survey will be shared with community groups.

c) ND Coast National Landscape Report has been circulated

d) Bideford Port. Report had been circulated. Martyn Bennet reported 5 ships coming in during a 2.5 month period. Messy cargoes had led to more cleaning up. Harbour Users Group will be issuing a Code of Conduct.

e) Appledore- Instow Ferry Report has been circulated

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f) Devon Wildlife Trust. Report had been circulated. Debbie Frazer reported an extra osprey platform in the Horsey Island area. . The question of shooting rights was raised and clarification of control on protected sites was not defined. (additional info here - <https://basc.org.uk/firearms/shooting-permissions/>)

g) WeBS Report had been circulated. Chris Dee reported that fencing around the Yelland site is not camouflaged. A question about bird input counts was raised.

h) Bideford R Torridge Heritage Harbour Report had been circulated. Mike Teare advised that new events will appear on their website

i) Other Reports RSPB Bird Watch Event 24-26th January.

A question was raised about the bad state of the boardwalk at Wrafton Pond - Ricky Knight responded that the parish council had it on their agenda.

9. Matters Arising from Minutes of 21st October 2024 - None

10. Matters brought forward by the Chair. No urgent matters.

11. Agenda Items for Next Meeting. TP proposed a possible speaker from TDC on "Torridge Estuary Strategy"

12.. AOB. Cllr. Mark Cann confirmed that the White Cross planning application would be considered at 7.45pm on Mon. 27th January at Braunton Parish Hall

13. Future Meeting Dates

Mon.28th April, 21st July, 20th October and January 19th 2026