

Reviving UK waterways - Environmental Law Foundation (ELF)/Imperial event

Date: 22nd March 2022, 10am to 4.30pm

Venue: Read lecture theatre, Imperial and online

**Imperial College
London**



Framing the event

The event is built around the communities ELF works with and driven by the environmental problems that they are experiencing. The impact of sewerage and industrial pollutants/outfalls along with diffuse pollution sources e.g. agricultural nutrients, will be explored through a set of case studies. The aim of the workshop is to identify the key environmental issues affecting the communities that are in close contact with rivers and waterways and scope the barriers and opportunities to their resolution from the communities' perspective.

Agenda

10.00	Welcome from Imperial College/ELF (Opening Address and Part 1 Chaired by ELF)	Dr Jem Woods/ Richard Wald QC
	Opening Address Followed by Q&A	Philip Dunne MP
10.45	Part 1 – Setting the scene How the system works – overview of water law, regulation, permits, monitoring, what protections there are and how harm is mitigated	John Bates (Old Square Chambers)
11.15	Break	
11.30	Part 2 – Current problems Overview – current monitoring and understanding of the drivers of water pollution – is it a problem of insufficient investment?	Professor Nick Voulvoulis (Imperial College London)
11.45	Permits to pollute? – Combined Sewage Outfalls	Bob Latimer – online
12.00	Nutrient Management Plans in rivers – River Wye	Helen Hamilton (Marches Planning) – online
12.15	Diffuse water pollution – River Thames	Theo Thomas (London Waterkeeper)
12.30	Domestic misconnections	Claire Hunt (Imperial College London)
12.45	Q&A	
13.15	Lunch (available in SALC7)	
14.00	Part 3 – Potential solutions – empowering communities (Chaired by ELF/Imperial College London) Data gathering: • Environmental Information Regulations requests	Dr Jem Woods Justin Neal (Fish Legal)
14.15	• Citizen science in the community	Mike Owens (Hayling Sewage Watch) – online
14.30	Environment Act – holding sewage undertakers to account	Stephen Eades, David Levy (Marinet)
14.45	Byelaws – Sussex Kelp Restoration Project – Marine rewilding for climate, conservation and communities	Sally Ashby (Sussex Wildlife Trust) – recorded
15.00	Bathing water status	Claire Robertson (Oxford Rivers Project)
15.15	Break	
15.30	Blue-green solutions to development	Dr Simon Tilley, (Hockerton Housing Project) – online; Nick Woolley (Woolley) – online
15.45	Rights of Rivers	Paul Powlesland (Lawyers for Nature)
16.00	Q&A	
16.30	Close	

Speakers (in order of appearance)

Rt Hon Philip Dunne MP, Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee

Philip Dunne was elected Member of Parliament for Ludlow in Shropshire in 2005. He has been a member of the Environmental Audit Committee (EAC) since 2018, which he has chaired since January 2020. He previously served as Minister for Defence Procurement (2012–2016) and Minister of State for Health (2016–2018), having been a Conservative Whip (2008–2012). He has focussed on water quality issues since introducing a Private Member's Bill in January 2020, the Sewage (Inland Waters) Bill, much of which was then taken forward by the Government into the Environment Act 2021. In January 2022 the EAC published a report into Water Quality in Rivers.

John Bates, Old Square Chambers

Recommended in Environment (London (Bar)) Practice Areas, over the last 25 years John Bates has acquired considerable experience in civil cases involving environmental work. *Barr v Biffa* [2011] EWHC 1003 (TCC) was a Group Litigation case of odour nuisance from a landfill with 152 Claimants. John did the legal advocacy for the Claimant which involved a detailed examination of the regulatory scheme in both English and EC legislation. *Dobson v Thames Water* [2011] EWHC 3253 (TCC) was a Group Litigation nuisance case concerning odour and mosquitoes with over 1,300 Claimants. John dealt with the mosquito case, cross examining expert witnesses and doing the opening and closing speeches on them. He was also involved in the detailed negligence claim in respect of the design and operation of the sewage treatment works and drafted the particulars of negligence. John also acts in many water and drainage cases such as abstraction, flood defence, fishing rights and sewerage. In *Robert Lindley Ltd v East Riding of Yorkshire Council* [2016] UKUT 0006 he obtained compensation for a farmer whose fields were flooded following flood relief work. Publications: UK Marine Environmental Law; UK Waste Law; Water and Drainage Law; co-author of Liability for Environmental Harm.

Professor Nick Voulvoulis, Imperial College London

Nick Voulvoulis BSc (Hons) MSc DIC PhD DMS is a Professor of Environmental Technology at Imperial College's Centre for Environmental Policy and Deputy Head of Department. He is an international expert in environmental management, especially where science and engineering interface with public policy. His research targets the interactions and interdependencies between human and natural systems, and focuses on processes and practices across many areas and diverse sectors that aim to decouple economic growth from natural resources. As an environmental scientist, he is committed to helping the industrial transition to a low carbon future, supporting government policy development, and empowering people through his research to engage in the transformational shift required for our society to reach sustainability. Professor Voulvoulis is the academic lead from Imperial on its strategic research partnership with Anglian Water and leads the research collaboration with Veolia on the Circular Economy. He is also a member of the Environment Agency Strategic Monitoring Review (SMR) Advisory Group.

Bob Latimer

Bob Latimer lives next to the North Sea at Whitburn, near Sunderland, overlooking a sandy beach and cliffs and rock pools. The bay lies between the Rivers Wear and Tyne, previously heavy industrial areas, but now cleaner apart from sewage spills! He has been self-employed with an international transport business, followed by an engineering business, currently run by his son, contracting plant maintenance. He is also part of his other son's retail fish business. He has built his own houses and a rural small holding and owns a small harbour in Scotland. He has very varied business experience! A Storm Water pumping station was built next to his premises, apparently to stop storm water spills to the beach, but for over twenty years it has discharged sewage into the sea. Concerned about the rock pools and beach and particularly the health of his grandchildren who played and swam and sailed there, he has campaigned against these discharges.

Helen Hamilton, Marches Planning

Helen Hamilton is an environmental and planning consultant who represents local campaign groups objecting to environmentally damaging development proposals. She has acted as an expert witness in several judicial review challenges and advises Herefordshire Campaign to Protect Rural England and Campaign for the Protection of Rural Wales. She lives on the Welsh borders and personally campaigns on local environmental issues, including the pollution threat to the River Wye Special Area of Conservation.

Theo Thomas, London Waterkeeper

Theo Thomas launched London Waterkeeper in 2014. The organisation uses environmental laws and grassroots advocacy to power change. It is a member of Waterkeeper Alliance – a federation founded in the US in 1999 which preserves and protects water by connecting local Waterkeeper groups worldwide. He grew up in rural Wales, and after university spent five years at BBC Radio Leicester and BBC East Midlands TV. He made the move to London twenty years ago to take a position at Keep Britain Tidy, before transferring to Thames21, where he spent 12 years as Senior Programme Manager.

Claire Hunt, Imperial College London

Claire Hunt is Option Convenor for Integrated Water Management on the Centre for Environmental Policy's MSc in Environmental Technology. After a BSc (Joint Hons) in Physics and Chemistry from the University of Nottingham, Claire worked in industry as an analytical chemist. A subsequent MSc in Computer Science from the University of Hertfordshire led to several years writing Electronic Data Interchange user software. Claire has worked within the Centre for Environmental Policy since completing the Imperial College London MSc in Environmental Technology in 2006.

Justin Neal, Fish Legal

Justin Neal was Head Solicitor at Fish Legal before moving to lead the Planning, Environment and Local Government team in the Public Law department at Irwin Mitchell. Justin returned to Fish Legal in 2016 bringing his expertise in judicial review to bear in challenging regulators and other public authorities' decision making that threatens fisheries. He also has extensive experience of nuisance and negligence claims.

Mike Owens, Hayling Sewage Watch

Mike Owens has had varied careers: soldier in the British Army, engineer, photographer and now a firefighter from Hayling Island on the south coast. He participates in numerous water sports mostly around Hayling Island where he lives; primarily windsurfing during storms and paddleboarding during still weather. He spends much of his spare time campaigning against sewage pollution by Southern Water and poor regulation by the Environment Agency. Mike formed Hayling Sewage Watch in 2018 to try and find out what's in the seawater and why so many locals were (and still are) experiencing high levels of sickness and infection. He also uses this group as a platform to effect change on Southern Water and the Environment Agency by using crowd funded Citizen Science and data extracted from EIR and FOI sources. Hayling Sewage Watch campaigning has had considerable success and was instrumental in Southern Water's Beachbuoy program, forcing MPs, ministers, Southern Water's CEO and councils to the table and, more recently, the UK's first real time pollution buoy which will become operational by May 2022. He also co-founded www.CleanHarboursPartnership.co.uk in 2021 in order to create more professional and robust localised Citizen Science projects. This has just started its first testing project advised by scientific experts from Portsmouth and Brunel Universities. They are doing biopsies of five different marine species that live close to the area's most prolific stormwater discharge outfall. Specifically examining the digestive system contents for 200 chemicals known to be present in sewage effluent. The Partnership is also testing water quality at 20 locations, for five consecutive days looking for the same 200 chemicals. Finally they are going to be doing e-DNA testing to baseline the harbour's biodiversity. Initial test results are due in the spring of 2022.

Stephen Eades, Marinet

Stephen Eades has been campaigning on marine issues since 1979 when he helped found Save Our Shoreline, Southport Association, in Merseyside in order to tackle marine pollution issues in Liverpool Bay and the Irish Sea. In 2002, following a move to Wiltshire, he helped found Marinet. He is self-taught in these matters, and believes strongly in creating organisations which help people to campaign both for a better environment and for a society that works in harmony with the natural world. Marinet can be contacted via email: stephen.marinet@btinternet.com or telephone: 01249 653972.

David Levy, Marinet

David Levy is a retired headteacher, antique dealer and auctioneer. On the environmental front, he took the Environment Agency and Blue Circle Cement to the Courts of Justice over the use of tyres as a fuel in cement kilns and the impact on air quality and human health, winning his case in the long-run. He also challenged the cement industry over their use of other "substitute fuels", particularly waste solvents, and secured significant changes in policy. In this work he met Stephen Eades, Marinet's co-ordinator, and they worked together on the design and delivery of the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. David is Chair of Marinet, tackling marine issues with a team approach and by giving individuals the opportunity to lead. He believes strongly in the role of the volunteer within Marinet.

Sally Ashby, Sussex Kelp Restoration Project, Sussex Wildlife Trust

Sally Ashby from the Sussex Wildlife Trust is the Sussex Kelp Lead – working with the partners of the Sussex Kelp Restoration Project to support the restoration of 300km² of marine ecosystems (of which 170km² is hoped to restore as Kelp forest) following the implementation of the Sussex Nearshore trawling byelaw in 2021. Sally co-ordinates the work of the partnership and supports its Science and Research group in order to ensure successful benchmarking and monitoring of the restoration process.

Claire Robertson, Oxford Rivers Project, Thames 21

Claire Robertson is the founder of the Oxford Rivers Project, a group of concerned citizens taking action to improve Oxford's rivers, aiming to make them healthy for both people and wildlife. Last year, she co-ordinated one of the largest citizen-science studies of bacteria in rivers in the country, and an application for bathing water status on the River Thames in Oxford. She is currently undertaking research into environmental DNA monitoring of freshwaters for her PhD at the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology.

Dr Simon Tilley, Hockerton Housing Project

Simon Tilley, a chartered mechanical engineer, joined Hockerton Housing Project in 1995 after a background in manufacturing and overseas sustainable development work. This included spending three years in Namibia working with Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) setting up maintenance departments in nine district hospitals. His engineering skills have more recently been put to good use, designing, implementing and monitoring the autonomous heating, renewable energy and water systems at Hockerton Housing Project. He is the operations manager for Sustainable Hockerton's community renewable systems and is a director of both Sustainable Hockerton Ltd and Hockerton Housing Project Trading Ltd. His educational work includes being lead on the Innovations in Energy module within the Environmental Science course at Nottingham Trent University. He is a joint author of a research paper: The 'power' of community renewable energy enterprises: The case of Sustainable Hockerton Ltd.

Nick Woolley, Woolley

Nick Woolley has a professional property career stretching in all over 50 years. He specialises in fund asset management for financial institution property funds and private individuals. This almost always involves the management of sustainable development projects meeting community needs; he is currently responsible for some 25 residential development projects in the UK. Since Nick became Chief Land Agent to the Prudential Corporation in 1979, with a portfolio of 85,000 acres, he has been responsible for putting together teams, consisting of the most suitable professionals to undertake both major development projects and the disposals of large and very valuable rural properties, often with major development potential. He has worked closely with the Prince's Foundation for nearly thirty years and has used their services and those of his fellow 'Enrolled Practitioners' for his clients on numerous occasions; similarly, he has been brought in as a consultant to the Prince's Foundation many times too. He was a member of the Council of English Nature (1993 -2002). He sat (2013 to 2020) on the External Advisory Board of Oxford University's PhD and Master's Courses in Sustainable Urban Development. His deep-rooted passion for moving projects and organizations to become truly sustainable is at last becoming the mainstream objective of many. He is well experienced in this, having promoted the essential need for sustainability for more than thirty years. His own company has now won five Gold Awards in the Suffolk County Council Carbon Reduction Challenge and he has led it to be one of the Top One Hundred Green Businesses in the East of England.

Paul Powlesland, Lawyers for Nature

Paul Powlesland is Head of Legal at Lawyers for Nature and a barrister at Garden Court Chambers. He specialises in upholding the rights of environmental activists to protest and protect the natural world, and uses environmental law and regulations to defend trees, rivers and wildlife. Paul is the co-founder of Lawyers for Nature and regularly gives talks and workshops on the rights of nature, the relationship between the law and the natural world and what barristers and other lawyers should do in a time of climate and ecological emergency. As a boat dweller for many years, he is also determined to protect the rights of boaters and other Traveller groups.

Chairs (in order of appearance)

Richard Wald QC, ELF

Richard Wald is an environmental, planning and public lawyer. He is ranked by Chambers & Partners and the Legal 500 in the categories of Environmental Law (1st tier of Leading Juniors), Planning Law (3rd tier of Leading Juniors), Administrative and Public Law (including Local Government) and Energy Law. He has also been rated by Planning Magazine Legal Survey as amongst the UK's top planning juniors for over a decade. He is the Chair of the Environmental Law Foundation's Board of Trustees.

Dr Jem Woods, Imperial College London/ELF

Jeremy Woods is a Reader in Sustainable Development at Imperial College London working on the interplay between development, land-use and the sustainable use of natural resources. He lectures on the Sustainable Energy Futures and Environmental Technologies MScs in Imperial College London and is the Director of Postgraduate Research Studies in the Centre for Environmental Policy. He is also an Environmental Law Foundation trustee.

Dr Alexandra Collins, Imperial College London

Alex Collins is a Lecturer in Environmental Sustainability at the Centre for Environmental Policy at Imperial College London. Her research activities are grounded in the motivation to inform and improve environmental decision making and environmental sustainability. This encompasses the need for greater considerations of the environment in decision making through improving understanding of ecosystem services and the societal benefits of environmental improvements, the use of evidence in environmental decision making and the promotion of integrated solutions to environmental problems. Currently Alex is a co-investigator on the NERC funded Community Water Management for a Liveable London (CAMELLIA) project, leading work on how ecosystem services and natural capital, the benefits that humans obtain from nature, can be incorporated into urban and water management.