

UK Rivers Network

Weekly News Update –13/7/26

July 2026

- 9 July 2026: [Surrey sewage works upgrade decades late, says campaigner](#): A Surrey campaigner has expressed hope that Thames Water's £26.4m upgrade to Burstow sewage treatment works will reduce river pollution and sewage spills. But Simon Collins, trustee of River Mole River Watch, added the work by the water company should have been done "decades ago".
- 9 July 2026: [Celebrate the River Day: An Oar-some show of River Welland's potential](#): After its inaugural year in 2025, this year's "Celebrate the River Day" event in Spalding, Lincolnshire was even bigger with around 150 people on a vast array of crafts on Sunday, July 5. There are some great photos and an uplifting write-up from the local community in The Spalding Voice this week.
- 9 July 2026: [Paul Powlesland: The East London river bandit](#): River Roding cleanup champ Paul Powlesland continues to make the news, in The Londoner (here) and in The Telegraph (below). It seems the Environment Agency's tardy, bureaucratic, and overly procedural intervention has bitten them on the posterior, which is a shame, because it sounds like there are bigger questions and lessons. For example, if community groups are allowed to use diggers to intervene to "improve" local rivers without seeking permits, where does that leave the Agency when [errant landowners](#) like John Price use diggers to carry out works they also deem to be "improvement"? What happens when well-meaning river cleanups inadvertently cause damage, as the Agency claims happened on the River Roding? As we all know, river improvement is all about teamwork; perhaps we'll see a more constructive debate soon.
- 9 July 2026: [Paul Powlesland: I risk jail for cleaning up Britain's rivers, but I won't stop](#): According to The Telegraph: "Barrister Paul Powlesland has become a cause celebre for his environmentally friendly, yet illegal crusade". Illegal? Really?

- 9 July 2026: [What can Britain learn from Europe's urban river revivals?](#): Europe's cities are opening their rivers back to swimmers. From Paris to Berlin, officials are racing to clean up centuries-old waterways, betting that a swimmable river is now essential urban infrastructure, not a luxury, as heatwaves intensify and summers get harder to survive. According to Trine Christiansen, head of the freshwater and environment group at the European Environment Agency, the continent's bathing waters are generally in good shape. In the EEA's most recent assessment, 85 percent of Europe's bathing sites were rated excellent, and 96 percent met at least minimum quality standards -- figures Britain can only eye with envy.
- 9 July 2026: [River Ouse artworks invite people to explore York's heritage](#): A new way to explore York's rivers has launched this summer, inviting residents and visitors to discover how water shapes the city, its communities and its future. "The York rivers trail: the rivers and us" is a walking and wheeling trail along the River Ouse in York, combining art, storytelling and digital experiences to help people understand how York lives with water. Following the river through parks, gardens and historic spaces, the trail connects people with the stories, landscapes and practical actions that support flood resilience in York and across the wider catchment. Co-designed with communities, schools and artists, it explores how the effects of upstream actions affect life downstream, and how nature-based solutions can help build a more climate-ready future.
- 9 July 2026: [Lincolnshire reports: rewilding really works](#): Patrick Barkham reports for The Guardian on how radical aristocrat Charlie Burrell is turning back on the clock on a modern-day prairie farm: "I went for a wander... down to the river. The sun broke through and, suddenly, there was a bewildering tumult of life in every direction. I've experienced these moments before, but only in special, protected nature reserves – often such tiny fragments of land that they represent simulacra of abundance. Here, however, we were standing on a large slab of ordinary countryside that until three years ago had been an arable field. Now it was a wetland, roiling with life".
- 9 July 2026: [Putting the wiggle back into the River Kemp](#): What happens when a routine farm visit grows into something far more ambitious? Natural England's Denise Latham shares the story of the Walcot Wiggle, how a conversation on a Shropshire hillside evolved into a landmark river restoration project that is putting the natural meanders back into the River Kemp. From funding breakthroughs to the moment water first flowed through newly restored channels, this is a story about what

becomes possible when farmers, advisers and partners share a vision, and the confidence to pursue it.

- 8 July 2026: [Anglers help tackle killer mink on Surrey's River Mole](#): In an effort to protect animals like water voles, swans and herons, traps to catch mink have been set along a stretch of the River Mole managed by the Dorking and District Angling Society. Rob Martin, from the Waterlife Recovery Trust, said catching and simply relocating the mink is unfortunately not an option, so they must be euthanised.
- 8 July 2026: [Over 350 threatened species to benefit from record investment](#): More than 350 threatened species, including some only found in this country, will benefit from the largest ever investment in recovering England's wildlife, Natural England has just announced, as part of the government's "Wild Again: Restoring England's Wildlife" initiative to turn the tide for England's wildlife.
- 8 July 2026: [Natural History Museum: Prehistoric fish: 11 of the largest, weirdest and most significant](#): The NHM's fossil fish collection contains more than 100,000 specimens. Here they introduce us to 11 key species from the epic, 500-million-year story of fish.
- 8 July 2026: [BGS: New geological mapping underway to help manage flooding along the River Tweed](#): It is a common assumption that flooding arises as a result of intense rainfall. Whilst this is true in many cases, another common cause is actually groundwater flooding, where groundwater emerges at the surface. Groundwater flooding can occur in a variety of geological settings and poses a significant risk around the UK. The impacts can be devastating for farmers, local businesses and homeowners, and cause significant disruption across regional transport routes. BGS geologists have started a four-year project that will enhance knowledge of ground conditions and undertake flood-pattern investigations around the River Tweed. This survey will provide crucial geological data for local authorities, organisations and others involved in land-management initiatives to the benefit of the 450 000 people who live in or around the flood-prone Borders region.
- 7 July 2026: [New penalties introduced in "crackdown on water companies"](#): From the Environment Agency this week: "Water companies that flout environmental rules now face faster penalties of up to £500,000 in the latest set of reforms to improve our waterways... The Environment Agency will see its powers strengthened and expanded. Previously, the regulator was limited in its ability to impose financial penalties for frequent, minor and moderate offending, such as breaches of a licence or permit. This was because it needed to prove an offence to the same high

legal standard used in criminal courts, often making penalties too expensive and time-consuming to pursue. In future, the regulator will be able to use the lower civil standard of proof, meaning more financial penalties, delivered quicker in a move that ensures those who violate the rules have nowhere to hide". Nowhere to hide? We'll see!

- 7 July 2026: [Lib Dem Leader Ed Davey joins Big Paddle Cleanup on the River Thames](#): Politicians finally seem to be getting the message that people care passionately about clean rivers. Sir Ed Davey took to the water in Maidenhead last week to back Paddle UK's call for cleaner inland waterways, joining club members, volunteers and local MPs for a litter pick on the Thames.
- 6 July 2026: [The return of the lost lidos?](#): Some communities are campaigning for clean open waters; others are getting behind lidos, those charming, much-neglected outdoor pools, dating from between the wars, that combine some of the exhilaration of open-water swimming with higher safety and more predictable water quality. Now, a group of 20 MPs, along with the Fabian Society, are calling for water companies to fund the reopening of the UK's lost lidos.
- 6 July 2026: [\[PDF\] Restoration of River Tyne saltmarshes begins](#): Marshes will be created along a stretch of Newburn Riverside in Newcastle by the environmental charity Groundwork North East and Cumbria. The charity said it would improve water quality and biodiversity, as well as help tackle climate change.
- 4 July 2026: [River 'wife' hopes Avon will gain new rights](#): A woman who "married" the River Avon in a campaign against sewage pollution is now calling for the river to be given greater legal protections. Meg Avon took part in a ceremony in Bristol in 2023 to raise awareness of untreated sewage being pumped into waterways. Now she is working with researchers at the University of the West of England (UWE) on a campaign aimed at strengthening protections for the Avon and changing the way people think about rivers.
- 3 July 2026: [Worldview: Nanobubbles cleaned up the Lincoln reflecting pool: here's how they could be used on dying seas and lakes](#): The problematic Lincoln Pool in Washington, DC has hardly been out of the news in recent weeks; here's the technical story ... and how the technology used might have wider applications.
- 3 July 2026: [Tidy pilot reduces litter by up to 52% in Yorkshire town](#): A powerful, pioneering 12-month pilot led by Keep Britain Tidy has led to cleaner streets, stronger community pride and renewed economic confidence without putting additional pressure on council budgets. The

programme delivered: a 16% reduction in food and drink litter, with even greater reductions in specific categories eg. confectionery (-20%); 52% reduction in littering around "Bin it for Good" installations - where bins are converted into charity tins; a 22 percentage point increase in public satisfaction with cleanliness (rising from 14% to 36%); significant improvements in perceptions of local businesses' contribution to cleanliness (up from 21% to 34%)". Keep Britain Tidy has just launched a full report and place-based litter toolkit so other local authorities can put the same tips into practice.

- 1 July 2026: [Record water temperatures worry the River Wye's citizen scientists](#): From Friends of the River Wye: "Last week's record heatwave not only scorched the land, but also the river, with 10% of our tests recording temperatures exceeding 25 degrees C, and more than half (57%) exceeding 20 degrees, between the 21st and the 28th of June. Many of these tests broke records for their test locations, and two broke our highest record temperature across the river".
- 1 July 2026: [Norfolk Rivers Trust looks forward to 2030](#): The newly published Norfolk Rivers Trust's "Strategy to 2030" sets out "the solutions we know make a real difference: restoring habitats, tackling pollution, recovering priority species, supporting water-sensitive farming and expanding our network of volunteers and citizen scientists. At the heart of it all is a deep commitment to help more people connect with, and care for, their local rivers".
- 1 July 2026: [Thirteen councils, six months, zero formal investigations: River Action challenges local authority inaction on sewage pollution](#): Six months after residents across the Thames catchment submitted complaints alleging that sewage pollution is causing a statutory nuisance, not a single local authority has opened a formal investigation, according to river cleanup champs at River Action.
- 1 July 2026: [Why partnership working is key to protecting the pristine habitats of the New Forest](#): Freshwater Habitats Trust has just published an interview with Paul Walton, Head of Environment and Rural Economy at the New Forest National Park Authority, exploring the vital importance of the area's freshwater habitats... and how they're maintained through such things as traditional grazing.
- 1 July 2026: [Wiltshire Council: No Environmental Impact Assessment "screening" undertaken for intensive Avon Salmon Farm](#): WildFish legal eagle Justin Neal explains why Wiltshire's failure to conduct an EIA "is a significant oversight and... a clear error of law".

Events in July

- 4-5 July: [Hunters Day](#): Paddling around the UK for hospice care.
- Until Sunday 5 July 2026: [Malmesbury River Festival](#): A brand new river festival in Wiltshire!
- 5 July: [Ely Aquafest](#): Raft races and family fun on the River Great Ouse.
- 8-12 July: [Henley Festival](#): A black-tie celebration of music, art, and culture on the banks of the River Thames in Oxfordshire.
- 13-17 July: [Royal Swan Upping](#): The charming, historic annual swan census on the Thames.
- 18-19 July: [Bedford River Festival](#): The ever-popular Bedford River Festival returns for a spectacular weekend of entertainment, activities, and community celebration.
- 25 July: [Maidstone River Festival](#): "We have dressed up boats, raft races, fun and games for all the family. There will be illuminated boats and paddle boarders in the evening and it will all end with a big bang the award-winning Firmin Family Fireworks Spectacular display which will go off from the top of Fremlin Walk in the town centre."
- 25 July: [Linslade Canal Festival](#): This one-day event is all about celebrating canal life, conservation, the countryside, and the charm of traditional rural crafts.
- 25-26 July: [St Neots Regatta](#): A river rowing regatta on the Ouse.
- 25 July-2 August: [Bristol Avon RiverBlitz](#): Community citizen science in the West Country with Bristol Avon Rivers Trust (BART).
- [Evesham River Festival](#): Cancelled for 2026, but hoping to return in 2027.
- 6 June-27 September: [Rivers4Life Exhibition](#): Join the Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust for their Rivers4Life exhibition at the Dales Countryside Museum, Hawes. Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Rivers4Life runs daily from 6 June to 27 September 2026, open 10am–4pm, seven days a week.

Jobs and other opportunities

The closing dates for jobs are in brackets.

Jobs

- [Radnorshire Rivers Project Officer: Radnorshire Wildlife Trust](#) (23 August 2026)
- [Ecological Data Officer: Yorkshire Water](#) (21 August 2026)
- [Rivers Officer: Chilterns National Landscape](#) (10 August 2026)

- [Project Officer Hull and East Riding: Yorkshire Wildlife Trust](#) (2 August 2026)
- [Programme Administrator, Central Area Regional Programme: Freshwater Habitats Trust](#) (29 July 2026)
- [Project Manager: South East Rivers Trust](#) (26 July 2026)
- [Catchment Restoration Project Manager: Bristol Avon Rivers Trust \(BART\)](#) (26 July 2026)
- [Programme Manager: South East Rivers Trust](#) (26 July 2026)
- [Project Manager: South East Rivers Trust](#) (26 July 2026)
- [Senior Waterways and Wetlands Officer: London Wildlife Trust](#) (20 July 2026)
- [Radnorshire Rivers Project Manager: Radnorshire Wildlife Trust](#) (20 July 2026)
- [River Restoration Operations Manager: Westcountry Rivers Trust](#) (19 July 2026)
- [River Restoration Team Operative: Westcountry Rivers Trust](#) (19 July 2026)
- [Water Vole Recovery Project Officer: Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust](#) (19 July 2026)
- [River Project Officer: ARK, the Rivers Trust for the Kennet and Pang Catchments](#) (19 July 2026)
- [NCP GIS and Data Support Officer: Freshwater Habitats Trust](#) (15 July 2026)
- [Engagement Manager: River Action](#) (15 July 2026)
- [Head of Campaigns \(Maternity Cover\): River Action](#) (19 July 2026)
- [Senior Policy and Advocacy Manager: River Action](#) (15 July 2026)
- [Director, Central Team: Freshwater Habitats Trust](#) (15 July 2026)
- [Species Recovery Officer, South East and East of England: Buglife](#) (13 July 2026)
- [Public Affairs and Water Policy Officer: The Wildlife Trusts](#) (12 July 2026)
- [Isle of Wight Wetland Officer: Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust](#) (12 July 2026)
- [Senior Project Officer - New Forest: Freshwater Habitats Trust](#) (8 July 2026)
- [River Catchment Manager: ARK, the Rivers Trust for the Kennet and Pang Catchments](#) (8 July 2026)

Trustees and other voluntary posts

- [Trustee: National Flood Forum](#) (7 August)
- [Trustee: Somerset Wildlife Trust](#) (20 July)

- [Trustee: The Inland Waterways Association](#) (10 July)
- [Trustee \(accounting skills\): Aire Rivers Trust](#) (N/A)
- [Volunteer Educational Activities Assistant: WWT Martin Mere](#) (Burscough, Lancashire, N/A)
- [Learning and Engagement Volunteer: West Cumbria Rivers Trust](#) (N/A)

Other opportunities

The Rivers Trust has a useful page of [current vacancies](#) with the various trusts, including voluntary posts and openings for trustees.

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