UK Rivers Network

Weekly News Update – 28/9/26

September 2026

- 27 September 2026: Happy World Rivers Day to rivers everywhere!: Millions of people in over 100 countries will, once again, be celebrating their rivers on the last Sunday in September.
- 25 September 2026: River Wye pollution plan "too little, too late" for anglers: Anglers say they feel "dismayed and betrayed" over the latest plans to tackle pollution in the River Wye. Ross-on-Wye Angling Club (RoWAC) has strongly criticised the Environment Agency's (EA) Diffuse Water Pollution Plan (DWPP), which aims to address pollution in the River Wye Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
- 25 September 2026: Anna Dixon, MP: It's time to bring water back into public hands: Writing in The Yorkshire Post this week, the Shipley MP explains why "our rivers are being poisoned by a broken system" and why it's time for public ownership once more.
- 25 September 2026: Pollute rivers if you like: so long as you pay for deer cull, housebuilders told: As we reported last week, a new quid-pro-quo scheme for housebuilders is raising eyebrows in East Anglia. Lucie Heath takes up the case in The I: "In a bid to boost housebuilding, ministers have agreed to a plan that they admit will see increased sewage being pumped into Norfolk's rare chalk streams". But some bigger, broader context is needed here. Last November, we raised eyebrows over Tony Juniper's disappointing conversion on the Tarmac-paved road to Damascus, switching his view from an exhortation "not to trot out the tired old thinking of the late 20th century" (at Friends of the Earth, 2007) to doing precisely that with a 1990s "green capitalist" relish at "how seamlessly environmental ambition aligns with business objectives" (at Natural England, 2025). This is the "tired-old" "builders not blockers thinking" that essentially informs the new East Anglian plan.
- 24 September 2026: First look behind scenes of UK-first Severn Trent sewage plant: BBC Midlands science and environment correspondent

David Gregory-Kumar looks at the new Monkmoor Sewage Treatment, outside Shrewsbury, which treats and cleans waste water that can be returned to the system with a quality almost the same as that in a river. Campaign group Up Sewage Creek said the firm had not been "very transparent" over whether the operation is truly effective and offers value for money.

- 24 September 2026: West Cumbria Rivers Trust launches interactive 'Watery Walk' in Distington: The walking route follows Stubskill Beck and features five unique oak sculptures created by artist Daniel Weatheritt. Commissioned by West Cumbria Rivers Trust, the sculptures form the centrepiece of the new Watery Walk, inviting visitors to explore the stories of local wildlife and the landscape around them.
- 24 September 2026: Wildlife Trust: Britains are hungry for nature protection: The British public want more than 60% of Britain's land protected for nature, according to new polling being taken to the Labour Conference this weekend by The Wildlife Trusts. The figure is more than double the UK Government's commitment to protect 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030.
- 24 September 2026: FBA: The next five years' commitment to action for freshwaters: The Freshwater Biological Association (FBA) has launched its new Organisational Plan for 2026-2031, setting out an ambitious programme of work to increase action and impact for freshwater ecosystems over the next five years.
- 24 September 2026: Connecting a local community to their river in Co Tyrone: An update from Northern Ireland on a Speedwell Trust project to engage the community around the Torrent River through education and activities such as litter picking, with volunteers playing an important role.
- 24 September 2026: Pierrepont Farm welcomes water voles to the River Wey: From The Countryside Regeneration Trust: "We're delighted to be part of a huge community effort to bring water voles back to the River Wey - where they were locally extinct - from the South Downs to the Thames. 300 nationally-endangered water voles have been reintroduced to a main section of River Wey in West Surrey".
- 24 September 2026: Ash Smith's report on the Parliamentary Water "referendum debate": WASP (Windrush Against Sewage Pollution campaigner Ash Smith and friends were in Parliament last week to watch the debate prompted by his stunningly successful petition, which has been signed by 213,266 people to date. Here's his account of what happened on the day.

- 23 September 2026: Invasive demon shrimp discovered in River Kennet tributary: An invasive species of shrimp has been discovered in a protected waterway, raising concerns for native species and the wider ecosystem. The charity Action for the River Kennet (ARK) is urging those who encounter the species, which can outcompete native species, to report it to them - and follow the government's Check, Clean, Dry guidance to stop the demon shrimp spreading further.
- 23 September 2026: Campaigner seeks protection for 'unwell' River Teme: A campaigner says he wants to see the River Teme given more legal rights because he believes it has become "unwell". Sam Jones, who lives in Shropshire, says he has seen a decline in aquatic species and an "invasion" by non-native species of both plants and animals.
- 23 September 2026: Yorkshire Dales Rivers Trust: Skeeby Beck: A River Reconnected: Sarah Lonsdale explains how a major slurry pollution episode led to the rewarding regeneration of Skeeby Beck.
- 23 September 2026: Fracking: Friends of the Earth objects to permit for North Yorkshire project: Groundwater concerns are one of the issues highlighted in Friends of the Earth's formal objection to an Environment Agency proposal to grant Europa Gas and Oil a permit for its planned fracking operations in Burniston, North Yorkshire.
- 23 September 2026: River Action: Join us in calling for a new chapter for Thames Water: River Action have just launched The Tiger Who Came For Our Water, a parody book that uses the story of a very greedy tiger to explain how excessive debt, underinvestment in infrastructure and profiteering have contributed to the crisis facing Thames Water.
- 23 September 2026: The Rivers Trust: Revealing the extent of chemical pollution in our ecosystems: Armed with bottles of river water and some rather cute looking needle-felt animals, The Rivers Trust joined Fidra and CHEM Trust at Wild Summit 2026 to host an interactive event unveiling the extent of chemical pollution in our ecosystems.
- 22 September 2026: Science: England is rainy again. So why is it still in drought?: Lucy Clarke, Associate Professor of Environmental Resliience at Nottingham Trent University, explains why "rain" and "drought" are not mutually exclusive.
- 22 September 2026: Southern Water fined £2.4m for Kent pollution: It's the Environment Agency's second successful prosecution of the company this year, with other cases going through court.
- 20 September 2026: Town residents demand action over 'eyesore' River Welland: More than 600 people have signed a petition calling on authorities to deal with an "eyesore" section of river in Market

Harborough. Residents have raised concerns over potential flood risks due to overgrown vegetation along parts of the River Welland, while others have commented on the state of the river's appearance.

- 17 September 2026: RSPB: Feeding garden birds: how to keep our feathered friends healthy: RSPB have just issued a reminder of their new bird-feeding advice: "Back in April, we updated our advice on feeding garden birds, asking that we all feed seasonally and feed safely. To help tackle disease among garden birds, we advise not feeding seeds or peanuts between 1 May and 31 October. We also recommend cleaning and moving feeders weekly, changing water daily, and not using bird tables or other flat-surfaced feeders".
- 16 September 2026: Stepped up efforts to prevent England remaining in drought by next spring: The government has today urged water companies not to lose momentum and carry on water efficiency measures until the drought is over.
- 16 September 2026: Science: Why most rivers don't respond to storms the same way twice: The same amount of rain falling on the same landscape at different times can send very different amounts of water into its rivers, according to a new study from hydrologists at the University of British Columbia, published in Nature Water. The research offers a global picture of how catchments behave—not where rivers are or how much water they carry—but how consistently landscapes turn rainfall into river flow.
- 14 September 2026: Thames Water updates plans for new Abingdon (White Horse) reservoir: The (two decades) long-running saga of the giant Abingdon Reservoir continues. The estimated cost of the project has rocketed from £2.2bn to between £5.5bn and £7.5bn after a review last year more than tripled the site to 38 sq km to accommodate extra building works, relocate adjacent solar farms and reroute local rivers and streams. Another HS2 in the offing?
- 8 September 2026: Science: What anglers have taught me about saving England's sharks: Matthew Witt from the University of Exeter explains why putting "anglers and conservation scientists together" gives "sharper insight into how to manage the marine world sustainably".
- 3 September 2026: BBC World Service: Should rivers have personhood?: The topical issue unpicked in a recent radio broadcast with help from Prof Nick Mount (geographer and river scientist), Dr Erin O'Donnell (author, senior lecturer and ARC research fellow, University of Melbourne Law School, Australia), Pier-Olivier Boudreault (director of conservation for the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society), Naveeda Khan (Department of Anthropology, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA) and others.

More news...

Events in September

- September 2026: Love Your Countryside Month: Celebrate all things country with rural champions CPRE.
- 19-27 September: Join the Riverlution this September and celebrate the Sussex Ouse: The community festival taking place 19 - 27th September will be a series of events for local people to come together for a shared vision and collective action. Voices of the Ouse opens the festival bringing together key organisations and communities who represent, work alongside, and feel a deep connection to its waters. A very special Council of All Beings workshop in the Lewes Town Hall Council Chamber will bring the voices of the eel and kingfisher into our democratic spaces.
- Various events until 27 September 2026: CARP Bewdley River Festival 2026: The Bewdley River Festival runs from 7 June to World Rivers Day on 27 September, a summer-long programme put on by Communities Against River Pollution, the local citizen science group working for a cleaner, healthier River Severn.
- Throughout September: Thames 21 events: Hands-on London activities this month include " Action for Silk Stream: River Action Day " (24/9) and "Oxleas Woods – Slowing the Flow " (29/9 until 1/10), and more.
- Until 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.
- September 2026 (TBC): Great Stour Riverfest: Lots of things to see and do on the Great Stour in Canterbury.
- Friday 18-Sunday 27 September 2026: MCS Great British Beach Clean: Every September thousands of people across the UK head to the coast to take part in the Great British Beach Clean. Find out how you can get involved and how it helps.
- Sunday 27 September 2026: World Rivers Day 2026: Lots of events planned worldwide.
- Sunday 27 September 2026: RiverKids: Create, Paint, Explore: Organised by Friends of the River Tyne, will be held on from 2pm to 4pm at the Trinity Centre in Haddington, East Lothian. Friends of the River Tyne will also be showcasing its new education boxes, which are set to be

introduced into local schools to help pupils learn more about river environments, conservation and biodiversity.
- Sunday 27 September 2026: Friends of the River Wye: Ranunculus Project Launch: A fun afternoon of talks, workshops, stalls and stories to launch Friends of the River Wye's Ranunculus Project at The Lost ARC, Rhayader, Wales.
- Sunday 27 September 2026: Stroud community ceremony will celebrate River Frome and World Rivers Day: The Equinox Balance event will take place on Sunday, September 27, with participants meeting at Capel's Mill at 10.30am.

More events...

Jobs and other opportunities

The closing dates for jobs are in brackets.

Jobs

- Freelance Opportunities: River Learning and Engagement Officer: Severn Rivers Trust (30 October 2026)
- Environmental Advisor: Southern Water (23 October 2026)
- Executive Support Officer: Norfolk Rivers Trust (17 October 2026)
- Habitat Creation Officer: Cheshire Wildlife Trust (13 October 2026)
- Chair: Tidal Dee Catchment Partnership (12 October 2026)
- Catchment Partnership Manager (Thames Valley): Thames21 (6 October 2026)
- Community Engagement Trainee: Eden Rivers Trust (5 October 2026)
- Projects and Technical Manager: South Cumbria Rivers Trust (4 October 2026)
- SmartRivers Analysts and Trainers: WildFish (Closing date unspecified)
- Head of Improvements: Thames21 (2 October 2026)
- River Educator: Wessex Rivers Trust (1 October 2026)
- Brent Catchment Partnerships Officer: Thames21 (2 October 2026)
- Project Officer: Dee Trust (30 September 2026)
- Project Delivery Officer: Tyne Rivers Trust (30 September 2026)

Trustees and other voluntary posts

- Independent Chairperson: Paddle Cymru (23 October)
- Trustee: The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire (16 October)

- Trustees: Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust (10 October)
- Trustees: Severn Rivers Trust (10 October)
- Volunteer crayfish surveyor (North Yorkshire): Yorkshire Wildlife Trust
- Trustee (accounting skills): Aire Rivers Trust (N/A)
- Volunteer Educational Activities Assistant: WWT Martin Mere (Burscough, Lancashire, N/A)
- Trustees × 2: Costwolds Rivers Trust (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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