

The image is a composite of two nature scenes. On the left, a kingfisher with a blue head and back and a rust-colored breast is perched on a weathered log. On the right, a river flows through a wooded area, with the trees and sky reflected in the water. The text is overlaid on the center of the image.

# Save the Teifi Community Group

Ffynnone Community Resilience

Professor Callum Firth



**Overall Aim** – Restore our freshwaters and estuary to health for the benefit of society and the natural environment.

In relation to the Teifi we are seeking to:-

1. End Sewage Pollution
2. Reduce the levels of harmful pollutants/chemicals (e.g. nitrates and phosphates) to recommended limits
3. Bringing Nature back from the brink
4. Have bathing sites designated at key sites along the river
5. Control invasive species
6. Utilise Citizen Science to monitor river quality and to hold polluters to account
7. Encourage regulators and political parties to take action
8. Work in partnership with communities, farmers, conservation organizations (e.g. West Wales River Trust), Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water and Natural Resources Wales to restore the river

# Who are we



- Members largely from the lower Teifi (Llandysul – Llandudoch/St Dogmaels) but aiming to extend further upstream
- 936 Facebook members
- 1,256 have signed Senedd Petition - **to increase the effectiveness of Natural Resources Wales in halting pollution on the Teifi**
- Wide range of expertise and experience – community councilors, business owners, swimmers, lawyers, teachers, retired professionals, artists, tourists, recreational users of the river
- Under represented groups – Under 20 years of age, farming community, Welsh speakers – plans in place to engage

# Our approach & what can we offer



- Catchment based approach which seeks to use environmental solutions where possible
- To work in partnership to increase understanding of the issues and restore the health of the environment
- Highlight issues to the media & set the narrative
- Seeking to increase the scale and pace of change for nature, the community now and future generations
- Already working with West Wales River Trust – Adopt a Tributary & Funding Bid to Esmee Fairburn Foundation
- Utilise Citizen Science to produce **meaningful** and **useful data** – need NRW guidance
- Actively reporting pollution incidents – need further training
- Estimate currently 75-100 volunteers willing to undertake active interventions

# Concerns



- Bio-diversity crisis requires urgent action
- Not just a nutrients issue (e.g. phosphates) also have sewage, micro-plastics, invasive species
- Lack of funding limits monitoring, regulation enforcement and habitat recovery
- Response of key stakeholders considered painfully slow (NRW, Dwr Cymru)
- Perceived lack of action over pollution incidents
- *“It will cost too much”, “Can not be achieved if we are to meet our net zero carbon targets” or “It will take too long”* are frequent responses but they are not solutions
- Community is losing trust in NRW and Dwr Cymru – to rebuild it need to set clear targets and deliver in a timely fashion



# Possible Actions



- Habitat enhancement – riparian habitat and floodplain restoration. No tillage/nutrient inputs within 50m of waterways. Promote agroforestry, extensive grazing and regenerative agriculture.
- Enhance monitoring via training and support of citizen science groups – provide the equipment and training and tell us where to go
- Open data platforms – real time monitoring and alerts of sewage release (in progress) and pollution incidents, plus a centralised platform to upload citizen science data
- Identify and support cost effective systems to decouple surface water and sewage effluent – retrofitting measures being grant funded or via bill relief
- New approach to regulation enforcement – Fines and returning money to customers does not solve the issues.
- Retrofit wetlands/nutrient stripping systems to sewage works and invest in recycling schemes
- Support innovation in farming community in reduction and effective reuse of slurry
- River/Future Generations Champions – Who is representing nature and future generations?