



Wallingford Town Council

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Chris Weston- Chief Executive Officer – Thames Water
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Copied to:-

Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs – The Rt Hon Steve Reed OBE MP
steve.reed.mp@parliament.uk

MPolly Glover - olly.glover.mp@parliament.uk

10 December 2024

Dear Chris,

Vote of no confidence in Thames Water

I am writing on behalf of Wallingford Town Council who recently passed a resolution after taking a vote of no confidence in Thames Water. The vote was unanimous.

Wallingford Town Council endorses the response made by Witney Town Council and Henley Town Council.

There are various reasons as to why this vote was taken, these are as below:

1. Thames Water has been releasing untreated sewage into our rivers for 20 years. In Wallingford, the Sewage Treatment Works (STW) and the Combined Sewage Overflow (CSO) systems have been regularly discharging untreated sewage from the Benson and North Moreton sewage works, significantly impacting our local waterways, contributing to pollution and environmental degradation.
2. Records show that illegal spills date back to 2004 or beyond.
3. Every time it rains, the poor repair of Thames Water's infrastructure, including the Benson and North Moreton sewage works, allows infiltration. The inadequate capacity of the Sewage Treatment Plant, coupled with management decisions, leads to days of overflow. The last three Christmases are well-documented, but it happens all year round:
4. The spill from Christmas Day 2021 ran until 9 January 2022.
5. The spill from 28 December 2022, which was reported in the Guardian, lasted 607 hours and was still ongoing on 18 January 2023.
6. The spill from 30 December 2023 ran well into January 2024. Last Christmas, the CSO action was accompanied by Wallingford residents having sewage back up into their homes.
7. The sewage spill map frequently shows discharges at times of rainfall that then turn to illegal dry spills.

8. A baby born today will be 16-21 before sewage overflows are "compliant". Whole childhoods are being spent knowing nothing but hazardous water and mismanagement of resources.
9. The UK is one of two nations to have privatised water, with the other being Chile. This privatisation has been shown to be a likely cause of Thames Water's financial issues and is clearly non-standard.
10. Thames Water hit with £39m of penalties after missing regulatory targets | Thames Water | The Guardian
11. Thames Water is requesting a bill rise of 44% over the 2025-2030 period.
12. Henley Town Council passed a motion of no confidence in Thames Water on 4 June 2024 and also a motion calling for renationalisation.
13. Witney Town Council passed in June 2024 has unanimously passed a motion of no confidence in Thames Water and described the decision as a "cry for help".

14. Bathing Water Status: -

With Wallingford recently granted bathing water status: Wallingford Beach was officially designated as a bathing water site by the UK government on 15 May 2024. This status means that the Environment Agency will regularly monitor the water quality during the bathing season, ensuring that the river is safe for swimming and other recreational activities. This designation comes as part of broader efforts to tackle sewage pollution. The Environment Agency's monitoring and the government's legally binding targets to reduce sewage dumping will help improve water quality in the area. Thames Water is also required to spend significant funds to address sewage issues, although their infrastructure remains a concern.

15. Thames Water's sewerage service is beyond inadequate. With illnesses on the rise, bringing serious risk of death, administrative change is needed.

16. The privatisation of Thames Water is a root cause behind the inadequacy of service. - Thames Water is not sustainable without direct intervention and renationalisation.

17. Thames Water's request for an increase in consumer bills of 44% over the next five years is extortion and is a clear show of poor business management and decades of collecting payments from residents without using them to maintain the network.

Wallingford Town Council sincerely believes that:

- TW's sewerage service is beyond inadequate. With illnesses on the rise, bringing serious risk of death, administrative change is needed.
- The privatisation of TW is a root cause behind the inadequacy of service.
- TW is not sustainable without direct intervention and renationalisation.
- TW's request for an increase in consumer bills of 44% over the next 5 years is extortion and is a clear show of poor business management and decades of collecting payments from residents without using them to maintain the network.

Wallingford Town Council resolves that:

Wallingford Town Council has no confidence in Thames Water's competence as a sewerage undertaker.

RESOLVED that the Town Council expresses that it has no confidence in the competence of the senior executives of Thames Water following the unacceptable releases of sewage into the River Thames and the impact of this on the natural environment and users of the river

Also, now we have heard that the water quality testing has giving a POOR rating for the bathing water designated area at Wallingford.

Yours Sincerely,

Karen Crowhurst
Locum Clerk/RFO to wallingford town Council