

Responses to Hazel Kendall speaker questions from ‘Tried and tested solutions for a green recovery: Working with nature 2’ on 5 November 2020



	Response
Do you have any advice for river groups in my local area by The Wye where we are experiencing high levels of phosphates mainly from intense chicken farms?	Our colleagues at the Wye & Usk Foundation are working in the area with a number of partners to deliver improvements, seek solutions and press for positive change. This includes them working with Government Agencies (Natural Resources Wales) and others to address this more recent concern. More info is available on this link; https://www.wyeuskfoundation.org/news/new-stance-on-phosphate-offers-hope-for-the-wye and I would encourage you to contact them locally for the latest news and how you can stay in touch with them, get involved or offer support depending on your own interests.
I heard that some rivers have a high level of plastic beads in them. What can be done to reduce that?	This is a growing problem - just like the emerging awareness of ocean plastic pollution. The microbeads in rivers are still being researched to a certain degree but can variously originate from sewage treatment works, waste plastic/litter, personal care products such as toothpaste, face scrubs, but also our domestic grey water from washing machines (fibres & beads from laundry products and treatments). Greater awareness and consumer pressure for more ethical products are starting to address this but clearly there is already a certain volume in our watercourses and oceans already; hard to remove effectively and at a large scale. Industrial processes are also being scrutinised to reduce plastic waste in all forms. In time it maybe the case that wastewater treatment sites have removal processes built in, but currently the best approach is to reduce further input through informed choices or practice. Once these enter the

	<p>food chain we know they they can be absorbed into higher trophic levels and as yet we don't fully know the consequences.</p>
<p>Are Rivers Trust concerned about EU withdrawal in terms of the water framework directive - what is to replace it?</p>	<p>With Brexit looming on the horizon and the risk of no deal, it is right to be concerned regarding what and how standards and regulation may operate in the future. We already know that too many of our rivers fall short of reaching 'Good' Ecological Status under WFD, which is the standard that we should be seeking as a minimum. Regional Trusts such as ourselves are represented by our umbrella body The Rivers Trust which actively works to influence, improve or lobby on policy - and does so at a level direct with Government.</p> <p>There are legislative measures which should see WFD enacted: The European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018 requires environmental principles to be set out in UK legislation and requires the creation of a new independent oversight body - the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP), essentially to hold the government to account on its environmental commitments. Many of these commitments were set out in the Government's own 25 year Environment Plan, 'clean and plentiful water' is one of the strategic goals.</p> <p>Currently the Rivers Trust and other NGOs are pushing for better standards and to ensure that Brexit is not an excuse to see this fail, a recent article debates this point further; https://environment-analyst.com/uk/105986/environment-agency-open-to-replacement-of-wfd</p>