Historic March for Clean Water: 130+ leading nature, environmental and water sports organisations urge Keir Starmer’s Government to end water pollution

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London rally on Sunday 3 November to Save Britain’s polluted waterways

More than 130 of the UK’s most prominent environment, nature, fishing, water sports and community organisations, **representing 10.1 million supporters**, will flood the streets of central London on November 3 for the March for Clean Water. The coalition calls on Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer to end the pollution of Britain’s rivers, lakes, and seas, or face the consequences of

broken promises.

Nationwide demand for clean water

Environmental advocates, community leaders, and citizens from across the UK will march to call an end to the pollution caused by multiple sources, including water companies and intensive agriculture. **Their asks of the new government are:**

1) stop pollution for profit;

2) reform our failed environmental regulators and;

3) enforce the laws that exist to deter and punish illegal pollution.

Marchers will wear blue, symbolising the call for clean water

Campaigners remain deeply concerned that despite multiple commitments made during the recent General Election campaign to take resolute action to address the issue, they do not go nearly far enough to address the root causes of water pollution.

Most significantly, the measures that have been published in the Government's planned **Water (Special Measures) Bill** do not address the chronic failure of regulation in recent years, whereby environmental laws and regulations have failed to be enforced by environmental protection agencies, allowing polluters to regularly break the law and poison our water bodies with impunity.

Meanwhile, while last week's announcement by the Government of an **independent Water Commission** is a welcome step, it must ensure that the needs of the environment are fully considered and not sidelined by an apparent prioritisation of promoting economic growth. It must also address other major sources of pollution such as agriculture, which so far are conspicuous by their absence in the Commission's terms of reference.

Join the fight against water pollution

Untreated sewage, agricultural runoff, and corporate negligence have pushed the UK's rivers, seas, and lakes to ecological breaking point. The November 3 march represents a critical moment in the urgent quest for environmental justice, with families, activists, and communities demanding immediate government action to stop the rampant poisoning of Britain's waterways.

Key speakers and performers

The march will feature voices from across the UK, including naturalist **Chris Packham**, broadcaster and campaigner **Carol Vorderman,** Olympic rowing champion **Imogen Grant**, nature

presenter and President of the Wildlife Trusts **Liz Bonnin**, bestselling author **Robert Macfarlane**, and actor-musician **Johnny Flynn**, known most recently for his role in Ripley on Netflix.

Eleven-year-old Benjamin Fallow will address the crowd, representing the next generation's call for urgent action on the water crisis. Alongside them stand grassroots environmental groups, anglers, swimmers, surfers, rowers, and a diverse array of clean water lovers, as well as **water industry workers represented by the GMB Union** (the biggest union in the water industry) **disillusioned by the failure of their employers to manage the water industry responsibly.**

Powerful symbols on the day

The march will feature striking visuals, including:

> **Poly the Whale,** Truth About Plastic's 7x2m sculpture made entirely from plastic waste collected from rivers and oceans, will be on display. Weighing 130kgs – the estimated amount of plastic that pollutes the ocean every second – Poly is a powerful reminder of the growing plastic crisis.
> A 3m tall **Goddess of the River Wye**, evoking the spirit of the iconic river and the ecosystems at risk.
> At least **40 Extinction Rebellion drummers** will energise and the inspire marchers.
> Participants are also invited to bring to London samples of water from their rivers, lakes and beaches – which will all be combined into a single vessel before being symbolically returned to the River Thames at the end of the march on the outgoing tide.

Voices of protest

Leading voices from the coalition urge the government to act:

Broadcaster and campaigner Carol Vorderman said, "*I'm 63 and have never been on a protest before. This is my first ever march. That is how much the disgraceful privatised abuse of our water system matters to me. I can't wait to add my voice to thousands on the day and share Carol's Poolution by Numbers!"*

Comedian and angler Paul Whitehouse, star of BBC's hit-show Gone Fishing with Bob Mortimer, said, *"Who likes dirty rivers? Not I. Lots of people love to use the rivers, waterways, and they're under threat from agricultural pollution and from the water companies. So, there is a march taking place on Sunday, third of November – come and join."*

Star of The Crown on Netflix, Jim Murray, actor and activist angler, said, *"The endangered Atlantic salmon is the pulse of our rivers and oceans, we must save the UK's 'black rhino' from extinction."*

British businesswoman and star of Dragon's Den Deborah Meaden said, *"As a business leader deeply committed to sustainable investing and a passionate advocate for nature, it is clear that we must protect our precious waterways from pollution. No business should be allowed to profit at the expense of our rivers, seas, and lakes. It's time for our elected leaders to take decisive action and restore our waterways to full health."*

Comedian **Joe Lycett** who made a television documentary about the terrible state of the UK's sewage network (Channel 4's Joe Lycett v Sewage) said, *"Our rivers and seas are still, literally, shit. I fully support this brilliant campaign."*

Beccy Speight, RSPB chief executive, said: *"The strength of public feeling is crystal clear, unlike our polluted rivers and waterways. An urgent, comprehensive and properly resourced response is long overdue."*

Hilary McGrady, Director General of the National Trust said, *"Water is life. It's fundamental to our health, our happiness, our heritage. But our rivers and waterways are in crisis. The public are outraged and want to see solutions."*

"Now's the time for all leaders across all industries – from business to agriculture and of course politics – to step up their game and prove we can turn the tide on our polluted water. Sunday's march is a crucial moment for change."

Melissa Green, CEO of the National Federation of Women's Institutes said: *"The Women's Institute proudly stands with the March for Clean Water, and WI members will be travelling from across the country to join forces on Sunday 3 November.*

"We are a movement of women long known and respected for challenging the status quo and fighting for justice time and again. We are no strangers to campaigning to clean and protect our waterways – and the March for Clean Water is another chance to show our strength. We must ensure this opportunity is not wasted. Now is the time for bold, urgent action from the Government to deliver lasting solutions, and clean up our waters for people, wildlife and the environment."

Richard Benwell, CEO of Wildlife and Countryside Link, said: *"Polluted rivers are wounds in our landscape. They ought to be the lifeblood of UK ecosystems, nourishing communities and wildlife. Instead, they channel sewage, agricultural runoff and toxic chemicals through the countryside and cities to the sea. Healing rivers restores nature and builds a stronger society. That's why so many people are gathering in support of tough action to make polluters pay, to stop pollution from every source, and to demand the urgent investment needed to clean up UK waters."*

Jamie Cook, CEO of Angling Trust said, *"For over 75 years anglers have fought against pollution, this government must finally end the water pollution crisis before it's too late."*

Hugo Tagholm, ocean activist and Executive Director of Oceana UK said, *"Water companies have mismanaged their way to creating one of the greatest environmental stinks the UK has ever suffered. The sewage scandal has destroyed rivers, beaches, wildlife & livelihoods. Why give them a stay of execution with a review of the industry? Why not enforce the law in place to hold them to account, right now?"*

Andy Prendergast, GMB National Secretary, said, *"Water privatisation has been a disaster for everyone; sewage dumped in our beautiful waterways, billions of gallons lost to leaks every day and zero investment. Meanwhile fat cat directors and shareholders trouser millions of pounds. Water workers and bill payers are marching together to demand better."*

Giles Bristow, chief executive, Surfers Against Sewage said, *"We're marching because we're sick of surfing in shit, it's that simple. No more cover-ups, no more excuses, no more delays, we are here to reclaim our rivers, lakes and seas from the profiteering fat cats of the water industry and to demand an end to sewage pollution, for good. Keir Starmer, the pollution that stains the dirty money of the industry is a stain on the government too – we demand radical reform and you must deliver."*

Charles Watson, Chair of River Action, the organiser of the March for Clean Water, celebrated the diverse and inclusive nature of the March. He said, *"This movement is unlike anything we've seen before. Families, communities, and organisations from across the UK are rising in outrage at the state of our rivers, lakes and seas. The Government's first 100 days in power are up. The time for excuses is over. We're here to hold the government accountable to the election promises previously made and make sure they deliver on them to clean up our long-suffering waterways for once and for all."*

This is not just a protest – it's a movement

The March for Clean Water is a call to action for millions of people who care about the future of Britain's waters. **Join us on Sunday 3 November, wear blue, flood the streets and make your voice heard.**

NOTES TO EDITOR

The March for Clean Water will be a legal, peaceful, family-friendly and inclusive demonstration. On Sunday 3 November, we will muster at **Albert Embankment from 1100, and start marching at 1145**. The rally will start in Parliament Square at 1330 and is due to finish by 1500.

More than 130 organisations have pledged their support for the march including the National Trust, RSPB, Wildlife Trusts, Women's Institute, Extinction Rebellion, WWF, GMB Union, Greenpeace, Angling Trust, Rivers Trust, Wildfish, British Rowing, Good Law Project, Ilkley River Action Group, Save Windermere, Activist Anglers, Save the Wye Coalition and Henley Mermaids.

River Action is an environmental charity on a mission to rescue Britain's rivers from the deluge of pollution that has left the majority of our waterways in a severely degraded ecological condition. Our campaigns to date have focussed on tackling the severe environmental crises created by both sewage and agricultural pollution.

Estimated number of supporters per organisation in the March for Clean Water coalition:

Bat Conservation Trust: 5,600
Blue Tits: 100,000
British Scuba: 28,000
Butterfly Conservation: 40,000
Clean Water Alliance: 450,000
CPRE: 40,000
Friends of the Earth UK: 250,000
Freshwater Biological Association: 1,200
GMB Union: 560,000
Greenpeace UK: 184,000
Green Alliance: Approx. 126
Mammal Society: 2,000
National Trust: 5,400,000
Plantlife: 17,000
Rewilding Britain: 900
RSPB: 1,200,000
Surfers Against Sewage: 150,000
Soil Association: 75,000
Sustain: 5,000
Wildlife Trusts: 870,000
Women's Institute: 180,000
Woodland Trust: 500,000
WWF UK: 100,000

Total supporters: 10,158,826