

New campaigning body challenging river polluters announces the full line-up of its advisory board

- As the UK prepares for COP26, our rivers are being damaged continuously by pollution caused primarily by run-off of agricultural waste and raw sewage discharges.
- Recent data has disclosed that no prosecutions or penalties have been issued for the hundreds of violations of the Farming Rules for Water since their introduction in 2018.
- The launch of River Action in February this year marked another milestone in the intervention by civil society to address the shortcomings of the UK's failing environmental regulatory system.
- The creation of River Action's Advisory Board creates a powerful weapon, which will play a major role in the coming campaigns against river polluters.

12th March: With backgrounds in government, business, media, angling, science, communications and conservation, River Action's board members bring a combined resource of hugely relevant experience and capabilities to tackle the abysmal state of the UK's rivers.

The full membership of River Action's Advisory Board comprises:

Richard Benyon – *Former Environment Minister in the Coalition Government. He led initiatives such as the reform of fisheries policy in the EU and negotiated for the UK in international fora such as the UN's Convention on Biological Diversity and the International Whaling Commission.*

Francesca Carnibella – *Senior Associate at the European Climate Foundation. Francesca works in the strategic communications team at the ECF where her work focuses on food, land-use and industrial animal agriculture. The ECF is a network of hundreds of organisations devoted to solving the climate crisis from every angle.*

Ruth Chambers – *Leader of the Greener UK coalition's work on the Environment Bill and the setting up of the Office for Environmental Protection (the new environmental watchdog for England). Ruth is also a Trustee of the London Wildlife Trust.*

Marina Gibson – *Ambassador for Angling Trust, Atlantic Salmon Trust, Fishing for Schools and Orvis Fly Fishing. Marina is one of the best-known figures in the UK angling community, making a major contribution in expanding both the diversity of the sport and its awareness of its environmental responsibilities.*

Ben Goldsmith – *Ben is Chief Executive Officer of Menhaden Plc, a London-listed investment trust which invests in opportunities which are delivering or benefiting from the more efficient use of energy and other resources. He is on the board of Defra.*

Isabella Gornall – *Founder and Managing Director of Seahorse Environmental, a specialist environmental PR, lobbying and corporate reputational consultancy. Isabella was Policy*

Adviser to Zac Goldsmith MP where she helped shape his policies, led the development of policy proposals to Government and managed his international environmental campaigns.

Dr Janina Gray – Chief Scientist, Salmon and Trout Conservation – currently the UK’s only independent charity campaigning for wild fish and their environment. Janina is one of the UK’s leading scientists focussed on river conservation and leads in providing evidence to policy-makers to drive actions that ensure change happens.

James Macpherson - Former Deputy Chief Investment Officer of BlackRock’s Active Equity business managing assets of \$280bn worldwide. James was the senior investor on BlackRock’s Global Environmental Social and Governance “ESG” Policy Group and was Chairman of the ESG Policy Group in Europe.

Nick Measham - Chief Executive, Salmon and Trout Conservation. Nick leads the UK’s leading independent charity campaigning for wild fish and their environment. He heads a dedicated team in providing the evidence to influence Governments and their agencies to protect wild fish and their waters.

George Monbiot – An award-winning writer and journalist well-known for his focus on environmental and political issues. He writes a weekly column for The Guardian and has published a number of books including *Feral: Rewilding the Land, Sea and Human Life*. George is carrying out a live investigative documentary into river pollution later this year.

Feargal Sharkey – A well-known environmental campaigner, focussing particularly on the state of rivers. Feargal has actively campaigned against the pollution of British rivers and the regulations of the water industry which impact British water resources. He has recently launched legal action against the government over the poor state of England’s rivers. As the lead vocalist of The Undertones, he has performed various roles supporting the UK’s commercial music industry.

James Wallace - Chief Executive of Beaver Trust, a charity helping communities find practical, scalable and financially viable ways to restore rivers and wildlife with beavers and their wetlands. Beaver Trust brings together stakeholders to develop and deliver nature-based solutions to protect rivers from pollution and help communities build climate resilience, such as the introduction of wildlife buffer zones between agriculture and water.

Commenting on today’s announcement, **River Action’s Chairman, Charles Watson said:** “The enormity of the ecological challenges facing our rivers is quite terrifying. For year after year the discharge of untreated sewage and the run-off of nutrients from intensive agriculture, combined with impotent environmental regulation, has created a perfect storm for environmental degradation. Working in close partnership with multiple environmental organisations and activists across the country River Action is resolved to campaign tirelessly to save our rivers. With the creation and contribution of this extraordinary Advisory Board, the odds of us making a real impact have just multiplied”

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Notes to Editor

About River Action

River Action is a campaigning body that launched in February to address the severe problem of river pollution. Its mission is to apply pressure on industrial and agricultural producers to take greater responsibility for remedying the adverse environmental impact their supply chains are having on the health of the UK's rivers.

The organisation's first campaign focused on the River Wye where reports indicate that industrial-scale poultry farms have contributed to a severe decline in the river's health. River Action publicly appealed to the region's largest egg producer, Noble Foods, to give information on what they were doing to mitigate the devastating effects of agricultural run-off. River Action is currently working on a number of other campaigns focussed on organisations not stepping up and assuming their share of responsibility for the environmental compliance of their supply chains.

For further information and updates on River Action, please visit www.riveractionuk.com.

Contact

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