

UK charity River Action announces major expansion plans

- UK charity [River Action](#) has today announced major expansion plans to scale up its campaigning action against river pollution.
- These plans include the appointment of a new CEO, James Wallace, and new Vice Chairman, Feargal Sharkey.

8th November 2022: Leading rivers charity [River Action](#) has today announced a series of initiatives which mark a major expansion of the organisation's scale and capabilities.

These developments include:

- The appointments of James Wallace as CEO and Feargal Sharkey as Vice Chairman
- The strengthening of River Action's advisory board & management team
- The successful completion of the first phase of a major fundraising campaign and the launch of a recruitment program.

River Action was launched at the beginning of 2021 by its founder and chairman Charles Watson. The organisation, which subsequently became a listed UK charity, launched to focus on rescuing Britain's rivers from increasingly unsustainable levels of agricultural and sewage pollution. To date River Action has become a leading voice in the campaign for cleaner rivers and better environmental protection across the UK, with specific achievements including:

- Raising awareness of the impact of agricultural pollution on important river catchments such as the Wye
- [Calling on retailers](#) and farmers and agribusinesses in the Wye catchment to take specific action to remedy the river pollution resulting from their supply chains.
- Supporting various river activists across the country, including raising over £30,000 for Wye Valley citizen scientists.
- Securing over [58,000 signatures](#) calling for significant increases in environmental protection budgets to fight river pollution.

Today's announcement marks a major move forward for River Action to fulfil its ambitions to become a leading UK environmental campaigning organisation. Principal developments announced today include:

- The appointment of James Wallace, former Chief Executive of the Beaver Trust, as CEO.
- The appointment of former musician and leading environmental campaigner Feargal Sharkey OBE as Vice Chairman.
- The strengthening of River Action's Advisory Board with the appointments of Jeremy Wade and Alison Caffyn. They join other leading figures from the UK's rivers and environmental movement including: Ben Goldsmith; George Monbiot; Marina Gibson and Ruth Chambers.
- The completion of the first phase of a major fundraising drive to support both River Action's campaigning activities and local communities. This has included donations from over 500 individuals and significant funding grants from major environmental

foundations such as: Frederick Mulder Foundation; Gower Street Foundation; the Cobalt Trust and T&J Meyer Family Foundation.

- The appointment of Lauren Razek as Development Manager.
- The commencement of the recruitment process for several new positions including a Campaigns Coordinator, Communications Manager and Community Officer.

River Action has also today published an [impact report](#) which documents the outcomes of its work during the calendar year to date.

Commenting on the expansion, Founder and Chairman Charles Watson said: *“The environmental challenges facing our rivers have never been more severe and River Action is determined to play its part in both changing the behaviour of corporate polluters and restoring effective enforcement of environmental regulations, something which in recent years has all but collapsed. I am particularly looking forward to working closely with James Wallace in fulfilling this mission. As one of the most successful and entrepreneurial leaders in the environmental NGO sector, we are extremely lucky to have him as part of our team.”*

Newly appointed CEO James Wallace added: *“What River Action has achieved under Charles’ leadership in such a short period of time is quite remarkable and it’s an incredibly exciting time to be joining the organisation. I can’t wait to start working more closely with our amazing team, Advisory Board and our many partners to help rescue Britain’s rivers by empowering communities, mobilising communications and influencing government policy and industry practice.”*

New Vice Chairman Feargal Sharkey also commented: *“With not a single river in the country receiving a clean bill of health, the emergence within the UK’s environmental movement of a new force of River Action’s agility and effectiveness is a very welcome development indeed. We only have a very short period of time left to save our rivers from irreparable damage and I am delighted to be working closely with the River Action team in the challenging months ahead.”*

- Ends -

Notes to editor

About River Action

[River Action](#) is a UK charity campaigning for action from Government and major agribusinesses to address the agricultural pollution crisis afflicting our rivers and to support farmers in delivering solutions. River Action was formed in early 2021 in response to concerning evidence that reveals the declining state of many of the UK’s rivers, including [data](#) from the Environment Agency in 2020 that showed for the first time no river in England met quality tests for pollution. The charity is supported by an [expert Advisory Board](#) including Lord Randall, Ben Goldsmith, Ruth Chambers, George Monbiot and Feargal Sharkey.

Photos and biographies of the River Action team and its new additions can be [found here](#).

Contact: Alice Russell, arussell@seahorseenvironmental.co.uk