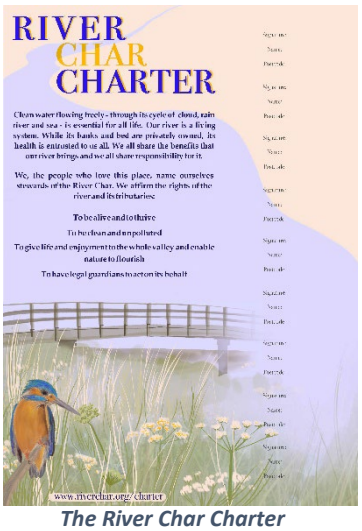
River Char Action Group and River Char Community Project

Our River Charter



The River Char Charter

1. **River Charter:** We've worked hard to agree our Charter for the River Char. Ours is only the fourth river in the UK to have its own Charter. The Charter will be publicly launched at the River Festival on 31st May.

   The Charter sets out our shared vision for the river and our belief that it should have the right to be unpolluted, to thrive and to flow freely. Please sign it if you agree.

   When we have collected as many signatures as possible, we will present it to our local Parish Councils, to Dorset Council and to our MP and ask them to sign it.

The Declaration of Rights of the River Char

2. **Declaration of Rights of the River:** The Declaration formally sets out the rights that we believe our river should have and explains why. It is based on other Declarations, like The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (adopted by the UN in 1948) and the English Bill of Rights of 1689.

   These earlier Declarations of Rights helped to define and establish basic human rights to freedom, dignity and representation. They seemed idealistic at first but now we take them for granted and fight to preserve them in the face of oppressive regimes and would-be dictators.

   We will ask bodies like Dorset National Landscape, the Environment Agency, Parish Councils, Dorset Council and our MP to sign it.

Neither of these documents has any weight in law. But this is the start of a wider campaign to change the law and to recognise the rights of nature formally. Other countries have done that and other countries have recognised the rights of their rivers in law. One day soon, we believe the UK will follow suit.

3. **Covenant for the River:** Finally, the River Char Covenant sets out our obligations to the river. It spells out what the local council, local farmers and landowners and local residents will do to clean up and look after the river. We are still working on the Covenant and we have to get all parties to agree to it. It will require all of us to change our ways and habits, but if we do, our river will start to heal itself. Its life will start to pour back – and with it, ours too.

To join us, help with river testing, learn more about flood management and keep the river free of sewage, or make a donation… please visit:

www.riverchar.org