

# CROWD: Clean Rivers Of West Dorset

**CROWD is campaigning to clean up the lagoons at Charmouth and Seatown.** Both are used throughout the summer by children and families for boating, paddling, swimming and playing. Both are currently unsafe for humans. The lagoon at Charmouth is a few metres from the beach, where the bathing water quality is rated 'Excellent' by the EA. The proximity of a bathing beach with 'Excellent' water quality and a bathing lagoon with toxic water quality is a problem.

## Background for Charmouth:

Until 2019, the Environment Agency regularly measured levels of *E Coli* and Intestinal Enterococci at the pool of the River Char (the lagoon). \* 20 measurements were made between Sept. 2018 and Sept. 2019 (last figures available).

**E Coli** levels ranged from a low of 480 cfu/100ml to a high of 18,000. They averaged 3,135. The acceptable upper limit is 900. On average, the River Char lagoon contained more than three times the acceptable upper limit in the last year for which EA measurements are available.

*[Similar results were found in preceding years, with particularly alarming results on 13th July 2012 (>100,000), on 22nd May 2014 (115,000) and 19 September 2014 (110,000).]*

**Intestinal Enterococci** levels ranged from 27 to 29,000. They averaged 2,750. The acceptable upper limit is 330. On average, the River Char lagoon contained more than eight times the acceptable upper limit in the last year for which EA measurements are available.

*[Similar results were found in preceding years, with particularly alarming results on 15th August 2015 (15,455), on 5th May 2015 (32,000) and 19th Sept. 2014 (46,000).]*

**Intestinal Enterococci and some strains of E coli cause urinary tract infections, meningitis, endocarditis, gastroenteritis, diverticulitis, bacterial peritonitis, colitis and Crohn's disease.**

## Action at Charmouth:

Step 1: CROWD calls on the Environment Agency to reinstate bacteriological testing at this site. (The EA has declined to do so. Local river group volunteers are starting to do tests in their own laboratory and at their own expense in 2024.)

Step 2: CROWD calls on the Environment Agency to undertake bacteriological testing higher up the river to identify sources of faecal and other pollution. (The EA has declined to do so. Volunteers are also starting their own tests in 2024.)

Step 3: CROWD is seeking to get the lagoon at Charmouth included in the neighbouring designated bathing water. (The EA has indicated that this is not possible.)

Step 4: CROWD is assessing risks to human health from exposure to pathogens in beach sand (as highlighted by the World Health Organization) and calls on the Environment Agency to add this evaluation to its monitoring of bathing waters.

\* Measurements were made and reported between 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2000 and 16<sup>th</sup> Sept. 2019.

(Results: [https://environment.data.gov.uk/water-quality/view/sampling-point/SW-50050521?\\_all=true](https://environment.data.gov.uk/water-quality/view/sampling-point/SW-50050521?_all=true))

# CROWD: Clean Rivers Of West Dorset

**CROWD is campaigning to clean up the lagoons at Charmouth and Seatown.** Both are used throughout the summer by children and families for boating, paddling, swimming and playing. Both are currently unsafe for humans. The lagoon at Seatown is a few metres from the beach, where the bathing water quality is rated 'Excellent' by the EA. The proximity of a bathing beach with 'Excellent' water quality and a bathing lagoon with toxic water quality is a problem.

## Background for Seatown:

In 2014 only, the Environment Agency measured levels of E Coli and Intestinal Enterococci at the pool of the River Winniford (the lagoon).\* 12 measurements were made in that time.

**E Coli** levels ranged from a low of 1,000 cfu/100ml to a high of 30,000. They averaged 10,024. The acceptable upper limit is 900. On average, the River Winniford lagoon contained more than ten times the acceptable upper limit in the last year for which EA measurements are available.

*[Similar results were found in 2023, when the EA again tested the lagoon twice. The average level of E. coli found was 15,100. In August 2022, Wessex Water tested the lagoon and found levels of >70,000 – over 70 times the acceptable upper limit.]*

**Intestinal Enterococci** levels ranged from 440 to 20,000 in 2014. They averaged 3,324. The acceptable upper limit is 330. On average, the River Winniford lagoon contained more than ten times the acceptable upper limit in 2014 (the only year for which EA measurements are available.)

*[One measurement was taken by the EA in 2023, giving a reading of 1,300 – four times the acceptable limit. In August 2022, Wessex Water tested the lagoon and found levels of >7,900 – over 20 times the acceptable upper limit.]*

**Intestinal Enterococci and some strains of E coli cause urinary tract infections, meningitis, endocarditis, gastroenteritis, diverticulitis, bacterial peritonitis, colitis and Crohn's disease.**

## Action at Seatown:

Step 1: CROWD calls on the Environment Agency to reinstate bacteriological testing at this site. (The EA has declined to do so.) Local river group volunteers began their own tests at their own expense in 2023. They quickly identified one major pollution source. Others have still to be identified.

Step 2: CROWD calls on the Environment Agency to undertake bacteriological testing higher up the river to identify sources of faecal and other pollution. (The EA has declined to do so.) Volunteers also started their own tests in 2024.)

Step 3: CROWD is seeking to get the lagoon at Seatown included in the neighbouring designated bathing water. (The EA has indicated that this is not possible.)

Step 4: CROWD is assessing risks to human health from exposure to pathogens in beach sand (as highlighted by the World Health Organization) and calls on the Environment Agency to add this evaluation to its monitoring of bathing waters.

\* Measurements were made and reported in 2014 and on two occasions in 2023.

(Results: <https://environment.data.gov.uk/water-quality/view/sampling-point/SW-50050207>)