Declaration of Rights of the River Char

(and all its tributaries)

The RIVER CHAR:

…nourishes a whole valley of plants, animals, birds and insects

…depends on the health of the surrounding streams, woods, gardens and farmland

…drains water from our roads, land and villages

…gives us fertile soil and a place for recreation, inspiration and tranquility.

But we continue to:

…pollute it with sewage from storm overflows and from septic tanks

…poison it with pesticides, chemicals, slurry and nutrients from homes, farms, gardens, pets and holiday parks

…channel and manage the river so that it cannot absorb flood water as it would do naturally.

And we know that:

…people of all cultures and traditions have long held that nature has fundamental rights

…many countries have recognised the rights of nature and rivers in their laws and constitutions

…current laws do not protect the health of the river.

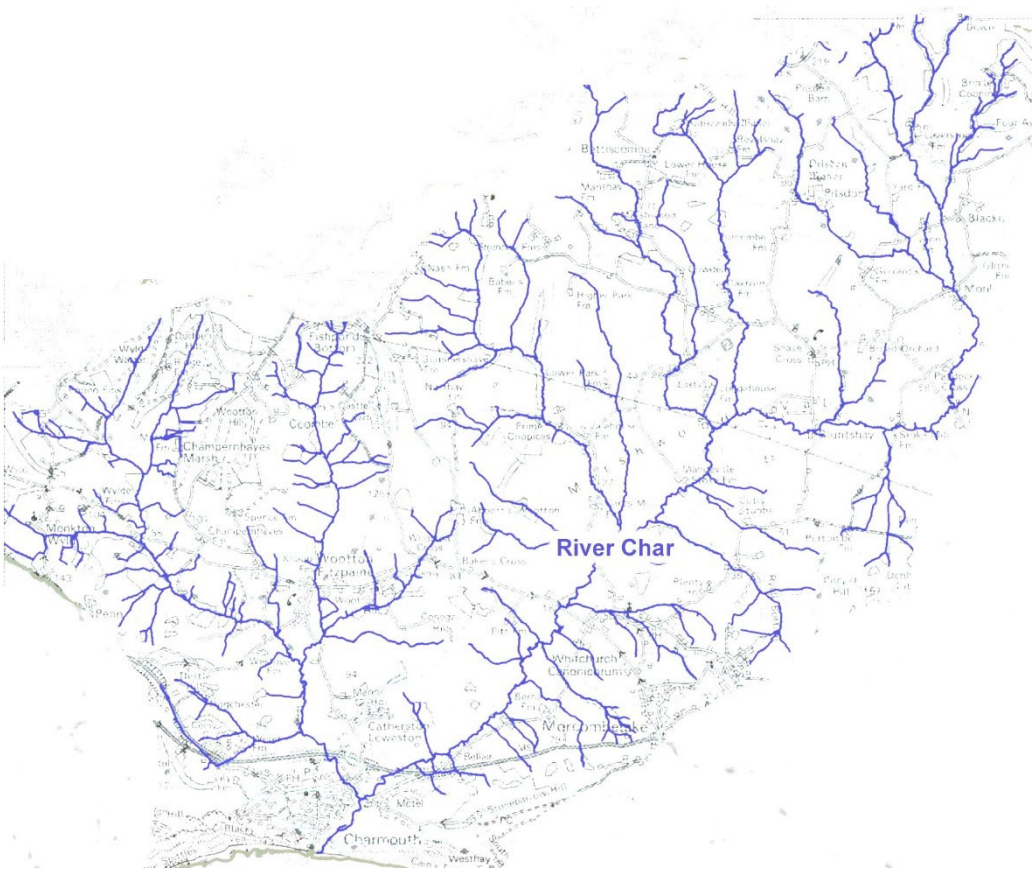
We therefore declare that the River Char is entitled to the following rights:

1. The right to be alive and to thrive – including the right to flow and to overflow as freely as possible without causing risk to life
2. The right to be clean and unpolluted – including the right to be free from toxic chemicals, pesticides, insecticides and other poisons
3. The right to give life and enjoyment to the whole valley and enable nature to flourish, with support from neighbouring businesses, farmers, householders, local councils and national government.

We further declare that, to ensure these rights, the River Char is entitled to have:

4. Legal guardians to act on its behalf and to represent it in any legal proceedings and before any local or national government body
5. Its best interests taken into account in all actions or decisions that concern the river, as determined by its legal guardians
6. Legal standing in a court of law.

We call on the UK Government to implement these rights in full.



River Char Community Project and River Char Action Group

www.riverchar.org/charter