

## South West Water and Newquay Town Council team up to protect local beaches

South West Water is working with Newquay Town Council to raise awareness about the small things everyone can do to help keep the town's world-class beaches clean and healthy.

The first-of-its-kind campaign will highlight important guidance about what should and shouldn't go down toilets and drains to reduce the risk of blockages and pollutions.

South West Water initially met with councillors in December 2022 after a motion was brought by Cllr Drew Creek expressing the strength of feeling in the local community around the water quality at their beaches. The Council sought assurance from the company that investment would be made to reduce storm overflow discharges.

Alongside South West Water outlining their commitments to the town under their regional WaterFit programme, which will deliver a reduction in storm overflow discharges at beaches by 2025, South West Water and the council also committed to working together on a pilot project, which focuses on the importance of 'sewers for sewage' - keeping the network flowing smoothly and highlighting the part everyone can play, just by taking simple actions.

Every year South West Water removes around 450 tonnes of unflushables, such as wet wipes, from its pumping stations which is enough to fill 30 double decker buses. These unflushables can cause blockages in sewers which can lead to pollutions and flooding, as well as storm overflow operation.

The campaign will share simple tips about the things everyone can do to prevent blockages, from only flushing the 3Ps – pee, paper and poo, to getting a water butt to help store and slow the flow of water into the sewers.

As part of the campaign, South West Water has created a toolkit of materials, including posters, leaflets and social media assets which the town council will share with their network of contacts, helping to bring this important information to light for residents and visitors to the area.

South West Water will also be visiting local businesses in the area to help prevent fats, oils, and grease (FOG) from entering the sewers. The visits are designed to educate commercial kitchen staff about the importance of properly disposing of FOG and food waste to avoid it going down sinks and drains, leading to blockages.

**Helen Dobby, South West Water's Director of Bio-Resources,** said: *"We are extremely pleased to be working with Newquay Town Council on this pilot campaign. While water quality standards are high across Newquay's beaches, we recognise we have a big part to play in keeping them that way. We also know that the more unflushables and excess surface water we can keep out of our sewers, the more we can help keep unnecessary pressure off the network.*

*"We are confident that this will help to reduce pollutions, floodings and even contribute to reducing storm overflow activity. We are looking forward to seeing how this collaboration works and we hope it will lead to a similar way of working with other councils and community groups."*

**Councillor Drew Creek, Newquay Town Council,** said: *"As a council we are very clear as to the strength of feeling around water quality at local beaches, so much so that I brought a motion to the council on this specific issue. Since then we have met several times with South West Water and have been encouraged to hear about their plans to reduce pollutions and storm overflow discharges at our beaches. As a council however, we felt more needed to be done. The next step we have agreed with South West Water is a pragmatic, first of its kind project, which we hope will contribute to reducing ocean pollution. Over the coming weeks and months, we will be watching closely the progress South West Water makes to meeting its commitments.*

**ENDS**

**Notes to editor**

In 2022 Towan, Great Western, Tolcarne, Fistril North, Fistril South, Lusty Glaze, Mawgan Porth and Watergate Bay met Excellent water quality standards, with Porth meeting 'Good', as assessed by the Environment Agency.

Storm overflows are built into the sewer network system so that at times of high network pressure, when flows are increased by heavy rainfall for example, they can take excess volumes of water out of the system, discharging flows to a river or stream. This ensures homes and businesses are not flooded.

WaterFit will deliver a step change in environmental performance through front loading and re-balancing investment. South West Water will be able to speed up and go beyond its base plans, delivering £330 million to 2025 to improve the quality of the region's rivers and seas. It is the company's biggest environmental programme in 15 years.