

Freshwater Charlestown Summary Project Plan

3rd April 2023

In 2020 only 50% of Scotland's freshwater was rated high or good ecological condition.

Timeline

We have started our project by working to gather existing data on water quality in the locations we are targeting which are part of the SEPA River Basin Management Plan, as well as finding out the levels of pollution that are regarded as acceptable across by SEPA here in Scotland, this includes pressures, measures, current conditions, future objectives, recorded incidents, past and current works including to restore for biodiversity and habitat. We are also looking at the Fife Council flood study, as a lot of our water quality issues are related to sewage and wastewater related pollution as well as road drainage pollutants, agricultural pesticide/nutrient run off and increased housing development pressure on infrastructure Scottish Water wise.

We will spend the next 2 months of April and May gathering data on our local area and FW catchment areas. We will also spend time ordering resources, understanding what time and support is available and the techniques and equipment we will be using to sample water. We plan to start monitoring from June 2023.

Location

We have identified 2 freshwater burns (rivers/streams):

The Lyne Burn that runs from the Hill of Beath through Dunfermline centre, towards Crossford and to Charlestown where it meets the sea where we are.

The Brankholme Burn links to a different catchment and is 90% rural catchment until it reaches Rosyth, then it runs through the hamlet of Pattiesmuir which is part of our community (CLP - Charlestown, Limekilns and Pattiesmuir) and is under pressure from housing developments.

All of the sampling points are on land accessible to the public in Scotland.

We plan to sample at different locations on the Lyne Burn, upstream e.g in agricultural areas, downstream through woodland gorge and from CSO locations. The Brankholme Burn will be sampled in one area most likely.

Budget

We don't foresee any costs for setting up our project, although we would like to use some of the funding we are receiving to print our report on what we have found in the future for use for lobbying for change and also to provide resources for the school.

It is likely we will have some paper and printing costs too.

We do not know yet how many sampling kits we get or how it all works but if we need extra kits we would order more of them.

We would also like to do invertebrate sampling in the river to engage the school, so perhaps a kit to help us do that and a microscope for the school to see what we have found.

Community Impact

The Lyne Burn runs through our village and meets the sea in our community, and we see the result on our beaches at Iron Mill Bay and surrounding beaches in Limekilns when there is heavy rain, in the form of sewage related debris (SRD). Iron Mill Bay is also an SSSI and SPA. We ask to see data on the water quality, the monitoring data of CSO's (combined sewage outflows) but much is missing (only 3% of CSO's are monitored in Scotland). SEPA were cyber attacked not long ago also, so some data has also been lost.

We would like to take ownership and have our own knowledge of the state of our local rivers so we can raise awareness and be informed and make change happen if needed.

The volunteers involved are from across the community and part of our nature group and are very active. They include parents, environmental consultants, retired professionals, grandparents, enthusiastic local residents who want to learn more about their local rivers, a local councillor passionate about the environment. Everyone is very excited about the project.

We will visit the school (who we have a very close working relationship with) and update them on what we are finding and will prepare resources for the teachers. We will share news of the project across our Facebook nature group page, across local Facebook community pages and in the local press if suitable. Our 100+ CLP Nature Group volunteers are already aware of it through our nature group email newsletter and will continue to get updates.

As said if there are lobbying opportunities to support existing work of charities etc, we will happily support.

We see a great opportunity through this project to bring our community together to have some ownership over their local freshwater habitat as they already do with our marine habitat with our beach cleans and nurdle hunts which are well attended!