

Summary of Public Consultation at Knaresborough on February 25th

- A well-attended meeting with more than 50 people there most of the time, (the agenda is on the NAG website)
- A huge range of thoughtful, well-argued presentations, focused on important areas of concern that we have about the health of the Nidd
- interesting and relevant questions and views expressed by attendees and responded to by presenters.
- A spirit of collaboration and understanding, mixed with frustration and some cynicism at what seems to be slow progress.
- It showed a continuing concern and involvement in all things Nidd!
- The Nidd Action Group AGM was held

John Wilkinson spoke of the AQuA project starting this year, led by York University but involving many citizen science groups (including NAG). The project focus is on collaborative understanding of Yorkshire rivers, supporting citizen scientists to use innovative validated field-friendly techniques to monitor river water quality.

David Clayden (NAG) summarized the current Bathing Water and ecological quality status of the Nidd, and the complex web of organizations working (mostly) together to make improvements. Using NAG's published Action Plan for 2025 onwards he reviewed the volunteer activities proposed.

Jonny Grey (WTT) described successes in improving wild trout populations (and invertebrates and plants) in the Nidd becks by improving the river habitat, alongside water quality and quantity effects.

Claire Campbell (EA) showed that the overall WFD classification of the Ecological status of the Nidd's waterbodies masked a range of concerns about the effects on fish and plant life and phosphate levels. The Plan for improving bathing water includes the current 3 sondes in place to gather continuous data about the Nidd and weekly samples from 4 locations upstream of the Lido. Compliance inspections and working with citizen scientists were important.

Sarah Lonsdale (YDRT) spoke of its role and resources, and its involvement with training volunteers (on MoRPh, outfall safaris, riverfly monitoring, INNS etc.) in conjunction with citizen science groups such as NAG.

Josh Cohen (University of Leeds) provided a thought-provoking presentation about the changing views of people about their rivers – moving from being 'Kin' to being an economic, controllable 'thing'. He announced local events of May 1st (an evening discussion) an already fully booked 'floating seminar' on May 2nd and an art-related public event on May 20th.

Hugh Clear Hill (NYC) spoke enthusiastically of the Council's co-ordinating and collaborative role as a responsible authority among a huge variety of organisations and agencies. to improve health, climate and tourism agendas.

Nathan Lawson and George Taplin (YW) spoke of bathing at The Lido, analysing water samples and modelling to understand the inputs. YW are investing £49M in 8 storm overflows upstream of The Lido to reduce spills to less than one per season by 2030, Reasons for pollution are mostly from agricultural practices and from human sewage, continuous treated sewage as well as from overflows. Citizen's support would be welcomed – the three P's!

Discharges from the Nidd's 87 storm overflows are due to be reduced to less than 10 overflows pa by 2050. Many of the Nidd's 17 Waste Water Treatment Works (WWTWs) are to be provided with phosphorous removal equipment so that by 2030 96% of final effluents from WWTWs would have been through a phosphorous removal process.

David Clayden, NAG Chair

.6 March 2025