

The Lido at Knaresborough- Swimming in the Nidd.

Summary

EA sampling for E.coli at the Lido on July 15 provided the highest concentration yet (**9,300 cfus**).

The 'sufficient' level of <900 has been exceeded in 10 of the 11 weekly samples taken since May by the EA so far, so **bathing water quality at The Lido** is continually **POOR**

From available data it seems unlikely that combined sewer overflows or rain are responsible for this current high level

Local swimmers need to understand the causes of this high level of pollution and to know the actions likely to be proposed by EA, YW and others to improve water quality at The Lido in a reasonable timescale.

Current EA advice is not to swim within 72 hours of rainfall

Evidence from Ilkley's Bathing Water designation some three years ago should inform actions on the Nidd's water quality.

A public meeting in Knaresborough to review the situation in The Lido would help local swimmers and other citizens concerned about their river.

The involvement of Harrogate and Knaresborough's new MP or the new Mayor of York and North Yorkshire would ensure a coordinated, evidence-based action

Background Text:

Weekly EA Sampling Results

If you look at the Environment Agency's weekly sampling of concentrations of E. Coli at the Lido [Bathing water profile \(data.gov.uk\)](#) (or Google Swimfo) you will notice that the most recent level of **9,300 on July 15th is the highest at The Lido yet**, since May.

The 'sufficient' level of <900 has been exceeded in 10 of the 11 weekly samples taken by the EA so far, so **bathing water quality at The Lido** is continually **POOR**.

What caused this considerable recent rise?

- There were no reported combined sewer overflows on Yorkshire Water's interactive map on the web. <https://www.niddactiongroup.org/resources/Yorkshire-Water-Publish-Interactive-Map-of-Storm-Overflows.pdf>
- The most recent local storm overflows were on Knaresborough's Waterside CSOs (47 and 48) and upstream at Killinghall and Hampsthwaite on July 9th and 10th, and from Harrogate North STW and Hollins Close on July 16th
- There has not been much rain recently. There was light rain in the area after 18.00 on July 15th and in the morning of July 16th, but the sample had probably already been taken by then.
- There certainly wasn't any 'Moderate or Heavy rain in the previous 72 hours' that tends to produce raised E.coli values - from treated and untreated human sewage, or from animal faeces washed into the river upstream.
- Treated human sewage is discharged into the river or becks more or less continuously, and sewage treatment works are not required or setup to remove E.coli from the waste water that they legally discharge.

- Other potential sources of E.coli include private (non YW) sewage treatment plants (septic tanks)

What does the future for water quality at The Lido look like?

- Sampling will continue until the end of September and then the EA has six months to define a plan of action ((hopefully more than putting up warning notices that state what is already known)
- The EA works slowly and methodically (they have had their resources cut considerably in recent years) and YW concentrates on keeping the regulator (but not local citizens) reasonably happy by slowly improving the sewerage network and its overflows.
- I attended a public meeting of the Addingham Environment Group yesterday 'The wonders and woes of the Wharfe'. Excellent science by local citizen scientists and experienced university researchers. The EA was present, and after three years collecting data at the Ilkley bathing water site, their bathing water is still POOR and the EA's best advice is not to swim within 72 hours of rainfall!

What can we do?

- NAG is currently involved in a collaborative national project of Bathing Waters to take additional independent samples to understand the different types of pollution in the Nidd, and their sources.
- Our local Rivers Trust (YDRT) is working with NAG and other stakeholders to improve the Nidd's ecological health – seeking funding for a collaborative holistic project (iNidd), based largely on NAG's surveys in 2023 that identified 'hotspots' of pollution - but focusing on their origins.
- The new UK Government is committed to improve our rivers, but their primary focus seems to be on 'growth', particularly on building ever more houses that connect to our existing, failing sewerage network
- A report by the Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit suggests that winter floods will impact the growing potential of high-quality farmland, particularly in the low-lying land in Eastern England, through increased flooding. It is not just about swimming!
- NO-ONE is looking holistically at the problem or acting with any urgency

Individuals need to continue to

- monitor the water quality of the Nidd and its tributaries
- report any pollution to the EA 0800 80 70 60
- keep the Nidd in the public eye by campaigning. E.g. A meeting on September 22nd in Ilkley <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/cleaning-up-our-rivers-lakes-seas-the-answers-tickets-913536882407>
- call for a public meeting in Knaresborough for EA and YW to present their current understanding of bathing water quality at the Lido and the actions they propose.
- advocate improvement in the Nidd to anyone who will listen.

Maybe Harrogate and Knaresborough's new MP or the new Mayor of York and North Yorkshire will get some coordinated, evidence-based action started?

Unless they get citizens involved, local swimmers at The Lido will not see improvement any time soon. We are part of the problem, **and** part of the solution!

David Clayden, Nidd Action Group Chair.