



South West
Water

Let's talk water

News from South West Water • Summer 2022

Bringing water to life

supporting the lives
of people and the
places they love for
generations to come

in this issue...

OUR NEW COMMUNITY FUNDS

Supporting brilliant
causes

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WELCOME TO WATERFIT

Our commitments
for the future of
the environment

PAGES 4-5

DESIGN OUR MASCOT!

Win £1,000 for
a local charity
or school

PAGE 16



A WARM WELCOME FROM SUSAN DAVY

Our job – providing clean water every hour of every day of the year is so important. We’re integral to communities across the South West and what makes me most proud, are the people who work alongside me, committed to ensure water for all, and protecting the environment from challenges today and for future generations.

In February, we announced that average water bills for our customers will fall in 2022 at a time when escalating energy and food costs are concerning many. We did it, because it’s the right thing to do, and because it’s our role to listen and respond.

I’m also proud to call the South West home. As a keen paddleboarder, and CEO of the region’s water and wastewater provider, I was delighted that this year, for the first time, we’ve achieved 100% bathing water quality right across the region.

Right now, we are focusing on delivering our largest environmental improvement plan for 15 years to deliver region wide benefits for our environment and economy.

I know from listening to you, that there’s more we need to do. It’s clear you want us to go further and faster in protecting our rivers and seas. And we are.

This year we have launched **WaterFit**. WaterFit brings together existing plans to deliver multiple benefits outlining how we can all play our part, working with you our customers, our partners, visitors, and local communities to protect and enhance the South West’s water for future generations. Simply put getting WaterFit will help put nature on everyone’s doorsteps – making water accessible for all. Read more about our plans on page 4.

I hope you enjoy this edition of Let’s talk water!

OUR PEOPLE

We are made up of 2,100 talented people across the region.

From the bottom point of Cornwall all the way to Somerset, and not forgetting the Isles of Scilly. Our people are out there – working on the network – treating, testing, inspecting and protecting. We never stop. For you, tea drinkers, shower takers and Sunday roast makers. We’re keeping life going.

We’re bringing water to life

Jules is helping us plant 250,000 trees (FIND OUT MORE ON PAGE 11)



Cameron helps tackle blockages



MEET ONE OF OUR GRADUATES

Our Graduate Management Operational Programme has already welcomed 26 new graduates, and we’ll be recruiting 100 more to the programme by 2025, starting right away. **Bethany Lock** is one of them.

Bethany joined us in the first year of the programme in our Customer Communications department.

“Not many people think about the water that comes out of their taps, let alone the various roles involved at a water company,” she says. “One of the best things I’ve done so far is set up TikTok. We got half a million views on one video within a month which is awesome. It’s incredible to be able to join a business and have the opportunity to do something new.”

Dive into a career with us southwestwater.co.uk/careers

SHINING A SPOTLIGHT ON OUR COMMUNITY

We not only serve the South West community, we're also part of it. There are many community projects which make a real difference to the lives of our region's people and the places they love. We're delighted to do what we can to support them through our community funds.

Since launching our two funds in 2020, we've helped over **100 brilliant causes** across the region. **Our Neighbourhood Fund** has supported fantastic local projects such as repairing buildings, providing sports equipment and helping vulnerable people. Through our **Water-Saving Community Fund** we've inspired communities to get involved in saving water. This has already resulted in an estimated yearly saving of around **59 million litres!**

The Hugs Foundation

Based in Bodmin, Hugs offers children who are suffering with their mental health six weekly one-hour sessions of 'animal-assisted' interventions, linking vulnerable and anxious children with rescue animals. They applied for help through our Neighbourhood Fund and received sponsorship for ten treatment placements.



25% of the funding available from our Neighbourhood Fund now goes to projects which protect our rivers.

southwestwater.co.uk/community



Devon Air Ambulance Trust



Cornwall Air Ambulance



Carrie & Mandy



Heathfield Allotment Trust

In the autumn of 2020, trustees were shocked to find how much water was being wasted through hoses left on, inefficient watering and over-use of taps. After applying to our Water-Saving Community Fund for 25 water butts, we surprised them by sending 30. The results speak for themselves:

"I know of at least two plot-holders who have gone all summer without using the tap!" says Carrie.

"I think people were really surprised that South West Water was giving us supplies that would help reduce our bill. This had a massive impact on us financially, but more importantly on the environment too. We need to be using natural resources with less wastage. It's a win-win situation" adds Mandy.

WaterFit

protecting rivers and
seas together

What makes the South West the best place to live in the UK?

Water plays a vital part in making the South West what it is, and WaterFit is all about protecting just that.

We've been listening to you, our customers, our communities, and campaigners across the region. It's clear, you want us to go further and faster to protect our region's precious environment.

WaterFit is key in protecting our river and coastal water quality.

OUR SIX WATERFIT COMMITMENTS

1 Nurture healthy rivers and seas

We'll reduce our impact on rivers by a third by 2025, and plan to make sure we cause zero harm by 2030. We also aim to eliminate pollution incidents by 2025, with a steady reduction between now and then.

2 Put nature on everyone's doorstep

We'll provide access to all our inland lakes and reservoirs, so you can enjoy everything they offer. And we'll achieve the region's first bathing quality river.

3 Create and restore habitats

We're going to restore another 1,000 hectares of peatlands by 2025 to create new habitats, improve river quality and reduce flooding, and we'll be working with farming communities to stop pollutants getting into our rivers.

4 Inspire local champions

We're donating 25% of our Neighbourhood Fund to local groups that share our passion for river health, and we'll be launching our WaterFit Warriors Programme soon.

5 Create a sustainable future

We're already well ahead of our schedule to plant a quarter of a million trees by 2025 to help fight climate change, support river health and create new wildlife habitats.

6 Put people in control

We'll share our progress through our website, our unique WaterShare+ scheme, at our quarterly public meetings and at the Customer AGM. You can keep in touch via our website, or come along to our meetings, to see how we're doing, and tell us what you think.



Some of the great things we're already doing...

Peatlands

The moors of Bodmin, Dartmoor and Exmoor include peat deposits and wetlands, which make up complex ecosystems supporting diverse and unique ecology. We're working in partnership to prevent further losses, while improving and restoring these habitats.

River pilots

We will install measurement pilots in the Dart and the Tavy, to monitor the current health of the rivers, and highlight what we need to do to restore, improve and protect them for the future. We're aiming to achieve our first ever river bathing water status for the South West.

Trees

Trees help combat climate change, improve water quality, reduce flooding, enhance biodiversity and add to the natural beauty of our region. Our new commitment is to plant 250,000 trees by 2025.

Upstream Thinking

How we protect the environment is not just about building physical infrastructure, how we work in our landscape and in partnership across the region is important too. That's why we've been working with farmers and organisations to improve water quality and restore our precious environment. Since 2010, we've worked with 864 farms to improve water quality.

Pioneering research


We're working with the University of Exeter to create The Centre for Resilience in Environment, Water and Waste. Through world-leading research we will tackle some of the biggest key environmental challenges we face.



Want to learn more?
Read our WaterFit plan
southwestwater.co.uk/waterfit

PUTTING
NATURE
ON

everyone's doorstep




From the very bottom of Cornwall all the way to Somerset, the South West is home to over 40 inland waters which play a critical role in keeping the region flowing.

Our local lakes are natural marvels, not only for capturing and storing rainwater, they're also important for people and wildlife. Millions of people from across the UK visit our lakes every year, making them destinations in their own right. Some of our lakes are located in National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and many have designations such as Local Nature Reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Interest. They're rich in history, with some over 100 years old.

Great places to visit

Drift away from the Crowdy places and enjoy a slice of Avon at one of your local lakes.

-  Lakes
-  Rivers
-  North Devon Biosphere
-  Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
-  National Parks



Isles of Scilly



swlakestrust

TAP INTO THE AMAZING WORLD OF WATER



Last year we opened the doors to our brand-new educational visitor centre at Roadford Lake. Designed for children, it's fun, interactive, and educational. Come and discover how we track down leaks with one of our listening devices, find out which water-saving hero you are, take the water-saving pledge, brave the sewer surprise and uncover some of the weird things that get flushed down the loo... oh and don't forget a slice of cake from the cafe.

Protecting local lakes for people and wildlife, today and in the future

The South West Lakes Trust is an independent charity that takes care of local lakes, working hard to protect the landscape and improve the quality of the water. The Trust also opens up our sites to the public. You can try your hand at archery, learn how to sail or windsurf, enjoy fishing from the bank or a boat, or try something completely new like paddleboarding.

For true lake lovers, there's even the chance to book a camping pitch by the water.

To book your trip visit swlakestrust.org.uk

**YOU
CAN'T
BEAT**

a glass of the good stuff



**But how much do you
know about it?**

**OUR DRINKING
WATER NETWORK
IN NUMBERS**



374

MILLION LITRES
of drinking water
supplied every day



1.8

MILLION PEOPLE
served across
our region



38

WATER TREATMENT
WORKS
operated and
maintained



21

RESERVOIRS
supply the
region's drinking
water



15,583

KILOMETRES
of pipework
keep our water
flowing

Most of us don't think about what's involved in keeping our taps running. Here in the South West, our unique geography includes a hilly landscape, limited groundwater reserves and a population which is spread out over huge distances. Each of these things would present a huge challenge on its own, but together they mean our systems and processes are much more complicated than in most other regions.

It's not just the volumes of water we need to consider but how to get it to people who often live in widespread communities at very different height levels, and this means that pumping is a much bigger deal than in flatter areas.

It's clearly worth the effort though. The fresh, clean water for our cuppas is among the best in the world.



“

The fact that people don't need to worry about what happens beyond the tap means we are doing our job. This is down to our incredible teams who work around the clock while many of us are asleep. For all the tech in the world, we're a people business and rely heavily on our team. ”

**MARK
HILLSON**
Drinking Water
Services Director

DID YOU KNOW?

90% of our drinking water comes from surface water sources, such as reservoirs and rivers. The other 10% comes from groundwater sources such as springs, wells and boreholes which are mainly located in East Devon. This is different from other parts of the country – for example, Wessex Water gets 75% of its water supplies from groundwater.



LEAKS – WE'RE ON IT!



Tackling leaks with drones, satellites, listening devices and good old-fashioned know-how.

We've halved leakage levels in our region but that doesn't mean we're stopping! There's more work to do to hit our target. We hate to see water wasted. Pinpointing and fixing leaks as quickly as possible is one of our top priorities.

What causes leaks?

A pipe can spring a leak at any time and there are a number of reasons why, from changes in the weather to extreme spikes in demand.

Most leaks aren't visible, they're hidden underground, which makes finding some a real challenge. In the South West we have a vast underground maze of pipes to monitor. Laid end to end, our pipes could reach from here to Australia.

How we're tackling leaks

- **Using the latest tech**

We're monitoring our network with drones, satellites and listening devices. Drones are helping us cover huge areas quicker and access hard to reach places, like Dartmoor and Exmoor. Satellites show signs of potential leaks across the region, and our leakage technicians are kitted out with advanced listening devices to make tracking the exact point of the leak easier.

- **Employing more people**

From finding leaks to fixing them – our people are key in helping us reduce leakage. They're out there, monitoring our pipes and pinpointing the exact spot of a leak, round the clock and in all weathers.



SEEN A LEAK? LET US KNOW

No matter how big or small – if you spot a leak, we might not know about it, so please let us know as soon as possible.

You can let us know on social media, via our website, or by calling our leak helpline.

 @southwestwater

 southwestwater.co.uk/reportleak

 **0800 230 0561**
(24 hours a day)

DIAL BEFORE YOU DIG

Digging when you don't know what's underneath or without taking adequate precautions can be catastrophic. Damage to the surrounding areas, as well as impacting drinking water supplies to homes, businesses and hospitals is incredibly serious. The costs of repairs can be huge.

Call us for help with tracing a water main before you begin work, or to discuss diverting a water main, on the numbers below:

0344 346 1010

8am-6pm Monday-Friday,
9am-1pm Saturday

0344 346 2020

for emergencies outside the hours above.

A GREENER, CLEANER FUTURE FOR THE SOUTH WEST



The world is facing a genuine climate emergency. 2010-2019 was the warmest decade on record. We need to act now to protect our planet.

TOP FACT

45% of our daily water supply comes from Dartmoor. The peat here can be up to seven metres deep, storing up to

10 million
TONNES OF CARBON

That's the equivalent to a year's emissions from all businesses in the UK.

It takes a lot of energy to make drinking water, and to treat and return wastewater back into our environment.

Our mission?

TO CUT OUR CARBON EMISSIONS AND HIT NET ZERO BY 2030.

But what is Net Zero?

Net Zero simply means taking more harmful gases out of the atmosphere than you put in. Achieving the balance can seem tough, especially in a world used to doing things unsustainably.

That's why we have a plan.

What does Net Zero mean to us?

It means cutting up to 100,000 tonnes in carbon emissions.

We're focusing on how we create and use energy in the most efficient way and the clever ways we can use our local environment to minimise carbon emissions for decades to come.

Luckily for us, the South West gives us everything we need, from renewable energy sources (plenty of sun, wind and water) to our natural peatlands which, when healthy, can store huge amounts of carbon or CO₂.

We've also teamed up with Exeter University to build a state-of-the-art research facility – the Centre for Resilience in Environment, Water and Waste (CREWW). By working together we'll aim to solve some of the biggest environmental challenges facing us right now; floods, droughts, and rising sea levels.

So, what are we doing?

- Making our treatment processes more energy efficient** ✓
- Switching to a 100% electric car and van fleet by 2030** ✓
- Swapping fossil fuels for lower carbon options** ✓
- Purchasing 100% renewable source electricity** ✓
- Recovering energy from wastewater sludge** ✓
- Reducing leaks and helping customers to use less water** ✓
- Restoring peatland to capture carbon naturally** ✓
- Planting 250,000 trees by 2025** ✓
- Providing lower carbon services with the help of our supply chain partners** ✓

TREES ARE NATURE'S WATER CLEANERS



Back in 2019, we announced ambitious plans to plant at least 100,000 trees by 2030 – a target we smashed by 2021. Now we're upping our plans, and with the help of our Land Management teams we're on track to plant 250,000 trees by 2025.

There's no better way of protecting our water supply and improving the environment and our mental health. Nature's water cleaners also help to combat climate change, improve water quality, reduce flooding, enhance biodiversity and add to the natural beauty of our region!



RESTORING PRECIOUS PEATLAND

We've invested millions in restoring precious peatland on Exmoor, Dartmoor and Bodmin Moor – where 90% of the water we use in Devon and Cornwall comes from.

Our unique landscape is crucial to improving everyday lives. By restoring peatland and bogs we can help to store carbon, improve water quality, reduce flooding, and work wonders protecting wildlife too.

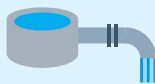
EVERYDAY THINGS WE DO...

emptying the sink, flushing the loo...

What happens next?

OUR WASTEWATER NETWORK IN NUMBERS


636
MILLION LITRES
of wastewater
treated every day



1,222
PUMPING STATIONS
keep the network
flowing

DID YOU KNOW?

We maintain more than **650 wastewater treatment works** to help serve our 1.8 million customers. In comparison, Thames Water serves nearly 4 million customers from just one wastewater treatment works.


653
WASTEWATER
TREATMENT WORKS
operated and
maintained


100%
WATER QUALITY
STANDARDS
achieved at our
bathing beaches


19,049
KILOMETRES
of pipework
to move wastewater
around the region

From the moment you flush the loo, empty the bath, or wash your clothes; the water you've used must travel through our wastewater network to be treated and tested so it's clean and safe enough to be returned to the environment. This may sound simple enough, but it's anything but...

Unique challenges

The South West is beautiful, there's nowhere else quite like it. But it's this unique beauty that makes managing our region's wastewater services a hugely challenging operation compared to most of England.

We're surrounded by the coast, we have two National Parks and nine Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Not many people live here, and the 1.8 million who do are widely dispersed. This means we need to maintain an extensive sewer network and hundreds of treatment works to take away and treat sewage from isolated communities.

Plus, millions of tourists flock down to our region every summer to enjoy everything the South West has to offer, adding extra pressure to our network.

To add to the challenge, our environment is changing. We're dealing with the impacts of climate change and increasing extreme changes in our weather. Also, as the population grows, there are more houses, driveways and roads.

This results in more surface water entering our sewers. And that's why we're working with communities, and organisations, to reduce the amount of rainwater entering our system.

This is part of our programme called Downstream Thinking, find more about it on our website

[southwestwater.co.uk/
downstreamthinking](https://southwestwater.co.uk/downstreamthinking)



“

No two days are the same. My job is running and maintaining Lords Meadow wastewater treatment works in Crediton. This includes sampling effluents, plant operation and maintenance, project managing, quality monitoring and optimisation. I have a big passion for the environment and nature so working in a role that has a direct positive impact is very fulfilling.

”

MARCUS BROWN

Wastewater Operator

Are you a WaterFit Warrior?



Our beautiful beaches, bathing waters, rivers and abundant natural environment set us apart from any other region and we need to work together to protect them.

We need your help to stop the block

Pipe blockages add millions of pounds to water bills each year, as well as causing damage to the environment. The main cause of blockages is people putting things they shouldn't into the water system, either by flushing them or pouring them down the drain. We need your help. And it's really easy...

- Only flush the 3Ps – poo, pee and (toilet) paper
- Don't pour cooking oil, fats and grease down the sink
- Don't put coffee grounds down the sink.

SHOULD YOU FLUSH IT?

You may see some products labelled flushable or biodegradable, but that doesn't mean you should flush them down the loo.

'**Flushable**' simply means products can pass through your toilet bowl. These products don't break down quickly enough to avoid blockages, so you should pop them in the bin.

'**Biodegradable**' products will also take a long time to break down, meaning they are likely to cause blockages and should be thrown away in the bin.



DID YOU KNOW?

Each year we remove approximately

1,800 tonnes

of inappropriate material from the sewer system

=

158

Double decker buses



In the past we've found jewellery, mobile phones, false teeth and even underwear!

ENJOY
YOUR
BREW

without the worry.

This year, we announced our average bill is cheaper than the year before. But at the same time, energy bills have increased and we know many of you have been impacted. No one should struggle to pay their water bill. We can, and we will, help.

Our new online calculator makes it easy for you to get the right help for your individual needs. Simply answer five quick questions and you'll be able to see straight away what sort of support we can offer you.

WAYS
WE
CAN
HELP...

Our flexible payment plans help by spreading the cost of your water bill – you can have a weekly, fortnightly or a monthly plan.

If you're on a low income, one of our support tariffs could help by reducing the amount you pay.

If you've fallen behind on your bill then we have a range of support in place, such as a payment matching scheme, or a grant which will clear your water debt.

Switch and save with a water meter. The average saving is between £300 and £400 a year. If you decide a meter isn't for you, you can easily switch back within two years.

Our **FREE** water-saving goodies can help you save water and money on your bill (if you're on a water meter).

Head here to order yours southwestwater.co.uk/savewater



Find out more
southwestwater.co.uk/helpwithbills

Prefer to speak on the phone?
Please call us on **0344 346 1010**

HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT...

PRIORITY SERVICES

Every now and again we all might need a little extra help, whether it's due to age, illness, a disability, or something else.

Sign up to our register for **FREE** and let us know what extra support you need.

What do we offer?

- Water deliveries if there's been a burst and you have no water
 - Letters and bills in large print
 - Telephone bill reading, NGT text relay and minicom
 - We can mail your bills to a nominated person, such as a carer
 - Request us to read your meter up to four times a year
- And more...



Join today

 0344 346 1010

Minicom 0800 169 9965

[southwestwater.co.uk/
priorityservices](https://southwestwater.co.uk/priorityservices)

WaterShare+ HAVE YOUR SAY

new
deal

Do you want to have your say in how we're run? Or ask us a question? Good, because we want you to be involved in what we do.

WaterShare+ is managed by an independent Advisory Panel. They represent the interests of our customers, and hold us to account.

You can attend one of our quarterly public meetings or our customer annual general meeting and find out what's going on at South West Water, and ask our executives any questions you may have.

Get involved
southwestwater.co.uk/watershareplus

WHERE TO FIND OUT MORE...

We publish various reports and documents on our website to help customers find out more about what we do, our future plans and how we can help them.

Following feedback from you, publications such as our Annual Performance Report and Business Plan 2020-25 have also been condensed into shorter customer summaries, so that you can access important information about our performance and future plans, in a customer friendly format.

Visit our website to find out more
southwestwater.co.uk



DESIGN AND NAME OUR FIRST EVER MASCOT

Feeling creative? Win £1,000 for a local charity or school, as well as a £100 shopping voucher for yourself!

Design your mascot here and make sure to give it a name!

HOW TO ENTER

Send your entry to us by 31 August 2022 to be in with a chance of winning. Please include your full name and contact details with your entry, so we can get in touch if you win. We'll select a winner by 30 September 2022.

Pop your entry through the post: Let's talk water 2022, South West Water, Peninsula House, Rydon Lane, Exeter, EX2 7HR.

Or ping us an email with your entry: education@southwestwater.co.uk

Full terms and conditions can be found on our website southwestwater.co.uk/letstalkwatertandc

This competition is open to all residents within our service area.

Closing date for entries is 31 August 2022.

KEY NUMBERS AND DATES

Questions? Just give us a ring!

Accounts Helpline for billing enquiries

0344 346 1010*

8am - 6pm Monday - Friday

9am - 1pm Saturday

Closed on Sundays and bank holidays

Debt Helpline

0800 234 6317

8am - 8pm Monday - Thursday

8am - 6pm Friday

9am - 1pm Saturday

24 Hour Emergency Helpline

0344 346 2020*

Call this number if you have an emergency with your water or sewerage supply.

Paying your bill

To make a debit card payment:

0800 230 0750

To set up a Direct Debit:

0800 083 2365

Meters

About meter installations:

0800 083 4301

If you want to talk about an estimate bill:

0800 083 4247

Come and say hello to us at the following events

Royal Cornwall Show

Wadebridge

9 - 11 June 2022

Mazey Day

Penzance

25 June 2022

Devon County Show

Exeter

30 June -

2 July 2022

Age UK

Roadford Swim

Roadford Lake

10 July 2022

Tavistock EcoFest

Tavistock

16 July 2022

Mid Devon Show

Tiverton

23 July 2022

Woolery Show

Bideford

25 July 2022

Yealmpton Show

Yealmpton

27 July 2022

Mt. Edgecombe Country Fair

Torpoint

7 August 2022

Okehampton Show

Okehampton

11 August 2022

*03 numbers are charged at standard rates and will be included in any free minutes in a mobile or landline phone contract.