

Petition Submission Report Untreated Sewage Discharges into the River Wriggle and Local Roads Submitted to: Clerk, Thornhackett Parish Council Petition Organiser: Paul Hollick Yetminster, Dorset Date: 8th March 2026

1. Purpose of this Report This report formally submits a community petition requesting action regarding untreated sewage discharges affecting the River Wriggle and surrounding roads within the Wriggle Valley, including areas within the Thornhackett Parish Council administrative area at Beer Hackett pumping station. The petition is submitted in accordance with the Thornhackett Parish Council Petitions Policy and is respectfully requested to be considered at the next available Parish Council meeting.

2. Petition Statement The petition calls upon Thornhackett Parish Council to: Recognise the growing public concern regarding untreated sewage discharges affecting the River Wriggle and local roads. Formally raise these concerns with Wessex Water, the Environment Agency and the local Member of Parliament. Support calls for urgent investigation and infrastructure improvements to prevent sewage discharges into the river system and onto public highways. Support independent monitoring and transparency of water quality within the River Wriggle catchment. The River Wriggle forms part of a wider catchment system flowing into the River Yeo, then the River Parrett and ultimately Bridgwater Bay. Pollution at source therefore affects communities well beyond the immediate parish area.

3. Background and Evidence Recent monitoring data and community observations indicate a concerning increase in sewage discharge activity across the three CSO's (BH=Beer Hackett). Environment Agency data shows: 2021 56 sewage discharge events (BH 19) Total duration: 288 hours (BH 94) 2022 63 sewage discharge events (BH 19) Total duration: 343 hours (BH 92) 2023 125 sewage discharge events (BH 58) Total duration: 904 hours (BH 599) 2024 107 sewage discharge events (BH 51) Total duration: 827 hours (BH 587) This represents a significant increase in both the number and duration of sewage discharge events into the river system. Local residents have also reported instances where untreated sewage has flowed across public roads, creating potential risks to public health and the local environment. In response to community concern, a public petition has been launched which has attracted over 740 signatures from residents and individuals, many with a connection to the Wriggle Valley area.

4. Infrastructure Concerns Residents were advised that significant investment was carried out by Wessex Water in 2023-2024, including extensive sewer pipe replacement between Yetminster and the Wessex Water pumping station near at Beer Hackett. This work was presented

as a solution to reduce sewage discharge problems. However, discharge events have continued and sewer jetting operations are still required to clear blockages, suggesting the infrastructure is still unable to cope with flows within the system. Additionally, there are concerns that some sewer sections have been reclassified as "foul only" sewers despite historically operating as "combined sewer" systems, which raises questions regarding the accuracy of sewer classification and reporting.

5. Community Support The petition has received over 740 signatures, significantly exceeding the minimum threshold of 50 signatures required under the Council's Petitions Policy. Signatories include residents and individuals with local connections to the Wriggle Valley communities including: Yetminster Leigh Chetnole Beer Hackett Thornford The number of signatures reflects substantial community concern regarding the ecological condition of the River Wriggle and the impact of sewage discharges on the local environment.

6. Requested Council Action The petition respectfully asks Thornhackett Parish Council to consider the following actions: - Receive and formally acknowledge the petition. - Discuss the issue at a Parish Council meeting and recognise the scale of community concern. - Request a meeting with Wessex Water to discuss: Ongoing sewage discharges Infrastructure capacity Urgent solutions to prevent pollution through CSO's. Engage with the local Member of Parliament and the Environment Agency to request investigation and oversight. Support calls for independent water. quality testing within the River Wriggle catchment.

7. Request to Address the Parish Council As the petition organiser, I would welcome the opportunity to briefly address the Parish Council when the petition is considered, in order to outline the concerns of residents and provide further context regarding the environmental impact and community concerns surrounding sewage discharges affecting the River Wriggle and surrounding roads.

8. Conclusion The River Wriggle is a valued local watercourse that forms part of a wider river system flowing through Dorset and Somerset. The scale of sewage discharge events recorded in recent years, combined with the strength of community concern demonstrated by the petition, highlights the need for urgent engagement with the responsible authorities and infrastructure providers. The petition is therefore respectfully submitted as a valid petition for consideration by Thornhackett Parish Council. Paul Hollick Petition Organiser  
<https://www.change.org/StopSewageInWriggleValleySaveOurRiver>