

## MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

10<sup>th</sup> October 2024, 7.30pm  
The Guildhall

Cllr C Martin (Chair)	Present	Cllr Golding	Present
Cllr Cook	Present	Cllr Perkin	Present
Cllr Coniam	Present	Martin Collins	Present
Cllr Eyre	Present	Matthew Hatchwell	Present
Cllr Gibson	Present		

### **In Attendance:**

Louise Bareham (Town Clerk)

**A presentation was delivered by David Hadley of FAVWAT prior to the start of the meeting – see slides attached.**

### **124. Apologies for Absence**

None.

### **125. Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Gibson Minute Item 127 DNPI as Chair of the SBC Eastern Area Committee

### **126. Previous Minutes and Matters Arising**

It was proposed by Cllr Gibson, seconded by Cllr Cook, and on being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED to accept the minutes of the Environment Committee dated 11<sup>th</sup> September 2024.**

### **127. Water Quality**

It was agreed to contact Natural England, and the Environment Agency, to express concerns about water quality in the Creek. Additionally, Cllr Gibson, advised that as Chair of the SBC Eastern Area Committee he was arranging a meeting with Helen Whately MP and Southern Water and would invite FAVWAT to be represented. Continuing Cllr Gibson asked for a letter to be drafted on behalf of the Committee to express its concerns. Matthew Hatchwell requested that Westbrook be included.

It was proposed by Cllr Cook, seconded by Cllr Coniam, and on being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED to:**

- 1) Form a Working Group to set up a campaign to include FAVWAT, Faversham Creek Trust, and Matthew Hatchwell as Chair of Friends of the Westbrook.**
- 2) Write letters to Natural England and the Environment Agency to express concerns about water quality.**
- 3) Write to Cllr Gibson as Chair of the SBC Eastern Area Committee to express concerns about water quality.**

**128. Update Reports**

Matthew Hatchwell provided an update on Stonebridge siltation. He was drafting a paper on Stonebridge Pond which would include the next steps, and it was agreed this would be presented at the next meeting.

It was proposed by Cllr Cook, seconded by Cllr Eyre, and on being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED to write to Swale BC to ask them to repair the sluices and carry out sluicing.**

Cllr Perkin provided an update on the Pesticide Free Action Framework. Cllr Perkin would contact Pesticide Action Network, work with the Town Clerk to update the Pesticide Free Action Framework and develop a schedule of Newsletter articles for 2025. The next step would be to ask the Pesticide Action Network for recognition as a Pesticide Free Town.

**129. Budget 2025-2026**

The Town Clerk reported £10,000 remained for the feasibility study at Stonebridge Pond. Matthew Hatchwell felt it would be better put towards items discussed earlier on sluicing. It was noted that Swale BC had also committed £10,000 to the feasibility study. Cllr Gibson suggested renaming the budget line so it could be put towards Water Health items.

**130. Hedgehog Awareness**

It was agreed the Hedgehog Awareness Week events, including the Talk carried out in the Guildhall, and the arts and crafts activities in the Town Hall, were very successful. It was agreed to donate £200 to Hogwinkles Hedgehog Rescue in recognition of their contribution to the Week.

It was agreed to promote Bat walks, and events/social media around Bees, Foxes, and Hedgehogs in 2025.

**131. Tree Week**

The Town Clerk reported Tree Whips would be given away in the Town Hall Exhibition space during the last week in November. The Tree Warden Victoria Dickenson had agreed to put together some guidance notes for the different tree varieties.

**132. Mapping Open Reach Cabinets**

It was noted the Openreach cabinet art programme was closed to new applicants at the current time.

**133. Perry Court**

The Town Clerk reported the transfer of ownership was in the final stages.

**134. Allotments**

The Allotments Report was noted.

**135. Items for Report**

- Perry Court

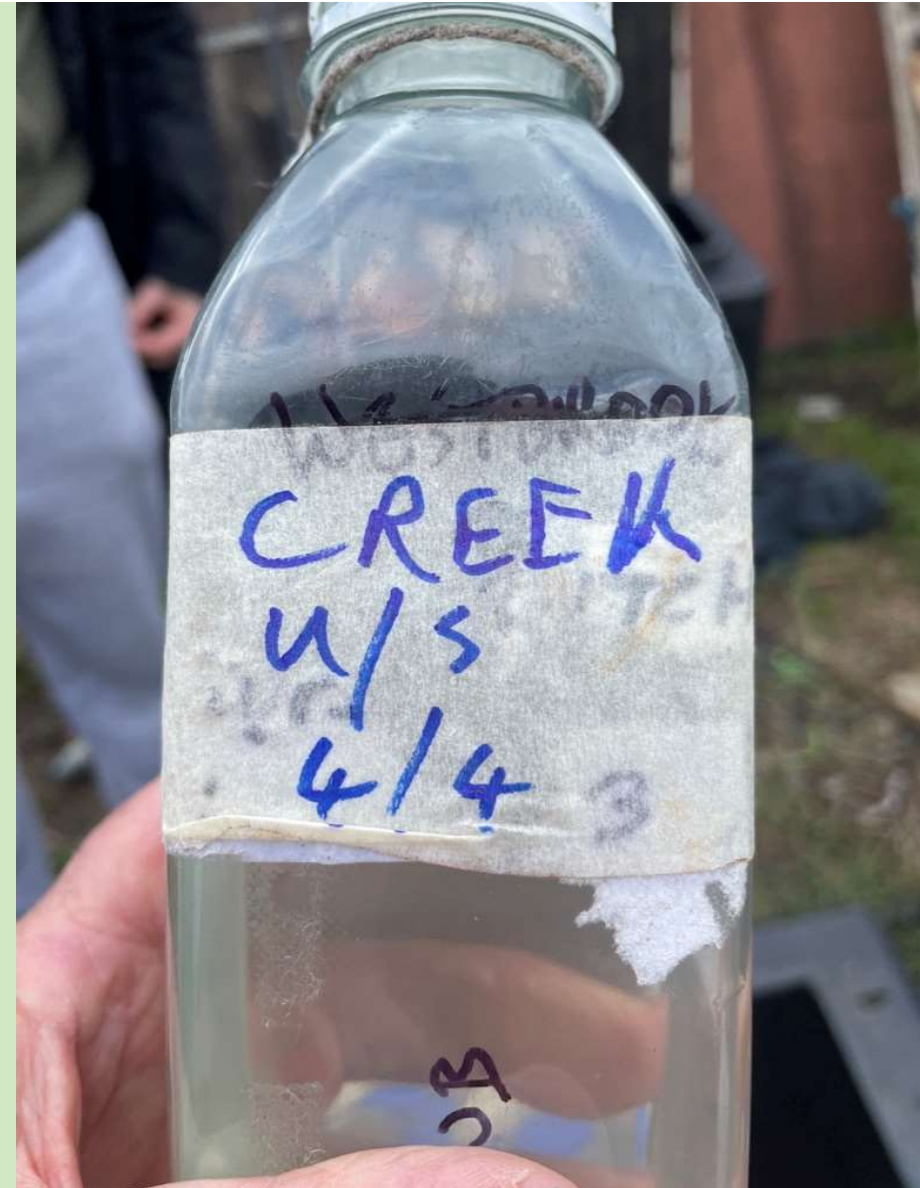
The Meeting concluded at 8:45pm.



# Favwat

## Faversham and villages water quality testing

Working with Faversham Creek Trust  
Friends of the Westbrook and Stonebridge Pond  
And  
Collaborating with the Zoological Society of London



The UK consistently ranks as one of the worst European countries for coastal water quality. Meanwhile, only 14% of our rivers warrant 'good' ecological status.

Surfers Against Sewage.

No single stretch of river in England or Northern Ireland is in good overall health, and just 14% reach good ecological health.

Rivers Trust.

In 2023, there were a total of  
**464,056 raw sewage discharges**  
into English rivers, waterways, and  
seas, this averaged  
**1,271 sewage spills per day**  
**Nearly 10,000 hours a day**

Spills data published by the Environment Agency

Supplied by the water companies



## The Environment Agency may record fewer than 3.5% of Thames Water's unpermitted spills\*

Our analysis shows that many unpermitted spills go undetected by the Environment Agency. This is partially because they only request daily data from Thames Water. We request data recorded at 15 minute intervals - giving us a more detailed picture.



\* Our analysis suggests there were 944 spills between 2010 & 2020 from Thames Water sites that breached permitted treatment standards. The Environment Agency records only list 33.



# Faversham Creek Sewage Works



# Faversham Creek Sewage Works outflow



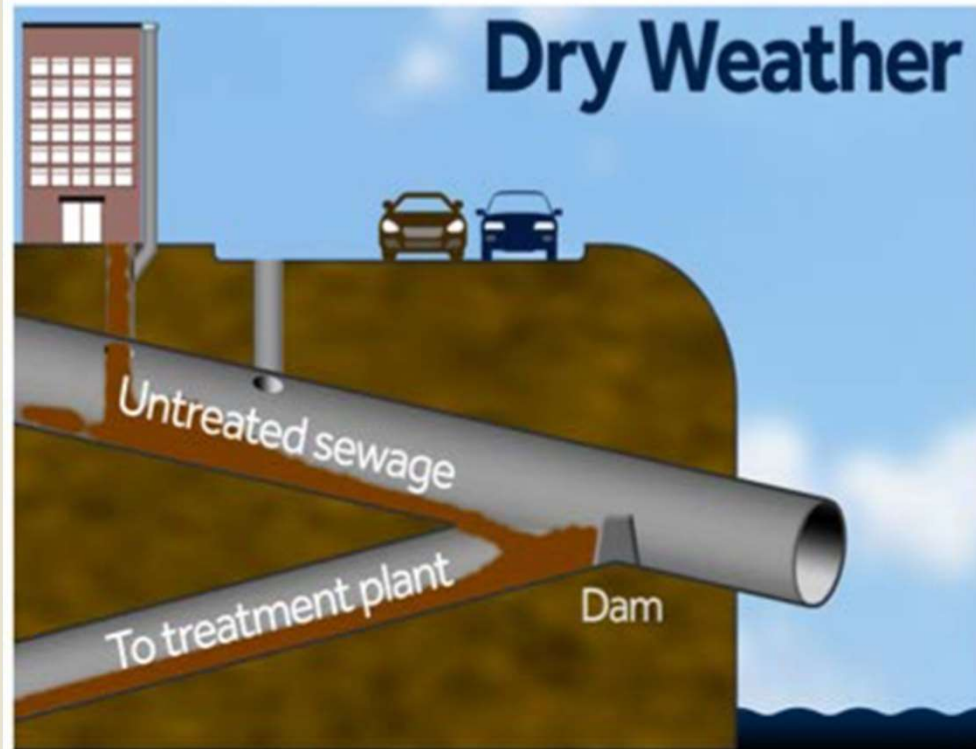


# Combined sewer overflows - CSOs

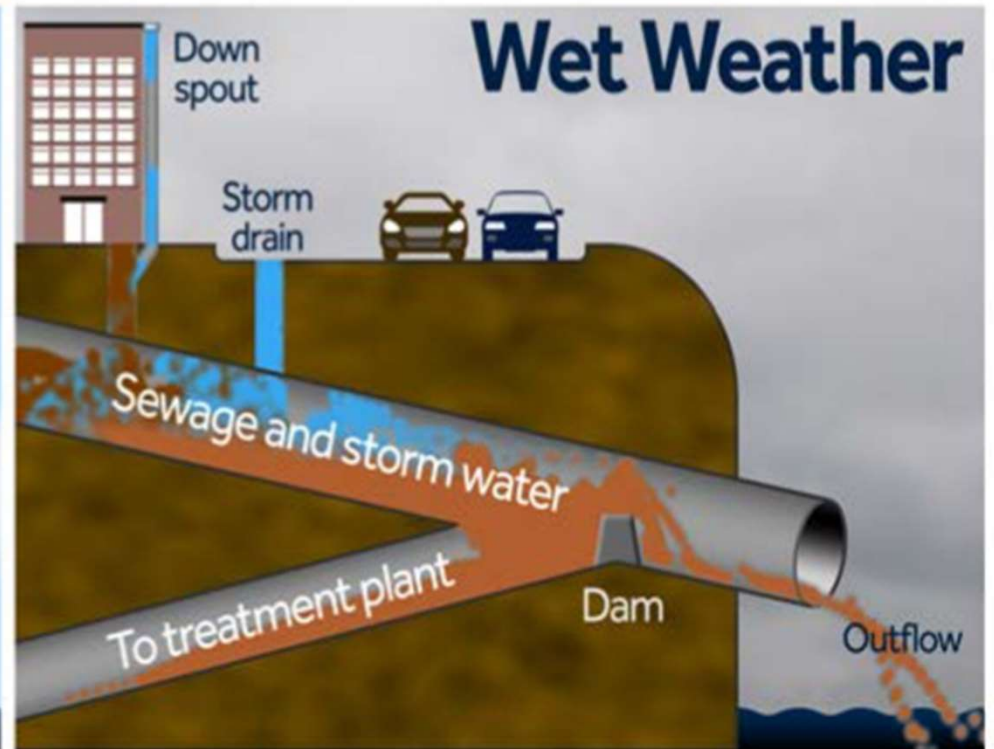
## How Heavy Rain Causes Sewage Overflows

CLIMATE  CENTRAL

### Dry Weather



### Wet Weather



# Environmental Information Request

Faversham dry weather flow permit is up to **290 cubic meters an hour**

**Three Olympic swimming pools a day** of partially treated sewage

We understand from an industry insider that when it rains the system is designed to cope for a time with **6 times dry flow:**

**1,740 cubic meters an hour**

This relies on the **storm tank** which has a **capacity of 2,080 cubic meters**

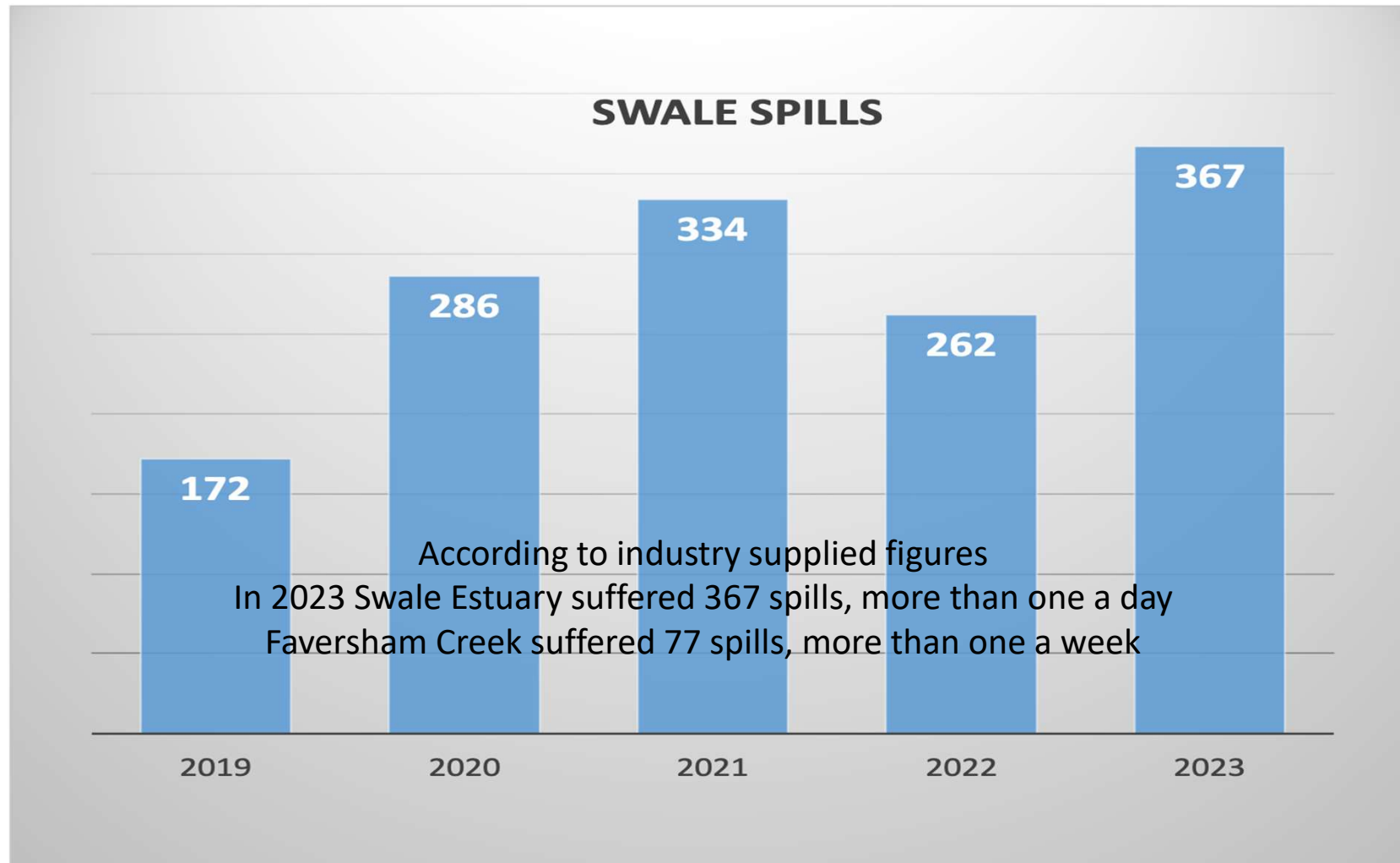
If the rain falls too hard or for too long the CSOs spill raw sewage

This was happening far too often so Southern Water promised to increase capacity

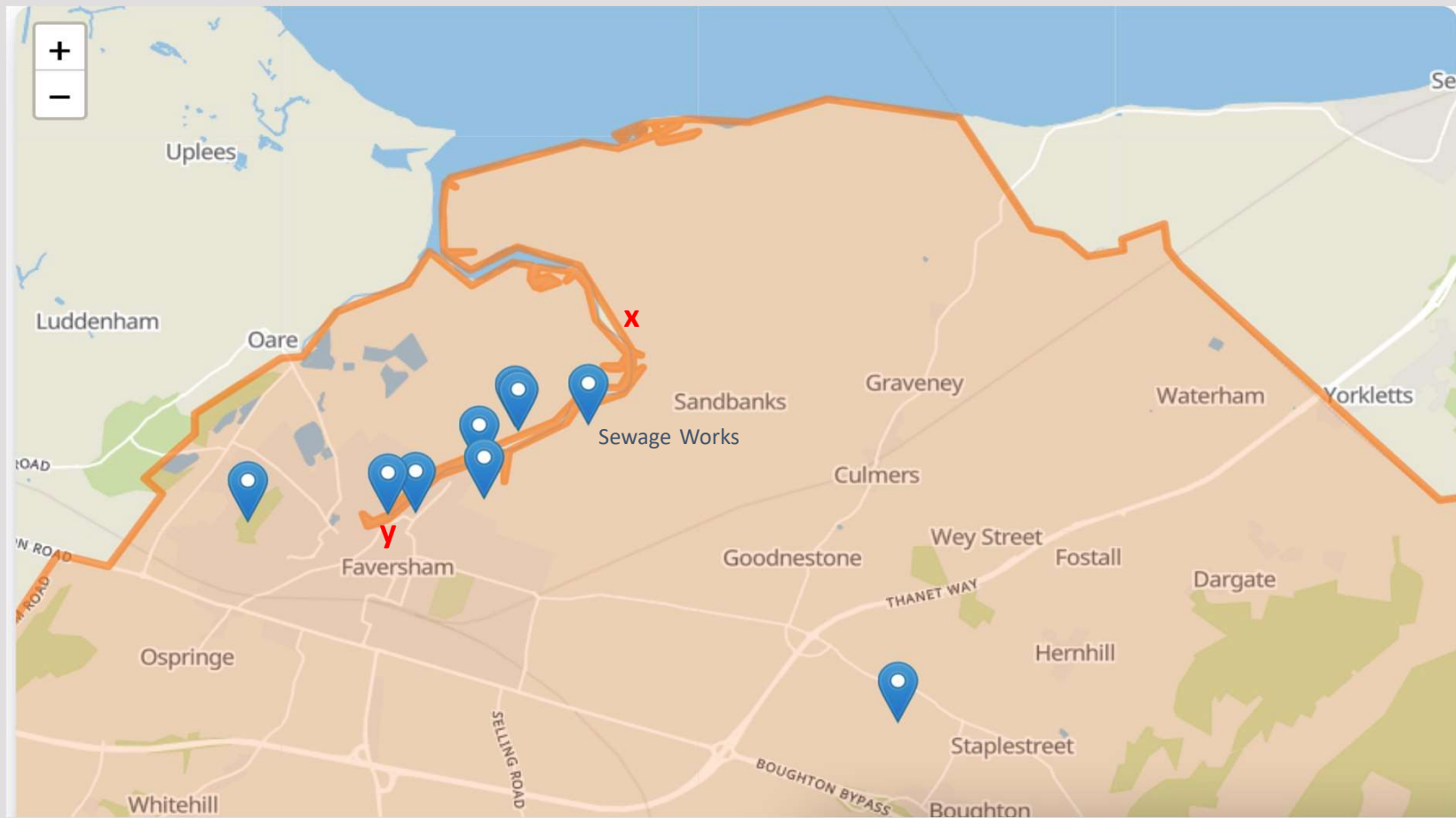
The **planned increase** in storm tank capacity is **200 cubic meters**, less than 10%

We calculate that at 6 times flow this **will add less than 15 minutes** before a spill

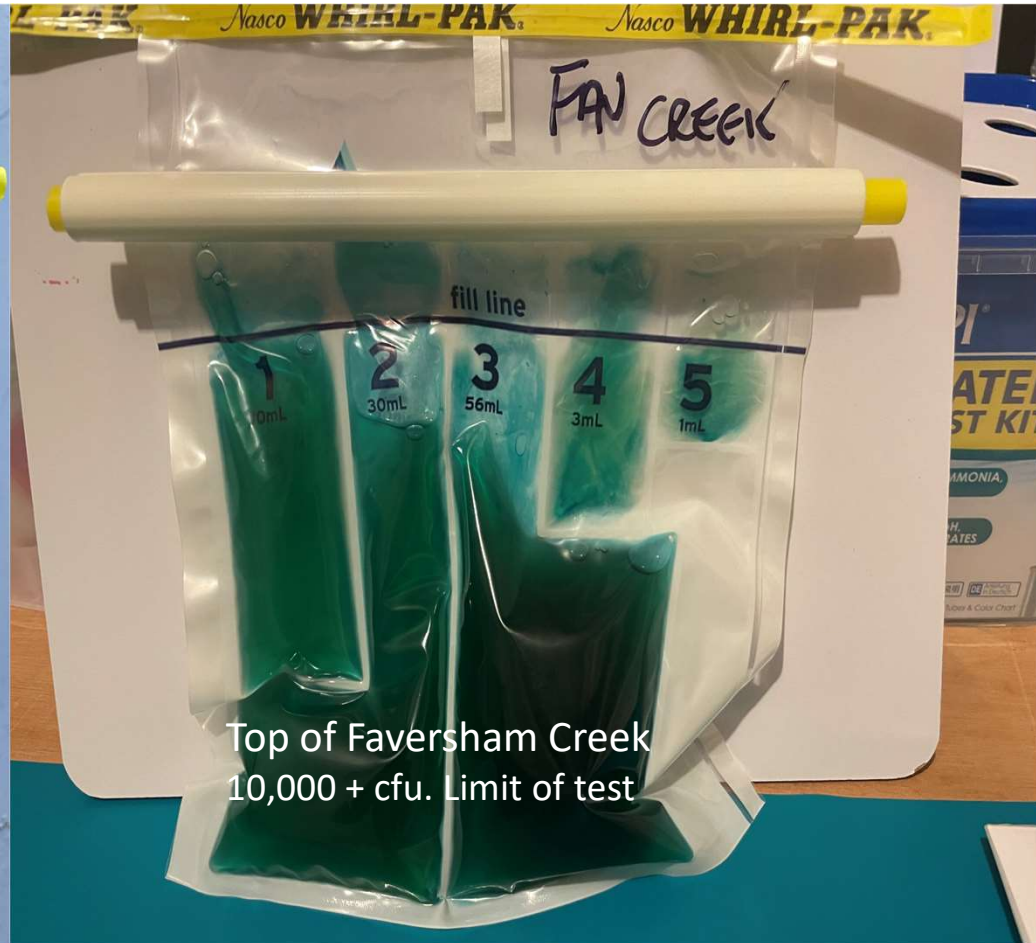
# Number of spills into Swale estuary 2019-2023



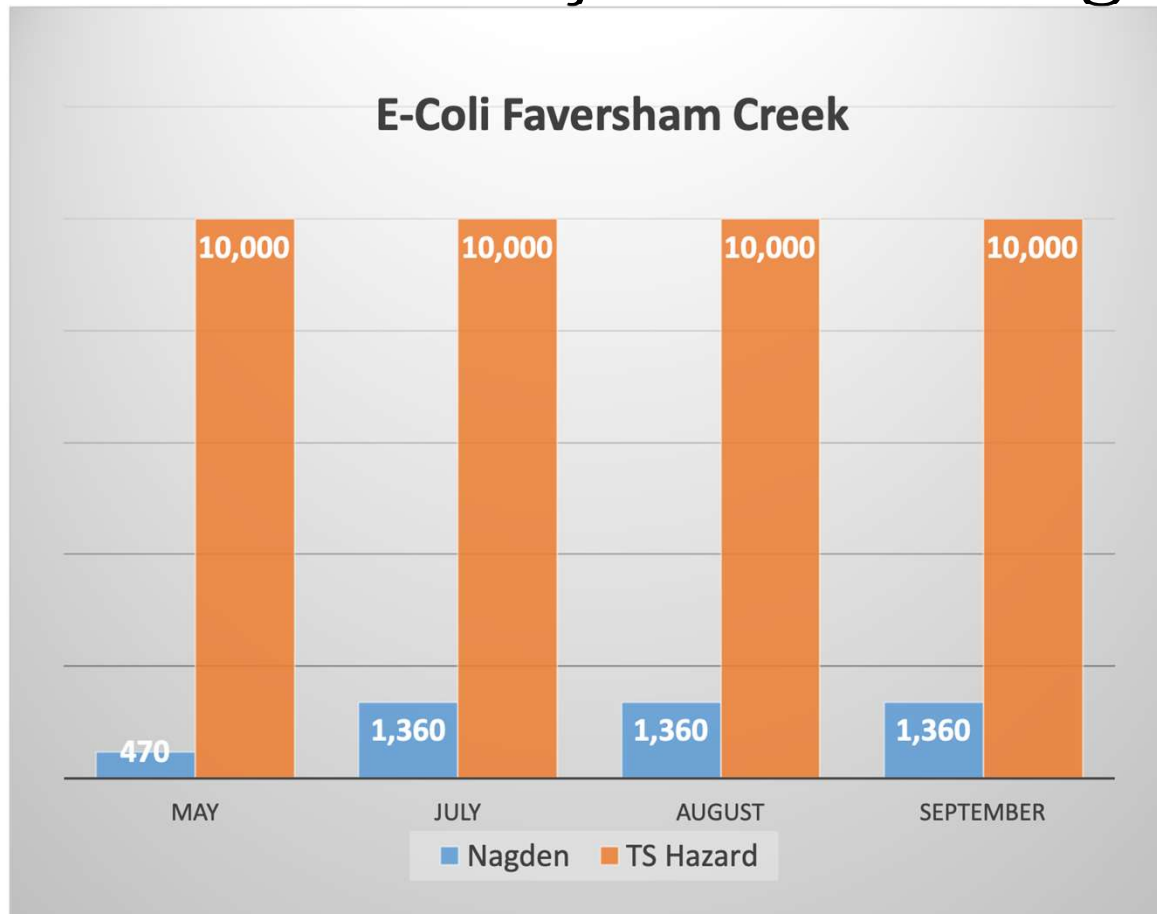
# CSOs feeding into Faversham Creek.



# Aquagenx Test Results for E.Coli



# Aquagenx test results in cfu/100ml for E.coli in Faversham creek just before high tide





## What does cfu/100ml mean?

There are some very public examples of levels of E.coli  
If coastal bathing water measures more than 500 cfu it is designated 'poor quality'

When they postponed the triathlon in the Olympics in the Seine.  
The level then was 1,000 cfu

When there was uproar at the boat race this year  
when they were told not to throw the cox in the water  
The level then was 2,869 cfu

The level at the top of Faversham Creek was greater than 10,000 cfu  
- over the limit of what our test can measure.

This was on a rising tide from the Estuary carrying in 1,360 cfu  
So the rest was added by the sewage works with a possible contribution  
from the 'black water' of the residential boats

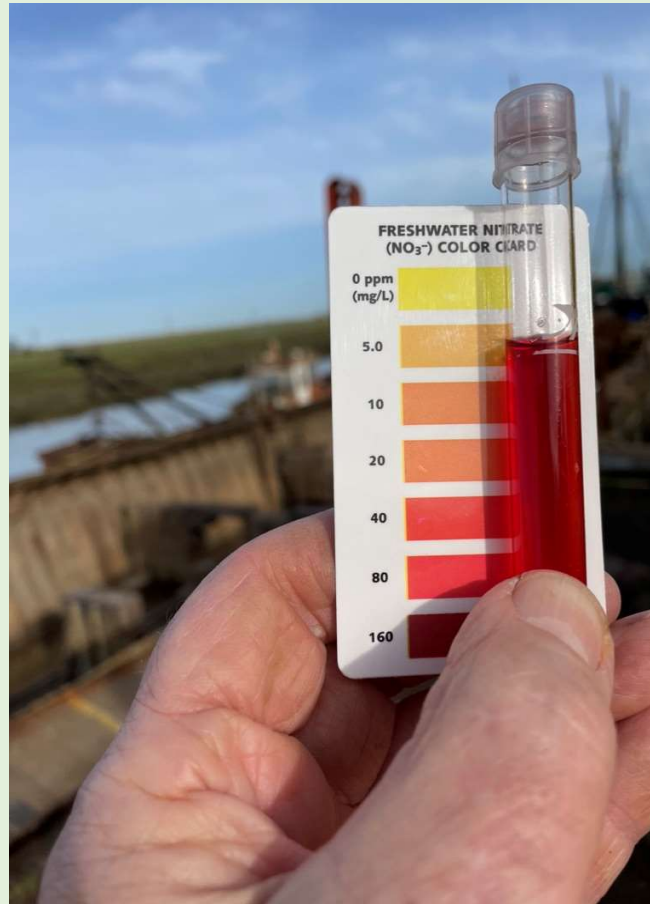


FAVWAT TESTING  
AT FAVERSHAM  
SEWAGE WORKS  
FOR  
NITRATES  
PHOSPHATES  
& AMMONIA

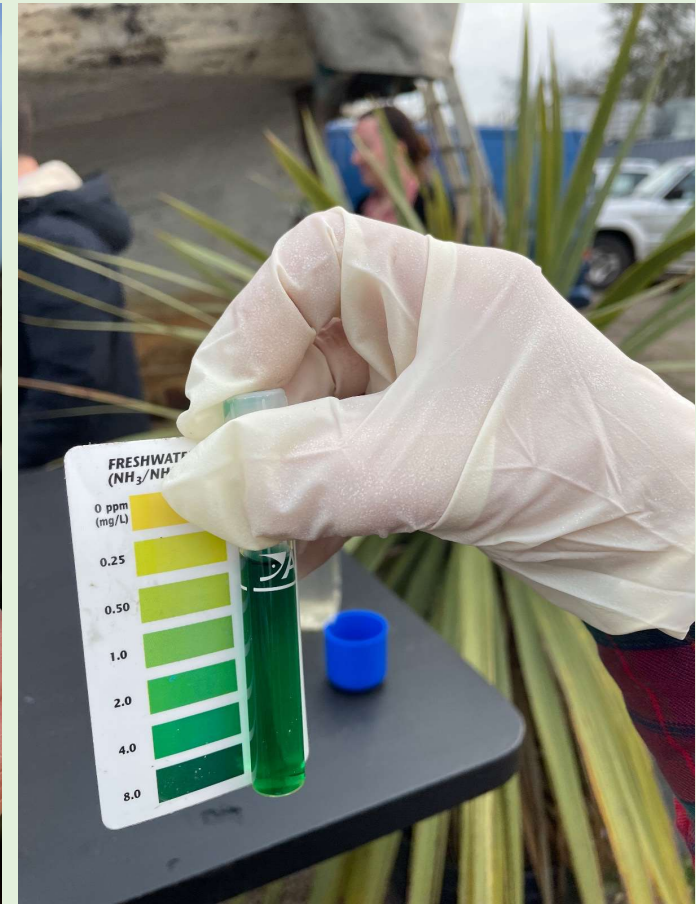
# NITRATE



# PHOSPHATE

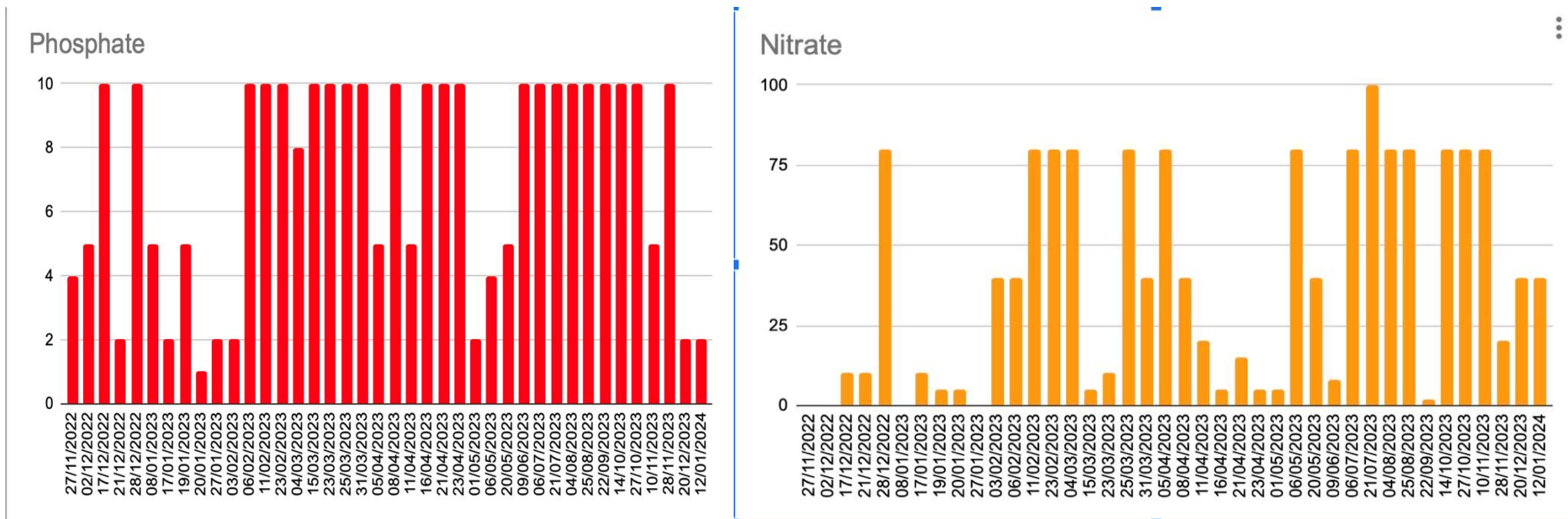


# AMMONIA



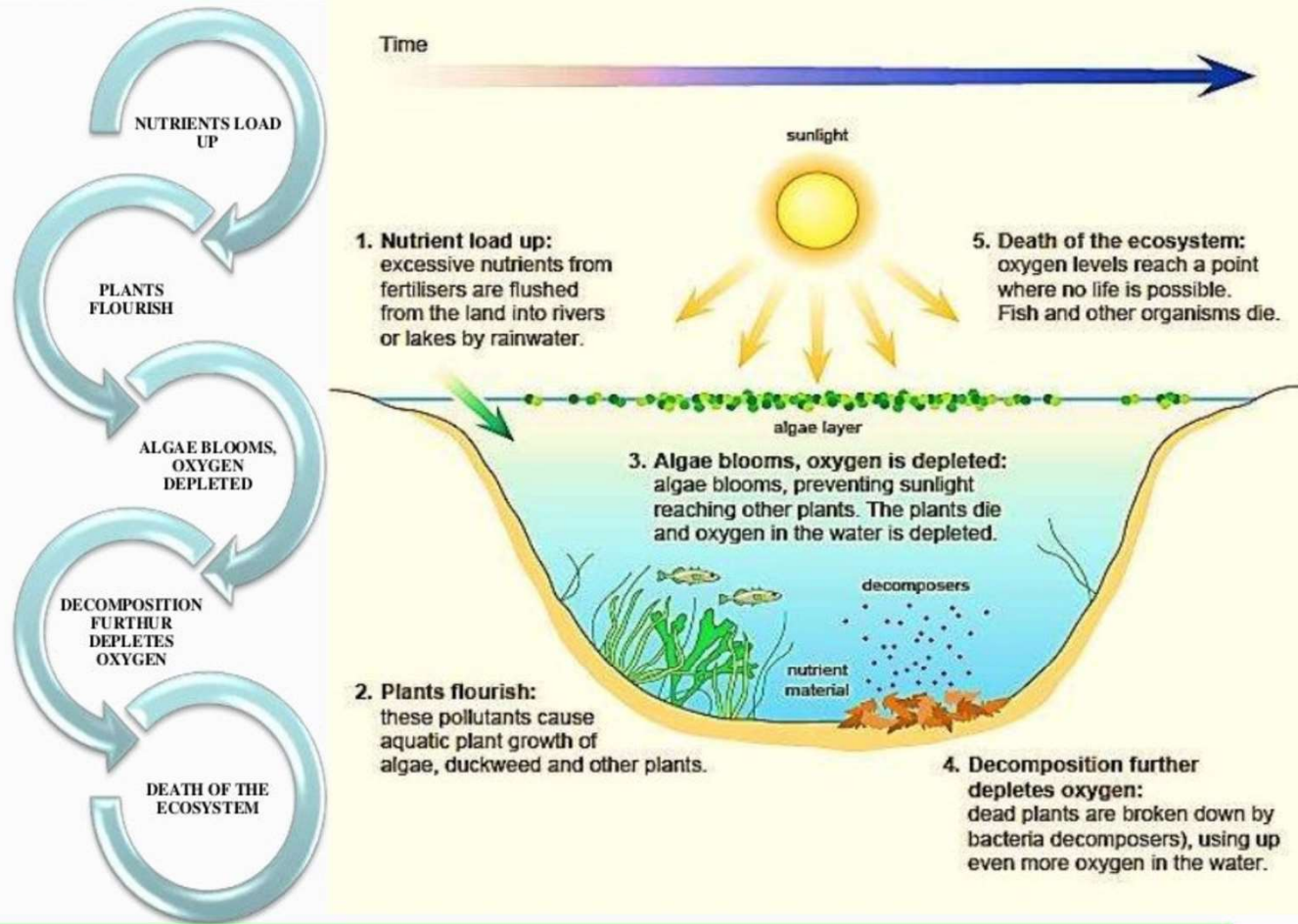
# Phosphate and Nitrate in final effluent of Faversham Sewage Works

Faversham Sewage Works does not provide tertiary treatment for nitrates or phosphates  
Results for phosphate levels are at or above limits for discharge into a sensitive environment protected against Eutrophication

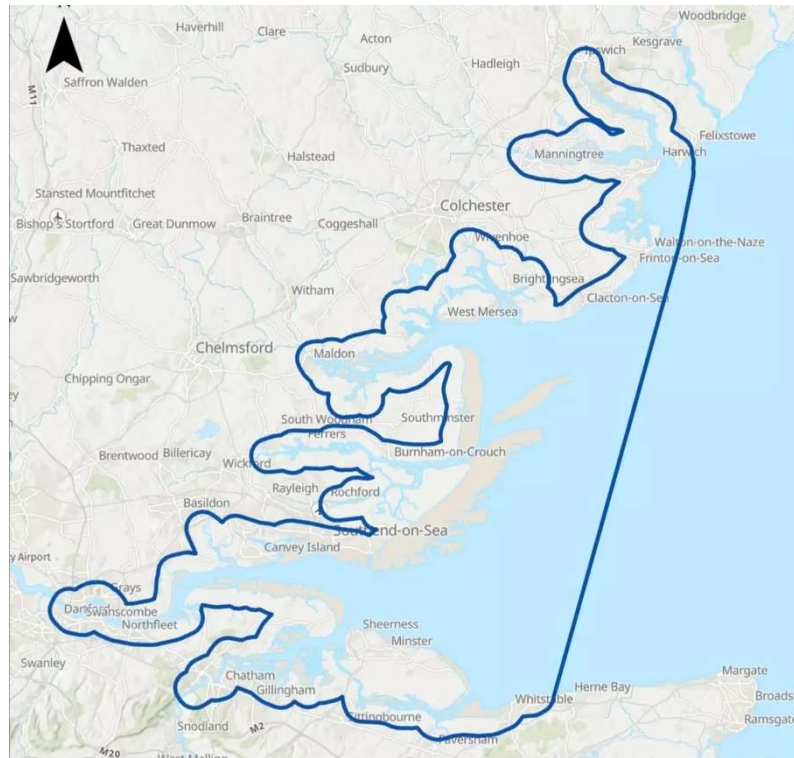




# Eutrophication Process in 5 Stages



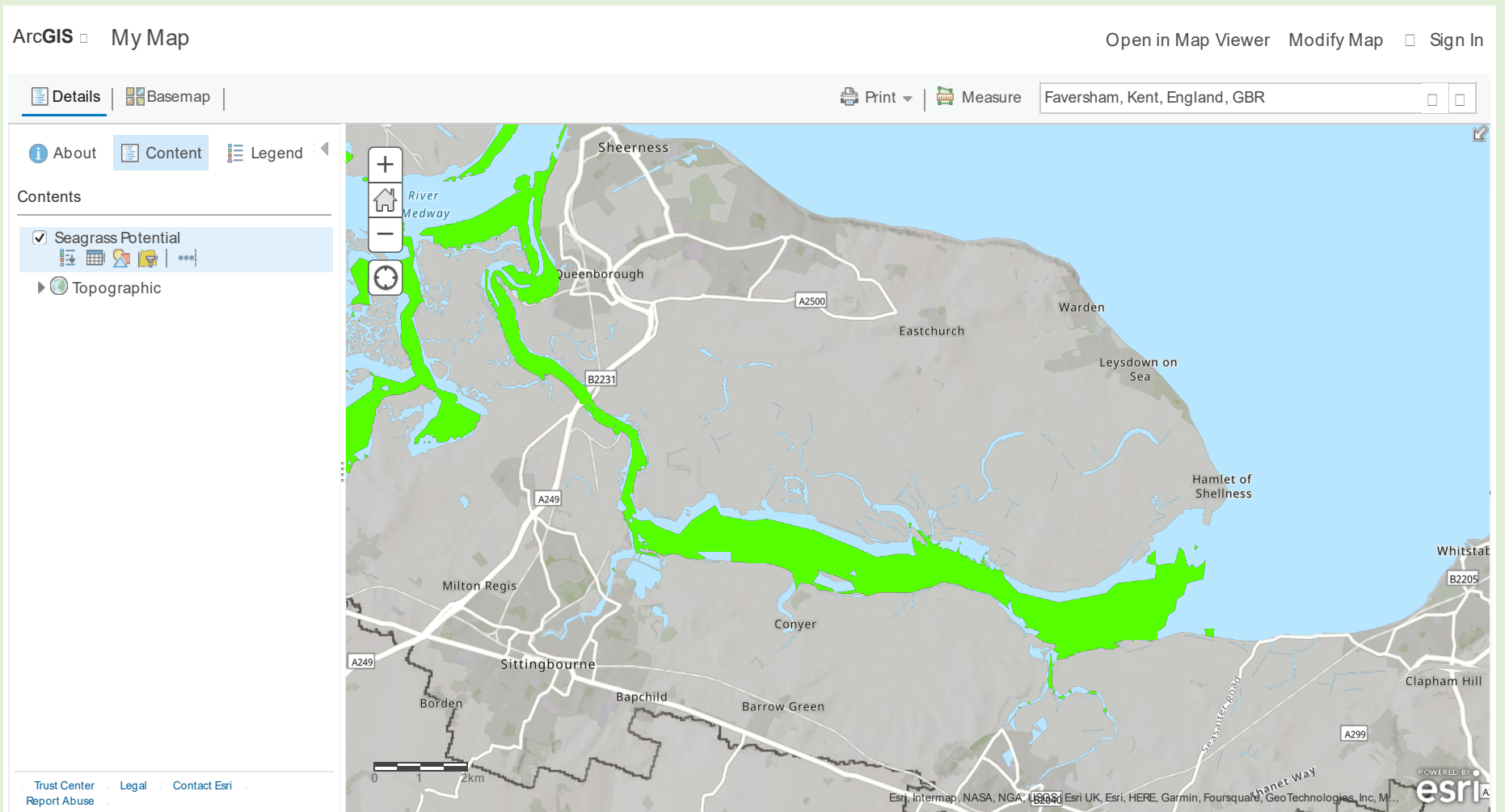
# Zoological Society of London Restoring the Thamescape



# Seagrass beds in the Swale & Medway 2022



# Government map of sea grass potential in the Swale





### Why are we picking seagrass seeds?

Intertidal seagrass beds within the Medway Swale Estuaries are predominantly composed of the dwarf seagrass species, *Zostera noltei*, however the larger *Zostera marina* seagrass can also be found. One restoration technique includes the collection of seagrass seeds which can then be planted at different sites to increase extent and seagrass cover.

### Where are we picking seagrass seeds from?

The seagrass seed is being collected from the seagrass meadow at Seasalter, near Whitstable, on the Swale Estuary. The intertidal seagrass meadow at Seasalter has an impressive bed extent of more than 20 Hectares and is in healthy condition with large areas of 100% seagrass cover. It was therefore chosen as a donor site from which seeds can be collected, processed, and planted at other sites in the Medway Swale Estuary.



Seasalter seagrass extent 2022, Swale Estuary

# Sea grass

Globally captures carbon up to 35 times faster than rain forest

Supports biodiversity:  
provides nursery habitat for key species such as cod and plaice;  
and for octopus, dogfish, seahorses and seals;  
and a feeding ground for wildfowl

Protects coasts from erosion by damping impact of waves

Once established removes pollutants



# Collecting sea grass seeds at Seasalter





# Map of potential native oyster bed restoration



# Yesterday at the swing bridge

