



APPLYING FOR INLAND BATHING WATER DESIGNATION

A TOOLKIT FOR COMMUNITIES



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Contact the Community Water Quality Officer at Surfers Against Sewage to support you in your application: kirsty@sas.org.uk

1. WELCOME

We want to see an end to sewage pollution in our rivers, lakes and all other inland waterways by 2030. To do this we are calling for 200 designated bathing waters by 2030 and we need your help. Together, we can restore rivers so they are thriving, clean and healthy for both people and the environment.

1.1 THE PROBLEM

The UK's rivers are in a critical state. At the last assessment, the Environment Agency concluded only 14% of rivers in England were ecologically healthy. Rivers are threatened by a cocktail of pollutants: from sewage pollution, agriculture, industry and transport. A third of all rivers are failing due to sewage pollution and in 2021, water companies discharged untreated sewage into rivers for 375,000 hours.

Despite this, every fortnight, over 4.3 million people visit the UK's lakes and rivers. Rivers and lakes provide humans and the wider ecosystem with a range of benefits: from flood prevention to creating habitats to numerous species. Thousands of hours and millions of pounds each year are spent on water-based activities, like swimming, paddle boarding, kayaking, sailing and angling, on and near these "blue spaces" which has been proven to improve our wellbeing.

Swimmers, paddleboarders and kayakers on rivers, lakes and streams deserve to have access to the same high standard of water as those who surf, sail and swim at the coast. The first step to improving the state of our rivers, and ocean, is to make sure the legal obligations are in place to improve water quality.



1.2 WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?

BATHING WATER DESIGNATION

Officially designated Bathing Waters are the only blue spaces where water quality is regularly monitored for its effect on human health, and legal obligations are put on polluting industries to clean up their act.

In the UK there are currently only 2 stretches of river, both of which have been won through local campaigns.



Credit: Zach Knott

WHAT CAN I DO?

This is where you have the power to create a change both at a local and national level. Through this toolkit we will support you with the application process and also equip you with how to create a campaign in your community.

Historically local authorities have applied for bathing water designation but there is a growing movement of activism from communities taking place which you can be part of and make an application yourself.

1.3 WHY CREATE MORE DESIGNATED BATHING WATERS?

The creation of over 600 coastal bathing waters around the UK has led to 98% of these beaches meeting standards, up from just 27% in the 1990s. Now, the same must happen to our inland waters.

Bathing Water Designation shines a light on the water quality at a specific site which puts polluters in the spotlight. Once designation is granted there is a legal obligation for polluters to clean up their act and also a requirement that the government agency for your region tests the water quality throughout the bathing season. Your bathing water will be tested for Intestinal enterococci and Escherichia coli, otherwise known

as E.Coli. At the end of the bathing season the designated site will be given a classification of:

- Excellent
- Good
- Sufficient
- Poor

Once your site has received its classification this is where we drive for change and hold polluters to account.

1.4 HOW DO I KNOW IF SEWAGE POLLUTION IS AFFECTING MY LOCAL SWIM SPOT?

- Are there visible signs of untreated sewage pollution? This could be “rag” (sanitary items, nappies), a bad odour or grey “milky” water. Sewage fungus is another sign.
- [Check The Rivers Trust Sewage Map for information on when untreated sewage pollution entered your waterway in the previous year.](#)
- Has anyone been sick after swimming in your stretch of river or lake?
- Carry out Citizen Science water quality testing – The Rivers Trust will be able to help signpost you to funding and water quality testing programmes.

Any evidence you have on the state of your river or lake will help in your campaign in applying for bathing water designation. Ensuring your community are informed on the issues will help in getting them on board.

However, as people are likely to be using the waterway to swim, paddle, fish and kayak it is important to strike a balance on how you communicate the water quality issues. There are many benefits to being in blue spaces, and it would be a shame to put people off entirely. Emphasise that it is down to individuals to assess the risk of using the river or lake themselves. Good general advice is to avoid entering the water until 48 hours after heavy rainfall. This is likely when sewage overflows will have discharged untreated sewage.

1.5 WHEN IS BATHING SEASON?

ENGLAND	NORTHERN IRELAND	SCOTLAND	WALES
15 MAY - 30 SEPTEMBER	1 JUNE - 15 SEPTEMBER	1 JUNE - 15 SEPTEMBER	15 MAY - 30 SEPTEMBER

2. HOW TO MAKE AN APPLICATION

An application is made to your regional government agency depending on the location of your bathing site:

Location of bathing site	Apply to
England	Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
Northern Ireland	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)
Scotland	Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)
Wales	Welsh Government

The application process does differ across regions but there are common requirements of the process. Depending on which agency you are applying to the application may take the shape of an application form, a nomination process or an email including the required evidence. Check the government agency website for your region to get further information on their specific process including the application deadline.

The common evidence requirements are:

- [Confirmation that the landowner supports the bathing water application](#)
- [Confirmation that the local authority supports the bathing water application](#)
- [Counts of water users during the bathing season](#)
- [Describe the facilities that are close to the bathing location](#)
- [Consult with your local community to get their views](#)

If your bathing site is designated the following government agencies will be responsible for testing water quality during the bathing season:

- England - Environment Agency (EA)
- Northern Ireland - Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA)
- Scotland – Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)
- Wales – Natural Resources Wales (NRW)

This timeline gives an idea of the overall application process and when you can expect to have specific conversations and carry out specific tasks.

BATHING WATER APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS TIMELINE

Initial discussion with government agency to discuss application
Contact Landowner for discussion on application and to obtain support
Contact your local authority for discussion on application and to obtain support
Survey number of water users*
Collect information on facilities at the proposed bathing site
Hold local consultation***
Submit application**
Once application is submitted government agency holds public consultation***
Government agency will decide if designation is granted
If designation granted government agency will test water quality*
Government agency release bathing water classification***

	Year 1			Year 2						Year 3						Year 4			
	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March
Initial discussion with government agency to discuss application																			
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Government agency release bathing water classification***																			

*See toolkit for specific dates of bathing season depending on region in the UK

**Check with the government agency in your region to confirm the deadline

***This may alter across regions

3. LET'S MAKE A START!

3.1 HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This toolkit has been created from conversations, lessons learnt and best practises shared by community groups that have applied for bathing water or are in the process of applying, along with government and non-government organisations. This guide will continue to be a live document which we will update continuously to ensure we provide you with the most up to date information and support.

The toolkit will take you through the steps in making an application, these include:

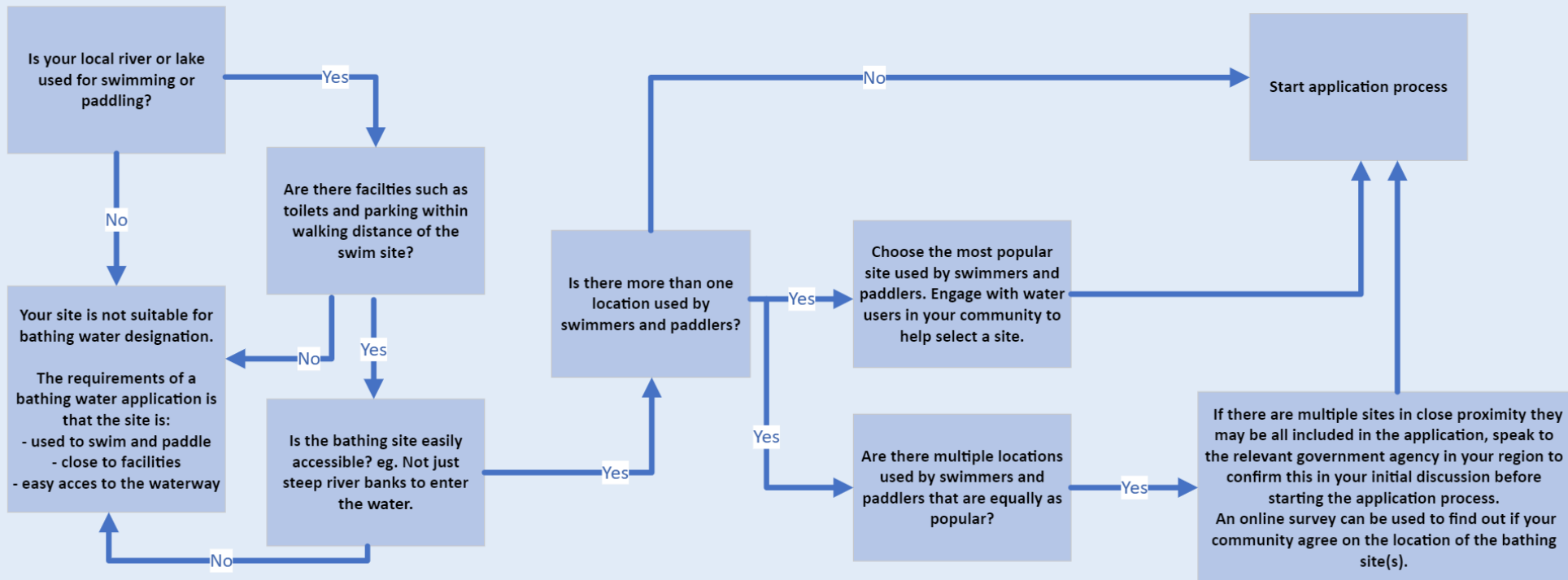
- Choosing a bathing site
- Creating a campaign in your community
- Submitting your application
- Continuing the momentum in your community after you have received designation and classification



Credit: Amy Morton

3.2 DECIDING ON A SUITABLE BATHING SITE

The below criteria is the government agency's evidence requirements that they use in assessing an application and not our view.



Think carefully about the length of river you are applying for. When selecting the waterway, an important consideration is that the environmental agency will only test at one location per designated bathing site. Are the facilities available to the whole stretch of river? Is there easy access across the whole length of river? Applying for two separate stretches of water may be a better approach to benefit from multiple testing locations.

If your site isn't suitable for designation don't despair – not every site is. There are still lots of things you can do to raise awareness and help end sewage and other river pollution. You could take part in a [million mile clean](#), organise water quality testing or lobby your local MP and water company.

4. GATHER A TEAM

You don't have to do this alone! Building a team around you will help to collect all the evidence and information you need as well as reach a wider network to support your application. Connect with your local community and find out who else is passionate about making a change. There may be people out there who are also thinking of applying for designation.



Credit: Michelle Tucker @The_wellbeing_supervisor

Link up with groups, clubs and individuals with interests who use the bathing site and surrounding area. Are there any of the below groups or individuals in your area who you can contact to create your community group? You could use social media, email, attend their club or have a chat to whilst they are using the waterway:

- Swimmers
- Anglers
- Wildlife and environmental conservationists
- Paddle boarders
- Rowers
- Kayakers
- Canoeists
- Sports clubs and groups
- Walkers
- Dog walkers
- Neighbourhood groups and "Friends of" local parks or green/blue spaces

Aim to have a representative from each type of water user who uses your waterway on your campaign group. If a specific of water user group aren't on board in designating the swim site, then having a representative within your group will help in expressing why they have their reservations and how you can work together to ease their concerns.

Once you have a group of likeminded people on board, assign roles to your group to help share the work. The process involves lots of different parts and the application process will be a lot easier if it is shared. Think about your group's individual skills, experience and interests and how they can fit with supporting each area of the application process and campaign. Is there someone who could take a lead in the areas listed in section 4.1.

4.1 ROLES IN YOUR COMMUNITY GROUP

Social media	Creating an account for your campaign on Facebook/Twitter/Instagram. Posting information about why you are applying for bathing water designation. Posting regular updates before, during and after the application process.
Liaising with the landowner and local authority	Are there members of your group that feel confident discussing the bathing water application with the landowner and local authority? Do members of your community already have a link to the landowner or local authority? Some agencies require the support of both the landowner of the bathing site and the local authority.
Getting your MP and Councillor on board	Who in your group is best suited to rally local government support to give bathing water designation the spotlight it deserves? Check out They Work for You where you can search for keywords such as "sewage" in the MP's speeches to check if sewage pollution is on their radar. Use UK Parliament to find out who your local MP is.
Co-ordinating the water user survey	Volunteers will need to be co-ordinated to survey water users. This rota template can help.
Water quality testing	If you plan on testing the water quality at your waterway then volunteers, training and equipment will need to be coordinated.
Gathering information on facilities	Is there a member of your group who is very familiar with the area who can audit the facilities and plot them on a map?
Consultation	Who is best suited to review which type of consultation method best suits your community and also take a lead in

	delivering the local consultation? Who has been in gathering community support previously? Do certain members of your group have IT skills who can help with creating an online survey?
Compiling the application	A few members of your group will be needed for this. Having people who have IT skills will be useful for this task.

5. GETTING THE LANDOWNER AND THE LOCAL AUTHORITY ON BOARD

The landowner of the site must support your application. Find out who the landowner is and [contact](#) them to explain your initial plans. The landowner must be in support of the application. If you are unsure who the landowner is you can find out this information by searching the online land registry or contacting your local authorities Planning department. The landowner may be the local authority, the environmental agency, other government body, a trust or private company or person.

Arrange to meet them in person or on a Teams or Zoom call to explain more about bathing water designation. Be prepared with an [agenda](#) to help guide you through the talking points.

Use [The Outdoor Swimming Society Inland Access Guide](#) if you need support in explaining to the landowner or local authority what it means in becoming a designated site from a liability point of view. It's important to remember that once a site is designated there is no more or no less liability placed on the landowner.

Depending on which government agency you are applying to, your local authority may be required to support your application. Contact them early in your plans to discuss why you are applying, what the pollution issues are and the benefits of bathing water designation. If you are finding it difficult to reach the relevant local authority department your councillor may be able to help you with this. The Environmental Protection or Planning teams will be a good place to start.

One way to get local authority support is to put a motion to your council and have councillors' support it. This sounds scary, but it doesn't have to be! Almost everyone agrees the level of river pollution is unacceptable and want to see that change. This can help because it will give council officers a clear steer that this is what the council want to see. Some applications can get stalled for a long time by council bureaucracy.

Within your application you must provide evidence that you have the local authority and landowners support in submitting an application. This evidence should be a letter or an email.

6. CREATING A CAMPAIGN

It is important to create some noise on why designation is needed to ensure your community and stakeholders get on board and support the application before it is submitted. Bringing your community on the journey with you is vital to ensure they feel engaged in the process. When demonstrating the water quality issues in your waterway, you'll need factual information which can be referenced if you are asked.



Credit: William Joshua Templeton

6.1 DEFINING THE ISSUE AT THE CENTRE OF THE CAMPAIGN

Within your community group have a clear aim of what change you want to see at your bathing site. This will strengthen your campaign message to focus on what designation means for you and your waterway. Some Aims that might help you decide which is a priority for your waterway and community:

- 1) AIM: Designation will improve access to our blue spaces.
- 2) AIM: Designation will hold polluters to account to stop dumping untreated sewage in our river.
- 3) AIM: Receiving designation will identify polluters that are impacting our waterway.
- 4) AIM: Designation will provide water users with the information they need to assess the risks in using our lake.

6.2 CAMPAIGN METHODS

When campaigning, remember to use methods that are inclusive so all of your community can engage. Take a look at our advice on [inclusive methods of consultation](#) which can also be applied to campaigning.

6.3 SOCIAL MEDIA

Create a Facebook/Twitter/Instagram account – Starting social media campaigning early in your planning will help in growing your community and then keeping them updated on progress. It is a useful tool in reaching out to other water users or conservation groups by ‘tagging’ them in your posts. Use social media to promote any petition you decide to run.

6.4 NEWSLETTER

Write a monthly newsletter with updates on how things are progressing. Include updates on the campaign process, any water quality testing results, application process, volunteer opportunities and up and coming consultation events. [Mailchimp](#) is a free tool that you can use to design and email lots of people.

6.5 LOCAL PRESS

Contact your local newspaper and radio station to promote the work that you are doing. Local press can also be used to encourage stakeholders to get on board and also recruit volunteers to support in the application process. Send a press release to your local newspaper that they can publish.

6.6 LOCAL SUPPORT

Contact your MP and Councillor – [email](#) your MP and councillor to update them on your plan to make an application and make them aware of the issues affecting your waterway. Include a [briefing note](#) to explain the importance of bathing water designation at a national level. Ask for a letter of support to include in your application.

Connect with other MP’s on the same stretch of river to update them on the water quality issues and your plans applying for bathing water designation. Your MP can help with spreading the word.

Contact your town, parish and local authority and ask to attend any meetings to talk about your plans. The support of local people at an influential level will help in the success of your campaign. Encourage local councillors to [table a motion](#) to support bathing water designation.

6.7 DEMAND CHANGE FROM YOUR WATER COMPANY

Contact your water company to request a meeting. Explain that you are applying for bathing water designation. Demand that real-time sewage pollution alerts are installed on combined sewage overflows in your waterway and discharges are monitored. SAS can then include these on the [Safer Seas and River Service](#).

7. UNDERTAKING YOUR USER SURVEY

DEFRA/SEPA/NRW/DAERA require you to survey the number of swimmers and paddlers who use your local bathing site during the bathing season.



Credit: Michelle Tucker @The_wellbeing_supervisor

This is where your team and network of passionate people will be needed. You'll need to gather a taskforce to count users to provide evidence that the site is a popular location with bathers. It's advisable to survey on sunny days when you expect large numbers of people to be paddling and bathing.

What you need to do:

- Count bathers and paddlers: DEFRA/SEPA/DAERA/the Welsh Government only require bathers and paddlers to be counted but it is important to show all water users and those using the land in direct contact to your waterway. You should record swimmers, paddlers and other water users as three separate categories. When counting users remember to include both adults and children and count and record these separately. Include bathers, paddlers, swimmers, anglers, kayakers, paddle boarders, dog walkers, people having picnics etc.
- Take photos: Take photos of the bathing site for each of the days you are counting as evidence to include in your application.
- Use our [water user survey template](#) to help in recording your results.

The government agencies across each of the four regions have different requirements on how many days you should hold the user survey. Check your region's agency webpage to find out the requirements of the user survey.

7.1 TIPS ON SURVEYING:

Make it obvious to the public what you are doing – wear a hi/low-vis tabard and/or hand out information to the public to ensure it is clear the reason you are counting users.

When taking photos it's important to get consent from those in the photo which should be taken from a distance to ensure people aren't recognisable.

Think about the easiest method to count users. Remember to categorise the types of users when you are counting them as you will need to present this in the application. Also consider if the bathing site that you are applying for is located over more than one area that is used by bathers and paddlers as a survey will need to take place here too.

Survey during the warmest part of the day when it is likely there may be more users. Use local knowledge to find out when swim groups or any other water user groups tend to use the site.

If you are finding it difficult to visit the bathing site in person to count users, ask your community to help. Do this by creating an online survey using Survey Monkey or Google Forms which can be accessed by displaying a poster with a QR code at the river or lake location. Ensure that the time of the visit is logged to so that there is no double counting. QR codes can be generated using websites such as [QR Generator](#).

Tip: QR codes can be used on posters or flyers to direct people to any online information, such as your Facebook page, petition, website or consultation information.

8. MAPPING FACILITIES AT THE SITE

You will be required to supply information on any facilities at the site that may support and promote bathing. Provide details on facilities such as:

- How do you access the river or lake
- Public toilets
- Changing facilities
- Parking or public transport
- Lifeguards
- First aid service
- Cafes, shop or kiosks



Credit: Kirsty Davies

8.1 TOOLS TO DEMONSTRATE LOCAL FACILITIES IN YOUR APPLICATION:

BACKGROUND ON THE LOCATION

Give some background on the location of the bathing site and the surrounding area. Is it close to a local town? Is the river in an urban or rural setting? Is the lake used by other water sport clubs?

LISTING THE FACILITIES

List the facilities that are close to the bathing site.

MAPPING THE LOCATION

Provide maps to show the exact location of the site you are applying for designation. Remember to only apply for the specific stretch of the river or area of lake that swimmers and paddlers use.

Plot any facilities and significant landmarks on the maps. Also highlight on the map the area in which people swim and paddle and at which point(s) they access the water. If you are applying for designation for more than one site on the stretch of water remember to plot this on the map too.

Provide grid references of the location.

PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE SITE

Provide photos of the site to show the stretch of water that you are applying for. Include in your photos the access points to show that the water is easily accessed by people of all abilities.

9. UNDERTAKING A LOCAL CONSULTATION

What is a consultation? A consultation is a way to exchange or communicate information and receive opinions which will feedback into making a decision.

In the case of your bathing water application you need to communicate the application plans with your community to allow them to feedback on what they think.

Ensuring that your community have all the information they need in the consultation process will allow them to respond with an informed decision on whether they are in support.

9.1 HOW TO COLLECT CONSULTATION RESPONSES

You will need a written record of the consultation responses. Think of the easiest method for your community to feedback but also ensure it is an efficient method for you, as you will need to collate this information as evidence in your application. We would suggest creating a survey, questionnaire or petition that can be accessed online and also replicated by creating paper copies for those who do not have access to the internet or IT. [We have created some example questionnaire questions.](#)

When asking people to complete the survey/questionnaire/petition include a question to ask for the consultees email address and if they give permission for you to include them in the newsletter mailing list.

9.2 METHODS OF CONSULTATION

Tailor your consultation with the local needs of your community. You know your community and what methods will work best. Your consultation methods should be inclusive to ensure that all of your community are able to input and engage. Ideas of consultation include:

- Local meeting with your town or parish council (include the formal minutes of the meeting as evidence) – [Contact your local town or parish councillor](#) to explain that you are applying for bathing water status and that you would like to meet with them to gain their support. The [councillor briefing note](#) can be used to help give some background. This [agenda](#) will help in structuring your conversation when you meet. A presentation may help in communicating

what you would like to discuss if you aren't used to talking in front of people. A meeting with your town or parish council can be useful if you are finding it difficult to contact the specific department at the local authority. Your parish or town council may have connections.

- Face to face event in the community – can you use your village hall, community centre, leisure centre to host a drop-in event to present the water quality issues and why you are making an application. Set up a display of information, including a map of the proposed bathing site, background on who uses the waterway, any water quality information and explain the benefits of your river/lake becoming designated in a list. Be prepared for you and your volunteer team to answer questions from members of the public. There may be some difficult questions! Ask attendees to complete the survey either on their mobile phone using a QR code to direct them online – have a laptop available at the event to access the survey. Also supply paper copies of the survey for people to complete.
- Email - Share the survey/questionnaire/petition with all supporters that you have contacted from the start of your campaign period. [Mailchimp](#) is a free tool that you can use to email lots of people.
- Social media – post information on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram about the bathing water application and include a link to your survey.
- Drop in session at the bathing site – At the same time as you are surveying water users you could set up a table at the site with some information, similar to the face to face event, and ask people who are visiting the waterway to complete the survey. Remember to have paper copies available too for those people who don't have a mobile phone or computer.
- Host a stand at a local event. Is there a village market, fete, community event taking place? Contact the organisers and ask if you can attend. Bring similar display information as outlined in the face to face event, along with paper copies of the survey and a link or QR code to direct people to the online survey.
- Information Posters – Put posters up at the bathing site and other locations in your community outlining your plans and why it's important for the community to support. Make sure you include a link to the survey. A QR code could be used provide a link. You may need to get permission to display posters.
- Promote consultation events and/or survey in the local press or community newsletters
- Hold a forum/discussion for water users to come together to share their experiences of using your waterway. This could be held at your bathing site.

9.3 WHO YOU SHOULD CONSULT WITH?

Engage with as many different groups and individuals in your community. Your consultation should be inclusive. Remember to work with community groups that aren't just water users. There is amazing potential to engage with people who may never have thought about using their river or lake to swim or to visit. Consult with groups and individuals using various methods to ensure as many people as possible have the opportunity to find out about your application and to make it as easy as possible to complete the questionnaire or survey.

Some tips on engaging inclusively with your community:

- Find out who your community are. Who lives in your community?
- When you know who your community are think about any barriers that might prevent people from engaging with a consultation. Whether it be a face to face event, online survey or information posters? For example, language differences, no access to IT/internet, mobility.
- Hold any consultation events during the day and evening so people who work or have caring responsibilities have the opportunity to attend.

Here are some examples of who in your community you should contact to respond to your consultation:

- Bathers and other water users
- Sports clubs eg rowers, sailing clubs
- Anglers
- Owners of local facilities close to the waterway
- Businesses
- Residents
- Farmers
- Conservation and environmental groups
- Neighbourhood and community representatives
- Volunteer groups
- Disability groups, charities and trusts
- Parish and town councils
- Day centres
- Hobby Groups
- Youth groups eg scouts, guides
- Religious groups, churches, mosques and other places of worship
- Local tourist office
- Local regeneration office
- Local authority community network directories
- Your local Rivers Trust and catchment partnership
- The local waterway navigation authority eg Canal and Rivers Trust

9.4 HOW LONG SHOULD YOU KEEP THE CONSULTATION OPEN?

It is important to run the consultation long enough to ensure as many people as possible have the opportunity to give their feedback. Run your consultation for a minimum of a month. If you hold an event in your village hall ensure you have an additional method of collecting feedback that can be open for at least a month, such as an online survey or social media poll.

9.5 EVIDENCING THE CONSULTATION IN YOUR APPLICATION

In your application document provide information on:

- How you consulted with your community and stakeholders.
- Provide the questions that you asked.
- A summary of the number of responses of those both for and against the application.
- The period of time that you consulted.
- The reasons given from those consultees both for and against the application.

Tip: Use tables, graphs and any other visual methods that make it easy to see the outcomes of the consultation when putting the application together. Use Excel to record the number of people you consulted and who is for and against the application

10. SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

So, you've campaigned, consulted, surveyed and mapped out your site. You've got all the evidence you need. It's time to apply!.....

As there are regional differences in the application process do research the government agency relevant to you to check the specific requirements:

[DEFRA](#)

[SEPA](#)

[DAERA](#)

[The Welsh Government](#)

Some government agency's require you to complete an application form as part of the process. Other agency's require you to compile the evidence required in a word document and email it to a specific contact, which can be found in the individual links above for DEFRA, DAERA, SEPA and the Welsh Government. As your finished document may be large in size it would be advisable to save it as a PDF document when submitting it.

This checklist will help when compiling your application to ensure you include everything:

- Information about the applicant(s)**
- Information on landowner and local authority**
- Letter or email from landowner(s) to confirm their support**
- Letter or email from local authority to confirm their support**
- Evidence of water user survey - include tables of data**
- Photographs to evidence water user survey**
- Map of waterway - highlight proposed bathing area(s)**
- Map of waterway - highlighting facilities**
- Photographs of proposed bathing area - include access points**
- Description of facilities**
- Explanation of local consultation - what did it look like and how long did it last?**
- Provide consultation questionnaire/survey questions**
- Summary of number of people who were consulted**
- Total number of people consulted with in support and opposition**
- Provide full written reasons (anonymously) of all consultees**
- Include information of any other meetings or engagement with stakeholders**
- Letters of support from MP/councillors/organisations/stakeholders**
- Information and results on water quality testing if available**



Credit: Jordine-Rae Devereau

11. CHECKLIST

Below is a useful summary of all the major steps which include the government agency's evidence requirements. Remember not all steps apply to all regional government agencies across the UK.

- Contact DEFRA/DAERA/SEPA/WG for initial conversation**
- Contact landowner**
- Contact local authority**
- Engage with local community to confirm location of bathing site**
- Engage with local community to champion bathing water designation**
- Recruit volunteers**
- Contact your MP to raise awareness and for their support**
- Contact your councillor to raise awareness and for their support**
- Explore options to test water quality using Citizen Science**
- Collect information on the bathing site location and any facilities**
- Carry out a survey of users during the bathing season**
- Hold a local consultation**
- Compile application evidence**
- Submit application to DEFRA/DAERA/SEPA/WG**

12. AFTER YOU HAVE SUBMITTED YOUR APPLICATION

Once you have submitted your application the government agency will hold their own public consultation. This will be available on their website for the public to easily find and to give their feedback. Encourage your community to engage with this consultation also. Share the link on social media or via a newsletter if you have collected email addresses of those in your community network. The agency will also consult with a number of organisations directly, which includes Surfers Against Sewage.

Before a decision is made, consultation will take place between DEFRA/SEPA/WG/DAERA and with the environmental agency who will monitor the water quality. Any additional information about the inland waterway will be raised.

Ministers make the final decision on whether your application is successful. The government agency that you applied to will contact you, the local authority, water

company and landowner with a decision on your application before the next bathing season commences.

If designation is granted:

The EA/SEPA/NRW/DAERA will create a bathing water profile for the bathing site and specify a water quality testing location. These agencies are obliged to test the water quality regularly throughout the bathing season. This information will be on the agency's website linked below:

[DAERA](#)

[Environment Agency](#)

[Natural Resources Wales](#)

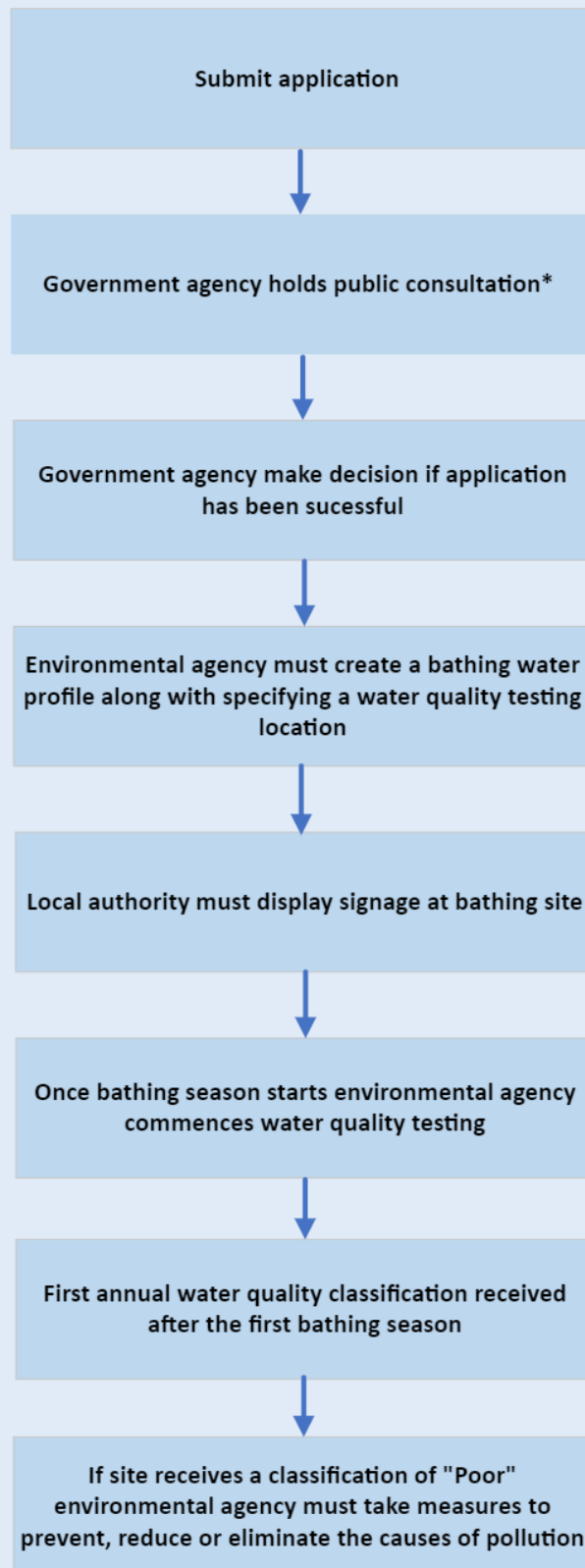
[SEPA](#)

The local council must display signage at the bathing site containing information about the water quality and pollution sources.

Once the first bathing water season has ended for a newly designated site the EA/SEPA/NRW/DAERA will give the bathing water site its first water quality classification of Excellent, Good, Sufficient or Poor. If the bathing site receives a designation of Poor then the environmental agency must take measures to prevent, reduce or eliminate the causes of pollution.

If your application is declined and designation is not received contact the agency to appeal the decision. Contact Surfers Against Sewage Community Water Quality Officer to discuss how we can support you.

12.1 SUMMARY OF PROCESS AFTER APPLICATION HAS BEEN SUBMITTED



*This process may differ across regions.

12.2 CONTINUING YOUR CAMPAIGN

WHAT NEXT?

You have worked hard to engage with your community both in the campaign and application phase of the process. It is really important you continue to take your community on the journey with you once you submit your application. Social media or email newsletters can help ensure you update regularly on progress and feedback on the outcomes of the local consultation and water user survey that you held.

After you have submitted your application publish your document for your community to access. You could use Google Documents for example, and link to it via your Facebook page or an email newsletter. Why not continue with a monthly or quarterly newsletter to your community contacts.

Below are some ideas and milestones that you can promote to your community via social media or a newsletter to keep the conversation going whilst waiting for the decision on your application:

- Announce that your application has been submitted.
- When the government agency launches the public consultation on your application, promote the link for your community to respond.
- If you are conducting water quality testing publish the results to your network.
- Share the annual bathing water classifications when they are published for sites that are already designated.
- Share other communities' posts that are going through the same application process.
- Share general news relating to water quality.
- Post information to announce the start and end of the bathing season.

12.3 IF YOUR APPLICATION IS SUCCESSFUL

If your application is successful and you receive bathing water designation it is just the start of the journey. There are lots of opportunities to continue momentum throughout your first designated bathing season and beyond.

Here are some ideas on key milestones to share with your community via social media or newsletters:

- Publish whether or not your application has been approved.
- Create a press release and send it to local newspapers and any other publications locally or nationally that are relevant.
- Share other successful applications social media posts.
- Share the link to the environmental agency's bathing water profile and the location of where the water quality will be tested.
- When you receive your first water quality classification share this information.

13. TIMELINE

To help plan how you approach your application and to flag milestones use this [timeline](#) of the overall process, from campaign to receiving the first annual water quality classification.

14. USEFUL LINKS

SURFERS AGAINST SEWAGE

[Safer Seas and River Service](#)
[Report a pollution incident](#)
[Submit a sickness report](#)

THE RIVERS TRUST

[The Rivers Trust Sewage Map](#)
[The Rivers Trust map of popular river bathing locations](#)

TOP OF THE POOPS

[Top of the Poops – Sewage Spill Data](#)

THE OUTDOOR SWIMMING SOCIETY

[The Outdoor Swimming Society Inland Access Guide](#)
[Wild Swim Groups: The UK List](#)

GOVERNMENT AGENCY'S

Application requirements:

England - [Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs \(DEFRA\)](#)

Northern Ireland - [Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs \(DAERA\)](#)

Scotland - [Scottish Environment Protection Agency \(SEPA\)](#)

Wales - [Welsh Government](#)

ENVIRONMENTAL AGENCY'S

Existing Designated Bathing Waters and Bathing Profiles:

England - [Environment Agency](#)

Northern Ireland - [DAERA](#)

Scotland - [SEPA](#)

Wales - [Natural Resources Wales](#)

BATHING WATER LEGISLATION

[The Bathing Water Regulations 2013](#)

ILKLEY CLEAN RIVER GROUP

[Bathing water application and campaign](#)

THAMES 21

[Oxford Rivers Project](#)

FIND YOUR MP

[UK Parliament](#)

MP'S POLITICAL VIEWS IN PARLIAMENT

[They Work For You](#)

15. RESOURCES

Below is a list of example templates to use. These resources are intended as a guide only for you to add to and change to fit your application. Please copy and paste the text into your own documents or emails and update or change where needed.

We will update and add more of these resources as we progress with our support so please check back regularly. If you have any suggestions on new templates that would be useful for us to create please do contact us.

Contact the Community Water Quality Officer at Surfers Against Sewage to support you in your application: kirsty@sas.org.uk

LOCAL AUTHORITY AND LANDOWNER

[Letter/email to local authority and/or landowner to contact them about supporting the application](#)

[Meeting agenda for use when meeting MP/councillor/local authority/landowner](#)

COUNCILLOR

[Councillor email/letter](#)

[Councillor briefing note and table of motion request](#)

[Meeting agenda for use when meeting MP/councillor/local authority/landowner](#)

MP

[MP email/letter](#)

[MP briefing note](#)

[Meeting agenda for use when meeting MP/councillor/local authority/landowner](#)

WATER USER SURVEY

[Water user survey](#)

[Water user survey volunteer rota](#)

LOCAL CONSULTATION

[Consultation questionnaire](#)

[Application timeline](#)

[How to choose a bathing site](#)

Resources coming soon -

Local councillor guidance to support local authority table of motion

Poster to promote bathing water application in your community

Flyer to raise awareness of water user surveying

Photo consent form

Bathing water designation presentation

Press and social media resources

Feedback form on Surfers Against Sewage support