

**From Tony Vaughan MP**

I hope you are well.

Thank you for organising the meeting about water quality tomorrow. I am afraid I cannot attend because I am required to be present in Westminster for votes at 7pm.

I wanted to let you know that I have sent a disclosure request (attached) to the Environment Agency to ascertain exactly what they have been doing to investigate water pollution in our District – focussing on the Marsh and in Folkestone – so I can assess whether the steps they are taking, as required by their legal duties, are adequate. The EA have acknowledged the request and I hope to have a response by April.

Please do feel free to re-iterate to the Environment Agency, if they are there, how important it is to the community of the EA responding fully to this request! (And to encourage others to do so!).

I have raised the issue of water quality in our area with Ministers, including with the Environment Secretary, Steve Reed, as recently as yesterday. In addition, I have met with Southern Water, toured their wastewater treatment plant in Range Road, attended local steering group troubleshooting meetings

(FHDC, RM Internal Draining Board, Southern Water, EA) and engaged with local campaigners and stakeholders. I have also campaigned on this issue for several years, as well as taken advice from Feargal Sharkey who has led the way in activism on this issue.

My view is that, although these meetings have been helpful, the buck ultimately stops with the Environment Agency, whose job it is to investigate and address this problem. They are clearly not doing enough; if they were, we would not still have two beaches that have no swim advisory warnings on the Marsh. As I say in my letter, this cannot go on. That is why I am asking for the information I seek in the attached. Once I have the EA's disclosure, I would hope to share this with the community so that, together, we can hold the EA to account by whatever means are available.

I look forward to engaging with you and the community and welcome feedback and comments on this issue.

Best wishes,

Tony

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