

Yellow Fish Project

‘Only rain down the drain’

The Yellow Fish Project helps to make people aware of possible pollution pathways to our rivers. Yellow fish stickers are placed by drains to remind people that anything put down these drains can impact our rivers.

Substances like oil, paint, soap, detergents or litter will enter a stream and can be very harmful to fish and other wildlife that live there.

The project is undertaken in two stages:

- Raising awareness about sources of pollution and how to prevent incidents taking place
- With permission from the landowner or highways authority the yellow fish sticker will be put near surface water drains leading directly to watercourses



The Yellow Fish sticker indicates that anything put down the drain will go directly to the river and could damage the river environment



Road and surface water drains are designed to carry only rainwater, usually to the nearest watercourse. Allowing engine oil, cooking oil, paints, chemical wastes, detergents and even litter to enter these drains causes pollution to enter the receiving watercourse. These pollutions can range from the creation of an eyesore to the killing of fish and wildlife.

Pollution is also caused by misconnections, particularly in older residential properties. Misconnected properties let the foul waste from toilets, washing machines, dishwashers, showers, baths and sinks to enter surface water drains. Instead these wastes must go to a sewage treatment works through the foul sewer.

Oils and paints can often be recycled by your local authority. In West Oxfordshire cooking oil can be put in a clear plastic bottle and collected as part of your household waste collection. Paint (once hardened) and engine oil can be taken to Dix Pit recycling centre. More information for Oxfordshire residents can be found here: <https://www2.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/recycling-z>

Yellow Fish Facts

- One litre of oil can pollute one million litres of drinking water
- Oil is toxic to aquatic life and prevents oxygen being absorbed on the surface
- High nutrient levels in sewage and grey water can cause ‘sewage fungus’ to grow on the bottom of rivers and streams



The Yellow Fish Project in Witney

The Lower Windrush Valley Project have been working with the Environment Agency to roll out Yellow Fish scheme in Witney. We have focused on the industrial estate near Station Lane and close to Queen Emma's Dyke, where there have been several pollution incidents in the last few years.

Between March and July 2018:

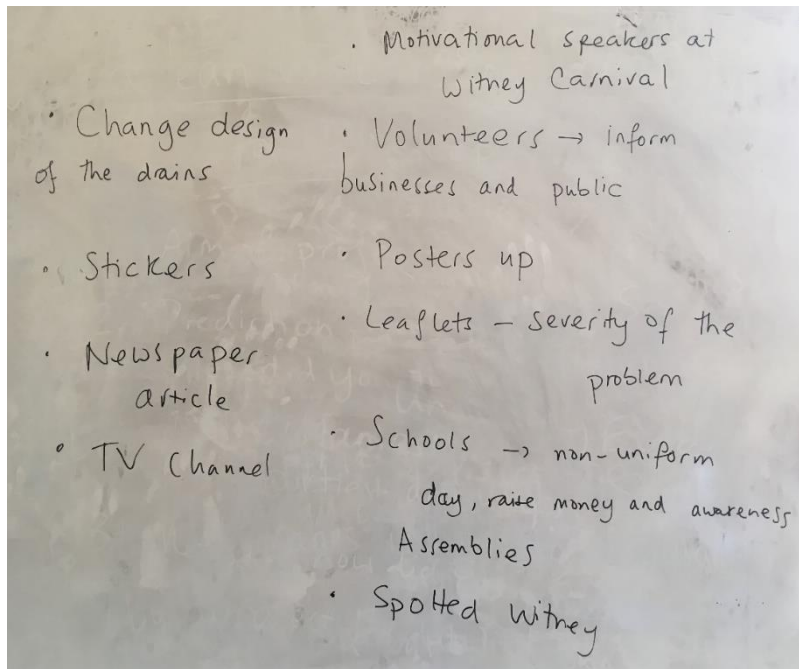
- 38 stickers attached to drains on public highway
- 20 stickers attached to drains on private land, including at Henry Box School and in the industrial estate
- Approximately 50 businesses visited and given information about the scheme

Local school involvement

In July we ran two classes with Henry Box secondary school in Witney, talking to Year 8 students about water quality, pollution and the Yellow Fish scheme.

The students were asked to discuss ideas on how to spread the 'Only rain down the drain' message and keep people engaged with the Yellow Fish project in the long term. Their ideas can be seen in the image on the right.

In the new school year, representatives from the class will be organising assemblies to tell the remaining staff and students about the Yellow Fish scheme.



A key part of the project is raising awareness so we are keen to share the message as widely as possible.

Articles appeared in local newspapers, the Oxfordshire County Council website and on social media. The project was also featured on the That's Oxfordshire TV news programme.

Causing or knowingly permitting pollution to enter a river or not following pollution prevention legislation is an offence and further steps may be taken.

If you see a pollution incident please report it using the Environment Agency Incident Hotline on 0800 807060.