

## **BATHING WATER QUALITY UPDATE FOR LSP JANUARY 2016**

Southern Water, the Environment Agency and Hastings Borough Council joined forces to tackle various sources of pollution which were putting the town at risk of failing tough new water quality standards.

Together they have found and fixed a variety of problems which have meant the town's bathing water has passed the tightened standards – which are twice as tough as last year.

The successful project means the bathing water, which was predicted to be classed as poor, now passes the new standard and is classed as good (excellent at St Leonards).

A major source of contamination was found to be misconnections – when foul sewers carrying wastewater from homes to the town's treatment works are wrongly connected into surface water pipes through which rainwater is released into the sea.

Finding these was a priority for Southern Water's contractors MWH and WERM who lifted more than 2,000 manholes and checked more than 1,200 properties in the town. At the same time the teams also identified and upgraded manholes shared by wastewater and surface water pipes which can be a source of contamination during heavy rain.

We had about 81 potential misconnections past over to us to investigate between Jan 2014 and June 2015. Out of those only 2 remain o/s due to access issues.

HBC have served 31 Building Act notices all remediated without works in default being required.

At the same time, the Environment Agency and the council set about cleaning the Alexandra Park stream. The work included the installation of floating vegetated islands in ponds linked to the stream to help clean the water that flows out to sea.

Helping communicate this wide-ranging project to the people of Hastings was Clean Seas Please – a community led campaign managed by Hastings Voluntary Action and Rother Voluntary Action.

With support from the Environment Agency and Southern Water, volunteers from Clean Seas Please held a series of high profile events across the town. The wide-ranging and successful campaign focused on encouraging people to check their domestic plumbing for misconnections and to only flush the three Ps – pee, poo and paper – everything else should go in the bin.

Over the winter SWS have continued to survey their infra-structure in different parts of the borough, particularly on the Eastern side which drains into the Ore Stream. Any potential misconnections they identify will be referred to the Council's environmental health service for follow up action.

Another phase of sustainable urban drainage works is being implemented within the Alexandra Park stream and pond system. This is jointly funded by HBC and the Environment Agency.

Given that the results for last summer were very good, and that the good work continues which should result in even better water quality in years to come, the justification for an engineering solution such as a long sea outfall is far less than it might have been. However, further research on a different form of outfall is being carried out.