

Open letter to:

Steve Wilson
Managing Director of Wastewater Service
Dwr Cymru Welsh Water

9th March 2023

Dear Steve

We are writing in connection with the burst of the sewer main in the River Taff on 7 March 2023 and the potential devastation that this type of incident has for our rivers in Wales. There are uncorroborated reports within the angling community of this main being reported previously for leaking into the River Taff.

There are a number of rivers across Wales which either have mains running across the river bed and/or have sewer mains running along the banks, usually on stilt structures. As an example, Afonydd Cymru and West Wales Rivers Trust have been working on the Nature Networks Funding with Swansea University on the River Afan which identified a large number of such pipes. This gives us grave concerns over how many other Welsh Water pipeline assets are in very close proximity to our rivers and would therefore ask that Welsh Water provides us information on:

- 1) Whether any previous reports of this main leaking have been made and if so, what actions Welsh Water undertook?
- 2) Whether sewer pipelines are identified as critical assets where they are either in or running alongside the banks of rivers in Wales?
- 3) Your asset management programme for these pipelines. For example, we would expect sewer mains which run in rivers to have a higher inspection frequency than other sewer mains in Wales and we would like to understand the additional measures that you take to ensure maintenance of them and protection of our rivers.
- 4) Given the significant incident on the River Taff, your post incident measures that will be put in place, not just for this incident but applied across all pipelines of this type?
- 5) What funding is within PR24 to support both maintenance and inspections of these type of pipelines? Given the current impact on rivers in Wales, are Welsh Water looking at the feasibility of moving sewer mains from watercourses in Wales?

We would request a meeting with you to discuss the above at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely,
Gail Davies-Walsh
CEO, Afonydd Cymru