



News

Exmouth Dye Test

Date and Location: South West Water will be conducting a dye test at Exmouth Beach on June 14, 2023, beginning at 8.30am. The timing of the test is to ensure optimum tidal conditions for the process to take place. It will take some time for the dye to move through the network.

Approach: SWW will use fluorescene dye in the test, which is bright yellow/green. Whilst harmless to water quality and wildlife it has the potential, though unlikely, to show on any swimmers or animals that come into contact with the dye. SWW operations and Comm's team colleagues will be present on site through the event and are liaising with both Exmouth Town council and East Devon District Council ongoing.

Proactive comm's will be issued in advance to ensure the local community has prior knowledge of the test.

Background

There have been recent reports of sewage ('black sand') in the area of Maer Rocks, Exmouth which were later confirmed to be the result of rotten seaweed. South West Water internal tests and the Environment Agency's independent investigation have conclusively shown that the reported incidents were unrelated to South West Water's infrastructure or sewage systems.

However, in an effort to address any concerns from residents and demonstrate its commitment to openness and transparency, South West Water have decided to conduct dye testing in the area. The primary purpose of this dye testing is to create confidence, showing the community how South West Water local infrastructure works and identifying the location of the storm overflow discharge point. The ambition is that this will assure the community that the SWW outfall functions as designed.

Exmouth bathing water has been classified by Defra as 'excellent', the highest standard for bathing water quality, in 2016-2022 inclusive. So far this season three bathing water samples have been taken by the Environment Agency at Exmouth beach and all three would have easily met the 'excellent' standards.

A South West Water spokesperson said: *"On 14 June, we will be carrying out investigative work at Maer Rocks in Exmouth involving dye testing. The work follows a request from the local community for us to confirm the location of the discharge point from our outfall pipe. As a result, customers may notice some yellow/green discolouration to the sea near Maer Rocks on Wednesday morning. We would like to*

reassure local residents and visitors that the dye is harmless and other than a temporary colouring, will not affect bathing water quality or the wider ecology of the beach or Exe estuary. We thank customers for their patience while we carry out this work.”

Councillor Olly Davey, Chairman and Mayor of Exmouth Town Council “ *We are really pleased that South West Water has agreed to carry out the dye testing. This will go a long way to reassure the local community and help with understanding the issues involved. We will also be pushing for the alert system to be clarified and possibly simplified as there is much confusion over when a discharge actually takes place.”*

For further information please contact South West Water’s Community engagement team by emailed thm on CommunityEngagement@southwestwater.co.uk