

The logo for RIVERACTION is centered in a black rectangular box. It features the word "RIVERACTION" in white, uppercase, sans-serif font. To the right of the text is a circular graphic composed of concentric, glowing blue and white rings, resembling a ripple effect or a stylized globe.

RIVERACTION

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AROUND AQUATIC POLLUTION

A horizontal, wavy line in a light teal color, positioned above the author's name.

Erica Popplewell

Charity number: 1194995

WHO WE ARE

River Action is a small and agile, highly impactful campaigning charity



Since we started in June 2021 we have grown exponentially in both size and impact. Our proven model takes a systemic and collaborative approach that cascades change at scale across the UK

THEORY OF CHANGE

1

Identify high profile river catchments in trouble and with engaged communities

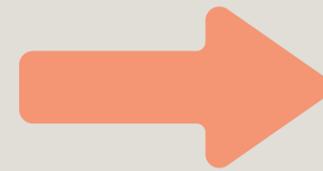


2

Engage local communities through our River Rescue Kit and Community Fund

3

Gather evidence around pollution including citizen science, industry supply chains and academic research



4

Combine this to create powerful and creative media campaigns reaching a wide national audience

5

Amplify public opinion through campaigning activity that pressures Government and industry to change

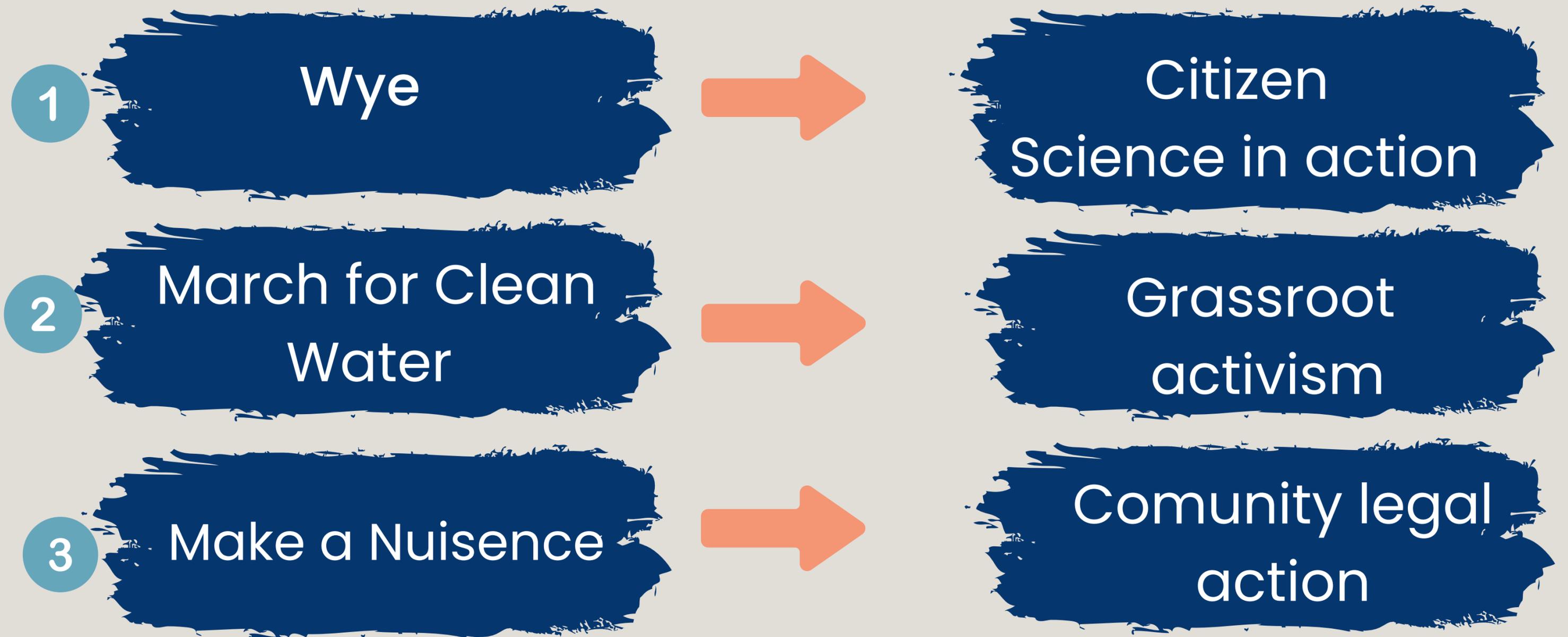


6

Use political advocacy and legal action to force the changes required



THRE EXAMPLES



THE WYE

1

Identify high profile river catchments in trouble and with engaged communities

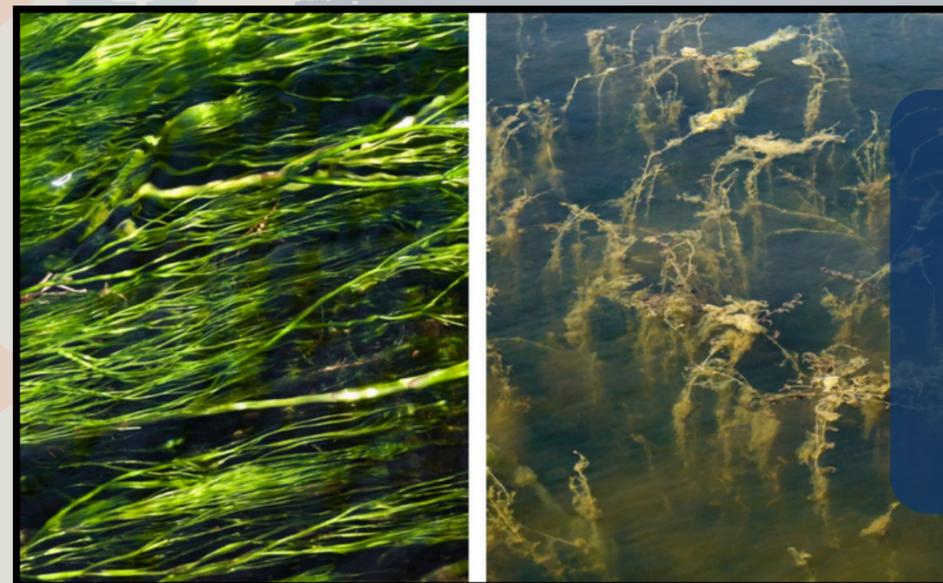


Poultry factories. Phosphate rich diet



140 miles of algal blooms in 2020

4



90% Ranunculus (Water Crowfoot) lost



THEORY OF CHANGE: THE WYE

1

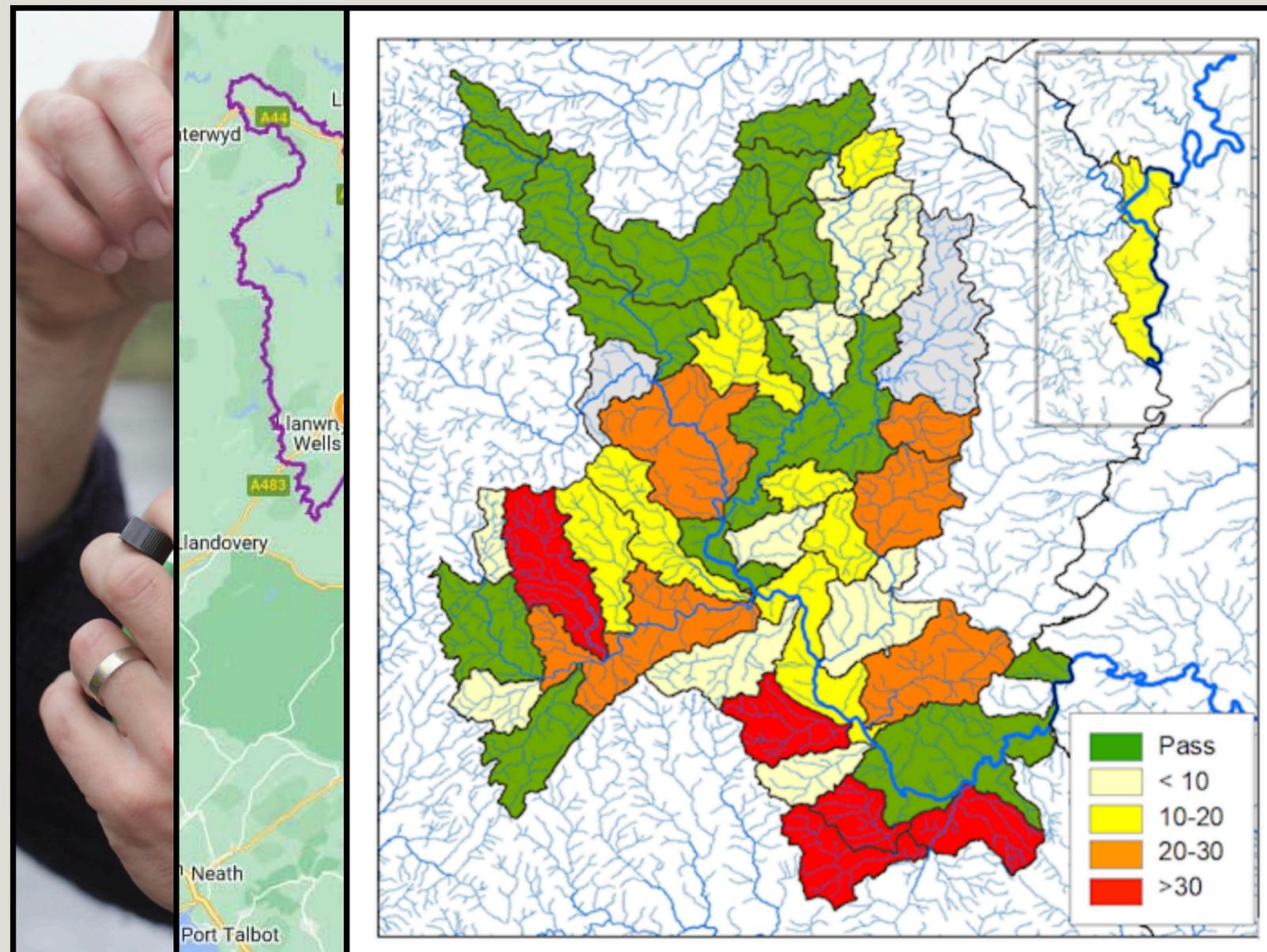
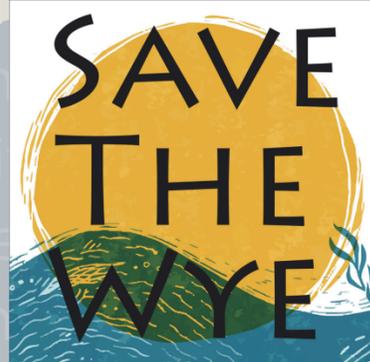
Identify high profile river catchments in trouble and with engaged communities

3

Gather evidence around pollution including citizen science, industry supply chains and academic research

5

Amplify public opinion, campaigning activities, pressures Government, industry to change



THE WYE

PHOTOS: EAMON BOURKE, RICHARD GREATHES

'Citizen scientists' exposing pollution in rivers

By **Steph Spyrro**
Environment Editor

GRANDPARENTS and children are among the citizen scientists helping to reveal the devastating effects of river pollution. Campaigners say they have assisted in discovering that just 14 per cent of England's rivers are in good ecological state, while not a single one was free from chemical contamination. Freshwater species, such as salmon, are at risk of suffocation because of high levels of phosphorus and nitrogen from sewage and animal waste. Charles Watson, founder of River Action UK, said: "Hundreds of ordinary people from all walks of life get into our rivers every day to monitor water quality. It is only through these extraordinary endeavours that we have got to understand the horrific extent of the phosphate pollution of the River Wye. "Manure from tens of millions of chickens has, in three years, wreaked untold damage on this iconic river." The Daily Express has highlighted the alarming state of waterways through our Green Britain Needs You campaign. Nick Day, founder of citizen science group Friends of the Lower Wye, said the river has been getting worse with extreme algal blooms in summer caused by nitrates and phosphorus. His group has trained around 20 volunteers to sample and test the water at locations on the Wye, which stretches from the Severn estuary through Wales, as well as its tributaries. There are now more than 600 volunteers testing at 330 locations, Nick said. "We've had interest from the Environment Agency (EA) and Natural Resources Wales in using our data. All the groups are keen that the information is used in the most valuable way possible for the river. We can offer a huge increase in the amount of data available to them and give them much more detail. "It's brought together groups of people who use the river in very different ways - anglers, canoeists, wild swimmers, walkers and artists. They all want to see a healthy river and a clean environment. An EA spokesman said: "Monitoring water quality is essential to keeping rivers clean and the Environment Agency has been collecting data from waterways since the 1980s. "We have spent more than £180million on environmental monitoring since 2016."

needed to get more information about where these particularly bad sources of pollution were entering the river. "People are increasingly realising our environment is important and it keeps us alive." Gavin Bown, of Natural Resources Wales, said: "NRW has a long relationship with citizen science, particularly in biodiversity monitoring, where long-established schemes provide key evidence."

COMMENT
CHARLES WATSON
Founder of River Action UK

by Westminster and in the devolved nations. For example, England's Environment Agency's (EA) funding has been reduced by 75 per cent - and with it systematic monitoring of water quality has all but collapsed. Despite the River Wye being heavily protected, both the EA's and Natural Resources Wales' record on pollution has been lamentable. With the number of enforcement actions undertaken by the EA now less than 10 per cent of what they were 10 years ago, polluters can literally tip excrement (whether human, chicken, cow or pig) into our rivers knowing their chances of prosecution are minimal. In the absence of effective government-backed enforcement, citizen scientists are the eyes and ears for organisations like the River Action. Without the evidence that they gather each day, our ability to campaign against pollution would be badly compromised. Anybody can volunteer. So why not become a citizen scientist today?

THE recent emergence of the citizen science movement is one of the most inspiring things yet witnessed within the UK's environmental sector. From school kids to grandparents, hundreds from all walks of life get into our rivers each day of the week to test and monitor the quality of their water. It is only through them that we have got to understand the full extent of the phosphate pollution of the River Wye caused by farmed chickens' manure. However, the emergence of the citizen science movement has its origins within a huge national scandal. Over the last decade our statutory environmental protection agencies have had their budgets mercilessly cut, both

Go with the flow - samples from the River Wye

Check... volunteer Tom Tibbitts

DAILY EXPRESS CRUSADE
GREEN BRITAIN NEEDS YOU

27
Daily Express Tuesday, March 29, 2022



Wye pollution: River charity in appeal for citizen scientists

Money raised by River Action will support citizen scientists testing for pollution in the River Wye.

BBC News / Jan 30, 2022



River Wye at Hereford Bridge now 2cm deep amid dry spell

A campaigner says UK rivers face an "ecological emergency" if the government does not act urgently.

BBC News / Aug 10, 2022

NEWS

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England | Local News | Regions | Hereford & Worcester

'Urgent action' call from River Wye campaigners

DEATH OF THE WYE



Rivers face 'horror story' as country heads for drought, say campaigners

River Action has urged the Government to act as low water levels mean more concentrated pollution in Britain's rivers.

The Standard / Aug 9, 2022



River Action says Tesco is key to saving the River Wye

TESCO has been warned by environmentalists not to allow itself to "potentially contribute to the destruction" of the River Wye by procuring products from the firms responsible.

The Forester / Jul 16, 2022



Citizen science group calls for funding help to save the River Wye

AN environmental group has called for action to help save an iconic river that flows through much of Powys

County Times / Jan 27, 2022

THE MARCH FOR CLEAN WATER - NOVEMBER 2024

141
organisation
strong
coalition

15,000
people on the
streets of London

1200
media mentions

2.8 million
social media
views



5

Amplify public opinion through campaigning activity that pressures **Government and industry to change**

6

**REFORM THE
REGULATORS**

**ENFORCE THE
LAW**

**END POLLUTION
FOR PROFIT**



OUR TOOLS - THE RIVER RESCUE KIT



WEBINARS:



COMMUNITY MAP

The **Community Map** is your essential tool for joining the fight to rescue our rivers – connect with groups in your area already taking action or find support for your own campaign. You can also [view other interactive maps](#) below to help with your campaign.

Select each community pin to find out more about what's happening in that area and ways to get involved with an active campaign. You can use the filters to find other groups facing similar issues or those who've taken actions you're interested in, to learn from their experiences.



HOW TO VIDEOS:



SET UP A GROUP

Fed up with the state of our rivers? Setting up a group is a great way to coordinate your action with other passionate river rescuers.

In this section: [Getting started](#), [Different types of groups](#), [Going forward](#)

[GET STARTED](#)



TEST MY RIVER

By monitoring your local river or waterway you're making a real difference, gathering important information about its health.

In this section: [Understanding citizen science](#), [Why is data important?](#), [Testing methods](#)

[FIND OUT HOW](#)



CAMPAIGN FOR MY RIVER

With proper planning, campaigning can be an effective, inspiring, and enjoyable way to support our rivers.

In this section: [What is campaigning?](#), [Why is it important?](#), [Ways to campaign](#)

[TAKE ACTION](#)



GET MEDIA INTEREST

Every passing moment sees our rivers under siege from pollution, endangering the ecosystems and communities they sustain.

In this section: [Getting the right attention](#), [Why pursue media interest?](#), [Attracting and using media interest](#)

[GRAB THEIR ATTENTION](#)



RAISE FUNDS

Funds are essential to enabling action and empowering river rescuers and their communities to join the fight against filth.

In this section: [Accessing grants](#), [Fundraising tips & advice](#), [Crowdfunding](#)

[DISCOVER OPPORTUNITIES](#)



KNOW MY LEGAL RIGHTS

Legal rights are an individual's or group's entitlements under the law which protect their well-being, interests, and freedoms.

In this section: [What are my legal rights?](#), [How can I use them?](#), [Taking legal action](#)

[LEARN MORE](#)

Find out more: <https://kit.riveractionuk.com/river-rescue-kit/>

RIVERACTION

