

Farmer bulletin

June 2021



POOLE HARBOUR
Nutrient Management Scheme



Image credit: Will Hyde

The Spring Trial

The Poole Harbour Nutrient Management Scheme (PHNMS) Spring Trial is progressing well. The presentations so far have covered compliance and accounting, available measures to reduce nitrate losses and a demonstration of a nutrient accounting tool. At each stage, Poole Harbour Agricultural Group (PHAG) has learnt a lot from the farmers involved and would like to thank the attendees for their input. The full outcomes from the trial will be presented in the next bulletin, but below are some initial thoughts from the feedback:

Hopes for the scheme:

"It sends out the right signals that responsible land managers are serious about controlling their environmental impact as a team"

"It could be a welcome source of income to aid in the management of environmentally sensitive areas within my holding"

Worries about a WPZ:

"The extra burden and restrictions will not allow us to adapt our business over time"

"Our business would have to close one holding to meet compliance under a Water Protection Zone"

Other themes:

Costs and support needed to reach compliance will vary between farms.

Mix of accounting systems used:

- online or paper systems,
- consultants, advisors or agents,
- paperwork managed directly on farm.

The Consent Order

The Environment Agency (EA) have now published their response to the Judicial Review Consent Order for Poole Harbour (available at pooleharbournitrates.org.uk/resources along with a summary). We are working with the EA to understand the implications of the Consent Order for farmers in the catchment.

The potential introduction of a Water Protection Zone would have significant impacts on farm businesses in the catchment. However, the EA also recognises and supports the PHNMS approach. If the industry commits to working together voluntarily, it could achieve the same aims without the need for additional regulation and also potentially open up wider business opportunities.

The EA will soon be communicating their response to the agricultural industry. Once the EA response is planned, PHAG will promote it to the catchment.

Comments from the Chair

We recently said farewell to Tess Tidman and would like to thank her for her dedication as Project Manager, the scheme has come a long way since Tess joined us last year. Tess has recently moved on to a new role and we wish her the best of luck for the future.

The team is now developing the membership system, ensuring it is simple and valuable for all our catchment's farmers.

The trial is proving useful to get insight from a variety of perspectives, helping us make sure we get the scheme right.

Thank you to everyone involved.


Wakely Cox