

World Water Wedding

The World Water Wedding is an opportunity for anyone who cares about one of our most precious resources to come together to honour our relationship with this wonderful element. Wedding vows often include a commitment to love 'for better or worse, in sickness and in health'. The World Water Wedding will both celebrate the miraculous basis of life and grieve the sickness facing many of our bodies of water.

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What's the World Water Wedding?



For people around the world to commit to water for life, because water is life!

“Rivers are the arteries of our planet; they are lifelines in the truest sense.” Mark Angelo

Extinction Rebellion’s Dirty Water crew were inspired to create the World Water Wedding campaign by [Meg Avon, a writer and campaigner from Bristol](#). Meg’s ‘wedding’ with the River Avon has sparked other campaigns and actions focused on celebrating and actively committing to water.

World Water Wedding asks you to nurture your relationship with your chosen water source for a day of wedding-style commitment ceremonies on **22nd March** annually to coincide with [World Water Day](#). For more detailed information including resources in a number of languages for World Water Day 2026, select the text [2026: World Water Day | Water and Gender](#).

Marriage vows often include a commitment to love ‘for better or worse, in sickness and in health’. The World Water Wedding will both celebrate this miraculous basis of life and grieve the sickness facing many of our bodies of water.

Find Your Flow

The World Water Wedding can apply to any body of water, from the smallest puddle to the biggest ocean. There are many ways that you can be involved; from organising a joyous hand-fasting, commitment ceremony with friends, family and your local community to a quiet personal commitment that you document and share with others later; or, to mark the sad deterioration of your water source, you may want to hold a funeral-style ceremony. Whatever you choose to do, you can use your events to spark local action and build community to protect your water source.

The Earth is mostly made up of water; rain, glaciers, the polar icecaps, springs, mist and much more are all part of our global water cycle. Despite this, only 2.5% of it is freshwater, and less than 1% is easily accessible and safe for humans to use.

Ambition

The intention is for the campaign to build each year on Sun 22nd March - Water Water Day, to become a global day of ceremonies and actions. Encourage everyone around the world to commit to water for life. Linking [international water dates](#) to water-related activities helps bring media attention. For example, you could announce your intentions during World Water Week and change your social media status to 'In a relationship', get 'engaged' on World Rivers Day and then hold your ceremony on Water Water Day. This slow build helps increase awareness and amplify your big day!

Fundraising

XR UK and the Dirty Water Campaign need regular donations to keep our activism going, to provide creativity, resources, physical spaces, websites etc.

To help support this, find information, training, links / QR code and more [HERE](#)

Inspiration from Meg

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/KvU8Vt10JAM?si=SbEeTcl7147CQv bv>

In 2023 Meg Avon, inspired by the [Conham Bathing Campaign](#) in Bristol UK, organised a wedding ceremony to symbolise her commitment to the River Avon. The ceremony was a unique way to draw attention to the problem of sewage pollution in the River Avon and to advocate for cleaner water.

By 'marrying' the river, Meg aimed to create a sense of guardianship and inspire others to take action. The wedding was filmed as part of the documentary '[Rave On for the Avon](#)' - watch the trailer above.

Meg Avon subsequently appeared on '[This Morning](#)' to share her story.

Please upload all the events you plan for the World Water Wedding to the XR [Map](#) and [Calendar](#).

You can do this by filling in the [Request XRUK Support](#) form. You can also use the form to request any additional support you might need for your event.

Commitment | Wedding Day

Sunday 22 March

Why this date?

World Water Day, held on 22 March every year since 1993, is an annual United Nations Observance focusing on the importance of freshwater.

The [World Water Day 2026](#) theme will focus on the vital role of water in achieving gender equality, highlighting how water access and management impact women and girls throughout their lives. The theme emphasizes the need for policies and programs to be tailored to the evolving needs of women and girls, from childhood to older age, ensuring inclusivity and effectiveness.

World Water Day celebrates water and raises awareness of the 2.2 billion people living without access to safe water. It is about taking action to tackle the global water crisis. A core focus of World Water Day is to support the achievement of [Sustainable Development Goal 6: water and sanitation for all by 2030](#).

Community Building

Commitment ceremonies celebrating water is a great opportunity to strengthen and build communities. The Community Building team have created workshops and resources to support you. Find suggestions on the [Pre-Action Activities - To Weave Community Building into Actions](#) page and the resources in the [Community Building](#) book.

What Can a Water Ceremony Bring?

Ceremony brings people into a deeper connection with water and each other, which can be moving and uplifting. It can bring a deeper dimension to an action, so you can better:

- Create an emotional connection with your local water bodies.
- Connect with the emotions you feel to drive change. Preserve them as your source of hope.
- Continuous outreach - engage your community in devising and publicising your ceremony, then invite the wider public to your event.
- Develop and strengthen relationships with other groups.
- Build a common community purpose.
- Influence local authorities and regulatory organisations.

- Bring people to your Community Assembly.
- Raise awareness and promote [Water Pressure - Citizens' Assembly on Water](#).
- Filming your ceremony and sharing it as widely as possible can cultivate a greater connection to the issues and inspire others.

Create a Water Ceremony

Resources for your ceremony including [songs, vows, posters, flyers](#).

Throughout history, we have always held ceremonies and rituals. They are our means of celebrating, marking moments, or making sense of the world we experience. Sacred events such as naming ceremonies, funerals and unions (marriages), or more modern celebrations such as birthday parties, gigs and football matches, are all a form of ritual where we share our feelings. They can include performance and express a sense of mourning or appreciation. Ceremonies are sacred. They are powerful.

Water is a life-giving element with profound importance, recognised and celebrated across cultures. Water is fundamental to life. Wherever clean water flows, life grows. Water represents emotions, renewal and life, which all ebb and flow. It's not only essential for survival but also revered for its spiritual significance, offering renewal, purification, and connection to the divine. When we connect deeply with the element of water, we honor its role as a giver of life and develop a greater sense of well-being and appreciation. This connection can help us foster respect for this sacred element while enhancing our personal sense of balance and vitality. Constantly evolving, ebbing and flowing, it reminds us that we can too.

How can you connect with your emotions to truly embody water in this ceremony?

For inspiration, watch [Sacred Rivers](#) with Simon Reeve, a BBC TV mini-series that explores three of the world's major rivers: the Nile, Yangtze, and Ganges. Simon takes us on an exploration into the spiritual and cultural significance of the rivers delving into the beliefs, cultures, and traditions that surround them.

Commitment Vows

A water wedding or ceremony symbolises a commitment to protecting and celebrating bodies of water. You can create your vows or use [these examples](#) to inspire you.

Ceremony Ideas

Blessing / Oathing Stones

Blessing Stones Ceremony is a meaningful ritual often incorporated into Pagan weddings and other spiritual or non-denominational ceremonies. Rooted in ancient Celtic traditions, the ceremony involves guests receiving a stone - often referred to as a wishing or oathing stone -

and writing or speaking a blessing, wish, or intention for the couple. The stones are then cast into a body of water such as a river, lake, ocean, or fountain, symbolising the release of love and good wishes into the natural world.

The water element plays a central role: it represents purity, flow, and the cyclical nature of life. As each stone hits the water, the resulting ripples are interpreted as the spreading of blessings and love, touching not only the couple but all those they encounter. This reflects the Pagan belief in interconnectedness and the power of nature to carry intentions.

Hand Fasting Ceremony

"[Hand Fasting](#)" is similar to knot tying. It can be adapted by using and sharing a garland and then allowing the river to accept some of the flowers and the union.

Knot-Tying / Unity Sand / Water Blending Ceremonies

Getting married is called "[tying the knot](#)" for a reason. If you're looking for a symbolic wedding unity idea, literally tie a knot to signify your bond. We recommend using a fisherman's knot to tie a piece of rope—not only is it the strongest knot, it gets tighter with pressure, making it a beautiful representation of your relationship.

You can also integrate a ceremony or ritual, like a [Unity Sand](#) ceremony, [water blending ceremony](#) or [water rituals](#), to visually represent your union.

The Language of Flowers

Create a bouquet with a special message using flowers and plants with symbolic meaning [here](#).

Paint the Streets

Paint the Streets is an ongoing creative campaign, breaking social norms to raise awareness about the climate & ecological emergency. It includes a variety of low-risk actions including murals, stickering, flyposting, stencilling, chalking, banner drops and the subvertising of bus stops & billboards. And the Dirty Water campaign have created a special **Fishy Business** paint-the-streets pack to shine a light on every **Dirty Water Source**.

Please take a look at all the creative ideas and the legal guidance in these two guides [Paint the Streets](#) and [Fishy Business](#).

We demand that water is treated as a precious natural life-source (Dirty Water)

Seeds of Change

This is a beautiful, family-friendly action from XR St Albans that kids will love. Sail your messages out into the water! Use leaves or you can cut these out using raw, biodegradable paper, with messages written on them using chalk pens. Find [chalk pens here](#).

Get everyone at your event to write their messages of hope and promises, and publicise your next action or event. You can also wrap water plant seeds in a leaf and sail them out too.





The Dream Boats

Origami is a creative, beautiful and fun way to get your point across. Why not leave some **paper boats**, with your expressed wishes for water on them outside (or inside) the HQ of your local Water Company?

Publicise Your Event

Please upload all the events you plan for the World Water Wedding to the XR UK **Map** and **Calendar**. You can do this by filling in the **Request XRUK Support form**. You can also use the form to request any additional support you might need for your event, e.g. Action Support and Legal Briefings.

What to Wear

This action is all about your creativity. You can wear whatever you feel fits the day. Meg, who's committed to the River Avon [inspired World Water Wedding](#), wore a repurposed wedding dress but you can make this exactly what you want it to be. Make it as bold and impactful as possible. We can't wait to see your ideas!

Spring Equinox

The commitment day comes just after the Spring Equinox (20th-21st March). The spiritual meaning of the spring equinox is deeply rooted in themes of balance, renewal, and transformation. This celestial event marks the moment when day and night are equal in length, symbolising harmony between light and dark. Across cultures, the equinox has long been recognised as a powerful time for growth, reflection, and new beginnings. Symbols of new beginnings can include decorated eggs and spring flowers.

Resources

Suggested vows, songs, graphics, flyers etc

Graphics, social media, posters, flyers etc

Here you'll find loads of resources you can use to promote your event/campaign.

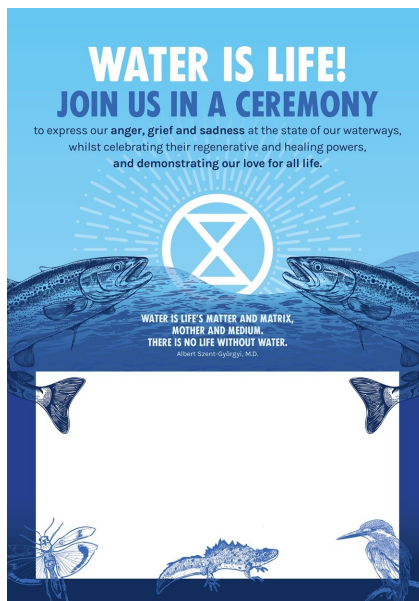
We have also created outreach materials for you to promote your ceremony. You can use the editable versions of the leaflets to add your text, QR codes and date/place of your ceremony and also use the printer-ready versions to send to a professional printer.

Dirty Water social media channels

- [Instagram](#)
- [TikTok](#)

Downloadable Assets

[Stickers](#) | [posters](#) | [flyers](#)



WATER IS LIFE!

This is an invitation to join a ceremony around our local waterways, to raise awareness, to learn how to protect our waters. We come from water, our bodies are 60% water and our brains are 80%. Humans are a part of nature not apart from nature. Water is crucial for all life, we must honour it.

Throughout history, we have always held ceremonies and rituals. They are our means of celebrating, marking moments, or making sense of the world we experience. For example, events such as naming ceremonies, funerals and unions (marriages), or more frequently, a football match or gig, are all a form of ritual where we share our feelings. Ceremonies have a more sacred element and gentle nature, they can include performance and express a sense of mourning or appreciation.

We're inviting you to an event to reaffirm our relationship with our local water. This might encompass our anger, sadness, awareness and care, and it can inspire change and our best intentions for this relationship from now on.

Using ceremonies to honour our water can include contributions of stories, myths, music and song, shared meditations, and spoken word. They can be as simple or complex as the community needs. Ceremonies, done well, leave lifelong lasting memories and therefore permanent good effects.

What would you like to bring to this ceremony we make together? You could be a witness or make your contribution. Please join this ceremony to act now on behalf of life.



Promote

- Share your ceremony and invite local authorities, politicians, other water users and engage schools & colleges.
- Highlight global water issues using the [XRGlobal Water Gallery](#) and encourage others worldwide wed their water on Sunday 22nd March 2026
- Incorporate [Blue Plaques for Nature](#). This could include a QR code on the plaque which could point to the history of the waterbody.



You can also find everyfin we've put together for the Dirty Water campaign [here](#). There are loads of ideas and resources available - check them out!

Songs, Music and Storytelling

Songs

The Algonquin Water Song, also known as the Nibi Song, is a traditional song deeply connected to the Indigenous Algonquin people of Canada and their reverence for water. The lyrics, primarily in the Algonquin language (Nishnaabemowin), translate to a powerful message: "Water is the lifeblood of our Mother Earth, and water is the lifeblood of our own bodies". It is a song of gratitude, respect, and a call to protect water as a vital resource.

Phonetic Lyrics:

Nee bee wah bow

En die en

Aah key mis kquee

Nee bee wah bow

Hey ya hey ya hey ya hey

Hey ya hey ya hey ya ho

"We sing this song like a lullaby. The song means the water is the life's blood of our mother the earth. Water is the life's blood of our own bodies" — Grandma Nancy

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/KC2FHciQ0sU>

Here's a breakdown of the song's significance and meaning:

- **Spiritual Connection:** The song emphasizes the sacredness of water in Algonquin culture, viewing it as a living entity and the source of all life.

- **Lifblood of Mother Earth:** The lyrics highlight the essential role water plays in sustaining the planet, recognizing it as the foundation of all ecosystems.
- **Lifblood of Humanity:** The song also acknowledges water's crucial role in human life, emphasizing its importance for physical and spiritual well-being.
- **Call to Action:** The Water Song is not just a song of praise but also a call to action, urging listeners to protect water resources and be mindful of their relationship with water.
- **Grandmother Nancy Andry:** The song is associated with Grandma Nancy Andry, who is known for her work in promoting water awareness and protection.
- **Singing for Water:** The tradition involves singing the song, often four times, facing the four cardinal directions (east, south, west, north), as a way to connect with and honor water.
- **Symbolic Representation:** In some traditions, women are seen as the keepers of water, while men are the keepers of fire, highlighting a balanced and complementary relationship with nature.

The Algonquin Water Song serves as a reminder of the interconnectedness of all things and the importance of respecting and protecting the natural world, particularly water.

The [Climate Choir Movement](#) have songs to learn and a growing number of choirs around the UK that you could connect with.

Other suggestions:

[Backwater Blues](#) - Bessie Smith

[The River is Flowing](#) - Native American song

[The River](#) - kids song

[When the Levee Breaks](#) - Led Zeppelin

'Old Macdonald'

Possible rewording of 'Old Macdonald had a farm for children with actions

This old river's full of life

Ee eye ee eye oh

And in its care it has some fish

Ee eye ee eye oh

With a splash splash here and a splash there, here a splash, there a splash, everywhere a splash splash

This old river's full of life

EE eye ee eye oh

beaver-dive/ kingfisher-zoom/ frog-croak etc

Accompanied with handouts for adults about the actual state of our rivers and seas.

You can [find more songs here](#).

Music & Storytelling

- [Song of the Thames](#) (YouTube 29min) by Sam Lee - singer and song collector.
- Traditional Native Storytelling - [Salmon Boy](#) (YouTube 12min) with Roger Fernandes.
- [The Lost Words Blessing](#) - (YouTube 4min) a song created from Robert Macfarlane's book *The Lost Words*.
- Collect stories.
- Water Stories for Children - You can find a selection of water stories for children [here](#) and the beautiful Water Princess [here](#).

Vows

Commit to Water for Life!

To commit to water wedding vows, you can draw inspiration from **the symbolism of water** – its flow, depth, and ability to cleanse and renew – to craft vows that reflect your love and commitment. Consider incorporating phrases about the ever-flowing nature of your love, the strength and resilience of water, or the peace and serenity it can bring.

Flow and Continuity

Compare your love to a river, always moving forward, ever-changing, yet always returning to the source. This can represent the enduring and evolving nature of your relationship.

Depth and Mystery

Use language that speaks to the deep and mysterious aspects of the ocean, emphasizing the hidden depths of your love and the adventures you will share.

Cleansing and Renewal

Highlight water's ability to cleanse and renew, symbolizing the fresh start and purification that marriage brings.

Resilience and Strength

Refer to the power of water to shape landscapes and withstand storms, symbolizing your ability to face challenges together.

Writing Your Own Vows

When writing your own vows, consider what you love most about water, how it's impacted your life, and your hopes for the future. Consider specific examples of your relationship and the promises you want to make. Start with an opening that addresses the water body directly, then share your feelings, make your promises, and conclude with a heartfelt closing.

Tips for Writing and Delivering Vows

- Be authentic and sincere.
- Speak from the heart.
- Practise beforehand to ensure a smooth delivery.
- Consider your audience and choose language that is appropriate for your ceremony.
- Remember that your vows are a personal expression of your love and commitment.

River Inspired Vows

Focus on Personhood of the River:

"I vow to love you as deeply as the river, with all its beauty, its power, and its sense of adventure. Like the water that flows ever-forward, my love for you will be unyielding, unstoppable, and unending."

"With the sound of the water rushing by and the warmth of the sun on our skin, I promise to love you with all my heart. I vow to be your partner in all of life's adventures, and to share with you all of life's joys and sorrows."

"As we stand here by the river, I am reminded of the flow of life and the power of nature. With you by my side, I feel supported, loved, and filled with joy. I vow to cherish and honor you for all the days of my life."

Focus on the river's journey:

"Like the river, our love will carve its own path, sometimes gently, sometimes with force, but always moving forward, together."

"Just as a river never stops flowing, my love for you will be a constant, a steady current in our lives."

"We will navigate the rapids and bask in the calm pools, just like a river flowing to the sea."

Highlighting interconnectedness:

"As tributaries feed the river, my life is enriched by your presence, and I promise to be a source of strength for you as well."

"Like the river's connection to the ocean, our lives are intertwined, and I pledge to honour and cherish this bond."

"We are two rivers flowing towards the same sea, each with our own unique course, but destined to be one."

Emphasizing enduring presence:

"I promise to be your constant companion, your steady shore, through all the seasons of life, just as a river is always there."

"Our love will be like a river, ever-changing yet eternally present, a source of life and beauty."

"Just as a river shapes the landscape, our love will shape our lives, creating a beautiful and enduring testament to our commitment."

Celtic Wedding Vows Option 1

You are blood of my blood, bone of my bone. I give you my body, that we might be one. I give you my spirit, until our life is done.

Celtic Wedding Vows Option 2

You are the star of each night,
You are the brightness of every morning,
You are the story of each guest,
You are the report of every land.
No evil shall befall you, on hill nor bank,
In field or valley, on mountain or in glen.
Neither above, nor below, neither in sea,
Nor on shore, in skies above,
Nor in the depths.
You are the kernel of my heart,
You are the face of my sun,
You are the harp of my music,
You are the crown of my company.

Sacred Earth Activism: [Back to Source - When the Rivers Were Goddesses](#) Written By Lorien Cadier

Traditional Christian Wedding Vows

'I, (name), take you, (name) to be my wife/husband/partner to have and to hold from this day forward; for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy law. In the presence of God I make this vow.'

Here, the wedding ring is placed on the finger: 'With this ring I thee wed, with my body I thee worship, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow: in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.'

The vows according to the service in Common Worship - followed since 2000 - are as follows:

'I, (name), take you, (name), to be my wife/husband/partner, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death us do part, according to God's holy law. In the presence of God I make this vow.'

Vows From Different Religions and Cultures

Eighteen Vows From Different Religions and Cultures.

More Inspiration & Ideas

The Power of Celebrating Water

Connection through water, with nature and each other, fosters well-being, through a regenerative and healing relationship, encouraging the flow and exchange of energy and knowledge. Consider making more of an impact by following some of these suggestions:

- Actively cultivate a sense of curiosity/care/communication/collaboration through creative interactions with the river (e.g. song, music, poetry, arts and crafts workshops or installations).
- Demonstrate vulnerability: create an impactful ceremony to demonstrate your anger, grief and sadness at the state of our waterways and your love for all life.
- Explore: physically get to know your local waters (the source, wells and tributaries) to engage with and care for your local waterway.
- Research: look at wider connections, the history of the local waters and collect local stories and images.
- Consider your catchment area, sewage treatment works, landfills and other sources of pollution. How can you bring awareness of all the different sources of pollution to this waterway?
- Presence: Be present around waterways and feel the energy and power they can give to you.

Here is an example [running order](#) for the Ceremony for the River Wye.

Words & Inspiration

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/LOJ27gEM8hQ?autoplay=1>

Word Cloud created from [The Symbolism Of Fish: Exploring Different Cultures And Meanings](#)

Fresh water is precious and finite | All life depends on it

Our waterways are the arteries and veins of the earth. If we pollute those waterways, life will die.



“Nothing on this planet had so forcefully hammered into her the ultimate value of water. Not the water-sellers, nor the dried skins of the natives ... Here there was a substance more precious than all others - it was life itself and entwined all around with symbolism and ritual.” - Frank Herbert, Dune

“Thousands have lived without love, not one without water.” W H Auden, First Things First

Although issues are faced in multiple facets of water, some communities may prioritise different areas, such as flooding or pollution.

Community

- Engage other river / water user groups to build a community of stewards.
- Lead walks, clear litter / blockages.
- Consider joining a [water testing group](#).
- Offer [Science Street Talk](#) to other groups.
- Share research to strengthen knowledge and connection to the waterways.
- Post on social media, highlighting local pollution issues.
- Discuss the change you want to see to the waterbodies you care about.
- Read about [other ceremonies](#).

Art & Creativity

- Create artwork
- Write or read poetry
- Make mandalas
- Chalk a message or word onto a casting stone
- Chant / sing to rivers / make music (more on this below)
- Use Sound Bowls

https://www.youtube.com/embed/NOyP07_I50g

Puppets/Masks/Costumes

- Make a 'big splash' in your local media with colourful [puppets, masks and costumes](#).
- Welcoming the [River Wye Ceremony](#) [YouTube 5min] at Herefordshire Council featuring Wye River Goddess puppet.

Press

Media Advisory Template (for you to send out in advance of your event)

You can either open the Google doc, make a copy and then edit it from there, or copy the text template below.

[Press Release Template \(Google doc\)](#)

Edit anything between the square brackets [---], and where possible include some personal quotes about why you're taking action. At the bottom of the Google doc and the text template, we've included examples of personal quotes.

Copy below

Meet the activists who will marry [insert name of water body] as part of Extinction Rebellion's Dirty Water Campaign

On [insert date], activists are gathering at [insert location] to [insert brief description of the action: e.g. ceremony, occupation...].

From the 24th August to 24th September, Extinction Rebellion's Dirty Water Campaign is launching the World Water Wedding with a range of actions intended for people to pledge their troth to protect rivers and water bodies across the country.

The campaign will build up into next year to a global day of action on World Water Day, 22nd March 2026, where people around the world will commit to safeguard water by 'marrying' their local water source in mass weddings and commit to its care for life.

[Insert 2-3 paragraphs describing the action or ceremony in more detail, with as much colour as possible.]

This campaign is inspired by writer and campaigner Meg Avon from Bristol, who married the River Avon and took its name in 2023 to raise awareness of the gruesome condition of the river [1], which, like most water bodies in the UK, is choked with sewage, chemicals, and other pollution, making it unsafe for swimmers, watersports, and wildlife [2].

England has some of the filthiest rivers in Europe [3]. Since Meg's wedding, the state of the UK's waterways has remained dire: an estimated 994,499 sewage discharges into rivers and other water bodies occurred in 2024: almost one discharge every 30 seconds [4]. The amount of sewage entering the water has been increasing year after year [5], and rose 60% in 2024, reaching the point of crisis [6].

[Insert 1-2 paragraphs of facts about the local water body and its condition.]

Water companies are legally allowed to discharge untreated wastewater through sewer overflows during periods of heavy rain, but they have started to do so with alarming frequency [7] and not only when raining. A 2025 study found that England's major water and sewage companies have been misleading the public and Government by using duplicitous greenwashing and disinformation strategies which mirror those of the tobacco and fossil fuel industries [8].

Thousands of people fall sick in the UK each year after swimming, watersports, or other contact with polluted water [9]. The broken water system has also resulted in contaminated drinking water [10]. Moreover, polluted and ecologically barren water bodies are a significant cause of the biodiversity crisis, failing to provide a healthy habitat for invertebrates, fish, birds, and mammals [11].

The water weddings symbolise peoples' love for and lifelong commitment to protect their local water bodies, and they can be seen as part of the wider movement of campaigning for the rights of nature and shifting the dial towards a more equal partnership with our ecosystems.

The River Ouse made history this year as the first river in the UK to be granted legal rights as a living entity with an intrinsic right to exist [12], and last year co-founder of Lawyers for Nature, Paul Powlesland, became the first juror to swear an oath on a vial of river water in court, declaring the river to be sacred [13].

[Insert name of activist taking part], said "[insert quote here.]" [Insert name of activist taking part], said "[insert quote here.]"

Notes to editors

[1] 'I married the River Avon - it has changed my life'
<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cgq22y97n58o>

[2] Water pollution: facts & figures - Surfers Against Sewage
<https://www.sas.org.uk/water-quality/water-quality-facts-and-figures/>

[3] England has some of the filthiest rivers in Europe - and these maps prove it
<https://inews.co.uk/news/england-filthiest-rivers-europe-maps-3514835>

[4] Water pollution: facts & figures - Surfers Against Sewage
<https://www.sas.org.uk/water-quality/water-quality-facts-and-figures/>

[5] Environment Agency storm overflow spill data for 2024 - GOV.UK

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/environment-agency-storm-overflow-spill-data-for-2024>

[6] Serious water pollution in England up 60%, government says

<https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cg5zl75dmm0o>

[7] Water pollution: facts & figures - Surfers Against Sewage

<https://www.sas.org.uk/water-quality/water-quality-facts-and-figures/>

[8] Water industry using deception tactics to deflect blame for sewage pollution

<https://www.manchester.ac.uk/about/news/water-industry-using-deception-tactics/>

[9] Water pollution: facts & figures - Surfers Against Sewage

<https://www.sas.org.uk/water-quality/water-quality-facts-and-figures/>

[10] Should we be worried about our drinking water? | Science, Climate & Tech News | Sky News

<https://news.sky.com/story/should-we-be-worried-about-our-drinking-water-13270874>

[11] New study finds that sewage release is worse for rivers than agriculture | University of Oxford

<https://www.ox.ac.uk/news/2023-09-22-new-study-finds-sewage-release-worse-rivers-agriculture#:~:text=These%20new%20findings%20come%20at,protected%20habitats%20are%20threatened?>

[12] England's River Ouse makes history as first to gain legal rights - Oceanographic

<https://oceanographicmagazine.com/news/englands-river-ouse-makes-history-as-first-to-gain-legal-rights/>

[13] Environmentalist becomes first juror to swear oath on river water | Rivers | The Guardian
About Extinction Rebellion

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/article/2024/aug/02/environmentalist-becomes-first-juror-to-swear-oath-on-river-water>

Extinction Rebellion (XR) is a decentralised, international and politically non-partisan movement using nonviolent direct action and civil disobedience to persuade governments to act justly on the Climate and Ecological Emergency.

Donate | Support our work

https://chuffed.org/donate/we-must-rise?utm_campaign=we-must-rise&utm_source=PRFooter&utm_medium=Link&utm_content=Donate

What Emergency? | Read about the true scale of the climate crisis

<https://extinctionrebellion.uk/the-truth/the-emergency/>

Why Citizens' Assemblies? | Breaking the political deadlock

<https://extinctionrebellion.uk/decide-together/citizens-assembly/>

XR UK Local Groups | View a map of all local groups
<https://extinctionrebellion.uk/act-now/local-groups/>

XR UK website | Find out more about XR UK
<https://extinctionrebellion.uk/>

XR Global website | Discover what's going on in XR around the globe
<https://rebellion.global/>

Time has almost entirely run out to address the climate and ecological crisis which is upon us, including the sixth mass species extinction, global pollution, and increasingly rapid climate change. If urgent and radical action isn't taken, we're heading towards 4°C warming, leading to societal collapse and mass loss of life. The younger generation, racially marginalised communities and the Global South are on the frontline. No one will escape the devastating impacts.

Examples of personal quotes

Meg Avon, who married the River Avon in 2023, said, "As the UK's first known river bride, I am so excited to no longer be alone in my role of unconventional wedding bliss! Having a wedding and becoming married to water is such a beautiful way of stepping forward as a guardian - it can be as public or personal as you want it to be. I believe that every ceremony is a story, and many ceremonies of similar intention have the power to change the law. We are becoming kin with our landscape and natural entities once again and the timing has never been more perfect."

Denise Ashurst, from Cwmcarn in the Welsh Valleys, 61 years old and unemployed, said "I am regularly charmed by rain and dew, whenever walking with my dog in local woods. My face brushing dew from leaves, or listening to rain drumming my body as I walk below the trees make me feel open-hearted and full of love, so I'm committing to learning more about what makes this relationship work."

Ned Evans, a 60 year old teacher from Holmfirth, said "I have the most beautiful reservoirs near me in West Yorkshire which serve as vital water sources and are important for overwintering bird populations, including the protected red kite species. The reservoir levels are at a historic low for August, standing at 42.2% capacity, significantly below the usual range of 65% to 80% for this time of year, due to a prolonged drought and the driest spring and summer on record. As far as I know, this recent lack of rainfall is due to the climate emergency and increasing temperatures disrupting weather patterns, which likely means the levels will get lower each year and that leads to higher concentrations of impurities as the volume of water decreases. Water for me means life and I find it heartbreaking to see how much our pollution is damaging water and wildlife so I've decided to join the World Water Wedding campaign and commit to protect water. I'm going to hold a quiet personal ceremony by the edge of my nearest local reservoir, Winscar, on the 24th August and then send out my wedding invites to everyone I know to get dressed up and join me on World Water Day, Sunday 22nd March 2026, for a fun and joyous celebration of water."

Steve Conlon, 70, a retired IT Manager from Twickenham, said “I have lived in a boat on the tidal Thames for nearly thirty years now and I love it, but discovering sewage pollution locally was very distressing. Becoming aware of the real scale of what was happening was heart-breaking. I have learned that critical water issues, from conservation, ecology, pollution, flooding and drought as well as corrupt utilities and ideology-fixated politicians, are interlinked. We need to pay attention to all of them together. This interdependence was addressed by Mark Lloyd, the chief executive of the Rivers Trust, who was quoted in the Guardian [14] this week about our current water shortages, ‘We need to build more resilience into our rivers and their catchment areas with nature-based solutions at scale, such as healthy soils that allow water to filter into the ground and not rush off taking the soil with it; riverside tree planting to provide shade and further slow the flow of water; wetlands to store and slowly release water, and rewigging streams to raise the water table and purify pollutants.’ If we attend properly to water throughout our environment, that is a true collective act of love, and an affirmation of life.”

World Water Wedding Launch: XRUK Open Call 12/8/25

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DIRTY
WATER

The **World Water Wedding Open Call** took place on Tues 12 Aug 2025 where we heard from Meg, who married the River Avon. Attendees learnt more about the campaign and actions, and had an opportunity for fishy questions.

Here's the recording of the [Open Call](#) and the [sliddeck](#) used in the Open Call.

Useful links:

- [World Water Wedding](#) Action Pack.
- [Vows](#) for a ceremony committing to Water for Life.
- [Resources for World Water Wedding](#) including social media, posters, stickers vows, songs and press release.
- Follow the [Dirty Water Campaign on Instagram](#).

Let's commit to protecting and nurturing our precious water sources.

Publicise your events on the XRUK [Map](#) and [Calendar](#) by completing the [Request XRUK Support](#) form. You can also use the form to request any additional support you might need for your event.

Dirty Water's [Linktree](#) - get connected on social media and join the Telegram chats.

For any general questions, email dirtywatercampaign@proton.me.

Key Water Related Dates

2026

Sun 22 March: World Water Wedding Day

The Big Day - let's send this campaign global! Mass water weddings or commitment ceremonies to coincide with World Water Day. These symbolise your commitment to protecting and celebrating bodies of water.

[Info on how to create your ceremony and vows](#)

23 - 29 March: Honeymoon Water Action Week

The wedding is followed by a week of Honeymoon Water Actions.

[Ideas for your week of honeymoon actions](#)

Other key dates:

- Tues 3 March: [World Wildlife Day](#)
- Mon 23 March: [World Meteorological Day](#)
- Wed 22 April: [Earth Day](#)
- 24th-30th April: [Big River Watch | Rivers Trust Citizen Science Week](#)
- Fri 5 June: [World Environment Day](#)
- Mon 8 June: [World Oceans Day](#)
- Sun 9 Aug: [International Day of the World's Indigenous People](#)
- Sun 23- Thurs 27 Aug: [World Water Week](#)
- Sun 27 Sept: [World Rivers Days](#)
- Wed 2-Fri 4 Dec: [UN Water Conference](#)

Please upload all the events you plan for the World Water Wedding to the XR [Map Calendar](#). You can do this by filling in this simple [online form](#). You can also use the form to request any additional support you might need for your event.

Previous events

2025

Tues 12 Aug 19:00-20:00 – Launch of World Water Wedding

Watch the recording of the Open Call to hear from Meg, who married the River Avon, and find out more about World Water Wedding. Open Call info. [More details here](#)

Sun 24 Aug

The start of World Water Week. **GET ENGAGED!** Water sources were chosen (river, lake, ocean, sea, puddle, glacier... anything) and commitments to marrying the water in March 2026. Happy news shared with friends, family and the wider world.

[More details here](#)

Mon 25 Aug – Sat 27 Sept

A month of action! A citizens' science project called the Great UK WaterBlitz, local actions and events from a selection of action ideas including occupations, blockades, Citizen's Arrests, Paint the Streets and mass trespass.

[More details here](#)

Sun 28 Sept

World Rivers Day, marked the end the month of actions with events taking any form including funerals, grieving, recommitment ceremonies and NVDA.

[More details here](#)