

HUW MERRIMAN MP  
(Bexhill and Battle)



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

By email to:

Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive, Environment Agency

23 August 2022

Dear Sir James,

Thank you for your reply of 22 August to the Sussex MPs letter of 18 August regarding the sewage incident at Bexhill and sewage discharge.

As you will be aware, these incidents have, quite rightly, raised a lot of concern from my constituents. I should therefore like to raise some further questions on which I should appreciate a written response which I can share with my constituents. These are:

1. When, precisely, did Southern Water contact the Environment Agency about the sewage discharge from the pumping station at Galley Hill?
2. Why did the EA send out bathing water quality alerts on Monday 15 August when there had been no rain or sewage discharges? What deemed the water to be unsafe on that date, had any water testing been done?
3. How often and where is actual testing of bathing water carried out?
4. How is the issue of bathing water quality communicated to the local authorities? What action do you expect them to take when EA issues an alert?
5. Why did the EA outflow pipe from Egerton Stream start discharging foul water into the sea before any rainfall hit Bexhill on Wednesday 17 August?
6. Why are other outfall pipes from surface water to stream discharging onto the shingle beach and not onto the sands at the end of the pipe? Are there holes in these pipes? If so, how should this be reported and when will they be prepared?
7. Why are the outfall pipes onto the beaches not clearly labelled so the ownership of them is obvious to the public?
8. How do you decide on how far the sewage spill might impact neighbouring beaches and how far along the coast is testing done to ensure that bathing water remains safe?
9. Why are Bexhill bathing waters consistently of lower water quality than Hastings and St Leonards where household misconnections to surface water drains are found to be more of an issue?

Please reply to: Constituency Office, 29-31 Sea Road, Bexhill-on-Sea, TN40 1EE

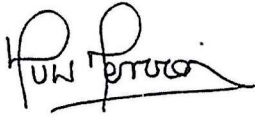
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10. What work is being done to establish the cause of lower bathing water quality in Bexhill? I have been out with Southern Water's engineers who were able to demonstrate that their pipes were not discharging sewage yet the sea appeared to be suffering from discharge. This points to other sources from across the coastline. Has the EA investigated these sources and tested the water to assess where this could be coming from?

I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Huw Merriman'. The signature is stylized with large, rounded letters and a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Huw Merriman MP  
Chairman of Transport Select Committee  
Member of Parliament for Bexhill and Battle