

Environmental Tip Of The Month. Don't Rush To Flush!

The estuary at Holbeton is protected as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and is also both a Site of Special Scientific Interest and a Marine Conservation Zone – confirming its national ecological and environmental importance.

But, did you know that the River Erme, which flows through the estuary at Holbeton and out to the sea at Mothecombe, is frequently polluted with raw sewage? After heavy rainfall, the surface water running off our streets and gardens drains into South West Water's Treatment Works, near the Green Gates, effectively causing raw, untreated sewage to flood out into the estuary.

This is not only bad news for all the birds, fish and creatures who live there but it's also a real health hazard for everyone who enjoys being in or on the water.

If it hasn't been through you... please don't put it down the loo (except loo paper).

Please help reduce the risk of these overflows by only flushing the 3P's down the toilet: Pee, Poo and Paper (the toilet kind). Anything else, even if it says it is biodegradable - wipes, sanitary products, tissues, kitchen towels, dental floss, nappies, cotton wool buds and the unmentionables – either have to be removed at the Treatment Works, adding to the risk of blockages and overflows, or end up in the estuary.

So something we can all do, and it will have an immediate effect starting today, is never to flush away anything but the 3P's. Dispose of the rest in the bin or through South Hams District Council's recycling scheme. Fat deposits in the drains can also cause blockages closer to home. Again, use your bins and not the drains to dispose of fats and oils. More information can be found on South West Water's 'Love your Loo' website.

While the Parish Council are taking action on the inadequacy of our sewerage plant every individual can also help when it comes to flushing. Please do your bit to safeguard the estuary for the benefit of all the precious creatures that live in it and on it and everyone who enjoys it.

With thanks to Liz Hitchins, on whose piece this is based