Proposal to become a 'Watermark Village'

Cllr Richard Mann

Proposal

To agree that Winsley Parish Council becomes a Watermark Village as part of the scheme run by Wessex Water. This would involve committing to the promotion of the 'Raising Awareness' activities and to at least three 'Taking Action' activities over at least a 12-month period.
[see Appendix 1 for lists of activities]

Background

Following the Wessex Water event held as part of the 'Wild Waters Festival' in June I have continued conversations started there with Matt Wheeldon, Head of Infrastructure for Wessex Water, about how as a community we could raise awareness of our all too often taken for granted water and sewage services. These issues are especially important at a time when climate change and nature loss are closely linked. For example, a warming climate is bringing more frequent heatwaves with the need to extract water from rivers to maintain water supplies as well as periods of intense rain with flooding and sewage overflows. All of which is very harmful to river wildlife.

In response, I have been directed to Wessex Water's 'Watermark Towns' project with the offer that we become the first 'Watermark Village'.

The Watermark Communities approach

The Watermark Communities approach is based around awareness campaigns and encouraging communities to take action. The aim is to help save water and improve the environment. Kirsty Scarlett leads on this project as their Group Head of Community Engagement.

Full details are set out on their website:
Become a Watermark Town | Wessex Water

Wessex Water will provide: local data and information, marketing materials bespoke to the local area, social media content and funding of up to £5,000 for local projects and events for the local community.

Our journey, as a Parish Council, should we choose to embark on this, requires the passing of a resolution to commit to this work.

RM October 2025

Appendix 1

Raising Awareness activities

Campaign	What it involves	How we will help
Save Water, Save Money	Encouraging people to save money	Providing campaign materials
Bin the Wipe	Encouraging people to stop using wet wipes that block pipes	Providing campaign materials
Stop the Block	Encouraging people to stop putting fats, oils and grease down the drain	Providing campaign materials
Customer Support	Creating awareness of the support available for customers who need help with their bills or extra support	Providing training to local support groups
National Refill Day	Encouraging people to use fewer single-use plastic bottles by drinking tap water	Providing campaign materials

Taking Action activities

Campaign	What it involves	How we will help
Council Resolution	Committing to becoming a Watermark Status town	A public demonstration of commitment to lead the change
Rain Savers	Installing water butts and rain gardens and helping to reduce rainfall run-off	Providing free water butts and advice
Water Audits	Holding water-saving interventions at council and community buildings	Finding and fixing water leaks and preventing wastage
Water Guardians	Keeping a watchful eye on local waterways and spotting pollutions	Working in partnerships with local Wildlife Trusts
Water Drop-Ins	A regular time for customers to meet Wessex Water in person in their community	Sessions provided by Wessex Water
Only Rain Down the Drain	National Yellowfish campaign to let people know which public drains lead directly to rivers and waterways	Providing campaign materials for community action
Education Service	Signing local schools up for a free education visit	Our Education Advisers will provide free sessions
Water Refill Points	Installing your own public water refill point	Providing advice to help reduce single-use plastics