



Newquay Council

Democratic Service

Newquay Town Council
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**The Rt Hon Emma Reynolds
Secretary of State for DEFRA
House of Commons
London, SW1A 0AA**

Our ref: 2026/06/04/SWW
Date: 04/06/2026

To the Secretary of State,

SUBJECT: Formal Vote of No Confidence in South West Water (SWW) and Petition for Special Administration.

At its Full Council meeting on 3 June 2026, Newquay Town Council formally resolved to issue a Vote of No Confidence in the management of South West Water (SWW). This decision reflects the Council's duty to represent the residents, businesses, and environment of the town, and includes its commitment to joining the "Dowr Glan" campaign ([Dowr Glan, Cornwall deserves clean water](#)), in recognition of the systemic failures of SWW to effectively manage the sewage system in Cornwall.

We are no longer requesting "improvements" or "consultations." South West Water has failed for more than a decade to show its capability and willingness to manage our water and sewage system. We are formally petitioning the Government and Ofwat to remove SWW from the management of the Cornish sewage and water systems, and transfer the ownership and management of our sewage and water system to a publicly-owned organisation, run as a public service.

Our decision is based on a systemic and catastrophic failure in the following three areas:



1. Failure of Infrastructure and Public Health

Despite Cornwall's residents paying the highest water bills in the UK, our coastline and rivers have become conduits for raw sewage. In 2025 and early 2026, we have witnessed unprecedented spill durations that have closed our beaches, impacted our tourism economy, and posed a direct threat to public health. The current management has proven incapable of maintaining a sewage system fit for the 21st century.

2. Financial Mismanagement and Breach of Public Trust

While our constituents face further bill increases this April, SWW continues to prioritise shareholder dividends and executive bonuses over essential capital investment. The "investment plans" touted by the company have repeatedly failed to yield results on the ground, leading to a total breakdown of trust between the utility provider and the Cornish people.

3. Inadequacy of Governance

It is the view of these Councils that SWW's leadership has lost the confidence of the Cornish communities and its "social license" to operate. The repeated fines and enforcement cases from Ofwat have acted as a "cost of doing business" rather than a deterrent. We believe the company is now structurally incapable of delivering the environmental protections required by law.

Our Formal Demand:

We call upon the Government to intervene and make this situation stop at once, using powers such as those granted by the **Water (Special Measures) Act** to remove the offending company from operating in Cornwall. We demand that South West Water be placed into **Special Administration**, stripping the current management of their mandate. We call upon the Government to transition Cornish sewage and water assets into a publicly-owned organisation, run as a public service, answerable to elected representatives of Cornish voters, that will prioritise the Cornish environment and its people over private profit.

Cornish rivers and seas are the lifeblood of our economy and our identity. We will no longer stand by while they are managed into decline.

We await your urgent response regarding the steps you will take to revoke SWW's licence in the Duchy.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Curtis BA (Hons) FCMI FSLCC FIoL FMAAT
Chief Executive

Cc:

- **Mr Chris Walters** (The Chief Executive of Ofwat)
- **Cornwall Councillor Leigh Frost** (Leader of Cornwall Council)

Cornwall's Members of Parliament;

- **Noah Law** (MP, St Austell & Newquay)
- **Andrew George** (MP, St Ives)
- **Anna Gelderd** (MP, South East Cornwall)
- **Jayne Kirkham** (MP, Truro & Falmouth),
- **Perran Moon** (MP, Camborne & Redruth)
- **Ben Maguire** (MP, North Cornwall)