



PROTECTING WATER QUALITY



INTRODUCTION

Water is one of Wales' most valuable natural resources. From rivers and streams to lakes, wetlands and our coastline, healthy waterways support wildlife, provide drinking water, reduce flooding and create spaces for recreation and wellbeing.

Football Clubs have an important role to play in protecting local water quality. Everyday activities such as grounds maintenance, vehicle management, waste disposal, cleaning, catering and facility operations can all affect nearby watercourses if not managed carefully.

Through the Together Greener Programme, Clubs can take simple actions to reduce pollution risks, conserve water, support biodiversity and strengthen connections with their local environment.

This resource will help your Club to:

- Understand how football Clubs can impact local water quality.
- Identify common pollution risks around Club facilities.
- Reduce the risk of contamination entering rivers, streams and drains.
- Improve management of oils, chemicals and waste.
- Protect biodiversity and local ecosystems.
- Engage members in positive environmental action.
- Develop projects that support water quality and nature recovery.
- Contribute to Wales' environmental and sustainability goals.





IMPACT

Why Water Quality Matters

Every drop of rain that falls on Club roofs, car parks, pathways and pitches eventually flows somewhere.

In many cases, rainwater drains directly into nearby streams, rivers or the sea without treatment. Any pollution entering these drainage systems can therefore have an immediate impact on wildlife, habitats and water quality.

Pollution can come from many sources, including:

- Oils and fuel spills.
- Fertilisers and herbicides.
- Grass clippings.
- Litter and plastics.
- Cleaning chemicals.
- Blocked drains.
- Incorrectly connected plumbing.
- Poorly maintained septic systems.

By understanding these risks, Clubs can take simple preventative measures that protect local waterways and reduce environmental impact.





BENEFITS

What Are the Benefits?

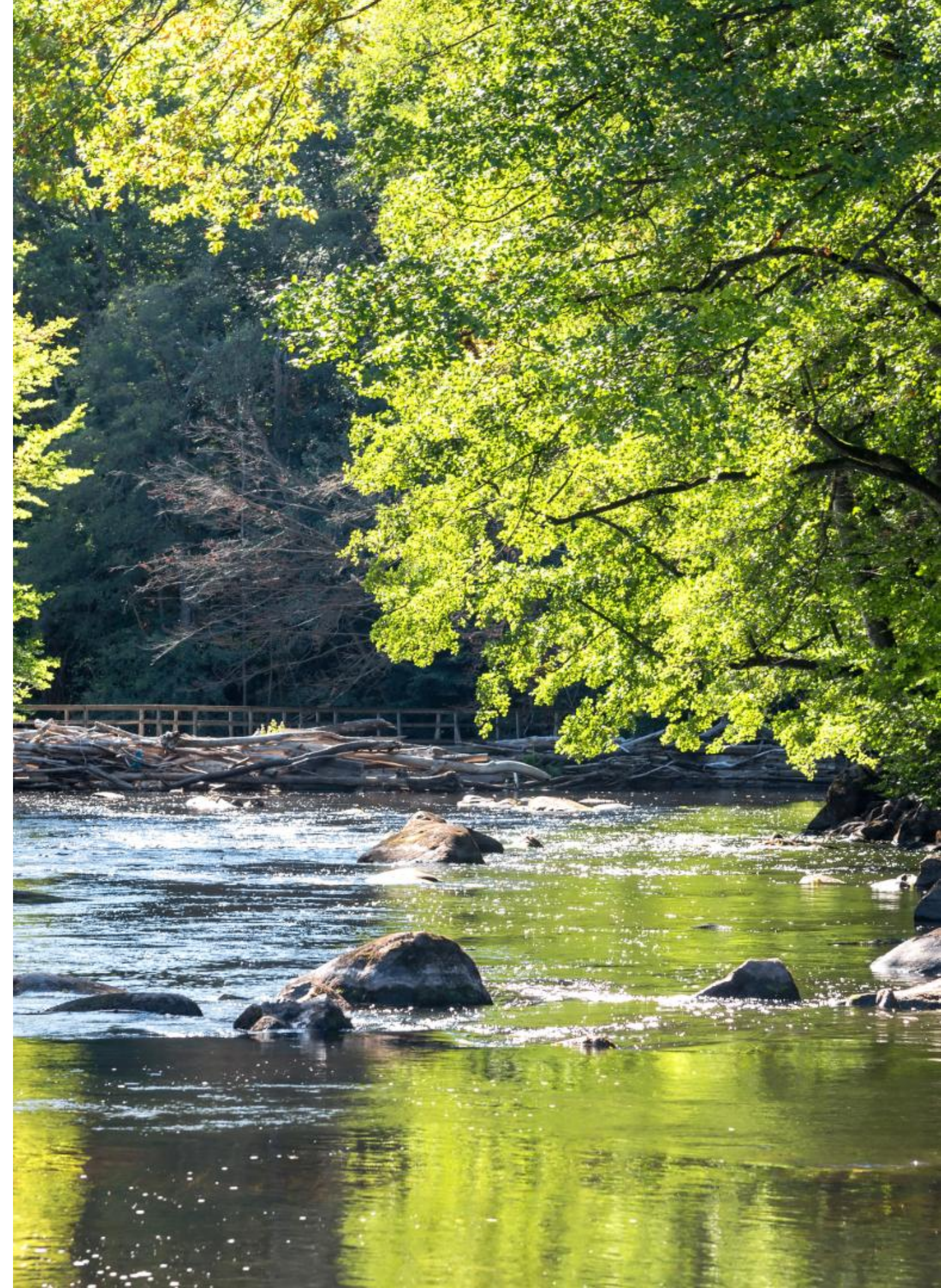
Protecting water quality provides benefits for both the environment and your football Club.

Environmental Benefits

- Protects rivers, streams, lakes and coastal waters.
- Supports fish, birds, insects and aquatic wildlife.
- Improves local biodiversity.
- Reduces pollution entering watercourses.
- Helps build resilience to climate change.

Club Benefits

- Reduces environmental risks and liabilities.
- Improves Club reputation.
- Supports sustainability accreditation and funding applications.
- Demonstrates community leadership.
- Creates educational opportunities for players and volunteers.
- Strengthens links with local environmental organisations.





PREVENT & PROTECT

1. Check Your Drain Connections

Many Clubs have both surface water drains and foul water drains.

Surface water drains carry rainwater directly to nearby rivers, streams or the sea. Foul drains carry wastewater from toilets, kitchens and showers for treatment.

If these systems are incorrectly connected, untreated wastewater can enter local waterways and cause serious environmental harm.

Actions for Clubs

- Understand your drainage layout.
- Check that toilets, sinks and showers connect to foul drainage.
- Clearly mark surface water drains.
- Include drainage inspections within maintenance schedules.
- Seek professional advice if drainage routes are unclear.

Tip

Consider marking surface water drains with environmental messages such as:

"Only Rain Down the Drain"

to help educate members and visitors.



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2. Prevent Drain Blockages

Blocked drains can cause flooding, pollution incidents and costly repairs.

Common causes include:

- Wet wipes.
- Sanitary products.
- Cooking fats and oils.
- Food waste.
- Coffee grounds.
- Cleaning cloths.

Actions for Clubs

Promote the "Three Ps" message:

- Pee.
- Poo.
- Paper.

Tips

- Install signage in toilets and kitchens.
- Provide food waste collection facilities.
- Train clubhouse users and volunteers.
- Regularly inspect drains and gullies.





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4. Maintain Septic Tanks and Wastewater Systems

Poorly maintained septic systems can contaminate groundwater, rivers and nearby habitats.

Actions for Clubs

- Schedule regular inspections.
- Arrange routine desludging.
- Check for pooling water or unpleasant odours.
- Prevent chemicals and oils from entering the system.
- Ensure rainwater is not connected to wastewater systems.

Tips

Look out for warning signs:

- Wet patches around the system.
- Slow-draining toilets.
- Strong odours.
- Unusual vegetation growth.



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PROJECT IDEAS

Water Quality Improvement Projects

Once your Club has addressed the main pollution risks, consider delivering projects that actively improve water quality and biodiversity.

Rain Gardens

Capture and filter rainwater runoff while creating wildlife habitat.

Native Buffer Zones

Create areas of native planting between facilities and watercourses.

Wetlands and Wildlife Ponds

Provide habitat for amphibians, insects and birds while helping manage water.

Rainwater Harvesting

Collect roof water for irrigation and maintenance activities.

Hydration Stations

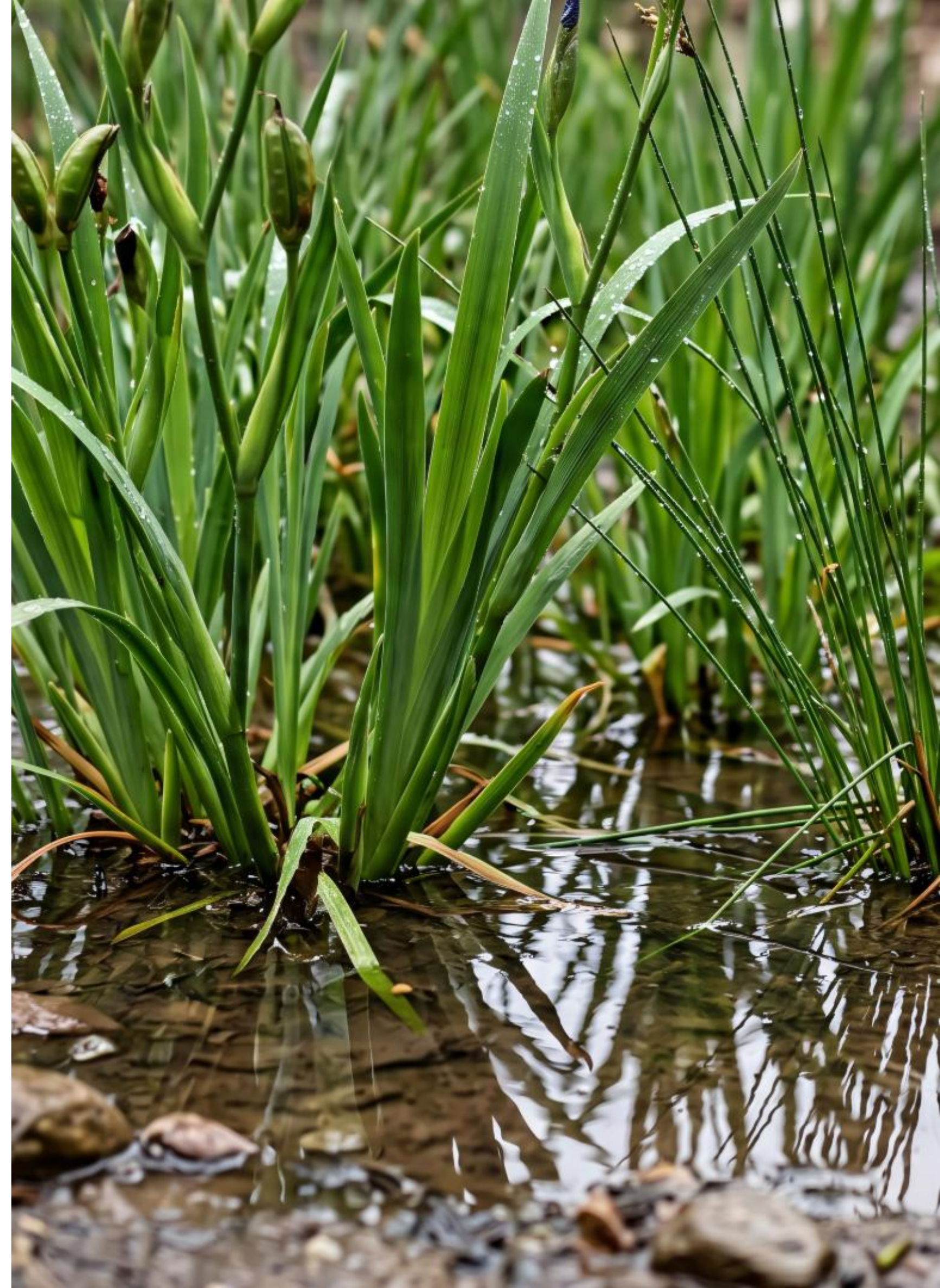
Encourage reusable bottles and reduce single use plastic.

Sustainable Drainage Features

Reduce flooding and improve water management around Club facilities.

Tree Planting

Native trees can improve water infiltration, reduce runoff and support biodiversity.





LOCAL MAPPING

Working With Your Local Water Environment

Every football Club sits within a wider landscape and catchment. Understanding where your rainwater ultimately flows can help identify opportunities to protect and improve local waterways.

Consider:

- Mapping nearby rivers and streams.
- Learning about local flood history.
- Exploring local wildlife and habitats.
- Identifying opportunities for partnerships.
- Supporting local environmental initiatives.

Whether your Club is located beside a river, near the coast, or within an urban area, your actions contribute to the health of Wales' wider water environment.



WATER QUALITY CHECKLIST

Club Name:

Date:

Use the following checklist to identify areas where your Club may be affecting local water quality.

QUESTION	YES/NO	COMMENTS
All wastewater drains are correctly connected.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
Surface water drains are clearly identified.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
Oil and fuel storage is secure and inspected regularly.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
Spill kits are available and accessible.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
Septic systems are maintained and serviced.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
Herbicide use has been minimised.	Yes ☐ No ☐	



WATER QUALITY CHECKLIST

Club Name:

Date:

QUESTION	YES/NO	COMMENTS
Chemicals are stored safely.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
Grass clippings are managed responsibly.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
Drainage systems are regularly inspected.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
Staff and volunteers understand pollution risks.	Yes ☐ No ☐	
Members know what can and cannot go down drains.	Yes ☐ No ☐	

Water awareness signage is displayed. Yes ☐ No ☐

Checklist completed by:



FURTHER SUPPORT

Protecting water quality does not require large budgets or specialist expertise. Small actions taken consistently across Club operations can have a significant positive impact.

By understanding risks, improving everyday practices and engaging members in local environmental projects, football Clubs can become important champions for clean water, healthy ecosystems and sustainable communities.

Use what you have learned in this resource to:

- Assess water quality risks around your Club.
- Improve management of drains, chemicals and waste.
- Reduce pollution entering local waterways.
- Protect wildlife and biodiversity.
- Develop practical water quality projects.
- Engage members and volunteers in environmental action.
- Strengthen partnerships with local environmental organisations.
- Support the development of your Together Greener Green Goals.

Further information on Water can be found at www.faw.cymru/togethergreener-water

If you require support completing this resource, please contact sustainability@faw.cymru