**Cowes**

WATER QUALITY INFORMATION

**In accordance with the 2006/EC Bathing Waters Directive Cowes is a designated Bathing Water. The Environment Agency is responsible for monitoring water quality and publishing this data on line. Additionally the Isle of Wight Council must ensure that each location displays the necessary information so that the general public can make an informed decision as to where to bathe, swim or paddle.**

**A classification for bathing waters is calculated annually, based on all of the samples from the previous four years. The classification for Cowes is "Good" which means the standard represents waters which are generally of good quality.**

**The majority of sewers in England are "combined sewers" and carry both sewage and surface water from roofs and drains. A storm overflow operates during heavy rainfall when the sewerage system becomes overwhelmed by the amount of surface water. The overflow prevents sewage from backing up pipes and flooding properties and gardens. An emergency overflow will only operate infrequently, for example due to pump failure or blockage in the sewerage system.**

**This bathing water is affected by a discharge at Queens Road storm overflow and Esplanade storm overflow that occur when heavy rainfall overwhelms the sewerage system and causes diluted sewage to overflow. South of the Royal Yacht Squadron in the Medina estuary there a number of other storm overflows. There is also a frequent storm overflow 2km away in deep water offshore from East Cowes. These outfalls can discharge when heavy rainfall overwhelms the sewerage system but they are designed to ensure that bathing water compliance is not affected.**

**This bathing water is subject to short term pollution. Short term pollution is caused when heavy rainfall washes faecal material into the sea from livestock, sewage and urban drainage via rivers and streams. At this site the risk of encountering reduced water quality increases after rainfall and typically returns to normal after 1-3 days. The Environment Agency makes daily pollution risk forecasts based on rainfall patterns and will issue a pollution risk warning if heavy rainfall occurs to enable bathers to avoid periods of increased risk. The Environment Agency works to reduce the sources of this pollution through pollution prevention measures, work with agriculture and water companies. 6 warnings advising against swimming due to an increase risk of short term pollution were issued in 2019 for Cowes bathing water. These warnings were issued because of the effects of heavy rain on the water quality.**

**Heavy rain falling on pavements and roads often flows into surface water drains or highway drains, ending up in local rivers and ultimately the sea. The quality of bathing water may be adversely affected as a result of such events.**

**Cowes** ***bathing water is monitored by the Environment Agency from May to September… The full details for this bathing water, its catchment, information on all potential pollution sources and how they are managed can be viewed at www.environment.data.gov.uk/bwq/profiles/ ********** **********