

Clear need to clean up the river

THE year-long project to carry out detailed assessment of water quality on a tributary to the River Torridge is maybe a case of better late than never.

I say this having taken my youngest son and his Chinese partner, visiting from China, to see the Rothern Bridge next to the Puffin Billy Cafe, Torrington. We ventured onto the stony bank of the Torridge, overlooked by the bridge, popular with families and children on sunny days.

Sadly, we were horrified at the suffocating growth of weed and algae, carpeting the stones of the river bed and, very likely, only there because of excess nutrients in the river via farm run-off and sewage effluent. Our dog churned up the river bed, releasing an unpleasant odour.

Stony river beds should not be like this but clean in clear water, as they saw at a campsite on the River Oke-ment, near Holsworthy, where they stayed one night earlier in the week.

Much work needs to be done to clean up the Torridge; ditto the Taw, often awash with foul-looking effluent suds being carried towards the sea.

Grahame Woodward
Roundswell, Barnstaple

Powerful argument

FURTHER to the *North Devon Gazette's* coverage of the Save our Sands group serving legal letters on North Devon District Council in an attempt to move the environmentally damaging White Cross offshore wind farm cables route to Abbotsham, I would like to make the following points.

Firstly, as it stands today there is no permission in place for any cable route from Cornborough Range through Abbotsham and Bideford and up to Alverdiscott via East the Water. All that exists is a paper proposal, unlike for White Cross at Saunton, where full planning consent has been given.

Secondly and ironically, given the SOS claims regarding alternative sites, the Xlinks proposal for landfall at Abbotsham contained no meaningful or detailed examination of alternatives and relied heavily on a "desktop assessment" of the North Devon coast.

For SOS to claim that there was no meaningful consideration of alternative locations for White Cross and then to suggest a single alternative location, with no meaningful consideration of alternatives, is hypocrisy to say the least.

I am deeply saddened by the attitude of Brauton residents who appear to be trying to dump their problems on Abbotsham but let's put that aside and consider the following.

NESO have granted 20 offshore wind projects access to the National Grid at Alverdiscott sub station, a commercial decision due to the limited infrastructure upgrades re-

Rainbow warriors



Mad messy fun was enjoyed by all ages earlier this month as families gathered for the RainBo Colour Run in Bideford's Victoria Park. Twinned with Saturday's busy Music Day, runners and walkers turned out to enjoy being splattered with messy paint and powders for a laugh out loud event to raise more funds for the RainBo Music Trust. Picture: Graham Hobbs

quired and without any apparent environmental impact, risk analysis or consultation.

There is no public information available about alternatives that were considered or any consideration of the additional and cumulative impact of the need for 20 cable sets or pylon lines to be laid between Alverdiscott and the coast.

Xlinks and White Cross, the first two cable connections proposed between Alverdiscott and the coast, are just the tip of a very large iceberg and one has to ask where on earth the other 18 cable connections are envisaged to be laid.

The two proposals thus far promise years of disruption and construction on our communities and

devastation of our beautiful UNESCO coastline and protected coastal landscape even without the other 18 yet to be launched.

So my plea to the good folks of North Devon is to stop trying to dump your blight on your neighbours because with 20 cable routes one of them will get you eventually, even if it's not this one.

Let's all get together, let's all get organised (including you Messers Cox and Roome, time to show that you deserve our votes, NDDC and TDC) and start demanding to know: how Alverdiscott can be selected for expansion when the cumulative environmental and social damage will be so catastrophic for our area and yet this impact was not considered; why

North Devon is such a good place to land cables that will be feeding electricity demand in industrial coastal areas such as Port Talbot that could be connected directly to marine cables; why it is not considered a good idea to make landfall at Hinkley Point C where the coastal landscape has already been destroyed and grid connections already exist or even make landfall at the already industrialised Avonmouth Docks.

I'll be honest, I don't have the data but I would bet, given the provision of turbines and solar panels, North Devon already generates more electricity than it consumes.

Come on people, we can do this.

Rob Jones
Abbotsham

Crying foul

MY family and I, together with all the other visitors we spoke to, were incredulous at the utterly disgusting state of the filthy, malodorous public lavatories at Saunton Sands.

I have lived in South America and Africa but I have never come across such horrendous facilities, which must be a public health risk.

You would do both locals and visitors a great service by exposing the situation and demanding immediate remedial action. One visit by one of your local reporters would reveal just how unbelievably horrendous the lavatories are.

Michael Seaford

Food for thought

THERE is a risk of further falls in UK food production.

Almost half of all food consumed in the UK is imported. We really need to be looking at a target of not less than 60 per cent self-sufficiency.

Farmers need to build reservoirs to provide irrigation to maintain crops during drought periods. Relying on food imports makes us vulnerable to price inflation imposed by foreign producers if they decide to cash in on our reliance on imports.

The government must screen all food imports for compliance with EU chemical safety standards which were promised to be adhered to in the Brexit negotiations. This needs to apply to all chemicals used right across the board. The government has lately published proposals to weaken standards in order to please manufacturers at the cost of jeopardising public health and safety.

They propose to allow inferior standards in other countries' jurisdictions to be allowed to apply here without proper scrutiny. Has anybody heard about the poor food standards that apply in the US and elsewhere; where public access to healthy food is just not a priority.

We cannot have a race to the bottom on chemical safety in food or manufacturing.

AD Gill
Ashford

Open doors

SO, Suella Braverman has become the first Tory MP to address an anti-immigration protest in the UK. She has got a brass neck as long as my back garden.

Do these so-called patriotic protesters not realise that it was Braverman and her ex-boss Boris Johnson who introduced the open door migration policy that has caused this chaos? Talk about the pot calling the kettle black!

Using phrases such as "invasion" like Braverman did is pure radicalisation on the part of herself, Robert Jenrick and Nigel Farage, and the sooner these people realise that, the better!

Geoffrey Brooking
Havant, Hampshire