

Sewage disposal and sea bathing water quality

For many years the Island has disposed of much of its sewage by pumping it, without processing, into the sea via short outflow pipes. This resulted in poor sea bathing water quality that is now unacceptable.

Southern Water Services has a wide ranging programme to improve the disposal of sewage - Operation Sea Clean. Part of this programme to improve sea water quality in Ryde was viewed by the forum delegates (the Ryde Marine Treatment Works).

The Ryde Works consists of a screen to remove solids and a three kilometre outfall pipe. Sewage, is deffused into a deep water channel in the Solent. The sea then 'processes' the sewage.

A number of schemes are planned at other sites on the Island but the costs are very high and a national debate is starting on the level of investment that the public can bear.

It is possible that the Ryde works will in time have to be further refined so that the sewage undergoes secondary treatment before being discharged into the sea. At present there is a debate on the classification of the deep channel where the Ryde pipe discharges - estuary or open sea.

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