

## Take Dirty Business to Your Community

The acclaimed Channel 4 docudrama ***Dirty Business*** tells the true story of the ordinary people who exposed the sewage pollution scandal. The producers have kindly edited the three-part series into a condensed format for you to share in your local community.

Through a ***Dirty Business*** screening, your community can explore the issues raised in the series, develop ideas to clean up our lakes, rivers and seas, end pollution for profit, and hold people and organisations to account. This event will raise awareness, and inspire people in your local area to take action. But the main purpose is to secure our 3 key asks of government through your elected representatives.

1. Examine Ownership
2. Enforce the Law
3. Give the Public a Say

We will provide you with clips and some talking points, but this is ultimately your opportunity to shape the conversation and ensure your voice is heard.

### Ways you can maximise the impact of the Screening

- **Invite your MP:** This is an opportunity to invite your local MP, hear their views on the ongoing crisis in the water sector, and ask questions that challenge them. It is one of the most effective ways to hold your MP to account and ensure your voice is heard, so we strongly encourage you to get them to attend.
- **Create a panel:** A maximum of three panellists (including your MP) plus a moderator works best. You might want to invite a local councillor or well-known local campaigner too.
- **Make waves in the local press:** You could issue a local press release and invite the local media to your event. To help, we have created a template of a press release should you want it in the Campaigners Resources Shared Drive [here](#) [coming soon]
- **Share on social media:** You could share the event on local social media and post in real time, allowing people to follow along and ask questions even if they can't attend in person.

### Some key talking points

The government's "New Vision for Water," published in January, promises "once in a generation" reform of our broken water sector. The government is now drafting a Water Reform Bill.

But this Bill ignores the systemic issues within the water industry. It ignores ownership and reinforces the failing privatised water system, despite overwhelming evidence that public

ownership ensures cleaner, cheaper and fairer water ([Peoples Commission on the Water Sector 2025](#))

It ignores widespread illegality and the failure to enforce existing legislation, and it denies the public a say in how our water is owned and run.

The purpose of the Bill is to strip away regulation and environmental protections and make the industry appealing to the very “investors” who asset stripped £85bn from our water sector and left our rivers for dead.

There are 3 distinct issues here:

1. **Failure to Examine Ownership** – The government refuses to carry out a transparent, independent review of all ownership models, preventing us from learning from what works internationally to inform a bespoke modern public ownership system. Internationally 90% of water is in public ownership and research has shown water is cleaner, cheaper and fairer in public ownership.
2. **Failure to Enforce the Law** – The government is not enforcing existing laws and regulations, opting instead to streamline them. Polluters are not currently held to account using existing legislation.
3. **Failure to Give the Public a Say** – The government is denying the public a say, allowing private vested interests to dictate the future of our water.

### **3 clear asks...**

1. Examine Ownership.
2. Enforce the Law.
3. Give the Public a Say.

### **Potential Questions You Can Ask**

Having asked your MP to respond to Dirty Business here are some questions you might pose, or have planted in the audience to pose:

- Why has the government refused to acknowledge the role of privatisation itself in this crisis, focusing instead on regulation?
- Will you, our MP, commit to demanding an independent public review on ownership, looking at international best practice, as the basis for a modern, bespoke, publicly owned water system?
- Ofwat is considering a proposal from Thames Water’s senior creditors, vulture capital funds Elliott Investment Management and Silverpoint Capital, to take control of the beleaguered company. Are Elliott and Silverpoint suitable owners for Europe’s biggest water company, with 16m captive customers?

- Water is essential to life, essential to our economy and is a matter of national security. Would you agree that water should be owned and controlled by the people who depend on it, not by private investors in it for profit?
- We don't need new legislation - we need existing laws enforced. Why are you considering weakening environmental protections when Ofwat and the Environment Agency haven't used the powers they already have?
- Will you support a national referendum so your constituents can decide who owns their water or do you think your constituents, the people who pay the bills don't deserve a say?
- Clean water is the most basic requirement of a functioning society. When private profit is allowed to compromise both public health and national security, hasn't the case for privatisation simply collapsed?

### A few logistics

We will provide you with a number of short clips for you to use as you see best. However, Channel 4 have asked that they are not mentioned at the event, or used in any publicity. Please just focus on *Dirty Business*.

### Further Information on the Issues

You can find the briefings that all MPs have already received from the Sewage Campaign Network [here](#). This provides all the background to the issues that concern us in the new White Paper.

You can find a Rebuttal Sheet [here](#), which sets out how to respond to all the usual responses to public questions from the government.

### Registering to hold a screening event

Please can you register [here](#)

We would love to hear how you got on.

After your event, it would be great to hear how it went. This could take the form of a very brief summary, letting us know who attended, how many people were there, the questions that were asked, and the answers that were given.