

# General Election Priorities

## Stone, Great Wyrley and Penkridge

### Priority 1: Clean up and restore Stone, Great Wyrley and Penkridge's rivers and streams

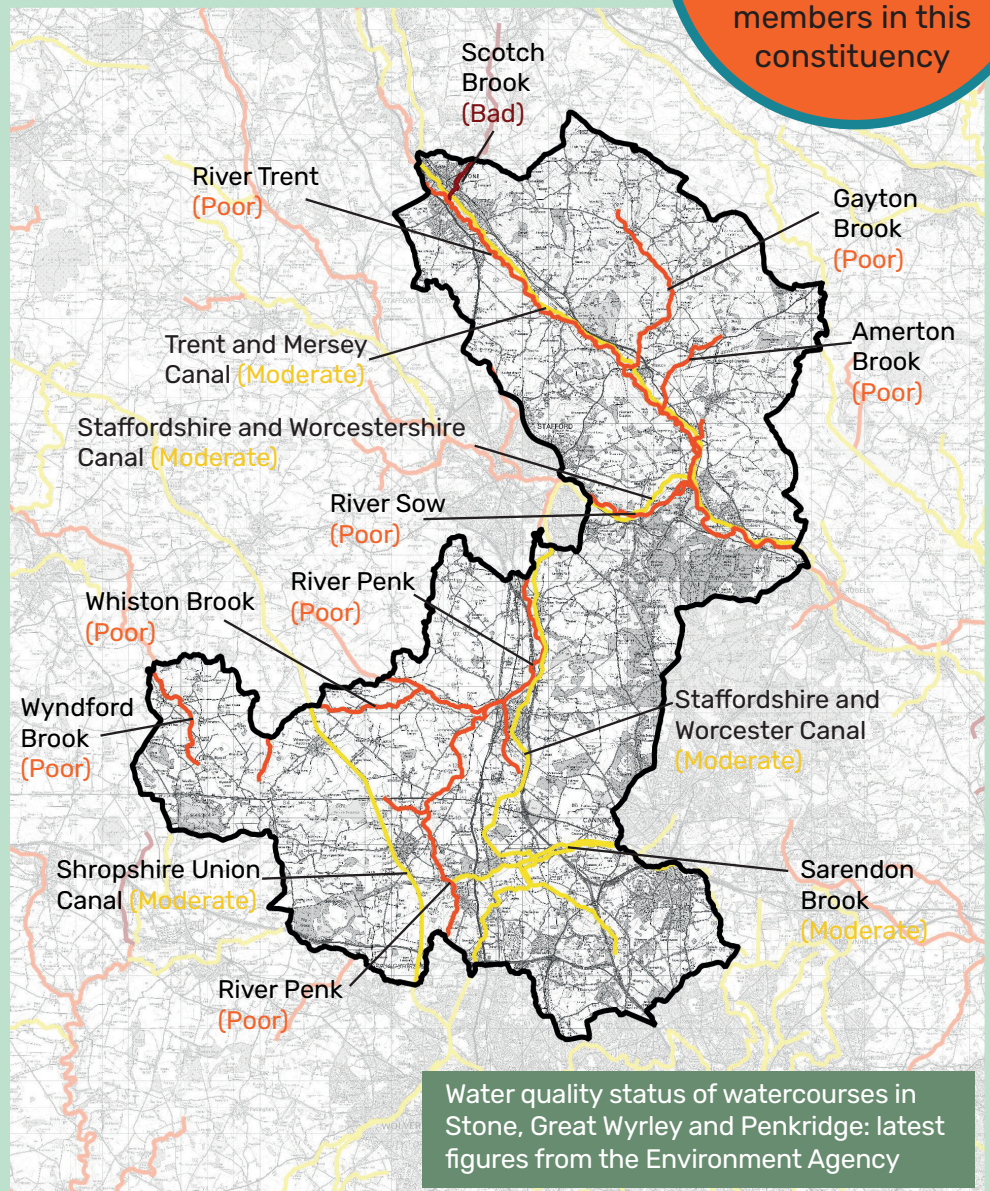
**4486**

Number of Staffordshire Wildlife Trust members in this constituency

**Every watercourse in Stone, Great Wyrley and Penkridge is failing to meet legally-binding environmental standards under the Water Framework Directive.**

Many - including the River Trent, Sow and Penk are classified as being in poor ecological health.

Agricultural runoff, where chemicals used on farms, such as nitrates and phosphates, are washed into rivers, is one of the leading causes of poor water quality, along with sewage discharges and industrial pollution.



**In 2022, untreated sewage was discharged into Stone, Great Wyrley and Penkridge watercourses 694 times, for a total of 2,628 hours.**

### What must be done by Government to clean up our rivers

- 1** Cut nutrient pollution from farming, sewage and development in half by 2030, with proper funding for enforcement agencies to effectively monitor our watercourses and enforce penalties on polluters.
- 2** Invest in creating and repairing wild habitats to provide a natural solution to flooding, which will protect people's homes and businesses, and improve water quality.
- 3** Support the reintroduction of beavers living in wild to restore our rivers and wetlands.



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### Priority 2: Bring back Stone, Great Wyrley and Penkridge's lost wildlife

Across the UK, the abundance of wild species has fallen by an average of 19% since 1970\*.

Priority species, which have been prioritised for conservation for reasons such as rapid population decline, have declined to 37% of their baseline value in 1970.

Similar wildlife declines are being seen across Stone, Great Wyrley and Penkridge.

Over the last two decades, the number of water voles recorded in the constituency has fallen by 87%, while records of brown hares have declined by 69%.

These devastating declines are caused by a number of factors including changes to the way we manage our agricultural land, climate change, pollution and urbanisation.

*\*State of Nature report 2023*



To halt and reverse the collapse of our natural world, we need the Government to put nature into recovery by protecting and restoring at least 30% of land and water for nature by 2030.

### What must be done by Government

- 1 Increase the budget for nature-friendly farming, so farms can be both productive and bursting with wildlife
- 2 Prevent further loss of habitat by ensuring new development both protects and enhances nature.
- 3 Fund the restoration and creation of more, bigger and better natural habitats, to help wildlife recover and protect communities from the impacts of climate change.

### People and nature in the constituency

96% of survey respondents<sup>1</sup> from the Stone constituency said when it comes to voting at the next General Election, strong policies to tackle the nature and climate crisis are important to them.

The biggest environmental concern for respondents from the Stone constituency is 'falling numbers of species', closely followed by 'losing wild places to development'.

*1: Staffordshire Wildlife Trust's Vote for Nature Survey, Nov - Dec 2023*

### Priority 3: Provide nature for all

Spending time in nature boosts physical and mental health – but not everyone has a nature-rich greenspace within walking distance of their home. In a third of local authorities, more than 70% of households don't have access to nature within 15 minutes' walk.

We must ensure that everyone has fair and equal access to restorative natural places in their neighbourhood.

### What must be done by Government

- 1 Support the creation of more good quality greenspace in neighbourhoods, and provide routes for people to access existing wild spaces, particularly for the communities that have the least provision today.
- 2 Fund and integrate green prescribing into community-based health services.
- 3 Ensure all children enjoy regular outdoor learning opportunities at school.

