

Thames21 News Release/Photocall (Embargoed)
Thursday 28 October

Minister to Target Thames "Dirty Dozen"

The Thames Foreshore in front of Custom House, HM Customs & Excise

Rt Hon Alun Michael MP, Minister of State for Rural Affairs and Local Environmental Quality, will on Thursday be launching Thames21 as a new environmental charity, to build on its work over the last 10 years as a partnership project to clean up London's rivers and canals. The organisation has in the last decade worked with over 20,000 volunteers and cleared 10,000 tonnes of litter from London's rivers and canals. It has educated 8,000 schoolchildren and installed 8 pieces of riverside artwork. This launch is to celebrate these achievements and Thames21's new charitable status.

It comes at a particularly appropriate time, given recent media coverage of combined sewer overflows to the River Thames and London's bid to win the Olympics in 2012. Thames21 was set up as a stand alone charity with pro bono legal advice from international law firm Lovells.

On display at the event will be the Thames's "Dirty Dozen" ? the most unwanted 12 items of rubbish that pollute London's rivers. The Minister and Thames21 will be revealing plans to make these pollutants a thing of the past. Thames21's two rubbish-munching boats, which remove 750 tonnes of litter from the tidal Thames each year, will be beached on the foreshore and will display samples of the litter collected in the last week.

Local environmental quality Minister Alun Michael said: "Rivers and canals are vital green corridors through urban areas which provide places for people to fish, canoe, sail, row, walk, cycle or just relax and unwind. By making them litter and graffiti free, Thames21 is encouraging people to make the most of London's greatest natural assets, which is fantastic.

Thames21 deserves credit as it's a great example of genuine partnership. One by which local communities, local authorities, statutory agencies and the private sector can all play their part in helping a charity deliver clean water environments in the capital."

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