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#### **RESEARCH ARTICLE**

# Employing the citizens' jury technique to elicit reasoned public judgments about environmental risk: insights from an inquiry into the governance of microbial water pollution

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5 Abstract. Devising policy instruments and interventions that can manage and mitigate the risks 6 associated with microbial watercourse pollution is a significant concern of the contemporary 7 environmental protection agenda. This paper reports on the work of a citizens' jury that sought to 8 elicit reasoned public judgments about the nature and acceptability of these risks as they relate to 9 the role of livestock farming, and what might constitute socially acceptable and sustainable 10 pathways to their management. By exploring this issue through a logical and sequential process 11 of risk characterisation, risk assessment and risk management, the paper reveals how citizens' 12 juries can be used to contextualise and structure science-policy apprehensions of microbial 13 watercourse pollution, and highlight where priorities for innovation and intervention might lie. 14 Reactions and responses of participants to the jury process and its outputs, including 15 issues of social and practical impact of the exercise, are also considered. The jury 16 technique is argued to be useful in the way it cuts across disparate domains of responsibility and 17 expertise for the governance of environmental risks, and therein challenges decision makers to 18 think more broadly about the political, moral and economic framings of otherwise narrowly 19 conceived science-policy problems.

20

**Keywords:** water quality; livestock farming; risk assessment; public participation; citizens'
jury

# 24 Introduction

25 Effective management of the risks associated with livestock farming for water quality is a 26 significant concern of the contemporary environmental protection agenda (Kay et 27 al., 2007; Vinten et al., 2009; Muirhead and Monaghan, 2012; Edge et al., 2012). In the 28 UK and wider Europe, for instance, it finds expression in debates surrounding the 29 implementation of new and evolving standards for ground and surface water quality 30 embedded in the mandates of the revised Bathing Water Directive, the Shellfish Waters 31 Directive and the Water Framework Directive (see Wyn-Jones et al., 2011; Birk et al., 32 2012). Defining and observing these standards with confidence is an area of considerable 33 scientific debate, though like other arenas of environmental risk and natural resource 34 management, the efficacy of any given set of policy instruments and practical 35 prescriptions will not stand and fall on scientific technical knowledge alone (Gregory et 36 al., 2006). Measures to mitigate should, for instance, be considered proportionate to risks 37 arising, and responsibilities for action in this area clearly assigned and borne fairly. Such 38 issues are by no means settled, and exert influence on the policy and decision making 39 process in contestedand politically uneven ways (Strachan et al., 2011). 40 The purpose of this paper is examine how interdisciplinary researchers and policy 41 makers might inform their understanding of the risks and uncertainties associated with

microbial water quality through the use of deliberative forms of environmental risk
assessment. In particular, it describes a process in which different perspectives on the
relationship between livestock farming and potential human exposure to pathogenic
micro-organisms were subject to the considered judgments of a citizens' jury. This is a
technique that has been elaborated and explored in detail in theories of deliberative
democracy, often specifically through recourse to issues of environmental decision

making and sustainability (e.g. Crosby, 1995; Smith and Wales, 2000; Ward et al. 2003; 48 49 Smith, 2003). Whilst not constituting a standard feature of policy and practice, 50 experimentation with the design aspects of the jury technique has also occurred as part of 51 a broader 'participatory turn' within environmental decision making (Bloomfield et al. 52 2001; Burgess and Clark 2007; Reed, 2008), and includes examples from such diverse 53 areas as waste management (Petts, 2001), air pollution (PSP, 2006), wetland creation 54 (Alfred and Jacobs, 1997), flood plain management (Kenyon et al., 2003), and GM crops 55 (FSA, 2000). The relationship between these techniques and other analytical aspects of 56 environmental decision making processes, such as cost-benefit and multi-criteria analysis 57 has also been an area of innovation and review (e.g. Aldred and Jacobs, 2000; Kenyon 58 and Nevin, 2001; Kenyon et al 2001; Rauschmayer and Wittmer, 2004; Alvarez-Farizo, 59 and Hanley, 2006

60 The following account has two objectives in the context of this evolving literature. 61 First and primarily, it is designed to report on the way policy and scientific imperatives 62 for the management and mitigation of microbial risks are interpreted and assigned 63 significance by the public through a structured jury process, and to explore corresponding 64 implications for researchers and policy makers. Secondly, it offers further insight into the 65 design, conduct and utility of the citizens' jury technique for marrying participatory 66 techniques to issues of high technical or scientific complexity, including a qualitative 67 assessment of participant reactions and responses to involvement.

68 The paper begins by scene-setting the relationship between watercourse pollution and 69 livestock farming, attending to key issues which define this relationship as a policy 70 'problem', and outlining the research context in which the case for enacting a citizens' 71 jury was made. It then goes on to outline the theoretical issues involved in defining the 72 aims and scope of a jury process and the way we practically initiated and ran the jury 73 proceedings. Key findings from the process are then summarised and discussed, and its 74 outcomes evaluated. By exploring this environmental issue through a logical and 75 sequential process of risk characterisation, risk assessment and risk management, the 76 paper reveals how citizens' juries can be used to contextualise and structure science-77 policy apprehensions of microbial watercourse pollution, and highlight where priorities 78 for innovation and intervention may lie.

### 79 Research context

80 The citizens' jury described here formed part of a programme of interdisciplinary 81 research examining how best to monitor, apportion and mitigate microbial risks within 82 farm environments in high risk landscapes. The specific geographical context for this 83 research was the Taw Catchment of north Devon, England. Laboratory and field-based 84 assessments of microbial dynamics in different environmental media (Hodgson et al., 85 2009), combined with extensive interviews with farmers regarding of the nature of 86 livestock management practices (Selfa et al., 2010) constituted the primary empirical 87 outcomes of this research. The research has resulted in the development of prototypical 88 risk assessment tools designed to inform more sustainable management of land and 89 livestock at the field and farm level (Oliver et al., 2009; 2010a) as well as critical analysis 90 of the catchment scale governance arrangements guiding polices in the study area (Winter 91 *et al.*, 2011).

92 The case for employing the jury technique emerged specifically out of the 93 interdisciplinary 'talk' that shadowed this unfolding programme of empirical research. In 94 developing its work, the research team readily acknowledged and reflected that, while 95 frameworks for structured assessments of microbial risk have immediate purchase on 96 issues of management, they rest on a deeper and unresolved set of uncertainties. At one 97 level, the environmental protection agenda surrounding the loss of faecal bacteria and

98 potential pathogens from land to water through livestock farming is well established. In 99 the UK, approximately 90 million tonnes of livestock manures are produced annually 100 (Smith et al., 2001), the majority of which requires collection, storage and spreading to 101 land. In addition, excreta from grazing livestock are deposited on land. A proportion of 102 these manures and excreta contain pathogenic micro-organisms which humans may be 103 exposed to in a variety of ways: by ingesting water through recreational activities such as 104 bathing and surfing; by engaging in activities in countryside environments such as 105 camping, walking and visits to farms; and through the consumption of food, such as 106 contaminated shellfish or from salad crops irrigated with contaminated water (Graczyk et 107 al., 2007; Heaton and Jones, 2008; Ogden et al., 2002; Campos et al., 2011). If humans 108 are exposed to certain pathogenic micro-organisms in sufficient numbers they may 109 experience gastro-intestinal illness, the implications of which are understood to be varied. 110 Microbial infection can prove fatal for some people (e.g. young children, the elderly and 111 those with a weak immune system). However, more commonly symptoms include nausea, 112 stomach cramps, vomiting and diarrhoea. Gastro-intestinal illness caused by E. coli O157 113 alone has been estimated to cost the UK around £30M annually in healthcare and over £1 114 billion per annum in lost productivity (Jones, 1999). Over and above this, the implications 115 of public health scares on regional economies dependent on competitive leisure and 116 agricultural sectors, as well as industries more generally reliant upon clean water, such as 117 shell fisheries, are potentially significant (Bridge et al., 2010). 118 Progress is being made in developing techniques that can track the origins of these 119 risks (Reischer *et al.*, 2011) but there are uncertainties regarding the extent to which 120 culpability can be attributed to either human or environmental sources (Chadwick et al., 121 2008; Oliver et al. 2010b). Alongside research into 'source apportionment' scientists are

122 now experimenting in the use of techniques that might help livestock farmers to mitigate

123 these risks. These techniques include: changing the way slurries and manures are stored; 124 enhancing the composting of solid manures; exporting manures from the farm; reducing 125 stocking levels; reducing the number and volume of applications; fencing off 126 watercourses and creating grass buffer strips (see Oliver et al., 2007). The efficacy of 127 these approaches is by no means clear and all demand the investment of time and money. 128 Scientific research is thus beginning to tell us many things about how these risks may 129 function, and evaluating a range of 'hard' and 'soft' technical options that may be 130 employed to reduce them. Yet, it is policy makers who must develop practical responses 131 in ways that marry this evidence base with proportionate forms of action. They need to 132 design interventions that reflect the significance of these risks and ensure that approaches 133 to mitigation are not only effective, but good value. And they need to develop 134 mechanisms that allow responsibilities for taking action against these risks to be properly 135 assigned, and any costs incurred borne fairly.

136 It is these issues and questions that provided the rationale for the citizens' jury. The 137 process was formally sponsored by the Water Quality Division of the Department for 138 Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), the government department with 139 responsibility for fostering sustainable rural development in England and Wales. In 140 essence, the Water Quality Division is a science-facing policy group embedded in wider 141 national level debates about water policy. At one level the Division agreed to support the 142 process as an experiment in, what was to them, a novel public engagement methodology; 143 one in step with the wider needs of policy delivery. At the same time, the process 144 occurred at a time, in 2008, of a Department-led consultation on recent revisions to the 145 EU Bathing Water Directive, with jury verdict ultimately considered as a formal 146 submission to this consultation. Nonetheless, it is important to note that this was an 147 unanticipated outcome from the perspective of the project team. The jury's funding

148 context, and therein its links to a real world policy consultation, was not anticipated in 149 advance. It was not conceived originally with ambitions to steer or shape policy at the 150 national level. Rather the motivating factor was initially about an area of science-policy 151 led research engaging with its underpinning rationales and priorities by exploring the 152 views, experiences and expertise of those who sit outside formal circuits of authority, 153 interest or expertise. That is to say, it was first and foremost conceived as a device to 154 encourage greater reflexivity on the part of natural and social scientists about whether and 155 how microbial watercourse pollution is understood as an object of risk governance, and 156 what these assessments then imply for prevailing modalities of scientific praxis, 157 regulatory activity, and interventions in livestock farming. Furthermore, while it is 158 common for citizens' juries to be constructed to address pragmatic local concerns 159 (Niemeyer and Spash, 2001), the jury did not originally set out to directly answer 160 questions of a vernacular local expression - namely how to directly foster tangible 161 changes to livestock management in the Taw Catchment. However, as we shall see, an 162 interesting outcome of this work was the way it anticipated models and approaches to 163 microbial risk mitigation that have since been employed in the study area and elsewhere.

164 Citizens' juries and analytic-deliberative assessments of risk

165 The protocols guiding the application of citizens' jury techniques have been already 166 described at length in the academic and grey literature (Armour, 1995; Coote and 167 Lenaghan, 1997, Smith and Wales, 1999; Veasey, 2004), and we summarise these 168 briefly here. Broadly put, citizens' juries involve a small cross section of the general 169 public (a 'jury'), usually between 10-20 people, coming to a considered judgment (or 170 'verdict') about a stated policy issue through detailed exposure to, and scrutiny of, the 171 relevant evidence base. This evidence base is presented to the jury in the form of oral and 172 written testimony at a formal jury event (the 'proceedings') which lasts between two and

173 three days, either as a 'one-off' process, or staggered over a period of time. Evidence is 174 presented to the jury by those with particular interests or expertise in the given topic area 175 (the 'witnesses'). The task of the jury is to assimilate this information and interrogate 176 witnesses about the nature and substance of their claims/arguments as the basis for 177 responding to a pre-given 'question', 'charge' or 'dilemma'. The response is provided in 178 a written and oral form after the jury proceedings have taken place, and is collectively 179 endorsed by the jury. This general approach guided our own approach to jury conduct. 180 In this study, the guiding approach to jury design is most closely aligned to the work of 181 Chilvers (2007) and, in particular, his assessment of approaches to risk governance that 182 are 'analytic-deliberative' in style. As Chilvers explains, analytic-deliberative 183 methodologies are shorthand for forms of science-citizen interaction that seek to link 184 together technical/quantitative approaches to risk governance with more 185 interpretive/qualitative participatory processes. A modest body of experimental 186 methodological work is emerging examining how jury techniques can be employed as 187 part of an analytic-deliberative process. Novel approaches to environmental valuation are 188 one facet of this work (see Neiymer and Spash 2001) some of which are being developed 189 specifically in the context of water management at the catchment scale (Alvarez-Farizo 190 and Hanley, 2006; Alvarez-Farizo et al., 2007). 191 For Chilvers (2007) the ideal structure of an analytic-deliberative process encompasses 192 three key stages - termed 'framing', 'assessing' and 'management/action' - within which 193 science, citizens and stakeholders interact in different ways depending on the type of

approach employed. At each stage, steps are logically encountered which duly

195 characterise the priorities of these interactions. Thus the 'framing' stage includes, for

196 instance, a process in which problems are defined and acceptability criteria are shaped,

197 while the 'assessing' stage encompasses issues of data collection, and its subsequent

198	interpretation and synthesis. The 'management/action' stage involves, in turn, a process in	
199	which option are evaluated, decisions are made, and ultimately, actions are monitored and	
200	evaluated. Within this schematic, citizen juries are understood to be a platform for	
201	'dialogic interactions' between scientific and non scientific forms of expertise, and in	
202	particular ones that potentially involve:	
203	"non specialists adopting evaluative or extended peer review roles in questioning the	
204	conduct, quality, uncertainties and interpretations of 'core' scientific analyses, as well	
205	as contributing alternative framings of the issues considered" (Ibid. 202).	
206	It is precisely these roles and contributions that we sought to enable through the jury	
207	process: in effect one in which citizens would expose the core scientific analysis of	
208	microbial water course pollution and livestock farming to critical scrutiny and provide	
209	(potentially) alternative ways of framing interfaces between science, policy and practice.	
210	This generic analytic-deliberative framework also provides a useful way of understanding	
211	the underpinning questions which ultimately guided the jury process. In particular, in our	
212	project the parameters of debate outlined above were developed as a set of sequential and	
213	connected themes that ultimately mirror the three stages envisaged by Chilvers, namely	
214	Acceptability	What risks arise from the microbial pollution of water
215		courses and how significant are they?
216	Culpability	What are the origins of these microbial risks and how
217		culpable are livestock farming practices within them?
218	Necessity	What more could reasonably be done to mitigate the impact
219		of livestock farming practices on water quality?
220	Responsibility	Where do responsibilities begin and end when controlling
221		these microbial risks arising from livestock farming?

Thus, the jury process was designed to begin with the issue of problem framing, where the issue was about critically evaluating the nature and acceptability of microbial risk, then move through more precise issues of assessment, where uncertainties surrounding the origins of microbial risk are considered, and then into issues of management and action, encompassing debates about the nature of reasonable action and how to assign responsibilities.

228 The sequential logic of this process is worth emphasising. It is not possible to form 229 judgments about how to assign responsibilities for risk management without first 230 addressing the way these risks should be managed. Equally, it is not possible to address 231 questions of management without first coming to a judgment over how these microbial 232 risks originate and behave within the environment, which in turn depends on accepting 233 these risks to be potentially significant in some way. In other words, this 'narrative based' 234 approach to 'issue framing' is designed to guide the jurors through the parameters of the 235 debate in a rational way. Importantly, it carries with it the virtue of exposing, and 236 therefore potentially subjecting to critique, prevailing wisdoms about the nature of the 237 problem at hand and what should be done about it. So, for instance, in addressing the 238 issue of 'acceptability' a jury might plausibly conclude that microbial risks are 239 unimportant and in so doing question the (otherwise unstated) significance assigned to the 240 issue in science policy agendas. To what extent this way of 'storyboarding' jury dilemmas 241 reflects the real world of decision making and problem framing is debatable, for in 242 practice the policy debates embedded in each of these themes tend to run in parallel, and 243 often in isolation. As such this approach knits together the social and environmental 244 relations of risk in a way that would not otherwise be likely in conventional policy 245 discourse. Consequently, we consider this narrative approach to be a useful way of

deciphering the complex and unruly nature of governing environmental risks in anintegrated and holistic fashion.

In advocating this it is important to emphasise that the way in which the issues are framed is strongly defined by the *a priori* work of the project team, and this potentially carries with it a tension with regards to how publics are implicitly structured in participatory processes as recipients of pre-determined problems. Thus, opportunities are required that allow for the acceptability of such a framework to be critically inspected, and potentially transformed, by the jury itself. In our case, this framework was open to scrutiny in advance of the jury proceedings by jurors, but was strongly endorsed.

### 255 Approach to jury formation

256 Conducting a citizens' jury raises important issues regarding the character and 257 composition of the jury (Kenyon and Nevin, 2001). Populating a jury is not only 258 conditioned by the need to reflect a good cross section of society, but beset with wider 259 debates over ideas of 'competence' - the extent to which members of the public are 260 capable of addressing the issue at hand - and 'bias' - the extent to which a jury can be 261 constituted in such a way as to avoid overt and overriding investments in the issue at 262 hand. In our jury process, the project team considered that establishing a balanced jury in 263 terms of age, gender, ethnicity, and area of residence (urban and rural) was a necessary 264 aspiration. At the same time the project team accepted a longstanding position in the 265 sociology of risk by conceptualising the public as 'experts in their communities' 266 (Corburn, 2007; Irwin, 1995). We took it as axiomatic that - providing the microbial story 267 was itself coherent and clear in its stated dilemmas - a lay jury would be able to return a 268 reasoned judgment through collective deliberation. Thus the project team regards 269 'absolute' definitions of expert knowledge - where authority to exert influence over the 270 design of policy is based, for instance, around formal credentials - as unnecessarily

271 reductionist. Furthermore, it was recognised that groups involved in public engagement 272 exercises will always carry with them particular investments in an issue, and that these 273 investments can be a virtue as much as an implied drawback. The idea that there exists a 274 jury with no *a priori* interest in this issue, however indirect, was considered problematic. 275 Even so, it seems important to acknowledge here that the jury comprised individuals 276 living in Devon, UK, an area with a strong livestock farming tradition and one 277 inextricably tied to wider debates about the sustainability of local landscape and economy 278 (including tourism). Whether this means that the judgments of the jury would be 279 inherently more 'pro-farming' than those of a jury constituted from a different 280 geographical context is an interesting question, though out of the scope of this inquiry. As 281 we shall see, the conclusion of the jury certainly carries with it a supportive message for 282 the farming fraternity. Nonetheless, given the origins of the wider research project in 283 Devon, it was considered reasonable that participants would be drawn from across the 284 county itself and the jury process would use the Taw Catchment as a platform upon which 285 wider science and policy issues could then be given practical expression. 286 It is in this context that the jury for the main event was recruited via a 'free find' 287 process. This involved designing a press release in conjunction with the public relations 288 department of the host University, which was circulated to the regional press and radio 289 and posted on its institutional website. This process resulted in a number of articles on the 290 jury process being written in the regional press and live interviews being conducted on 291 BBC and commercial radio. In total, 37 people who responded to this publicity expressed 292 a serious interest in participating. We distinguished respondents to this process in three 293 ways. First, a major response grouping was 'interested lay environmentalists' as a 294 respondent type, by which we mean members of the public who responded to the 295 publicity out of intrinsic interest/concern in environmental issues, but with no formal

Table 1 about here 296 training or background in the issues being treated by the jury. In addition, a number of 297 respondents were practicing farmers or people who came from a farming background, or 298 were people who held or had held professional roles (outside of farming) which related to 299 an aspect of the jury issue, such as agricultural consultancy, microbiology and water 300 management. A small number of respondents were drawn from the university sector who 301 were currently studying, or had recently studied, for degrees relating to the jury topic 302 (such as in biosciences). In practical terms this experience suggests that, to secure interest 303 in processes such as these, the most effective means of free find communication is via a 304 locally circulated newspaper article (Table 1).

305 Of these 37 respondents, 13 were selected to participate at the event. The view was 306 taken that these persons should be drawn predominantly from the interested 'lay' 307 grouping, rather than those with specialist credentials. In total nine people were drawn 308 from this lay grouping to which was added: one respondent brought up on a farm (but not 309 a farmer *per se*); one with some background in microbiology (a school teacher); one who 310 was a retired (organic) sheep farmer; and one who was a recent university graduate in 311 Geography with technical knowledge relevant to the Jury. A further two persons, both 312 aged 17, were purposively recruited by the jury facilitator because it was judged that the 313 demographic profile of the recruitment process was skewed towards a more senior age 314 profile. These individuals were drawn from a local Further Education College in 315 consultation with its AS Environmental Science course leader. All of the jurors lived in 316 Devon and a good geographical spread across the county was achieved. The ratio of 317 women to men on the jury was 2 to 1. The mean age was 47 years. 318 Debates surrounding the constitution of a jury tend to be inverted in the construction of 319 an evidence base. There is, of course, a need to frame understandings of jury themes in a

representative way, but here the issue is about staging a discussion in such a way that

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321 different types and levels of professional investment are exposed and brought to the fore.

322 In our case we structured the jury process to span philosophical as well as technical 323 debates, and for this reason, the evidence base is potentially very wide. It also relies on 324 a highly purposive approach to expert recruitment. Many of the protagonists with 325 investments in these debates work in tightly delimited policy areas. They are named 326 individuals with precise areas of expertise and responsibility. Even in areas where 327 evidence may be produced by a number of individuals (such as in the presentation of 328 scientific evidence), the need to recruit those with proven and well established track 329 records is arguably important to strategic policy interest in the process and its outcome. In 330 total, 18 witnesses were recruited to participate in our jury process combining a mixture 331 of scientific experts and professional stakeholders from across the public, private and 332 third sector (see Table 2). They included witnesses from government departments, 333 statutory bodies, water utilities, unions and pressure groups, scientific and policy 334 researchers in universities and institutes, as well as from the farming community. 335 Enacting a jury and returning a verdict

336 In the run up to the proceedings, both witnesses and jurors were provided with guidance 337 notes on the scope and nature of a citizens' jury and the key questions which we, the 338 convenors, anticipated the process would explore. These notes included an exploratory 339 narrative characterising the relationship between microbial risks and agriculture and an 340 introduction to the way policy makers and researchers interact with this issue in terms of 341 types of regulation and basic and applied scientific research. Jurors attended a pre-jury 342 event where this information was re-presented to them through formal presentation and 343 then open discussion, and where they also learnt more regarding what the process would 344 involve in practical terms. At this juncture, participants were also provided with witness 345 statements and, where offered by a witness, supplementary written evidence to support

Table 2 about here 346 understanding of presentations at the main proceedings. An opportunity to reframe the 347 initial questions laid down by convenors was given to jurors, but in practice the initial 348 questions were actively endorsed. Our experience suggests that a pre-event was helpful in 349 clarifying misconceptions about the nature of the issue which cannot be anticipated in 350 written guidance. They also build confidence among the participants. Indeed, some of our 351 participants initially were worried that they had no formal authority to address the debate, 352 that they would make wild and unfounded recommendations of little use to anyone. We 353 held this pre-event a fortnight before the main proceedings: sufficiently near to the real 354 event to build momentum; sufficiently distant to give time for jurors to consider 355 materials.

356 The event itself took place in two, quite different, settings: a civic space in an urban 357 (city) area and a scientific research institute in the countryside, with a working livestock 358 farm. In the first setting, jurors considered issues of a more abstract nature (i.e. dilemmas 359 of 'acceptability' and 'culpability'); in the second those of a more applied and practical 360 nature (i.e. 'necessity' and 'responsibility'). As part of this second phase jurors attended a 361 short walking tour of a farm and visited a laboratory where testing for pathogenic micro-362 organisms takes place. In the proceedings short witness presentations were followed by 363 juror questioning. In our process, questioning rights were reserved exclusively for jurors 364 while the physical space was organized in such a way as to reflect the asymmetrical 365 power of the process, with observing witnesses located behind the main proceedings. 366 After each exploratory theme was considered jurors were required, during a closed 367 discussion, to discuss this evidence and form a partial response (or 'verdict') on the given 368 issue at stake (such as 'acceptability') that could then be revisited at the end of the jury 369 process. Constructing this response invariably involved further cross-examination of 370 witnesses, for instance, where uncertainties of understanding existed among group

members or where jurors wished to probe witnesses on key arguments. These responses
were constructed initially in a discursive fashion with the jury chair closing the section
with agreed summary of key points. At the end of the two day event participants reviewed
these responses as the basis for communicating an oral verdict to all participants. This
was primarily designed to 'book-end' the formal proceedings and was effectively an
interim verdict.

377 A formally written verdict for detailed consideration by jury sponsors and other 378 participants was then constructed. This written verdict was achieved by the jury 379 facilitator transcribing the discussions and conclusions of jurors - which were sound 380 recorded in their entirety - and creating a draft written statement that reflected key 381 conclusions and where degrees of consensus emerged. This statement was then 382 collectively endorsed by the jury through an iterative process of document feedback and 383 review,. It took one month to achieve the final wording of this verdict. Complexities arise 384 when forming an agreed statement because responses to these issues were rarely 385 definitive in group discussion. In our experience this reflects, in part, the challenge of 386 ensuring that jurors can adequately pursue the kind of open ended questions, (technical, 387 ethical and economic and so forth) naturally raised by these processes given the breadth 388 of the subject and the time available, as well as the stated intention to use the jury to think 389 about an issue in integrated way. It also, of course, reflects fundamental differences of 390 positionality and world view. Consensus building through deliberation is one normative 391 facet of arguments surrounding the use of this technique, but we would argue that 392 deliberation is also partly about clarifying, rather than necessarily reconciling, differences 393 of juror perspective and outlook on a given issue. In this, iterations of the verdict turned 394 on grafting a statement that the jury could agree in terms of majority and minority views 395 on each of the issues. In this way the focus was on communicating a coherent overall

message rather than a consensus verdict *per se*. The role of jury facilitator and chair in
developing forms of words acceptable to all is acknowledged here, and places the
researchers close to Pielke's (2007) idea of the scientist as a 'broker' of views and options
at the interface of policy making and society. Taking these issues into account the
following sub-sections report on the principal claims of the jurors with respect to the four
jury themes namely: acceptability; culpability; necessity; responsibility.

## 402 Acceptable risks?

403 We began the event by asking participants to consider evidence and views on the 404 significance of the risks associated with microbial watercourse pollution as the basis for 405 thinking through the issue of acceptability. Participants were asked to consider risks to 406 public health and risks to the economy based on the testimonies of five expert witnesses. 407 From a public health perspective, presentations to the jury were provided by the Health 408 Protection Agency, Food Standards Agency and Surfers Against Sewage and focused on 409 contextualising microbial watercourse pollution in relation to different types of 410 environmental hazards and their potential to cause harm, not only biological hazards, but 411 also chemical, radiological, nuclear and industrial. The purpose here was to situate 412 microbial risks within a wider landscape of risks to human health, and to convey how 413 these are understood by policy makers and interest groups alike. These witness 414 viewpoints were followed by presentations from representatives of shell fisheries and the 415 regional tourist board where the ramifications of the risks for wider economic actors in 416 region were emphasised. On the basis of this evidence the majority view of the jury was 417 that current risks to human quality of life arising from the microbial pollution of 418 watercourses were *relatively* insignificant. The jury made this judgment whilst 419 recognising that the public health and economic implications of such pollution could be 420 serious. It was careful to recognize that risks to human health or economic prospects

would be unacceptable to those who bear the burden of these risks directly, such as those
infected by *E. coli* O157 or those attempting to secure a viable shell fish industry. Yet the
majority of the jury was strongly of the view that the risks arising were, in general
societal terms, insignificant when set against the wider scheme of risks to human quality
of life.

426 Within this context the jury considered it unrealistic to interpret watercourses as 427 systems that can be entirely free of risks to human quality of life. It argued that policy 428 makers seeking to manage and regulate microbial water course pollution should therefore 429 recognise that 'zero risk' is a problematic standard against which to assess the efficacy of 430 its interventions. Moreover, the jury suggested that the significance policy makers assign 431 to this issue may partly reflect the relatively short timescales around which microbial 432 risks tend to manifest themselves. When weighing up their priorities they suggested that 433 policy makers should therefore take great care to incorporate into their assessments other 434 risks that may well be more important, but have much longer, 'lead-in' times. Risks 435 associated with industrial legacies, such as contaminated land, were cited as a case in 436 point here. While the jury felt that these microbial risks may be considered relatively 437 insignificant, and to some extent inevitable, their acceptability depended on programmes 438 of research being funded that not only seek to improve mitigative action, but anticipate 439 new developments in the environments they study. In this latter respect, the jury was 440 strongly of the view that the significance of these risks may increase in the future given 441 the likelihood of greater episodic incidents related to climate change. Microbial risks 442 were only acceptable in the context of measures being taken that reflect the best available 443 scientific knowledge and which are sensitive to changing circumstances. 444 The jury further considered the ongoing monitoring frameworks for these risks in

England could be enhanced through greater cross-agency working. In particular, based on

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the evidence presented, it was felt that there may be unrealised possibilities for statutory
organisations (such as the Environment Agency) to conduct more extended monitoring
for faecally-derived micro-organisms in the course of their work and which may provide
an important contribution to the scientific evidence base of government departments
(such as Defra) with direct responsibility for this policy area.

451 *Culpable risks?* 

452 It has been noted above that progress is being made in developing techniques that can 453 track pathogen found in watercourses to their source. In the jury we sought to convey to 454 participants how this science is conducted and reported on by academic researchers, 455 regulators (the Environment Agency), industry (the water utility, South West Water) and 456 public health specialists (the Health Protection Agency). An important dimension of this 457 was to convey an understanding of the uncertainties associated with this science. At one 458 level livestock farming was revealed in the proceeding to be but one protagonist in the 459 debate regarding 'culpability'. For instance, it is widely recognised that pathogenic risks 460 may arise not only from agriculture, but also from human sewage and other 461 environmental sources (such as from wild animals). The key underpinning questions 462 considered in this section of the Jury, then, were 'with what confidence can it be claimed 463 that livestock farming has a bearing on these microbial risks', and 'to what extent is it 464 able to attribute these risks to a particular failing in enterprise management'? Evidence 465 presented thus considered the relative role of livestock farming compared to other sources 466 and the way in which researchers conceptualise the specific risks associated with 467 livestock farming. Empirical research findings were drawn from monitoring work both nationally and regionally and a specific case of investigating a recent regional outbreak of 468 469 E. coli O157, which was eventually tied to cattle grazing in fields upstream, was 470 presented and critically analysed.

471 It is against this context that the jury took the majority view that, with regard to 472 culpability, livestock farming currently played a significant role in contributing to 473 incidents of microbial watercourse pollution compared to human and other environmental 474 sources. The scientific evidence was considered credible in this respect, though for a 475 small number there was some ambiguity on the basis of evidence presented with regards 476 to the significance of wild animals and human sewage treatment systems. Moreover, the 477 jury cautioned that the significance of these risks will inevitably be relative to the 478 prominence of livestock farming within particular areas, and further, that no two livestock 479 farmers will be the same in terms of their attitudes and capacities to manage and mitigate 480 these risks. The jury also noted the possibility of increased storm events relating to 481 climate change may mean that the status of the water industry as a relatively low 482 contributor to microbial risk could be quite different in the future.

#### 483 Necessary risks?

484 The jury explored approaches to mitigation. This dimension of the process involved a 485 structured field walk around a working (research) farm, allied to a mixture of 486 presentations wherein natural and social scientific researchers outlined the potential 487 options available to reduce risks and their associated costs, not only farm based, but also 488 downstream approaches, such as improving signage at bathing water locations. The 489 pragmatic focus of the evidence presented at this stage gave rise to a broad ranging 490 exploration of the idea of 'proportionate' intervention. In their assessment of mitigation, 491 the jury considered 'extreme' options, such as withdrawing livestock from the land, or 492 advocating overall reductions in UK livestock numbers per se. However, these measures 493 were considered not only disproportionate to the significance of the risks in question, but 494 would carry with them negative trade-offs. They might, for instance, raise problems 495 regarding the provision of animal welfare, increase dependency on imports for livestock

496 products, amplify diffuse pollution coming from cultivated land, as well as jeopardize the497 propagation of biodiversity on farmed landscapes.

498 In general terms, the jury suggested that measures should centre primarily on 499 programmes of advice and training, and that there exist bodies of good practice 500 information produced by policy stakeholders that should act as the basis for farm 501 standards and guidance. It was felt that this information should be widely disseminated 502 and linked to systems of financial assistance that emphasise low cost and low technology 503 solutions in step with existing patterns of farming activity. In other words, given the 504 assessment of low risk significance, but high culpability, jurors sought to strike a careful 505 balance between the need for mitigative action and financial burdens on enterprises. 506 Nonetheless, it is also noteworthy that the jury felt there was a strong case for imposing 507 financial penalties on farmers where there have been incidents of microbial pollution 508 linked to episodic failings in enterprise management. It was suggested that farmers should 509 look to insure themselves for these potential failings. The jury was less convinced that 510 mitigative measures at the 'user end' of risks, (such as the provision of 'live' bathing 511 waters information or leaflets at bathing locations) was an effective approach to the 512 management of these risks (c.f. Stidson, et al 2011). Signage was regarded as potentially 513 incongruous to the surroundings, while leaflets are often ignored. These efforts were 514 considered potentially useful but the jury felt that mitigation at 'source' should be the 515 primary focus of intervention.

516 Who's responsible?

517 In the final session of the event the jury contextualised further its assessment of types of 518 intervention by exploring where burdens of responsibilities for action should lie. Jurors 519 heard the views of regulators (environment agency), government (Defra) farming bodies 520 (the National Farmers Union), and practising farmers. They were informed of the 521 mandatory responsibilities that farmers are obliged to meet to help reduce these risks, 522 such as those pertaining to 'Codes of Good Agricultural Practice', but also the potential 523 for voluntary forms of action, such as participation in the England Catchment Sensitive 524 Farming Initiative and agri-environmental stewardship schemes, and through quality 525 assurance schemes, such as the FABBL Farm Assurance Scheme. Responding to this 526 information, the jury suggested that the state, not farmers, should play the major role in 527 funding programmes of assistance and mitigation. The jury was clear that those with 528 policy responsibility for water quality must influence the design of agri-environmental 529 schemes so as to produce outcomes conducive not only to the enhancement of 530 biodiversity, but issues of environmental protection as well. Designing scheme options 531 that produce these multiple benefits was considered important. However, the jury felt that 532 the state has good reason to pursue options that specifically strengthen funding for the 533 mitigation of pathogenic organisms. We should note here that this was a highly perceptive 534 intervention by the jurors; one that challenges how objectives of environmental 535 stewardship schemes have been historically imagined. More generally, the jury expressed 536 some concern that failing to influence the design of stewardship schemes in this way may 537 carry with it the implication that the burden of costs will fall directly on farmers alone. 538 The jury considered this unacceptable. Indeed, it suggested that unlike other potentially 539 'polluting' industries - such as the chemical industry, the nuclear industry, the 540 incineration/landfill industry and the water industry, the market would not allow farmers 541 to pass on the costs of mitigation directly to the consumer. This was felt to be problematic 542 for these risks are the product, in part, of wider consumer demand for livestock products 543 and the need to be competitive in the market.

544 The jury also suggested that microbial watercourse risks were, in a significant sense,545 about one industry (livestock farming) potentially polluting another (shell fisheries). For a

546 minority of the jury this raised the interesting question as to the extent to which the public 547 purse should pay for an 'industry problem'. Pragmatically it was felt that the shell fish 548 industry might look to develop systems of cross-industry subsidy given the potential 549 difference that an uptake of low cost measures in the livestock industry may make for 550 profit margins in aquaculture. In this the jury actually anticipated subsequent policy 551 developments in that it indicated potential public support for models of risk management 552 based on 'payments for ecosystem services' (Defra, 2010). Indeed, this approach has 553 subsequently been developed and applied in the case study area with the regional water 554 utility now paying livestock farmers to adopt management practices that protect 555 downstream water quality.

# **\$56** Reactions and responses of participants to the jury process and its outputs

Alongside this verdict the research undertook a formal evaluation of the process by
surveying participating witnesses and jurors through written feedback and structured
questionnaire. In general terms the witnesses suggested that the citizens' jury technique
was a novel way of encouraging active public participation and scrutiny of the policy
process. As one put it:

"I thought the idea of a jury was an interesting concept as it provides members of
the community with an opportunity to question agencies and organisations
directly on a particular topic. It seems a good mechanism for encouraging healthy
debate".

Many witnesses suggested that the process had value because, besides the substantive verdict itself, the very process of conducting a jury - where scientists stand alongside policy makers, interest groups and practitioners and speak to the bigger issues that define and motivate their work - was as one suggested, "a departure" from what is "normal". It was widely felt that the process was also a useful way of gaining a deeper understanding 571 of public priorities about the issue at hand and how different areas of sectoral 572 responsibility were perceived in relation to this. In this respect one participant suggested, 573 he left with a clearer understanding of how the public "viewed" his sector. Most also 574 welcomed the opportunity to both shape and learn from public understandings and 575 perceptions of the issue. As one put it, the process was a means of "directly influencing 576 the understanding of the community", and an interesting experience in that it demanded 577 experts to "deliver messages to an audience in 'real' terms i.e. that which a reasonable 578 layman could understand". This latter witness concluded that "perhaps the opportunity to 579 deliver [messages in this way] to other such groups should be something we do more of 580 as an organization". Notwithstanding our own recognition of the trade off between issue 581 complexity and the time dedicated to the proceedings, it was clear too that witnesses had 582 confidence in the process to produce a level of engagement that was appropriate to the 583 issue in hand:

"It was very enlightening to attend the citizens' jury. The panel showed an
excellent depth of insight and discussions with individuals showed the breadth of
their backgrounds and understanding"

587 "The jury asked intelligent questions and were obviously putting a lot of thought
588 into the process. I was encouraged by the points the jury made which gave me
589 confidence that their final decision would be a valid one"

590 Citizens' juries are often explained primarily, if not exclusively, as public engagement 591 techniques, but it was also clear from undertaking this exercise that witnesses considered 592 this process to have been an opportunity for cross-sectoral communication in ways that 593 would not be normally possible. There was sense in which the format of the jury process 594 was able to bring stakeholders into dialogue with each other. "I thought it was a particularly effective way to bring together and facilitate
discussion between diverse interest groups which may not easily be achieved by
more traditional consultation processes. It was also a useful opportunity for me to
meet colleagues from Defra and elsewhere.

599 "It was good for me to get a feel of where the other witnesses were coming from –
600 it will help shape our future campaigning on this issue"

601 "It was a good opportunity for me to meet and talk to the other witnesses, as this is
602 a subject that I have a particular interest in professionally, especially as Cornwall
603 has a long coast line and a strong farming ethos".

604 "It allowed me to hear about viewpoints from representatives of other stakeholders
605 concerned. I had several good conversations with people from other sectors and I
606 think we all went away a little better informed about other people's perspectives
607 and issues. Therefore the chance to network in this respect was indeed valuable"

608 "I felt that the jury was an interesting way of encouraging participation from a
609 wide range of the public and organizations in discussing a subject area which
610 affects us all"

Finally, it was considered by some as a way of building confidence in the public image ofpolicy makers, in this case Defra. One witness suggested that:

"If nothing else, the Citizens' Jury process will, I think, begin to help restore some
street cred to Defra's public image. They should, if only for this reason, continue
to invest the relatively small sums involved in the Citizens' Jury process...I
believe Citizens' Juries processes have a vital part to play - if, and it's a big if, the
outcomes are fed into the policy formulation process, rather than simply a sop to
the principles of consultation. It is to be hoped that ...Defra will continue the

stakeholder engagement with interest groups and parties and that the results will
be used at least to help shape and frame policy decisions. It is to be hoped that it
won't simply end up on some senior civil servant's desk stamped DONE and go
no further"

623 As this point suggests, the link to outcomes is important. Many witnesses indicated that 624 would read the judgments of the jury with interest, and would disseminate them widely 625 amongst peers. In this the processes tends to be constructed as relevant in its outputs, but 626 diffuse and informal in its overall impact. This partly reflects the jury's placement with 627 an exploratory research process rather that a real decision process. However, the 628 unanticipated link to the Bathing Waters Directive consultation has already been noted, 629 although again the precise impact of this is difficult to discern. As Defra formally, if 630 obliquely. stated in their responses to these findings, the juror's conclusions would be put 631 "into the mix" of consultation responses. There is currently no evidence for wider updatke 632 of this technique occurring in the sponsoring department.

633 For participating jurors, the evaluation questionnaire revealed the process to be 634 "enjoyable" or "hugely enjoyable" with the majority of participants regarding the 635 technique as "useful" exercise in assisting decision makers in understanding public 636 priorities about policy issues. A small proportion considered it "very useful" in this 637 respect. However, some respondents raised specific concerns about the importance of 638 jury composition and representativeness, and specifically that there might have been a 639 greater number of people in the 18-40 age range group. This would have brought "better 640 balance" to the proceedings. Another suggested that perhaps the jury was slightly 641 "biased" in its pro-farming view of the issue:

642 "I think it only became apparent towards the end of the process that the overall643 'balance' of [juror] opinion could have been better. Personally, I felt the views of

the farming fraternity were over-represented on a number of vital aspects underdiscussion and I sensed their influence on younger panel members."

Half of the respondents to the survey felt that the sponsoring Government Department
Defra would take the verdict either 'seriously' or 'very seriously'. Others were less
confident or suggested it was "impossible" to gauge the Department's response. At the
same time, most participants regarded the technique as 'useful' or 'very useful' exercise
in informing the public about the policy process. As one suggested:

651 "I feel overall that the public have a right to be informed and express views, and
652 this type of process is a good way of reviewing evidence and making a guided
653 judgement, which can be used by policy makers to inform, guide and influence
654 developments in the public and community interest"

However, one respondent cautioned that using this technique to inform the wider public
was valuable in so far as it depended on the results of the Jury being publicized widely in
the Media. Indeed, there was felt to be a distinction between informing a small group of
the public about an important policy debate, and influencing the understanding of a wider
public.

### 660 Conclusion

In the analysis above we have sought to present a simplified account of a highly interpretative, and qualitatively rich, process of public engagement in the issue of microbial watercourse pollution. We set the terms of reference for this experiment broadly. Starting from a platform of interdisciplinary applied research our concern was to explore the political, economic and moral, as well as scientific complexities, embodied in this environmental protection agenda. The need to build coherent policy narratives out of such varied and often contested domains of debate should, of course, be a natural 668 aspiration for rational policy formation (and the development of corresponding platforms 669 of scientific research), though it is one that rarely occurs in practice. Indeed, one of the 670 interesting problems facing environmental managers and decision makers, not least those 671 working in the area of microbial watercourse pollution, is how to devise holistic 672 understanding of, and approaches to environmental problems, for they are never the 673 preserve of one area of responsibility and expertise alone. Our experience of conducting 674 this experiment was that the technique was useful in the way otherwise disparate areas of 675 authority, expertise and influence could logically explore the issue of microbial 676 watercourse pollution together.

677 Building a jury verdict sequentially around an exploration of issues of 'acceptability' 678 'culpability' 'necessity' and 'responsibility' was, we suggest, important to this outcome. 679 As we have shown, this structured process served to animate the potential of new models 680 of working (such as in the case for cross-industry subsidy), invite new types of policy 681 analysis (such as re-evaluating the place of environmental protection within agri-682 environmental schemes), flag up areas of poor institutional working (such as 683 arrangements for integrated monitoring), subvert the technocratic orientation of science-684 policy research agendas (by prioritising low cost, low technological interventions) and put 685 the status of microbial risks into wider perspective (for instance, by considering these 686 risks 'relatively insignificant'). The technique, in other words, has utility in the way it 687 challenges prevailing research and policy orthodoxies and highlights areas of potential 688 innovation.

Yet, if our findings suggest that the technique has the potential to elaborate
environmental issues in constructive, critical and creative ways, the process of building
institutional and political capacities to capture and act on well-reasoned public insights
such as this, including reflexivity in applied research is, of course, an altogether more

693 vexed issue. . In this we recognise our citizens' jury had some degree of artificiality to it. 694 The provenance of our experiment was in a programme of exploratory interdisciplinary 695 research which coupled insightful results with diffuse, and generally informal, impacts. 696 Although critical and practical exposition of the 'ideal' of deliberative democracy 697 periodically serves to re-energise interest in the citizens' jury technique, policy makers 698 and researchers are some distance from harnessing the potential of these process to help 699 contextualise better the nature of science and policy priorities in a complex, if often silo-700 driven world of decision making. It seems time to view this technique as something more 701 than methodological curiosity; a helpful if slightly unconventional appendage to the 'real 702 stuff' of public engagement in decision making. 703 704 References 705 706 Alvarez-Farizo, B. and Hanley, N., 2006. Improving the process of valuing non-market 707 benefits: combining citizens' juries with choice modelling. Land Econ, 82, 465-478. 708 709 Álvarez-Farizo, B., Hanley, N., Barberán R., and Lázaro, A. (2007) Choice modeling at 710 the 'market stall': individual versus collective interest in environmental valuation, Ecol. 711 *Econ.* 60, 743–751. 712 713 Aldred, J., Jacobs, M., 2000. Citizens and wetlands: evaluating the Ely citizens` jury. 714 Ecological Economics, 34, 217-232. 715

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