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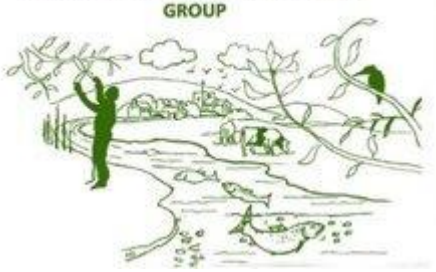
WATERCRESS & WINTERBOURNES

Watercress and Winterbournes Evaluation Report

CHERITON CONSERVATION VOLUNTEER GROUP



Environment Agency

Hampshire Buildings Preservation Trust Ltd.

Hampshire County Council

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

NATURAL ENGLAND

NFU WATERCRESS ASSOCIATION

South Downs National Park Authority

WATER for LIFE from Southern Water

TEST & ITCHEN ASSOCIATION

Test Valley Borough Council

Wessex Rivers Trust

WildFish.

WILD TROUT TRUST

Watercress and Winterbournes Landscape Partnership

Front cover photo Riverfly training on the Pillhill Brook, credit: Maggie Shelton

Executive Summary

"Before W & W chalk streams ran through my village. Now they also run through my veins."
(Chalk Stream Champion)

The Watercress and Winterbournes Landscape Partnership Scheme (2020-2026) was an innovative, six-year initiative dedicated to protecting and celebrating the headwaters of the Rivers Test and Itchen, two of the world's most iconic chalk streams. Supported by a £1.9 million grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), the Scheme was led by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (HIWWT) in collaboration with the Wessex Rivers Trust and a diverse array of partners and volunteers.

Launched during the 2020 COVID-19 lockdown, the Scheme was extended to six years to account for initial delivery challenges. Its primary vision was to build landscape resilience through intensive community engagement, citizen science and practical restoration. The Scheme focused on four core programmes:

1. **Resilient Chalk Streams:** Physical habitat restoration and flood management.

2. **Chalk Stream Community Action:** Empowering local leadership and behaviour change.

3. **Exploring and Celebrating Chalk Stream Heritage:** Connecting the public to the streams' cultural history and celebrating the chalk streams.

4. **Chalk Stream Skills:** Building a sustainable base of skilled volunteers and land managers

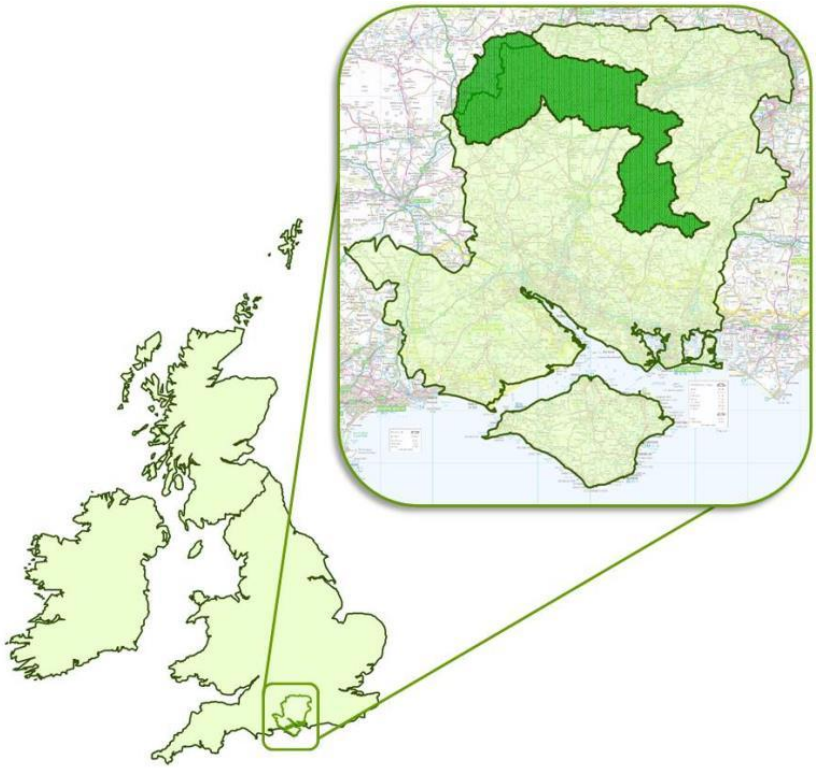


Figure 1 Where Watercress and Winterbournes is located in the UK and within Hampshire

The W&W model for successful landscape resilience.

The Method.


Physical habitat restoration.

Intensive community-led conservation.

Citizen science.

The Outcomes.

Physical chalk stream improvements.

Independent community catchment groups.


Hundreds of skilled volunteers.

The Impact.

Long-term stewardship.


Strengthened public connection to these globally rare ecosystems.


A robust framework for future landscape-scale conservation.

What's Been Achieved - People and Communities

305 Chalk Stream Champions and 3 new catchment groups

293 people trained

£57,603

16 grants provided to communities and landowners

£426,457

in volunteer time match funding

8 Chalk Stream Quest trails installed

800+ Chalk Stream Challenge Badges awarded

46 Open Chalk Stream events

3,739 young people reached through the education programme

53 chalk stream oral histories shared

What's Been Achieved - Heritage and Environment

5.1 km chalk stream renaturalised and improved for flow, water quality and habitat

New winterbournes guidance

28 training events for landowners and managers

2 structures removed to allow fish passage

1 white-clawed crayfish ark site constructed

1 white-clawed crayfish hatchery opened

8 nationally or locally significant water meadow structures restored

14 sediment mitigation schemes implemented

Key Achievements and Impacts

The Scheme exceeded many of its original targets, delivering tangible improvements to both the natural environment and local communities.

1. Heritage and Environment

- **Restoration:** 5.1 km of chalk stream habitat is now in better condition through 19 completed restoration projects.
- **Invasive Species:** 78 km of stream improved through the removal of non-native species by volunteers.
- **Fish Passage:** 8.25 km of chalk stream habitat made accessible to a variety of fish species.
- **Natural Flood Management:** 245 metres of chalk stream habitat better managed for flood resilience.
- **Biodiversity:** Established a new crayfish hatchery and "ark" site to protect the critically endangered native, white-clawed crayfish. Water vole populations demonstrating an increase where marginal habitat has been restored.
- **Pollution Control:** Implemented sediment mitigation measures in 13 locations and 24,000 residents were reached with "Septic Smart" management information.
- **Water Efficiency**: 25000+ people engaged with about water saving measures

2. People and Communities

- **Sustainable communities:** 305 Chalk Stream Champions: committed volunteers and 3 new chalk stream groups established.
- **Education:** 3,739 young people engaged through school programmes, and a further 800+ completing the Chalk Stream Challenge Badge.
- **Volunteering:** Thousands of hours contributed equating to £426,457 in match funding
- **Skill Development:** 293 people trained in specialist skills, including invertebrate sampling, water quality monitoring and the restoration of heritage structures.
- **Grant Funding:** £57,603 awarded across 14 community grants and 2 landowner grants, supporting local initiatives like the "Whispers of the Chalk Stream" project in Bishop's Sutton.
- **Accessibility:** 8 new chalk stream quest trails installed, two footpaths made more accessible and one new permissive footpath created.

Strategic Lessons Learnt

The evaluation identified several strategic insights for future landscape-scale projects including:

The Power of Citizen Science: Methods like Riverfly and Smart Rivers served as vital entry points for community engagement, fostering a sense of ownership and providing essential data for national databases.

Flexibility is Key: Adapting to external shocks—such as the pandemic—required a shift to digital solutions, which ultimately extended the Scheme's reach beyond the immediate landscape.

Community Independence: Successful legacy depends on "not over-structuring" groups. Allowing Community Catchment Groups* to form their own unique identities ensured their long-term sustainability.

Landowner Relationships: Building trust through "warm leads" and local volunteer connections proved more effective than cold-call approaches.

*'*Community Catchment Group'* is a name and descriptor used in the LCAP. Although it was not used in Scheme delivery due to the different variety of local groups that developed (see part three) we have continued to use the phrase for clarity throughout this report.

"The Scheme has connected people over a common shared interest. It has forged real and lasting friendships and given people the chance to enjoy their day in nature while doing something for wildlife." (Scheme Volunteer)

Legacy and Future Outlook

The Watercress and Winterbournes Scheme concluded with a robust legacy, in particular:

- **Sustainable Organisations:** Six independent and locally led Community Catchment Groups are now active.
- **Long-Term Care:** 10-year maintenance agreements are in place for all capital restoration projects and heritage structures
- **Digital Resources:** A wealth of animations, training videos and guidance documents (such as the *Winterbourne Guidance*) remain accessible to the public.
- **Chalk Stream Health:** The conditions for species like water voles and brown trout have been significantly improved, creating a more resilient ecosystem against the pressures of climate change.

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Riverfly training on the Pillhill Brook in 2024 © Maggie Shelton

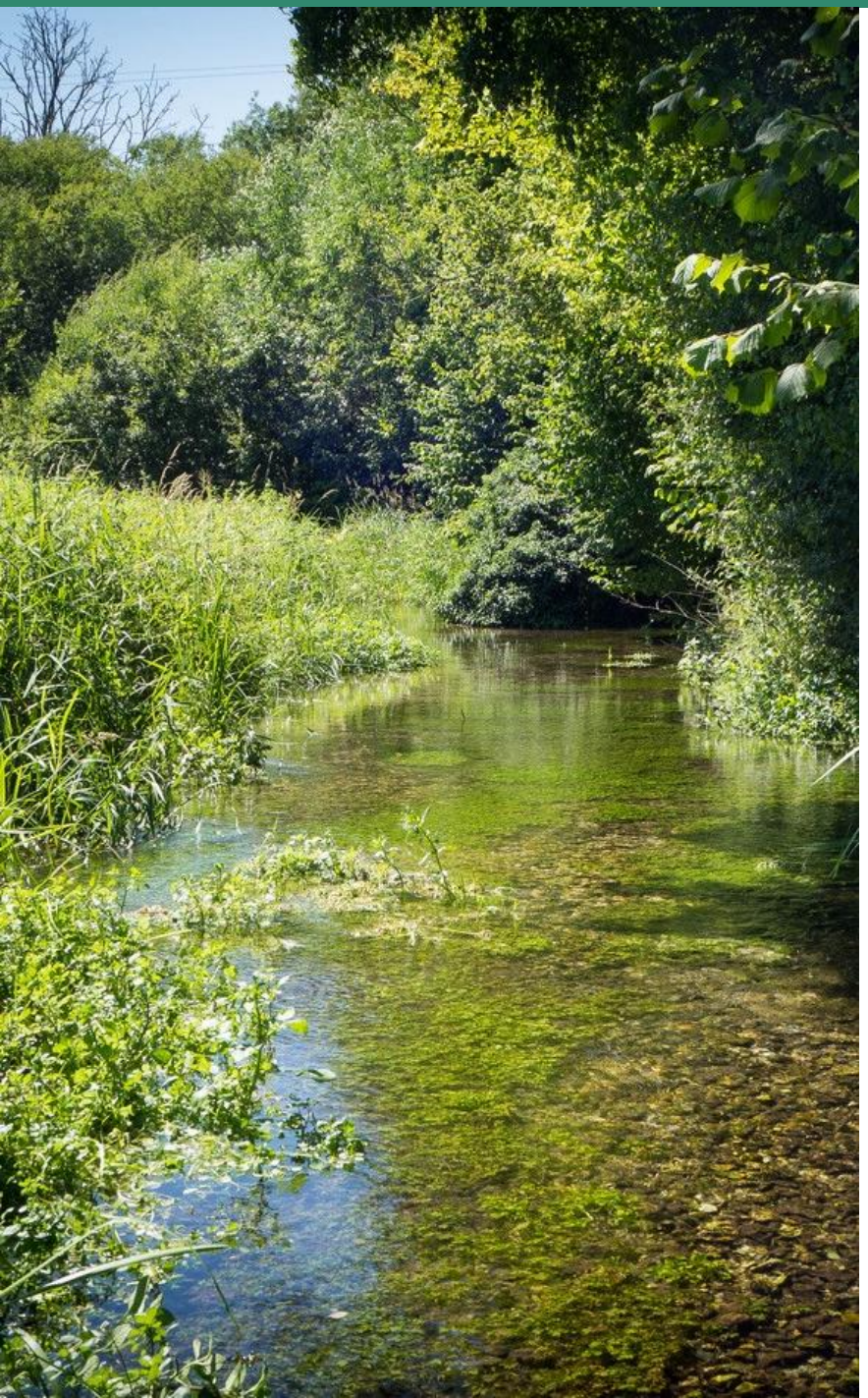


Photo credit: Steve Pullen

Pupils from Ropley C of E Primary School identifying invertebrates at Alresford Eel House in 2023 © Tracy Standish

Part One: Scheme Evaluation

Introduction

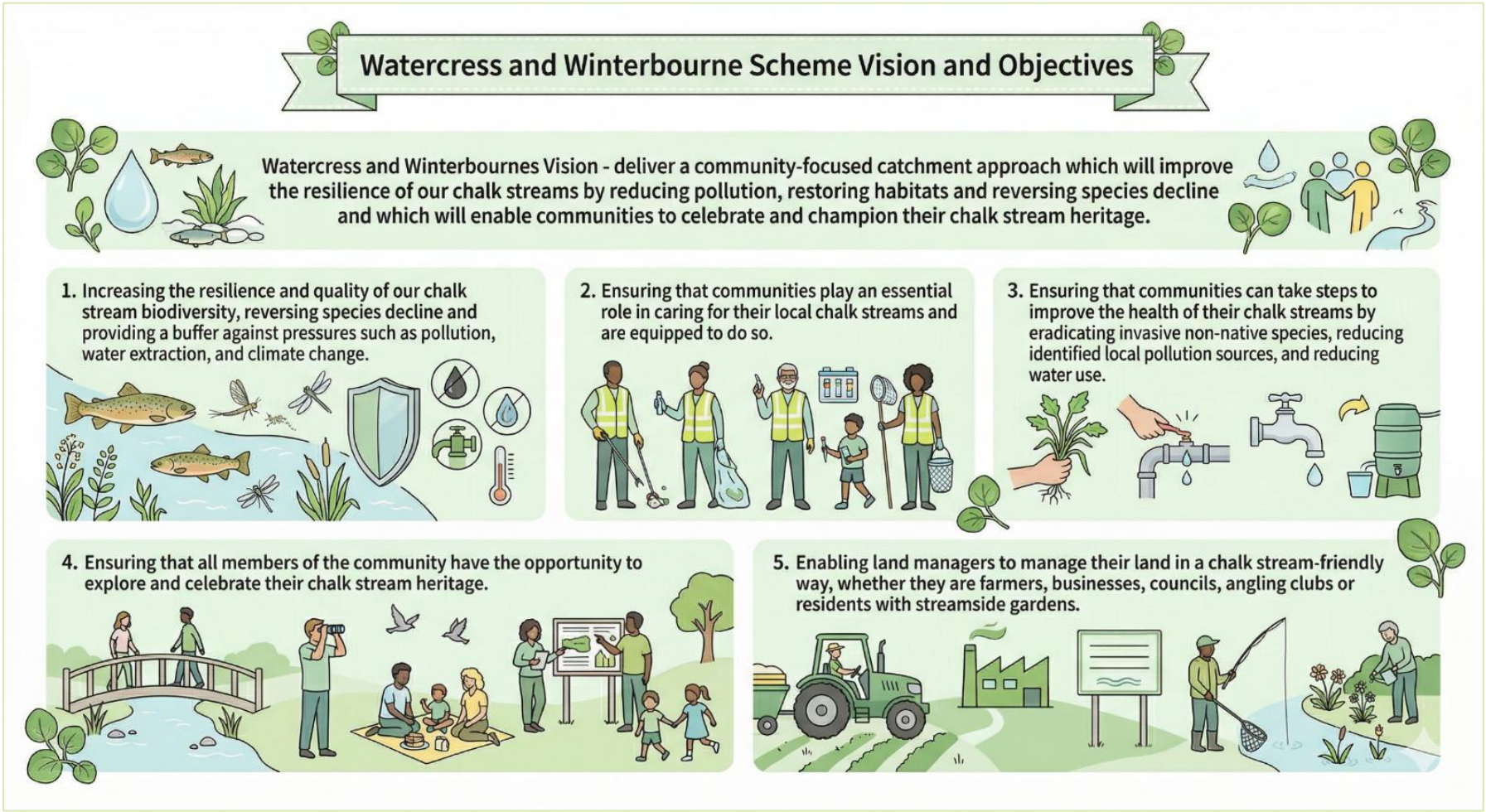
Watercress and Winterbournes (W&W) has been an innovative and dynamic Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS) delivered from 2020 to 2026 via £1.9 m from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF). The Scheme was designed to fulfil the NLHF's wider aims of conserving, enhancing, and managing a distinct natural and cultural landscape, in this case by improving the resilience of the headwaters of the Rivers Test and Itchen, two of the UK's most iconic chalk rivers. It has been led by Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (HIWWT) and Wessex Rivers Trust working in collaboration with local people, communities and other partner organisations. The Watercress and Winterbournes Landscape Partnership Scheme was extended to six years in length rather than the usual five as delivery time was lost in the first year due to the Scheme starting in the Covid lockdown.

The natural beauty of the chalk streams and their valleys form the unique 683km² Watercress and Winterbournes landscape area in north Hampshire. This area has been celebrated through art and literature for generations. However, this landscape is under threat from climate change, risks to water quality, habitat degeneration, invasive non-native species, the deterioration of historic buildings, access challenges, a decline in traditional land management skills and a level of disconnection in approaches to the landscape from differing agencies and communities. The Watercress and Winterbournes Partnership created a vision and objectives to begin to address these threats to the landscape.

Photo credit: Maggie Shelton

Flowing winterbourne showing in-channel plants in 2023 © Maggie Shelton

The Watercress and Winterbournes vision was to “deliver a community-focused catchment approach which will improve the resilience of the chalk streams by reducing pollution, restoring habitats and reversing species decline and which will enable communities to celebrate and champion their chalk stream heritage.” This vision was underpinned by a set of Scheme objectives:



The Scheme's objectives were achieved by working closely with local residents, community groups, landowners and strategic partners across the catchment, supported by citizen science. This method aimed to build long-term resilience in the chalk stream by embedding skills, knowledge, opportunities and practical action within the community, encouraging local leadership and securing a lasting legacy.

Evaluation is a requirement of NLHF-funded Landscape Partnership Schemes and Resources for Change, working with Emma Cranidge, has collaborated with W&W on this process since 2020.

The final evaluation drew on best practice and the National Lottery Heritage Fund's own guidance. When this Scheme was funded, NLHF defined evaluation as a structured process of looking back to understand what worked and why. The evaluation reviewed each project and activity, assessing both the quality and quantity of outputs and outcomes against a set of agreed evaluation questions.

This report sets out to show how the Scheme's community-led approach has created change. It draws on monitoring data, evaluation interviews, conversations with volunteers and local residents, video and phone interviews with key stakeholders, process charts, online surveys, project documents, communications, materials, photographic and video records, discussion groups and site visits.

Volunteer water quality testing © Kira Fuller

Smart Rivers invertebrate monitoring © Maggie Shelton

Volunteer water vole survey training © Chris Mayne

Scheme Overview

The journey from Scheme Vision to securing a lasting legacy is made up of a Scheme's programmes, projects and activities but the real story lies in the approach and methods used to deliver them and how effectively it has achieved the intended outcomes.and legacy. This report explores the application of that approach as illustrated below.

Landscape Vision

Watercress & Winterbournes will deliver a scheme "which will improve the resilience of our chalk streams by reducing pollution, restoring habitats and reversing species decline."

Vision Approach

Watercress & Winterbournes "will deliver a community- focused catchment approach...which will enable communities to celebrate and champion their chalk stream heritage."

Methods

The Scheme applied a set of methods that underpinned the approach:

- Capacity Building
- Communication
- Community Engagement and Partnership working
- Education

Deliver & Review

To deliver the Scheme, the following was put into place:

- An effective Landscape Partnership Board, Management and Delivery Team
- Delivery processes for the activities, projects and programme of the Scheme
- Review and feedback methods with ways to revise if necessary

Outputs

The Scheme worked towards the activities within the projects to deliver the planned outputs as outlined in the LCAP

Outcomes

The Scheme ensured the delivered outputs contributed to achieving both NLHF outcomes and the outcomes of the Scheme as described in the LCAP

Legacy

The Scheme planned for legacy and worked to develop post Scheme longevity through project delivery

Scheme Programmes and Projects

Programme 1 - Resilient Chalk Streams: This programme focused on practical work to restore and enhance habitats, increasing their resilience to climate change and water abstraction, removing barriers to fish movement and reducing sediment and pollution entering the chalk streams.
This was delivered through the following projects:
Chalk Stream Habitat Restoration prioritised and delivered river habitat and floodplain improvements, creating more resilient habitats to support chalk stream species.
Natural Flood Management used natural techniques to reduce the impacts of flooding on priority areas.
Stopping Sediments deployed mitigation measures to tackle 'pathways' which deliver sediment and nutrients to the chalk streams.
Spawning Habitats delivered fish easement schemes, removing structural barriers to allow fish access up and downstream.
Conserving Our Native Crayfish developed a hatchery and an 'ark' site for native white-clawed crayfish.

Habitat restoration on the Pillhill Brook in 2024 © Nicky Nicklin

Upper Itchen Restoration CIC running a stand at Alresford Show in 2025 © Peter Stokes

Programme 2 - Chalk Stream Community Action: This programme focused on actions that the catchment communities could deliver to improve and celebrate their chalk streams. Delivered through the following projects:

Building Sustainable Community Catchment Groups - Development of long-term Community Catchment Groups.
Watercress and Winterbournes Grant Scheme grants available for communities and landowners
Save Every Drop encouraged people to make changes to their water usage and understand the connections between their water consumption and the health of the local chalk stream.
Septic Smart encouraged better management of off-mains drainage sewerage systems and septic tanks across the headwater catchments.
Tackling Invasives controlled invasive species on the chalk streams to reduce prevalence and prevent their spread.

Scheme Programmes and Projects

Programme 3 - Exploring and Celebrating our Chalk Stream Heritage: This programme focused on engaging a wide and diverse range of audiences to explore and celebrate chalk stream heritage. This was delivered through the following projects:

W&W Education Programme delivered activities for schools and home education groups, connecting local heritage to the national curriculum and activities aimed at uniformed and other youth groups.
Roaming by the River made identified river walks more accessible.
Restoring our Chalk Stream Structures restored and celebrated the built heritage structures on the chalk streams, associated with water meadow systems.
Tales from the Riverbank got local communities connecting with their chalk stream heritage through:
A photography competition and exhibition encouraged local people including young people to connect with their local chalk stream.
A literary competition and festival explored the writers and poets that have been inspired by the chalk streams and encouraged young people to try poetry and nature writing.
A local stories exhibition told the stories of local people's connections with chalk streams.
Hidden Treasure Trails engaged local people with their chalk stream through special interest walks and local walking routes.
Open Chalk Streams gave local communities the opportunity to visit and appreciate some private stretches of their local river.

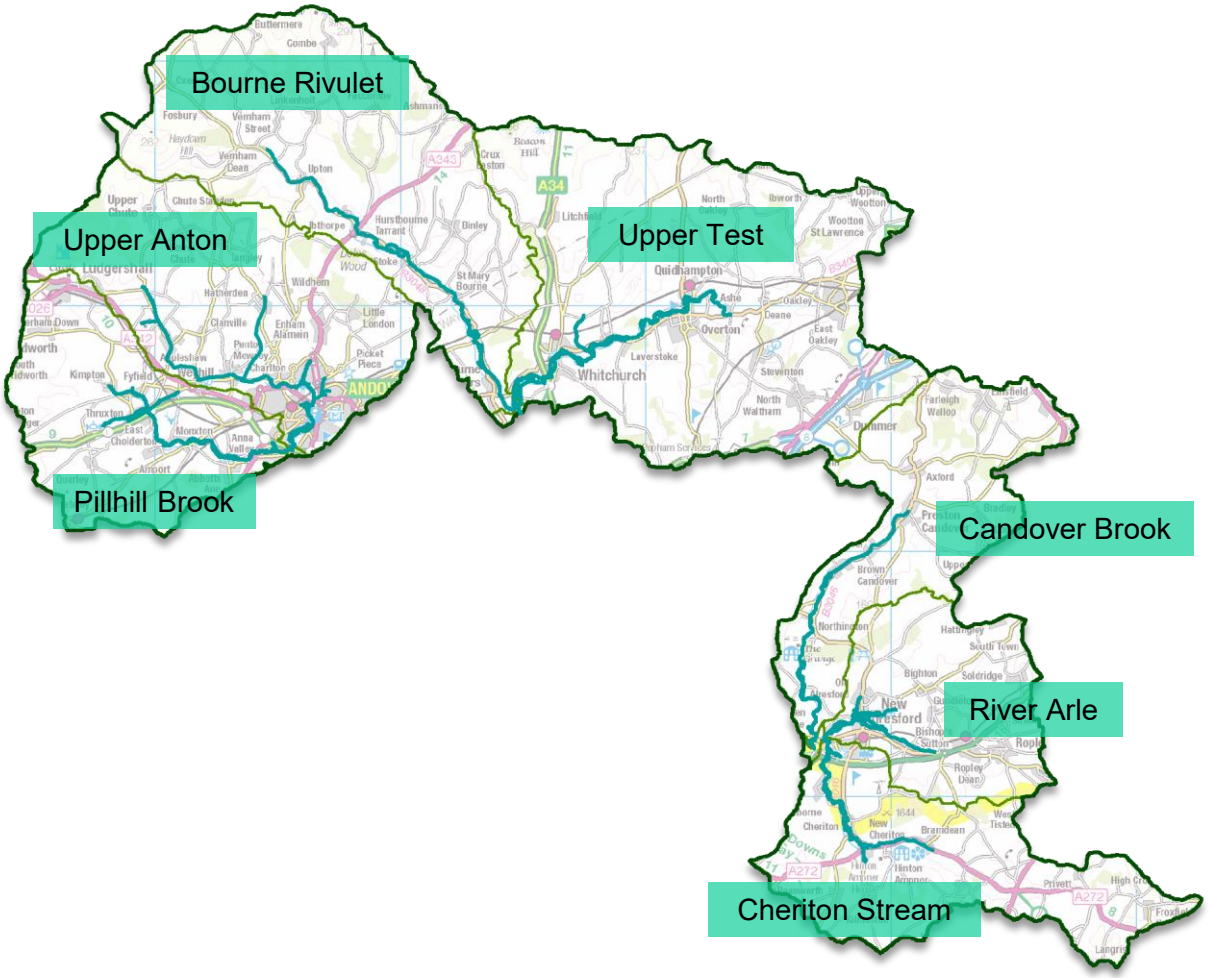
Programme 4 - Chalk Stream Skills: This programme focused on building the skills of key stakeholders to better equip them in caring for their chalk streams in the future. This was delivered through the following projects:

Chalk Stream Events delivered an ongoing programme of talks and workshops aimed at all members of the community learning more about chalk stream issues and heritage.
Chalk Stream Champions provided an ongoing programme of training for volunteers involved in the scheme to develop their skills in a range of areas including water quality monitoring, species monitoring and identification, INNS identification, health and safety training and tools training.
Chalk Stream-Friendly Land Management delivered an ongoing programme of events and on-site workshops and advice visits aimed at improving the management of riparian land as well as for people in the surrounding catchments who can have an impact on the chalk streams.

Photo credit: Lawrence Brodley

In the following sections we set out an evaluation of how these programmes and projects were delivered in terms of:

- Outlining the extent to which NLHF outcomes have been achieved.
- Describing changes for chalk streams.
- Exploring the partnership and the scheme management approach that has enabled their delivery.
- Reviewing the effect on the outcomes and legacy of key delivery approaches adopted by the Scheme including community engagement, embedding skills and communication, as well as the reach and recognition the Scheme has achieved.
- Describing the legacy of the Scheme and how that legacy was planned.
- Drawing out the Scheme's lessons for wider application and conclusions.



The Watercress and Winterbournes project area

Scheme Management and Partnership

A partnership board member told the evaluators that *"the scheme has been delivered well",* while a CCG member reported that "*seeing the community groups and comradery that has been developed within our volunteer community and education groups shows that it is very well delivered."* The review of the evaluation data suggests that there have been some parts of the Scheme's approach which have enabled success, some that may have hindered delivery and there have been some external challenges the delivery team has had to manage.

Management

"Watercress & Winterbournes was seen as very well managed, transparent, and largely over-delivering."
(Member of the Partnership Board)

Quality project management is essential to the successful delivery of a Scheme's vision. By reducing risks and using resources efficiently and effectively it is more likely that a Scheme will be delivered on time and within budget. More importantly good Scheme management ensures that a programmes and projects are resilient to changes that occur during delivery and to unpredictable external forces.

The management of the Watercress and Winterbournes LPS was *"highly effective"*, resilient and *"overall it has been excellent"*. By the good use of resources and a willingness to be flexible, while keeping a clear eye of the goal and outcomes, the Scheme has been able to not only deliver a highly successful LPS but also rise to major delivery challenges such as Covid and lockdown.

The evaluation participants strongly praised the overall management of the Scheme. Telling us, for example that *"overall, the project was regarded as professionally delivered and well governed, with meaningful local impacts, particularly in science-based monitoring and partnership delivery."*

One challenge that was identified by team members was around monitoring and recording. It was suggested that more consideration be given at the development stage to how outputs and outcomes are going to be measured and what 'change' planned outputs are going to demonstrate. The Delivery Team further suggested that in future Schemes setting aside budget for including GIS skills and monitoring data analysis would be helpful, as would more detailed thinking through and gathering of base line data where appropriate.

Key areas of successful management identified by evaluation participants included:

- The process of managing the involvement of volunteers – *"The Wildlife Trust's volunteer management capacity was highlighted as a key strength."*

- Management delivered by an organisation with the capacity to deliver *"multiple strands of work",* while being *"flexible and responsive"* – *"Being embedded within established organisations with experience of scheme delivery provided a strong operational platform."*

- Delivering National Lottery expectations – *"highly competent and effective in navigating the administrative and reporting requirements of National Lottery funding."*

- Financial management and reporting were also highlighted as *"exemplary."*

Chalk Stream Champion annual get together at Whitchurch Silk Mill in 2022 © Maggie Shelton

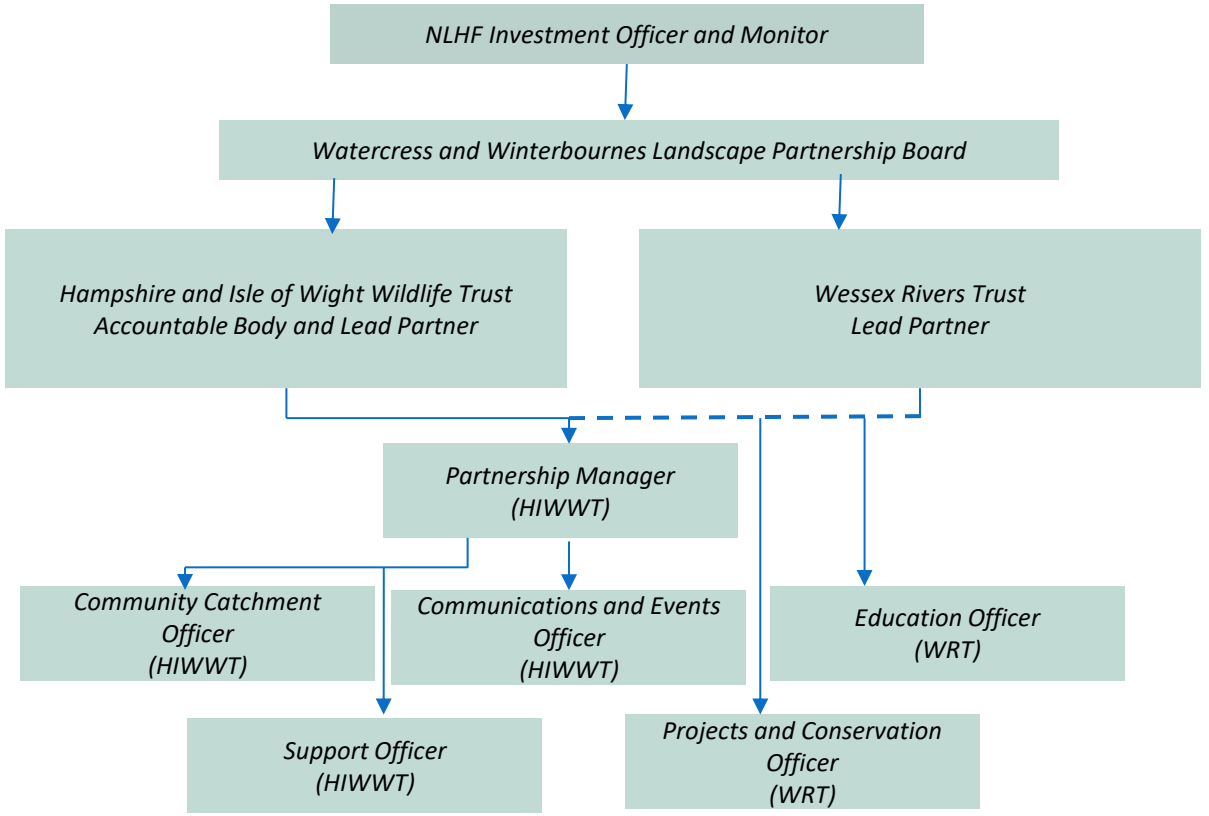
Scheme Delivery

The support and enthusiasm from both Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and the Wessex Rivers Trust has been absolutely fantastic and a major reason in the success of the scheme and the formation of groups to take the work forward."
(Community Catchment Group Member)

A team of six specialist staff were employed by Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and Wessex Rivers Trust for the day-to-day delivery and management of the Watercress and Winterbournes Scheme.

The team included:

- Partnership Manager (full-time)
- Community Catchment Officer (full-time)
- Projects and Conservation Officer (full-time)
- Communications and Events Officer (full-time)
- Education Officer (part-time)
- Support Officer (part-time increased to full-time part way through the scheme)



Evaluation respondents gave high praise to all members of the delivery team. One member of a CCG emphasised *"the quiet effectiveness and commitment of the Watercress & Winterbournes team*", while a local volunteer suggested that the staff were "*extremely helpful and knowledgeable".* Another CCG member concluded that this *"combination of practical support, encouragement, and relationship-building was seen as central to the success of the local group."*

The effectiveness of Scheme delivery has been greatly helped by the continuity of staff in the Wildlife Trust team. Some of the staff have been working on the scheme from the development phase, and some have been able to stay for the duration of the scheme, which helps especially with securing engagement from landowners, volunteers and community members.

The make-up of the team has included a different mix of approaches to looking at and tackling projects, different personalities, knowledge and experience. This mix has had a role in the positive delivery outcomes. Especially important has been ensuring that team members had the skills required for complex approaches such as community engagement and effective communications.

Throughout the Scheme, being flexible to what is happening in the field and enabling organic development has been a key to successful delivery. The team members have not been 'wedded' to delivering the plan exactly as described in the LCAP but have instead focused on achieving the vision, outcomes and legacy.

Delivery has not been without some challenges including the extensive person hours it can take to achieve Scheme outcomes, especially in the field of community engagement. The Delivery Team have found that volunteer expectations can clash with staff availability, which can be challenging. One member of the delivery team reported that *"these (expectations) had to be met constantly as, once an interest was sparked, people wanted something right now".* Similarly, in the area of communication, workload has been an issue for balancing project delivery with the provision of good communications.

Team members collecting a Highly Commended for Stakeholder Engagement at the 2023 CIEEM awards © CIEEM

Photo credit: CIEEM

W&W team on a site visit to the Upper Test in 2021 © Sophie Evingar

HIWWT, WRT, W&W Board Chairs and Team at the Celebration Event in 2025 © Howard Boardman

Delivery staff turnover in partner organisations caused some losses of information and continuity. In future programmes this risk needs mitigation to ensure continuity to continue to maintain relationships and progress projects whilst recruitment is going ahead. The team have suggested that having an Assistant Project Officer would have helped to alleviate this problem. This is especially important as it appears that there is a current issue in the river world with people leaving the charitable sector to go and work for contractors, water companies and the Environment Agency.

The overall workload has also been a challenge, as a Delivery Team member reported, *"we had too many projects and not enough staff to deliver all of the projects as well as we would have liked."* The demands of project delivery have also taken time away from management tasks like partnership development and legacy planning.

Staff time was further stretched in some roles that were part time in the LCAP, but where delivery would have benefited from a full-time post, this caused stress points for both staff, personally, and for project delivery as work pressures increased.

The chalk streams themselves presented some specific challenges to delivery. For example, some projects could only occur in a specific season which meant that at certain times of the year there was increased workload and a need to get an increased number of projects delivered within a defined timescale. Balancing workloads across the seasons was an issue for all of the delivery team. This was exacerbated by the length of time taken for consents to come through for work within the streams and the fact that high-water levels impacted on schedules in some years.

There have also been some external, structural factors that have either helped or hindered delivery including:

- The covid pandemic which moved some of the delivery online which gained wider engagement.
- The covid lockdown delayed the timeline for staff recruitment. The lack of in-person contact during lockdowns also impacted on team development and the building of relationships within the team. Slow delivery for the first year of the scheme due to the covid restrictions made an extra year of delivery necessary.
- *"The amount of press about pollution in our rivers has helped in getting more people involved because there are a lot of people who are angry about the situation,"* reported a member of the team.
- The local negative media coverage about Southern Water has impacted on the Save Every Drop project delivery. A member of the team reported that *"some people don't want someone from SW visiting their house and don't understand why they should be taking action if Southern Water can't sort the leakage and pollution issues at their end."*
- Staff turnover within the capital and habitat improvement projects was a challenge for continuity and delivery.

The Scheme has been well managed and delivered, and the team has risen positively to the challenges they have faced both from within and without by adjusting what they did and how it was delivered. The delivery has benefited from a skilled and dedicated staff team who reported that they *"have really enjoyed working on the scheme and working with the other members of the team,"* and they *"have also really enjoyed meeting the volunteers and community group members and seeing the wide range of work we have achieved together."*

Case Study: Flexible Delivery - Conserving our Native Crayfish

"This is something we've been looking to deliver for 15–20 years… and within two years we've created it."

The focus of this project was the conservation of native, white-clawed crayfish. The headwaters of the Itchen have one of the last viable populations in the region, but they are vulnerable due to many external factors. An ark site would allow a self-sustaining population of white-clawed crayfish to thrive in safety- a protected population, available for any future reintroduction projects.

The original plan was to develop a hatchery at Sparsholt College where juvenile native crayfish could live and grow to maturity. Unfortunately, a non-native spiny-cheeked crayfish was discovered at the proposed site, meaning that plans had to change and adapt to eliminate unacceptable biosecurity risks. The delivery team worked with Wildheart Animal Sanctuary to build a new hatchery on the Isle of Wight, and a suitable site was found for the development of an ark site - a new specifically designed pond. Being a new pond, it was possible to incorporate many features essential to the species such as a carefully engineered water supply, specific flow management, gravel substrates and increased structural complexity. The bio secure design reduces risk of disease and prevents invasive species from entering the pond.

The project had additional benefits. The contractors who constructed the ark site learnt much about crayfish conservation and felt they would now be able to support future restoration projects. The project leads were inexperienced in contract management and although the contractor was excellent in helping with this, the leads now realise that it would have been helpful to have someone on the client side who understood NEC contracts and contract law more widely and would implement this in future projects.

The project also strengthened links between county and national crayfish strategies and broader river restoration ambitions. The project legacy has been secured through a 10-year agreement for the Ark site, with the ambition that it becomes a permanent refuge population. Ongoing monitoring will assess water quality, habitat stability, and establishment success over the coming years and the work contributes to a shift from reactive species rescue toward proactive resilience-building.

It was *"so inspiring to be involved."*
(Delivery Team Member)

White-clawed crayfish ark site at Tangley after construction in autumn 2025 © Morton Pattison

Photo credit: Morton Pattison

The Partnership

A Landscape Partnership is a formal arrangement, a group of organisations developing and delivering a heritage-focused project, sharing the workload, risks, and benefits. Partners take an active role within a written agreement, hold joint accountability and share expertise to add value to the Scheme.

The Watercress and Winterbournes Landscape Partnership was led by Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust and delivery-partner Wessex Rivers Trust and was underpinned by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by all partner organisations. The purpose of the Board was to guide and monitor the delivery of the Scheme through:

- managing and ensuring the implementation of the programmes by co-ordinating and focusing effort and resources.
- contributing extensive experience and knowledge towards individual projects and the overall Scheme.
- reviewing and scrutinising the progress made through the Scheme.
- monitoring and evaluating the Scheme's outputs and outcomes and ensure adherence to the terms of the NLHF contract of grant.

Many partners were involved before the start of the development stage and this longevity has certainly been of benefit. However, during the life of the Scheme there have been some Local Authority departments and other agencies where a lack of engagement has hampered progress. One partnership board member suggested that the inclusion of local councillors in future programmes could reduce this risk.

Another challenge the Board faced was some continuity issues due to staff turnover. Plus, the challenge smaller organisations and charities face of finding it hard to put in more than the minimum amount of time for the Board as they must justify every hour of their time and how it is going to be paid. This would be less of a challenge if Board time was funded where necessary or appropriate.

Beyond this formal arrangement the Watercress and Winterbournes Scheme has also worked successfully in partnership with local communities, organisations and people.

The evaluation review of inputs from stakeholders suggests that, generally, the partners on the board have worked well together but there have been some issues. These have included continuity with some organisations where there have been frequent staff changes or long-term sickness and heavy workloads for all partners has led to some communication challenges.

Outcomes of the partnership working:

- **Much closer working between local communities, the statutory bodies and NGOs** – has been achieved where the partnership has helped unlock access, nurture relationships with the riparian owners, and support restoration work. Participants felt that the partnership working was underpinned by a "*patient, relationship-based approach*" which was particularly effective. Partnership working at this community level was seen as one of the Scheme's strongest features by evaluation participants.

- **Stronger relationships built between partners** enjoying the effectiveness of joint-working that will continue after the lifespan of the scheme. Strategic partnership working was a core strength of the Scheme. As one member of the Delivery Team reported "*the diversity of organisations enable stronger decision-making, greater reach and more effective use of resources and the collaborative approach significantly increased impact compared to single-agency delivery and is expected to continue*."

- **Better liaison between partners and volunteers** carrying out local monitoring will result in a more comprehensive long-term picture of the state of our chalk streams and the issues affecting them on a local scale. This has been particularly well demonstrated through the evaluation data; especially through strong relationships between organisations that have traditionally not worked so well together eg. angling and conservation.

The evaluation has found that the methods used to deliver the Watercress and Winterbournes LPS have been effective overall. There have been challenges including the level of activity, outputs and outcomes presented in the bid as well as significant external impacts including Covid and of course the weather, that have been beyond the control of the Scheme. Most significant, perhaps, was frequent turnover of staff in partnership organisations, for instance during the scheme there were 4 different representatives from both Natural England and Environment Agency (EA) and for more than 2 years the Board had no representatives from either EA or Hampshire County Council due to long-term sickness. The evaluation has found that the Partnership Board, Management and Delivery Team have worked hard to overcome and mitigate these challenges.

Quick Reference Guide

WATERCRESS & WINTERBOURNES

Heritage Fund

Cheriton Stream *Conservation Management Plan*

Advice for landowners and volunteers

Why the plan matters.

If you want a healthier and more complex Cheriton Stream which will better support wildlife, or you would like to know what to do and when best to do it, you should use the full conservation plan. It includes timings and plenty of practical advice and is available from Cheriton Parish Council. They also have a copy of our ***Winterbournes Guidance*** document. For now, here is your quick guide.

Key point: have a healthy chalk stream:

- Allow plants to grow into the stream
- Reduce weed-cutting
- Keep woody material in the stream
- Keep out of the stream Oct–Jan (spawning)
- Remove monkey flower and mink.

Key Point: have thick and tall bankside vegetation:

- Keep bankside plants bushy and thick. Let them grow 2m wide
- Cut only every 2-3 years (in Spring)
- Leave stems to overwinter (for insects)
- NEVER dump cuttings into the stream.

Photo credit: M Shelton

Photo credit: PTES

Key point: improve habitat for water voles:

- Enlarge a connected and safe habitat
- Control mink. Monitor mink year round
- Maintain bushy thick vegetation (at least 2m wide) along entire stream
- Carry out annual water vole surveys.

Key point: Improve habitat for trout:

- Keep a mix of: clean riffles; deep pools; submerged plants
- Identify and remove barriers (eg sluices)
- Increase clumps of trees for shade and roots
- Monitor fish spawning sites (Dec – Feb).

To see the full plan, please visit Cheriton Parish Council's website. Alternatively, contact them for an electronic copy.

The extent to which NLHF outcomes have been achieved

Outcomes are the specific changes, benefits, or impacts that a project achieves and the overall difference that a Scheme makes. All schemes have their own set of outcomes but, overall, they must align with NLHF's overall investment principles: saving heritage, protecting the environment, promoting inclusion and organisational sustainability.

Outcomes for Heritage

The NLHF's three outcomes for Heritage are that it will be better managed, in better condition and better identified and recorded. Heritage being 'better managed' and 'in better condition', in the context of the Watercress and Winterbourne LPS, includes both built and natural heritage as well as practical outcomes and people-based outcomes. Across the Scheme all programmes as well as many projects and activities have delivered results against several outcomes at once. In this section we provide some broad-brush examples of how NLHF outcomes have been achieved, together with selected case studies.

Heritage is better managed

- Chalk streams will now be better managed through the development of seven comprehensive management plans and the management advice provided to all restoration sites.
- Natural Flood Management measures have been implemented on 245 metres (254% of the original target) of chalk streams improving flood risk to the two villages downstream of St. Mary Bourne, on the Bourne Rivulet.
- 8.25 km of chalk stream including spawning habitats have been made accessible to fish species, two structures being removed or adapted to allow fish passage.
- Native crayfish have been conserved through provision of a new hatchery and ark site, ensuring their populations are better managed for species survival.

Outcomes for Heritage

Heritage is in better condition

- 8 heritage structures (bridges, sluices, hatch pools and Alresford eel house) have been restored to good condition
- 19 habitat restoration projects have been completed resulting in 5.1 km of chalk stream which is now in better condition.
- Two fish easement projects have been implemented resulting in 8.25 km of chalk stream habitat accessible for a variety of fish
- Volunteers have removed invasive non-native species resulting in 78km of chalk stream with improved condition.
- The installation of sediment mitigation measures has resulted in 7 km of chalk stream in improved condition.
- Natural heritage will be improved by reducing mink numbers, with volunteers playing an active role in the on-going monitoring of 27 mink rafts.
- White-clawed crayfish populations will be improved by the new hatchery and ark site created through the Scheme

Heritage is identified and recorded

Watercress and Winterbournes has worked with volunteers to initiate a comprehensive programme of monitoring across the 7 catchments. Where possible the results have been linked into and recorded on nationally recognised databases. This has included:

- 10 Smart Rivers invertebrate monitoring sites
- 28 water quality monitoring sites
- 28 Riverfly invertebrate monitoring sites
- Recording of redds (trout spawning nests)
- Targeted surveying for water voles

In addition, details have been recorded on the Heritage Environment Record for Hampshire of all of the water meadow structures identified through the Scheme and all of the oral histories collected through the Sharing Stories project have been stored with the Wessex Archive.

River Arle in 2023, the year after bank restoration works © Claire Thirlwall

Himalyan Balsam removal on the Bourne Rivulet in 2023 © Maggie Shelton

Cart bridge at Bere Mill on the Upper Test after restoration in 2021 © Kathryn Boler

Case Study: The River Arle

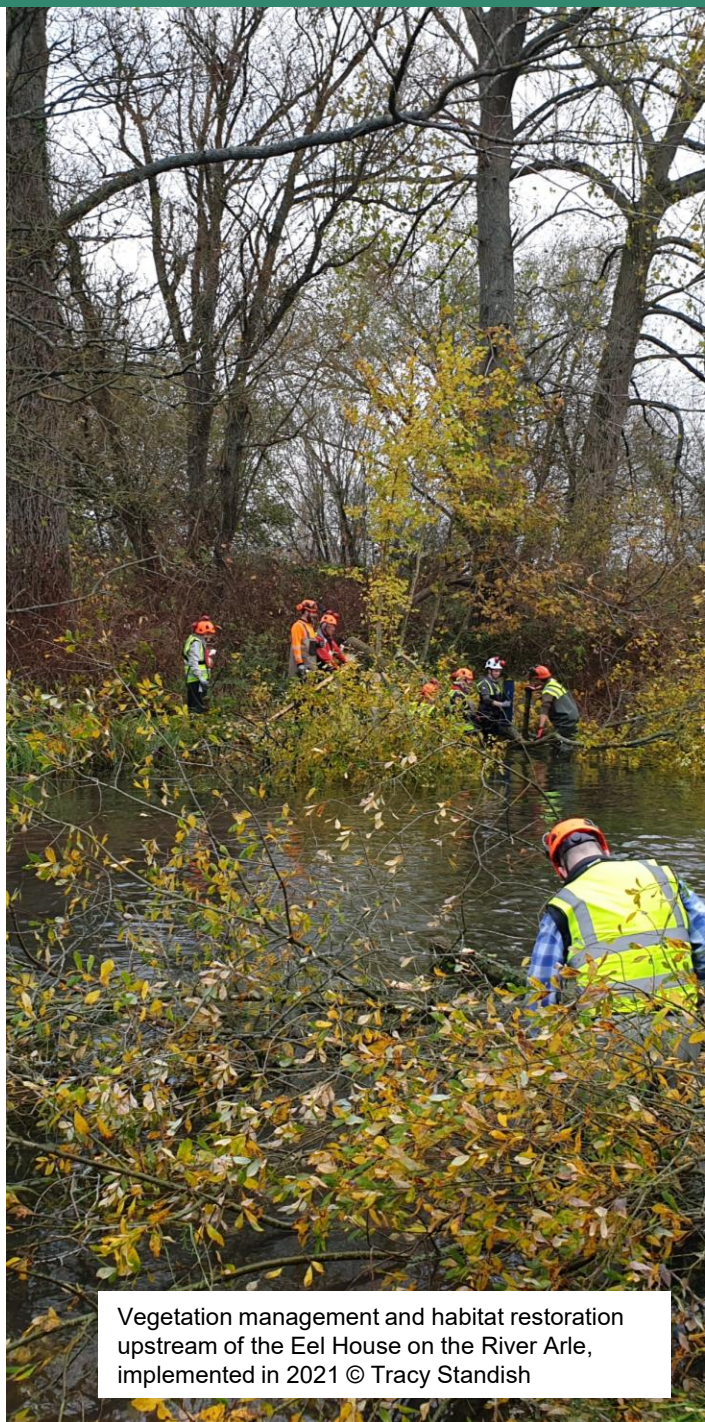
From the very beginning of Scheme engagement, there was a group of people passionate about the area of the Arle near the eel house. It was clear that they were proud of their chalk stream and its heritage, but that crumbling infrastructure was hampering their ability to excite people about it.

Led by the Alresford Society, the group successfully applied for a W&W community grant. They wanted to replace a series of tired and outdated interpretation boards along the river. The volunteers organised a series of smart new boards and wrote the text that now raises the profile of the chalk stream and its special heritage and charismatic species. They organised the installations so that people can learn more about the stream and the heritage of the area on their walks by the river.

The river path leading to the historic eel house (where eels used to be caught for market) had become severely eroded. The banks were falling away, and dog access was causing damage to the riverbank which was eroding back into the footpath making it increasingly impassable. Through the Scheme, contractors and volunteers worked together to reduce shade from trees and restabilise the banks so that plants could flourish. The river path was rebuilt with dog access focussed into one place. This was managed by the use of some natural temporary fencing that still allows walkers to have a fantastic connection to the river but reduces disturbance and erosion by dogs. The light-touch fencing has allowed the marginal vegetation to grow, resulting in increased water vole activity along the bank, as evidenced through volunteer surveys. People can now enjoy their walk on their way towards the eel house and can see more wildlife.

Using funding provided through a W&W community grant, New Alresford Town Trust also shared the exciting story of the eels. They created some information boards that are displayed during their eel house open days, and they created and printed some attractive free booklets all about the critically endangered European eels.

The legacy of these three projects mean that people can connect with chalk stream heritage, whilst they enjoying their walks in an area that is more attractive and where nature is more protected.



Vegetation management and habitat restoration upstream of the Eel House on the River Arle, implemented in 2021 © Tracy Standish

Outcomes for People

People developed skills through formal and hands on learning

- 59 people have increased their knowledge of Natural Flood Management.
- 10 volunteers were given practical experience and professional guidance in the restoration of brick structures.
- 145 people were trained how to identify and remove INNS through practical sessions and online training.
- 98 people have increased their skills in restoring and enhancing chalk stream habitats.
- 40 Open Chalk Stream volunteers gained the skills to deliver local walks and talks that pass on information and enthuse others.
- 3,739 young people have explored and learnt about chalk streams through the W&W Education Programme.
- 184 students at Sparsholt College have learnt more about the white-clawed crayfish and how to protect it.
- 476 land managers engaged with the scheme through site visits, online talks, workshops and training opportunities.

People learned about heritage through informal learning opportunities

- 305 chalk stream champions have had opportunities to access activities, learning opportunities and received e-news with chalk stream information.
- 293 people have received training through the scheme in a range of skills essential for looking after and monitoring chalk streams and their associated heritage structures.
- People better understand the need to work sympathetically to protect their chalk stream heritage through engagement with online talks and resources.
- People have enjoyed spending time with nature around chalk streams and better engaged with their local heritage as evidenced by the feedback from the Scheme's Open Chalk Stream events and engagement activities. 4,475 people attended the Open Chalk Stream events over a 4-year period.
- 26 young people and 14 adults leant more about nature and poetry writing.

Water vole survey training on the Cheriton Stream in 2023 © Chris Mayne

Landowner and volunteers at an Open Chalk Stream event on the River Arle © Sophie Evingar

Open Chalk Stream event on the Upper Test © Elizabeth Morriss

Case Study: Developing a Chalk Stream Champion

Nicky got involved with Watercress and Winterbournes during the Development Phase. She was Clerk for the local Parish Council and came along to the Scheme's initial meetings to see how the Parish Council could get involved. She soon became involved as a local resident as well as representing her Parish Council.

Nicky was invaluable during W&W's initial outreach as she knew many neighbours and landowners. She joined the W&W community group meetings for the earliest mapping activity, helping the team to understand the local river. After initial training, she was also able to identify where troublesome plants were. She stepped up to present at one of the Lottery progress visits and talked online about her experiences as a Chalk Stream Champion to new volunteers.

If she was free, Nicky always joined in with volunteering activity. After one work party, she was curious about if there would be a difference in the invertebrate community found in some warm ponded water, to that of some colder clearer springs. She was swiftly loaned a survey net and buckets so that she could survey to find out.

Nicky learnt to become a Riverfly surveyor, joining others on their start-up surveys. She is one of a small group who survey every month at Bombay Sapphire Distillery's stream and who stepped up to run their own Open Chalk Stream events for W&W. At their Open Chalk Stream events, they displayed Riverfly invertebrates and were very enthusiastic about their stream with visitors, as evidenced by the feedback forms. Always keen to support others, Nicky helped many Riverfly surveyor teams, constantly learning about chalk streams. She now has her own Riverfly site and as it is on a public footpath, she often talks to people about what she is doing and how they can help their river.

Nicky's interest led her to becoming a SmartRivers surveyor. Here the work was more intense and detailed and involved the use of a microscope. Now, Nicky is one of the volunteer team who are continuing Smart Rivers analysis into the future.

Her final two acts confirm that she is fully committed to the legacy of W&W. Firstly, she has now got a shed just to house all of the waders and Riverfly kit. Secondly, she stepped up to fill the role of secretary for the newly formed group called Upper Test Chalk Stream Conservation.

Nicky Nicklin in Laverstoke and Freefolk Millennium Pond ~ 2024 © Maggie Shelton

Outcomes for Communities

The conditions to reduce negative environmental impacts have been put in place

- Sediment and pollution in the chalk streams have been reduced through the implementation of sediment mitigation schemes.
- Improved in-channel and bankside habitat on 5.1 km of chalk stream plus the improvement of 0.0856 sq km of flood plain.
- 6 grant projects have been funded focusing on restoring and caring for the built and natural chalk stream and 2 grant-funded projects have reduced run-off into the water courses.
- Chalk stream champions have taken a lead role in monitoring and caring for their chalk stream and will pass on their skills, knowledge and enthusiasm to other community members. Communities are working together cohesively to care for their chalk streams.
- 25000+ people have engaged or received information about water efficiency and managing their off-mains drainage systems to reduce possible pollution.

More people and a wider range of people have engaged with heritage

- 47 key people have been focused on developing their community groups and plans
- 30 people actively involved in leading activities to care for celebrate chalk stream heritage.
- Over 850 people involved in learning about heritage and celebrating the unique qualities of chalk streams heritage through a range of community led activities.
- 713 volunteer hours in the Roaming the River project alone.
- There have been 4,475 attendees at Open Chalk Stream activities and 3600+ more at other directly organised W&W events.
- 20 landowners opened their private land to allow access for the Open Chalk Stream events.
- 800+ young people have competed the Chalk Stream Challenge Badge.
- 800+ adults have been involved in the W&W education programme

Wessex Rivers Trust staff digging out a sediment ditch on the Cheriton Stream in 2025 © Wessex Rivers Trust

Riverfly survey training for volunteers in 2024 © Maggie Shelton

Stand at Alresford Watercress Festival in 2022 © Chris Mayne

Photo credits: Wessex Rivers Trust, Maggie Shelton, Chris Mayne

Outcomes for Communities continued..

The local area / community will be a better place to live, work or visit

- Chalk Stream Champions and members of Catchment Community Groups have reported many social benefits of being part of the Scheme.
- Landowners have greater knowledge of the significance of the heritage structures on their land and eight chalk stream structures have been restored with landowners continuing to restore more.
- Greater sense of ownership of their local area has been created through photography and literature competitions as well as storytelling and other cultural events.
- 53 people have shared their chalk stream stories to date with seven Chalk Stream Champions involved in collecting their chalk stream stories.
- People have heard about how local people have come together for chalk streams, including the volunteering that has taken place and this is resulting in the continuing growth of the numbers of people being involved.
- Community Catchment groups are continuing to grow their work and spread the word about chalk streams – Just as the scheme finished in spring 2026, the Upper Itchen Restoration CIC were delivering a roadshow of events through the towns and villages talking about the impact of household chemicals on chalk streams and the natural alternatives that can be used such as white vinegar and bicarbonate of soda and citric acid.

Literary Festival event in Alresford in 2024 © Sophie Evingar

Sharing Stories event in Bishops Sutton in 2025 © Howard Boardman

Sharing Stories volunteer talking about his involvement at the W&W Celebration Event in 2025 © Kira Fuller

Photo credits: Sophie Evingar, Howard Boardman, Kira Fuller

Case Study: Whispers of Chalk Stream

"Whispers of chalk stream is still whispering –
it keeps people talking about the river."
(Member of the Organising Group)

After initially engaging with Scheme staff at Septic Smart events and water vole surveys, some of the Bishop's Sutton community wanted to host an ambitious programme of community events that would reach all ages. The group successfully applied for a W&W community grant. The focus of their events would not just be on the history or ecology of chalk streams. It would have elements of the arts through poetry and music, and they called it Whispers of Chalk Stream. The organisers hoped it would appeal to people for whom science might be a barrier.

Whispers of Chalk Stream delivered a series of monthly events. These included: a craft activity day for old and young; an evening of original songs and creative activities; a family winterbourne event with craft activities such as willow weaving; a weekend bio blitz to understand the local ecology; a water vole picnic for families. They created a poetry collection and put up poetry boxes where people would write and post a short poem for others to read on their walks. They held an exhibition in the village hall and installed some new interpretation boards.

The outcome from the feedback-forms was that people felt they now had a deeper connection with their stream. The audience also wanted to learn more about it. The blend of intellectual stimulation, creativity, and physical activity was particularly valued. Whispers also expanded professional and voluntary networks, and everyone felt it had been a real success.

The organisers felt that their varied events programme did reach new people. They were able to reinforce messages relating to their chalk stream. People made new connections and strengthened relationships, which was important for the eventual formation of their Community Group.

The legacy of Whispers was that people had a deeper connection to their chalk stream and some had the confidence to work with others to put on even more events. The latest one being a roadshow of interactive awareness-raising talks about cleaning products and their impact on the stream.

Invertebrate displays in Bishops Sutton through the Whispers of Chalk Stream project ~ 2024 © Graham Flatt

Habitat restoration at Flashetts on the Upper Test, implemented in 2021 © Maggie Shelton

Chalk Stream Impacts

NLHF outcomes within the Scheme have been successfully achieved though the consistent application of approaches such as quality management and partnership working whilst deploying the key methods of community engagement - embedding skills, communications and education. These approaches make up the story of how the Scheme has worked to achieve the outcomes and are discussed below.

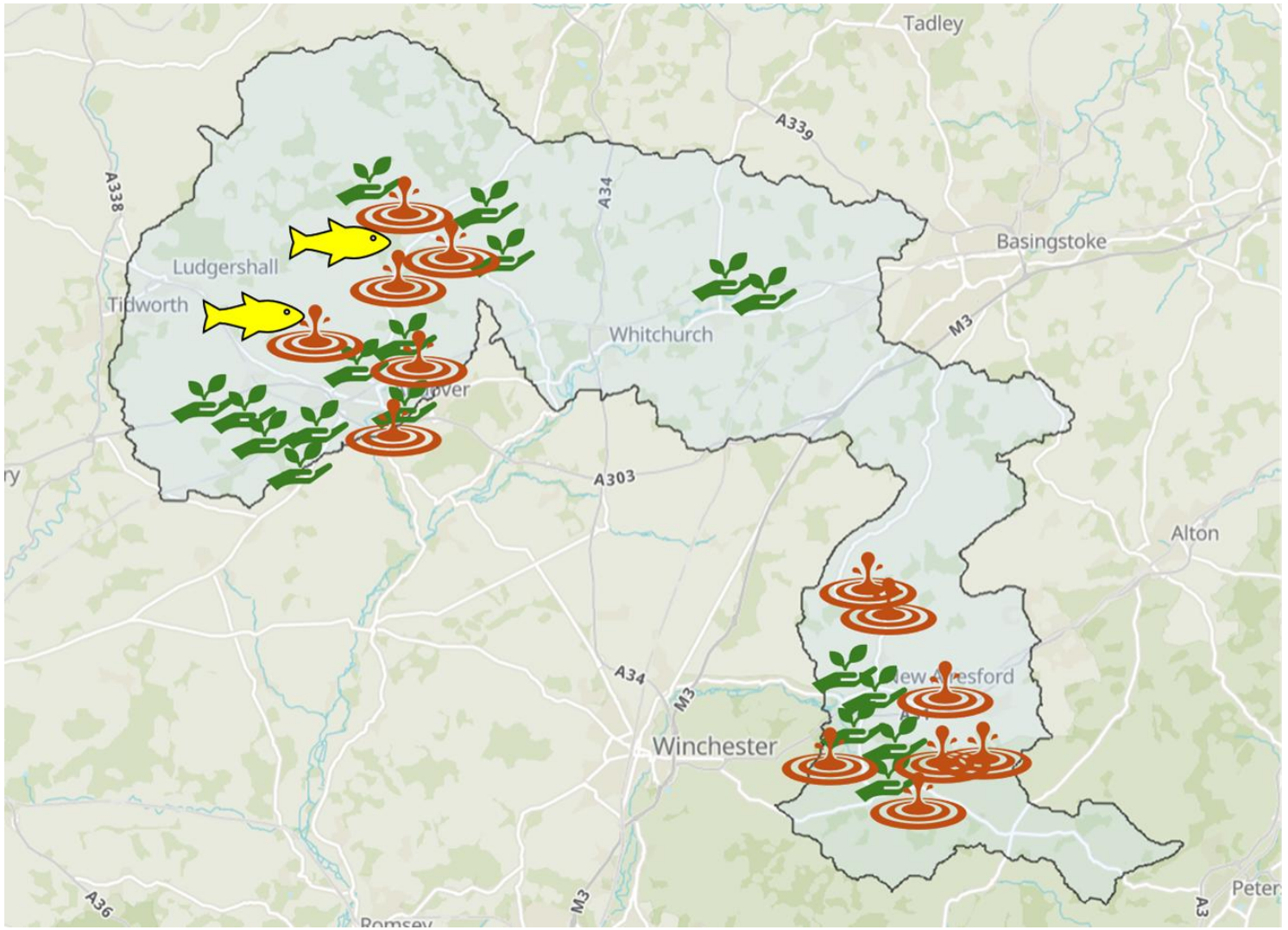
Chalk Stream Habitat Restoration

The scheme has renaturalised over 5 km of over-straightened, over-widened chalk stream, restoring meanders, habitats and flows. These changes will reduce sedimentation and pollution and improve bankside habitats, creating heathier more resilient chalk streams. Surveys show that these habitat restoration projects have benefited some species and in particular, the geographical spread of water voles has been significant.

Whilst most work has focused on the channel and banks, 5 projects have also improved floodplain management, reconnecting the stream to the floodplain, protecting the channel from erosional pressures and restoring natural processes.

Many of the habitat restoration schemes have involved local people and communities, for example the in-channel works on the Rive Arle, propagating plants / lakeside planting on the Bourne Rivulet at St Mary Bourne and using cobbles to create crayfish refuges on the Cheriton Stream. The scheme has also worked in close collaboration with communities and landowners to develop seven habitat management plans, one for the entire catchment and others for key sites thus securing their long-term legacy. Land managers of sites where capital works have been implemented have also received individual management guidance.

Map showing locations of capital works projects for habitat restoration, stopping sediment and fish passage.



Key to map:

Habitat enhanced

Sediment reduced

New passage for fish

Esri. "W&W Activity and Events - PUBLIC Map" [basemap]. Scale not given. "Public Map of Activities, Events and Grant Funding from the Watercress & Winterbournes scheme". December 10 2025.

Natural Flood Management (NFM)
An NFM and habitat restoration scheme was implemented in St Mary Bourne in 2022 resulting in improved flood management for adjacent properties and those in the downstream villages.
A more complex NFM scheme was developed through W&W for the head of the Cheriton Stream in conjunction with the landowner, the National Trust and has secured additional funding to be delivered in 2026, post W&W.

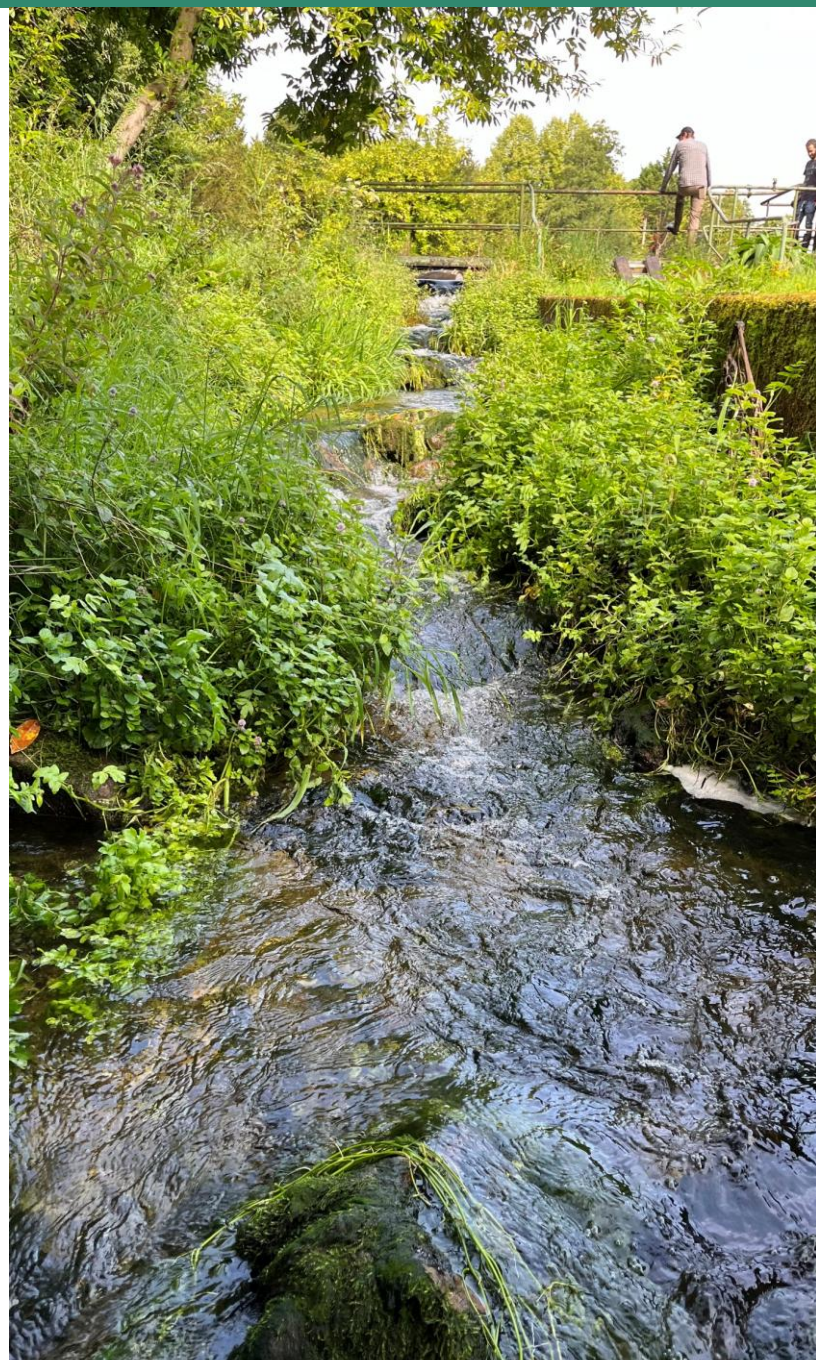
Stopping Sediments
Mitigation measures have been installed in 13 different locations across the 7 catchments to reduce sediment and nutrient input entering the streams. Measures have included the implementation of fencing, sediment traps, hedging, hard standing, dog dips and cattle crossings.

Spawning Habitats
Work to replace an inaccessible stepped channel with a rock ramp on the Bourne Rivulet and to remove a sluice structure from the Anton in Andover have improved access to spawning habitats for fish. Provision of the rock ramp at the Saw Mill opened up 3km of habitat for upstream migration and over 5km of habitat for downstream migration for juvenile fish.

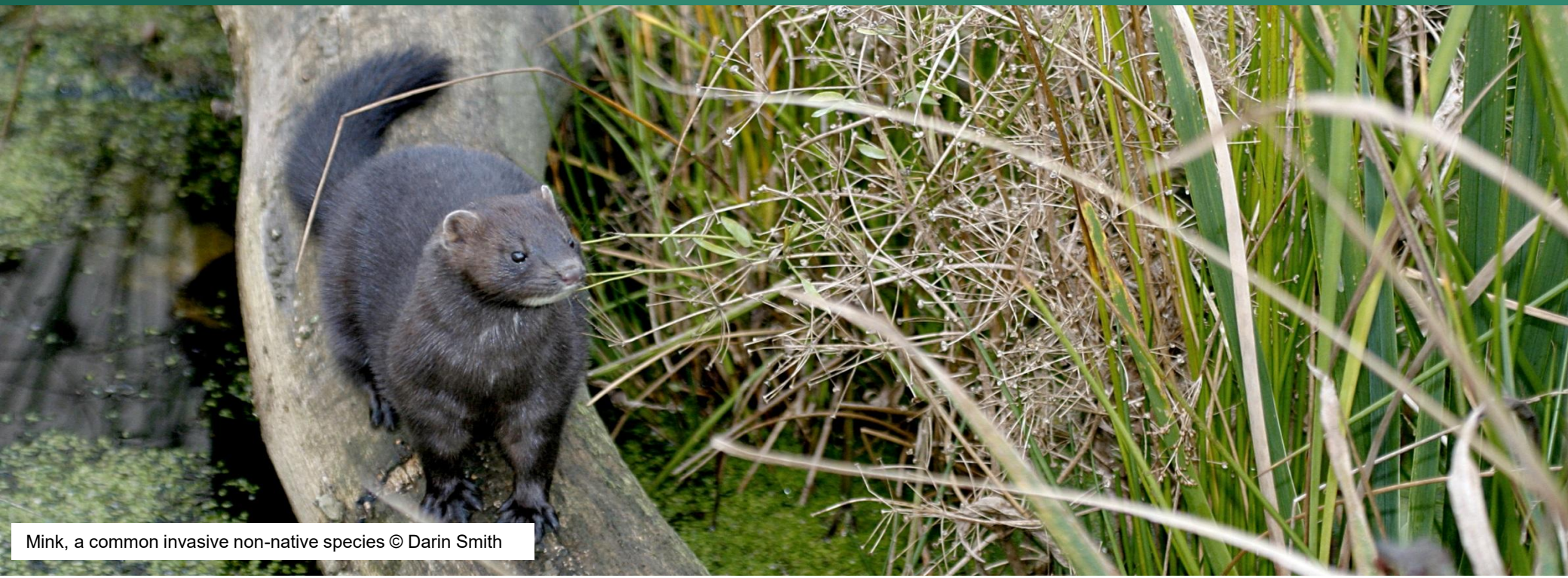
Conserving our Native Crayfish
Specialist work through the scheme has increased the chances of the long-term survival of native white clawed crayfish with the creation of a new hatchery for brood stock and the development of an ark site.

Save Every Drop
Over 25,000 people have been reached with information and inspiration on saving water in their homes, while over 60% of participating households where meters were read showed sustained water use reduction

Septic Smart
Over 24,000 residents have been reached with information on how to better manage their off-main sewage systems to protect their local chalk stream.



Saw Mill fish pass scheme, implemented in 2021 © Wessex Rivers Trust



Mink, a common invasive non-native species © Darin Smith

Tackling Invasives

W&W have worked with land managers to install 21 mink rafts in identified hotspots across the seven catchments.

Over 800 volunteer hours spent monitoring and 1455 volunteer hours spent removing non-native invasive species to restore the native plant habitats that, in turn, have created an improved environment for chalk stream species.

Restoring our Chalk Stream Structures

8 chalk stream structures (5 which are nationally significant) have been restored and safeguarded in the landscape for the future. These have been underpinned by long term maintenance agreements.

Chalk Stream Friendly Land Management

Landowners have implemented changes which have impacted on the landscape with 22 receiving land advice visits and tailored recommendations on pollution and sediment management.

Photo credit: Darin Smith

Biodiversity Monitoring

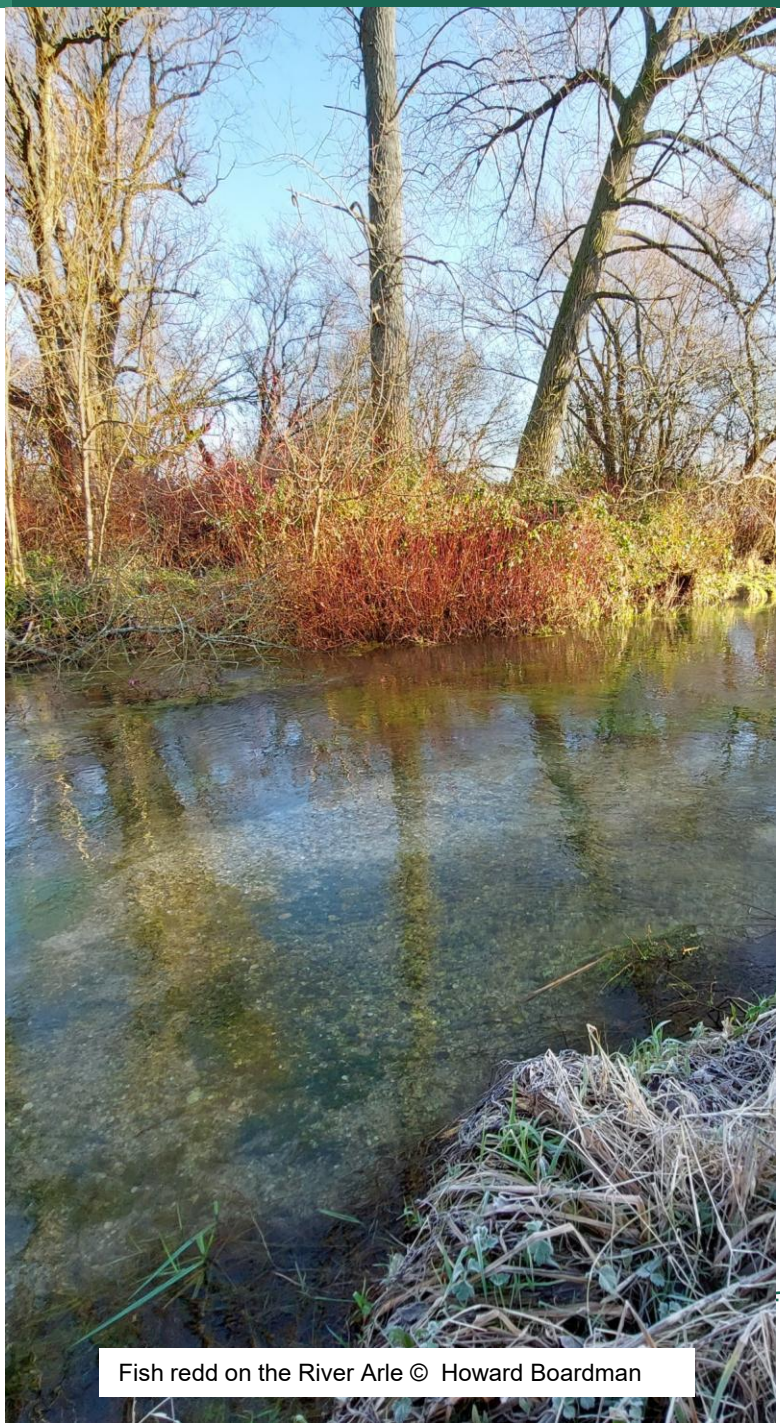
W&W volunteers learnt new skills and were equipped to be able to monitor the streams. Monitoring is a popular and regular activity and volunteers feed data into national recording programmes. Specifically, the scheme wanted to be able to demonstrate whether capital projects and community group activity had impacted chalk stream habitats and structures. Were they in better condition, better managed and better maintained? Were they more resilient to future pressures?

For some projects such as Tackling Invasives, it was difficult to easily demonstrate positive change through the data. As more people joined W&W and learnt about INNS the more recording and the larger the dataset. Survey 123 is easy to use so many records were added each year. Ecological conditions influenced the plants, so granular inspection of data on a site-by-site basis was important. The overarching story is that more people are now equipped to spot INNS and have the confidence and knowledge to remove them. There are increased connections with landowners, more permission to access sites, and volunteers and landowners working together to improve the streams.

For water vole and redds surveys, the weather conditions were an issue. Some years the banks were dangerously flooded so surveys had to be abandoned for safety reasons. Full-flowing winterbournes made spotting redds difficult in some locations. Monitoring data did show that on many sites, capital works quickly increased water vole numbers and they spread into the new habitats created.

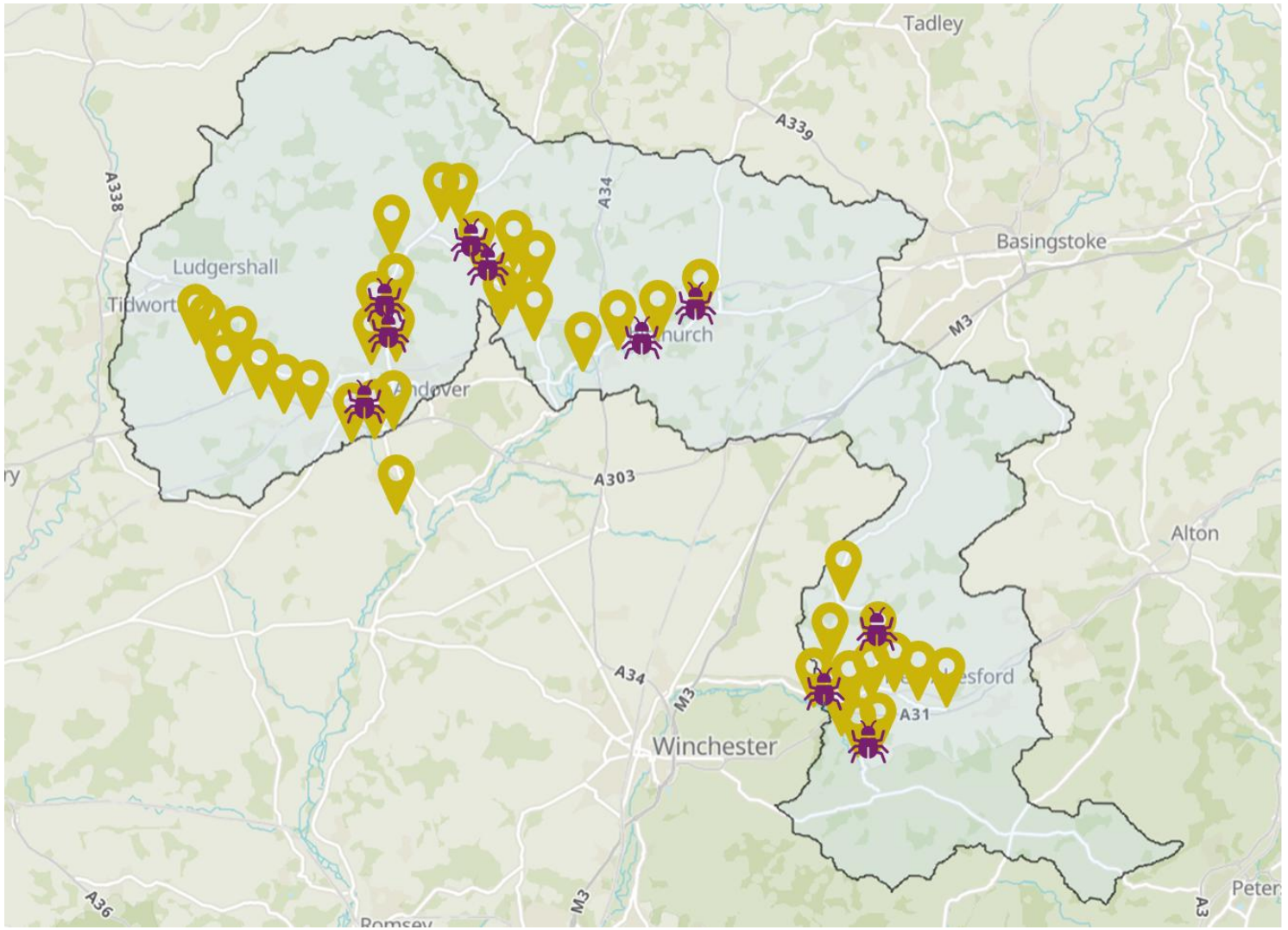
For all these reasons it was important to look at the bigger picture on each stream. Were people engaged and able to monitor their stream? Could change be seen on a local level? Could the community respond to an unexpected event (for example a mink being spotted, or reports of a sudden sewage spill)?

Overall W&W has improved conditions for chalk stream species so that they are more resilient to future pressures such as climate change. Where capital works have visibly improved the ecology, neighbours are keen to join in and improve their stretches. Volunteers are talking within their communities about how to improve biodiversity and carry out their own work parties. There is a reduction in INNS in the catchment and people know where to report sightings. Skilled volunteers also share information and resources with landowners and explain what the data means, something that is particularly valued.



Fish redd on the River Arle © Howard Boardman

Map showing locations of river monitoring



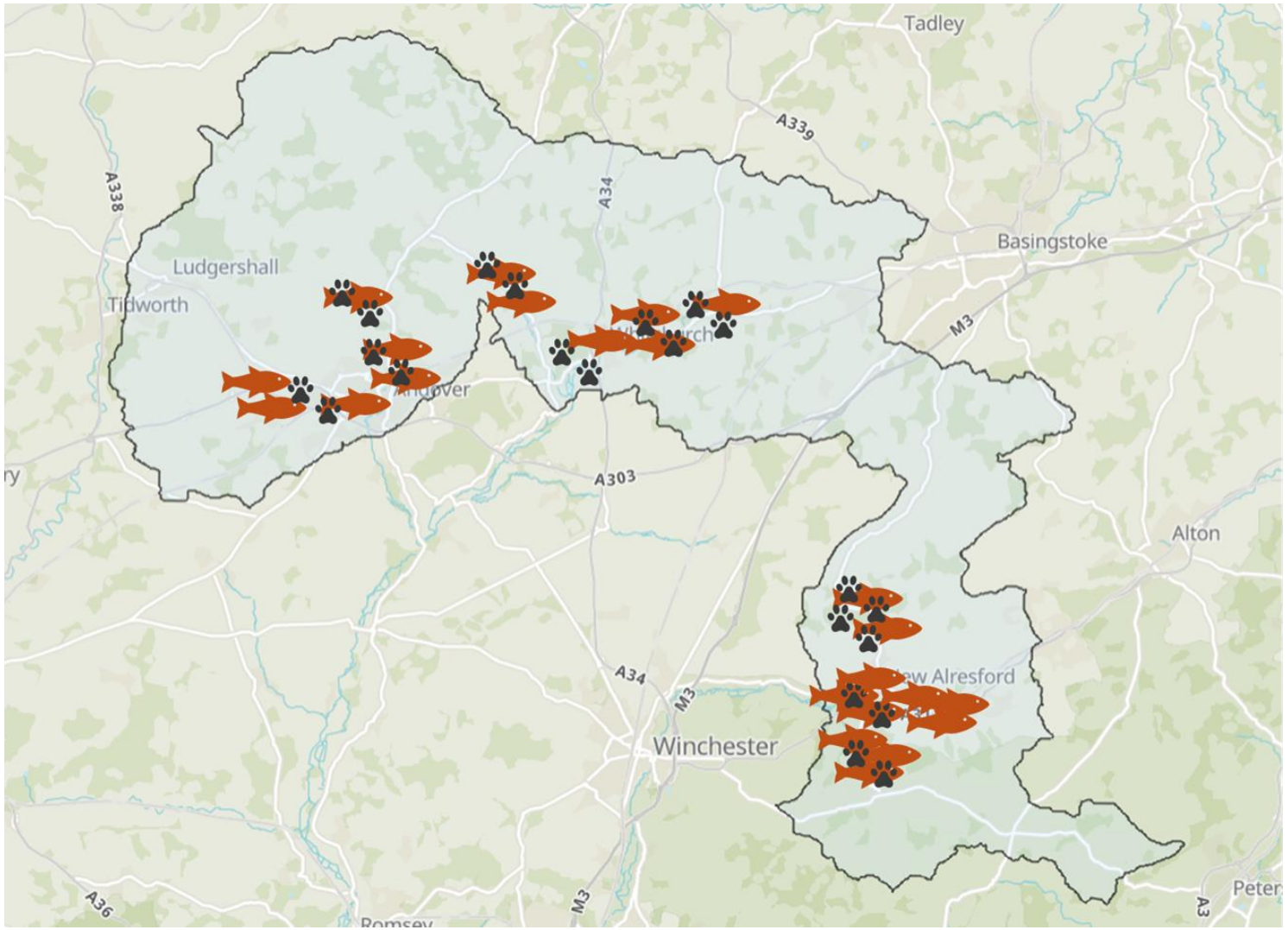
Key to map:

Sites of volunteer riverfly surveying

Sites of volunteer SmartRivers surveying

Esri. "W&W Activity and Events - PUBLIC Map" [basemap]. Scale not given. "Public Map of Activities, Events and Grant Funding from the Watercress & Winterbournes scheme". December 10 2025.

Map showing locations of surveys of water vole and fish nesting sites (aka redds)



Key to map:

Sites of water vole surveys

Sites of redd surveys

Esri. "W&W Activity and Events - PUBLIC Map" [basemap]. Scale not given. "Public Map of Activities, Events and Grant Funding from the Watercress & Winterbournes scheme". December 10 2025.

Case Study: Spotlight on Water Voles

Water vole surveys were carried out on the Watercress and Winterbournes capital work sites before projects started. Professional ecologists supported trained volunteers to carry out the surveys, looking for typical signs such as feeding remains, droppings and burrows. Following completion of the capital works, surveys were repeated each year, and water vole activity was mapped using the Survey 123 app. Here are some of the findings.

Along the **Pillhill Brook** surveys showed some ecologically complex habitat but also some neighbouring areas that did not support water voles. Following the restoration works, data indicate that water voles have been able to spread into the improved habitat and are utilising more space. Much of this has been where bankside vegetation can now grow thick and bushy.

At **Flashetts on the Upper Test**, water voles were not found prior to the works. However, after project works which included tree thinning, marginal habitat improvement and confining dogs and people to two places, evidence of feeding was found. Now that they are less disturbed, water voles appear to be moving to the area to feed. The team have now had conversations with the landowners to advise on further improving connectivity with the upstream water vole population.

Before the habitat restoration work on the **River Arle Millennium Way,** there were no water voles present. There was sparse vegetation and any wildlife was extremely exposed to both dogs and people. Following the installation of the temporary fence and the tree thinning work, the flourishing vegetation in the protected space meant that the water vole population grew quickly. They are now found all along the footpath bank as well as the opposite bank. In places, water vole droppings can be seen from the footpath.

Overall, the scheme observed that tree thinning (to let light reach the plants), marginal habitat improvement and excluding dogs and cattle from the banks (to prevent disturbance and allow marginal vegetation to grow up) created the right kind of habitat for water voles. Provided that they can migrate into the enhanced space and that water levels remain high enough, it is possible for them to flourish. The scheme observed that with the right conditions water vole populations can boom in a couple of years.

Water vole ~ 2023 © Tony Matthews

Case Study: Spotlight on Water Voles

Restoration site	Water vole status pre habitat enhancements	Water vole status post habitat enhancements
Hawk Inn, Pillhill Brook		
Little Ann, Pillhill Brook		
Abbotts Ann, Pillhill Brook		
Carters Meadow, Anton		
St Mary Bourne Stream, Bourne Rivulet		
Chapmansford Farm, Bourne Rivulet		
Flashetts, Upper Test		
Swarraton, Candover Brook		
Arle Millennium Way – right bank		
Cheriton		

Key

- No water voles present
- Some water voles present
- Good numbers of water voles using the site

Water vole ~ 2023 © Tony Matthews

Chalk Stream Champions removing monkeyflower from the watercress beds in Alresford in 2024 © Maggie Shelton

Delivery Process – What Worked?

The evaluation has explored what methods have worked well to deliver the outputs, outcomes and legacy of the Scheme. The evaluators found that there was one overarching approach and three key methods that have been elemental to the Scheme's delivery that can be drawn out as important learning for other Schemes.

The overarching approach was described in the Scheme's vision to "deliver a community-focused catchment approach which will improve the resilience of our chalk streams by reducing pollution, restoring habitats and reversing species decline and which will enable communities to celebrate and champion their chalk stream heritage." Keeping a community-focused catchment approach central to all delivery has contributed significantly to the Scheme's success.

To apply the approach, the practical methods of delivery must be put in place - for W&W these have been the intertwined methods of community engagement, communication and capacity building.

Community Engagement

Community engagement is a dynamic, relational process that fosters partnerships between organisations (such as public bodies) and community members to plan, make decisions and take action on issues affecting their lives. It involves two-way communication, trust-building, and active participation to achieve social outcomes. The process is made up of four parts that include:

Active participation - moving beyond just informing people to active collaboration and empowerment of residents.
Building relationships - developing long-term, trusting partnerships.
Change focused – deploying and enhancing local skills, knowledge, and assets to achieve positive change.
Inclusivity - ensuring diverse voices are actively involved, particularly those directly affected by actions and decisions.

Ideally community participation should be built in from the start of a LP Scheme and should run through its planning, management, delivery and evaluation.

Having made the choice to deliver the W&W Scheme through community engagement the Partnership Board and team needed to shape the structure in a way that enabled this method to be successful. This meant that consideration had to be given to how power was to be distributed and equity promoted as creating community power and leadership and equity between participants, delivery staff and organisations is essential to the successful application of community engagement.

Planning Workshop in Overton Community Centre in 2025 © Chris Mayne

The review of evaluation data suggests that community engagement has been successful because the Delivery Team provided a variety of choices for individuals and groups and many different routes to involvement. W&W has been successful in providing a wide range of delivery combined with the understanding that impact is achieved at different levels and in different ways. This reflects various theoretical models of engagement that flow from non-participation to community led action.

To enable this process the delivery team also adopted a collaborative approach which included a principle of open access where anyone can join in all activities within an atmosphere of support and acceptance.

The journey from vision to a locally led legacy has involved significant investment of staff time as well as specialist skills to develop relationships, build trust, support individuals, develop community organisations and encourage networking. The approach was co-designed, planned and communicated during both the development and early delivery stages of the Scheme but was applied differently in each area according to the needs and conditions in each community. It has been found to be important to work with people where they are, in the way they want and doing what they want to do, while always looking towards building independence. The majority of the Scheme projects have been delivered using this community focused approach. Key community engagement projects have included the following:

Building successful Community Catchment Groups
Developing community owned and led Community Catchment Groups has been a significant result of community engagement. 63 local leaders have been meeting regularly in six groups. There are 3 new groupings – Pillhill Brook Association, Upper Test Chalk Stream Conservation (working with the Sustainable Bourne Partnership), and Upper Itchen Restoration CIC and 2 existing groups – TARCA and Cheriton Conservation Group.

Watercress and Winterbournes Community Grant Scheme
14 community initiatives were awarded a total of £47,803 in community grants. These were community-led and delivered projects that resulted in wide engagement. For example, 30 people were involved in leading activities and more than 850 were involved in learning about and celebrating chalk streams through a wide range of different types of volunteering activities.

Tackling Invasives
Local people have been engaged in tackling INNS, for example 802 people (156% of the original target) have been involved in monitoring invasive on-native species at multiple sites.

Upper Test Chalk Stream Conservation planning meeting in 2025 © Maggie Shelton

Roaming by the River
Two key projects were delivered to improve access to chalk streams – these were at Laverstoke Pond on the Upper Test and the Millennium Way on the River Arle.

Tales from the Riverbank
Through participatory events people have come together to celebrate their chalk streams- 46 people entered a photography competition, 70 young people entered the literature competition and 53 shared chalk stream stories. Including attendance at exhibitions and events, 8,265 people participated overall in the Tales from the Riverbank activities.

Hidden Treasure Trails
Family-focused Chalk Stream Quests have been installed at 7 locations, with smaller Quests at a further 2 locations. The Quests are QR code-accessed trails linking to animations about a wide range of chalk stream species.

Open Chalk Streams
The Open Chalk Stream events raised awareness in communities by providing opportunities for local people to access 58 chalk streams sites, many of them private. This, combined with activities to raise awareness and engage with the streams in both practical and cultural ways, engaged 7,500 people.

Chalk Stream Events
A comprehensive events programme was delivered, incorporating 70 online events and 35 in person events, covering a wide range of chalk stream topics. 23 of the talks were delivered by volunteers. The events programme also developed a significant legacy resource on Youtube and the learning and skills embedded in communities.

Yavington Open Chalk Stream event in 2023 © Maggie Shelton

Water vole survey volunteers on the Upper Anton in 2025 © Maggie Shelton

Getting a good starting point for engaging communities is essential and successful methods and approaches used within W&W included:

- Starting with warm leads.
- Developing clarity about what people need, know and feel about chalk streams.
- Developing trust over time to ensure the engagement, ownership, local leadership and ultimately the sustainable legacy.
- Developing relationships and facilitating networks between people and across local communities, organisations, geographical areas and strategic partners.
- Recognising the base line in communities where there are lots of existing skills and experience, existing organisations and local interest but a lack of access, a disconnect between communities and their chalk streams and a lack of knowledge.

The LCAP proposed three key vehicles for delivering community engagement that resulted in community led legacy. These were:

- Community Catchment Groups
- Chalk Stream Champions
- Community Grants.

As the Scheme developed, these structures evolved as they became more locally led but the vision remained the same. These three were essential to the long-term legacy achieved by W&W.

Case Study: Upper Test Chalk Stream Conservation

Throughout delivery, W&W committed to ensure that activities would continue beyond the life of the Scheme. This would be by skilled local people and local community organisations. The Upper Test Chalk Stream Conservation Group was supported by the Scheme from their early days, evolving from a group of motivated volunteers into a team of highly skilled people with local ownership, and who are undertaking a vast range of activities.

Initial engagement was through different projects involving individuals from the three communities along the Upper Test. Activities included collaboration to organise the building of a footpath, restoring water meadow structures, water vole and Riverfly survey training, INNS work parties and SmartRiver survey and analysis. Group members presented talks at W&W volunteer events and helped with the many activities for schools and youth groups, engaging young people with the river. Individuals were regularly in contact with each other about projects and became firm friends. They have high regard and great respect for each other, something that remains important to them and is stated in their Charter. They joined a great number of training events and visited practical restoration sites, becoming knowledgeable about their river.

Following the successful formation of other W&W community catchment groups, and after joining in some networking events facilitated by the W&W delivery staff, they explored becoming an official group. The group wanted the lowest level of structure that was possible while being a recognised organisation. The model they chose was to become a constituted community group - a simple structure with a Charter. Individual roles were agreed, and they developed a manageable plan. They found that the best communication methods are '*little, often, accessible and timely.*' and use WhatsApp effectively. Many of these members are still in full-time employment so their volunteering time is somewhat limited. This community group have committed to continue to analyse SmartRivers samples.

Group members reported that the most significant change the Scheme had bought about for people was increasing *"awareness of what is in the stream"* while impacts for the chalk streams had been brought about through *"data being collected and adding to knowledge of the landscape and contributing to national information and understanding of this unique habitat".*

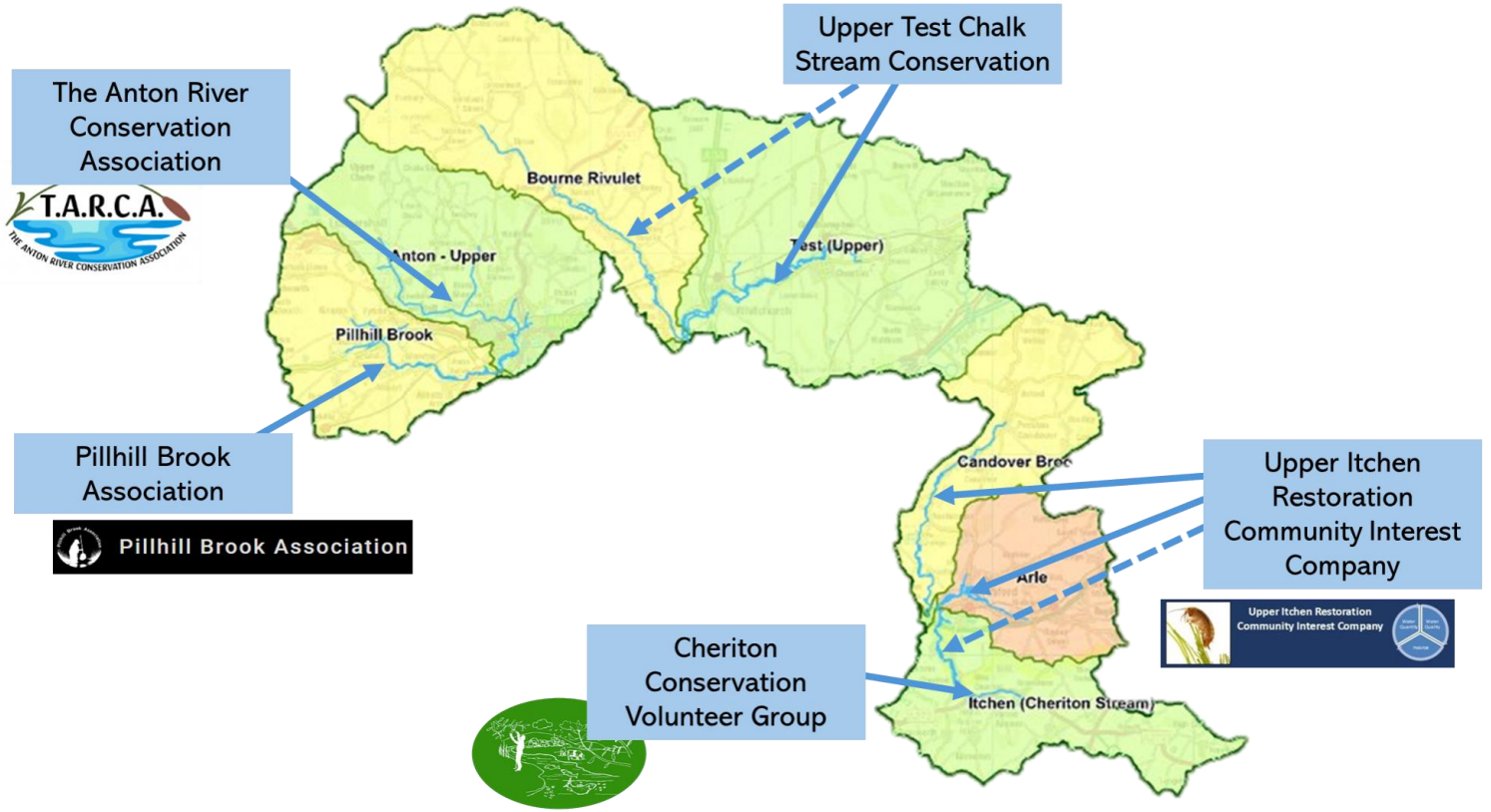
A significant change that the Scheme has certainly brought about is that it, *"has connected some people together over a common shared interest. It has forged some real and lasting friendships. It has allowed some people to learn new skills. It has given* people *the chance to meet on a stream and enjoy their day in nature and heritage whilst doing something for wildlife". Chalk Stream Champion*

Open Chalk Stream; Bombay Sapphire ~ 2023 © Peter Barratt

Community Catchment Groups – growing a movement

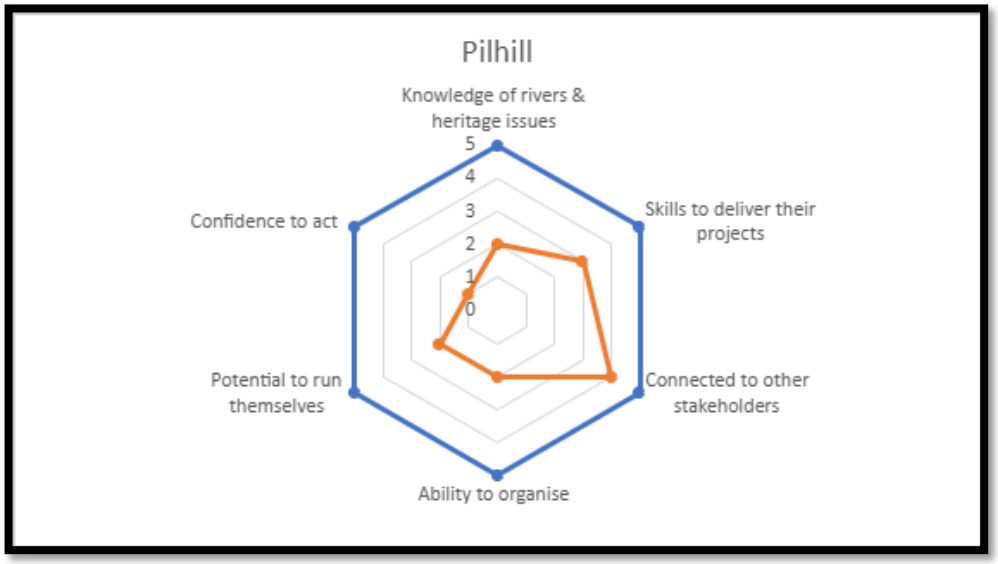
The LCAP's stated purpose for the development of Community Catchment Groups (CCGs) was to overcome a lack of community involvement, giving local people a central role in the planning, development and delivery of projects and activities and ensuring a legacy for the scheme.

The establishment of collective activities including Riverfly surveys, invertebrate / water quality surveying and Redd surveys and the development of skills for volunteers through a range of activities, whilst meeting with people in their local groups, has supported CCG development.

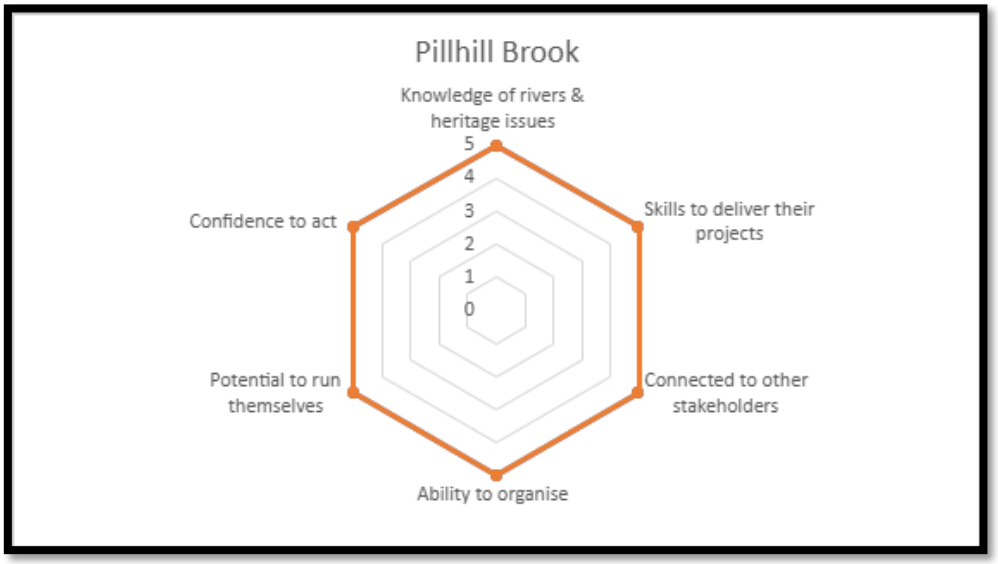


Community Catchment Groups

The development of Community Catchment Groups followed a road map for development monitored through a ‘distance travelled’ methodology. The method was based on six distinct pillars as shown below. The position of each group was ‘assessed’ out of five both before and after the Scheme as you can see in the Pillhill example below. Assessments were for; knowledge of rivers and heritage issues, skills to deliver their projects, connections to other stakeholders, ability to organise, potential to run themselves and confidence to act.



Pillhill group profile in the Development Phase of W&W – orange shows the group profile, the blue line shows the target profile

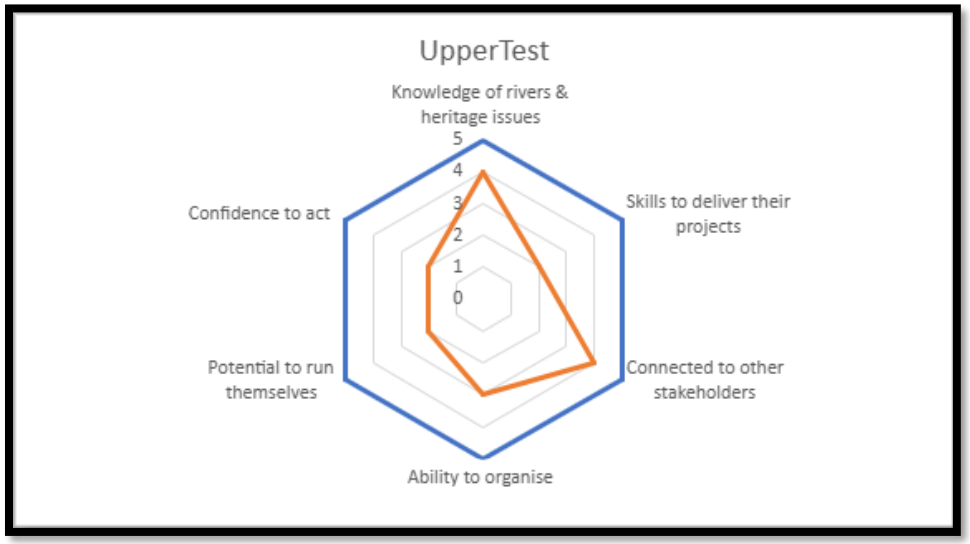


Pillhill group profile at the end of the Delivery Phase of W&W

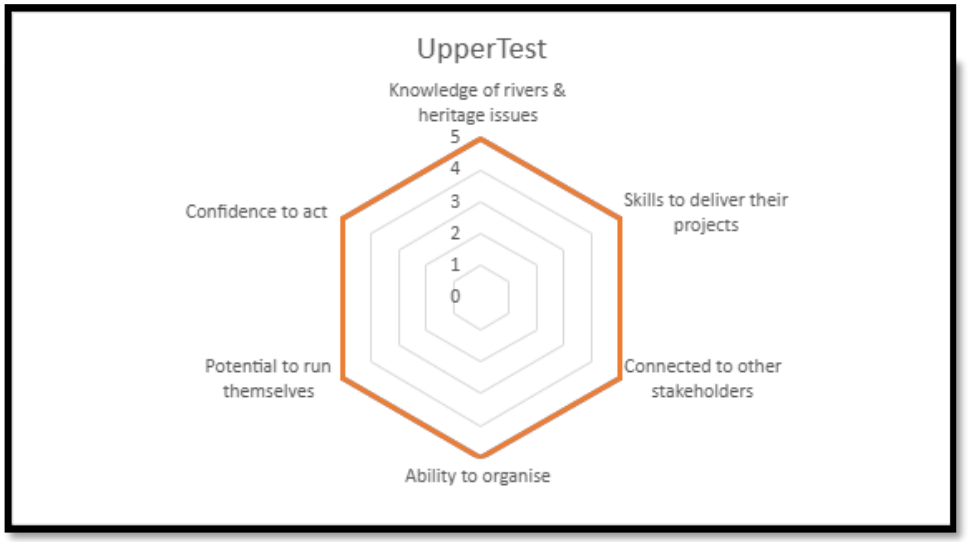
Using this framework transforms the role of the community engagement specialist from a simple coordinator into a strategic facilitator. By taking a baseline reading a planned and tiered strategy can be implemented. Groups with high baselines require a fine tuning while groups with low baselines, require more hands-on coaching.

The development across the six chalk stream catchment groups reveals a significant upward trajectory in capacity and self-sufficiency. Collectively, the groups improved by a total of 74 points across all measured criteria. While most groups reached or neared the maximum possible score of 30, the starting positions varied wildly, indicating that the level of intervention required for each group was vastly different.

Groups like the Cheriton Conservation Group and the River Arle began the process with high levels of existing organisational strength and confidence. In contrast, the analysis highlights a massive shift in groups like the Pillhill Brook Association and the Upper Test Conservation Group, which successfully bridged double-digit gaps to achieve peak performance.



Upper Test group profile in the Development Phase of W&W – orange shows the group profile, the blue line shows the target profile



Upper Test group profile at the end of the Delivery Phase of W&W

Each chalk stream community led group has taken its own journey, which has been supported through the flexible approach of the Scheme's delivery mechanisms. The specific actions delivered and supported by the Delivery Team have resulted in sustainable locally led groups that are all different. These are shown in the Community Catchment Groups illustrations that follow.

Building each community group... the Pillhill Brook

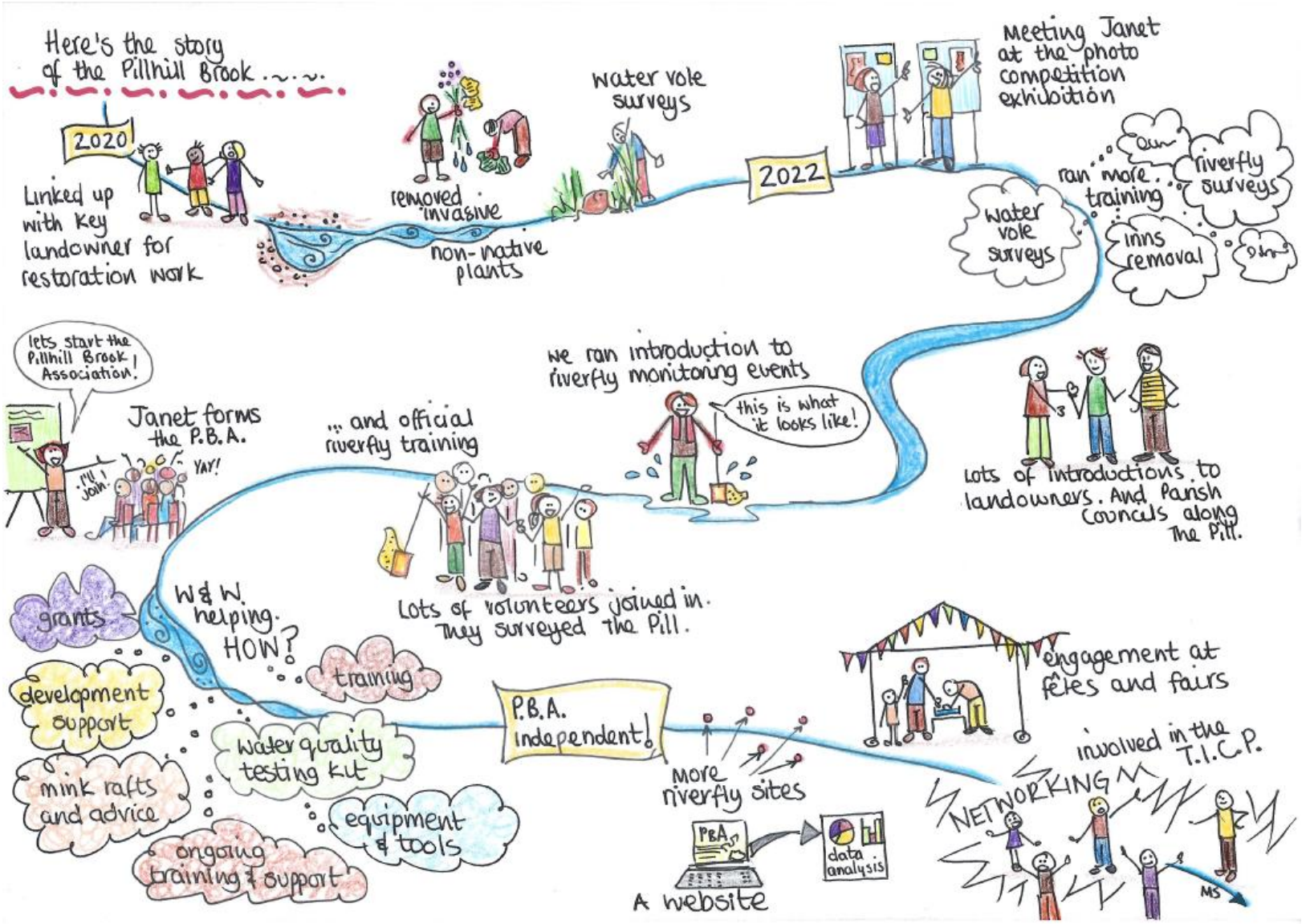


Image credit: Maggie Shelton

Building each community group...the Anton

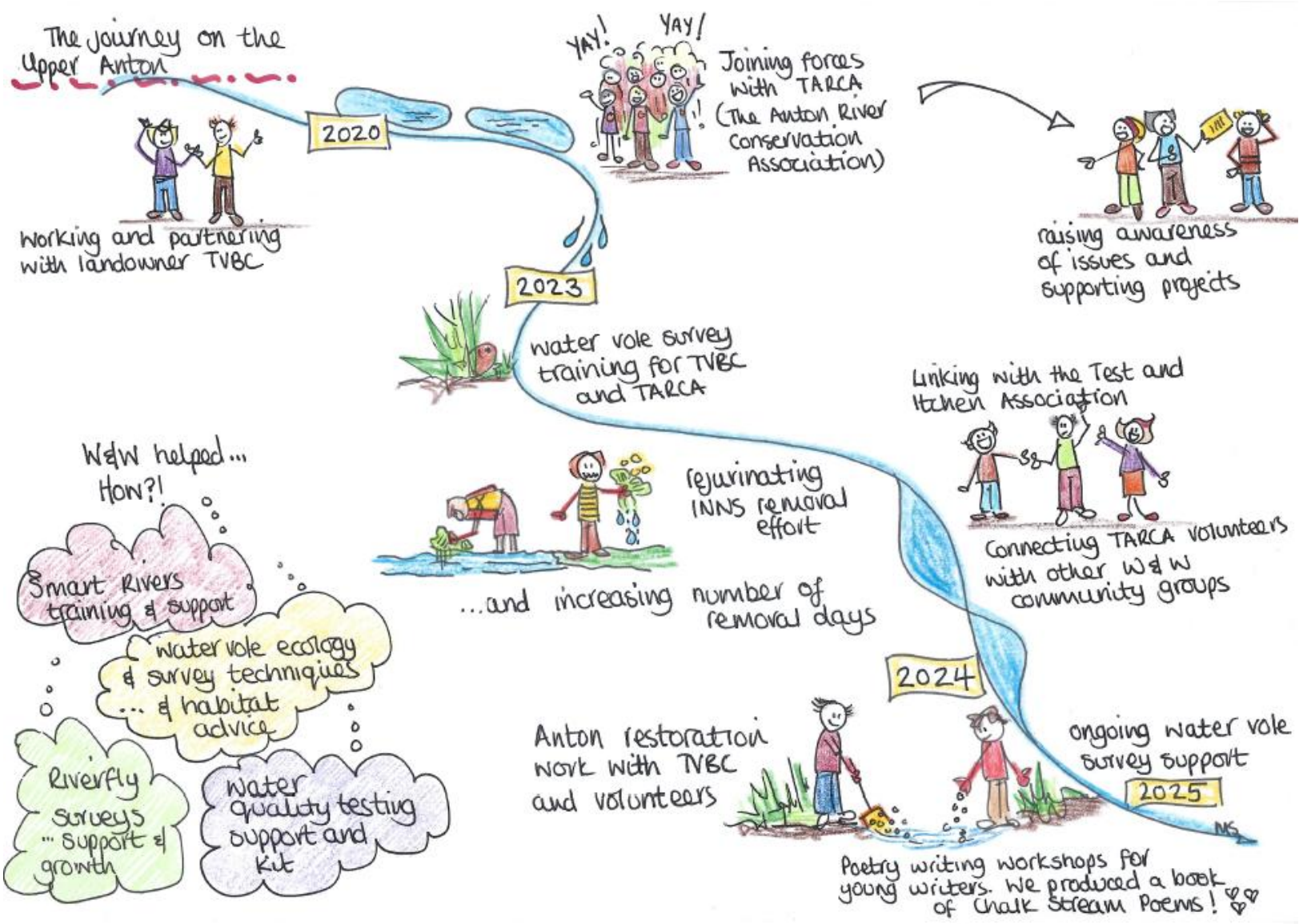


Image credit: Maggie Shelton

Building each community group... the Bourne Rivulet

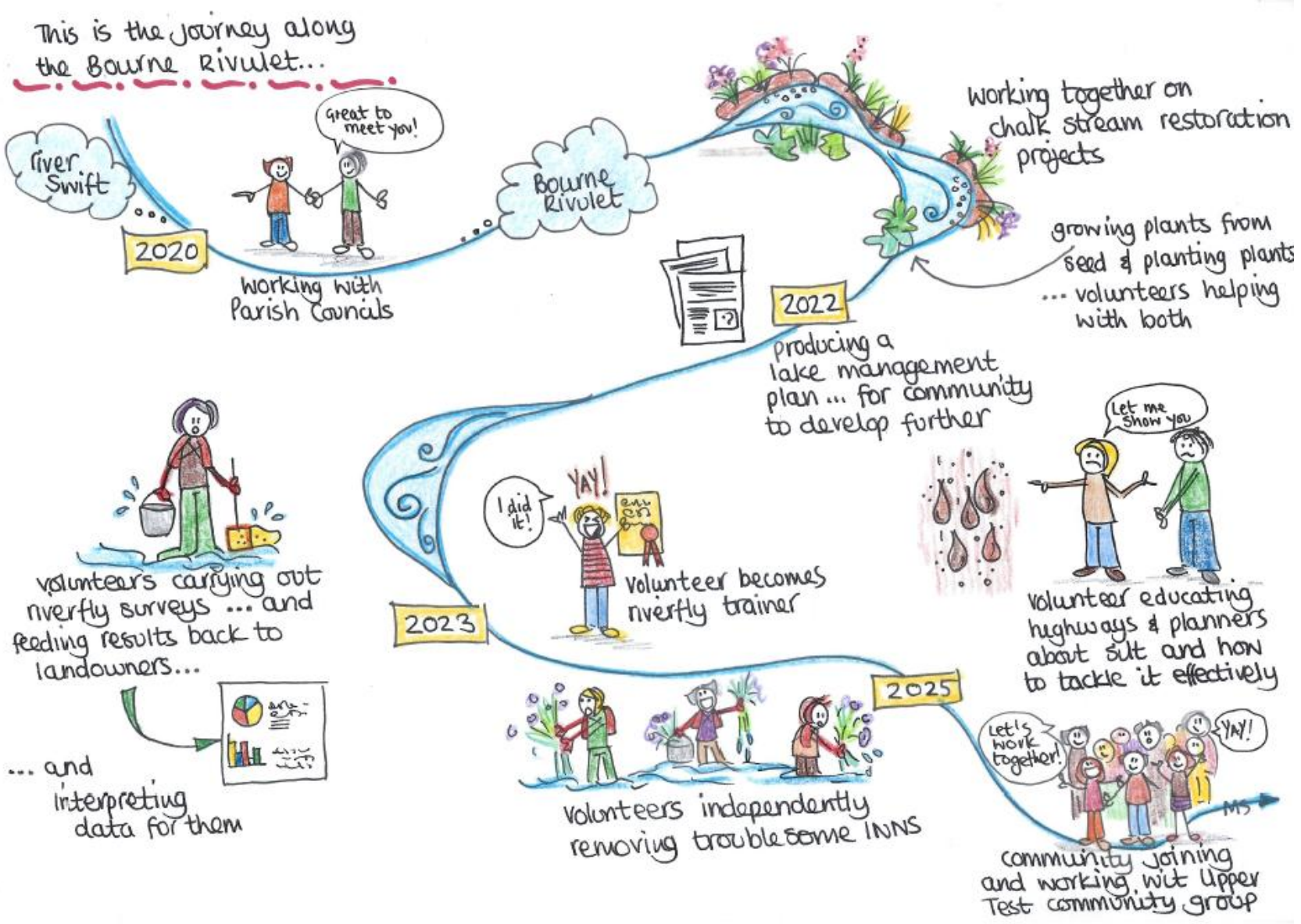


Image credit: Maggie Shelton

Building each community group... the Upper Test

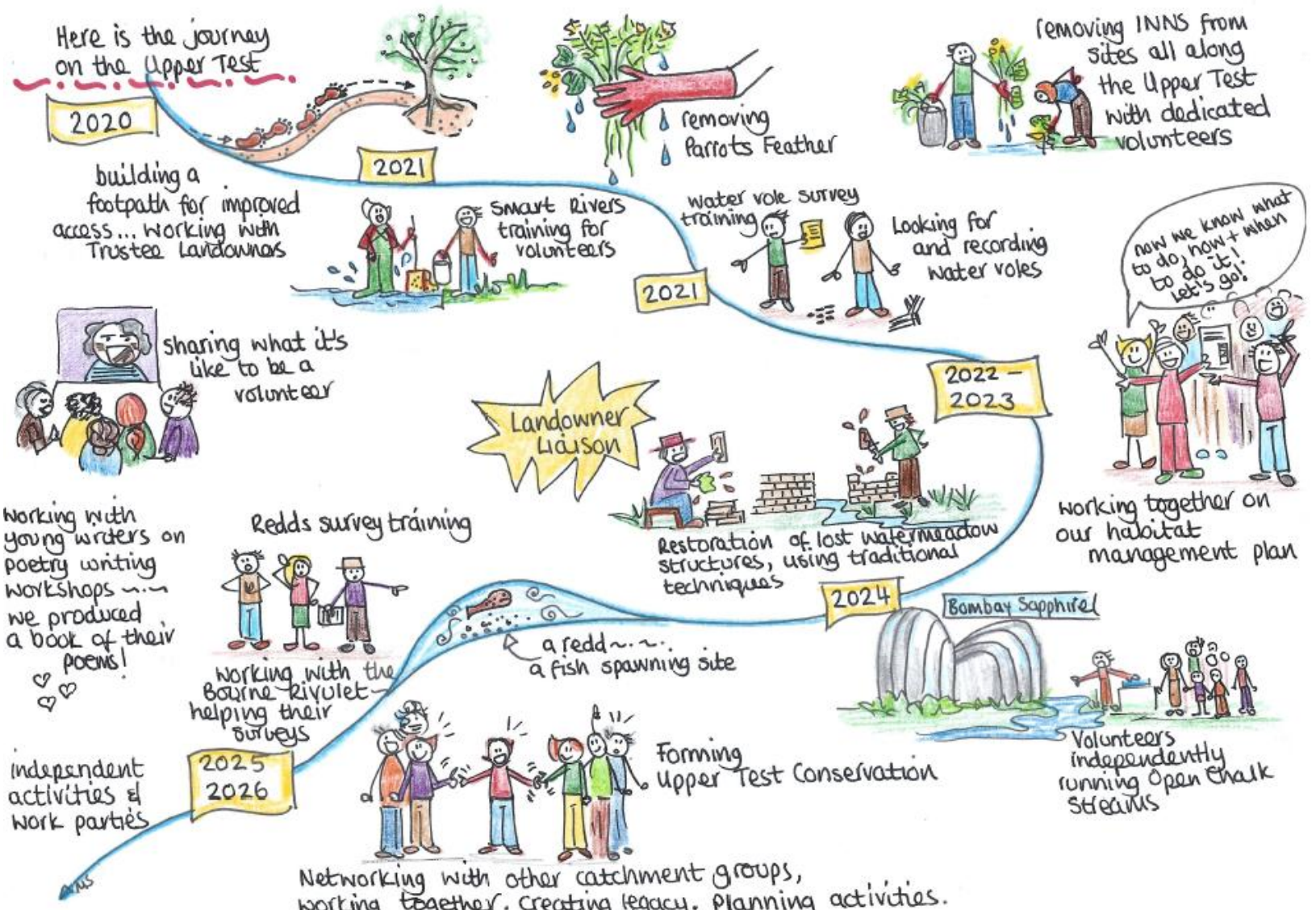


Image credit: Maggie Shelton

Building each community group... the Candover and Arle

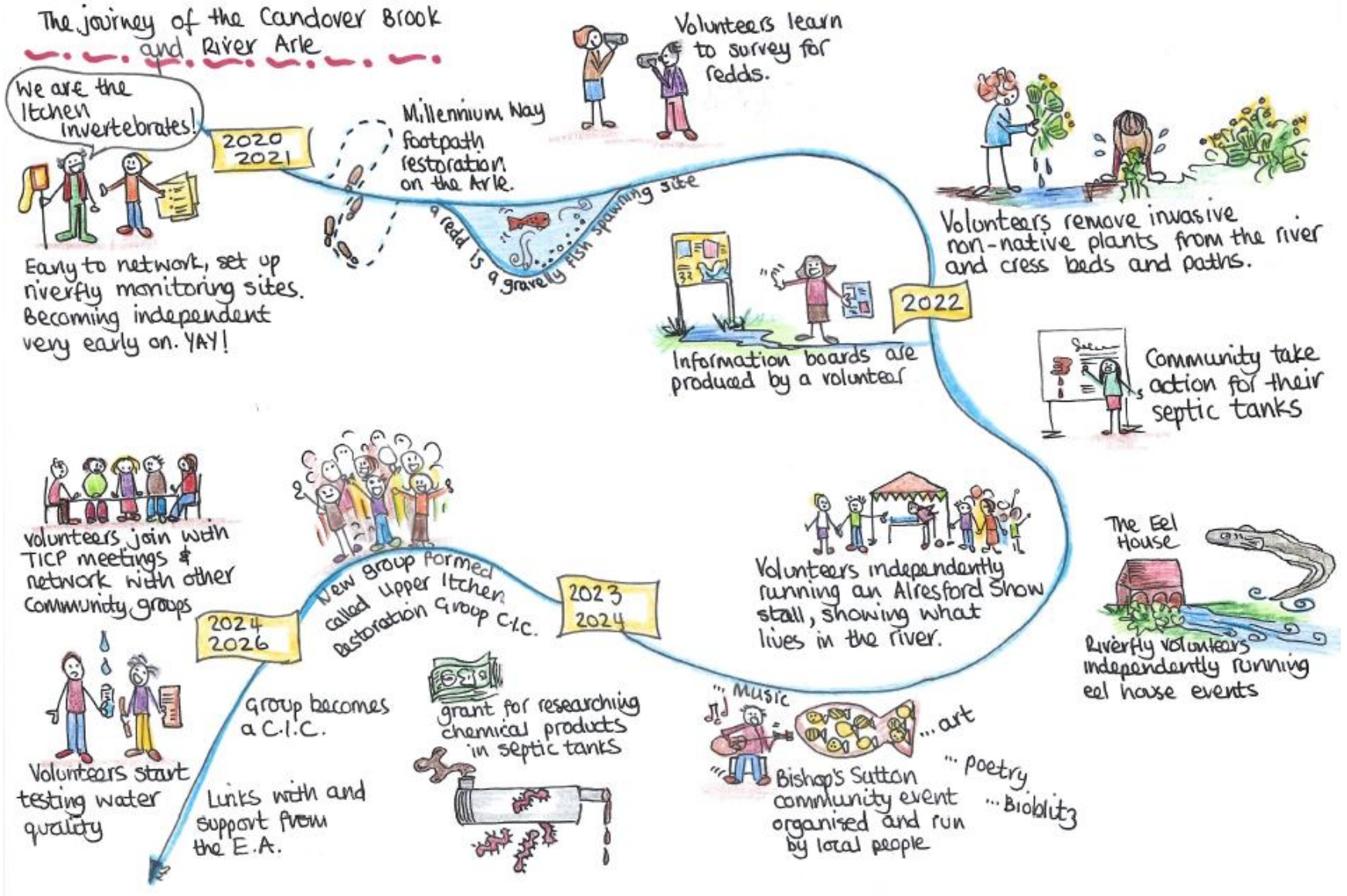


Image credit: Maggie Shelton

Building each community group... Cheriton

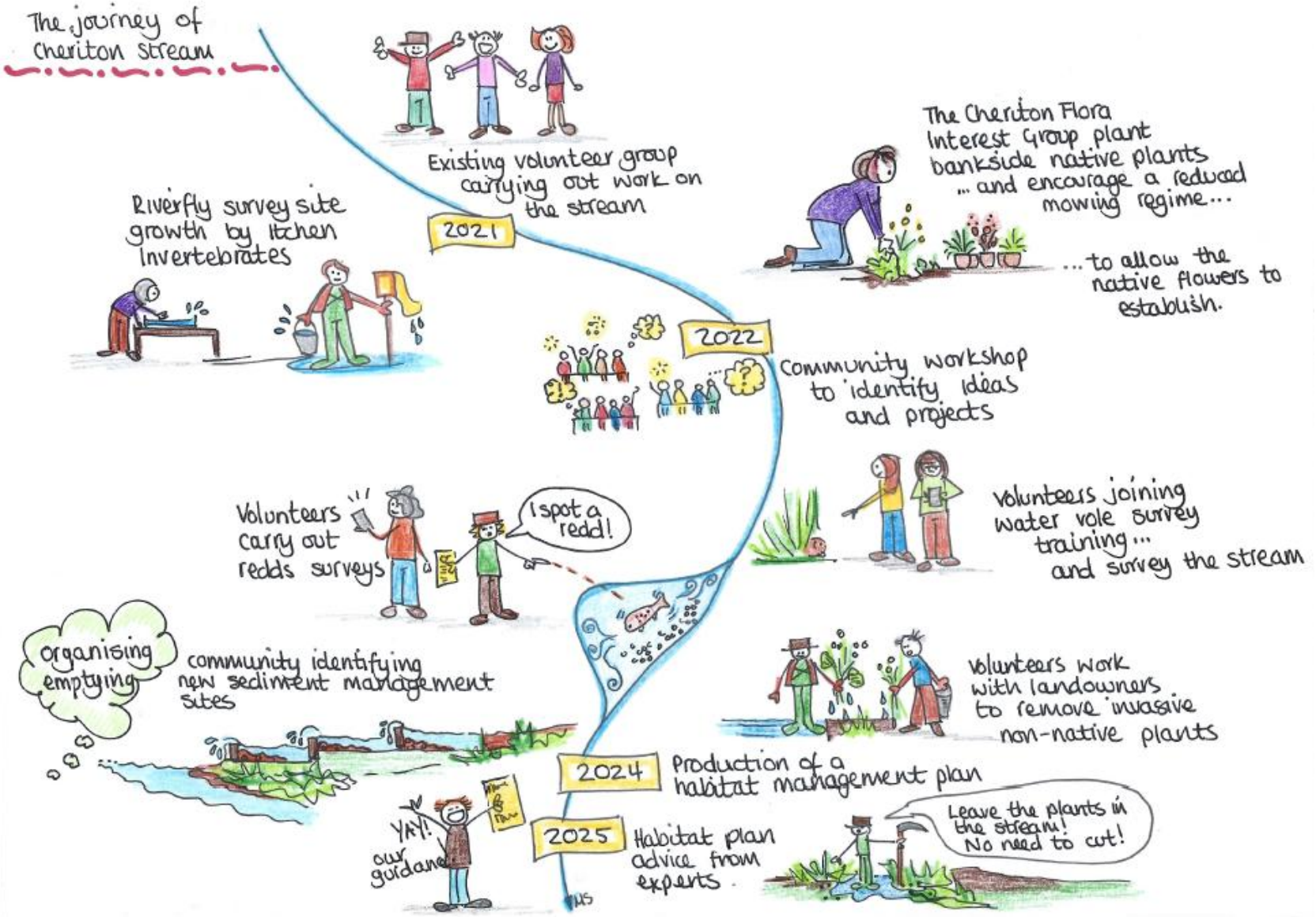


Image credit: Maggie Shelton

As CCG development progressed, a range of group types emerged:

Community groups were supported on their journeys to becoming officially recognised. Through a structured programme of meetings and training events they investigated governance topics such as safeguarding, health and safety, GDPR and insurance. They became fully prepared and confident to run themselves.

Case Study: Pillhill Brook Association

The Pillhill Brook Association (PBA) is a new locally led group that emerged from the Building Sustainable Catchment Groups activity of Watercress and Winterbournes (W&W). After significant support and nurturing from the W&W delivery team, local people developed a structure that is unique to them and focuses on monitoring and improving their chalk stream.

Development of the PBA involved:

- meeting people and raising awareness of the chalk stream; networking; developing survey and practical work party skills. The result was that people moved from being passively aware of the stream, to learning more about it.
- carrying out practical tasks (monitoring; restoration work; INNS removal). This, and supply of equipment, gave people confidence and skills to act. One person said, *"I'd been looking for something I could actually do for the brook that runs past my garden – the kick sampling showed me there was a way in."*

One particularly motivated individual held community talks to inspire more action and link landowners and locals together. Over time this group formed the PBA as *"we always knew the project wouldn't be there forever – so we made sure we could stand on our own feet"*. They ran surveys (Riverfly; water vole; fish spawning sites), removed INNS and installed river gauges. Members contribute according to skills and availability, share equipment and continually learn. Peer support and expert input was seen as especially valuable. They developed a dedicated website and recruited new members whilst out on surveys. They have become a local authoritative voice: *"people often come to us worried the stream is polluted ... and they're quite surprised when we can show them what the data actually says".* A striking change has been people's growing awareness of long-term ecological change.

> *It feels good to be part of something that's genuinely making a difference."*
> (Community Catchment Group Member)

Pillhill Brook Association members talking about invertebrates at the Amport Fen Botanical Survey 17.07. 2024 © Janet Wright

Open Chalk Stream event at Cheriton Mill in 2022 © Steve Pullen

The Scheme has also been successful in creating positive networks between groups across the catchment areas which can only help the continuation of the Scheme's vision. All of the Community Catchment Groups know each other and are in touch with each other. They exchange information regularly and are working on joint funding bids together to support their survey work. Many of the groups attend the Test and Itchen Catchment Partnership meetings which allows them to share information about their activities and progress. A cross section of CCG members continues to support the Upper Test Chalk Stream Conservation Group to continue their Smart Rivers survey work.

Reflection on the progression of Community Catchment Groups suggests that two keys to success are founded in not making early assumptions about communities. Firstly, not assuming that there are no existing skills or knowledge in the community but instead working with the existing skills of local people and the community organisations that already exist. Secondly, be prepared for some areas or groups not to be responsive to the Scheme and put in place mitigation and contingency plans to ensure an alternative way of achieving the desired outcomes if possible.

Based on communities taking the lead we asked members of Community Catchment Groups to offer their tips for success. These included:

- Don't get too bogged down in GDPR.
- Use easy, quick and accessible communications like WhatsApp groups.
- Keep communications small and regular to keep people engaged and prevent drop off.
- Give out dates of activities well in advance and, if possible, include a planner that is issued at least quarterly.
- Ensure all activities are fun and sociable.
- Provide hot drinks and biscuits and / or cheese and wine.
- Don't take yourself or the activity too seriously, as one CCG member said, *"if you know your task, you will get it done, so why not enjoy the ride?"*

Photo credit: Steve Pullen

Chalk Stream Champions

A large number of the activities within the Scheme were suggested by, supported by or directly delivered by skilled Chalk Stream Champions, some examples of which are shown in the table below:

Activities that CSC supported	Activities that trained CSC led
Habitat restoration schemes	Collecting stories in the Tales from the Riverbank Project
Monitoring and citizen science	Giving talks to other groups of people
INNS removal	Monitoring and citizen science
Supporting events such as water saving events and Open Chalk Streams	Delivering Open Chalk Stream events

A significant activity that was led by the Chalk Stream Champions was the Sharing Stories element of the Tales from the Riverbank project. This project involved the collection, recording and retelling (at local events) of local river-focused stories in a community led oral history project. Local people were trained and equipped with all the necessary equipment. After this they interviewed local people and suggested and planned an evening event.

Initially the team found it difficult to get people involved in this activity but found that not all activities need large numbers and the group of people who became involved drove the project and were very committed to it and passionate about it. For those involved, either as contributors or leaders, the project provided a real opportunity to pause and recognise that some of the positives in their lives were embedded in their experiences of the rivers.

Based on the experience of collecting the stories and interacting with the story tellers , the lead volunteer adapted the initial plan of an exhibition of stories into a story telling evening in which:

- Melissa shared how Donut, her pup, led to a wonderful celebration and awakening shared with the whole community.
- Richard took attendees on a walk of magical encounters with the river creatures.
- Jan shared the significance and importance of caring for the River Arle.
- Charlotte told how the river has flowed all through her life.
- Howard's story showed attendees how much the river has to offer every single day.
- Steve told of a meditative walk along the River Itchen and a special encounter.

Sharing Stories event in 2026 © Chris Mayne

Case Study: Bombay Sapphire

Collaboration at the Bombay Sapphire site between a group of chalk stream champions and a local business demonstrates that relationships can develop between community and landowners with clear benefits for the ecology of the chalk streams. The distillery owns a short stretch of the Upper Test and whilst the chalk stream doesn't directly influence the distillation process; the company has a commitment to having a positive impact as environmental stewards.

When taking on the site, Bombay Sapphire had restored the stretch of the Upper Test flowing through the site from a barren concrete channel into a wildlife-rich stretch of chalk stream. For this reason, the site was included as a W&W Open Chalk Stream Event where the public met the horticulturist to hear about how the distillery had improved the chalk stream. Visitors also saw beautiful marginal plants and heritage features that have been left in place.

Local volunteers now include the restored stream site at Bombay Sapphire in their monthly Riverfly monitoring activity. This began when a local volunteer made connections with the horticulturalist at the Open Chalk Stream event. The local volunteers (now part of the newly formed Upper Test Chalk Stream Conservation group) offered to monitor the site through Riverfly surveys. This monitoring allows a monthly spot check for any general water quality issues. Data from the surveys are fed back to the landowner with appropriate advice. For example, in July 2025 the Riverfly score showed both poor numbers and diversity of invertebrates compared with previous months and years. It showed that there was a spike of Ammonia-N which is both unusual and unwanted in terms of toxicity to life on this section of the river. As a result, possible solutions were discussed such as *"speeding up the river flow rate which would help to clear silt deposits and improve oxygenation'.* Plans were also made to improve weed cutting practices to ensure that invertebrate habitat was improved.

In September 2023, Bombay Sapphire Distillery became the first UK spirits production site to attain the Wildlife Habitat Council's Silver Certification. Further progress has now seen the distillery win the council's Wetlands Project Award for 2024. The collection of monitoring data - and its application in decision making - is a key criterion for winning this category.

Bombay Sapphire site in ~ 2023 © Maggie Shelton

W&W Community Grants Scheme

The Watercress and Winterbournes Scheme further promoted and supported community engagement through the provision of small grants. These grants enabled local organisations to invent their own ways to address the condition of chalk stream habitats and the built heritage while enabling a wide variety of people to explore, enjoy and learn about the natural and cultural heritage of the chalk streams. The innovative and exciting local projects run by local organisations and funded through the Watercress and Winterbournes Grant Scheme included:

- *Bishops Sutton* Parish Council and Attention 2 Place- ***Whispers of Chalk Stream Project*** – Delivery of hyper-local place-based immersive experiences that used journaling, talks, creative workshops and meetings, poetry boxes, publications and an exhibition within the community for residents to learn about their chalk stream and consider its significance to the village.
- *Hampshire Bat Group* - **Bat *Boxes for the Arle*** - Installation and monitoring of bat boxes to provide roosting opportunities especially for the water specialist Daubenton's bat.
- *Whitchurch Conservation Group* - ***Protecting Whitchurch's Chalk Stream Environment*** – A research project aimed at awareness raising, lobbying, policy influencing and developing local actions that are aimed at reducing phosphates and other contaminants which are transported and stored within the aquifer.
- *Alresford Society* - ***The River Arle: History, Heritage and Future Interpretation Project*** - Development of new, high-quality information and interpretation boards along the Arle to raise awareness of the cultural and environmental heritage of the chalk stream.
- *Laverstoke and Freefolk Millennium Green Trust* - ***Laverstoke Pond and Stream Community Access Path*** - Access for the local community has been improved through the development of a permissive footpath and the provision of QR codes which link to chalk stream information on their website.
- *Upper Itchen Restoration CIC* - ***Particulates in the Upper Itchen*** – Research project investigating amounts of micro-particulates in the River Arle and the Candover Brook and their sources.
- *Abbotts Ann Primary School* - ***Slowing the Flow*** – Installation of water efficiency measures in the school grounds combined with behaviour changes to reduce water use in school and at home through the development of resources for pledges by the students, which were taken up and maintained.

Chalk Stream artwork produced through the Whispers of Chalk Stream project © Attention2Place

Particulate sampling © Upper Itchen Restoration CIC

Chalk Stream Beasts workshops © Whitchurch Folk Festival

New permissive path © Laverstoke and Freefolk Millennium Green Trust

Role of citizen science in community engagement

- One point of learning that has emerged from the evaluation data is the positive role and impact that citizen science has had on community engagement. The Scheme deployed existing models of citizen science and also encouraged the development of new innovation by communities.

Tested and recognised citizen science methods used by W&W that are linked to national or catchment-based databases:

- Riverfly invertebrate sampling co-ordinated by the Riverfly Partnership. The results also trigger action by the Environment Agency .
- Smart Rivers - invertebrate sampling to species-level through a national scheme co-ordinated by Wildfish.
- Water quality testing as part of the Angling Trust's Water Quality Monitoring Network.
- Redd surveys using the ArcGIS Survey 123 app feeding into a new database.
- Water Vole monitoring feeding into the Wildlife Trust's National Water Vole Database Project (NWVDP).
- Mink monitoring including the use of the Mink Police units (Remote sensors used to monitor mink that notify instantly via SMS or e-mail the moment a trap shuts) with potential to link into a future Water Life Recovery Trust scheme in Hampshire.
- INNS monitoring using the ArcGIS Survey 123 app, linking to the Test and Itchen INNS project.

Locally developed methods of monitoring and citizen science.

- Upper Itchen – Sampling micro-particulates in the River Arle and the Candover Brook in collaboration with the University of Brighton.

The evaluation notes that the accessibility and visibility of citizen science has been a successful entry point into communities and for recruiting new participants. CCG interviewees also reported citizen science was a positive benefit as it was *"not just looking down a microscope but chatting and building relationships within developing groups and between groups to create a network"* and that *"the combination of practical work combined with the trust building that takes place through the non-toxic double checking of results"* was also helpful. These points combined with frequent and reliable feedback from other national databases provided timely recognition of people's time and efforts. Plus, the regularity of meeting to have to monitor and review findings provides an opportunity for delivery staff to hear from groups and check in with participants informally.

Water quality testing in 2025 © Kira Fuller

Riverfly monitoring at Whitchurch Silk Mill in 2024 © Nicky Nicklin

Pillhill Brook flora survey in 2025 © Janet Wright

Water vole surveys ~ 2025 © Maggie Shelton

Photo credits: Kira Fuller, Nicky Nicklin, Janet Wright, Maggie Shelton

Case Study: Upper Itchen Restoration CIC

"We didn't want all this knowledge and momentum to disappear when the funding ends – so we built something that could last."
(Community Catchment Group Member)

The Upper Itchen Restoration CIC formed from a group of Watercress and Winterbournes volunteers. They were early to act and expanded the reach of Riverfly surveys; joined river restoration days; joined and ran INNS work parties; joined SmartRiver training and identification days. Always curious and asking questions, they were keen to learn more about rivers, trialled citizen science testing kits and joined the nationally recognised 'yellow box' survey method. They fed information into national databases. Recognising the finite nature of the Scheme, they formed an official group called the Upper Itchen Restoration Community Interest Company (UIR CIC) with a structure that best suits their aims and objectives. Their reach is coordinated and covers the Candover Brook, River Arle and the Cheriton Stream, working collaboratively with the Cheriton Conservation Group.

The UIR CIC are ambitious. To reduce pollution in chalk streams they collaborated with Brighton University to investigate micro plastics in chalk streams; they run roadshows to educate people about chemical products; they raise awareness at public-facing events. Through surveys they have *"been able to build up facts and then go to landowners and say: this is what's happening, and this is what it's doing to the ecosystem".* They collaborate with partners to challenge and reinterpret national standards.

For the members, involvement has reshaped how they perceive the landscape *"it makes you see the landscape in a completely different way – once you know more, you start noticing everything."* Social benefits are significant, with strong friendships forming through shared purpose and regular collaboration. They network with other W&W groups and feel ongoing collaboration with neighbouring groups is seen as essential to avoid fragmentation.

"When you start identifying every creature in a sample, you suddenly understand what the river needs to survive."
(Community Catchment Group Member)

Display at Upper Itchen Restoration CIC's Greener Cleaning Roadshow in 2026 © UIR CIC

Community Engagement Conclusions

Engagement was described as one of the Scheme's strongest areas by evaluation participants. One interviewee highlighted effective storytelling, education programmes in schools and community-based activities that fostered local ownership of rivers. Adult engagement through volunteering, citizen science and practical restoration work was also seen as highly successful, especially in rural communities.

The evaluation review demonstrated the importance of longevity, community engagement, and proactive legacy planning. Community engagement was identified as a particularly effective route to addressing the challenge of improving landowner relationships, as trusted local connections often open doors more effectively than formal approaches. Explaining purpose clearly and approaching landowners positively was seen as key to building trust and cooperation.

However, the evaluation recognises that the Scheme found that the higher levels of engagement were focused within the rural villages and market towns, with less engagement with some of the planned minority groups within Andover. This suggests that elements of achieving a wider range of people being involved in the heritage of the landscape was more of a challenge for the Scheme.

And finally … The Watercress and Winterbournes Scheme experience reminds us to be ambitious for community ownership and leadership, to widen the base of skilled knowledgeable people while strengthening local communities through support, to incorporate best practice and provide resources for existing or new organisations as appropriate and all the while embracing failure and going for out of the box ideas.

Embedding Skills

Watercress and Winterbournes has increased

"My empathy and knowledge about an important, rare natural resource and habitat which exists in my own 'back yard'".

(Chalk Stream Champion)

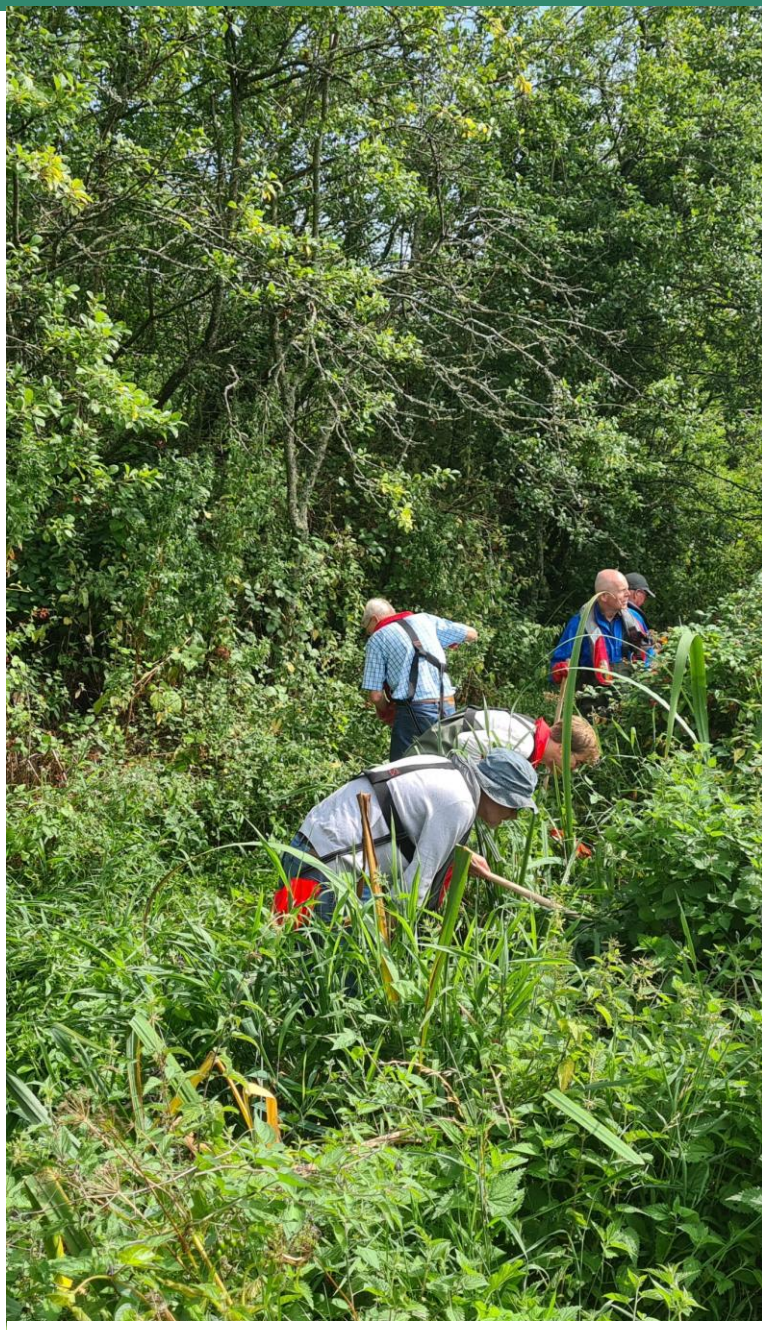
The ambitious vision of Watercress and Winterbourne and its long-term legacy has depended on local people taking action to build change in communities and in the landscape. As a result of the Scheme's projects and activities, 1000s of people have developed skills, learnt about their heritage and volunteered time. One Delivery Team member reported that they were *"awestruck and humbled by the huge differences people [are] making".*

From the outset W&W recognised that for the ongoing security of the chalk streams existing skills in the community will need to be enhanced and new ones developed. Therefore, capacity building was embedded in all programmes and projects using a range of techniques from basic information sharing to formal skills development. This work has resulted in people actively practicing skills and adapting and sharing skills with increased confidence.

As the final goal of W&W has been focused on local ownership it has been necessary to make wide connections in the community. These connections have worked through a range of approaches - from actions that raised awareness of chalk streams in the consciousness of local people, through formal transfer of skills, to local people passing on their skills to others.

To fulfil its vision of a lasting community legacy the Watercress and Winterbournes capacity building activities have fallen into two types:

- Sharing chalk stream knowledge and skills like built and natural heritage restoration, monitoring and management.
- Skills to maintain community actions and organisations after the end of the Scheme.



Volunteers removing INNS in Whitchurch in 2024 © Maggie Shelton

Photo credit: Maggie Shelton

Embedding Skills

The Scheme effectively used a range of different methods to build capacity and raise awareness including:

- An interactive education programme in schools and with uniformed / youth-focused groups.
- Learning by doing - for example restoration skills and monitoring. Learning this way shows the uniqueness of chalk streams and the biodiversity they bring and makes them realise how being in or near them makes them feel.
- Providing information in different formats - for example posters, leaflets, social media messaging, video and animation resources to provide information and raise awareness.
- Training face to face and online.
- Providing guidance, educational and support materials.
- Site visits to exemplar sites.
- Targeting specific audiences such as landowners with tailored programmes.

Community Learning

The Scheme strategically planned that the learning and skills development would result in different 'levels' of understanding and that these levels could also be a journey for participating individuals and communities. These levels included:

- **Awareness raising** through activities such as walks alongside rivers with specialists in riparian plant management to demonstrate practically what a healthy chalk stream looks like, the aim being to encourage people to leave the plants (weed) in the river - something that is better for the overall chalk stream habitat. The purpose of this awareness raising work was summed up by one participant as being to *"enthusiastically share information about chalk streams and teach people some fundamental facts about what is going on in the stream so that [local people] can better look after them"*
- **Developing understanding** for example of off mains sewage systems through leafleting and video.

Open Chalk Stream event at Cheriton Mill in 2022 © Steve Pullen

Nick Lawrence from the Wild Trout Trust providing habitat management training in Abbotts Ann on the Pillhill Brook in 2021 © Moragh Stirling

- **Formal skills development** through hands on events like those described by a Delivery Team member as *"in person training events showing people how to manage weed and marginal vegetation within their local chalk stream and how to improve flow and habitat in their stretch of the river by installing berms and woody debris."*
- **Enhancing existing skills** through refining local people's existing skills through training with specialists.
- Developing ways for participants to **pass on skills to others** – Participants also learnt how to message this to friends and neighbours in the community.

In the development stage the Watercress and Winterbourne Scheme identified a key set of skills to be delivered that would be essential to achieving a sustainable legacy. These included:

- **Awarenesses raising and learning about water efficiency** and **septic tank maintenance** for behaviour change decision making.
- **Species identification skills** through hands activities backed up with written information and animated videos.
- **Heritage building skills** for practical restoration skills.
- **INNS removal** including flora and fauna.
- Best practice in **managing their riparian habitats**, managing land for equines, managing winterbournes with skills development on practical habitat restoration skills.
- Increasing knowledge in **Natural Flood Management**.
- **Native Crayfish learning** relating to the hatchery and ark site
- Specific learning for **developing and maintaining community organisations.**

The evaluation found that the Scheme had to adapt methods in the early stages due to Covid restrictions by using more digital solutions. However, these solutions proved to be more accessible, as recordings could be made available online afterwards and the online offer also extended the reach of the Scheme beyond the Landscape area. All Scheme projects included some level of either awareness raising, capacity building and / or skills development. Some examples have been discussed above and others are shown next:

Chalk Stream Habitat Restoration
The Scheme has been a catalyst for 63 volunteers to be upskilled and acquire knowledge about best practice in management of river and floodplain habitats, plus they have obtained practical restoration skills and have contributed 1269 volunteer hours.

Natural Flood Management
59 stakeholders have attended workshops about Natural Flood Management interventions increasing their knowledge about the subject and its potential impacts.

Building Sustainable Community Groups
305 chalk stream champions have had opportunities to access activities, learning opportunities and resources. Within this number are 230 Community Catchment Group members who have received a range of training including water quality testing, habitat restoration, Smart Rivers and Riverfly invertebrate monitoring, water vole surveys, redd surveys, how to run events, safeguarding, recording oral histories, first aid and delivering education sessions.

Community Grant Scheme
Grants have enabled local people to gain knowledge about what lives in chalk streams, practical experience on and around the water and opportunities to meet new people with a shared interest. This has resulted in 843 people learning about heritage – and celebrating the unique qualities of the chalk stream heritage through a range of activities while contributing 3925 volunteer hours.

Tackling Invasives
80 volunteers have been trained in identifying Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) and are more confident about removing INNS. 21 volunteers are more confident identifying mink activity. Skills have been improved through 504 volunteer hours of practical monitoring and 378 volunteer hours in removing INNS. Volunteers have been trained and are on-alert to dispatch mink.

Volunteers removing orange balsam ~ 2024 © Maggie Shelton

Photo credit: Maggie Shelton

Education Programme
The extensive education and youth organisation project has involved 26 schools and 31 uniformed groups / youth groups in a total of 245 sessions reaching 3739 young people. These contacts have provided interactive learning for young people (and the adults present) around how they can protect chalk-streams.

Roaming by the River
Volunteers have spent 713 hours making access improvements and learning a number of practical skills during this activity ensuring that local people could enjoy being outside in locations they did not previously know.

Restoring Chalk Stream Structures
10 people have been trained in brick structures restoration and have honed their skills through 624 hours of volunteer activity to restore structures.

Open Chalk Streams
4475 participants have been able to increase their understanding the chalk stream ecosystem and what is required to improve it, while being introduced to locations that they did not previously know.

Chalk Stream Events
The project has delivered 70 online events, 23 of which have been delivered by volunteers (through 136 hours of volunteer time) as well 35 in-person events for a total of 3637 people through which people have increased their connectivity with chalk-streams and learned more about them.

Chalk Stream Champions
Overall, there have been 293 chalk stream champions trained in monitoring and caring for chalk stream habitats and heritage structures, with involvement in citizen science reported as being one of the most significant changes the Scheme had brought about.

Explaining the river features and wildlife spotter sheet to the Simply Out of School Club, Whitchurch, in 2025 © Chris Fairhead

Chalk Stream-Friendly Land Management
25 targeted landowners have received site specific advice for their land-holding and 476 landowners and land managers have attended events or training that have targeted specific types of land use.

Learning of all kinds and passing on learning to others was frequently highlighted as the one thing participants enjoyed most about participating in the Scheme. Participants fed back that the aspects of W&W they enjoyed most was:

- *"Working with likeminded people, learning more."*
- *"Learning more about the streams and sharing my knowledge."*
- *"Learning new skills and meeting friends. Doing something useful for the health of chalk streams."*
- *"Learning about the local river and increasing my sense of connection to it."*
- *"Learning water vole sign and learning about chalk streams."*

Learning for Young People

The Scheme included a targeted programme of learning and education for young people. The programme delivered chalk stream education to local schools as well as uniformed groups and youth groups. The sessions were designed to enable young people to learn about chalk stream heritage, chalk stream wildlife, the economy of chalk streams, the pressures chalk streams are under and how they could take action for their chalk streams.

The evaluation has found that the education sessions were an *"engaging and memorable experience",* being highly interactive with lots of hands-on activities supported by high quality resources developed specifically for this programme. As a result, young people would be:

- More aware of how their actions can impact on the health of their chalk stream.
- Able to tell others why chalk streams are so special and why we should care about them.
- Have a deeper understanding of how chalk streams have influenced settlements over time, and of the wildlife present in them.
- Understand the impact our everyday choices can have on chalk streams.

River dipping with Overton Beavers in 2025 © Kira Fuller

The sessions that were planned and on offer were carefully designed to mesh with national curriculum expectations including; working scientifically, living things and their habitats, animals, including humans, evolution and inheritance, geographic skills and field work, place knowledge, human and physical geography and rivers.

The sessions that the Education Programme offered were planned as a set, with inputs that built up through successive delivery. In the delivery stage it was found that most schools were not realistically able to commit to a programme of multiple sessions. Overall, the Education Programme worked with most school groups twice, most often delivering an assembly and riverbank session, with some schools also taking up the option for either an introductory classroom-based session before going to the river or a follow up classroom-based session afterwards.

In delivering the programme there were some initial challenges as schools had only just opened up post-Covid. For this reason, attracting schools to the programme initially was difficult. Promotional effort focused on what worked in schools, which often was their need to fulfil the curriculum requirement of 'field work', as one teacher reported, *"we wanted a fieldwork link to our local ecosystems and this was perfect!"* Once a session had been delivered that met this need, schools preferred to repeat the session annually rather than opting for different sessions. Other reasons for choosing to become involved in the Education Programme as reported by teachers included, *"to engage the girls in nature and outdoor learning"* and *"raising children's awareness of their local chalk streams and ways they can protect them and influence others to do this."*

Schools reported that the sessions delivered the learning outcomes required and that students came away with:

- Greater awareness about the life of chalk streams.
- More knowledge about what lives within chalk streams and the threats towards them.
- An understanding of how rare and fragile the chalk stream is.

By the end of the Scheme 26 Schools and 31 youth organisations had participated in the Education Programme, reaching 3,739 young people.

Identifying invertebrates with Ropley C of E Primary School at Alresford Eel House © Tracy Standish

Photo credit: Chris Fairhead

Case Study: Abbotts Ann Church of England Primary School: Slowing the Flow

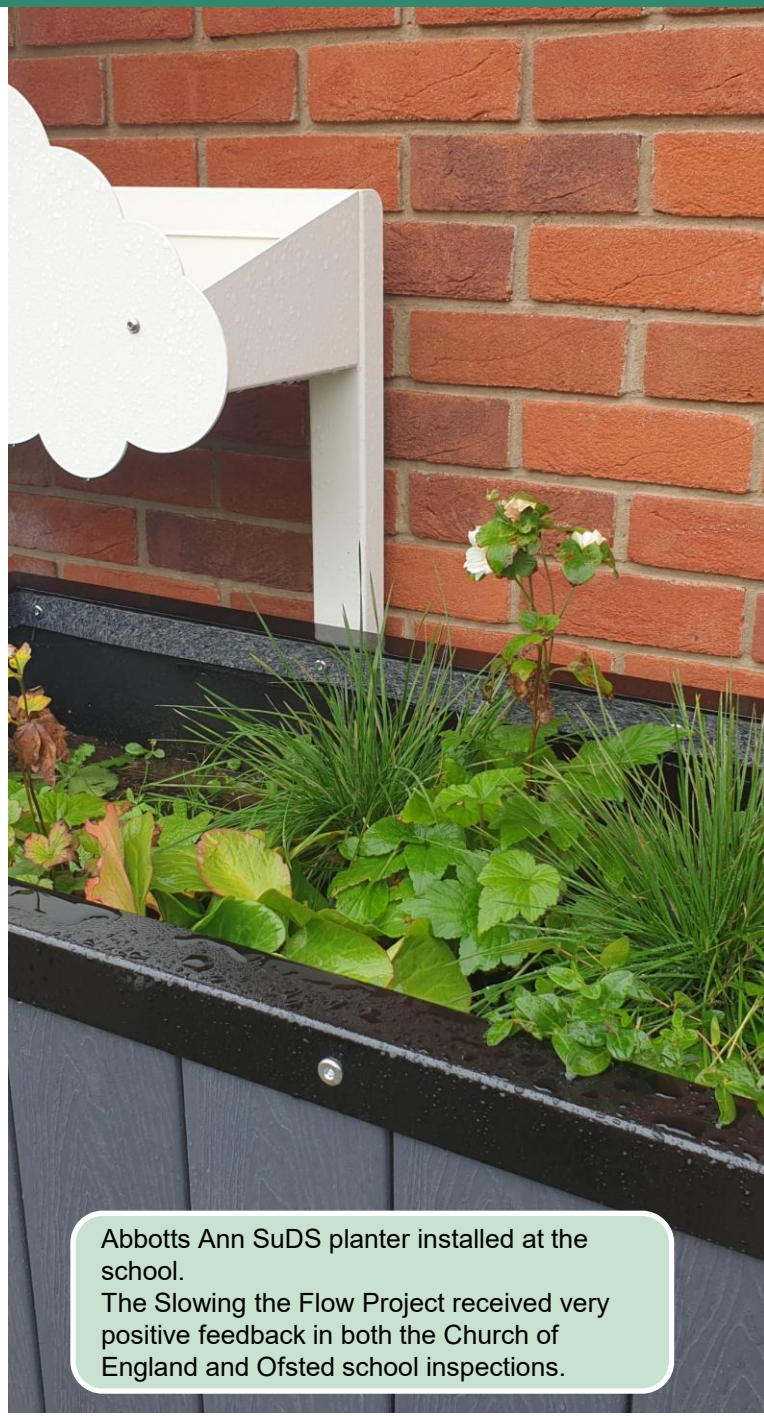
As a result of the Education Programme, one school, Abbotts Ann Church of England Primary School, wanted to take what they had learned about how people impacted on chalk streams further and they applied for a Watercress and Winterbournes Community Grant for some project money to run their own 'Slowing the Flow' project.

The project was led by the school's Eco Team, a group of 14 children. With ongoing support from W&W, the Slowing the Flow project involved pupils in educational activities exploring the theme of saving water. The project cost just less than £5000 and included practical outputs such as:

- Installation of two SuDS Planters - These specialist planters are designed to capture rainwater run-off from roofs by rerouting the downpipe into the planter instead of directly into the drains. They slow the flow of water into drains as well as storing water combatting both increasing flood risk and water scarcity. This planter is also a permanent illustration for students of how hard surfaces change the way in which water moves through the landscape.
- Installation of a water butt to collect and store rainwater from roofs, via gutters and downpipes, primarily for use in the garden. It helps conserve water, reduces water bills, and provides a sustainable water source for the school's vegetable garden and flower beds especially during periods of hose pipe bans.
- Production of a take home leaflet and a river pledge card that were created by the pupils and were printed and given to every child at the school.

When asked if they had maintained their pledges, participating students reported the following behaviour changes:

- Shorter showers – 2 minutes or 4 minutes.
- Using less water in the kettle (so saving energy as well).
- Making sure taps are always turned off.
- Having half a cup of water to avoid pouring away what wasn't drunk.
- Turning off the tap whilst brushing their teeth.
- Increased number of water butts at home (one child said they had 2 and bought 2 more so they now have 4).



Abbotts Ann SuDS planter installed at the school.
The Slowing the Flow Project received very positive feedback in both the Church of England and Ofsted school inspections.

Photo credit: Tracy Standish

The Chalk Stream Challenge

"They loved the science we did (flow and clarity measuring) and the river dipping!"
(Local Youth Organisation Adult Leader)

The Chalk Stream Challenge is a pack of fun and hands-on activities for youth organisations and families to carry out on chalk streams. The activities provide informal and interactive learning on identified chalk stream trails or can be used independently on other chalk streams. Once competed, all participants can download a certificate and/or buy a fabric challenge badge.

The Challenge emerged from W&W as a unique tool for sharing knowledge and learning. The evaluation found the Challenge to be particularly successful in widening engagement with young people, extending engagement beyond the scheme area and increasing knowledge about and connectivity to chalk streams.

Its inception was enabled by having a truly community-led ethos that encouraged and supported innovation. It is now a fully-fledged programme in its own right that has spread its reach way beyond the landscape area of the Scheme.

The Badge was created to give children, young people and their families a fun way to connect with their local chalk stream through guided walks, spotter sheets and hands-on activities. It was created, designed and pioneered by 2 chalk stream champions who had experience in Girlguiding and the concept and workings of challenge badges.

They worked together with the Education Officer to design a resource that would fill the knowledge gap about chalk streams, improve connection with the streams, provide information on how to care for and use chalk streams, whilst also improving understanding that the water is a living environment. It was designed for use by any age group in any chalk stream.

The resources have received high praise in the evaluation. With one guide leader telling us that, *"it was a great pack, maybe some more river dipping identification sheets? but you can look most things up easily these days. I've read and used a lot of children's activity packs, and I can confidently say that this pack is a very good one! It's easy to use and adapt, and the badge is lovely!"*

Photo credit: Sophie Evingar

The Chalk Stream Challenge Continued...

Learning more about chalk streams, having fun and doing something different were all reasons groups chose to participate in the Challenge. Uniformed group leaders reported that

- *"The activities in the pack were easily adaptable to our river, and our girls, and there was a range of activity types."*
- They, *"live right next to the river and were looking for outdoor activities to do on our Guide Weekend away."*
- *"It was something different we could do with Rainbows and highlighted our local area."*
- *"As a Brownie unit, we are always looking out for different types of experiences we can give the girls. Being based in Andover, we are fortunate to have a chalk stream running through it. Therefore, we decided to complete the badge so the girls could understand the river's importance as well as have fun."*
- And possibly, most importantly, *"there was a badge!"*

The Challenge is designed for use by anyone at any time. However, a number of specific chalk stream routes have been developed and can be followed. In the Scheme area these routes include:

- Rooksbury Mill & Charlton Lakes on the Upper Anton in Andover
- River Arle, Alresford
- Upper Test, Whitchurch

Looking for insects in the Millenium Meadow, Whitchurch, in 2025 © Chris Fairhead

The Chalk Stream Challenge Continued...

An impressive outcome of the Challenge is its reach beyond the Scheme area. Other routes that have been developed include:

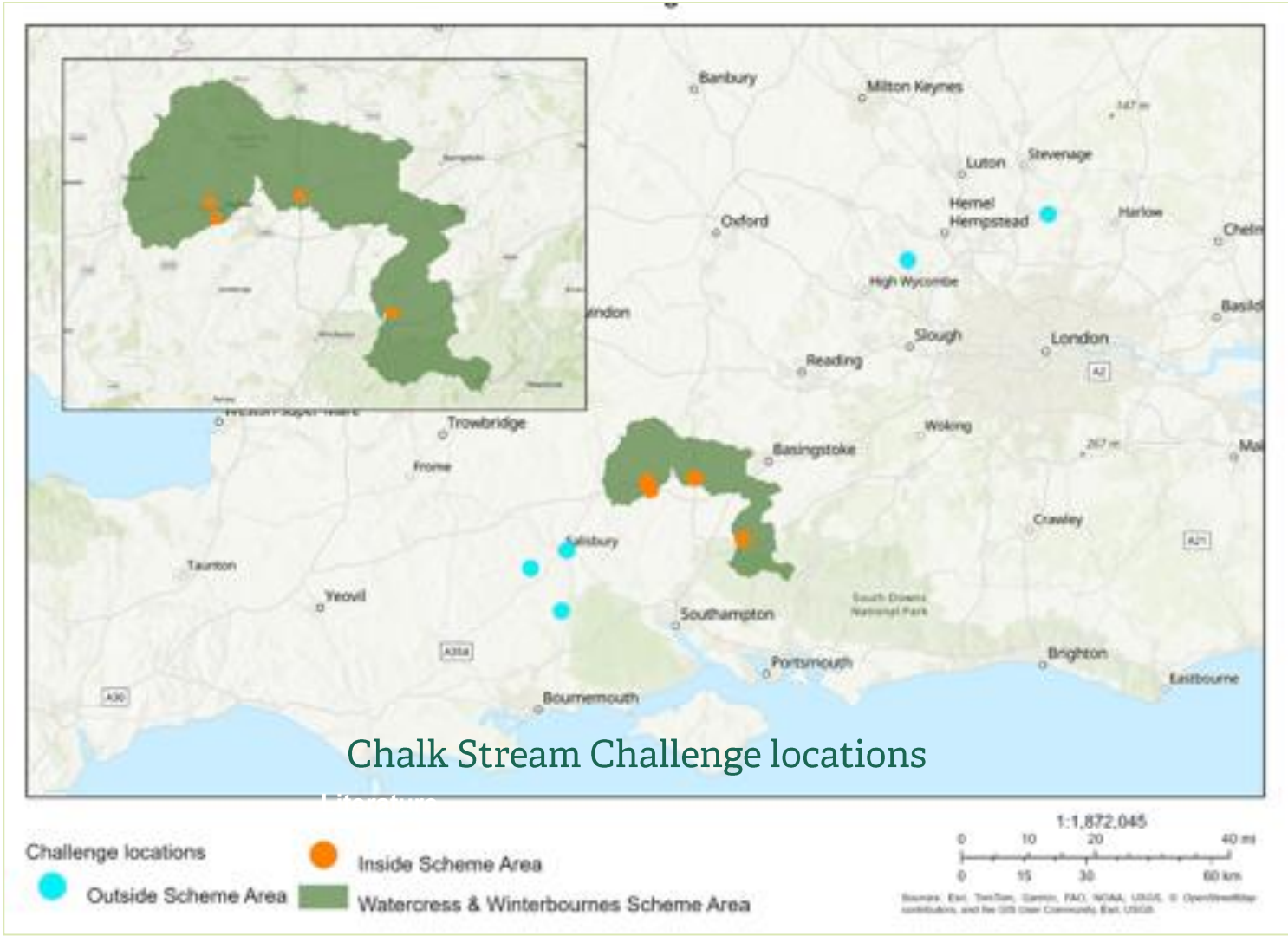
- The River Bourne, Laverstock
- The River Ebble, Bishopstone
- River Chess, Chesham
- River Ver, St Albans
- River Mimram, Hertfordshire

There are also further Challenge routes under development in the following locations:

- Sweatfords Water, Fordingbridge
- Swan River/the Wylye, Warminster
- River Itchen, Bishopstoke

Of the 28 organisations that have awarded challenge badges, 14% are from beyond the Scheme area.

Wessex Rivers Trust will be continuing to support and develop the Chalk Stream Challenge post-W&W, providing a great legacy for the Scheme.

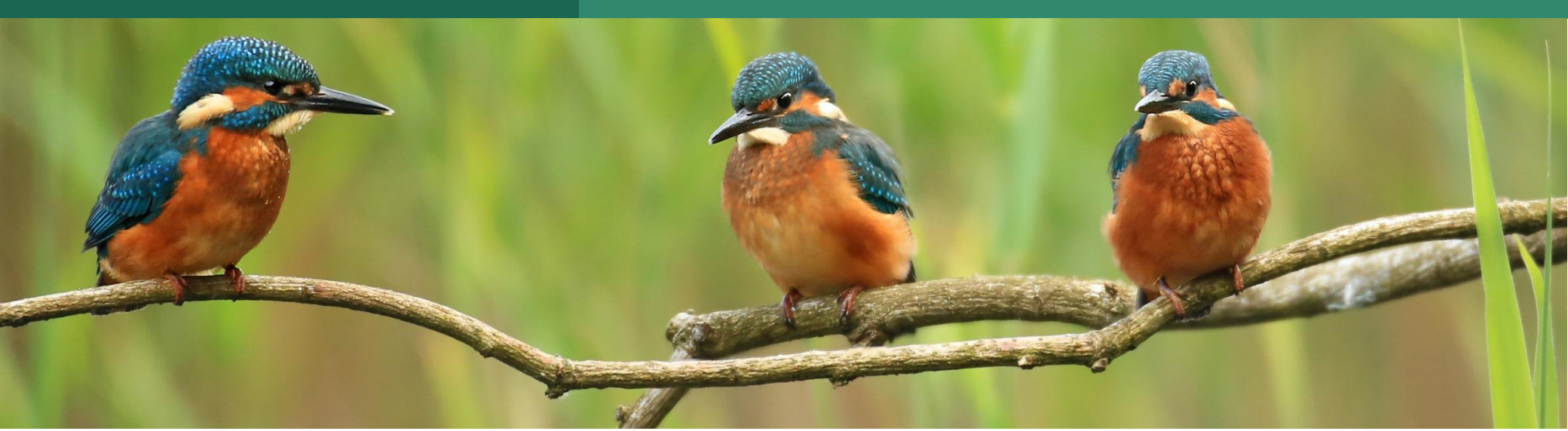


Chalk Stream Challenge locations

Skills Development – Conclusions

Skills development has been an integral element of delivering the Scheme, enabling people to understand more about their chalk stream while underpinning the journeys towards community ownership. A review of the evaluation data suggests that key success factors have included using a variety of methods, easy access points, welcoming innovation from the community and being as interactive as possible.

Both photos - water vole survey training in Cheriton in 2023 © Chris Mayne



Communication

Communication has been the third underpinning method in Watercress and Winterbournes' approach to delivery. Communication was identified in the evaluation data as one of the 'highly effective' elements of the Scheme, although during the evaluation process some key structural challenges were identified.

In the context of the delivery of a NLHF Landscape Partnership Scheme, communication plays many roles. These include efficient Scheme delivery, supporting engagement and skills development, expanding the width and depth of reach, providing information and supporting behaviour change. Clear and consistent communication enables Schemes to be successful and therefore needs to be prioritised and maintained throughout the life of the Scheme. Within Watercress and Winterbournes, communication carried out all these tasks, contributing to bringing about the changes delivered and the Scheme's legacy.

An evaluation review of communication materials has shown that clear branding guidelines have been developed and used and quality has been maintained across the board. Different media have been used to extend reach and make information available into the future and where appropriate, local people have been involved in design and delivery of communications.

Photo credit: Jon Hawkins

Communication Audiences

Volunteers learing riverfly surveying ~ 2023 © Maggie Shelton

Chalk Stream Champion showing invertebrates at Open Chalk Streams ~ 2024 © Maggie Shelton

The starting point for communication is understanding the audience. In the development phase an Audience Development Plan was undertaken but this work continued during the Scheme informally and more formally through studies like “A study of stakeholder perceptions of Natural Flood Management and how it affects uptake across Hampshire”.

The 104,000 residents of the Scheme area made up the main audience for W&W and the LCAP identified some particular groups with whom the Scheme particularly wanted to work and who may have specific communication needs including, for example young families and physically and socially isolated people.

An evaluation review of the communication processes deployed across the Scheme has shown that an holistic approach has been adopted to delivering communications to the key stakeholder groups listed above. Communications were successfully produced and co-ordinated by a communications specialist within the team, as well as communication / producing communication materials being part of all roles within the delivery team and supported by volunteers. For example, *“from a Board perspective, the Scheme was very well managed, communication was transparent and consistent, with structured Board meetings providing detailed updates and case studies.”*

The evaluation data suggests that two key stakeholder groups were more of a challenge to engage with. These were populations in urban communities and some riparian landowners. The reasons for the challenges have been complex but the Scheme’s response to the challenges has been important for the overall success of the Scheme. The delivery team have tried multiple methods and different entry points for engagement. When these adaptations have not been effective the team have flexed their delivery methods to either provide a different route to achieving the outcome (as per the engagement on feeding ducks in Andover) or by ensuring information, skills and resources are available (should that audience become engaged at a later date) for example written guidance for landowners.

Communication Purposes and Methods

Chalk Stream poetry workshop in 2024 © Chris Mayne

Displaying invertebrates at Open Chalk Streams. Upper Test; 2024 © Maggie Shelton

The LCAP proposed that communications would “feature a variety of content and utilise a range of methods in order to engage the most diverse audience possible, with the aim of fostering ongoing interaction with the Scheme.”

The range of methods were focused into three key areas including development of ‘promotional and awareness raising materials’, ‘programme and project support materials’ and ‘behaviour change / social marketing materials.’ This communication activity continued the successful methods introduced in the development phase of the Scheme, of widened reach through local networks and organisations such as Parish Councils, established volunteer led community organisations and schools, co-design / co-production of materials where appropriate and community led innovation.

Promotional and awareness raising materials used included:

- Local advertising publications such as the Itchen Valley and Test Valley Forum magazines and the Overton, Oakley and Kempside Community Ad website
- Social media including HIWWT Facebook and Instagram pages and Youtube channel
- Local news media such as the Andover Gazette, the Andover Advertiser and the Hampshire Chronicle
- Blogs on the HIWWT website
- W&W e-newsletter for subscribers
- HIWWT magazine
- Partners magazines – Wessex Rivers Trust, South Downs National Park Authority, Wild Trout Trust and Test and Itchen Association
- Community magazines such as the Hill and Valley magazine
- Radio – Love Andover

Like the Watercress and Winterbournes communication assets listed above, communications should do more than just promote; they can actively foster learning, behaviour change, and skill-building. By also deploying creative and cultural mediums—like storytelling and poetry—into public outreach, Watercress and Winterbournes transformed temporary marketing into an enduring educational and cultural legacy.

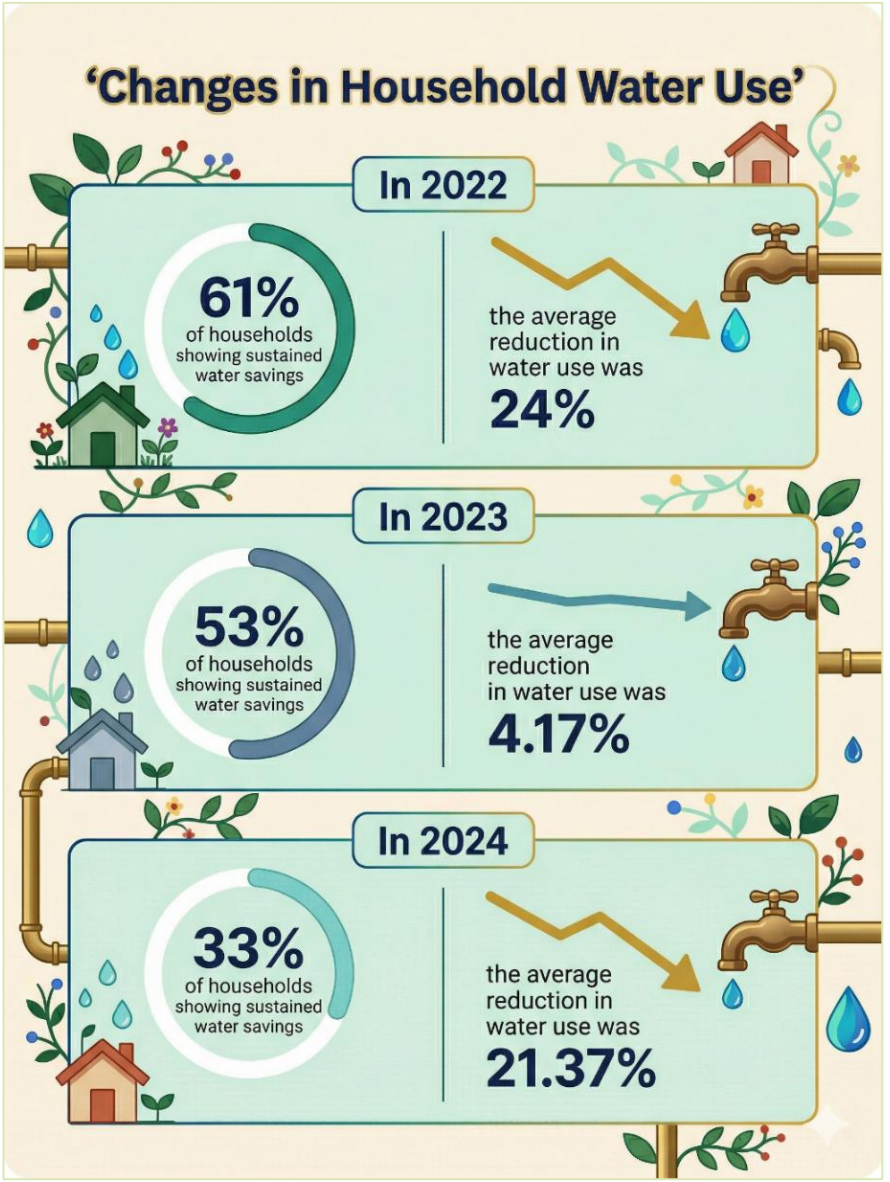
Behaviour Change Projects

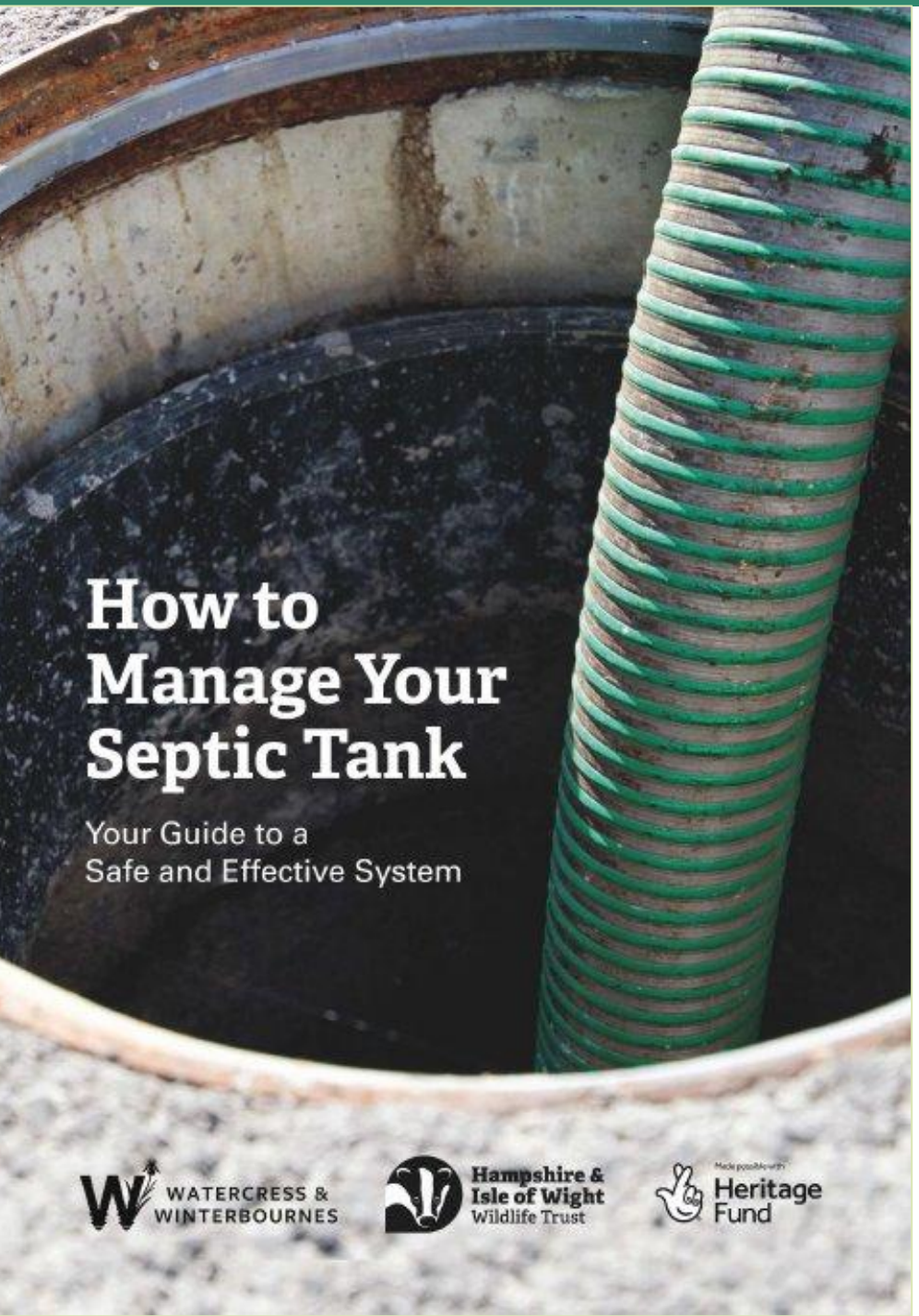
The behaviour change process ran throughout all scheme projects, however, the LCAP project descriptions outlined that three projects would have delivery focused specifically on behaviour change. These projects had defined behaviour change goals and included a social marketing approach to communications which is a process that aims to effect behavioural change to achieve social goals through the application of commercial marketing techniques. The Scheme's behaviour change projects were Save Every Drop, Septic Smart and Duck Feeding in Andover.

The communication activities and outputs for **Save Every Drop** included:

- **Water saving events** – 2,438 people attended water saving events (either face to face or online).
- **Water saving visits** – 168 home visits provided tailored water saving advice and fitted 448 items of equipment to enable water saving.
- **Local water saving champions** – 15 Community Catchment Group members and 7 other community leads have an increased understanding of the connection between water use and the health of the chalk stream, with 12 CCG members involved in running events and an additional 169 volunteers involved in delivering Save Every Drop leaflets.
- **Wider awareness raising** - 25,118 households have been reached with information leaflets and many more reached through social media and other online features.

The outcomes of these activities have achieved water savings in households as well as ensuring that there is a legacy of both information and informed local people who are prepared and equipped to support and inspire continued and wider behaviour change. The goal for water reduction was 15% less water used by participating households. The adjacent diagram shows what was achieved.





Within the **Septic Smart** project, a similar range of methods were deployed to effect behaviour change. These included:

• **Wide awareness raising** with residents with septic tanks on how to better manage their systems; 8,865 direct engagements through face-to-face events and direct leafletting, plus 16,124 reached through online events and communications. As well as 6,624 leaflets delivered directly to households, a further 12,000 were distributed through Valley Forum magazines.

• **Engagement** with 19 businesses, primarily pubs in areas which are off mains, to encourage better management of their systems.

• **Development of local septic smart champions** - 8 Chalk Stream Champions have engaged with residents and businesses.

• **Developing locally embedded support** through engagement with 2 septic tank sales and maintenance companies and 14 estate agents who were involved and handing out leaflets to clients.

•**Training** of septic tank maintenance operatives

• **Joint communications** with septic tank maintenance company

• **Legacy resources created** through an online septic tank management video being used through social media and on website / You Tube.

Duck Feeding in Andover was a behaviour change project with multiple points of entry for local people. The delivery team faced challenges in establishing these activities and re-imagined the project with a new method to achieve its behaviour change goals. It is understood that 1,832 local people have been reached with awareness raising and basic information on changing duck feeding habits in addition to local knowledge sharing at Four Fun Friday events, a local survey, duck feeding interactive games and a project in partnership with Test Valley Borough Council to provide interpretation and to continue to promote healthy food for ducks.

The evaluation notes that delivery of the behaviour change projects has been flexible when needed. For example, the public were not responsive to the original planned methods of delivering the Save Every Drop project, so the delivery was adapted to ensure that the important messages were still circulated in communities. These revised methods included messaging at engagement activities, during the activities of other projects and via upskilling local champions.

Some audiences that were seen as being able to champion behaviour change were more difficult to engage with than expected, in particular local businesses. Through trying different methods, the delivery team found that breaking down the complexity of the task into easily accessible messages worked best.

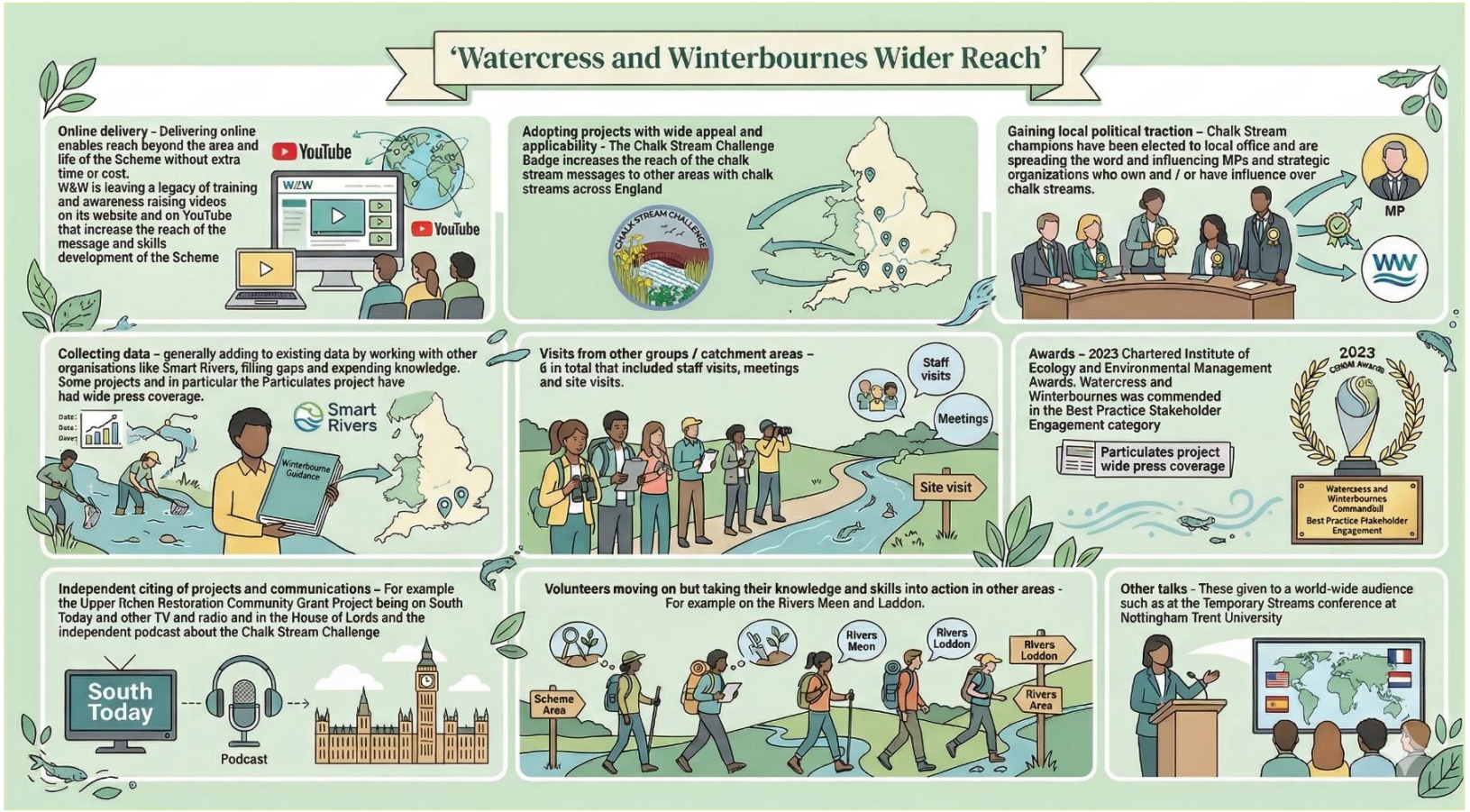
In addition to the behaviour change projects previously mentioned, the delivery team also had some additional behaviour change challenges. Engaging with some landowners to encourage change in chalk stream management caused some tension as techniques were well established and created a 'look' that people desired. The delivery team found that changing behaviour can take a long time and repetition is needed to steer hearts and minds to what a healthy chalk stream should really look like for native wildlife to thrive. This also needs a shared approach across strategic partners.

Behaviour Change Conclusions

The scheme delivery faced a significant challenge through pressures on staff time but was successful in providing resources to enable change and distributing those to a very wide audience with management to the forefront of people's minds. The activities have also created a legacy of information resources and a network of local people who are enabled to share information and support change.

Wider Reach and Recognition

Having wider reach is important for spreading what the Scheme does into other communities and for lobbying and influencing structural impactors on the target environment that are beyond the control of the Scheme.



Communication Conclusions

Communications faced some challenges that were similar to other parts of the Scheme delivery such as the impact of Covid and pressures on staff time. However, by adopting a flexible approach to delivery and maintaining both review and feedback loops, as well as high quality, consistent and cross project messaging, communications appear to have been very well and successfully received overall.

Delivery Processes Conclusion

The successful delivery of W&W demonstrates that the effectiveness of a Scheme can be measured in human connections. By moving beyond traditional "top-down" conservation, the Scheme has successfully woven chalk streams into the social fabric of the communities that surround them.

A significant legacy of the Scheme is found in the lasting friendships created while kick-sampling or removing INNS. What began as a series of environmental tasks has evolved into a great social network:

- **Community Cohesiveness:** By creating spaces where residents meet "on a stream," the Scheme has fostered a sense of belonging. Groups like the Upper Test Chalk Stream Conservation Group and Pillhill Brook Association have demonstrated that shared purpose leads to mutual respect and a stronger collective identity.
- **A "Fun" Approach to Science:** By including social elements to the delivery like the "cheese and wine" philosophy or the collaborative nature of citizen science, the Scheme has ensured that engagement felt less like work and more like a community celebration.

For many individuals, the Scheme was a catalyst for personal transformation:

- **Building Confidence:** Through learning by doing, hundreds of volunteers moved from being passive observers to authoritative local voices. Residents who once may have felt unqualified to speak now confidently present data to others.
- **The Environmental Awakening:** A key impact of the delivery process has been the increase in people's and community interest in the chalk steams. By including events, local storytelling and accessible entry points, the Scheme was able to provide stepping stones for people's awareness raising and learning.

The success of this community-focused approach rests on the strategic intertwining of engagement, skills, and communication:

- **Embedding Skills:** From the Chalk Stream Challenge for youth to specialised heritage restoration for adults, the Scheme has "future-proofed" the landscape by placing technical expertise directly into the hands of the community.
- **Communication and Recognition:** By celebrating every success, the Scheme ensured that volunteers felt their measurements meant something. This recognition has empowered local leaders to influence political and strategic partners, ensuring the vision outlives the funding.

The Watercress and Winterbournes Scheme has demonstrated that by fostering empathy, building confidence, and connecting neighbours, the Scheme has created a locally led movement where the community's shared ownership and passion are here to stay.

The Legacy of the Scheme

When the Scheme is over and the staff and resources are gone, the chalk streams, people and communities remain. To ensure that the changes that the investment has brought about in the lifetime of W&W continue, future action must be embedded with the local people and communities. This process takes time and skill and W&W have created a model of how to achieve this successfully.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) requires that Landscape Partnership Schemes leave a legacy of a lasting impact, sustainability, and long-term maintenance of heritage assets. Watercress and Winterbournes built legacy planning into their management systems and delivery approach and planned for:

- **Long-Term Maintenance –** the care and maintenance of capital projects is in place for chalk stream habitats and built heritage through landowner agreements that will last 10 years after project completion.
- **Habitat management plans / habitat guidance** are in place for capital projects and for key local sites and catchments
- **Sustainability** – the community structures and skilled local people will continue to provide Scheme benefits for communities and heritage, including building organisational capacity and skills for local people.
- **Digital Sustainability** - digital and online products are high quality, accessible and usable after the funding period ends.
- **Environmental Legacy** – project outcomes suggest that conditions have been created for environmental impacts to be reduced and for increased resilience to climate change.

A process of successfully working towards legacy is not an add-on but an integral part of all the work of a Scheme from day one. Every scheme programme, project and activity needs to be delivered in a way that ensures that actions are contributing to the overall sustainable work goals.

The Scheme leaves a vast legacy of tangible products many of which are digitally stored across a variety of web sites including those of the community and strategic partner organisations. In all cases the contribution of the Watercress and Winterbournes LPS is acknowledged. However, there is some scattering of products which means that some products and resources can be hard to locate.

Although there have been some in-scheme challenges to preparing for legacy, especially pressures on staff time, the key factors that have led to the success have been:

- adopting an approach that is embedded in community leadership.
- starting the legacy planning process as early as possible and ensuring it is a focus of all activities.
- focusing on projects that have been successful in bringing about change while being flexible in delivery.

Watercress and Winterbournes Legacy

Hundreds of digital and printed resources.

Some of the changes in the landscape, community and for people described in part one of this report.

A network of community based global experts in understanding chalk streams, their fragility and uniqueness.

Independent and sustainable locally led groups focused on improving their local chalk streams.

Increased skills and networks in and between local communities.

Potential impacts on habitats and climate change resilience through creating the conditions for habitat recovery, for example carrying out works in chalk streams and with landowners to establish an enviro-mment in which water voles are able to thrive and increase and mink should decline.

A cultural legacy that may continue to inspire greater connectivity to chalk streams from local people.

Lessons and Conclusions

In addition to demonstrating the difference a Scheme has made, an overarching evaluation purpose is to explore what worked well and less well to draw out learning and to share lessons, practical tips and ideas with others.

To draw out the lessons discussed in part three of this report, we have focused on analysing the evaluation through the lens of two evaluation questions. These are:

- What has the Scheme achieved and what has helped and hindered success, focusing on outcomes rather than outputs?
- How have the outputs led to the outcomes, giving particular consideration to how the method was designed to meet the needs of the audience?

Lessons for the Future: A Roadmap for Landscape Resilience

Based on the successes and challenges of the **Watercress and Winterbournes Landscape Partnership Scheme (2020-2026)**, the following lessons have been distilled to guide future landscape-scale initiatives. These insights focus on shifting from a "top-down" delivery model to an "organic" community-led approach that ensures environmental and social benefits can be sustained beyond the funding period.

Upper Test Chalk Stream Conservation mapping their work in 2025 © Maggie Shelton

Chalk Stream Champion at Bishops Sutton fair in 2023 © Sophie Evingar

Lessons and Conclusions Continued

1. The Strategy of "Organic" Governance

The primary takeaway from the Scheme is the need for non-prescriptive structures when developing community groups. While uniform templates are tempting, the W&W experience demonstrates that flexibility is the key to longevity.

W&W avoided a one-size-fits-all approach by using a flexible, tiered strategy based on a six-pillar "distance travelled" methodology (as set out on page 50) which assessed the key components needed for a sustainable community catchment group. Because the baseline positions of the groups varied, the delivery team adapted its support for each group.

Key lessons for the future from this include:

- **Avoiding Being Prescriptive:** The evaluation of W&W found that Community Catchment Groups (CCGs) develop most successfully when allowed over time to define their own identities, whether as formal Community Interest Companies (CICs) or informal volunteer networks. The Upper Test Conservation Group chose "the lowest level of structure that was possible while being a recognised organisation," choosing to operate simply under a basic constituted model with a local Charter, while the Upper Itchen Restoration group independently assessed what type of structure would best hep the, achieve their unique goals and formed a formal "Community Interest Company (UIR CIC)" rather than following a uniform template.

Lessons and Conclusions Continued

- **Using a "Warm Lead" Approach:** Through delivery, it emerged that relationships with landowners and stakeholders are best built through local volunteer "ambassadors" rather than cold outreach from staff. Identifying and empowering these local influencers early in the development phase is critical. Landowners were challenging to engage and using warm leads was a successful solution, starting with low-key, visible, volunteer-led activities like Riverfly surveys which built trust and relationships organically. Similarly, a volunteer established a vital relationship with the Bombay Sapphire distillery landowner through a casual interaction at an *Open Chalk Stream* public event, which opened the door for monthly monitoring on their private stretch of water.

- **Realistic Resource Allocation:** W&W management prioritised outcome quality over output quantity to both prevent staff burnout and ensure meaningful impact. However, a delivery team member explicitly stated: *"We had too many projects and not enough staff to deliver all of the projects as well as we would have liked,"* highlighting the consequences of over-promising outputs. Additionally, several staff positions that were designated as part-time in the Landscape Catchment Action Plan (LCAP) faced extreme workload pressures, causing documented *"stress points for both staff, personally, and for project delivery"* - in future, development teams need to avoid the "competition trap" of promising more activities with fewer staff for less money.

Tour of Alresford eel house using new grant-funded interpretation © Sophie Evingar

Promotion of water efficiency at Alresford Show in 2024 © Chris Mayne

Lessons and Conclusions Continued

2. Strategic Planning and Delivery

The evaluation of the effectiveness of delivery methods has shown that some approaches used by the W&W team have been key to the success of the Scheme. These have included:

- adaptive management (flexing delivery approaches when external shocks or low public responses occur),
- integrating monitoring/baseline data,
- and fostering community innovation through structured grants

Significantly, by creating a flexible approach to delivery methods, the team ensured that projects were delivered even when the public was unresponsive to the original delivery methods. For example, for the *Save Every Drop* project, the team flexed its delivery by shifting the focus from specific water efficiency events to direct community leafleting, messaging at wider engagement events and upskilling local champions. This pivot successfully resulted in 25,118 households being reached with information leaflets and 2,438 people discussing water-saving at events.

The evaluation draws together important lessons from how the Watercress and Winterbournes LPS was planned and delivered that can inform future landscape level delivery:

Evidence-based bid writing: The evaluation clearly shows that it is essential to ensure that outputs and outcomes are realistic, measurable, and founded on a clear baseline. The delivery team noted that the initial bid design created challenges because it was difficult to balance the heavy "level of activity, outputs and outcomes presented in the bid" against constraints such as staff resource.

Lessons and Conclusions Continued

- **Integrated Monitoring:** Similarly, the Watercress and Winterbourne experiences show that during the development stage it is essential to determine exactly what "change" your outputs will demonstrate and how outputs and outcomes will be measured. The delivery team directly recommended that future programs set aside a dedicated portion of the initial budget specifically for "including GIS skills and monitoring data analysis," as well as for gathering early baseline readings.

- **Organisational Identity:** Part of the success of this LPS was that it clearly established the Scheme's culture and values before engaging the public. The Scheme enshrined the culture and values in the Vision statement, emphasising *"a community-focused catchment approach"* and enabling *"communities to celebrate and champion their chalk stream heritage."* Moving forward the Scheme also ensured that this engaged and inclusive approach was maintained beyond the funding period in the new community led organisations. For example, The Upper Test group solidified its internal culture and values by writing a formal "Charter" to establish mutual respect, camaraderie, and clear expectations among its working members.

Chalk Stream Champion Gathering in 2024 © Chris Mayne

Chalk Stream Champions, Hazel and Sarah receiving their Wilder Award in 2023 for developing the Chalk Stream Challenge © HIWWT

Lessons and Conclusions Continued

- **Adaptive Management:** The Watercress and Winterbournes LPS were committed to applying an "iterative learning" model to programme and project delivery. The Scheme Board and Delivery Team reviewed delivery methods regularly and were prepared to flex approaches to meet core goals. So, when an invasive spiny-cheeked crayfish was discovered at Sparsholt College - the planned site for the native crayfish hatchery, instead of abandoning the initiative, the team successfully shifted operations to an alternative site where a brand-new, bio-secure ark site was engineered to protect the critically endangered native, white-clawed crayfish. Also, the original Education Programme designed a series of multiple classroom sessions, but when some schools could only commit to two visits, the team adapted its delivery to an assembly and a single riverbank session.

- **Fostering Innovation:** The Scheme created an environment where the community could innovate which also helped promote the central role of community engagement. In particular, the Scheme supported local ideas through structured grant schemes and through the provision of professional technical assistance to local groups as required by the local group's own agendas. Two examples of locally led innovations the Scheme supported are a small community grant of just under £5,000 to Abbotts Ann Primary School, giving the student-led Eco Team the autonomy to invent their own local water pledge cards and educational leaflets and the creation of the Chalk Stream Challenge Badge which was born entirely from community innovation, being created, designed and pioneered by two chalk stream champions who had experience in Girlguiding.

Lessons and Conclusions Continued

- **Risk Mitigation:** The experience of delivering W&W shows that it is essential to actively plan for risks outside the Scheme's direct control. This Scheme had to mitigate the initial delivery time lost to the COVID-19 lockdown in year one. To do this the Scheme's timeline was extended from a standard five-year framework to a six-year program. Risk mitigation planning could also have included participation risks at the Board level. In future to mitigate participation risks for smaller partner charities who struggled to justify uncompensated Board hours, the evaluation recommends that *Board time is funded where necessary / appropriate* in future schemes. Other mitigation could include rigorous documentation by partnership organisations to provide detailed information for smooth hand over to new staff and overlap periods between staff changes.

3. Principles of Community Engagement

Sustainable community independence must be the ultimate goal of all engagement activities. The evaluation of W&W delivery methods suggests that allowing a prerequisite of time, offering a "menu of options" for capacity building/skills, training in locations where the volunteers are and providing multiple entry points for diverse participation are keys to success.

The Scheme successfully built capacity by providing diverse, hands-on training opportunities rather than rigid volunteer requirements. This menu of training options resulted in:

293 people trained in specialist skills (invertebrate sampling, water quality monitoring, etc.).
145 people trained face-to-face and online to identify and remove invasive non-native species (INNS).
98 people trained in restoring and enhancing chalk stream habitats.

Mink monitoring workshop for land managers and volunteers in 2024 © Kathryn Boler

Annual chalk stream champion get together in 2023 at Whitchurch Silk Mill © Maggie Shelton

Lessons and Conclusions Continued

The Watercress and Winterbournes LPS appears to have been successful in developing locally led, sustainable structures that will take on the continued restoration of chalks streams beyond the funding period. The evaluation of the methods used suggest some key learning for future application including:

The Prerequisite of Time: Quality engagement cannot be rushed. The extended duration of this Scheme was a primary factor in its success; allow for longer timelines than standard landscape partnerships. The evaluation notes that community engagement requires an extensive investment of baseline hours and describes the extensive person hours it can take to achieve Scheme outcomes, especially in the field of community engagement. In trying to adjust landowner land-management techniques, the Delivery Team also noted that *"changing behaviour can take a long time and repetition is needed to steer hearts and minds."*

Professionalism and Equity: The evaluation of the Scheme demonstrates that effective engagement requires specific professional skill sets within the delivery team and all actions should be rooted in the principles of equity and shifting power toward the community. In the development phase the Scheme recognised that engagement requires a distinct, non-coercive professional skillset, employing a specialized, full-time Community Catchment Officer to facilitate local relationships. During delivery the community engagement skillset was essential to tailor methods for different communities and needs. The evaluation also found that the team promoted equity and shifted power to the community by maintaining a principle of "open access," for example through giving volunteer groups a level of autonomy over projects like the Tales from the Riverbank oral history recordings.

Lessons and Conclusions Continued

Recognising Organic Diversity: W&W offered multiple entry points to accommodate different community needs and accepted that communities will connect with the Scheme on their own terms rather than following a prescribed catchment plan. The Scheme accommodated different community preferences by offering scientific paths (like Smart Rivers monitoring) for data-driven volunteers, alongside creative paths (like the *Whispers of the Chalk Stream* arts project) for others. Also, by using the "distance travelled" model, the team recognised that groups started at very different baselines - Cheriton began with high organisational strength, whereas the Upper Test group required more intensive, hands-on coaching to close the capacity gap.

Capacity Building: The evaluation shows that the Scheme provided a "menu of options" for skills training, allowing individuals and groups to decide what they needed and when they needed it, while also using diverse media and methods to widen participation. For example, the Scheme provided a broad menu of training options, successfully upskilling 293 local people in technical tasks like invertebrate sampling, water quality monitoring, and historic brick structure restoration. Additionally, the Scheme distributed training videos, animations, and specialised physical reference materials (such as the *Winterbourne Guidance*) to build the long-term technical capacity of local land managers.

Volunteer Management: The evaluation shows that the Wildlife Trust's volunteer management capacity was highlighted as a key strength in successfully organising thousands of hours of contributed volunteer time. The three key successful methods used by the Delivery Team identified through the evaluation for volunteer management were:

- Meeting volunteers "where they are" and support their specific interests.
- Maintaining high visibility and avoiding prescriptive task lists.
- Focusing on achieving quality outcomes rather than simply pursuing high volunteer numbers.

To prevent volunteer dropout and keep tasks engaging, Catchment Group leaders emphasised a sociable approach to volunteering, explicitly advising others to *"provide hot drinks and biscuits and / or cheese and wine."*

Education session with Alresford and Cheriton Scouts, Cheriton, in 2022 © Tracy Standish

Pillhill Brook Association sampling riverflies. Pillhill Brook ~ 2025 © Maggie Shelton

Lessons and Conclusions Continued

3. Citizen Science as a Gateway to Advocacy

The evaluation of W&W found that citizen science became the "engine room" of the programmes and projects, providing both high-quality data and a powerful hook for long-term engagement. Highly standardised monitoring was deployed by volunteers over 7 catchments. The data produced was not just collected for internal use but was integrated directly into national systems to ensure professional validity.

Key successful delivery methods from W&W for future application included.

Data with Purpose: Through utilising recognised protocols (e.g., *Smart Rivers*, *Riverfly*) the Scheme ensured data contributes to national databases. This provides volunteers with a sense of "professional agency," knowing their work can trigger statutory action. For example, volunteers utilized standardized *Riverfly* invertebrate sampling protocols, which carry professional weight because the logged data can directly *"trigger action by the Environment Agency"* and vole surveys were integrated directly into the Wildlife Trust's *National Water Vole Database Project (NWVDP)* to track biodiversity trends on a macro scale.

Relationship Building: Trust-building between delivery staff and local citizens occurred naturally during "the non-toxic double checking of results" when reviewing stream samples together creating a low-pressure space for staff and volunteers to bond, building the strong relationships that the Scheme required. Local W&W group members reported that regular citizen science monitoring sessions served as a vital social anchor, noting it was *"not just looking down a microscope but chatting and building relationships within developing groups."*

Lessons and Conclusions Continued

- **Technical Translation:** W&W found that they needed a larger budget at Scheme level for translating complex data into accessible reports for the public and policymakers. However, at the community level, collaborative interpretation was successful, for example, in the Pillhill Brook Association, volunteers successfully translated complex metrics into accessible language for worried neighbours, showing them *"what the data actually says"* regarding local pollution. The Upper Itchen Restoration CIC translated their detailed water quality survey data into clear, factual talking points in order to approach local landowners and demonstrate exactly *"what's happening, and what it's doing to the ecosystem."*

5. Communication and "Digital Permanence"

Communication is not merely promotional; it is a vital tool for behavioural change and the preservation of project legacy. The evaluation shows that W&W delivery methods were successful in creating human connections to chalk stream habitats through storytelling, building scalable assets and creating accessible messaging. For example, the Chalk Stream Challenge Badge translated complex chalk stream ecology into fun, self-guided trails and activities. The asset proved so scalable that its reach extended far beyond the immediate funding area: **28 youth organisations** awarded the badges, with **14% of those organisations originating entirely outside the Scheme area** (including projects running in the Chilterns and Hertfordshire). Over **650 young people** completed the badge.

Raising awareness at the Alresford Show in 2023 © Chris Mayne

Pillhill Brook Association sampling riverflies. Pillhill Brook ~ 2025 © Maggie Shelton

Lessons and Conclusions Continued

- **The Power of Storytelling:** The evaluation shows that the Delivery Team found that emotional connection is a precursor to environmental action. To engage audiences who were not interested in hard data or citizen science, the Scheme used emotional storytelling to build an interactive entry point. The *Tales from the Riverbank* project trained and equipped local volunteers to record oral histories, culminating in community storytelling events and, similarly, the *Whispers of the Chalk Stream* project used poetry boxes, village exhibitions, and music to create a hyper-local connection, proving that creative communication successfully fosters a shared sense of environmental ownership.

- **Scalable Assets:** The Scheme was successful in creating "viral" legacy products - such as the *Chalk Stream Challenge Badge* - that can be easily adopted by groups outside the immediate project area and, therefore, spread the messaging, behaviour change and outcomes more widely. For example**,** the New Alresford Town Trust utilized a grant to produce a free, high-quality take-home A5 booklet, *The Alresford Eel House: History and Habitat (2022)*, to scale up public conservation awareness long after public open days concluded

- **Centralized Digital Legacy:** To prevent "digital decay," animations, training videos, and guidance documents (e.g., *Winterbourne Guidance*) need to be hosted on permanent, partner-supported platforms like the Wildlife Trust or Rivers Trust or should include clear signposting to them. For example, the Scheme filmed and uploaded permanent online septic tank management instructional videos to social media platforms and YouTube. The evaluation shows that a wealth of animations, training videos, and guidance documents remain hosted online, though it notes a risk that some resources are currently located across various partner websites and can be hard to find.

Lessons and Conclusions Continued

- **Accessible Messaging:** W&W broke down complex environmental tasks into simple, accessible messages, which was particularly useful when initial delivery plans fail to attract an audience. In the *Septic Smart* project, complex off-mains environmental regulations were condensed into simple, accessible leaflets distributed via local estate agents and tucked into local *Valley Forum* magazines. The Delivery Team retained the core messages but pivoted to alternative delivery methods.

- **Interactive Entry Points:** When introducing communities to the project the Delivery Team and community partners created hands-on activities to inspire an initial emotional connection, then provided "deeper" experiences that were led by the community's own interests. The *Duck Feeding in Andover* project captured public interest by utilising interactive duck-feeding games, local surveys, and "Four Fun Friday" events before introducing deeper behavioural changes. While the *Whispers of the Chalk Stream* initiative used a family-oriented winterbourne event featuring hands-on willow weaving and a "water vole picnic" to give families an easy, creative entry point into appreciating local wildlife.

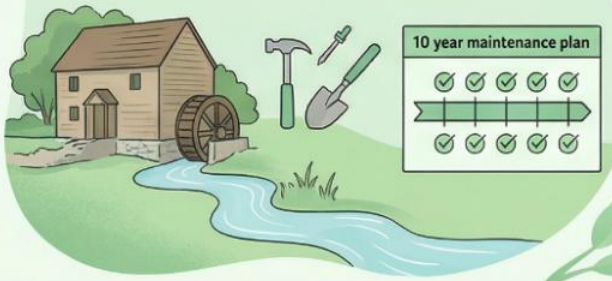
Raising awareness at the Alresford Show in 2023 © Chris Mayne

Watercress and Winterbournes Lessons for Achieving NHLF Outcomes

Outcomes for Heritage -

Heritage is better managed:
By establishing strong, sustainable, committed local groups the chalk streams are better managed now and will be into the future.

Heritage is in better condition:
Simple, cost-effective methods were used for built heritage restoration with low maintenance requirements, and all projects were accompanied by 10-year plans for maintenance.



Outcomes for people -

Developing skills through formal and hands on learning:
Capacity building included upskilling, people learning new skills, equipping participants to pass on skills to others & ensuring learning resources remain available after the Scheme.

Learned about heritage through informal learning opportunities:
Hands on activities were provided for community learning and interactive activities for young people.

Outcomes for communities -

Negative environmental impacts will be reduced:
Actions focused on finding out about the state of habitats and then creating the conditions for improvement combined with behaviour change.

More people and a wider range of people will have engaged with heritage:
The Scheme provided a breadth of projects including participatory activities. As well as ensuring that information has been spread widely and through in lots of different ways.

The local area and community will be a better place to live, work or visit:
The combination of restoration, monitoring and cultural activities have created a renewed connection with chalk streams.

Conclusion

The Scheme applied an intensive community engagement approach, working closely with local people, community organisations and strategic partners in a catchment-based approach and incorporating citizen science. This community led method has helped to build chalk stream resilience through embedding opportunities, information, skills and action and thereby fostering community ownership and ensuring a lasting legacy.

The ultimate lesson of Watercress and Winterbournes is that **landscape resilience is inseparable from community resilience**. By the end of the Scheme, the "veins" of the chalk streams were not just maintained by staff, but by trained **Chalk Stream Champions** and six independent community groups.

Future schemes should aim to be "catalysts" rather than "controllers" - providing the tools, training, and initial funding to spark a fire of local stewardship that continues to burn long after the final report is signed.

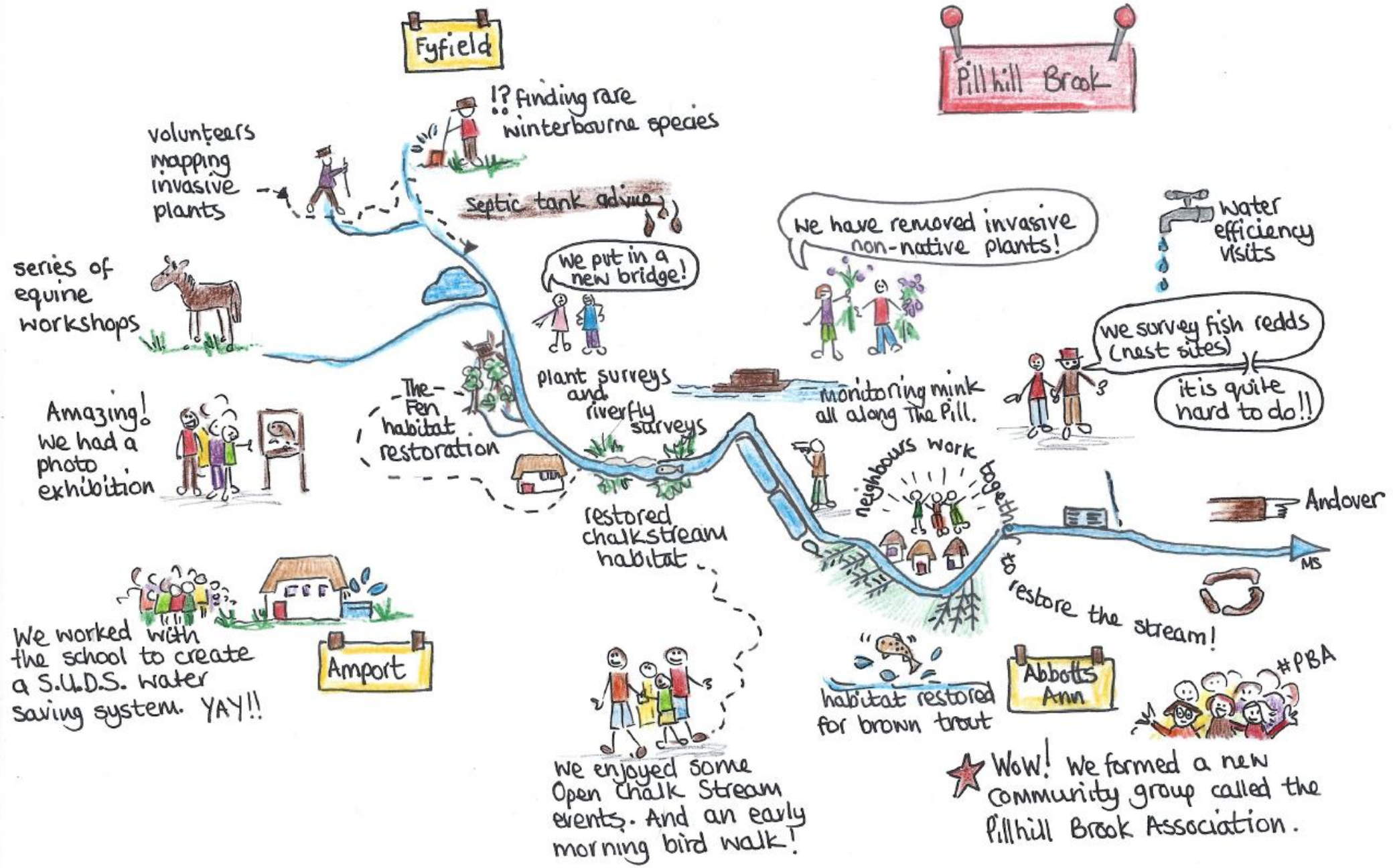
Watercress and Winterbournes - “chalk stream education, support, raising awareness, creating positive change, making a real value adding impact, empowering! You will be missed and long remembered”
(A Chalk Stream Champion)

Chalk Stream Champions doing a riverfly survey. Whitchurch; 2023 © Nicky Nicklin

Part Two: Activity Per Catchment

Photo credit: Brian Cartwright

Priorities identified on the Pillhill Brook	Actions taken	Project
To understand the water quality in the stream to improve biodiversity and resilience	• Volunteers trained to carry out monthly Riverfly sampling and water quality monitoring, linking in with the national Riverfly Partnership and the Angling Trust's Water Quality Monitoring Network. • Volunteers trained to carry out redds surveys to monitor spawning of brown trout	4.2 Chalk Stream Champions
To identify and record the wildlife within the catchment	• Training provided in water vole monitoring • Online talk programme provided including information about chalk stream wildlife • Trail cameras provided through W&W community grant scheme	4.1 Chalk Stream Events 4.2 Chalk Stream Champions
To increase awareness of the heritage and fragility of chalk streams	• Specialist talks and workshops provided about a wide range of chalk stream subjects • Promotion of Septic Smart messages	3.6 Open Chalk Streams 4.1 Chalk Stream Events 2.4 Septic Smart
To remove invasive non-native species and educate the community of the threat	• Training in identification of invasive species, followed by catchment walkovers to plot INNS • Volunteer-led removal of invasive species at Abbotts Ann Water Meadows • Provision of mink rafts for landowners and training in how to monitor mink for landowners and volunteers • Raising awareness of the issues surrounding INNS	2.5 Tackling Invasives 4.2 Chalk Stream Champions
To improve access to the stream to engage the community	• Installation of chalk stream quest trails • Open chalk stream events at Amport Fishery, Abbotts Ann Water Meadows, Amport Fen and Hawk Inn provided to allow community members to visit and learn about stretches of their local chalk stream • Projects to celebrate the chalk streams delivered – chalk stream photo exhibition, sharing stories collected	3.2 Roaming by the River 3.4 Tales from the Riverbank 3.5 Hidden Treasure Trails 3.6 Open Chalk Streams
To improve the habitat and river quality for wildlife and people	• Chalk Stream habitat management training delivered for riparian landowners in 2022 and PBA members in 2024. • Habitat restoration projects implemented at Abbotts Ann Water Meadows in 2020, Abbotts Ann village in 2023 and and Hawk Inn in 2024 • Erosion management at Abbotts Ann Water Meadows in 20230and Hawk Inn in 2024. • Habitat restoration and development of management ideas for Amport Fen with the PBA and Parish Council, followed by vegetation management carried out in 2026. • Delivery of land management workshop for equine keepers at Abbotts Ann Village Hall in 2024, followed by online webinars.	1.1 Chalk Stream Habitat Restoration 1.3 Stopping Sediments 4.3 Chalk Stream-friendly land management
To reduce water use in the catchment to improve resilience and improve the health of their chalk stream	• Water efficiency messaging and promotion of water saving household visits. • Support for Abbotts Ann C of E primary School's Slow the Flow project through the Education Programme and Community Grants Scheme	2.2 Grant Schemes 2.3 Save every drop 3.1 Education Programme



Priorities identified on the Upper Anton	Actions taken	Project
To provide access opportunities which will allow people to engage with chalk stream heritage, both natural and cultural	• Implementation of Chalk Stream Quest trails at Rooksbury Mill and Anton Lakes. • Delivery of Open Chalk Stream events at Carters Meadow so that people can visit and learn more about their local river • Attendance at Four Fun Friday events in Andover to engage with the public, allowing them to experience and learn more about chalk streams • Chalk Stream Challenge trails implemented at Rooksbury Mill and Charlton Lakes • Education sessions delivered with a wide range of schools and organised groups • Literature festival events and poetry / creative writing events held in Andover	3.1 Education Programme 3.4 Tales from the Riverbank 3.5 Hidden Treasure Trails 3.6 Open Chalk Streams
To encourage responsible behaviour around and along the river that will improve people's experiences, and support improvements of habitat	• Events to raise awareness about the problems with duck feeding, followed up with educational messaging in local publications and social media • Development of interpretation about duck feeding	1.1 Chalk Stream Habitat Restoration
To increase the removal of invasive non-native species and raise awareness through education	• Working with TARCA to remove invasive species and carry out catchment monitoring of botanical INNS • Provision of mink rafts and support for TVBC and TARCA to monitor for mink	2.5 Tackling Invasives 4.2 Chalk Stream Champions
To improve the habitat quality for wildlife and people	• Stream restoration at Carter's Meadow – taking the pond offline, desilting and restoring chalk stream channel • Removal of small structure at Carter's Meadow to allow fish passage • Improvement of stream habitat and flow at Anton Lakes • Management advice provided for manager of Carters Meadow site	1.1 Chalk Stream Habitat Restoration 1.3 Stopping Sediments 1.4 Spawning Habitats 4.3 Chalk Stream-Friendly Land Management
To improve the quality of the water in the streams to improve the health of the catchment	• Stream restoration at Carter's Meadow – taking the pond offline, desilting and restoring chalk stream channel • Installation of riparian fencing and ford crossing at Anton Lakes to reduce sediment ingress • Installation of berms and woody debris to channel at Anton Lakes to improve flow and diversity of habitat • Volunteer training and involvement in Smart Rivers, Riverfly and water quality monitoring. • Raising awareness of Septic Smart issues through local communications, presentations and leaflets	1.1 Chalk Stream Habitat Restoration 1.3 Stopping Sediments 2.3 Save every drop 2.4 Septic Smart 4.2 Chalk Stream Champions
To get the community involved in caring for their local chalk stream and giving them the skills to do so	• Raising awareness about water efficiency measures, including working in partnership with the housing associations. • Training provided in sampling, water quality monitoring, water vole surveys, INNS management including mink monitoring.	3.4 Tales from the Riverbank 4.1 Chalk Stream Events 4.2 Chalk Stream Champions

Image credit: Maggie Shelton

Priorities identified on the Bourne Rivulet	Actions taken	Project
To undertake a hydrogeological study for the purpose of reducing the impact of sediment	• Creation of management plans for priority areas for landowners / community to follow and better manage areas in the catchment • Installation of fencing to the stretches of winterbourne through Stoke and Hurstbourne Tarrant to stop livestock poaching, bank erosion and vegetation reduction	1.3 Stopping Sediments 4.2 Chalk Stream Champions
In-stream monitoring for biodiversity that could be mapped and monitored over time	• Local chalk stream champions trained in Riverfly, Smart Rivers and water vole surveys, as well as water quality monitoring. Two sites on the Bourne Rivulet regularly monitored.	4.2 Chalk Stream Champions
To educate landowners on how to manage their riparian/winterbourne land	• To provide a programme of events, on-site workshops and advice targeted at improving land management for chalk streams to key audiences • Landowner grant issued to equine owner in Hurstbourne Tarrant to fence off winterbourne to reduce poaching and sediment ingress by equines. • Winterbournes Management Guidance document developed and promoted to landowners. • Support provided by Community Catchment Officer in development of management plan for St Mary Bourne lake site	2.2 W&W Grant Schemes 4.3 Chalk Stream-Friendly Land Management
To increase community opportunity for walking and connecting with chalk stream heritage and wildlife	• Open chalk stream events delivered at St Mary Bourne lake stream, Hurstbourne Priors and Gangbridge Lane in Stoke • In-person engagements sessions with community about river restoration proposals • Education sessions with local schools • Chalk stream photography exhibition in St Mary Bourne • Community involvement in Sharing Stories project	3.1 Education Programme 3.4 Tales from the Riverbank 3.5 Hidden Treasure Trails 3.6 Open Chalk Streams
To improve the habitat quality for wildlife and people	• Habitat restoration / NFM implemented at St Mary Bourne lake stream in 2021 • Chalk stream restoration at Chapmansford Farm in 2025 • Installation of rock ramp at Hurstbourne Saw Mill to allow fish passage in 2020 • Creation of management plans for priority areas for landowners / community to follow and better manage areas in the catchment • Raising awareness of Septic Smart issues through local communications, presentations and leaflets	1.1 Chalk Stream Habitat Restoration 1.3 Stopping Sediments 1.4 Spawning Habitats 2.4 Septic Smart
To improve the water quality of runoff/waste from watercress farms and salad processing	• Development of plans for a three-pond wetland scheme at Vitacress St Mary Bourne site was planned but the planning application was stuck in planning for 2 years+ for technical reasons. Had to be withdrawn due to complexities over EA permitting linked to planning application. Vitacress have now paused their plans for the wetlands while the EA permits are considered.	1.6 Vitacress Wetland Creation Scheme

Image credit: Maggie Shelton

Priorities identified on the Upper Test	Actions taken	Project
To increase community opportunity for walking and connecting with chalk stream heritage and wildlife	• Constructed accessible path, viewing platform and seating at Laverstoke Pond in 2021 • Supported new permissive path at Laverstoke through the Community Grants Scheme in 2025 • Installed Chalk Stream Quest at Whitchurch Millennium Meadow, Laverstoke and Freefolk Millennium Green and through Overton in 2026. • Held Open Chalk Stream events at Bombay Sapphire, Flashetts, Freefolk and Bere Mill, Laverstoke Pond, Tufton and Whitchurch Silk Mill to allow community members to visit and learn about stretches of their local chalk stream • Held in-person engagement sessions with community about river restoration proposals at Flashetts • Delivered multiple education sessions with local schools and organised groups • Held a chalk stream photography exhibition in Whitchurch and poetry / creative writing workshops and author-talks in Whitchurch and Overton. • Community involvement in Sharing Stories project – both oral history recorders and those sharing their stories.	2.2 Community Grant Scheme 3.1 Education programme 3.2 Roaming by the River 3.4 Tales from the Riverbank 3.5 Hidden Treasure Trails 3.6 Open Chalk Streams
To remove all invasive flora and educate people about the impact of spreading INNS	• Volunteer-led and contractor-led removal of invasive species including the removal of parrot's feather at Laverstoke Pond and the treatment of Japanese Knotweed in Overton. • Volunteers trained to be able to identify and remove INNS in the future and are willing to take this on	2.5 Tackling Invasives 4.2 Chalk Stream Champions
To educate landowners on how to manage their riparian/winterbourne land	• Landowner grants scheme promoted for sediment / pollution mitigation schemes. • Land advice provided for identified landowners and follow-up recommendations. • Winterbournes Guidance document developed for landowners	2.2 W&W Grant Schemes 4.3 Chalk Stream-Friendly Land Management
To enhance Laverstoke Pond, making it a space for locals to enjoy and appreciate their water environment	• Constructed new accessible path, viewing platform and seating at Laverstoke Pond in 2021 • Supported installation of new permissive fenced path at Laverstoke through the Community Grants Scheme in 2025	1.1 Chalk Stream Habitat Restoration 3.2 Roaming by the River
To improve the habitat quality for wildlife and people	• Habitat and river restoration works delivered at Flashetts with involvement from landowners and volunteers – phase 1 in 2021 and phase 2 in 2025 • Creation of management plans for Laverstoke Pond and Whitchurch Millennium Meadow to allow landowners / community to follow and better manage areas in the catchment	1.1 Chalk Stream Habitat Restoration 1.3 Stopping Sediments 1.4 Spawning Habitats
To restore and celebrate built heritage structures associated with water meadows	• Restoration of 5 historic water meadow structures at Bere Mill in 2021 involving restoration contractor, working alongside volunteers. • Online talks provided about key local heritage subjects such as water meadows and watercress growing. • Interpretation provided about the heritage of water meadows within the newly updated Mills trail.	3.3 Restoring our Heritage Structures 4.1 Chalk Stream Events 4.2 Chalk Stream Champions
To get the community involved in caring for their local chalk stream and giving them the skills to do so	• Volunteers trained in redds surveys, invertebrate surveys (Riverfly and Smart Rivers), water quality testing, water vole surveys, water safety, habitat restoration, brickwork restoration, INNS ID and removal. Upper Test Conservation Group formed in 2025 to take forward the work of W&W. • Raising awareness of Septic Smart and water efficiency messaging (scouts involved in leafleting local households about water efficiency measures)	3.4 Tales from the Riverbank 4.1 Chalk Stream Events 4.2 Chalk Stream Champions

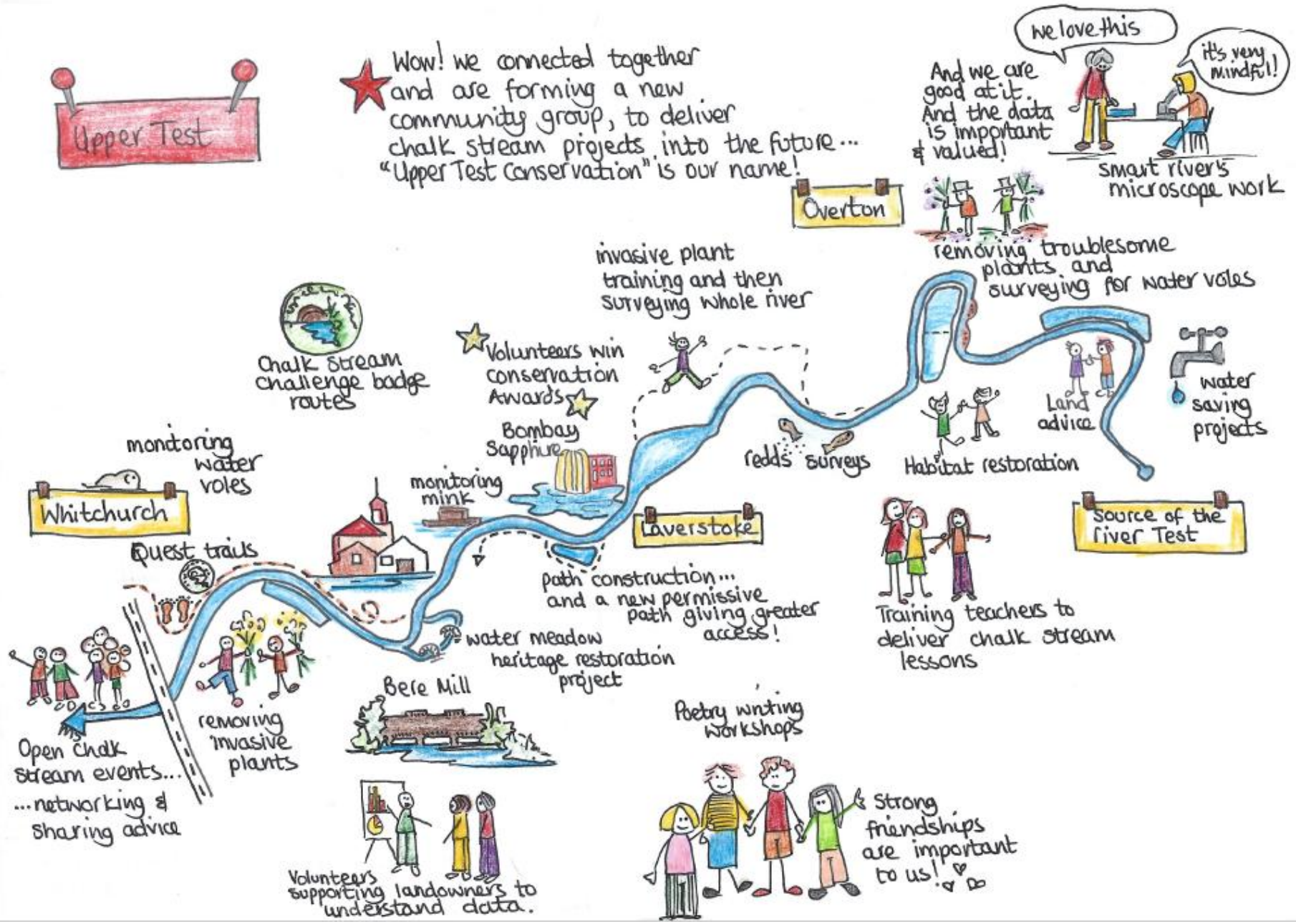


Image credit: Maggie Shelton

Priorities identified on the Candover Brook	Actions taken	Project
To celebrate and increase awareness of local heritage	• Restoration of water meadow structures at Totford Farm in 2025 and installation of interpretation about water meadows but also including links to chalk stream species vis the Chalk Stream Quest QR codes	3.3 Restoring our Heritage Structures 3.5 Hidden Treasure Trails
To improve an existing walking route to make it circular and give a higher heritage value	• Held Open Chalk Stream events at Yavington Beat	3.2 Roaming by the River 3.6 Open Chalk Streams
To improve and protect river habitat along a stretch of the stream upstream of the Grange Lakes	• Installation of armored ford crossings and fencing at Swarraton to reduce stop livestock poaching and reduce bank erosion. Support for landowners in managing the land through grazing to reduce sediment ingress. • Initial work to pull together landowners and look at feasibility of restoring the winterbourne through Preston Candover – now picked up through SE Water proposed works.	1.1 Chalk Stream Habitat Restoration 1.2 Natural Flood Management 1.3 Stopping Sediments
To increase the removal of invasive non-native species and raise awareness through education	• Volunteers trained to be able to identify and remove INNS in the future • Volunteer-led removal of invasive species including Himalayan Balsam and Monkey Flower.	2.5 Tackling Invasives 4.2 Chalk Stream Champions
To improve the habitat quality for wildlife and people	• Wetland and stream creation at West Lea Fam Shop – turning a disused watercress bed into a more naturalised wetland and new stream. • Surveys carried out for redds, invertebrates and water voles – volunteers trained to deliver these going forward. • Smart Rivers training provided for volunteers and volunteer sessions held in Northington and Swarraton Village Hall to complete seasonal sampling	1.1 Chalk Stream Habitat Restoration 4.2 Chalk Stream Champions
To reduce the volume of fine sediment getting into the stream	• Installation of armored ford crossings and fencing at Swarraton to reduce stop livestock poaching and reduce bank erosion. Support for landowners in managing the land through grazing to reduce sediment ingress. • Online programme of chalk stream talks about chalk stream issues and management, • In-person and online workshops for equine keepers. • Landowner grants scheme promoted for sediment / pollution mitigation schemes. • Land advice provided for identified landowners and follow-up recommendations. • Engagement with farm cluster group about Smart Rivers sampling and findings.	1.3 Stopping Sediments 2.2 W&W Grant Schemes 4.3 Chalk Stream-Friendly Land Management
To secure the long-term survival of white-clawed crayfish in Hampshire	• Development of breeding centres at Wildheart Animal Sanctuary and Marwell leading to the release of captive-born white-clawed crayfish into the Candover Brook. Construction of Ark Site in North Hampshire to secure protected population of white-clawed crayfish. • Online talks delivered about white-clawed crayfish	1.5 Conserving our Native Crayfish

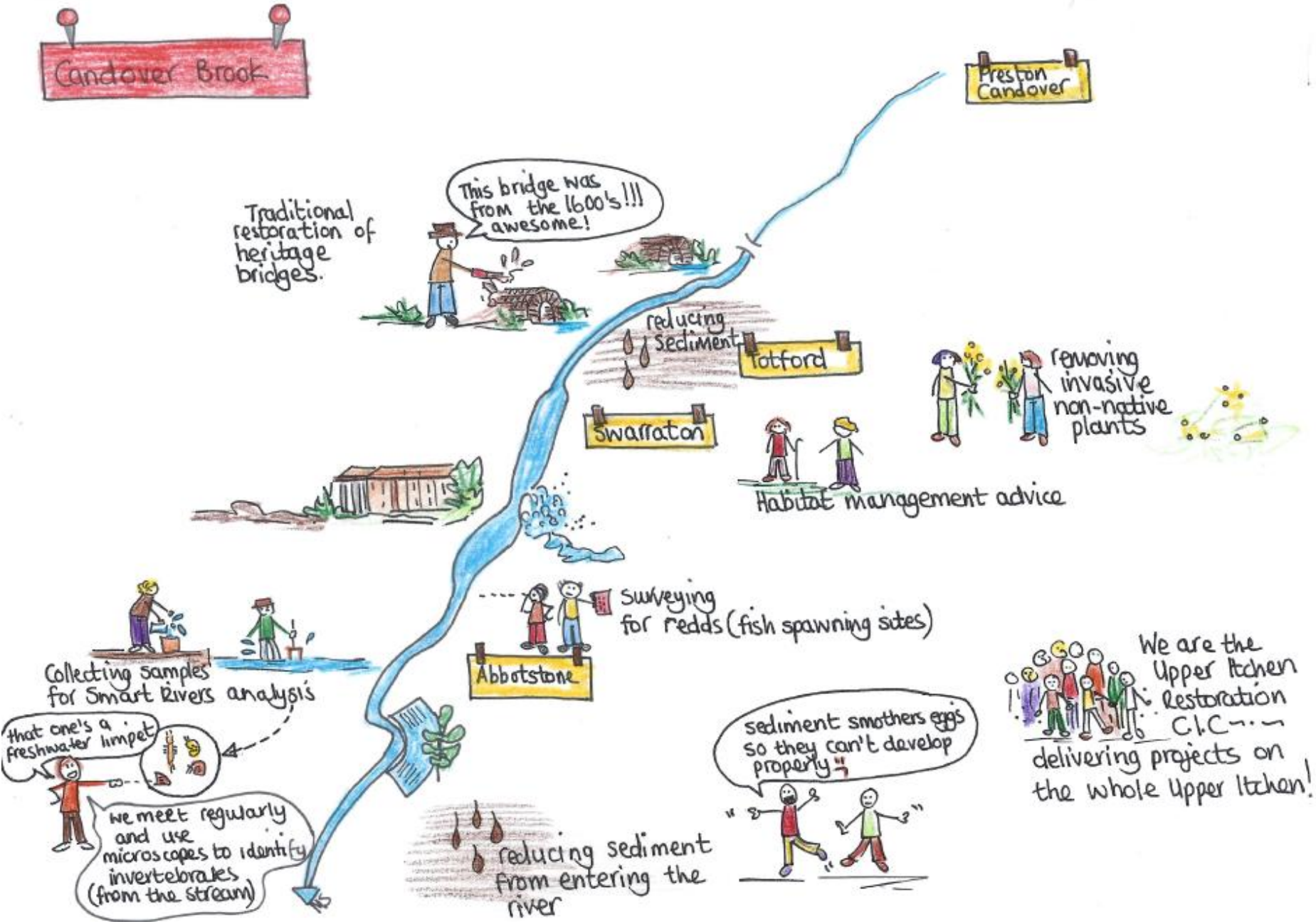


Image credit: Maggie Shelton

Priorities identified on the River Arle	Actions taken	Project
To provide opportunities for engagement with the chalk stream and its heritage	• Installation of Chalk Stream Quest through Alresford and shortened trail at Bishops Sutton • Community grant support for heritage trail interpretation boards and eel house interpretation. • Delivery of Open Chalk Stream events at The Watercress Company, Drayton Farm, the Watercress Beds, Millennium Way and Soke Bridge. • Chalk Stream Photography exhibitions held in Alresford Library and Alresford Community Centre • Sharing Chalk Stream Stories event held in Bishops Sutton Village Hall in 2025. • Delivery of Open Chalk Stream events at The Watercress Company, Drayton Farm, the Watercress Beds, Millennium Way and Soke Bridge.	3.2 Roaming by the River 3.4 Tales from the Riverbank 3.5 Hidden Treasure Trails 3.6 Open Chalk Streams
To collect scientific data to inform and educate the wider community about the chalk stream and the issues facing it	• Volunteers trained in redds, water vole, water quality, Riverfly and Smart Rivers surveys. • Upper Itchen Restoration CIC supported to continue monitoring and sharing data. • Upper Itchen Restoration CIC supported through community grant scheme to deliver Particulates in the Upper Itchen research project.	4.1 Chalk Stream Events 4.2 Chalk Stream Champions
To create a new nature reserve and manage it to be an example of best practice to others	• Delivery of land management workshop for equine keepers at Bishops Sutton Village Hall in 2024, followed by online webinars in 2025. • Visits to exemplar sites for landowners and key community members – Winnall Moors and Westfair Restoration site.	4.3 Chalk Stream-Friendly Land Management
To improve the habitat quality for wildlife and people	• Improvements to the footpath on the Millennium Way carried out in 2022 alongside improvements to the bank and marginal vegetation and installation of fencing to prevent future erosion. • Habitat management advice provided to Old Alresford Parish Council and to many of the riparian landowners on the Arle. • Installation of bat boxes along riparian corridor by Hampshire Bat Trust, supported by W&W community grant • Volunteer-mapping of sediment pathways	1.1 Chalk Stream Habitat Restoration 1.3 Stopping Sediments
To secure the long-term survival of white-clawed crayfish in Hampshire	• Development of breeding centres at Wildheart Animal Sanctuary and Marwell leading to the release of captive-born white-clawed crayfish into the Candover Brook. Construction of Ark Site in North Hampshire to secure protected population of white-clawed crayfish. • Online talks delivered about white-clawed crayfish	1.5 Conserving our Native Crayfish 4.1 Chalk Stream Events
To educate landowners on how to manage their riparian/winterbourne land	• Production of the new winterbournes guidance document • Provided a grants scheme for landowners to deliver 'river-friendly' land improvements • Provided face to face land advice and written recommendations to riparian landowners on the Arle • Worked with landowners and local volunteers to remove botanical INNS and to monitor mink. Upper Itchen Restoration CIC will continue to tackle INNS post W&W.	2.2 W&W Grant Schemes 4.3 Chalk Stream-Friendly Land Management
To reduce water use in the catchment to improve resilience and improve the health of their chalk stream	• Delivery of Save Every Drop water efficiency campaign including attendance at events and delivery of leaflets throughout Alresford by members of the Arle Rotary and New Leaf.	2.3 Save every drop

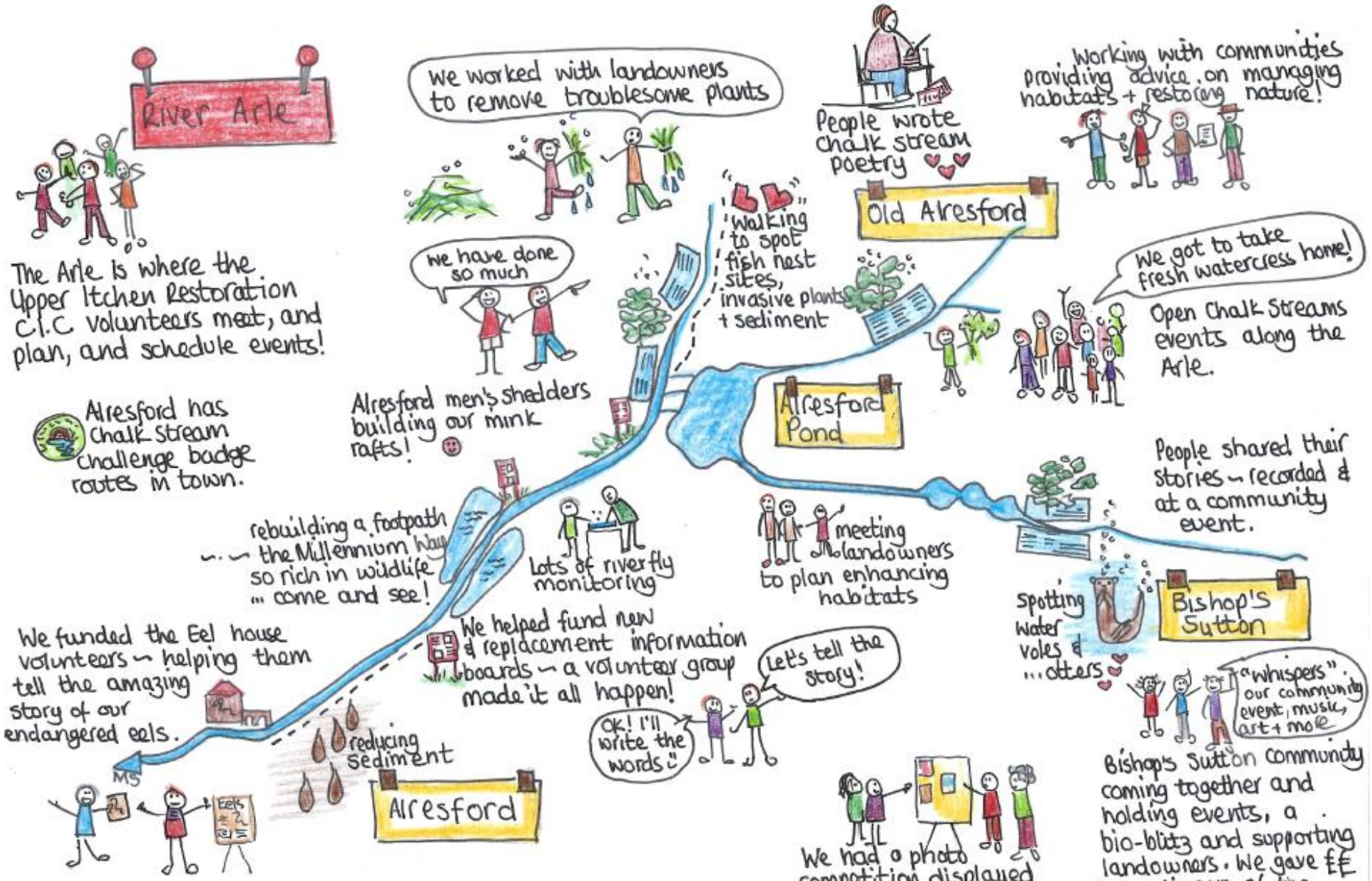


Image credit: Maggie Shelton

Priorities identified on the Cheriton Stream	Actions taken	Project
To reduce the impact flooding has on the village through awareness raising	• Raising awareness of NFM through NFM workshop and questionnaire • Reduce the volume of sediment getting into the streams by delivering improvements in priority areas • Installation of sediment mitigation schemes on Dark Lane and Flower Pots Hill • Online talks about flood management	1.2 Natural Flood Management 1.3 Stopping Sediment 4.1 Chalk Stream Events
To raise awareness of the problems caused by soil and silt entering the chalk stream	• To engage school children and uniformed groups in an education programme • To educate the community in all there is to know about the natural and built heritage of chalk streams in their local area • To provide a wide variety of training opportunities for volunteers to get involved in testing for water quality and other aspects of the scheme • Design of wider NFM / sediment mgt proposals for National Trust for Hinton Ampner site • Volunteers trained in redds, water vole, water quality, Riverfly and Smart Rivers surveys.	3.1 Watercress and Winterbournes Education Programme 4.1 Chalk Stream Events 4.2 Chalk Stream Champions
To improve the local village green that runs along the stream for the enjoyment of the local community	• Wildflower planting by school children on riparian margins on village green and changes to mowing regime • Installation of check weirs into sediment ditch on Flower Pots Hill in 2025 • Installation of new bench on village green	1.1 Chalk Stream Habitat Restoration 1.3 Stopping Sediment 3.2 Roaming by the River
To increase the removal of invasive non-native species and raise awareness through education	• Volunteer-led removal of invasive species especially monkey-flower • Training of volunteers to be able to identify and remove INNS, including monitoring of mink rafts	2.5 Tackling Invasives 4.2 Chalk Stream Champions
To improve public access and allow the community to connect more with their chalk stream environments	• To make improvements to existing rights of way in line with actions found during the access audits • Delivery of Open Chalk Stream events at Cheriton Mill Beat and the Source of the Itchen. • Chalk Stream Photography Competition exhibition in Cheriton Village Hall	3.2 Roaming by the River 3.4 Tales from the Riverbank 3.6 Open Chalk Streams
To improve the habitat quality for wildlife and people	• Provided a grants scheme for landowners to deliver 'river-friendly' land improvements • Provided face to face land advice and written recommendations to riparian landowners on the Arle • Installation of sediment trap on Dark Lane in 2021 • Habitat restoration works to Tichborne Home Beat in 2021 • Habitat restoration works to Cheriton Mill Beat in 2025 • Winterbourne restoration at Hinton Ampner in 2025 • Development of Catchment Habitat Management Plan for the Cheriton Stream, including multi-stakeholder workshops • Delivery of weed management training by Wild Trout Trust in 2025.	1.1 Chalk Stream Habitat Restoration 1.3 Stopping Sediments 4.3 Chalk Stream- Friendly Land Management
To secure the long-term survival of native crayfish in Hampshire	• Habitat works for native crayfish at Cheriton Mill Beat in 2025	1.5 Conserving our Native Crayfish

Image credit: Maggie Shelton

Part Two: Project Evaluations

Photo credit: Terry Whittaker/2020VISION

Project Evaluation Summaries

The following pages provide a summary of the evaluations for each project as provided by each of the project leads:

- 1.1 Chalk Stream Habitat Restoration
- 1.2 Natural Flood Management
- 1.3 Stopping Sediments
- 1.4 Spawning Habitats
- 1.5 Conserving our native Crayfish
- 1.6 Vitacress Wetland Creation Scheme
- 2.1 Building Sustainable CCGs
- 2.2 Watercress and Winterbournes Grants Scheme
- 2.3 Save Every Drop
- 2.4 Septic Smart
- 2.5 Tackling Invasives
- 3.1 Watercress and Winterbournes Education Programme
- 3.2 Roaming by the River
- 3.3 Restoring our Chalk Stream Structures
- 3.4 Tales from the Riverbank
- 3.5 Hidden Treasure Trails
- 3.6 Open Chalk Streams
- 4.1 Chalk Stream Events
- 4.2 Chalk Stream Champions
- 4.3 Chalk Stream-Friendly Land Management

Photo credit: Maggie Shelton

Programme 1: Resilient Chalk Streams | 1.1 Chalk Stream Habitat Restoration

Outputs achieved

- 4.97 km chalk stream improved – *photos of the restoration on the Millennium Way, River Arle project and at Abbotts Ann on the Pillhill Brook are included below.*
- 0.0714 sq. km floodplain enhanced
- 63 volunteers with practical restoration skills
- 1269 hours of volunteer time spend on habitat restoration projects

Outcomes achieved

- Priority species (water vole, crayfish, salmonids) and habitats will be in better ecological status within restored or enhanced sites post project
- An increased perception of 'engagement and ownership' with the headwater habitats amongst engaged volunteers
- The presence of well-trained volunteers across the catchment area, facilitating continued management of river and floodplain habitats post 2025.
- A direct increase in amenity value for local communities – many of which already value these environments highly.
- People will learn about the issues of feeding ducks bread and chose other options.

What Went Well

- Surpassed chalk stream habitat restoration targets by almost double (4.97km vs 2.5km), completing 19 river and floodplain habitat schemes across all seven watercourses in the W&W programme. Projects spanned a diverse range of scales and landowner types, from smaller volunteer friendly habitat enhancements for individual riparian owners to river restoration for larger estates and strategic partners.
- The delivery of the chalk stream habitat projects has helped foster and develop relationships with riparian owners and communities throughout the project area, establishing a lasting legacy.

What Went Less Well

- Staff turnover and a period of sick leave meant that momentum was lost on some projects and not regained until the final year of the project. However, the move from paid staff to a consultancy arrangement was agreed in the final 18 moths of the scheme which enabled delivery to progress at an increased rate.
- The programme delivered 0.07km² of floodplain habitat enhancement/restoration, some way short of the 0.2km² target. While floodplains are naturally smaller in headwater regions and landowners and constraints made delivery of these projects within the timescale of the scheme a challenge, opportunities to meet this metric likely remained.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1.1 Chalk Stream Habitat Restoration continued

What would we do differently next time

- Start with a review of the project opportunities and make some tough decisions as to which projects to prioritise and which to potentially drop rather than this occurring organically.
- An additional Project Assistant role could have provided a lot of benefits, helping to maintain a more consistent approach to admin, providing continuity during staff changes, eliminating lone working issues, and allowing for more in-house capital delivery, saving on contractor costs.
- Rolled out management plans throughout the programme rather than collating into a single task at the end of the programme. This approach would have ensured a more seamless transition between project leads.

What difference has the project made

- In the short-term 4.97km of chalk stream and 0.07km² of floodplain have been restored/enhanced, reinstating natural processes and enhancing the ecology and resilience of the headwaters of both the Test and Itchen.
- Restoring natural processes allows these habitats to flourish overtime, increasing climate resilience and supporting a broader range of priority species. By combining the chalk stream and winterbourne guidance documents with active engagement—working alongside volunteers, landowners, and strategic partners—we are securing the enduring stewardship of these vital headwaters.

Champagne Moments – the best moments of the project

- The Carters Meadow project *(photos below show Carters Meadow before, during and after works)* and the Hinton Ampner winterbourne restoration are groundbreaking in their approach and have become great case studies for innovation.
- Wrapping up the programme with both a watercress bed project and a winterbourne restoration project delivered in the final year.

Fantastic failures

- Relying on the already significantly delayed EA permits to arrive – contractors mobilised ready to start only to immediately be stood down again until pending consent.
- The most difficult moment was facing an unexpected backlash to the fencing at Swarraton. Although public engagement sessions were held, a lot of time and effort could have been saved if the door of one property had been knocked on.


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Programme 1: Resilient Chalk Streams | 1.2 Natural Flood Management

Outputs achieved

- NFM/ restoration work in St Mary Bourne will have reduced the risk of flooding in two villages *(Community engagement leaflet shown below with a photos of a hard revetment before the work, then replaced with a geotextile revetment during the works) .*
- 245m of chalk stream habitat better managed in St Mary Bourne.
- 59 stakeholders with increased knowledge of Natural Flood Management.
- 78 community members and landowners with increased knowledge of Natural Flood Management.

Outcomes achieved

- Chalk stream habitat less damaged by flooding and silt input
- People, property and infrastructure are better protected from flooding
- People understand the need to work sympathetically to protect their chalk stream heritage
- Communities understand how their land management can play a part in managing flood risk and work collectively to achieve this
- Volunteers understand the role of land management and NFM measures in reducing flooding.
- People have the skills needed to balance flood and environmental protection.

What Went Well

- NFM schemes to be implemented in both the priority areas of St Mary Bourne and Cheriton. In St Mary Bourne, 245m of watercourse is now better managed for flow. In Cheriton, W&W is supporting the design and permitting of a scheme to manage 12,500 sqm for water storage and flow reduction, with delivery anticipated for Autumn 2026.
- Developing the Cheriton NFM plans provided a platform to engage the local community on the specific challenges of flood risk and implementing natural flood management in a ground water dominated headwater catchment.

What Went Less Well

- Finding NFM opportunities proved difficult - due to a combination of limited time and the challenges associated with implementing NFM measures in groundwater dominated headwaters. As flood risk is caused by a combination of high groundwater and surface run-off, traditional NFM measures are not as effective, as they are built to handle peak flow during a heavy rainfall event whilst groundwater operates on a timescale of weeks or months.

1.2 Natural Flood Management continued

What would we do differently next time

- With hindsight it would perhaps have been more sensible to have geared something around flood resilience at a property/community level and surface-water flooding from road/lane networks. This could have had greater impact.
- Shift the focus from specific NFM intervention and instead prioritise restoring natural hydrological and ecological function which will realise both drought and flood resilience.

What difference has the project made

- Opportunities to engage with local communities have improved their understanding of groundwater, flood risk and the challenges of NFM and the need for wider land management changes.
- Working with key landowners and demonstrating tangible benefits of improved land management for flood resilience encourages wider adoption in the catchment.

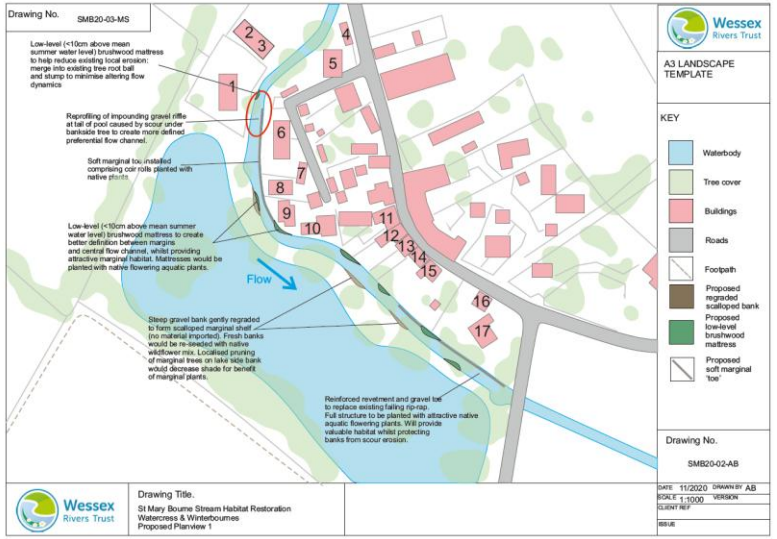
Champagne Moments – the best moments of the project

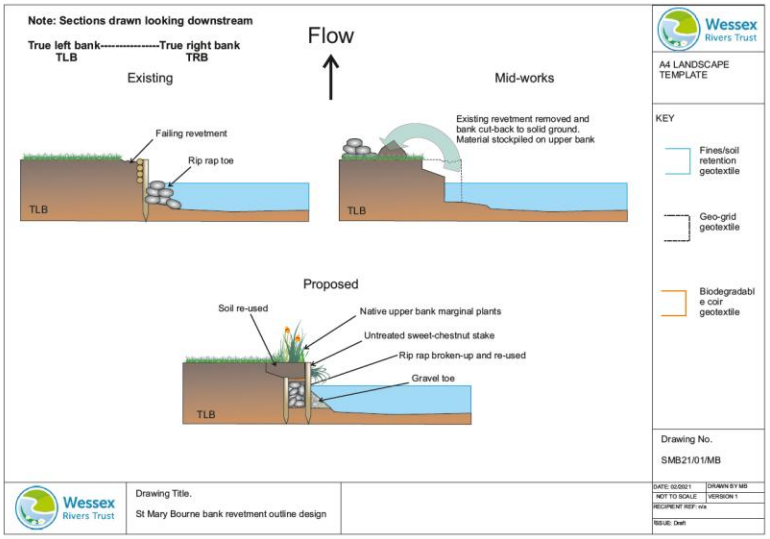
- Mediating and improving the relationship between the Cheriton community and the National Trust. Following a period of land management transitions that coincided with two exceptionally wet winters, local perception had incorrectly attributed increased road flooding to National Trust interventions. Through engagement, I helped the community to understand the complexities of groundwater-driven headwater flood risk.

Fantastic failures

- None but the change in staff members meant that the full National Trust scheme at Hinton Ampner was only partially delivered through W&W. The remaining work will be delivered later in 2026 through additional funding.

Below: Designs for the St Mary Bourne Lake Stream NFM project





Programme 1: Resilient Chalk Streams | 1.3 Stopping Sediments

Outputs achieved

- 9 sediment mitigation and management measures installed (a further 4 planned for spring 2026) – *photos show the implementation of a sediment trap in Dark Lane, Cheriton to reduce run-off down Dark Lane from entering the Cheriton Stream at the bottom.*

Outcomes achieved

- Fine sediment and nutrient input reduced resulting in healthier chalk headwaters
- Greater connection of people with their local environment / natural heritage
- Greater sense of ownership of their local area

What Went Well

- We completed 9 Stopping Sediment projects with another 4 planned for Spring 2026. These projects ranged from addressing point-source sediment input (dog dips, fords, riparian fencing) to diffuse run-off in the wider catchment (pasture management, cross drains and hedgerows).
- The land advice visits delivered through the Chalk Stream-Friendly Land Management project identified a number of sediment mitigation projects with landowners that could then be delivered through the Stopping Sediment project.

What Went Less Well

- A lot of time was wasted waiting for Hampshire County Highways and other stakeholders to fully engage with road run-off proposals. It would have been more productive to focus on agricultural run-off from the beginning.

1.3 Stopping Sediments continued

What would we do differently next time

- Dedicate more time to developing relationships with landowners about sediment projects to address diffuse run-off.
- An additional Project Assistant role for the capital works would have been beneficial. The stopping sediment projects are heavily reliant on engagement with statutory bodies and landowners that require a lot of chasing to keep up momentum. Such tasks could have been “kept warm” by a Project Assistant whilst the Project Officer was developing other projects.

What difference has the project made

- In the short term, many of the projects will reduce the amount sediment input to the headwaters, improving ecological condition.
- In the long term, engagement with landowners and the community through delivery of projects but also wider land management advisory visits, has resulted in a better understanding of sediment issues and how we can address them long-term.

Champagne Moments – the best moments of the project

- After unexpected earlier than usual heavy rainfall making ground conditions unsuitable for transport of gravel for armouring a ford, working collaboratively with the landowner and grazier to find a solution to store the already delivered gravel somewhere safe until site was accessible again.

Fantastic failures

- To install a project to address a point source sediment issue, to immediately find out after the next rainfall event it didn’t work as well as expected and the design had to be revised – *photos of the sediment ditch in Cheriton before and after check weirs had been installed and then after redesign to improve functionality.*

Outputs achieved

- 2 structures removed making 8.25 km of chalk stream made accessible to fish – *photos below show the terraced overspill channel at the Saw Mill before the works, the rock ramp immediately after the works and the vegetated channel 2 years after.*

Outcomes achieved

- The 2 structures altered by the project for the benefit of fish passage, have created the conditions for a beneficial change in composition of upstream community.
- The improvement of impacted natural heritage environments (barriers to fish passage) will result in a direct increase in amenity value for local communities (visibility of fish and wild fishing opportunity) – many of which already value these environments highly.

What Went Well

- The Saw Mill rock ramp was delivered in our first year despite covid restrictions and the challenges this brought. The scheme has been a great success.

What Went Less Well

- One of W&Ws most ambitious and potentially flagship projects (St Mary Bourne) would have delivered all of the remaining fish passage metrics as well as river and floodplain improvements. Unfortunately, the project fell at the final hurdle with the landowners insisting on the use of a contractor that was neither the most qualified/experienced or cost-effective. The project could not proceed. This was a huge disappointment considering years of work had gone into its development. Communication with the landowner about the process was good so it is hard to see what could have been done differently in this case.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1.4 Spawning Habitats continued

What would we do differently next time

- Engagement with key deliverers in the catchment sooner to better assess what larger opportunities were available.

What difference has the project made

- Removing two barriers to fish passage addressed opening 8.25km of potential spawning habitat. *Photo below left shows the weir notch in the sluice at the Saw Mill.*
- Removal of barriers will also have improved the ecological condition of the river and alongside other restoration efforts, will support extensive spawning habitat.

Champagne Moments – the best moments of the project

- Seeing the Saw Mill fish passage project develop and naturalise over time has been a real joy – particularly as other habitat restoration projects upstream and downstream mean it now connects together high-quality chalk stream habitat. It is an excellent case study for creating a nature-like rock ramp in a confined post-industrial setting. *Photo below right shows the rock ramp at the Saw Mill after a year.*

Fantastic failures

- The Anton Town Mill project provided a critical lesson in better assessing barrier to fish passage earlier. Despite investigation by three project leads and an environmental contractor—which included two unsuccessful design iterations—a final assessment concluded that the structure does not constitute a significant barrier to fish passage.

Outputs achieved

- Development of a new white clawed crayfish ark site at Tangley, near Andover. Crayfish to be introduced in 12-18 months once the water quality and vegetation / invertebrate life is appropriate.
- New white-clawed crayfish hatchery developed at Wildheart Animal Sanctuary, alongside engagement opportunities for the public and training opportunities for staff. *Photos below show the new hatchery.*
- 184 students engaged with white clawed crayfish ecology and biosecurity issues through the teaching programme at Sparsholt College.

Outcomes achieved

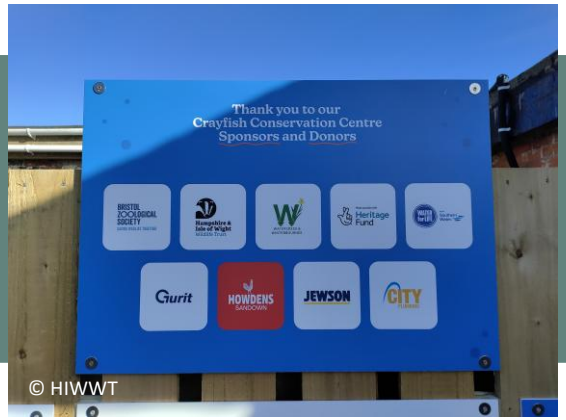
- Increase the robustness and the security of the long-term survival of white-clawed crayfish of River Itchen provenance
- Increase of the knowledge of Sparsholt College students with regards to the ecology and conservation of white-clawed crayfish.
- Increase the knowledge of the public within and beyond the catchment communities with regards to the ecology and conservation of white-clawed crayfish resulting in greater appreciation / sympathetic behaviour changes in audiences

What Went Well

- We were able to deliver a fantastic outcome – the creation of a large pond – which has the potential to play an important role in securing the long-term survival of white-clawed crayfish in Hampshire.
- The overarching aim of the project was achieved despite significant challenges, which required a wholescale shift in the specific project objectives / outcomes. This was only made possible by the support and adaptability of the project staff and funder and by additional funders supporting the project.

What Went Less Well

- Project delivery took much longer than anticipated, with the completion of the revised target / objective – the creation of a white-clawed ark site – to be realised outside of the project's delivery timeframe.
- This can partially be explained by challenges including the Covid-pandemic, and the discovery of an invasive non-native crayfish species not previously recorded in Hampshire. However, the revised agreed outcomes could have been delivered sooner.



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1.5 Conserving our Native Crayfish continued

What would we do differently next time

- Secure / assign a greater proportion of dedicated specialist staff time, as tasks such as securing consent / permissions were delayed due to the significant workload of those trying to move the project forward.

What difference has the project made

- The creation of a new still water body within an agricultural landscape – a type of habitat that has suffered dramatic losses.
- The creation of the first successful white-clawed crayfish ark site in Hampshire, an important component in our wider project aim of securing the long-term survival of white-clawed crayfish in Hampshire.

Champagne Moments – the best moments of the project

- Visiting the ark site when construction was completed and the pond was full of water. *Photos of the ark site during construction and as the pond started to fill shown below.*
- The best champagne moment is still to come – when we are able to release crayfish into the pond!!

Fantastic failures

- The discovery of spiny-cheeked crayfish, Faxonius limosus within a fishing lake at Sparsholt College; an invasive non-native crayfish species not previously recorded in Hampshire.
- Our original project plan was to create a bespoke hatchery / holding facility for white-clawed crayfish at Sparsholt College. This was no longer viable / appropriate due presence of this species and associated biosecurity considerations and resulted in the requirement of a new project deliverable to be established and agreed.


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1.6 Vitacress Wetland Creation Scheme

The Original Plan

Vitacress planned to develop an exemplar scheme for the watercress industry by creating a series of new wetland ponds on their St Mary Bourne site, which would manage the sediment and phosphate outputs from the watercress farm, drastically reducing the amount which would be discharged into the Bourne Rivulet.

This would have been a massive investment for Vitacress and a pilot for the watercress industry.

What Actually Happened

Despite the best efforts of Vitacress and Scheme partners, this scheme was stuck waiting for a planning decision between March 2021 and early 2024 due to complications around the fact that the planning application and the permit licence for Vitacress were coupled together. Unfortunately, the planning authority then stated that they would not make a decision on the application until the Environment Agency had approved the water permit. This resulted in Vitacress withdrawing the application as they were unable to progress the wetlands scheme within the timescale of W&W. In addition, the hold-ups had vastly increased the likely cost of the wetland scheme so this will need to be considered by the business before committing to take this forward again. Currently it does not look likely that the wetland scheme will proceed in the near future.

This project was officially removed from the W&W scheme outputs in approval with NLHF in Sept 2024.

What Has Been Learnt From This?

- Achieving planning permission before the submission of the LCAP would have been the best option. This wasn't possible in this case but would have avoided including a project which then had to be removed further down the line. Despite the planning authority giving positive early indications, objections from a small number of people resulted in a different outcome which could not fit within the Scheme timescales.
- Fortunately, because the wetland scheme had not had planning permission in place at the time of the LCAP submission, the funds for the wetland scheme (which were being covered wholly by Vitacress) were not included in the overall costs, only funds for the promotion of the scheme as an exemplar. This was definitely the right move and has saved a lot of problems that would have been caused by large financial elements being removed from the scheme.

Photo credit: Vitacress

Programme 2: Chalk Stream Community Action | 2.1 Building Sustainable Community Catchment Groups

Outputs achieved

- 305 chalk stream champions have had opportunities to access activities, learning opportunities and received e-news with chalk stream information.
- 63 CCG members are meeting regularly to plan and organise activities and their group
- 131 CCG members and volunteers have attending networking events.
- 227 CCG members have received specific training.
- *Photos below show a 2022 catchment workshop with the Cheriton community, the 2024 annual networking event for chalk stream champions and a 2026 Upper Itchen Restoration CIC-organised volunteer evening.* Overton 2025, Alresford Show 2025

Outcomes achieved

- People are appreciating the chalk stream heritage and have the confidence to encourage others to manage it better.
- Local people can recognise, monitor and record heritage features.
- Group members are continuing their CCG groups beyond the end of W&W.
- CCGs have confidence to take the lead in delivering aspects of their community catchment plan and in proposing and planning new projects on their chalk stream.
- Community members have a greater knowledge of their chalk stream and their impacts on it.

What Went Well

- Overall people have a raised understanding of chalk streams, winterbournes their heritage, and their ecology and issues they face.
- There has been lots of opportunity to learn both online, in talks and workshops, from site visits and during practical events.
- People feel they have the skills to talk about a new subject and have the confidence to give advice and run their own events.
- There has been opportunity for people to connect with like-minded people.
- People now decide what they would like to see happen to their chalk stream and some feel emboldened to campaign.
- There are increased connections between groups, landowners and partner organisations.

What Went Less Well

- It took a long time before people decided to form official groups. This was partly because it takes time to find that somebody who might feel motivated to act, or to build confidence within a group, but also because people felt supported and organised by W&W staff.
- Some interested people can be reluctant to get involved where relationships within the community are not open or respectful. In a couple of instances, key people had reservations or walked away from becoming involved, so this is a real issue and can be difficult to overcome.
- There wasn't much partnership collaboration before the groups had formed. However, once groups had become established, partners were able to support the community by way of training.


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2.1 Building Sustainable Community Catchment Groups continued

What would we do differently next time?

- Overall, we would take a similar approach as we think this worked well. We would continue to dedicate time to build relationships and trust.
- Next time we would try to reach a wider audience eg people who are interested in the arts, as this gives a good balance to the ecological interest. It proved a successful route through some of the grant projects.
- In a community with difficult relationships, we would look to work with individual landowners with large land holdings, to have more impact.

What difference has the project made?

- Better connected communities with community members feeling part of a team.
- Better overarching understanding of winterbournes and chalk streams and the issues they face and what actions will make a difference.
- Increased monitoring of the chalk streams for wildlife, INNS and sediment.
- Good community cohesion and stronger friendships based on a shared interest.
- Increased and ongoing participation at community events .
- Increased awareness raising of chalk streams, their issues and how to help them.
- Increase in better habitat management through volunteers liaising with landowners.
- Improved catchment-wide communication from groups joining with TICP and partner organisations.
- People enjoying making a difference for their chalk streams.
- Community members having the confidence and feeling they have permission to talk to landowners and the public about chalk streams. This permission aspect is important. Some volunteers who are incredibly knowledgeable, from all the training and practical experience, can still feel that they do not have the right to give advice.

Champagne Moments – the best moments of the project

- Watching Janet organise a talk about the Pillhill Brook in her local village hall. She did this all on her own because she was so passionate about the stream. The hall was full of locals, and she held their attention with her enthusiasm. So started the Pillhill Brook Association. *Photos below show Janet giving a talk at one of our CCG networking events in 2024, people networking at the same event, the Upper Test Restoration Group meeting in 2025 and the Upper Itchen Restoration CIC running the stand at Alresford Show in 2026.*

Fantastic failures

- Working up two habitat management plans only to have the communities not embrace or deliver the recommendations. These are challenging to deliver in some communities.


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Programme 2: Chalk Stream Community Action | 2.2 W&W Grant Schemes

Outputs achieved

- 16 grants allocated in total – 14 community grants and 2 landowner grants
- 3 projects supported focussed on improving land management
- 6 community projects supported focussed on restoring and caring for built and natural chalk stream heritage
- 843 people have learnt about chalk stream heritage and have celebrated the unique qualities of the chalk stream heritage through a range of activities
- 2 schemes were implemented to reduce pollution and sediment reaching the water courses
- Photos to the left below show the Arle Heritage Interpretation Trail and the new permissive path in Laverstoke, both supported through the Community Grant Scheme.

Outcomes achieved

- Reduced pollutants and sediment getting into the chalk streams
- Restoration of chalk stream heritage for future generations
- Local people empowered to lead activities to care for or celebrate their chalk stream heritage
- People making changes to their lifestyles to help look after their local chalk stream
- Participants have ongoing interest in chalk stream heritage
- More people inspired to continue contributing to the management and celebration of their local chalk stream

What Went Well

- All of the community grant pot was allocated before the end of 2024 and the projects delivered good outcomes particularly around celebrating and people learning more about the chalk streams (a few had to make some necessary changes during delivery). We made some good connections with local groups through the grant scheme.
- We reached new audiences who had no prior contact with W&W, but some of whom went on to be involved (including becoming volunteers).
- We reached a lot of people through the community grant activities whose primary interest was arts / culture or family activities who then learnt more about chalk streams.
- The two landowner grants that we allocated, delivered good outcomes for the Bourne Rivulet.
- Some of the projects have produced some really useful, practical data and research – the Whitchurch Conservation Group's project "Protecting Whitchurch's chalk stream environment" made a real impact on water policy planning discussions at Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council and the Upper Itchen Restoration CIC's research into micro-particulates in the headwaters made national news and even got mentioned in the House of Lords debate about the Planning and Infrastructure Bill.

What Went Less Well

- We only had 2 applications for the landowner grant pot despite promoting it widely and talking to a number of landowners about projects they could take forward through the grant scheme. I think a lack of time and match funding on the landowner-side were both barriers. *Photos to the right below show before and after the implementation of fencing on the winterbourne section of the Bourne Rivulet to reduce sedimentation from poaching by equines – one of the landowner grant schemes.*


© Sophie Evingar


© Laverstoke and Freefolk MGT


© Kathryn Boler


© Kathryn Boler

2.2 W&W Grant Schemes continued

What would we do differently next time

- We could probably provide a larger grant pot for communities – we could have allocated more grants.
- And perhaps providing larger grants for landowners would have made them more appealing and worth them allocating time to.
- *Photos to the right below show the bat boxes being installed on trees in Laverstoke along the river corridor and the Kingfisher, one of the "chalk stream beasts" made for the Whitchurch Folk Festival.*

What difference has the project made

- A lot of people have learnt more about chalk streams and are more aware of the pressures that chalks streams are under. They have also learnt more about the chalk stream wildlife.
- The Abbotts Ann School Project has resulted in young people who are more aware of their impact on the chalk stream and who are sharing those messages with their families.
- Many of the projects have provided a great long-term legacy – the permissive path at Laverstoke, the interpretation trail along the River Arle, the interpretation at the eel house, the micro-particulates research, chalk stream information now on many of the websites of the applicant groups, the bat boxes along the river corridors, all of which will be around for years to come.

Champagne Moments – the best moments of the project

- The Bishop's Sutton project was a massive success and brought together the whole community in learning more and thinking more about their winterbourne. One of the project leads commented that it was the first time the community had really got together again after the pandemic and they all really appreciated it and it brought them back together again. *Photos to the left below show one of the activity sessions within Bishops Sutton and the artworks created.*
- The Upper Itchen Restoration CIC's micro-particulates project being mentioned in the House of Lords.

Fantastic failures

- None really, just disappointing that the landowner grants didn't get better take up.

Programme 2: Chalk Stream Community Action | 2.3 Save Every Drop

Outputs achieved

- 2438 people attended water saving events – either face to face or online
- 168 households received water efficiency visits
- Of the customers that had home visits and whose meters were able to be read; in 2022, 53% showed sustained usage reductions, in 2023 61% showed sustained usage reductions and in 2024, 33% had sustained reduced usage
- 25,118 people were directly reached through leaflets and evidenced communications about water efficiency / health of the chalk stream messaging plus further unquantified communications through social media and the website.

Outcomes achieved

- People are more aware of how their own water usage can impact on their chalk stream health
- People adopting and maintaining water saving behaviour
- Lessons learnt for the efficient and effective delivery of community water-saving projects that can be used for scale-up and replication
- People will share their knowledge with other community members and encourage behaviour change within the community

What Went Well

- We got a lot of good comms and leaflets out about the project which reached a large number of people. We also supported this with a number of online talks about water efficiency measures.
- A lot of the people who had household visits still showed sustained water savings a year after the visit.
- The link up with Vivid Housing worked really well – they did direct mailings / e-mails to all of their residents with the W&W area and put out water saving information on their e-news. Astor Housing also put out information through their e-news.
- We had good engagement and discussions with people at face-to-face events such as Alresford Show. People were interested to hear about and take the “freebie” leaky loo strips and hippo bags that SW had provided, as well as hearing about the link that water efficiency has with our chalk streams.

What Went Less Well

- We didn’t manage to get many people to sign up to having the household water efficiency visits – it wasn’t helped by the fact that there had been bad press about Southern Water whilst we were trying to promote these – a lot of people were querying why they should be making an effort to save money when SW have so many leaks that aren’t fixed.
- Quite a few of the people who tried to get water efficiency visits were then told that they weren’t eligible for the visits. It became apparent after we started the project that there were more eligibility criteria than we had been told about beforehand – households without their own water meter couldn’t have visits and this included flats and properties with shared meters etc.
- The £500 incentive didn’t work as well as we had hoped but maybe our comms needed to have more of a hard sell to it, which is a hard thing to achieve for a charity / landscape partnership. Also, I think to achieve higher numbers we would have had to be continually pushing out information about the household visits and we couldn’t do this as we had to balance staff time and Comms promotion with the rest of the projects that we needed to deliver.
- Our Southern Water contact for this project left the organisation in 2024 which made getting any further data about the project very challenging.

2.3 Save Every Drop continued

What would we do differently next time

- I'm not sure we would do a repeat project which focused on SW household visits as we spent a lot of time and effort promoting this but achieved only small numbers overall. Perhaps we would just focus on the "what people can do" side of water efficiency messaging if we were doing this again.

What difference has the project made

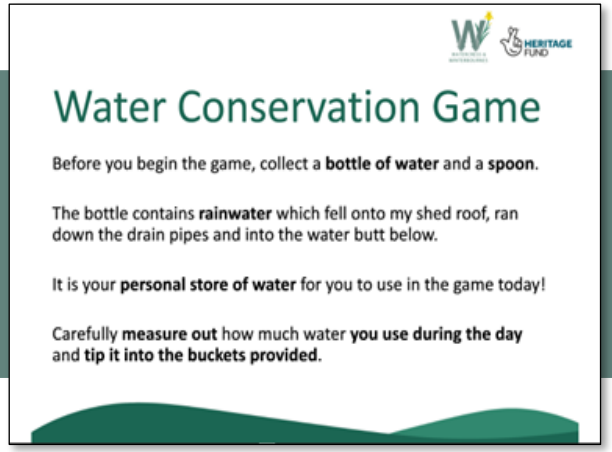
- I think our Chalk Stream communities are now much more aware of the link between their own use of water and the amount of water in the chalk streams in this area (and the impact this can have on the river's health). I also think the people that have had the water saving visits will be more aware and the data to date suggests that over 50% show sustained reductions after a year.

Champagne Moments – the best moments of the project

- Two of our Chalk Stream Champions allowed us to video them having their Southern Water water efficiency household visit. They did such a great job telling people about why they were doing it and what they had found out. It was a really great video and promotional tool.
  https://www.hiwwt.org.uk/watercress-and-winterbournes/save-every-drop

Fantastic failures

None particularly but the household visit sign-up numbers were a disappointment.



Programme 2: Chalk Stream Community Action | 2.4 Septic Smart

Outputs achieved

- Engagement with 8,865 residents with septic tanks on how to better manage their systems resulting in streams in better condition plus an additional 16,124 people reached through inline events and communications
- Engagement with 19 businesses with septic tanks on how to better manage their systems resulting in streams in better condition
- Engagement with 4 septic tank sales and maintenance companies
- Engagement with 15 estate agents and solicitors who have been championing the campaign and handing out Septic Smart leaflets to clients
- 1 septic tank management video produced.
- 18,624 leaflets disseminated to residents and businesses with septic tanks

Outcomes achieved

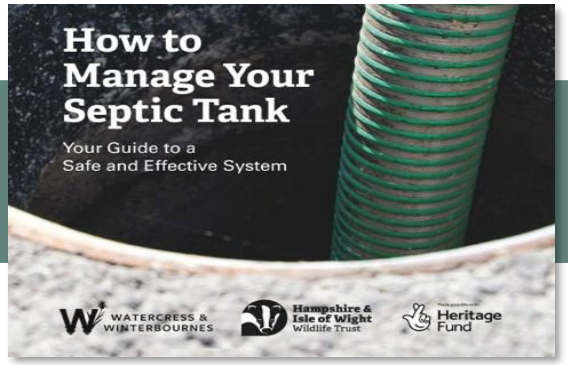
- Increased understanding among residents, businesses and estate agents and solicitors about the environmental impacts and legal responsibilities related to septic tanks
- Increased understanding by septic tank maintenance operatives about the importance of chalk streams and how septic tanks can impact them
- Information about the environmental impacts and legal responsibilities related to septic tank use was seen and is available to a greater number and variety of people

What Went Well

- Relationship with CSG (drainage business) proved to be much more extensive and fruitful than expected.
- Meaningful discussions with many community members, especially after giving public talks.
- A noticeable shift in public awareness and concern around off-mains sewage system pollution.
- Project was a springboard for various other chalk stream activities in Bishop's Sutton.

What Went Less Well

- Businesses proved hard to get on board.
- Success was impacted by lack of research/proof that this issue is having a detrimental impact locally - a short feasibility / research project on this would have been useful to provide evidence.
- Project was complicated by discussions around system upgrades using phosphate credits –In the absence of a functional credit scheme, many old/broken systems will continue to pollute, potentially outweighing water quality improvements from changes in management behaviours. A future project could have usefully include lobbying for policy changes.



2.4 Septic Smart continued

What would we do differently next time

- Allocate more time and resource to in-person engagement, e.g. talks in village halls.
- Allocate more time and resource to building relationships with businesses.
- Explore possibility of joint research into the impact of system management in chalk catchments.

What difference has the project made

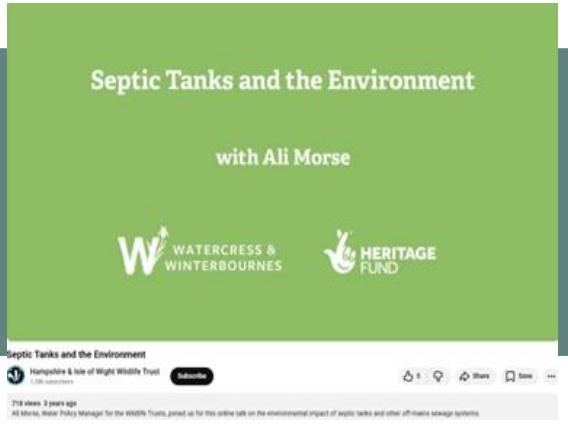
- Help people to understand what their system actually does, how it works, and therefore how their actions affect it. The biggest hurdles are lack of knowledge and “out of sight, out of mind” mentality.
- Initiating water quality discussions, connecting residents with their chalk stream, encouraging them to empty their systems more frequently and take care around cleaning products.

• Champagne Moments – the best moments of the project

- Executives at CSG becoming so invested in the topic that it impacted the creation of their sustainability policy and communications approach. *Middle image below shows one of the press releases CSG produced talking about their work to encourage people to maintain their septic tankas better for the sake of their local chalk stream.*

Fantastic failures

- Three businesses dropping out of the joining process after extensive discussions.



Programme 2: Chalk Stream Community Action | 2.5 Tackling Invasives

Outputs achieved

- 26 mink rafts in place across the catchments.
- 145 volunteers were trained in INNS identification
- 86 volunteers more confident in identifying mink activity.
- 364 people engaged through events and training.
- 802 volunteer hours in monitoring INNS.
- 1455 volunteer hours in removing INNS.
- 3 events delivered aimed at spreading the word about INNS.
- *Photos below show the removal of Parrots Feather at Laverstoke Pond, the removal of monkey flower from the Candover Brook and the removal of monkey flower from the Arle cress beds*

Outcomes achieved

- Water & terrestrial habitat is cleared of INNS, with volunteers playing an active role in on-going management, supporting re-establishment of native species.
- Volunteers trained and equipped to take an active role in on-going monitoring of mink, protecting species such as water vole and fish.
- Volunteers are more confident and competent about the management of their local environment.
- People know what action to take to reduce / remove INNS they find.
- People are equipped to identify and remove INNS.

What Went Well

- We tackled INNS across the entire catchment
- Number of landowners deploying mink rafts
- Regular work parties formed friendships and helped to build CCGs
- Opportunities for mindfulness, to learn and to see wildlife
- Volunteers mapped the area for INNS
- Mens' Shed were involved building mink rafts
- The use of Survey 123 to log INNS
- Support from our 3 dedicated mink survey volunteers
- CCG held stands at local fairs and Alresford Green Week, where they shared information about INNS and biosecurity

What Went Less Well

- Difficult to measure activity or amount of INNS removed
- Difficult to demonstrate our impact in an effective, easy way
- Some challenging access so volunteer numbers had to be low on those sites
- All the GIS work was difficult: we needed an expert support us from the start
- INNS work involves a lot of time cleaning kit and travelling which needs factoring in
- Did not catch any mink
- Mink project needed more time and dedication than was available

2.5 Tackling Invasives continued

What would we do differently next time

- Be realistic about what we can achieve, especially if delivering other projects during the summer months.
- Factor in time for travel and kit cleaning etc.
- Acknowledge that INNS are difficult to eradicate.
- Measure impact by using large buckets to measure amounts of plants removed.
- Remember to always take a few before and after photos.
- If working with over 3 people from a corporate group, organise a day just for them.
- Have more time for a catchment or county-wide mink programme.
- Allocate funds to technology eg. Mink Police units or Remoti devices.
- Utilise GIS expert support.

What difference has the project made

- People know about and recognise INNS.
- Communities record INNS using Survey 123.
- People know that mink are a problem.
- People know about biosecurity.
- Communities working together to remove INNS independently.
- Community groups recognise that monitoring and removing INNS is important for the health of the chalk stream.
- Chalk streams being better cared for into the future.
- Community groups know how to reach Partner organisations about tackling INNS in future (eg Wessex River's Trust).

Champagne Moments – the best moments of the project

- When the Laverstoke community came out to remove INNS in their pond. They believe that this is important work and we worked together to find a novel solution to remove the plant. Since then, they have been acting independently to continue to remove it – a real legacy impact.
- Photos from left to right; Himalayan Balsam pulling on the Bourne Rivulet and the team involved, INNS removal from the stream at Laverstoke and volunteers checking a mink raft for activity.

Fantastic failures

- After 5 years of delivering work parties for a group of Trustees with responsibility for a piece of community land, they committed to organising INNS removal themselves. I was later dismayed to find they had not done this, and that the plants were growing all over the site.
- Having Natural England and the Environment Agency disagree on the way to treat Azolla on a designated site. Very disappointing and confusing.

Programme 3: Exploring and Celebrating our Chalk Stream Heritage | 3.1 Education Programme

Outputs achieved

- 26 schools and 31 youth groups engaged with the project
- 245 education sessions delivered
- 6393 learning opportunities created, reaching 3739 young people and 800+ accompanying adults
- 9 training courses delivered to teachers, youth leaders, volunteers and community group members enabling them to deliver chalk stream heritage sessions themselves
- 4 Chalk Stream Challenge routes created in the scheme area
- Over 800 young people engaged with the Chalk Stream Challenge both inside and outside of the scheme area
- *Photos below are all taken by Education Officer, Tracy Standish, of a range of the groups and activities delivered through the Education Programme*

Outcomes achieved

- Young people are more aware of how their actions can impact on the health of their chalk stream.
- Young people will be able to tell others why chalk streams are so special and why we should care about them.
- Teachers and group leaders will feel confident about identifying chalk stream species.
- Young people will have a deeper understanding of how chalk streams have influenced settlements over time, and of the wildlife present in them.
- Teachers and leaders will be better able to incorporate local chalk stream heritage into their activities with young people.
- Education providers and youth leaders will better appreciate these special places and their heritage.

What Went Well

- The sessions with schools and youth groups, and the uptake of these. Schools and group leaders have been really appreciative of the activities.
- We were really lucky with access to suitable sites for sessions, in particular in the Andover area. Most schools were able to walk somewhere suitable, with a very small number needing transport to site. Only two schools needed to access the project's Travel Grant which enabled us to reallocate it to more session delivery.
- Working locally connected children and young people with rare habitats on their doorstep – the sessions really opened up their eyes to sites they previously viewed as their journey to school or their local dog walk.

What Went Less Well

- Low interest from volunteers to help with the education sessions – those who did help out were really committed (we only had regular support from three volunteers, plus a couple more who helped with a small number of sessions)
- The initial hope for school sessions involved a greater breadth of learning for the children, with them doing a second site visit, more follow up work back at school and sharing what they had learnt with their peers. Some classes did work with us two or three times, but not the five times that was originally planned, due to the time available to teachers in the school day, the need to really link sessions with the national curriculum and the slow start after Covid – it took a while to get schools back out of the classroom.





3.1 Education Programme continued

What would we do differently next time

- Increased staff time to enable: more schools to engage with the project and/or for a greater breadth of learning with those who did participate; greater participation in other engagement activities e.g. community events (the Education Officer role is 0.6 FTE).
- Less of a focus on training and loans boxes for the project's legacy, and more focus instead on the Chalk Stream Challenge as the key legacy.
- More in-depth projects with some schools (e.g. working with Eco Teams or school councils to spread messaging more widely or the installation of slow flow planters, in line with the Abbotts Ann C of E Primary School Slowing the Flow Project).

What difference has the project made

- Provided young people with opportunities to engage with their local river.
- Highlighted the threats our rivers currently face and how rare chalk streams are, encouraging young people to look after their local blue spaces as they grow up and perhaps advocate for them in the future: research shows that a strong connection with nature leads to more pro-environmental behaviours.
- Small behavioural changes to their daily lives may be made, e.g. through saving water, and they will be more aware of where their water comes from.
- Given Wessex RT the opportunity to expanded its education offer to schools, become more well known for river education and, in securing other funding, continue offering sessions: 10 schools/groups are booked in for the summer.

Champagne Moments – the best moments of the project

- The creation of the Chalk Stream Challenge by two Chalk Stream Champions and the legacy and scope of this, with routes being created by other organisations in other areas.
- Seeing the children's excitement, awe and wonder when they're catching invertebrates and the enjoyment they get from simply being in a river and getting wet.
- When you meet children you have already worked with, and they can share all of your introductory facts and talk through how to take a kick sample with the rest of the group because they really enjoyed and engaged with their previous session.
- *Photos below are all taken by Education Officer, Tracy Standish of a range of the groups and activities delivered through the Education Programme*

Fantastic failures

- The slower than ideal start to the project due to covid, with some schools more cautious to get back out of the classroom.
- We were unable to deliver a session on the Candover Brook, despite having contacts for a uniformed group in the area and contacting the local school multiple times – the Primary School are now booked in for summer term 2026.
- The creation of a trial loans box and an initial training session to staff and volunteers (both part of the project's legacy) highlighted a number of issues, including: items going mouldy as they were put away damp; the time and space required to clean and dry the equipment; the cost of replacing damaged items or a process needed to recoup costs; staff and volunteer turnover; lack of confidence in leading sessions, especially if these are not run often.
- A lack of uptake to the training sessions for teachers and group leaders.




Programme 3: Exploring and Celebrating our Chalk Stream Heritage | 3.2 Roaming by the River

Outputs achieved

- Boardwalk, bench and path installed at Laverstoke Pond.
- Improved footpath installed on the Arle Millennium Way, along with restored river banks and marginal vegetation.
- 3 benches installed.
- 1 bridge repaired.
- 713 volunteer hours spent making access improvements.

Outcomes achieved

- Local communities took a leading role in developing improved access in their area.
- Volunteers gained skills in improving physical access to the chalk streams
- Less-abled community members and parents with pushchairs are now able to access the chalk stream more easily.
- More people accessing the chalk stream and their local heritage.

What Went Well

- The Laverstoke pond path project – this was one of the first projects delivered. The community worked with the project lead to identify the best design and delivery options. On completion, the community held a ribbon-cutting event with drinks and many people turned up on what was a windy rainy day! Following it becoming established, the community worked with a neighbouring landowner to extend the access even further with a permissive path. This was going to run alongside the stream, however when the community and landowner realised there were water voles present, they decided to keep a fence in place to protect the water voles from disturbance.
- Delivery of the Arle Millennium Way footpath and river bank improvements – we undertook extensive surveying of people who regularly use the path to raise awareness and check their feelings about the proposed changes (especially to the temporary fencing and dog-access point). The delivery involved WRT working with volunteers and a contractor. The path has allowed people to walk or wheel safely along the river and bank improvements and fencing have allowed water voles to spread into the bankside vegetation.

What Went Less Well

- Installation of kissing gates. Both the Piscatorial and Cheriton Conservation Group in the end decided not to have kissing gates installed despite indicating previously that they wanted them

- *Photos below show progress of the path and viewing platform being installed at Laverstoke Pond in 2021.*

3.2 Roaming by the River continued

What would we do differently next time

- Have some more minor jobs that volunteers can join in with – they enjoy doing practical work in and by the river.

What difference has the project made

- Raised awareness of W&W.
- A wider range of people being able to experience riverside / pondside walks – People can access the areas safely, with wheelchairs and pushchairs and can walk without dodging puddles and trip hazards.
- People being able to spot wildlife whilst on walks.

Champagne Moments – the best moments of the project

- Having such a big turnout for the "opening" of the boardwalk and path at Laverstoke Pond. It was windy and raining so I thought there would be just 3 of us. We turned around to see a big group who stayed to hear thank you speeches and share a drink and crisps in the bad weather! It was a great event to celebrate one of the first big installations - *see photo on the left below*.

Fantastic failures

- Hearing a community group turn down the opportunity to have kissing gates installed. It felt like no one really wanted these in the end, despite our research in the development phase indicating that they were desired.

Photo to the centre shows the newly installed path on the Arle Millennium Way and the photo to the right shows the volunteers inspecting the bankside improvement works before getting in the river to help with some further vegetation management – Nov 2021.


© Emma Healey


© Kathryn Boler


© Tracy Standish

Outputs achieved

- 8 significant chalk stream structures restored and safeguarded from further deterioration – 5 at Bere Mill on the Upper Test, the Eel House on the Arle and 2 at Totford Farm on the Candover Brook.
- 10 new water meadow systems recorded on the Heritage Environment Record.
- 10 volunteers were involved in brick structure restoration skills.
- 624 volunteers hours were spent on restoring the water meadow structures.
- *Photos below show the restoration of the bridges, hatches and sluice structures at Bere Mill on the Upper Test in 2021.*

Outcomes achieved

- Restored water meadow structures managed in a way that will minimise future deterioration
- Up to date records of the water meadow systems available to the public
- Volunteers with new skills
- Volunteers have gained a greater awareness of the importance of the landscape and heritage
- Landowners have greater knowledge of the significance of the heritage on their land
- Greater awareness in local people that the chalk streams have played a part in our land management and food heritage

What Went Well

- We restored 5 nationally significant water meadow structures at Bere Mill on the Upper Test (2 bridges and 3 hatch pools / sluices) and two locally significant bridges at Totford Farm on the Candover Brook (one of which dates from the C17th and contributed towards the restoration of the Arle eel house - one of only 2 known eel houses in the UK.

What Went Less Well

- We had to change the way we planned to deliver this project as we were intending to train the volunteers first through a more intensive restoration training course. The covid pandemic restrictions meant that we couldn't put the volunteers through the training course as all the local training centres had stopped their delivery as a big part of it was indoors. We therefore asked the contractor we were working with to train the volunteers on the job and to involve them in the different aspects of the work as and when they were able. We had to have smaller groups of volunteers due to the pandemic group number restrictions.
- Also, the landowner of one of the sites we had hoped to work was difficult to contact and to liaise with, so we restored the structures at Totford Farm instead.

3.3 Restoring our Chalk Stream Structures continued

What would we do differently next time

- We have more expertise now about what consents are needed now – it would have helped us plan timescales more effectively if we had had better understanding of this before the project started.

What difference has the project made

- More people learned and took an interest in the water meadow systems, what they were and how they were used – this included the landowners involved, the volunteers and contractors involved, members of the public seeing the works going on as they passed by (a few of the structures were near busy public footpaths and a lot of people stopped and asked about the structures). We also held Open Chalk Stream events to see and talk about the Bere Mill structures. We also ran some online talks about the water meadow systems to coincide with the works
- These nationally / locally significant structures have been restored for future generations – they will probably stand for another 50 years without needing any significant maintenance work and they would almost certainly have continued to deteriorate from their pretty poor state if we hadn't invested in these.

Champagne Moments – the best moments of the project

- Seeing all the completed structures – they all looked amazing and the volunteers all fed back really enthusiastically about their time on the project.
- Hearing the volunteers and the contractor talking about all of the wildlife close encounters they had while they were carrying out the works on the Bere Mill site – they had water voles almost running over their feet!
- *Photos below show the bridges and sluices at Totford Farm before, during and after the restoration works in 2025.*

Fantastic failures

- Nothing major – The team asked a consultant we were working with to give a talk to the volunteers about the water meadow system at Bere Mill before they began volunteering there. The talk was vague and didn't really cover what I hoped it would. She previously had done some amazing talks for us so we probably hadn't given her as much direction as usual because of this. It was a reminder to make sure that people have a good brief for what you want even if you have been working with them for some time.

Programme 3: Exploring and Celebrating our Chalk Stream Heritage

3.4 Tales from the River Bank – Chalk Stream Photography Competition

Outputs achieved

- 46 people entered the photography competition
- 7,948 attended the photography exhibitions which took part in 7 different locations across the catchment
- 50 Chalk Stream Champions assisted with project activities (Photography Competition, Literature Festival & Poetry Competition, and Sharing Stories)
- *Images below show the promotional leaflet for the photography competition and two of the competition winners*

Outcomes achieved

- This project approached the topic of chalk streams from a unique angle that is more accessible and interesting for some people in the target communities.
- Reached new audiences who had no prior contact with W&W, but some of whom went on to be involved (including becoming volunteers)
- The richness of the chalk stream and central role that chalk streams play in local lives being better recorded.

- People enjoyed getting out, connecting with nature, and spending time by their chalk streams looking for photographic opportunities. The competition gave them a reason and a focus at this time.
- A good number of enthusiastic entries were received in all six categories – heritage, landscape, people, wildlife, young photographer and community choice.

- The photography competition and exhibitions were significantly impacted by the Covid pandemic in terms of the number of entries and the number of visitors, particularly to the touring exhibitions which were booked at certain venues on specific dates. Some people may have felt anxious about visiting an exhibition during this period, even though precautionary measures were in place. Where we had the opportunity to have a fixed exhibition in place over an extended period, the attendances were much higher.

3.4 Tales from the River Bank – Chalk Stream Photography Competition continued

What would we do differently next time

- Overall participation in the competition and exhibition attendances would have been higher if they had not taken place during the Covid period and subsequent uncertainties in attending public gatherings. Although this was carefully managed, it did impact this project.
- Allocate more time and resource to in-person engagement and project promotion.

What difference has the project made

- The exhibition toured the Landscape Partnership Scheme area providing a wide variety of opportunities for the Scheme to connect with new people and new audiences.
- Gave a “human aspect” to the ecology and conservation side of W&W’s work.
- Reached new audiences who had no prior contact with W&W, but some of whom went on to be involved (including becoming volunteers).

Champagne Moments – the best moments of the project

- The standard of the photography received in all categories along with people's obvious enjoyment of taking part.
- The photography competition prize giving evening, bringing everyone together to celebrate and enjoy the displays.
- *Photos below show the exhibition and prize-giving event held in 2021 and the exhibition of photos at St Mary Bourne in 2022*

Fantastic failures

- The photography competition and the exhibitions were significantly impacted by the Covid pandemic in terms of participation


© Kathryn Boler


© Maggie Shelton


© Sophie Evingar

3.4 Tales from the River Bank – Literature Festival

Outputs achieved

- 70 young people entered the literature/poetry competition
- 180 people attended literature festival events
- 50 Chalk Stream Champions assisted with project activities (Photography Competition, Literature Festival/ Poetry Competition, and Sharing Stories)
- Spoken recordings of the poems made as a literary celebration to use in comms
- *The photos below show one of the poetry writing workshops in Andover in 2024.*

Outcomes achieved

- We had some great author speakers and a good list of River – themed book reviews – good involvement & support from Hampshire Libraries
- Encouraged young people and community members to explore and appreciate their relationships with their chalk streams, deepening those connections.

What Went Well

- The poetry workshops and nature walks for the children and families to inspire their creativity and understanding of chalk streams and their habitats
- The Literature Storytelling events which took place in locations around the catchment. They were very well received by the audience.

What Went Less Well

- Many requests for participation, particularly for the Poetry Competition, from outside the scheme area, and some public frustration about the exclusivity of the activities.
- Low partner interest and participation.
- This project took a significant amount of staff time, but the level was not consistent. Around the competitions, and particularly the festival, it was difficult to manage everything alongside other commitments.

3.4 Tales from the River Bank – Literature Festival continued

What would we do differently next time

- Allocate more time and resource to in-person engagement, e.g. talks in village halls, club, societies, schools, to further promote the project and the poetry competition.
- The project seems to have been successful, but would probably have benefitted from more partner “buy in” and participation.
- Allocate more time and resource to building relationships with businesses.

What difference has the project made

- Although participation didn’t hit the targets, the activities still involved large numbers of people, in many cases resulting in lengthy and meaningful discussions about chalk stream issues.

Champagne Moments – the best moments of the project

- The prizegiving ceremony for the children’s poetry competition – the chance to recognise and reward so much talent and passion. Proud families, friends and community members gathering together to enjoy the children's poetry readings. *Photos below show storyteller Amanda Kane Smith introducing the winners at the prizegiving event and two of the winning poets.*
- The beautifully illustrated Chalk Stream Poems book that was produced - a compilation of the children's poetry – *see cover below*.

Fantastic failures

The project budget had to be topped up several times, mostly notably for oral history recording equipment and for the literature festival (mostly speaker/facilitator fees and venue hire). Even so, it took quite a lot of negotiating to stay within budget. It was under-costed due to our inexperience with running these kinds of activities.

Programme 3: Exploring and Celebrating our Chalk Stream Heritage

3.4 Tales from the River Bank – Sharing Stories

Outputs achieved

- 53 people shared their chalk stream stories with us, including associated photographs, articles, maps and related items. (41 shared audio stories and 12 shared written blogs)
- 7 Chalk Stream Champions collected stories, having received training in safeguarding, use of audio equipment and interviewing skills
- 50 Chalk Stream Champions assisted with project activities (Photography Competition, Literature Festival/ Poetry Competition, and Sharing Stories)
- 137 people attended the Sharing Stories exhibitions (39 attended the evening storytelling event, and 98 attended the project exhibition at the scheme celebration event.

Outcomes achieved

- Involved community members who might otherwise not find suitable ways to participate (e.g. elderly individuals, families from outside the scheme area).
- Good legacy - oral histories capturing people's personal memories and experiences of chalk streams will be preserved at the Wessex Film and Sound Archives for generations to come.

What Went Well

- During the last 2 years of the scheme, we had a few, very dedicated volunteers who really put a lot of effort and interest into collecting the stories and it was through them that we managed to achieve the target number of stories.
- *Photos below show the storytelling event held in October 2025 at Bishops Sutton Village Hall.*

What Went Less Well

- The slow start to the oral history part of this project. The difficulty in recruiting volunteers for this project and a high drop-out rate from those we trained.
- Target for the number of Chalk Stream Champion's collecting stories would probably have been achievable if volunteer recruitment and retention hadn't been an issue.

3.4 Sharing Stories continued

What would we do differently next time

- Allocate more time and resource to in person engagement to promote this project and the recruitment of volunteer interviewers earlier on in the scheme. So rather than rely on asking our existing volunteers, who may have signed up for the outdoor, hands- on type roles, to become interviewers, take it out to specific community clubs and societies where this type of role would have more appeal. This could then attract a different type of volunteer more inclined towards storytelling and the arts.

What difference has the project made

- Approached the topic of chalk streams from a unique angle that is more accessible/interesting for some people in the target communities.
- Increased the visibility of W&W and chalk stream issues, reached new audiences, created engaging and inspiring experiences.
- Bolstered W&W's legacy resources. Encouraged community members to explore and appreciate their relationships with their chalk streams, deepening those connections.

Champagne Moments – the best moments of the project

- The evening event, Our Chalk Streams, Our Stories, where 6 of our storytellers gathered to share their personal chalk stream memories and experiences with an audience from the community and beyond. The event, supported by river related music from one of our local landowners, project displays, and refreshments, was a great success and was very well received by the audience. It brought everyone together to celebrate and to learn about chalk streams from a different perspective.
- *Photos below - story collector Steve Pratt telling people about his experiences at the W&W Celebration event and sharing stories displays at Celebration and Storytelling events.*

• Fantastic failures

- The very slow start to the oral history project due to the difficulty in recruiting volunteer interviewers. The majority of our volunteers signed up to take part in the more practical, hands on, outdoor tasks such as habitat restoration, surveys, sampling and INNS work. The volunteer role on this project, as an interviewer, was far more niche, requiring specialist training and more independent, lone working. This appealed to a much smaller and very limited number of volunteers.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Programme 3: Exploring and Celebrating our Chalk Stream Heritage

3.5 Hidden Treasure Trails

Outputs achieved

- This project is due to be lanched in April 2026
- A total of 10 trails are planned. (6 trails agreed (2 x Andover lake sites, 1 x Whitchurch, 1 x Laverstoke, 1 x Alresford, 1 x Bishops Sutton, 1 temporary trail in shop windows in Andover, 1 to be included on interpretation board in Totford, Discussions still ongoing in Overton, Pillhill Brook and Cheriton about locations and / or consents
- Anticipate exceeding the target of 450 people using the trails, but with the launch being in April 2026 this is still to be determined.

Outcomes achieved

- Richness of the chalk streams is better recorded and communicated
- Chalk stream champions gain valuable experience and opportunities to apply their skills
- Increased understanding of the wildlife of the chalk streams; encouragement to care for it and engage with it through the trails and guided walks
- Opportunities to learn about and engage with chalk stream heritage will be accessible to a wider audience
- Improved sense of place and community involvement, enhanced learning and engagement offer for local people and visitors

What Went Well

- The animations – they came right on budget, we were very happy with the output, and the contractor was a pleasure to work with – *see stills of the animations and one of the Chalk Stream Quest signs below and on the next page.*
- The narrations – also came on budget and were smooth sailing in terms of the delivery.
- The blend of in-person and digital elements is great for a younger audience.

What Went Less Well

- Planning of the routes – some of the sites are quite challenging to designate routes and specific locations for signage to be installed e.g., Overton Town.
- Some community members did not understand the concept of QR codes and/or did not ask for clarification then did not communicate the information well to others in their area.
- The project was held up due to having to replace the Comms and Event Officer, who was project lead, leaving the company and a new staff member being recruited to fill the role .The trails project will now be launched in April 2026, slightly later than originally planned.

3.5 Hidden Treasure Trails continued

What would we do differently next time

- I think that it would have been good to gather community groups together on one day to discuss the project concept and not had just one point of contact per area.
- More time and resources for the opportunity to create a digital version of the trail for online use.

What difference has the project made

- Provide a new and engaging way for young people and families to learn about chalk stream wildlife and appreciate the unseen creatures that live in their local area, as well as understand the challenges faced by them
- Increased awareness for chalk stream wildlife and hopefully people will change their behaviour for the benefit of our chalk streams.

Champagne Moments – the best moments of the project

- So far – showing the videos at the WW Celebration Event and having so many people ask about them, ask to use them in their work outside W&W, and comment on how good they are!

Fantastic failures

- So far – mapping out the routes has been a significant time sink as I have gone out to meet each community group individually and then had follow up conversations.

Programme 3: Exploring and Celebrating our Chalk Stream Heritage

3.6 Open Chalk Streams

Outputs achieved

- 20 different Open Chalk Stream sites opened in total.
- 46 Open Chalk Stream events delivered over all years.
- 4,475 visitors in total.
- 30 Chalk Stream Spotter Guides produced.
- 40 volunteers helped at Open Chalk Stream events.
- 20 landowners opened their chalk streams for people to visit.
- 10+ magazines / e-news + 3 newspapers feature Open Chalk Streams.
- *Photos below are of Open Chalk Stream events at Yavington on the Upper Itchen, Hurstbourne Priors on the Bourne Rivulet and Cheriton Mill on the Cheriton Stream.* , Tufton on Upper Test, Yavington

Outcomes achieved

- Community seeing and learning about heritage features.
- Appreciation of riparian management and inspiration regarding potential careers or volunteering opportunities.
- People will have learnt about the pressures facing chalk streams.
- People will have enjoyed spending time with nature around chalk streams and will be better engaged with their local heritage.
- People will have been inspired to make a change to benefit chalk streams.
- An increasing number of people will have enjoyed visiting the normally hidden stream and heritage.

What Went Well

- We had supportive landowners and fishing beats.
- We had enthusiastic volunteers – we could not have delivered this without them.
- Though audiences were low in number, we had great feedback.
- We had a variety of walks and talks.
- We were able to be peaceful, see nature and hear interesting landowner perspectives and stories.

What Went Less Well

- Time intensive and involved many members of staff.
- Nature of walking by a river meant the audience had to be small.
- Parking opportunities were limited as often on remote sites.
- Little on-site Partner support.
- Audience was not always local (local people wanted this project because they can't connect with their stream, but did not book on).
- Could not hold in Summer due to Lead delivering other Summer-based projects (so plants not always so pretty).

3.6 Open Chalk Streams continued

What would we do differently next time

- Have a more realistic workload for delivery staff.
- I would have a few key sites with great parking opportunities, where we could take large groups to see and hear talks about heritage, ecology and habitat restoration projects.
- Build in a good amount of time to sit quietly in nature.
- Have Partner organisations commit up front to delivery on the day of the booked event.
- *Photos below are of the Open Chalk Stream events at Tufton on Upper Test and Yavington on the Upper Itchen.*

What difference has the project made

- Gave people a new experience – an interesting day out. In fact, many people said they didn't really know what to expect but that they had had a lovely time.
- Gave people some insight into chalk streams, riparian land ownership and river management.
- Allowed an intimate connection with wildlife.
- Allowed some people to connect with their neighbours.
- Forged connections within the community between landowners and volunteers which will be useful in the future as the Community Groups may need to ask landowner permission for access for surveys.
- Gave some landowners a deeper understanding of their heritage features or the wildlife in their stream.
- A community group outside W&W came to two events to learn about riparian management

Champagne Moments – the best moments of the project

- Seeing the 3 kingfishers fly by. We were standing on a bend so could watch them for a long time as they flew off. Hearing that people were moved by this was wonderful.

Fantastic failures

- Always to do with unexpected animals. Cattle in a field that was meant to be a car park was a particular nightmare. We had to quickly find another car park whilst everyone was arriving down a one-way lane.
- On the day, it was frustrating dealing with no-shows or late arrivals.

Programme 4: Chalk Stream Skills | 4.1 Chalk Stream Events

Outputs achieved

- 5 events targeted at winterbourne landowners and managers
- 52 events held attended by 3637 people
- 34 people have volunteered their time to give talks, sharing their specialist knowledge and skills with others = 136 volunteer hour

Outcomes achieved

- Reached a wide audience, also involved community members who might otherwise not find suitable ways to participate (e.g. elderly or infirm people, people from outside the scheme area).
- Recorded online talks provided further educational/training for volunteers as well as a legacy resource.
- Further cemented partner relationships and opened doors for collaboration with other parties (e.g. Floodplain Meadows Partnership).
- Opportunity to attract new audiences with “adjacent interests”, pulling them into the W&W’s orbit. Low commitment and no cost.

What Went Well

- Move to online format proved very successful – greater accessibility, greater attendee numbers, and wider selection of speakers. Plus ability to make recordings available as a legacy resource.
- Very good discussions with attendees, with lengthy and lively Q&A segments in most cases.
- Overall very positive feedback from both speakers and attendees.

What Went Less Well

- Occasional minor technical issues.
- A small number of talk cancellations due to speaker being unexpectedly unavailable.
- Risk associated with covering contentious topics (although generally audience remains polite).
- High drop-out rate due to talks being free and online.
- Difficulty finding speakers for more niche topics.
- Difficulty of hitting target number of events with staff resource.
- Volunteer time didn’t include any talks done by partners, which affected the target.
- Recording/editing process creates extra work.

4.1 Chalk Stream Events continued

What would we do differently next time

- More forward planning about what topics the talks should cover.
- The target for the number of talks was ambitious for the staff resource available More staff resource required, if the targets remain the same.

What difference has the project made

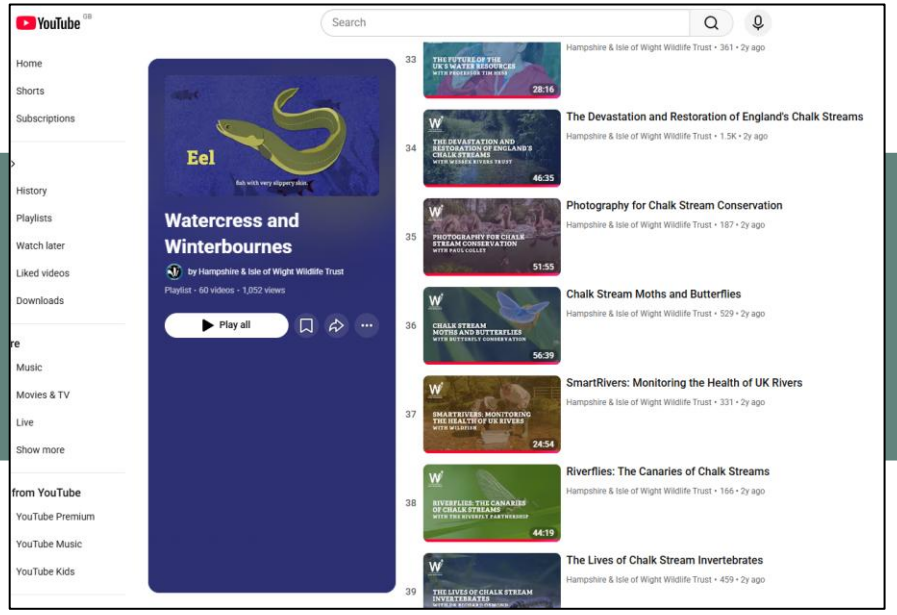
- Increase visibility/authority of W&W and chalk stream issues, reach new audiences, create a stronger knowledge base about chalk stream topics.
- Increase W&W's public presence, reputation, and influence.
- Deepen engagement with partners, volunteers, and other stakeholders.
- Allowed for coverage of subjects/topical issues that have no obvious presence within the W&W projects. Bolster W&W's legacy resources.

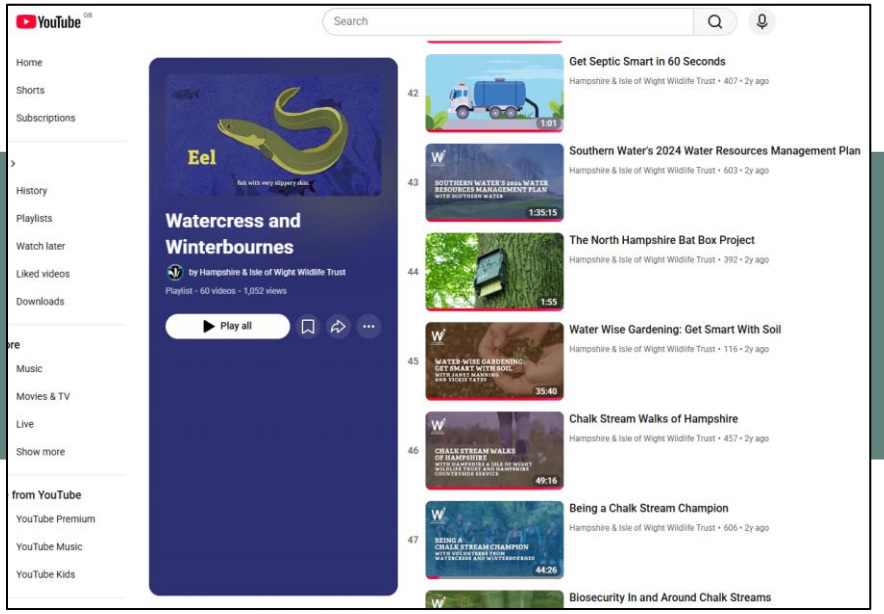
Champagne Moments – the best moments of the project

- Generally reading all the positive feedback, and meeting people in person who enjoyed one or more online talks and then became more involved.
- *Below are snapshots of the W&W talks now available on YouTube.*

Fantastic failures

- Having to start a talk, only to tell everyone that it was cancelled because the speaker was no longer available (what I didn't tell them, was that he had forgotten about it).





Programme 4: Chalk Stream Skills

4.2 Chalk Stream Champions

Outputs achieved

- 293 people have received training through the scheme
- 121 people trained in identifying and removing INNS
- 98 people with increased skills in restoring and enhancing chalk stream habitats
- 40 people with the skills to deliver inspiring guided walks and talks in order to pass their knowledge and enthusiasm on to others
- 10 people with skills in heritage brickwork restoration
- *The photos below show water vole survey training in Cheriton and Test Valley in 2023 and Smart Rivers training in 2022.*

Outcomes achieved

- Chalk streams with habitats in better condition due to reduction in INNS
- Identified chalk stream heritage structures in better condition
- Chalk stream habitats in better condition and better able to support key chalk stream species
- Chalk stream champions that are able to monitor and record the health of their own stream and will take a lead in reporting anomalies, pollution or sedimentation during the scheme and beyond.
- Chalk stream champions that can take action to care for their chalk stream - reducing pollution and INNS and improving habitats.
- Community members will have a better understanding of the chalk stream heritage and take a lead in talks about issues / actions required

What Went Well

- The enthusiasm of our Chalk Stream Champions (CSC) and their willingness to learn new skills.
- We quite quickly recruited a lot of interested volunteers – all of the press about our rivers was helpful in this – raised awareness across the board. There was a huge interest in the more practical river restoration and monitoring work (but less so in some of the other engagement projects)

What Went Less Well

- Some of the areas of work were harder to get volunteers for than others; for instance on the INNS project, there was very little take up for training and skills development for mink control, so we had a very small number of CSC checking the mink rafts.
- Likewise, with the Sharing Stories project, there was very little take up for the oral history training. It was quite niche and only appealed to a very small (but dedicated) number of CSC. This also applied to the Education programme where we struggled to get more than a few CSC trained and involved in this aspect.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4.1 Chalk Stream Champions continued

What would we do differently next time

- Maybe try to schedule a few more of the training sessions and activities at the weekend to help those who work get involved.
- *Photos below show Chalk Stream Champions learning on the job on the restoration project at Abbotts Ann 2022, Riverfly training in 2023, Redds survey training at Hurstbourne Priors in 2024 and online Sharing Stories training in 2025.*

What difference has the project made

- Many of these CSC started with barely any knowledge of their chalk stream, had never done a redd survey, a water vole survey, INNS, Riverfly monitoring, etc. With the range of training opportunities provided, many of the CSC are now equipped with skills to monitor, survey, look after their chalk streams, and raise awareness in their communities which will keep the momentum going especially with the newly formed catchment groups set up to continue the work. These groups are enthusiastic, well organised, and keen to encourage more volunteers to join them.
- The skill sets these CSC have gained, the contacts that they have formed (landowners/partnership leaders, etc), the groups that they have formed, and the communication between them all, supporting each other, along with the enthusiasm and dedication shown, will enable them to carry on looking after their chalk streams and hopefully attract more volunteer support as they progress.

Champagne Moments – the best moments of the project

- There were two occasions, one in early 2022, and the other in 2023, when some of our Chalk Stream Champions did an online talk, each talking about what it was to be a CSC, what they had learnt and about a project that they were involved in.
- Seeing the CSC who had trained in Riverfly, at the Alresford Show, engaging with the public, a very large footfall, telling them all about the invertebrates that they had taken from the Chalk Stream that morning, and how it helps indicate the health of the stream.
- Seeing the connections that have been made between people – the friends they have made, with enthusiasm for the chalk streams in common.
- Many Champions now feel emboldened and feel they are able to explain to members of the public or landowners what a healthy chalk stream should look like.

Fantastic failures

- Nothing major but we have had a few niggles along the way – one volunteer who didn't want to wear facemasks / life jackets who we had to speak to sternly! One volunteer with mental health issues who needed more hand holding in activities than we could manage effectively with the number of staff / volunteers that we had.
- No volunteers trained in fixed point photography – no interest from volunteers towards the beginning of the scheme and then no time or opportunities available.


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Programme 4: Chalk Stream Skills

4.3 Chalk Stream-Friendly Land Management

Outputs achieved

- New Winterbournes Guidance document developed and promoted
- 22 events held, targeted at specific land use including equines, reaching 476 landowners / managers
- 28 targeted landowners have received written specific advice for their landholding.
- 7 face to face tours of exemplar sites for landowners and key community members and 6 best practice examples on W&W website
- *Images below show the new Winterbournes Guidance document, a visit to the Westfair restoration site in 2025 and habitat management training by Wild Trout Trust in 2022.*

Outcomes achieved

- Landowners and land managers will know more about their heritage and how to manage it better
- Landowners and managers that know how to and choose to take action to avoid negative impacts on the chalk streams
- Land managers and owners with the skills and knowledge to manage their chalk streams and floodplain habitats
- Landowners and managers that understand better the impact of their land management actions on the chalk streams
- Improved bankside habitat for the chalk streams
- Reduced sediment and pollution in the chalk streams

What Went Well

- Good feedback from the events that we held for equine owners and suggestion in the feedback that some of the attendees are intending to make changes
- Good feedback from the tours that we did of best practice sites – also encouraging discussions amongst the landowners about how they can implement what they have seen on their own sites – definitely generated enthusiasm
- Good, well attended online talks about habitat management
- Additional funding from Natural England to support our land advice visits and delivery of our equine-keeper events.
- Good uptake on offer of land advice

What Went Less Well

- The hold-up in Defra confirming the changes to countryside stewardship arrangements wasn't helpful as people didn't want to make changes that meant they might miss out on future payments.
- A lot of the landowners haven't implemented the recommendations in their land advice reports – in a few cases this is due to lack of funding (they are larger scale changes), in others it is due to some of the family members not supporting the changes, others because they have tenant farmers that don't want to make the changes. However, most have taken the advice on board and it has engaged with them the issues, it may just take a lot longer for change to actually happen on the ground.


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4.1 Chalk Stream-Friendly Land Management continued

What would we do differently next time

- Carry out the land advice visits earlier on in the scheme and then have allocated funds through the capital projects to deliver more of the changes directly with the landowner, We hoped that it would work having the landowner grant scheme but the amounts weren't large enough and in many cases the landowners didn't have the time to allocate to the grant scheme or implementing the sediment management projects.

What difference has the project made

- It has definitely made a lot of landowners / managers think more about how they manage their land and the impact their land management has on their local chalk stream. There have been some positive changes already but only the smaller scale ones.

Champagne Moments – the best moments of the project

- Managing to get agreement to provide a land advice visit from one of the larger estates that has been previously disengaged with countryside stewardship schemes and Catchment Sensitive Farming. They were positive about making some changes as well.
- The visits to the Westfair Piscatorials site was an eye-opener for most people because it is a larger visionary restoration site - it was great to see the attendees getting excited about the project and realising that we should be pushing to do bigger and better things for our rivers.

Fantastic failures

- None really – we didn't manage to hold as many events as originally targeted but this was due to workload issues.

- *Photos below show a visit to Winnall Moors in 2023 to look at riparian management, a talk in 2025 for key community members and local authorities about planning issues relating to chalk streams and a talk in 2024 for equine keepers on pasture, water and nutrient management.*


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Part 4: Key Facts and Figures

Photo credit: Maggie Shelton

Scheme income – cash contributions

Source	Type	Amount Proposed in LCAP	Actual	NLHF category
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust	Cash	£18,609	£18,609	Own Reserves
Wessex Rivers Trust	Cash	£15,000	£14,000	Private Donation – Trusts / Charities / Foundations
Environment Agency	Cash	£60,000	£223,542	Other public sector
Hampshire County Council	Cash	£10,000	£10,000	Local Authority
Hampshire County Council – access grant scheme	Cash	£5,000	£0	Local Authority
Southern Water	Cash	£260,000	£260,000	Commercial / Business
South Downs National Park Authority	Cash	£9,000	£9,000	Local Authority
Test and Itchen Association	Cash	£5,000	£5,000	Private Donation – Trusts / Charities / Foundations
St Mary Bourne Parish Council	Cash	£14,000	£7,000	Local Authority
Laverstoke and Freefolk Parish Council	Cash	£250	£250	Local Authority
Laverstoke and Freefolk Millennium Green Trust	Cash	£250	£250	Private Donation – Trusts / Charities / Foundations
Parish and town councils	Cash	£5,000	£0	Local Authority
Landowner contributions	Cash	£11,142	£3,114	Private Donation - Individuals
Community group contributions	Cash	£5,000	£6,507.80	Private Donation – Trusts / Other fundraising
Monitoring post scheme	Cash	£8,500	£0	Increased mgt and maintenance costs
Fundraising	Cash	£34,493	£11,758	Other fundraising
Misc corporate contributions	Cash	£0	£2,000	Commercial / Business
Natural England Collaborative funding	Cash	£0	£10,516	Other public sector
Test Valley Borough Council	Cash	£0	£9,189	Local authority
Ecological Resilience Fund (Southern Water)	Cash	0	£50,000	Commercial / Business
North Wessex Downs	Cash	0	£46,059	Other public sector
Totals:		**£461,244**	**£686,795**	

6.5 Scheme income – in-kind contributions

Source	Type	Amount LCAP	Actual	NLHF category
Hampshire County Council – natural flood management event costs	In-kind	£2,075	£0	Non-cash contribution
Hampshire County Council – provision of kissing gates	In-kind	£2,792	£0	Non-cash contribution
Southern Water – water efficiency visits and installation of water efficiency equipment	In-kind	£389,700	£32,012	Non-cash contribution
Salmon and Trout Conservation UK – invertebrate sampling training and equipment	In-kind	£4,500	£6,027	Non-cash contribution
Wild Trout Trust – 8 days habitat restoration work	In-kind	£2,080	£405	Non-cash contribution
Community group and landowner contributions	In-kind	£10,000	£480	Non-cash contribution
Wessex Rivers Trust – unclaimed staff time for restoration projects	In-kind	£0	£4,155	Non-cash contribution
Volunteer time for whole Scheme	Vol time	£305,270	£453,307	Volunteer time
Totals:		**£716,417**	**£469,536**	

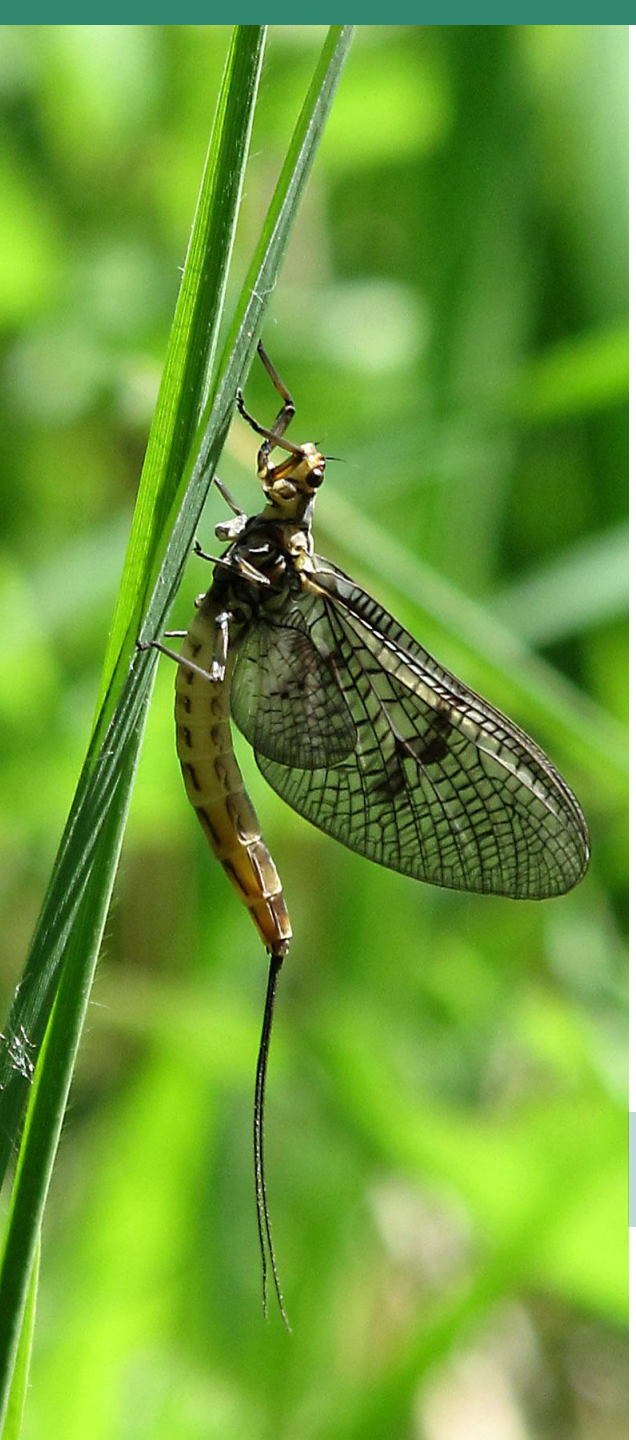
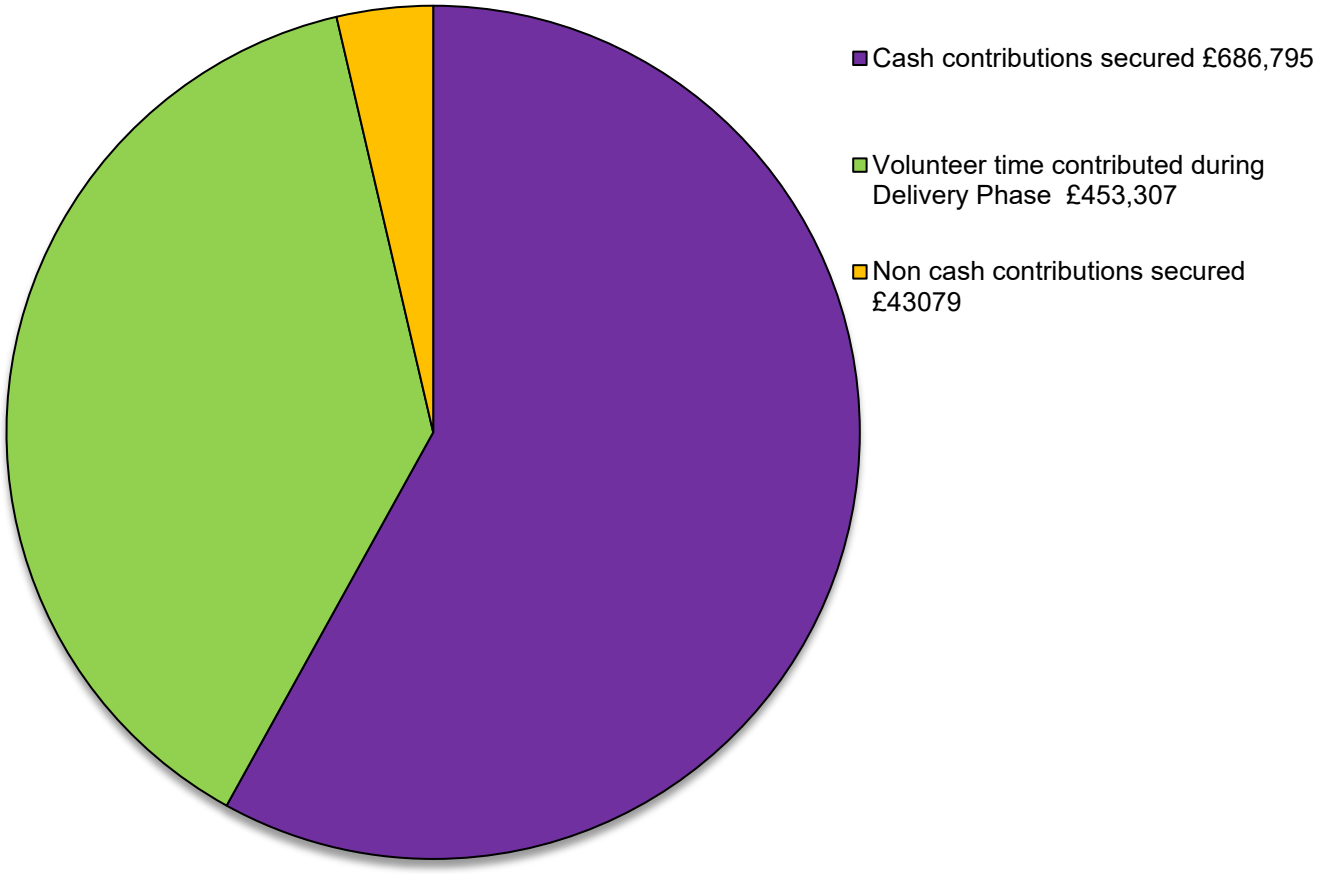
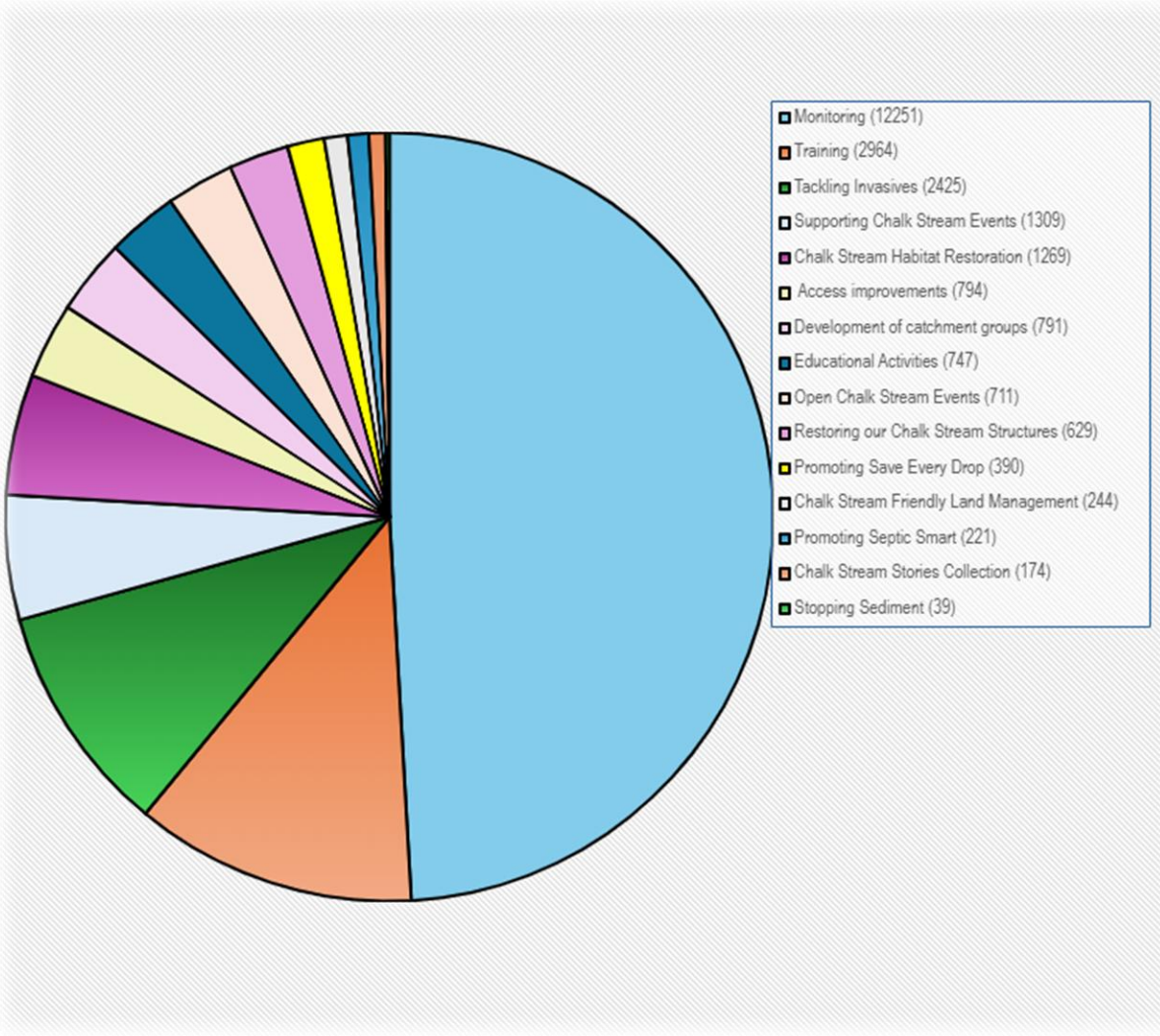


Photo credit: HIWWT

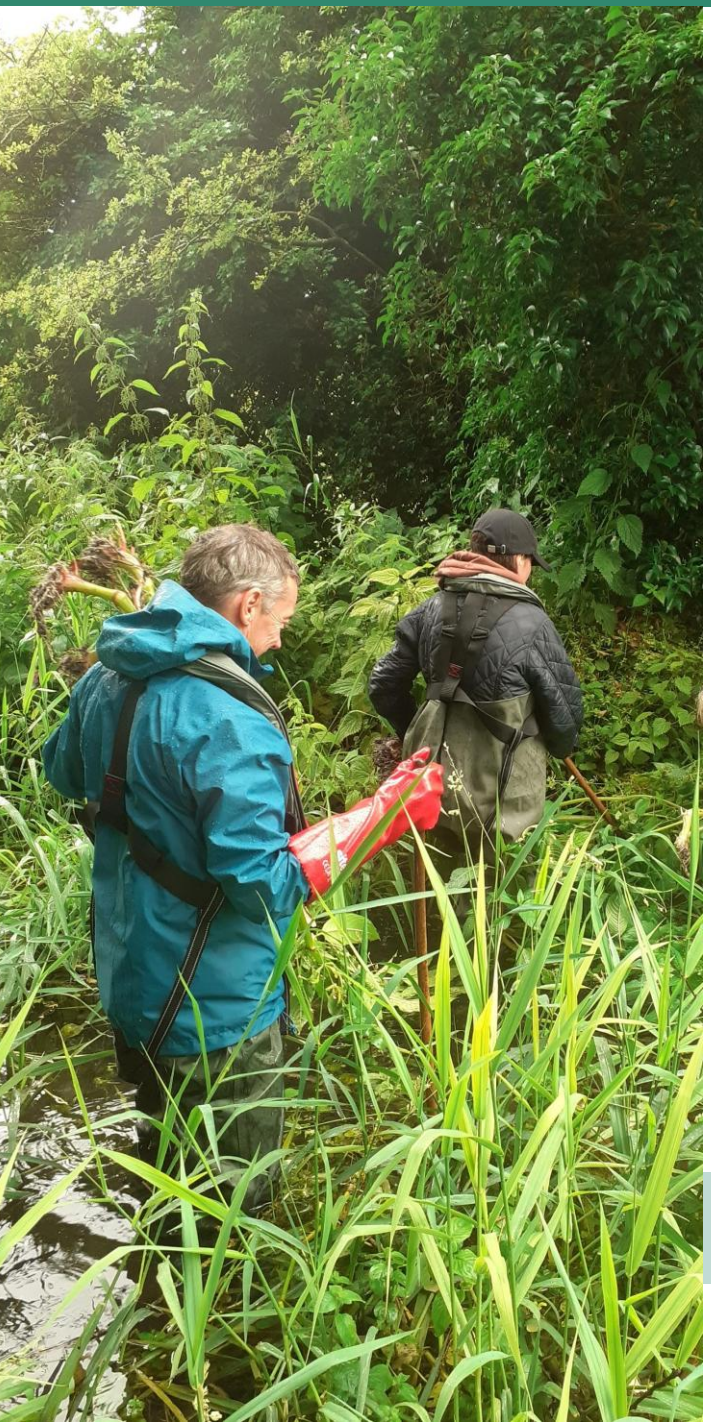


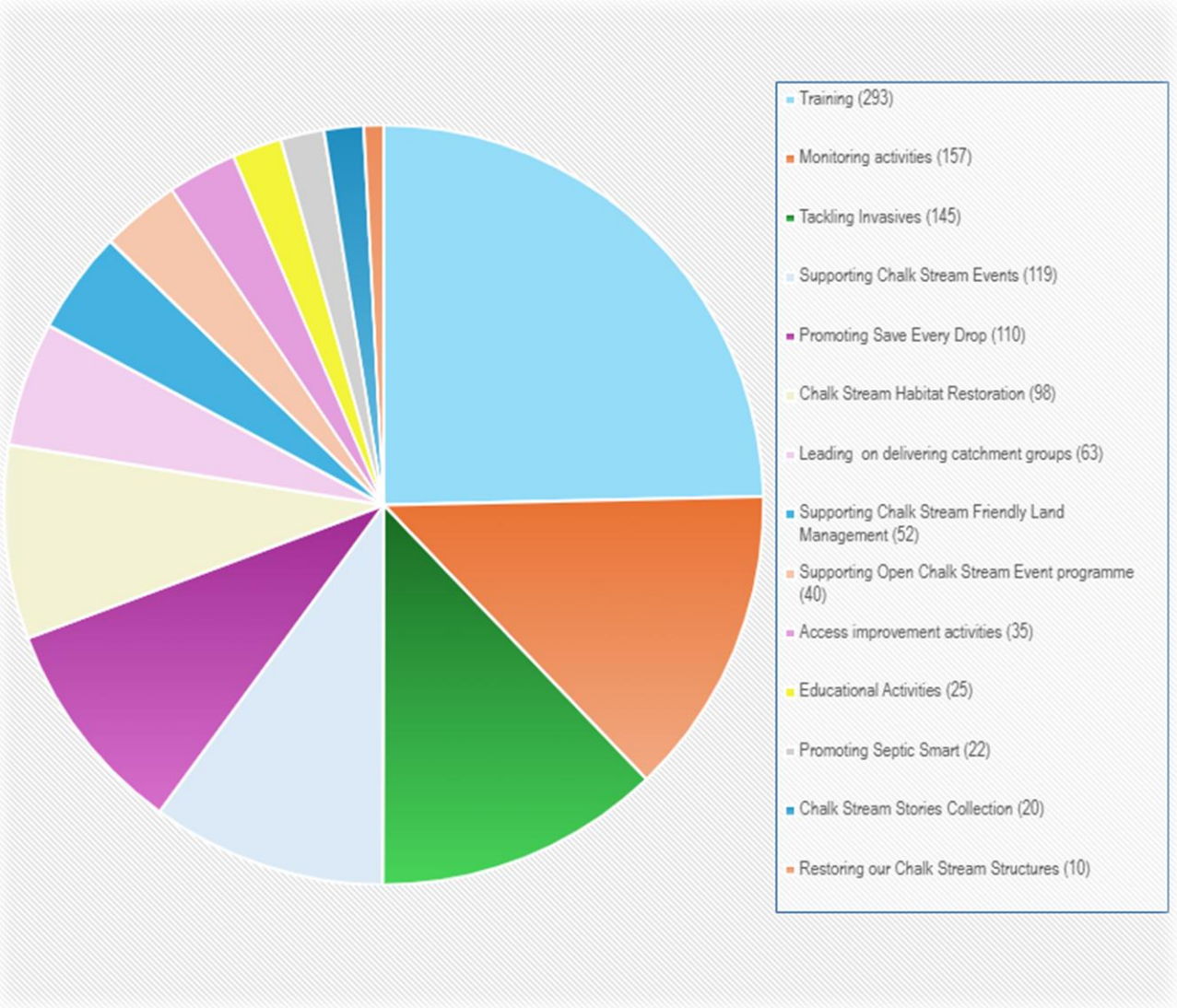
Income summary for the Watercress and Winterbournes scheme



Volunteer hours delivered by activity

Photo credit: Maggie Shelton

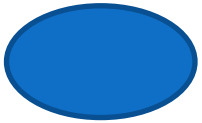




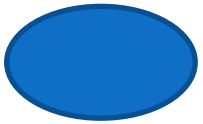
Volunteer numbers delivered through each activity type

Added value

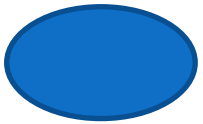
Over and above the outputs and targets set out within the LCAP, Watercress and Winterbournes has achieved a range of additional benefits. These include:



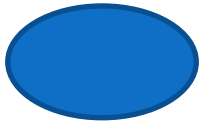
The Scheme has raised over £200,000 more in match funding than was originally agreed. A significant amount of this was for the white-clawed crayfish ark site which was not included within the LCAP but was progressed part way though the scheme when the plan to construct a crayfish hatchery at Sparsholt College had to be abandoned due to biosecurity issues.



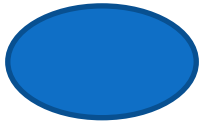
The Chalk Stream Challenge was not included within the LACP but was an additional initiative created by two Chalk Stream Champions. The Challenge has been a huge success and has now spread to a range of different chalk streams outside of the W&W area, demonstrating the Scheme's wider reach.



Natural England has supported the project *4.3 Chalk Stream-Friendly Land Management* by focusing significant time from their existing Catchment Sensitive Farming staff to support the delivery of land management advice to identified landowners within the W&W area including those that are not within stewardship agreements. They have also provided staff input into the delivery of the online equine-focused training courses and have provided Collaborative Funding to support both the delivery of land advice and the in-person and online equine-focused training courses.



The Scheme has resulted in volunteers contributing over 28000 hours of time, this equated to £453,307 in match-funding. This was £148,037 over the target amount within the LCAP.



The initial Chalk Stream Quest trails were installed through the scheme but a number of the communities are looking to extend to trails into other areas. Neighbouring local authorities have also shown interest in installing the trails in their areas.

Scheme Budgets and Expenditure

The tables below show how the actual expenditure compared with the NLHF budget headings set out within the application.

Capital Cost Headings	Budget within LCAP	Actual expenditure	Difference	Explanation
Purchase price of items or property	£0	£0	£0	N/A
Repair and conservation work	£485,967	£391,819	-£94,148	Lower expenditure for a number of reasons – two of the larger capital restoration projects didn't happen in the final year, one due to weather conditions and the other because the landowner changed their minds because of the outcome of the procurement process. Also, the INNS contractor costs were lower than estimated as most of the INNS could be managed through volunteer removal.
New building work	£0	£0	£0	N/A
Other capital work	£22,250	£3,249	-£19,001	Much lower spend on installation of Chalk Stream Quest due to using existing posts and structures for QR codes and interpretation boards.
Digital outputs	£21,040	£18,922	-£2,118	Lower expenditure as a lot of the video production was done in-house.
Equipment and materials (capital)	£65,680	£265,417	+£199,737	Increased funds for the crayfish ark site which was not originally budgeted for. Project changes were as a result of the biosecurity issue at the proposed location of the white-clawed crayfish hatchery.
Other costs (capital)	£12,800	£385	-£12,415	Decreased expenditure due to change to Hidden Treasure Trails project and lack of demand for benches from the communities
Professional fees (capital)	£0	£0	£0	N/A
Total	**£607,737**	**£679,792**	**+£72,055**	

Activity Cost Headings	Budget within LCAP	Actual expenditure	Difference	Explanation
New staff costs	£910,131	£1,137,606	+£227,475	Increase due to scheme extension from March 2025 to May 2026 and increase of Support Officer hours from 3 days per week to 5 days per week
Training for staff	£15,000	£4,226	-£10,774	Decrease due to staff not using much of the available budget due to time constraints and a lot more of the conferences and training being delivered online since covid.
Paid training placements	£0	£0	£0	N/A
Training for volunteers	£29,783	£21,469	-£8,314	Decrease due to delivery of some training on the job instead due to covid eg. Building Restoration skills
Travel for staff	£37,000	£48,331	£11,331	Increase in cost of travel for staff largely due to scheme extension but also increase in fuel costs
Travel and expenses for volunteers	£18,775	£17,894	-£881	Small reduction in volunteers expenses due to limited draw on mileage expenses
Equipment and materials (activity)	£37,536	£51,014	+£13,478	Increase in budget due to increased costs for literary competition
Other costs (activity)	£137,650	£79,941	-£57,709	Reduction in many activity costs due to delivering more online
Professional fees (activity)	£36,920	£29,602	-£7,318	Decrease due to number of speakers for talks providing them for free
Total	**£1,222,795**	**£1,390,084**	**+£167,289**	

Other Cost Headings	Budget within LCAP	Actual expenditure	Difference	Explanation
Recruitment	£5,000	£258	-£4,742	
Publicity and promotion	£66,340	£26,593	-£39,747	Reduced advertising costs for Open Chalk Streams and other events due to doing more online, through social media and local uncharged for or low costs publications
Evaluation	£38,732	£50,999	+£12,267	Increase in budget as Smart Rivers invertebrate analysis volunteers have needed much more support than originally costed for and will need this going forward
Other costs	£58,530	£42,430	-£16,100	Primarily a reduction in satellite office costs due to partner organisation, Sparsholt College - providing a less expensive option.
Full Cost Recovery	£255,901	£288,745	+£32,844	Increase due to scheme extension
Contingency	£101,433	£25,131	-£76,302	Remainder of contingency budget moved to support staff costs needed for extension of scheme
Inflation	£34,076	£5,000	-£29,076	Remainder of inflation budget moved to support staff costs needed for extension of scheme
Increased management and maintenance costs	£8,500	£16,040	+£7,540	Increase in monitoring and management costs of crayfish ark site at Tangley to ensure suitable for crayfish release in 2027.
Total	£568,512	£455,197	-£113,315	

Other Cost Headings	Budget within LCAP	Actual expenditure	Difference	Explanation
Non-cash contributions	£411,147	£43,079	-£368,068	This was massively lower than anticipated due to poor take-up of the Southern Water household water efficiency visits for a number of reasons. The non-cash contribution amount was reviewed at the mid-term review and was reprofiled down to £32,769, which was exceeded.
Volunteer time	£305,270	£453,307	+£148,037	Volunteer involvement / hours far exceeded estimations
Total	**£716,417**	**£496,386**	**-£220,031**	

SCHEME TOTAL:	**Original Budget**	**Actual Expenditure**	**Difference**
	£3,115,461	**£3,021,459**	**-£94,002**

Project Budgets and Expenditure

The tables below show how the actual expenditure compared to budgets set out within the application for each project.

Project	Cash budget within LCAP	Actual expenditure	Difference	Explanation
Programme 1 – Resilient Chalk Streams				
1.1 Chalk Stream Restoration	£211,551	£228,186	+£16,635	Small increase due to projects delivery a range of project outcomes. Often projects were mainly restoration so budgets were allocated to 1.1 but they would also have delivered outcomes for 1.2 and 1.3 as well.
1.2 Natural Flood Management	**£35,000**	**£15,000**	**-£20,000**	NFM project at Hinton Ampner was held up due to staff changes so wasn't delivered within the timescale of the W&W team. Planned to be delivered within the following year through other funding schemes.
1.3 Stopping Sediments	£87,888	£44,669	-£43,219	Decrease spend due to a lot of the sediment mitigation schemes being low cost to deliver.
1.4 Spawning Habitats	£60,936	£28,143	-£32,793	Decrease in spend due to underwater investigations proving fish could already pass under the Town Mill in Andover thus removing the need for that scheme.
1.5 Conserving our Native Crayfish	£67,840	£268,917	+£201,077	Increase due to change in delivery plan from hatchery at Sparsholt College to hatchery at Wildheart Animal Sanctuary and ark site in Tangley due to biosecurity issues at the college.
1.6 Vitacress Wetland Creation Scheme	£6,000	£0	-£6,000	No spend as planning permission was not approved for the wetland initiative.
Total	**£469,215**	**£584,915**	**+£115,700**	

Project Budgets and Expenditure Continued..

Project	Cash budget within LCAP	Actual expenditure	Difference	Explanation
Programme 2 – Chalk Stream Community Action				
2.1 Building Sustainable Community Catchment Groups	£9,863	£5,939	-£3,924	Not as much training for the CCGs was needed as had been estimated. Many already had experience through their jobs or involvement with other groups. Time spent planning with the staff team was found to be more valuable than paid-for training courses.
2.2 Watercress and Winterbournes Grant Scheme	£90,810	£62,955	-£27,855	Low take-up of landowner grants meant that the landowner grant pot was mostly unused.
2.3 Save Every Drop – Community Water Efficiency	£19,590	£5,266	-£14,324	Decreased expenditure due to receiving a lot of free marketing in local publications and doing a lot of communication online.
2.4 Septic Smart	£4,330	£6,512	+£2,182	Decreased expenditure due to receiving a lot of free marketing in local publications and doing a lot of communication online.
2.5 Tackling Invasives	£47,566	£5,458	-£42,108	Decreased contractor spend as most INNS could be dealt with through volunteer groups rather than needing contractor intervention and NE guidance meant that we couldn't use weevils.
Total	**£173,159**	**£86,130**	**£87,029**	

Project Budgets and Expenditure Continued..

Project	Cash budget within LCAP	Actual expenditure	Difference	Explanation
Programme 3 – Exploring and Celebrating our Chalk Stream Heritage				
3.1 W&W Education Programme	£27,000	£36,595	+£9,595	Increase due to extra developmental work that was carried out during the covid restrictions to progress the programme before the Education Officer was in post.
3.2 Roaming by the River	£43,000	£40,385	-£2,615	Decrease due to limited requirement for new seating from the communities
3.3 Restoring our Chalk Stream Structures	£33,312	£33,225	-£87	
3.4 Tales from the Riverbank	£20,130	£17,579	-£2,551	Decrease in expenditure due to changing celebration of Sharing Stories project to in-person speaking events rather than exhibitions.
3.5 Hidden Treasure Trails	£43,390	£13,759	-£29.631	Decrease in expenditure as consents for the signs were not required and existing posts were used in most locations.
3.6 Open Chalk Streams	£15,060	£837	-£14,223	Decreased expenditure for promotion as most was done online rather than through hard copy booklets.
Total	**£181,892**	**£142,380**	**-£39,512**	

Project Budgets and Expenditure Continued..

Project	Cash budget within LCAP	Actual expenditure	Difference	Explanation
Programme 4 – Chalk Stream Skills				
4.1 Chalk Stream Events	£17,800	£2,227	-£15,573	Decrease in expenditure due to delivering most of the events online rather than in person – increased audience but reduced costs. Also, many of the speakers were willing to give their time for free.
4.2 Chalk Stream Champions	£18,370	£16,062	-£2,308	The brickwork restoration training was delivered on the job rather than through a specific training course due to covid restrictions.
4.3 Chalk Stream-Friendly Land Management	£39,570	£24,105	-£15,465	Venue and refreshment costs for events were reduced as we decided to hold sessions for small groups of landowners on the riverbank instead. This proved more productive in allowing them to share their experiences and talk through their issues.
Total	**£75,740**	**£42,394**	**-£33,346**	

Notes

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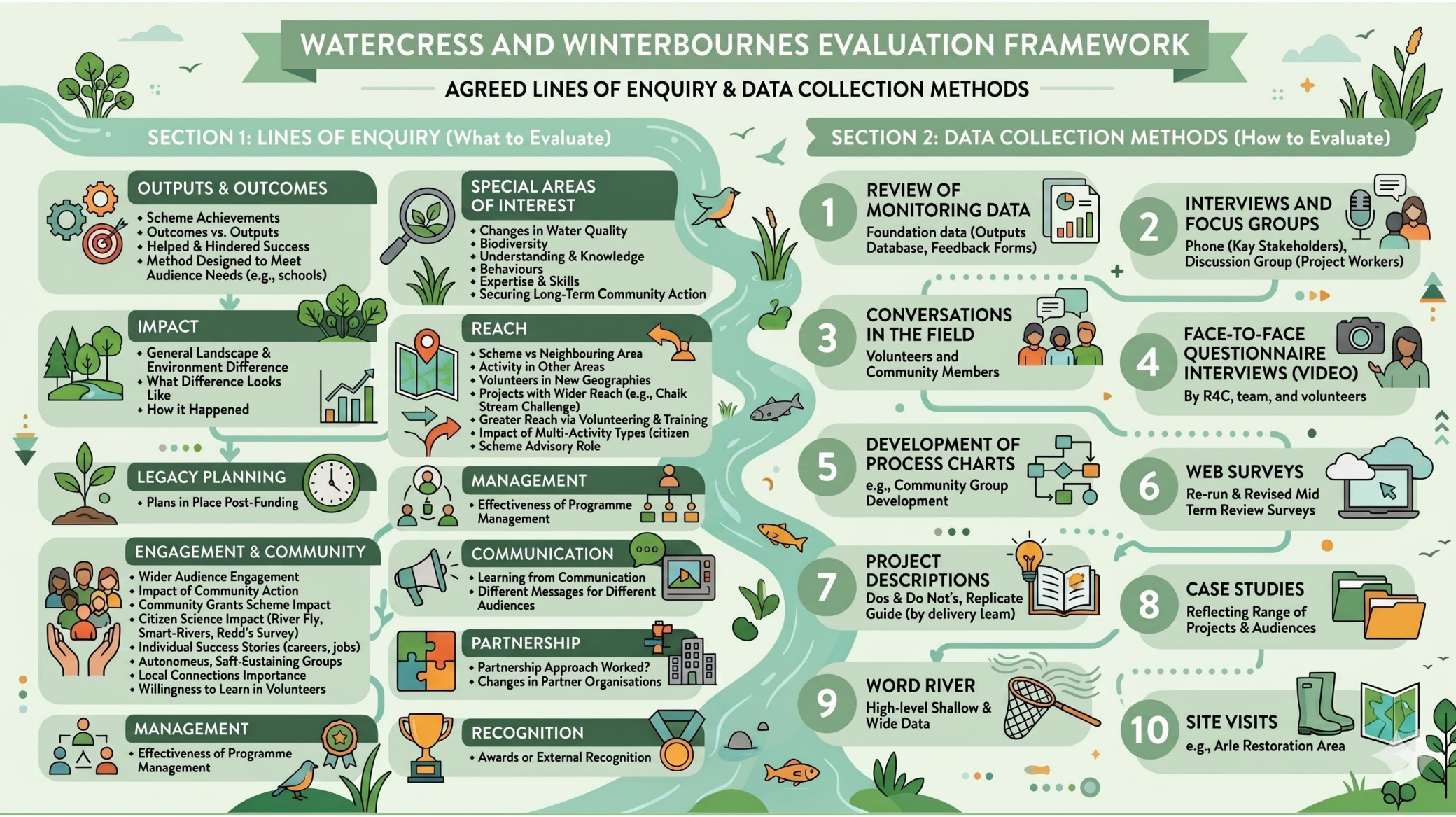
WATERCRESS AND WINTERBOURNES EVALUATION FRAMEWORK
AGREED LINES OF ENQUIRY & DATA COLLECTION METHODS
SECTION 1: LINES OF ENQUIRY (What to Evaluate)
OUTPUTS & OUTCOMES
• Scheme Achievements
• Outcomes vs. Outputs
• Helped & Hindered Success
• Method Designed to Meet Audience Needs (e.g., schools)
IMPACT
• General Landscape & Environment Difference
• What Difference Looks Like
• How it Happened
LEGACY PLANNING
• Plans in Place Post-Funding
ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNITY
• Wider Audience Engagement
• Impact of Community Action
• Community Grants Scheme Impact
• Citizen Science Impact (River Fly, Smart-Rivers, Redd's Survey)
• Individual Success Stories (careers, jobs)
• Autonomeus, Saft-Eustaining Groups
• Local Connections Importance
• Willingness to Learn in Volunteers
MANAGEMENT
• Effectiveness of Programme Management
SPECIAL AREAS OF INTEREST
• Changes in Water Quality
• Biodiversity
• Understanding & Knowledge
• Behaviours
• Expertise & Skills
• Securing Long-Term Community Action
REACH
• Scheme vs Neighbouring Area
• Activity in Other Areas
• Volunteers in New Geographies
• Projects with Wider Reach (e.g., Chaik Stream Challenge)
• Greater Reach via Volunteering & Training
• Impact of Multi-Activity Types (citizen
• Scheme Advisory Role
MANAGEMENT
• Effectiveness of Programme Management
COMMUNICATION
• Learning from Communication
• Different Messages for Different Audiences
PARTNERSHIP
• Partnership Approach Worked?
• Changes in Partner Organisations
RECOGNITION
• Awards or External Recognition
SECTION 2: DATA COLLECTION METHODS (How to Evaluate)
1 REVIEW OF MONITORING DATA
Foundation data (Outputs Database, Feedback Forms)
2 INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS GROUPS
Phone (Kay Stakeholders), Discussion Group (Project Workers)
3 CONVERSATIONS IN THE FIELD
Volunteers and Community Members
4 FACE-TO-FACE QUESTIONNAIRE INTERVIEWS (VIDEO)
By R4C, team, and volunteers
5 DEVELOPMENT OF PROCESS CHARTS
e.g., Community Group Development
6 WEB SURVEYS
Re-run & Revised Mid Term Review Surveys
7 PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS
Dos & Do Not's, Replicate Guide (by delivery Team)
8 CASE STUDIES
Reflecting Range of Projects & Audiences
9 WORD RIVER
High-level Shallow & Wide Data
10 SITE VISITS
e.g., Arle Restoration Area