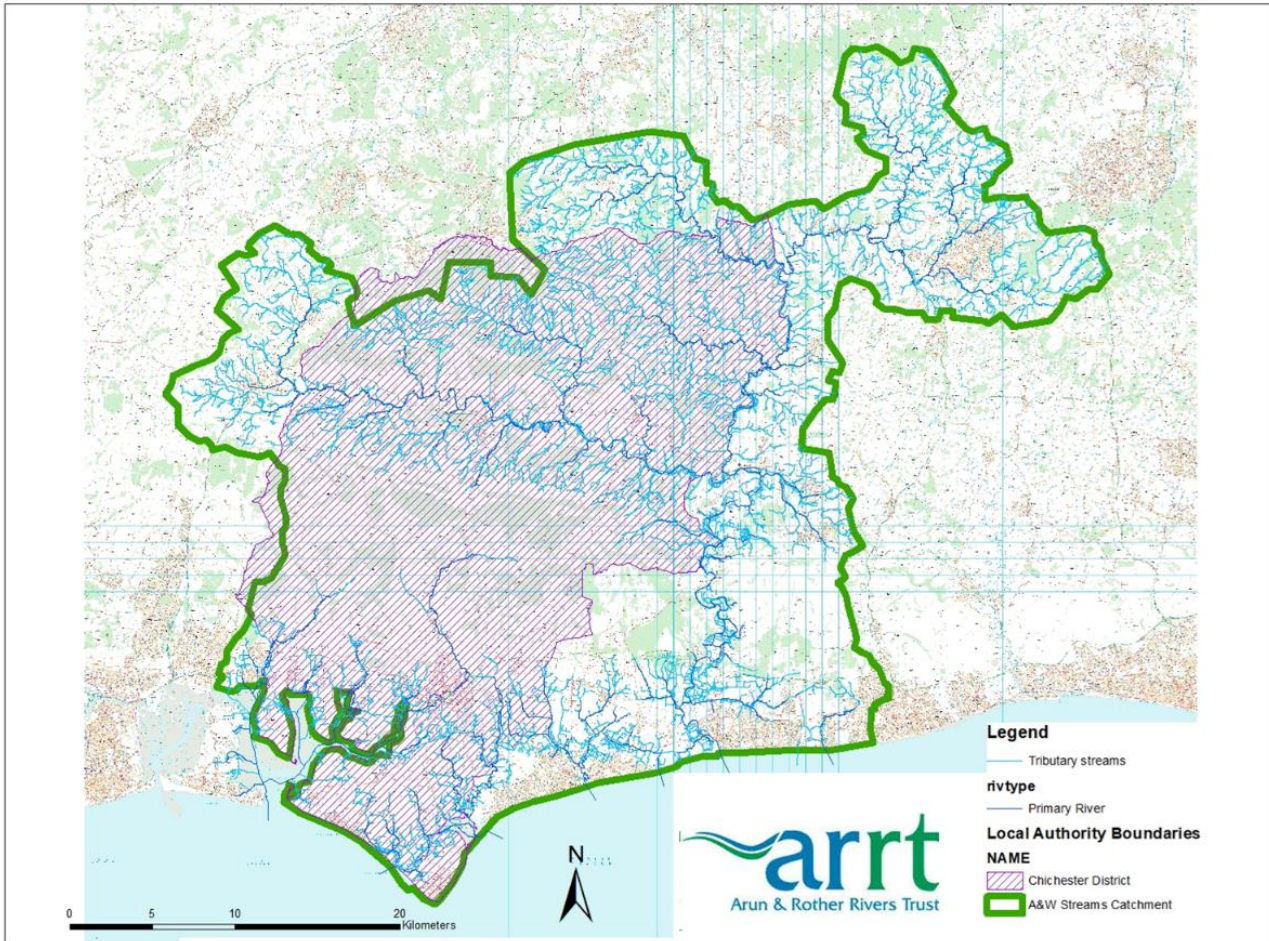


**Background:**

The Arun and Rother Rivers Trust (ARRT) is Chichester District Council's Rivers Trust. CDC's area covers most of our catchment.



ARRT's aims are to protect and restore our rivers and streams, and to increase the public's understanding of our rivers and their associated wildlife, and the value which they bring to our lives.

**Proposal:**

We would like CDC to part-fund two Chalk Stream Resilience Officers, one focusing on the Ems and Hambrook and a second on the Lavant.

We would like to ask CDC to contribute £30,000 per catchment per year for 3 years (total £60,000 per year for 3 years).

**The need:**

The River Ems, Hambrook and Lavant are among only 283 chalk rivers and streams in England. These rivers and streams were described by the [Chalk Stream Restoration Strategy](#) (2021) as our equivalent to the Great Barrier Reef, holding 'a truly special natural heritage with a responsibility'. They are not only locally precious, but globally unique.

These streams and rivers also feed Chichester Harbour, an internationally important habitat for wildlife.

We have a vision to enhance the status for our chalk streams, as their current condition does not benefit their uniqueness. These streams are suffering from the effects of abstraction, drought, pollution, habitat loss, development, and interruption to the natural processes which should occur in a healthy river. We have all seen the effects of increasing flooding over recent years – another symptom of how we manage our rivers. Taking action now to restore, protect and ready them for future changes is vital.

The Chalk Stream Resilience Officers would enable ARRT to apply for and activate further grant funding. We would use this to up-skill local residents and groups, and to protect and restore these rivers, making them more resilient to climate change and inspiring local communities to look after them. We would measure this and report back on the ratio of funding secured per £ of CDC investment.

**Outputs:**

1. **Ems:** Working with stakeholders and local people ARRT have drawn together the ‘River Ems Restoration Plan 2024 – 2034’. This includes 56 recommendations focused on improvements to water quality, water quantity issues and habitats and species.

The following table provides prioritised recommendations to be delivered by the Chalk Stream Resilience Officer working in partnership with landowners and others. Each output has an associated success measure which will be monitored and reported back to the funder.

Output	Success measure (reported back annually to CDC)
<p>Improvements to fish passage to allow fish to seek refuge during times of low flow and poor water quality.</p> <p>Yr 1: Plans finalised for two projects at Westbourne Mill &amp; Lumley sluice, funding secured, permissions and permits in place.</p> <p>Yr 2-3: Capital works delivered at Westbourne Mill and Lumley sluice.</p> <p>Yr 2-3: Further investigations of culverts, weirs and sluices and planning for removal or modification to allow fish passage.</p>	<p>Project plans and permits</p> <p>km of stream opened up to fish movement</p> <p>Project plans</p>
<p>River and floodplain restoration inc. re-meandering, pond creation, water meadow restoration to increase resilience to high and low flows, and increase biodiversity.</p> <p>Yr 1: Plans finalised, funding, permissions and permits in place of enhancements at Walderton water works.</p> <p>Yr 2-3: Capital works delivered at Walderton.</p> <p>Yr 2-3: Work with landowners to plan further river corridor and floodplain enhancements.</p>	<p>Project plans and permits</p> <p>km of stream enhanced, km<sup>2</sup> of river corridor enhanced, no. people engaged, funding secured</p>
<p>Tackling Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS).</p> <p>Yr 1: INNS watch volunteer programme established to identify the distribution of INNS throughout the catchment, landowners engaged, eradication strategy produced, quick-win INNS removal</p>	<p>No. volunteers trained and engaged, hours of surveying conducted, survey results displayed on ARRT Cartographer map (online map to view by all)</p> <p>Eradication strategy report produced</p>

Yr 2-3: Further INNS removal and replacement with suitable native planting	m/km <sup>2</sup> of invasives removed, m/km <sup>2</sup> of native planting established
Enhancing the river channel to improve artificially altered sections, reducing impact of low flows and improving biodiversity.  Yr 1: Work with landowners on sites identified in Ems restoration pipeline to plan enhancements works at a minimum of 3 sites  Yr 2-3: Deliver identified projects	Project plans and permits, funding secured  km of stream enhanced
Community engagement events and activities with the aim of: Increasing citizen science volunteering Improving understanding of chalk streams and beneficial management Resolving conflict between stakeholder groups Reducing water use Supporting Friends of groups  Yr 1-3: Regular walks, presentations, attendance at community events	No. events delivered/attended, no. people engaged
Citizen science surveying established (biodiversity, water quality testing, outfall surveys, Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) identification)  Yr 1: Volunteer surveyors recruited and surveying, Cartographer (online map open to view by all) set up to receive data  Yr 2-3: Further volunteers recruited and data is being used for project planning	No. volunteers trained and engaged, hours of surveying conducted, survey results displayed on ARRT Cartographer map
Ensuring project legacy  Yr 3: Legacy plan post 2027 agreed between partners	Plan produced

2. **Hambrook:** Activity will focus on partnership with the Friends of the Hambrook and wider local community. Friends of the Hambrook have identified a number of actions and enhancements, and are keen to have support from ARRT to implement these measures. Examples outputs include:

Output	Success measure
Hambrook walkover complete and restoration recommendations identified	Production of report jointly with Friends of Hambrook
Citizen science surveying established (biodiversity, water quality testing, outfall surveys)	No. volunteers trained and engaged and hours of surveying conducted
Friends of the Hambrook increase in skills and knowledge	No. of days of training/shadowing ARRT staff
'Quick win' projects delivered	Km of stream enhanced, km <sup>2</sup> of river corridor enhanced, no. people engaged, funding secured
Longer term projects identified and planned	Project plans (minimum of 2)

Funding secured for longer term projects	Amount of funding secured (£), ratio of funding secured per £ of CDC investment
Legacy plan post 2027 agreed between partners	Plan produced and resourced

### 3. **Lavant:**

The Lavant Chalk Stream Resilience Officer would work with stakeholders, the community and partners to plan and deliver tangible ‘on-the-ground’ action to improve the health and resilience of the River Lavant. Partners include the Goodwood and West Dean Estates, SDNPA, South Downs Trust, Portsmouth Water, Southern Water, the Clean Harbours Partnership and parish councils. An early focus would be on working with these organisations to help identify and implement a long-term solution to groundwater infiltration leading to over-pumping and tankering and subsequent pollution of the village pond and river at East Dean and Charlton.

Outputs for the Lavant would include:

<b>Output</b>	<b>Success measure</b>
Build support for the Lavant  Yr 1: Form a sub-catchment partnership group holding regular meetings	Minutes published
Planning and delivery of restoration and resilience recommendations  Yr 1: Walkover carried out on lower Lavant and restoration recommendations identified  (N.B – SDNPA funded walkover is underway to identify recommendations for Upper Lavant)  Yr 2-3: ‘Quick win’ restoration and resilience projects delivered, including within and downstream of Chichester city  Longer term projects identified and planned	Recommendation report  Km of stream enhanced, km <sup>2</sup> of river corridor enhanced, no. people engaged, funding secured  Project plans (minimum of 3)
Increasing capability amongst local groups and residents to safeguard the river  Yr 1: Citizen science surveying established (biodiversity, water quality testing, outfall surveys)	No. volunteers trained and engaged and hours of surveying conducted
Help facilitate the planning and implementation of a long-term solution to groundwater infiltration to prevent over-pumping and tankering in East Dean, Charlton, Singleton and West Dean  Yr 1: Assist Southern Water and others to formulate plan  Yr 2-3: Implementation – support capital works support as needed	Plan finalised  Capital works delivered for a long-term solution
Funding secured for quick-win and longer-term projects	Amount of funding secured (£), ratio of funding secured per £ of CDC investment
Legacy plan post 2027 agreed between partners	Plan produced and resourced

### **Outcomes for each catchment (long-term effects):**

- Community feels more hopeful as quick win improvements have been delivered.
- Outcomes have been demonstrated to mitigate negative impacts of development, showing the public that there are positive ways to deal with this.
- Improvements to water quality and measures to deal with peak flows and drought begin to be delivered, and invasive species are being brought under control.
- A wide section of the community are engaged with the chalk streams, value and cherish them.
- Community members enact positive behaviours to support their rivers.
- Citizen scientists have been up-skilled and empowered to monitor the rivers as an important tool to protect them.
- Schools are able to use this wonderful learning resource on their doorstep.
- The Ems becomes an exemplar showcase for climate mitigation/adaptation, nature recovery, water body resilience, community engagement and community wellbeing.
- The profile of the Lavant is increased and a group coalesced around positive action for this river.
- A solid plan for continuation of the projects beyond the 3 years contribution from CDC is in place, including identifying and applying for funding.

### **Links with existing CDC strategies:**

These posts would help CDC achieve outputs and outcomes in the following strategies and endeavours:

[Chichester Local Plan 2021 – 2039 Proposed Submission – Chapter 4 Climate Change and the Natural Environment](#)

NE2 Natural Landscape \* NE4 Strategic Wildlife Corridors \* NE5 Biodiversity and Biodiversity Net Gain \* NE6 Chichester's Internationally and Nationally Designated Habitats \* NE8 Trees, Hedgerows and Woodlands \* NE11 The Coast \* NE13 Chichester Harbour AONB \* NE15 Flood Risk and Water Management \* NE16 Water Management and Water Quality \* NE19 Nutrient Neutrality \* NE20 Pollution

[Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2020-2024](#)

Increase ecological data \* Wildlife Corridors Project \* Naturalising Chichester's Green Spaces \* Monitoring for biodiversity \* Promote biodiversity projects and achievements \* Encourage biodiversity in CDC Parks and Gardens and Estates

[Chichester District Council – Managing Water quality and wastewater](#)

Continue to support the Chichester Local Plan Water Quality Group, Chichester Harbour Protection and Recovery of Nature (CHaPRoN), and Three Harbours Technical Working groups.

[Chichester Harbour Conservancy - Policy 6 Water Quality](#)

To use evidence to influence decision making and investment in protecting and enhancing important habitats and species, and water quality improvements.

[Nutrient Mitigation](#)

There are a number of riparian improvement opportunities already identified on the Ems and Lavant which will lead to reductions in nitrates. These can then be used to mitigate impacts of the housing in the Local Plan, and contribute to outputs required under the Local Nutrient Mitigation Fund if CDC is successful in their bid for

phase 2. ARRT is already working with relevant landowners, and there would be possibility to stack additional benefits such as improved public access and Biodiversity Net Gain.

### **Match funding:**

- £95,000 secured from **Environment Agency** for Ems restoration measures to March 2027. Initial funding of £10,000 for the Lavant has been requested for 24-25 (decision in April 2025). This would kick-start new citizen science investigations on the Lavant.
- Awaiting decision on £31,600 application to **UKSPF** for the Ems. This includes £15,600 towards a Chalk Stream Officer for the Ems. Therefore, if we are successful in our application the first-year contribution from CDC could be reduced by £15,600.
- **Portsmouth Water** have included a £650,000 investment in the Ems catchment as part of their Water Industry National Environment Programme delivery proposals to Ofwat. This would primarily be spent between 2025-2030, but with early start implementation before April 2025. Portsmouth Water will be notified on the outcome of their proposal bids later in the year. Their full investment proposal can be found here:  
[Business Plan 2025-2030 | Portsmouth Water](#)
- **Southern Water** have included £11.78m investment in the Lavant catchment as part of their Drainage and Wastewater Management Plan (DWMP) for the Arun and Western Streams River Basin Catchment. This work is scheduled to be delivered during the water company's Asset Management Plan Period 8 (2025-2030). This includes sewer relining and wetland creation to reduce the impact of groundwater infiltration to the sewer network. Further information can be found here:  
[AWS Options Development and Appraisal](#)  
[Lavant Investment Needs](#)
- The **South Downs Trust** and **Portsmouth Water** are funding SDNPA to carry out early investigations on the Lavant, delivering a Biodiversity Net Gain walkover which will identify recommended projects to improve the Lavant.
- In-kind support from **Goodwood Estate** and **West Dean** for the Lavant. They both have improvements to the river corridor identified in their estate plans. We have already completed an Upper Lavant walkover with these estates and SDNPA to identify sites for biodiversity and water quality improvements and natural flood management.
- Approaching **parish councils** and **West Sussex County Council** for contributions.

### **Contact:**

Thank you for considering this proposal. To discuss please contact:

Aimee Felus – ARRT Trust Manager

07579 831548 or [aimee@arrt.org.uk](mailto:aimee@arrt.org.uk)